EVERYBODY HAS A CHANCE:
CIVIL DEFENSE AND THE CREATION OF COLD WAR
WEST GERMAN IDENTITY, 1950-1968

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

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* * * * *

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ABSTRACT

In the opening decades of the Cold War, West Germans faced a terrifying geo-strategic dilemma. Located on the frontlines of the Cold War between nuclear-armed superpowers, they were forced to consider how best to protect their nascent democracy from the possibility of a devastating war fought with weapons of mass destruction. For Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and the right-of-center coalition that governed West Germany in the 1950s and 1960s, the answer to the country’s dilemma was threefold. Close rapprochement with the West and a strong national military were combined with civil defense—protecting the country’s civilian population and its societal and cultural institutions from the worst effects of a future war through a tripartite strategy of mass evacuation, protective shelters, and post-attack rescue and recovery units.

This chronologically and topically-organized dissertation examines the origins, evolution, and demise of the West German civil defense program during the Cold War’s opening decades. In doing so it presents three major arguments. First, as a result of unique historical and cultural influences West Germany’s early-Cold War civil defense program exhibited remarkable conceptual continuity with its Weimar and National Socialist predecessors. Second, the program’s political failure in the mid-1960s was due in large part to the inability of West German civil defense planners to make a clean break with the past. Finally, the Federal Republic’s early-Cold War civil defense experience provides a new understanding of the process by which West
Germans individually and collectively worked to create a new national identity in the post-1945 world. Specifically, in rejecting the highly-centralized program proposed by civil defense proponents West Germans individually and collectively rejected the sacrifice of their democracy called for by Adenauer and his allies. In doing so, the dissertation concludes, West Germans made a momentous decision about the fundamental nature of the Federal Republic’s existence, its new and untested political institutions, and the structure of its society—a decision that has lost little of its relevance to contemporary democracies debating fundamental beliefs about personal freedom and the limits of government authority in an era of a global war on terrorism.
This dissertation is dedicated to my entire family,
but most especially my wife, Karen.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like all academic projects, this dissertation’s successful completion was possible only with the support and encouragement of others. Several institutions kindly provided the financial support necessary to support this project, including the German Academic Exchange Service, the German Historical Institute, the Graduate School of The Ohio State University, the Ohio State University’s Mershon Center and Department of History, and Oberlin College.

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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bundesarchiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA-MA</td>
<td>Bundesarchiv-Militäraarchiv</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLSV</td>
<td>Bundesluftschutzverband</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>Bundesministerium des Inneres [Federal Interior Ministry]</td>
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<tr>
<td>BR</td>
<td>Bayerisches Radio [Bavarian Radio]</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDAS</td>
<td>Civil Defense Assistance Service [Luftschutzhilfsdienst]</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDU</td>
<td>Christian Democratic Union [Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands]</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSU</td>
<td>Christian Social Union [Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern]</td>
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<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>Deutschmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>German Party [Deutsche Partei]</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRK</td>
<td>German Red Cross [Deutsche Rote Kreuz]</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCDA</td>
<td>Federal Civil Defense Association [Bundesluftschutzverband]</td>
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<tr>
<td>FCDA</td>
<td>Federal Civil Defense Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDP</td>
<td>Free Democratic Party [Freie Demokratische Partei]</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOCD</td>
<td>Federal Office for Civil Defense [Bundesamt für Zivilschutz]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRG</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany [Bundesrepublik Deutschland]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FVP</td>
<td>Free Peoples Party [Freie Volkspartei]</td>
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<tr>
<td>GB-BHE</td>
<td>All-German Block-Union of Homeland-Expellees and Disfranchised [Gesamtdeutsche Block-Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechten]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDR</td>
<td>German Democratic Republic [Deutsche Demokratische Republik]</td>
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<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>Luftschutz</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSHD</td>
<td>Luftschutzhilfsdienst</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDR</td>
<td>Norddeutsche Radio [North German Radio]</td>
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<tr>
<td>NWDR</td>
<td>Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk [Northwest German Radio]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCDA</td>
<td>Reich Civil Defense Association [Reichluftschatzverband]</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLSV</td>
<td>Reichluftschatzverband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDR</td>
<td>Südliche Radio [Southern German Radio]</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>Social Democratic Party [Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands]</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWG</td>
<td>Südwestfunk [Southwest Radio]</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAC</td>
<td>Emergency Technical Assistance Corps [pre-1950, the Technische Nothilfe; post-1950, the Technisches Hilfswerk]</td>
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<tr>
<td>WDR</td>
<td>Westliche Radio [West German Radio]</td>
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<td>ZB</td>
<td>Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz</td>
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

This novel originated in New York during the bitter years of the last world war as the terrible Allied air-raids burnt out Germany and the first atomic bombs fell on Japan. Without raising the question of who bore responsibility for these horrible developments, [one can say with certainty] that confronting humanity was the oppressive question: “what does the future hold?”

- Oskar Maria Graf, The Holocaust’s Survivors

The opening pages of Oskar Maria Graf’s The Holocaust’s Survivors [Die Erben des Untergangs] portray a grim future for humanity. Human civilization, still recovering from the destruction and misery caused by the Second World War, finds itself engulfed by a far more destructive atomic war. While the inhabitants of Graf’s Europe never learn of the war’s origins, or even its purpose,

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1 Oskar Maria Graf, Die Erben des Untergangs. Roman Einer Zukunft (Frankfurt-am-Main: Nest Verlag, 1959), 9. (The English translation of the title is that used by the Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives at the State University of New York, Albany, the holdings of which include the majority of Graf’s extant papers, available at the archive’s website: www.library.albany.edu/speccoll/findaids/ger002.htm (accessed 18 March 2005.) The novel was first published in 1949 under the slightly different title Die Eroberung der Welt. German original: “Dieser Roman ist in New York, in den bittersten Jahren des letzten Weltkrieges, entstanden...als die furchtbaren Luftangriffen der Alliierten Deutschland ausbrannten und als schließlich die ersten Atombomen auf Japan fielen. Ganz abgesehen davon, wem die Schuld an dieser entsetzlichen Entwicklung zuzuschreiben war, in dieser Zeit standen die Menschen aller Nationen vor der beklemmenden Frage: „Was steht uns noch bevor?“”

2 A brief but important terminological explanation is necessary at this point. While the terms are not, strictly speaking, interchangeable, this study makes no distinction between atomic and nuclear weapons or warfare. The former is a subset of the latter. Atomic weapons, such as those used at the
the horrifying results are all too clear. Massive earthquakes and vast tidal waves caused by the explosions of an unknown number of atomic bombs kill tens of millions in the world’s coastal cities. In the interior regions of all the world’s continents hordes of sick, wounded, and starving people flee from the irradiated ruins of cities and industrial complexes only to find the very earth itself poisoned by radioactive fallout and deadly bacteria spread by missile-delivered biological weapons. Highways, railroads, and waterways are clogged by survivors—barefoot women in fur coats, dazed middle-aged men dressed in tattered rags, half-crazed women carrying the cold bodies of their dead children, and heavily-armed soldiers with hard, cold expressions. Most eventually die from the injuries they received in the opening days of the war, the diseases or radiation poisoning contracted as they fled for illusionary safety, or the chaos and violence that resulted from the utter breakdown of the fragile support networks necessary to sustain advanced industrialized societies. Few of the people mentioned in the opening chapters of The Holocaust’s Survivors live to experience the emergence of a new utopian civilization at the end of the novel.

Although a work of fiction, The Holocaust’s Survivors was clearly based on Graf’s perception of the world in which he lived. Born the closing decade of the nineteenth century, the anti-militaristic and sometimes-Socialist Graf implied in the novel (and stated explicitly in his other writings) that the holocaust that engulfs the characters The Holocaust’s Survivors, and which threatened the world in which he lived, was the direct result of disastrously bad decisions...
made by the world’s civilizations.³ After his own experience with and rejection of Prussian militarism in the First World War—he received a dishonorable discharge for mental illness and narrowly escaped execution as a deserter—Graf watched with dismay as the promise of Weimar democracy was replaced by the rise of the authoritarian National Socialist state. Eventually forced to flee first from his native and Germany and then from Austria, Graf spent the subsequent global war in the relative safety of New York. Although physically safe from the regime that sought to kill his Jewish wife and silence his outspoken criticism, Graf was nevertheless unable to ignore the way in which human civilization changed after 1939. The first use of atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were certainly horrifying, but in Graf’s opinion merely marked the inevitable climax of a half-century of deliberately satiating the forces of militarism and war.

In the opening decades of the Cold War, West Germans were well aware of the fact that their world had changed. It is now a commonly accepted truism among scholars that the catastrophic global war waged during the period 1939-1945 dramatically changed civilians’ wartime experience. As the vast body of Second World War-related scholarship documents, wartime military operations first blurred and then all but eliminated the division between military and home fronts.⁴ Rapid advances in military technology, especially the large-scale use of

³ Despite his important contributions to twentieth century German literature, Oskar Maria Graf has received little scholarly attention. A short summary of his life is found in Alfred von der Heydt, “Oskar Maria Graf,” in The German Quarterly 41:3 (May 1968): 401-412. Graf himself discussed his anti-militarism and Socialist sympathies in his autobiographies, Wir sind Gefangene (1927) and Das Leben meiner Mutter (1947).

massive aerial bombardment, eliminated non-combatant status and space—the traditionalulwarks of protection for civilian populations. This dramatic change in warfare was certainly
apparent in the strategic bombing campaigns waged against civilian populations. Fulfilling the
apocalyptic visions of early-twentieth century air-power theorists, during the Second World War
both Axis and Allied war leaders unleashed their air forces against civilians. Although at first
directed solely against critical war industries, both sides rapidly refocused their strategies of aerial
bombardment on human resources. Using techniques first practiced during the Spanish Civil
War, the German Air Force rapidly eliminated the distinction between soldiers and non-
combatants in the campaign against Poland, the Netherlands, and Great Britain. British, and then
U.S. war leaders, citing the “barbaric” practices of their opponent, soon responded in kind, and
eventually sent thousands of bombers into the skies over Germany.

The results of these decisions were deadly indeed. In the 1950s, the sociologist Hornell
Hart, among others, described the results in statistical terms. Focusing on the “accelerating
power to kill and destroy” that occurred before and during the Second World War, Hart
calculated the rise in the average number of deaths per ton of explosives dropped during the two
world wars. On the basis of this work Hart estimated that during the First World War each ton of
explosive dropped on civilians killed about three people. By the end of the Second World War
the rate had risen precipitously; in the American incendiary bombing raid on Tokyo on 9 March
1945, for example, each ton of explosive dropped on the city accounted for fifty deaths and many
times that number of wounded.5 This dubious advance in military technology was eclipsed,
however, with a new generation of weapon, the atomic bomb, and an exponential increase in

5 Hornell Hart, “Acceleration in Social Change,” in Francis R. Allen, et. al., Technology and Social
destructive capacity. While not physically larger than the weapons that preceded it, the new
weapon’s potential was measured in thousands of tons (kilotons) of T.N.T. This resulted, not
surprisingly, in an identical increase in lethality. By the end of the war, Hart concluded, the
atomic bomb’s invention meant that about 10,000 people were killed by each ton of weaponry
carried in the bomb-bay of the B-29 strategic bomber that made the raid.6

Statistical measurements are a poor way of capturing the extent to which warfare changed
on 6 August 1945, however, or the human misery, both real and potential, that accompanied this
change. In the more than six decades since the first (and only) wartime use of nuclear weapons,
writers, scientists, survivors, and artists have sought to understand what the Nobel prize winning
Japanese author Kenzaburo Oé describes as “the worst ‘deluge’ of the twentieth century.”7
Contemporary eyewitness accounts support Oé’s judgment. “My whole heart trembled at what I
saw,” the Japanese doctor Shuntaro Hida wrote shortly after the attack. Hida continued, “‘What
is this? What am I looking at now?’ I thought. Although I was only twenty-eight years old, the
experience of any age would have been inadequate to grasp this completely unknown world
which burned before me.”8 And burn it did. In the days, months, and years following the
bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world read, and later saw, the terrible consequences of
the weapons: city-blocks leveled flat, people vaporized by the explosion’s vast heat and
tremendous explosions, tens of thousands of mangled dead and wounded scattered amongst the
wreckage, and the poisonous gray ash that fell from the sky.9

6 Ibid., 41-43.
7 Kenzaburo Oé, “The Unsurrendered People,” in Hiroshima’s Shadow, ed. Kai Bird and Lawrence
8 Shuntaro Hida, “The Day Hiroshima Disappeared,” in Hiroshima’s Shadow, op. cit., 418.
9 Despite the fact that their explosive power is measured in equivalent amounts of T.N.T., nuclear
While Germans escaped the horror experienced by their wartime ally, the country and its civilian population nonetheless also suffered from their opponents’ accelerating power to destroy. Physically, the country suffered the near total destruction of its major cities and industrial centers by the combined might of the British and U.S. strategic air forces—the transformation of thriving, modern metropolises into nightmarish wastelands very similar to those described in *The Holocaust’s Survivor’s*. Psychologically, the very fabric of German civilization was ripped apart by its waging of nearly six years of racial warfare. Through a combination of carefully concocted propaganda and harsh repression Adolf Hitler and his followers managed to convince and coerce Germans to make the tremendous physical, psychological, and ethical sacrifices necessary to fight a war that directly or indirectly cause the deaths of tens of millions of men, women, and children by battle, reprisal raids, forced labor, “euthanasia” programs, starvation, exposure, and medical experiments.

The ruined cityscapes produced by the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaign and moral and ethical devastation caused by the National Socialist regime were the settings in which Germans began the task of rebuilding their civilization. As countless studies have shown, they faced immense challenges. The problems posed by extensive physical destruction were

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compounded by widespread unemployment, hunger, social dislocation, psychological strain, and what the post-war world considered moral bankruptcy. Further complicating the challenges of reconstructing and reconstituting German society was the international climate in which these processes occurred. By the end of the Second World War the uneasy peacetime alliance between the western democracies and socialist Soviet Union showed signs of severe strain. In the immediate post-war period the floodwaters of intransigence and contradictory visions of the post-war ordering of Europe and the world caused an irreversible rupture, and the Cold War engulfed all of Europe. By 1949, the spheres of influence that came to characterize the Cold War era were firmly established. For Germans, the practical reality of this Cold War split was the creation of two countries: the socialist German Democratic Republic and capitalist Federal Republic of Germany.

The division of their homeland into two separate and ideologically opposed countries forced Germans to confront a new, and for the most part unwelcome geo-strategic dilemma of serving as foot-soldiers in the front-lines of the Cold War. The position for West Germans was hardly enviable. To the rear of the new country lay the democracies of Western Europe. Economically weak and socially divided as a result of five long years of war and harsh, and in some cases exploitive German occupation, the western democracies had little love for or trust in the new country. Facing West Germans to the East was an even greater challenge, however: a

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bloc of hostile nations—formally organized in 1955 into a military alliance, the Warsaw Pact—controlled by the Soviet Union and protected by its military forces.

Physically, the threat posed by Soviet forces was all too real. The Red Army had emerged from the Second World War as the savior of the Soviet people—a victory that validated Stalin’s hyper-militarization of the economy and provided legitimacy for a post-war policy of maintaining strong military forces. By the end of the Second World War the Soviet army was the most powerful military force in continental Europe, and exceeded in absolute numbers the size of its rival, the United States. Moreover, despite public pronouncements to the contrary, in the years following the Second World War Stalin implemented a massive (by Soviet standards) research and development program to overcome the country’s technological inferiority in strategic forces. In 1948, Soviet engineers successfully duplicated the U.S. B-29 heavy bomber through reverse engineering. Less than one year later, the Soviet Union broke the U.S. nuclear monopoly with the successful test of its own atomic bomb. By the end of the decade all of West Germany was theoretically within easy flying distance of Soviet heavy bombers armed with weapons similar to those that had instantly destroyed vast sections of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Thus, even as they struggled to clear away the rubble that constituted the legacy of the National Socialist regime, West Germans were forced to acknowledge that evolving concepts of war as well as advances in military technology had changed the very nature of conflict, and in so


doing increased the threat facing the country’s civilian population. This is particularly apparent in the evolution of German strategic thought. During the Second World War, German military planners devoted their energy to fighting a war characterized by massive numbers of conventional forces on battlefields hundreds, or even thousands of square miles in size. In the opening decades of the Cold War, however, the dominant paradigm of war shifted, and by the mid-1960s military planners thought increasingly in terms of very short conflicts characterized by the deaths of tens of millions and destruction of whole cities in days or even a few hours. As a result, by the early 1950s West Germans officials were forced to acknowledge the impossibility of protecting the entire country and its population from the worst effects of a future war. What they hoped to achieve, however, was the protection of some of the country’s population and preservation of part of its infrastructure.

Extant scholarship and archival records reveal that West Germany’s political and military leaders pursued three theoretically complementary strategies to protect the country and its people. A useful analogy for understanding Cold War West German national defense [Verteidigung] is that of an inter-related system of flood defenses. For much of their existence, West Germans faced the omnipresent and unpredictable threat of nuclear-equipped Warsaw Pact forces. In much the same way unpredictable natural phenomena such as Atlantic storms affected the overall threat posed by flood, specific international events elevated and reduced the threat posed by Warsaw Pact military forces and their nuclear weapons. During periods of acute tension, such as the 1956 Hungarian uprising, 1957 Sputnik scare, the construction in 1961 of the Berlin Wall, and the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the possibility of a red tide flooding all of West Germany seemed all too real to West Germans.

To limit the damage caused by a possible flood of Warsaw Pact forces, West Germans constructed an intricate system of flood protection. The abundant studies of West German
foreign and defense policy in the 1950s and early-1960s confirm that Adenauer himself envisioned the country’s westward orientation as the country’s first, and most important, line of defense. Ongoing, if domestically controversial, agreements to host foreign military forces and the country’s acceptance into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, provided West Germans with the equivalent of a modern, well-developed system of outer flood defenses. However, in keeping with their observation of the 1953 Dutch flood catastrophe, West Germany’s political leaders showed considerable sense in their refusal to trust the country’s safety to a single line of powerful but untested defenses. Here, too, the extant scholarship confirms Adenauer’s determination to erect a second, more traditional, but therefore more trustworthy, barrier: an independent West German military. While the fortunes of history mean that the West German armed forces’ ability to physically protect the nation will forever remain the subject of intense speculation, little doubt exists as to the psychological importance of a robust military defense. Adenauer and his advisors recognized, of course, the sheer impossibility of protecting the entire country and all its inhabitants should war return to German soil. However, they believed that a strong national military, combined with a credible NATO deterrence, offered such strong protection that the country’s enemies might think twice before unleashing the floodwaters of destruction.

Civil defense, the subject of this study, formed the third and final barrier in the country’s system of protection. An idea which had evolved considerably since the term’s first use during the First World War, civil defense in the early-Cold War period was generally defined by the international community after August 1949 as the performance of humanitarian tasks to protect civilian populations from the consequences of war or disaster, to assist in recovery from
immediate effects of either, and to provide for the population’s survival.\textsuperscript{15} As was the case with the majority of its political and military allies, the West German government eventually expanded this internationally-accepted definition to include any activity or measure designed or actually implemented to defend civilian society from military attack. As we shall see, in practical terms this included a whole range of nonmilitary actions, including measures to ensure enough of the country’s most important political, economic, and societal institutions survived intact to first support war-fighting and then resume some semblance of peacetime activity.

**Major Arguments and Organizing Themes**

Civil defense has not fared well in the nuclear era, and is generally viewed today as one of the great tragicomedies of the Cold War. A closer look at this civil defense-related cynicism reveals, however, that it is the product of events and developments that occurred during the Cold War’s closing decades. Admittedly, the 1970s and 1980s legacies of chronically inadequate financial support and the deployment of great numbers of technologically-advanced, extremely destructive weapons provided civil defense detractors with much to criticize.\textsuperscript{16} However, this study will

\textsuperscript{15} See the *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War*, 75 U.N.T.S. 287, which entered into force on 21 October 1950. It was not until 1977, however, that the international community agreed upon a common definition for civil defense. The full text of this convention is available from the University of Minnesota’s on-line Human Rights Library at www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/y4gcpcp.htm (accessed 15 February 2005).

\textsuperscript{16} The inadequacies of Western Europe’s late-Cold War civil defense programs are the subject of a rich, if not entirely impartial, body of literature. Examples include Duncan Campbell, *War Plan UK* (London: Barnett Books, 1982), John Dowling, *A Choice of Disasters* (New York: American Institute of Physics, 1987), Jennifer Leaning and Langley Keyes, *The Counterfeit Ark: Crisis Relocation for Nuclear War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishers, 1984) and Rainer Jogschies, *Wo bitte geht’s zu meinem Bunker?* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Ullstein, 1988). Late-Cold War critics of civil defense were responding, in part, to the deployment of a new generation of nuclear weapons, which in Europe included the U.S. Pershing II and Soviet SS-20 intermediate range missiles. Also the subject of extensive popular and scholarly scrutiny, the outpouring of public condemnation of these weapons eventually resulted in the landmark Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed by the
show that the cynicism we now associate with Cold War civil defense was, in West Germany at least, far less prevalent in the opening decades of that conflict. Indeed, for much of the 1950s and 1960s West German civil defense proponents argued that a national civil defense program could protect the country and its society from the worst effects of a future war.

As we shall see, West German civil defense proponents were neither fools nor inexperienced. Most had lived through the Second World War strategic bombing campaigns. Many knew of and understood the frightful implications of recent advances in military technology so vividly illustrated by the atomic bombings of Japan. All acknowledged that the country’s geo-strategic position made the task of protecting civilians extremely difficult. Therefore, while West Germany’s civil defense experts privately acknowledged the grave challenges facing the country, they countered publicly that any civil defense was better than none.

To blunt criticism voiced by the country’s military commanders, West Germany’s civil defense officials raised the very real specter of hordes of panicked civilians hampering military operations by clogging the country’s road and rail network in times of crisis. To refute criticism voiced by political opponents of the program, especially those reluctant to spend money on a costly shelter-construction program, civil defense officials argued that the citizen-soldiers in the country’s armed forces, the Bundeswehr, needed to know that the government was concerned with protecting the lives of their families. To rally public support for the government’s program, civil defense officials mounted impressive public-relations campaigns to remind citizens that civil defense meant more than the protection of people—at stake was nothing less than the

preservation of German society and culture. In short, despite the irrational situation in which the country found itself, civil defense proponents believed making credible plans to protect the country’s civilian population was still an essential component of a robust national defense.

This dissertation will also show that while it did not immediately reject the idea, the West German public was far from enthusiastic about civil defense. Concern about the government’s civil defense vision was rooted in larger debates about the fundamental nature and organization of West German democracy. For state \([\text{Land}]\) and local governments, the program proposed by their federal colleagues raised questions about the meaning of West German federalism, including the extent to which national-level authorities should determine the financial and social policies of the individual states. For the public, the early-Cold War civil defense debates raised troubling questions about the democratic society they were trying to create. Were the federal government’s plans to protect the country’s civilian population in the event of war indicative of a resurgent German militarism? Would implementing a vast bunker construction program and developing plans to evacuate the country’s cities doom all hopes for eventual reunification with the east? (Notably, both accusations featured prominently in East German propaganda of the period.) Did the Adenauer government’s reluctance to discuss any aspect of its civil defense planning with the public imply only tepid support for transparency and democratic participation? Was the true goal of the expanded civil defense program first proposed by federal authorities in the early-1960s that of creating the foundations for an authoritarian state? And finally, given the fact that West Germany’s governing coalition (which for the entire period this study covers was dominated by the Christian Democratic Union [\(\text{Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands}\)], or CDU, and Christian Social Union in Bavaria [\(\text{Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern}\), or CSU] consistently under-funded its civil defense programs, was it truly possible to say that national politicians cared about the welfare of the people they represented? It is in these early debates about the nature and
meaning of civil defense in the nuclear era that we find the seeds of the program’s ultimate failure.

Ultimately, the questions posed by critics proved too much for proponents to overcome, and by the end of the 1960s West German civil defense planning was well on its way to creating the oft-ridiculed program the Cold War’s closing decades. This leads us to the inevitable question of relevance. What can we hope to learn by examining the history of a failed program? Studying the West German civil defense experience is important for two reasons: it enhances our understanding of the country’s overall early-Cold War existence and makes an important contribution to recent debates in German historiography. More specifically, this study shows that the subject of West German civil defense serves as an *entrée* into several distinct aspects of the country’s early-Cold War experience.

First and foremost is the problem of identity formation. What did it mean to be “West German” in the opening decades of the Cold War? From their country’s founding in the 1871, Germans had adopted, and ultimately been forced to reject, several different national identities (imperial power, liberal democracy, and fascist state). Military defeat in May 1945 provided Germans with the chance to once again forge a national identity, albeit in the heavily circumscribed framework of occupation. The country created out of the western zones of occupation—the Federal Republic of Germany—eventually embraced democratic ideals, developed its own form of federalist government, and oriented itself towards the democracies of Western Europe and North America. As scholars have shown, however, the creation of a democratic, western-oriented West Germany was neither quick nor easy. Establishing viable political, economic, social, and cultural institutions required concessions by non-Germans and Germans alike. Non-Germans, most particularly those people from countries controlled by the National Socialist regime during the Second World War, were forced to concede that a complete
break with the reprehensible National Socialist past was impossible (a bitter realization that even many Germans, most notably from the opposition SPD, also accepted only reluctantly). Many Germans, for their part, were slow to internalize the fact that full acceptance of their country and its people required a degree of sacrifice and public contrition. As Norbert Frei convincingly demonstrates in his work on post-war identity formation, the western Allied occupation authorities needed, and indeed desired, to extract at least some public penitence from the very large number of Germans who supported Hitler’s National Socialist regime.\(^{17}\)

Closely related to this first theme of identity formation is the second: the nature and meaning of West German democracy. Clearly, an important aspect of the process by which West Germans constructed their national identity was extended debate about the composition and limits of West German democracy. The claims of Margaret Anderson notwithstanding, the German record on successful democracies prior to 1945 was dreadful.\(^{18}\) Because replicating the Weimar experience was unacceptable to the western occupation powers and most Germans, the first true German democracy could not serve as a model for the post-war period. The institutions that West Germans developed after 1949 acknowledged and reflected this fact and sought to create a new democratic model. But in a society and culture where the “rule of law” was (and is) predicated on past-precedent and tradition,\(^{19}\) the former’s absence and the latter’s disturbing past presented

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19 See Nigel Foster and Satish Sule, *German Legal System and Laws*, 3d. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). This concept is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Three.
considerable problems during the country’s early existence. Stated differently, how were West Germans to reconcile their immediate authoritarian past with the hoped for democratic future? As we shall see, official and public debate about the country’s civil defense program commonly centered on larger questions about West Germany’s nascent democracy. Politicians at all levels were forced to consider the proper relationship between federal, state, and local authorities in implementing programs paid for the federal government but implemented at the regional and local level. Individuals and special interest groups, by way of contrast, often used national discussions about civil defense to clarify the extent to which governmental authorities might intrude into daily existence.

Debates about national identity and nature of West German democracy took place within the highly charged Cold War international environment. It is now commonly accepted among scholars that the breakdown of the anti-Fascist alliance in the years following the Second World War had enormous ramifications for West Germany’s early development. The importance of foreign influences, whether international organizations such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, or individuals such as the British civil defense expert Sir John Hodsoll, constitutes the third major theme of this study. As we shall see, events, organizations, and people outside the country greatly influenced West Germany’s civil defense experience. The omnipresent threat of nuclear-equipped Warsaw Pact forces drove West German civil defense planners to look outside their country’s borders for sources of support and inspiration. At the same time, the fact that West Germany was part of larger international political and military alliances limited officials’ options and forced them to adopt ideas and implement programs not entirely compatible with their own vision of the country’s future needs.

The fourth major theme examined in this study is the importance of continuity. It is now widely accepted by scholars that May 1945 represented only a partial Stunde Null in German
Admittedly, military defeat and the massive physical and psychological destruction and dislocation that accompanied it offered enormous possibilities for national, and indeed cultural renewal. In addition to creating new political and legal systems, for example, Allied occupation authorities and Germans found themselves in a position to oversee transformational programs of physical and social reconstruction of a truly revolutionary nature. However, beginning in the 1990s, scholars such as Robert G. Moeller, Elizabeth Heinemann, Norbert Frei, and others made clear that a clean break with the past proved difficult. The case of West German civil defense clearly illustrates the degree to which developments in the Federal Republic were influenced, and in some cases dependent, on Germany’s pre-1945 experience.

Finally, a study of the early-Cold War West German civil defense program raises important questions about historicizing the country’s twentieth-century experience. That such a challenge exists is an idea discussed by an increasing number of scholars as they work to understand and historicize a turbulent twentieth century. In the introduction to their thoughtful exploration on the subject, for example, the eminent scholars Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer suggest the need for a fundamental reassessment of how we examine the contradictory complexity that is the twentieth century German past, and emphasize most particularly the importance of joining the first half of the century with the second. However, as the authors note, achieving this fundamental reassessment is far from easy, for doing so requires us to deconstruct enduring conventions of periodization and focus.

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Civil Defense Historiography

Although civil defense is a topic closely intertwined with many of the most important themes in European, German, and Cold War history, it has generated only a modest body of scholarship, especially among historians. The sparse scholarship on civil defense is surprising, especially when one considers that conceptualizing and implementing a civil defense program in the 1950s and 1960s meant full and active engagement with many of the most studied aspects of the Cold War. Civil defense policy in general was an important part of international military and political alliances such as NATO, and influenced domestic economic and social policies in Europe and the United States. In considering the West German example, a study of the government’s civil defense plans in the 1950s and 1960s also provides important insight into important debates over topics such as federalism, collective memory, the structure of post-1945 society, and even conceptualization of gender roles in the new nuclear era.

A review of extant civil defense literature reveals three general trends in the scholarship. First, there exists a close correlation between heightened international tension and interest in the topic of civil defense. In practical terms this means that much of the extant writing on civil defense was published in the 1960s and 1980s. Second, until very recently nearly all serious writing on the topic of civil defense came from political scientists, sociologists, physicians, and scientists and those people interested in shaping contemporary policy. The practical result of this fact is that the primary foci of the studies produced the 1960s and 1980s are short-term, public-policy oriented questions or extremely complex debates about the technical and scientific feasibility of protecting civilians during a nuclear war. While such foci were (and are) important, they often failed to consider the topic of civil defense within a broader historical context. Third, by almost any measure the depth and breadth of civil defense-related scholarship of the United States far surpasses that of Western Europe. This is especially true if one considers specifically
historical studies of civil defense. Therefore, although this dissertation focuses on civil defense in West Germany, any discussion of relevant historiography must begin with the work of U.S. scholars. It is here that the most useful models for this dissertation are found.

Despite its current popularity, interest in the history of U.S. civil defense during the 1950s and 1960s is a recent phenomenon. In the 1980s, policy studies such as Nebemiah Jordan’s *U.S. Civil Defense Before 1950* and Lyon G. Tyler, Jr.’s dissertation, “Civil Defense: The Impact of the Planning Years, 1945-1950” traced in detail the events leading up to the creation of the Federal Civil Defense Administration, while Thomas J. Kerr’s *Civil Defense in the U.S.: Band-Aid for a Holocaust?* focused more generally on the political and legislative history of civil preparedness in the twentieth century. Tyler and Jordan’s works are well written and reasoned. Both examine how political leadership and international affairs shaped congressionally supported mandates for civil defense initiatives. Subsequent research in the field of U.S. civil defense has exposed the weaknesses of these studies. By ignoring the social dynamics of preparedness they provide an incomplete picture of American civil defense. As one critic of this early work notes, Tyler, Jordan, and Kerr concluded that public responses to civil defense must have followed the same trends evident in the behavior of country’s political leaders—a conclusion that is incorrect.

Beginning in the early-1990s, U.S. scholars, once again took up the topic of the country’s civil defense program. In doing so, they attempted to move away from the incomplete policy studies of the 1980s and offer instead a different, more personalized view of the United States’ preparedness measures. Guy Oakes’s *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and the American Cold*

War was the first of these studies. Oakes portrayed the U.S. civil defense program in the opening decades of the Cold War as one gigantic federal hoax. He argued that Presidents Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower, their advisors, and even the heads of the country’s preparedness agencies personally did not believe civil defense initiatives would protect the country or its citizens if a nuclear exchange occurred. Oakes concluded that the primary purpose of the elaborate U.S. civil defense campaigns of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations was to prevent people from succumbing to panic or despair.23 Oakes’s controversial work was quickly augmented, and in some cases superseded, by cultural and social studies of the Atomic Age and Cold War era. Recent examples include Paul Boyer’s By the Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age, Spencer Weart’s Nuclear Fear: A History of Images, Allan Winkler’s Life Under a Cloud: American Anxiety About the Atom, and Margot Henriksen’s Dr. Strangelove’s America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age.24 Although none of these books focused solely on the U.S. civil defense program, they did attempt to place American preparedness and the general public’s reaction to preparedness initiatives within a larger cultural and social perspective.

More than a decade after the Cold War’s end American scholars finally produced a solid, book-length study of the U.S. civil defense program and its impact on American society and culture. Laura McEnaney’s Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties was the first of these studies. In her book McEnaney examined the how “nuclear war


literally and figuratively came home to America” as both policy-makers and average citizens “tried to make peace with the bomb through civil defense.”25 In a series of impressively reasoned chapters, McEnaney argued that the all-pervasive fear present in American society in the 1950s resulted in an incremental militarization of everyday life—the creation of a society still under the control of elected politicians, but one that increasing sanctioned the incursion of military priorities and ethics into everyday life. To achieve this goal of militarization the government focused on the nuclear family, encouraging Americans to reorganize their lives and values according to the doctrine of “home protection.” McEnaney concluded, however, that despite the very considerable resources invested by the American postwar defense bureaucracy in programs intended to support the militarization of everyday life, civil defense ultimately failed in the United States. “Although a majority of citizens expressed strong support for civil defense conceptually,” McEnaney wrote, “…public interest was sporadic, fickle, and only occasionally attentive to and compliant with [Federal Civilian Defense Administration Agency] directives.”26

As we shall see, similar develops occurred in West Germany

Like McEnaney, Andrew Grossman also focused on the opening years of the Cold War. In his book, Neither Dead nor Red: Civilian Defense and American Political Development During the Early Cold War, Grossman examined how the Truman administration engaged in a “civic garrisoning process that shaped and ultimately solidified the domestic political consensus necessary for Cold War mobilization.”27 Grossman argued that the aim of early U.S. civil defense


26 Ibid., 153.

27 Andrew D. Grossman, Neither Dead nor Red: Civilian Defense and American Political Development During the Early Cold War (New York; Routledge, 2001), ix.
planning and education was fundamentally to “manage and control the process by which the general public was informed about issues of nuclear weapons and the politics of postwar national security.” Labeling the government’s civil defense programs as “instruments of social control,” Grossman showed how the Truman administration sought first and foremost to prevent widespread panic in the American public over the possible effects of nuclear weapons. According to Truman’s civil defense experts, Grossman asserted, failure to prevent widespread panic about nuclear weapons would result in an erosion of the domestic political consensus necessary to support the country’s postwar grand strategy—a strategy predicated on collective security agreements and the possible use of nuclear weapons. Thus, beginning with the Truman administration one sees attempts by American governments to “domesticate” nuclear weapons and explain to the general public the role these weapons played in U.S. postwar foreign and military policy. Grossman concluded that the Truman administration ultimately was successful. Utilizing highly rationalized interagency governmental, private sector, and quasi-private sector relations at the federal, state, and local levels, civil defense officials changed the way in which the American people conceptualized the destructive capability of nuclear weapons. The price of success, however, was high, for in changing the opinions of the American public the Truman administration’s civil defense apparatus dramatically expanded its power into many spheres of both public and private life.

Kenneth D. Rose’s *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture*, published shortly after McEnaney’s work, focused on one of the most visible, stereotypical, and

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29 *Ibid*.

controversial symbols of post-1945 civil defense programs—the protective shelter.\textsuperscript{31} Although Rose traced the origins of the shelter debate to the closing days of the Second World War, the pivotal moment in the work was a speech delivered by President Kennedy at the height of the 1961 Berlin crisis. Expressing his determination to oppose Soviet designs on Berlin, Kennedy announced his intention to seek increased funding for the country’s military and civil defense programs. (As we shall see in Chapter Six, Kennedy’s commitment to civil defense was particularly noteworthy to many West Germans given their own government’s reticence on the subject.) Rose argued that the international tension that resulted from the 1961 Berlin crisis, in combination with Kennedy’s request for a massive increase in civil defense spending, resulted in a nation-wide debate on the question of nuclear war and survival.\textsuperscript{32} Much like McEnaney, Rose’s book is essentially a study of a failed program. By the end of 1963 the American public’s involvement with the issues of fallout shelters and nuclear arms rapidly fell off. For reasons ranging from the cost of construction to the ethical dilemma such structures presented, Americans rejected the concept of home protection.\textsuperscript{33} Even the renewed international tension resulting from the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis failed to stimulate public interest in personal shelters.

In turning to the extant scholarship of European civil defense in general, and German civil defense planning and preparation specifically, it is clear that the issues examined by U.S. historians are ones long-neglected in European, German and Cold War historiography. Despite the central role played by nuclear weapons in shaping the lives of Germans, important gaps remain in our knowledge of the way in which West Germany’s political and military leaders


\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Ibid.}, 1.

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}, 186-192.
hoped to protect the country’s civilian population. There exist, of course, a great number of articles, editorials, and opinion pieces written about nuclear weapons and printed in West German publications during the 1950s and early 1960s, but more serious secondary studies are rare. As is the case in the U.S., the most recent “wave” of European civil defense scholarship corresponds with the heightened international tensions of the 1980s. The introduction of new generations of nuclear weapons in both the U.S. and Soviet Union, combined with the hard-line, anti-Communist rhetoric of U.S. President Ronald W. Reagan, intensified interest about civil defense in Europe. It is not surprising, therefore, that the most important works published in the 1980s and early-1990s, such as Duncan Campbell’s *War Plan UK*, John Dowling’s, *A Choice of Disasters*, Jennifer Leaning and Langley Keyes’ *The Counterfeit Ark: Crisis Relocation for Nuclear War*, and Rainer Jogschies’ *Wo, bitte geht’s zu meinem Bunker?*, all of which were published in the 1980s, examined and critiqued the then current civil defense plans of Western Europe. The works often failed, however, to frame their analysis within a larger historical perspective.

The absence of serious historical studies of civil defense is glaring in the case of West Germany, especially when one looks at general histories of the Bonn Republic, more specialized works on West German security planning and policy, and studies that focus on specific cultural and societal aspects of the 1950s and 1960s. Most general histories of the Bonn Republic adequately cover the events and debates surrounding the country’s geo-strategic position in the 1950s and 1960s, integration into a western defensive alliance, and subsequent rearmament, but few devote any attention to the West German civil defense program. Of the general histories of West Germany published in the past fifteen years—works such as Christoph Kleßmann’s *Zwei Staaten, eine Nation*, Rudolf Morsey’s *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Dennis L. Bark and David R. Gress’ *A History of West Germany*, Adolf M. Birke’s *Nation ohne Haus*, Anthony
Nicholls’ *The Bonn Republic*, Manfred Görtemaker’s *Kleine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, and Ansgar Fürst’s *Die Bonner Republik*—none mention the country’s civil defense program.\(^{34}\)

Studies that focus specifically on West German and European security during the 1950s and 1960s are equally silent on the subject of civil defense. The monumental and still most comprehensive study of early West Germany security policy, *Anfänge westdeutscher Sicherheitspolitik, 1945-1956*, contains not a single reference to the government’s plans to protect its civilian population in times of crisis. The topic is also missing in classic, if now somewhat dated, works such as Hans Speier’s *German Rearmament and Atomic War*, Catherine McArdle Kelleher’s *Germany and the Politics of Nuclear Weapons*, Mark Cioc’s *Pax Atomica*, and Jeffrey Boutwell’s *The German Nuclear Dilemma*. Broader studies of Western European and NATO security policy are equally uninformative. One sees in books such as Andrew Pierre’ *Nuclear Weapons in Europe*, David Schwartz’s *NATO’s Nuclear Dilemmas*, and Leon Sigal’s *Nuclear Forces in Europe: Enduring Dilemmas, Present Prospects* little discussion or appreciation for the fact that security for the Federal Republic of Germany necessarily involved the lives of millions of Germans living and working on the most densely-settled fault-line of the Cold War.\(^{35}\)

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While the absence of any meaningful mention of civil defense in general histories and specialized studies of West German and European security during the 1950s and 1960s is understandable, if regrettable, it is less so in works that focus on specific aspects of West German society and culture. Nonetheless, even those studies that focus on topics intimately associated with civil defense—such as reconstruction, the country’s political leaders and system, fiscal policy, and popular opinion—most often fail to consider the ramifications of the program. For example, works on the physical reconstruction of the Federal Republic’s urban landscape, the best known of which are Jeffrey’s Diefendorf’s *In the Wake of War* and Günther Schulz’s *Der Wiederaufbau in Deutschland*, do not mention the federal government’s plans to require civil defense shelters in all federally-financed public construction.36 Given the fact that throughout the 1950s officials in the Ministries of Interior and Housing [*Bundesministerium des Innernes* and *Bundesministerium für Wohnungswesen*] estimated the total potential cost of the shelter construction program as more than fifteen percent of the amount spent in government-subsidized housing [*Sozialwohnungen*], this omission is important.37 Definitive histories of Konrad


36 Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, _In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities After World War II_ (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Günther Schulz, _Der Wiederaufbau in Deutschland_ (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1994).

37 The official names of the Federal Republic’s government ministeries often changed over time. For example, the Federal Housing Ministry began its existence as the Federal Ministry for Housing and Reconstruction [*Bundesministerium für Wohnungsbau und Wiederaufbau*], became the *Bundesministerium für Wohnungswesen, Städtebau und Raumordnung* in 1961, the *Bundesministerium für Städtebau und Wohnungswesen* in 1969, and today exists as part of the larger *Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau- und Wohnungswesen*. Unless the ministry’s official mandate changed dramatically during the period that forms the dissertation’s chronological focus, the same official name is used throughout this study.
Adenauer and the Adenauer government, such as Hans-Peter Schwarz’s *Adenauer* and Die Ära Adenauer, Frank Bösch’s *Die Adenauer-CDU*, and Charles Williams’ *Adenauer* dwell at length on security and defense policy, but contain no mention of civil defense. Similar problems are found in major works on the country’s early budget policies. Christopher Henzler, in his book *Fritz Schaffer, 1945-1967*, devotes considerable attention to the budgetary battles waged by West Germany’s first Finance Minister in an attempt to fulfill Adenauer’s multiple and costly policy objectives. Yet absent from the book is an examination of the multiple, acrimonious debates that took place between Schaffer and his colleagues about how the government’s proposed civil defense program affected government finances. Similar problems exist in more recent work on subjects closely connected with the entire question of the civil defense program. Michael Geyer’s work on the evolution of West German public opinion on issues such as rearmament and nuclear weapons ignores civil defense. While this omission is understandable because public debate about civil defense never reached the same intensity as that of proposed plans to equip the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons, the fact remains that there existed an important connection between the two topics. Proponents of a strong civil defense program often presented the government’s program as an essential aspect of a robust national defense. Critics of the government’s plans, on the other hand, attacked civil defense preparations as tangible evidence of an unwelcome resurgence of German militarism.

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Despite the general silence of German and Cold War historiography on the subject of West German civil defense, a small historiographical foundation for this dissertation does exist. Mention of the country’s civil defense program is sometimes found in administrative histories of West Germany. For example, the multi-volume work on German administrative history edited by Kurt Jeserich contains a short section detailing the establishment and work of the Federal Office for Civil Defense [Bundesamt für Zivilschutz], or FOCD, as well as the civil defense-related bureaucracy in the Federal Interior Ministry. One finds similar information in Das Bonner Innenministerium: Innenansichten einer politischen Institution, edited by retired Interior Ministry officials. Both studies, however, focus primarily on the “bare bones” chronology of West Germany’s primary civil defense institutions and leave unexamined the questions that constitute the central foci of this dissertation. In addition to the administrative histories discussed above, a limited number of political histories of the Bonn Republic are useful. Civil defense is mentioned in Gordon D. Drummond’s study of post-1945 Social Democratic Party’s opposition to Adenauer’s attempts to integrate West Germany into a western defensive alliance, The German Social Democrats in Opposition, 1949-1960: The Case Against Rearmament, but only in a superficial manner. As the title of the book suggests, Drummond is more interested the debate concerning the country’s rearmament than with plans to protect its civilian population. Finally, there exist a few narrowly focused, German-language monographs and articles. Examples include Axel Schildt’s examination of the impact of civil defense considerations on West Germany city planning in the early-1950s, and Volker Wendorf’s study of the Federal Interior Ministry’s program to recruit volunteer civil defense workers.40

One final historiographical note is necessary before turning to a discussion of the dissertation’s sources. Readers familiar with scholarly studies on post-1945 German history will doubtless note an important departure from the recent trend of considering the West German experience in tandem with that of the German Democratic Republic [Deutsche Demokratische Republik], or GDR. Of course, histories of the two nations have never totally excluded the other. Since their inception in 1949 to the GDR’s demise in 1990 both have existed and developed within the framework of a “special relationship” characterized by what one German scholar has termed “separation and interconnection” [Abgrenzung und Verflechtung].\footnote{Christoph Kleßmann, “Abgrenzung und Verflechtung. Aspekte der geteilten und zusammengehörigen deutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte,” in Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (1993): 39-41.} However, the Germany’s reunification in 1990 ushered in a new debate about the proper means to understand and interpret the history of the two Germanys. While unwilling to completely abandon the idea of separate national Cold War histories, scholars such as Christoph Kleßmann nonetheless concluded, “the traditional division of historiography into federal republican and GDR constituents should not simply continue. Research into and practical accounts of both West and East German history are of course legitimate and necessary. But the idea of a common German post-war history demands a new set of questions.”\footnote{Christoph Kleßmann, “Introduction,” in The Divided Past: Rewriting Post-War German History, ed. Christoph Kleßmann, German Historical Perspectives, vol. 15 (New York: Berg, 2001), 2.}

As compelling as Kleßmann’s argument is, the differences between the West and East German civil defense experience are significant enough to warrant a separate approach to each. Civil defense programs existed in the Warsaw Pact nations, of course, but drastic differences in
governmental systems and societal organization makes comparison difficult. East Germany, like most Warsaw Pact nations, developed a civil defense program nearly identical to that of the Soviet Union. Paramilitary civil defense units manned by a mixture of conscripts and volunteers were integrated into the country’s military command structure and organization; funding for these units was included in the country’s yearly military budgets. More importantly, while the Federal Republic’s debates about means to protect the civilian population from a nuclear attack are an important lens for viewing the development of West German democracy, East Germans in the 1950s and 1960s engaged in very little debate about the practicality or viability of their government’s civil defense programs. Thus, for the topic of civil defense a unified history would serve no useful purpose. West Germany developed a program that was specific to the special needs and particular resources of the Federal Republic.

Archival Sources

The sources that form the foundation of this dissertation are housed in several German archives. The collections of the Federal Archives [Bundesarchiv] in Koblenz and Federal Military Archives [Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv] in Freiburg, Germany, contain the records of the federal ministries and offices responsible for conceptualizing and implementing the country’s civil defense program. Especially important for the purposes of this dissertation are the records of the Federal Interior Ministry, which oversaw the government’s civil defense programs, the Federal Ministry of Finance [Bundesfinanzministerium], which wrestled with the complex problem of funding civil defense programs.

defense initiatives, the Federal Housing Ministry, a surprisingly strong proponent of the government’s early efforts to implement a nationwide civil defense program, and the Federal Chancellery [Bundeskanzleramt]. Although not directly concerned with the actual creation and implementation of West Germany’s civil defense program, the Federal Defense Ministry [Bundesministerium der Verteidigung] did play a role an important role in conceptualizing and implementing the program. West Germany’s military leaders were supportive of the idea of civil defense in principle, yet vigorously resisted any attempt to divert resources away from their efforts to recreate and arm the country’s new military force. Additionally, military leaders also raised very important questions about civil defense and its relation to the more general idea of national defense.

Despite the wealth of civil defense-related files open to the public, it is important to note that complete access is still impossible, and an important portion of the archival records pertaining to the West German civil defense program were unavailable when the research for this dissertation was conducted. Access to the records of the Federal Defense Council [Bundesverteidigungsrat]—the small group of senior politicians and military experts which determined West Germany’s national security policy—remains restricted to this day, a fact that greatly complicates the task of tracing the interplay between military and civil defense planning. Accessibility issues also occurred in the case of the records of the federal cabinet [Bundeskabinett]. The Federal Archive’s work to publish the superbly annotated federal cabinet minutes is, unfortunately, on going, and has resulted in suspended access to official cabinet-level discussions during the 1960s. The private correspondence of national politicians and official ministerial records are partial, but not entirely adequate, substitutes for these records.

In addition to records located in federal archives, this dissertation also draws upon the holdings of more specialized collections. The Hamburg and Bavarian State Archives
[Staatsarchiv der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg and Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv] provided valuable information about the way in which state governments attempted to implement the federally mandated civil defense program. Of particular importance were the records generated by the Standing Civil Defense Committee [ständigen Ausschußes für die zivile NotstandsPlanung], the main institution through which federal officials coordinated their civil defense work with West Germany’s state and local governments. The Hamburg State Archives contain a complete collection of the Committee’s official minutes and copies of most of its reports. The holdings of the various political archives and research libraries were also consulted. Of the former the Archiv für Christlich-Demokratisch Politik der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the Archiv der sozialen Demokratie der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung were most important. The libraries of the Bundeswehr, in particular the Fachinformationsstelle des Bundesamts für Wehrtechnik und Beschaffung (Koblenz) and the Universität der Bundeswehr in Hamburg, as well as the University of Hamburg [Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg] provided very important secondary sources for this project, including nearly-complete runs of the major West German civil defense periodicals. These periodicals are particularly important for the insight they provide into the broader dimensions of the West German civil defense experience, especially debates with the country’s scientific and technical communities, and the work of special interest groups, such as the Association of German Industry [Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V.], and non-governmental organizations like the German Red Cross. The records of the various NATO civil defense planning committees housed in that organization’s archives, located in Brussels, Belgium, provided important insight into the way in which NATO policy influenced West German civil defense planning.

Archival records form only one part of this dissertation, however; equally important is the extensive relevant literature published at the time West Germans consciously and unconsciously
grappled with the problem of creating a national civil defense program. This literature, for the most part ignored by political and social historians, ranges from policy studies produced by the country’s political and military leaders to works of post-apocalyptic science fiction such as Arno Schmidt’s *Republica Intelligentsia* [*Die Gelehrtenrepublik*] and Louis Emrich’s *Live, Not Die!* [*Leben, Nicht Sterben!*]. Sources as diverse as technical treatises on the construction of family-sized fallout shelters to privately-published manifestos distributed by various of the country’s peace movements show how few areas of West German life and society remained untouched by the need to cope with the omnipresent specter of nuclear annihilation. Finally, this dissertation also makes use some use of motion pictures, radio shows, television programs, museum exhibits, and photographs. Because these sources were ones seen and heard by much of the West German public, they provide important insight into the ways in which the population publicly and privately conceptualized and internalized the country’s civil defense program.

**The Dissertation’s Organization**

In addition to this introduction, this dissertation contains five additional chapters and a conclusion. Chapter Two examines the historical context for West German civil defense planning. As the chapter shows, the fundamental problem facing West Germany in the 1950s and 1960s—that of protecting the country’s population from the worse effects of a future war—was not unique to the Cold War period. Prior to 1914, advances in military technology forced military commanders to make the first tentative efforts in reconceptualizing the impact of war on civilians. During the First World War, the scale and scope of warfare expanded to include, for the first time, aerial bombardment of a country’s civilian population. The rudimentary civil defense measures adopted by German authorities prior to 1918 were the subject of considerable debate during the inter-war period. As the chapter details, the nature of this debate fundamentally
changed after the National Socialist ascension to power in 1933, for unlike their Weimar counterparts, Nazi leaders recognized and exploited the political and psychological value of civil defense. Yet despite their emphasis on creating a centralized program, the inefficient nature of the National Socialist regime meant that Germany’s civilian population entered the the Second World War ill-equipped to master the challenges total war involved, a fact that greatly influenced postwar debates on the subject.

In the third chapter of this dissertation we turn our attention to the Federal Republic’s initial efforts to reintroduce civil defense into West German society. Because of the overwhelming importance of law to German civilization, this chapter focuses on the creation and passage of West Germany’s first civil defense legislation, the Law on Activities Pertaining to Civil Defense [Gesetz über Maßnahmen auf dem Gebiete des zivilen Luftschutzes], referred to in this study as the 1957 Civil Defense Law. Approved by the Bundestag in June 1957 after nearly ten years of private and public debate, the law’s passage provides insight into three critical issues in post-war West German civil defense planning. First, and most important, was the question of threat identification: what, exactly, threatened the nascent democracy? That the country found itself in an unenviable geo-strategic position was a fact agreed upon by nearly all West Germans. Greater disagreement existed, however, about the nature of the threat, or threats, facing the nation, and the extent to which past experience provided an accurate indicator of future possibility. The second question was that of how best to craft a response to these threats. Military leaders, politicians from all parties, and government officials all agreed on the need to create a new national system of civil defense, but they held differing opinions on the scale, scope, and even objectives of such a program. Finally there existed the question of implementation; specifically, what type of civil defense program could West Germans afford, both financially and psychologically? Not surprisingly, this final issue elicited considerable disagreement.
The problem of implementation constitutes the main topic of Chapter Four. The program outlined in the 1957 Civil Defense Law called upon the country's government bureaucracies to implement three broad strategies: mass evacuation, bunker construction, and preparing for rescue and recovery operations in a post-attack environment. The country’s success and failure in implementing each strategy is discussed in turn. As we shall see, continuity played an important role in determining the broad outline and ultimate success of each strategy, but not the only important factor. Efforts to create and implement a viable system of mass evacuation—a strategy which traced its conceptual and organizational roots back to Germany’s Second World War experience—ran afoul of obstacles resulting from the Federal Republic’s growing involvement in western-oriented political and military alliance. Protective shelters, also a legacy of Germany’s wartime experience, engendered widespread controversy in nearly every circle of West German society. Likewise, government efforts to prepare the country and its population for post-attack rescue and recovery operations, the strategy ultimately experienced by the greatest number of West Germans, suffered from the public’s collective memory of such work prior to 1945.

In addition to the problems caused by continuity, West German civil defense proponents were also forced to address resistance to civil defense measures by state and local governments, and the public. In a deliberate rejection of past experience West German civil defense officials focused on creating a decentralized system to protect the country’s population in times of war. Given the historical legacy of National Socialism and world war, the program outlined in the 1957 Civil Defense Law made sense, at least to the bureaucrats and politicians in Bonn. For the bureaucrats and politicians in Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Munich, and other state capitals, however, the program detailed in the 1957 Civil Defense Law raised very serious questions about the nature of West German federalism and the national government’s commitment to the ongoing process of reconstruction.
The public posed an even more serious impediment to implementing civil defense in early Cold War West Germany. As we shall see, the reasons for this tepid public support were many and varied. Of critical importance was Germans’ experience during the Second World War. For the majority of people living in West Germany during the 1950s and early-1960s, the horror of war was not an abstract concept, and in arguing both in favor and against the national system of civil defense proposed by the Adenauer government, proponents and opponents drew upon public and private memories of these experiences. A second, equally important factor that contributed to ambivalent public support was widespread mistrust of government planning. Throughout the 1950s and early-1960s a sizeable percentage of West Germans remained skeptical about the ability of federal and state authorities to effectively address the dangers they faced. This skepticism resulted in part from a general perception that the national government, in particular, was not interested in committing the resources necessary to fund a comprehensive national civil defense program.

The program called for in the 1957 Civil Defense Law was predicated on widespread public support and participation. Unfortunately, as federal and state officials quickly discovered, during the 1950s and early-1960s public interest in and enthusiasm for civil defense was sparse rather than overwhelming. As a result, federal officials, in particular, devoted considerable resources to public relations and propaganda campaigns intended to “sell” their civil defense vision. As detailed in Chapter Five, the propaganda campaigns waged by federal officials as first centered on print media—a well-tested and comfortable advertising method. The increasing affluence and changing nature of West German society in the 1950s and first half of the 1960s necessitated new approaches, however, and federal officials turned to private advertising companies to create “modern” public relations campaigns to generate public support. By the
mid-1960s government efforts to promote civil defense included traditional print advertisements, increasingly sophisticated use of radio, television, and film, and carefully staged public events.

Even before it received Bundestag approval, federal civil defense officials recognized that the program outlined in the 1957 Civil Defense Law was incomplete, and began work on creating a new and far more comprehensive civil defense program. Chapter Six traces this effort, which resulted in the introduction in 1962 of an “Emergency Law Package” [Notstandsgesetzpakt] through to its ultimately failure in the mid an late-1960s. This was a series of laws intended, according to their authors, to ensure the smooth functioning of West Germany democracy and society even during periods of severe crisis, like war. While proponents of the expanded civil defense program viewed it merely as an effort to build upon past success, opponents offered a much different interpretation. Embedded in the laws, detractors argued, were the seeds for the country’s destruction. The civil defense program outlined in the Emergency Laws was too broad and too reminiscent of the emergency powers that resulted in the demise of the Weimar Republic, Germany’s first experiment with democracy, and subsequent rise of the authoritarian National Socialist regime. Thus, at the heart of the multi-year private and public discussion about expanding the country’s civil defense program existed the vastly more important question about the future and nature of West German democracy and society.

The dissertation concludes by placing West German civil defense planning in the 1950s and 1960s within a larger geographical, chronological, and historical context. The multi-decade West German debate about how to best use the country’s scarce resources to protect civilians from the worst effects of a nuclear war was similar to dialogues held in all the western democracies, as was the ultimate result. However, as this chapter shows, important differences existed between the West German civil defense experience and that of countries such as France, Great Britain, the Scandinavian countries, the United States, and the Federal Republic’s likely
foes to the East. The government’s legislative defeat in 1965 and subsequent adoption of less controversial, less visible, and potentially less effective civil defense programs shows clearly the unwillingness of many West Germans to let the threat of war upset the general feelings of peace and growing prosperity of the post-war period. The issue would resurface in West German society in the 1980s, but by that time the only realistic strategy of meaningful civil defense rested in the realm of strategic and tactical arms control. Yet as this chapter concludes, the case of West German civil defense in the 1950s and early-1960s is an important one, for it represents an example of how a society comes to terms with the extraordinary tension created by an ill-defined but nonetheless credible threat to its existence. The dissertation ends by arguing that recent events vividly illustrate the continuing need to study pervasive dangers and fears. In the 1950s and 1960s, West Germany faced a challenge similar to that currently debated within the western democracies—how does one conceptualize and prepare to protect a society from an only vaguely understood threat? The insights found in this dissertation are useful for any age that has not destroyed its ability to wage wars capable of seriously disrupting, and perhaps destroying, entire societies.
CHAPTER TWO
GERMAN CIVIL DEFENSE PRIOR TO 1945

On a warm Saturday night in May 1942 the residents of the great industrial city of Cologne, Germany, experienced a new form of warfare previously only experienced by their enemies. The high-pitched howl of air-raid sirens began shortly after midnight. Shortly thereafter, great searchlights blinked on, sending mile-long white shafts into the nighttime sky. As the beams of light probed westwards, first the heavy anti-aircraft batteries opened fire, followed by the lighter weapons which constituted the city’s last ring of defense. Witnesses who survived the night later described the artillery fire as “continuous” and “never-ending,” a desperate attempt to stop the creeping wall of flame that moved steadily towards the center of the city.

In the two-hour period following the shriek of the first air-raid siren, nearly 1,500 tons of bombs fell on Cologne. In addition to more than eight hundred high-explosive bombs weighing between 500 and 1,000 pounds, the bomber forces that attacked the city dropped approximately 111,000 stick incendiaries (weapons which were essentially powerful magnesium flares capable of reaching temperatures in excess of a thousand degrees while they burned) 1,000 phosphorus canisters, and four “liquid bombs.” The latter were particularly dreadful. Consisting of thin-

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walled containers filled with hundreds of pounds of incendiary liquid, upon hitting their target the bombs smashed apart, spraying forth in a wide arc a ghastly mixture either of gasoline, rubber, and viscous material, or of oil, liquid asphalt, and magnesium—a synthetic lava impervious to water.45 Amazingly, despite the raid’s intensity fewer than 500 people died that night, although more than 5,000 were wounded in the attack. Authorities attributed the relatively light casualties to the city’s extensive civil defense preparations. Less surprising was the serious physical devastation caused by the raid. The approximately 12,000 fires ignited by individual incendiary bombs developed into thousands of major conflagrations. Schools, offices, stores, warehouses, churches, and hospitals all fell victim to the inferno, and by the end of the night 3,300 buildings lay in smoldering ruin and 45,000 people were left homeless.46 Yet as destructive as the Cologne raid was, the attack was a harbinger of worse things to come. The Royal Air Force’s (RAF) May 1942 attack marked the first successful thousand-bomber raid against a German target and the beginning of a new emphasis in Britain’s strategic bombing campaign.47 Responding in part to German attacks against its own population centers, the British Defense Committee authorized the RAF in February 1942 to make the “morale of the enemy civilian population and, in particular…the industrial workers…” its primary target.48 By the war’s end in May 1945, all of Germany’s major cities and industrial centers had suffered the same fate as Cologne (as had cities in Poland, Russia, and Great Britain).

45 Beck, Under the Bombs, 48.
46 Boog, et. al., 568; Beck, Under the Bombs, 48.
Five years later, as West German civil defense officials began the process of preparing for a future European conflict, the experience of the recently fought world war loomed omnipresent over nearly all aspects of their planning. To better understand this experience, this chapter examines the evolution of German civil defense programs prior to the country’s defeat in May 1945. As we shall see, the problem of protecting the country’s civilian population was one with which Germans had grappled since the beginning of the twentieth century. During the First World War, rapid developments in military aviation technology resulted in new and very disturbing challenges for the political and military leaders who sought to shield their populations from the worst effects of war. The relentless march of technology and the disadvantageous geo-strategic situation in which the country found itself forced the continuation of official and public debate about civil defense during the inter-war period. The National Socialist’s ascension to power in January 1933 and their subsequent emphasis on preparing the country for armed conflict helped elevate civil defense to become a national priority. Thus when war began in September 1939, German civilians were protected by a comprehensive national civil defense system, at least in theory. However, as Germans and their leaders quickly discovered, the gap between rhetoric and reality was great indeed. As the global conflict grew more demanding in terms of material and human resources, and more devastating in terms deaths and physical damage, the severe shortcomings of the pre-war National Socialist civil defense program became glaringly apparent. By the final year of the Second World War, the fundamental mission of German civil defense—protection of the country’s civilian population—remained essentially the same, but the scale and scope of the challenges facing Germany’s civil defense community did not.
Civil Defense in Wilhelmine Germany

Although rapid advances in military technology greatly complicated the task of West German officials charged with preparing for the next war, the situation in which they found themselves was hardly new. The possibility of aerial conflict first emerged in the late-nineteenth century. During the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian War German military commanders sought an effective means to counter the hot air balloons used by the communards to escape the besieged city of Paris. However, it was not until the invention and subsequent development of powered aircraft in the opening years of the twentieth century that German military commanders began to think seriously about how aerial warfare.

The initial successful powered aircraft flights of Orville and Wilbur Wright in 1905 aroused the interest of the Prussian General Staff, and thereafter the Prussian Army’s technical agencies followed advances in aeronautical engineering closely.49 Admittedly, most of this early interest centered not on the fragile, crash prone powered aircraft but rather the lighter-than air dirigible airship, first introduced in July 1900 by Count Ferdinand Zeppelin. In 1906, General Helmuth von Moltke, newly appointed to the position of Chief of the Prussian General Staff, advised the Prussian War Ministry to begin serious study of the airship as a weapon. As a result of their limited experience with hot air balloons, attention focused first and foremost on using airships in a strategic reconnaissance role. Improving technology allowed Prussian military officials to expand their thinking, and by 1909 the idea of using airships to drop bombs on

49 John Howard Morrow, Jr., Building German Airpower, 1909-1914 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 14-15. The Wright brothers’ 1903 flight went mostly unnoticed. It was their invention in 1905 (and subsequent test flights) of the world’s first practical airplane that caught Prussian and French attention.
military and transportation targets was firmly established.\textsuperscript{50} But the transition from theory to practice proved difficult when airships, in the form of Zeppelin dirigibles, first made a limited appearance in 1909 during the annual military maneuvers. According to General Staff reports, the performance of the new airships was hardly encouraging. Disappointment in airships occurred again the following year. In both cases the advantages of airship technology—range and load-carrying capacity—were negated by its many problems. Airships, which were expensive to build and maintain, required special docking and hanger facilities, and proved to be extremely vulnerable to fire from howitzers and rapid-fire anti-balloon guns.\textsuperscript{51} As a result, Prussian military planners concluded that in a future war airships might work as a tool for strategic reconnaissance, but not as weapons to bring the war to the enemy.

The limits of airship technology and mounting concern about rapid French technological advances in aircraft design very quickly forced the conservative Prussian General Staff to reconsider its initial dismissal of heavier-than-air aviation. In 1909 and 1910, the Prussian and Bavarian Armies entered into official relationships with domestic aircraft producers, organized military aviation agencies, and began to subsidize civilian aviation companies. In 1910, the Prussian Army began its first pilot training program; one year later, eight army aircraft flew in the Kaiser’s military maneuvers to the astonishment and delight of the participants.\textsuperscript{52} The successful use of airplanes during Italy’s 1911-1912 Libyan campaign and again during the 1912 Balkan War sparked further interest in airpower by the Prussian General Staff, and by the outbreak of

\textsuperscript{50} James S. Corum, \textit{The Luftwaffe: Creating the Operation Air Wing, 1918-1940} (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1997), 16-17.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{52} Morrow, \textit{Building German Airpower}, 33-36; Corum, \textit{The Luftwaffe}, 18.
war in August 1914, Germany, along with France, were serious European air powers. Yet it is important to note that the overall strategic vision for the new technology remained limited, and most German military planners envisioned the airplane as a useful adjunct to traditional reconnaissance units. The idea of using the fragile machines as an offensive weapon received little consideration. Neither was there much interest in developing effective counter-measures against aerial attacks. As one historian of the twentieth century German anti-aircraft program notes, general interest in the potential for extending conflict into the clouds failed to translate into the creation of a robust anti-aircraft program prior to the Great War, and at the outbreak of war in August 1914, neither Germany nor other European countries had official plans for protecting either military forces or civilian populations against aerial bombardment.

This lack of planning was costly, for from the very opening days of the war Germany’s opponents, especially France, made frequent air-attacks on the German homefront. At first these attacks were directed at transportation targets such as railheads, and large bodies of mobilizing German forces. By the autumn of 1914, however, these loosely coordinated, haphazard strikes gave way to a more systematic strategic concept of bombing military targets and the industrial infrastructure necessary to support the German war economy. By the end of October 1914, the French High Command had established the first strategic bombing squad—the Groupe de bombardement Numéro 1. By the end of the year the French squad, augmented by a few British

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aircraft, had made Freiburg im Breisgau, in southwest Germany, the first German city to experience an aerial bombardment.\textsuperscript{55} In June 1915, the Anglo-French bombing of targets within Germany took on a more sinister character: that of reprisal. A French force of twenty-three planes that dropped 107 bombs on the city attacked Karlsruhe, the capital of Baden, killing thirty people and injuring an additional sixty-eight. French accounts of the raid spoke openly of revenge—the raid was meant as retaliation for German air-attacks on Verdun and Nancy, as well as for zeppelin attacks on towns in southwest England.\textsuperscript{56}

With the benefit of hindsight we can now say that the June 1915 raid on Karlsruhe marked a decisive turning point in the history of strategic bombing and civil defense. Prior to the Karlsruhe raid, aerial bombardment was directed against military targets, with civilian targets hit only inadvertently or if they had some military importance. In Karlsruhe, however, the bombs were dropped randomly on the city center. The result was a vicious circle of reprisals and counter-reprisals that continued until the war’s end. French bombers attacked Trier, Koblenz, Stuttgart, and even Munich in 1916 and 1917. The most serious of these raids—a second attack on Karlsruhe in June 1916—killed and injured more than 200 people, many of them children. In each case the strategy employed by the attackers—the raids were conducted at heights beyond the range German anti-aircraft guns (ten to fifteen thousand feet) thus making identification of single targets impossible—clearly showed that German civilians were the target of the attacks.\textsuperscript{57}


\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Ibid.}, 212. The German raids on the Verdun, Nancy, and southwest England occurred in the opening months of 1915.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Ibid.}, 213.
strategic bombing campaign against Germany intensified in the final year of the war as the British, both impressed and outraged by German raids on their cities, mounted attacks deep into the country. By the end of the war cities such as Frankfurt-am-Main, Ludwigshafen, and Aschaffenburg had experienced attacks by British forces.\(^{58}\)

The early success of the Anglo-French strategic bombing campaign forced German military commanders and politicians to think more seriously about aerial defense.\(^{59}\) Much of the early planning activity focused on active defense measures, especially interceptors and anti-aircraft artillery, at and near the battle lines. In May 1915, however, German officials made some attempt to address the needs of the homefront, and appointed an officer to coordinate Germany’s nascent air defense program. This measure was followed in August 1915 with the creation of the post of Inspector of Anti-Aircraft Artillery.\(^{60}\) Part of the German military command structure, the Inspector of Anti-Aircraft Artillery was charged with coordinating the activity of military units (primarily anti-aircraft artillery) and the civilian volunteers who served as a primitive “observation” service. Unfortunately, the position enjoyed little actual authority, a problem that continued until the general reorganization of the country’s active and passive defenses in 1916. As a result of this reorganization, Germany established its first comprehensive national program of civil defense. The new program was the joint responsibility of the newly appointed Commanding General of the Air Service and Commander of Home Defense. To the former fell the responsibility of exercising authority over military air units, anti-aircraft units and civil defense.


\(^{60}\) Westermann, *Flak*, 20.
defense units. The latter received responsibility for “all arrangements and measures which [were] necessary for the defense of the homeland against air attack.” Top priority for Germany’s newly reorganized civil defense program included developing initiatives to enhance individual awareness of and participation in measures intended to protect individuals [Selbstschutz], especially at places of employment, and improving pre-existing services. The system created by the 1916 reorganization remained intact until the end of the war.

How effective was the civil defense system created by German authorities during the First World War? Scholars continue to debate this question. On the one hand, the fact that the Allied and Associate Powers sought during the subsequent peace negotiations to dismantle the entire system which protected Germany from aerial attack suggests a certain degree of effectiveness. However, as Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show, Anglo-French strategic bombing during the war resulted in only modest casualties and minor physical damage. (In comparison, German air raids against the United Kingdom resulted in more than 4,800 deaths and nearly three million pounds sterling in property damage.) German military authorities themselves tended to dismiss the importance of the Anglo-French raids, even as the intensity of those raids increased in the difficult closing months of the war. In the summer of 1918, for example, both the German Air

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61 The exact wording of the Imperial decree was as follows: “Alle zum bisherigen Dienstbereich des Chefs des Feldflugwesens gehörenden Verbände sowie der Inspekteur der Flugabwehrkanonen (Operationsgebiet) treten unter den Befehl des Kommandierenden Generals der Luftstreitkräfte, der außerdem den Heimatluftschutz mit allen hierzu gehörenden und neuzuschaffenden Einrichtungen übernimmt….” Quoted in: Wendorf, Zivilschutztruppen im Geschäftsbereich des BMI, 27.

62 Quoted in Westermann, Flak, 21.

63 Wendorf, Zivilschutztruppen im Geschäftsbereich des BMI, 28.

Staff and the German General Staff concluded that the raids directed against the country’s homefront posed no major threat to the population or war production. Indeed, the study conducted by the German General Staff found that German civilians were, in fact, their own worse enemies. After examining the results of thirty-one bombing raids conducted against German cities in August 1918, staff officers found that many of the 122 civilians killed or wounded were casualties that could have been avoided by taking proper precautions, such as finding shelter. The author of the report, Captain Hoth, noted that many of the dead and wounded had actually gone outside to watch the bombing raids.65

As the work of scholars such as Christian Geinitz makes clear, however, post-war concern, casualties and physical damage are not the only way to evaluate success. Geinitz, whose work focuses on the bombing raids conducted by Anglo-French forces against Freiburg im Breisgau, demonstrates convincingly that while the physical damage caused by the Anglo-French strategic bombing campaign was minor, the psychological impact was not. As Geinitz notes, Germans themselves recognized the toll aerial bombardment leveled on the country’s civilian population. Professor Alfred Hoche, a psychiatrist at the University Freiburg who studied the public response to the Anglo-French aerial bombardments of the city as they occurred, asserted at a medical congress in June 1917 that strategic bombing all but eliminated differences between the front-lines and the homefront. The citizens of Freiburg, Hoche argued, developed the mentality of a “besieged city” and lived in a “psychological state of emergency” as a result of collective feelings of constant danger, alarms, and the presence of weapons in the town itself.66

65 Corum, The Luftwaffe, 41.
As the example of Freiburg im Breisgau suggests, an important factor contributing to widespread public concern about aerial bombardment was the perceived failure of the city’s (and by extrapolation the country’s) civil defense program. That Freiburg’s defenses proved useless during the first attack on the city in August 1914 came as little surprise to either civilian authorities or military officials—the technology was simply too new and prevalent thinking too conservative for effective counter-measures to exist at the beginning of the war. The failure of the city’s defenses in April 1917 was, however, deeply disturbing, for at that point the city’s air defenses and civil defense measures were, in theory, at the peak of their development. As a result of this failure, which was apparent to anyone who watched the raid, individuals and organizations wrote to municipal and state government officials to demand better protection. While the majority of these demands centered on upgrading active civil defense measures, including stationing greater numbers of anti-aircraft artillery and inceptors in and around the city, a sizeable minority also called for improvements in passive civil defense measures, such as a comprehensive warning system and protective shelters. Moreover, demands for improvements cut across socioeconomic classes. Members of the middle-class urged the mayor to establish a prisoner-of-war camp in the middle of the city to serve as a “human shield” against future attacks; workers pressured the city by forcibly occupying public buildings at night to shelter themselves from a possible attack. As town residents grew increasingly dissatisfied with official plans, they took matters into their own hands. Families began to spend nights in the cellars of their own homes; public air-raid shelters were created; air-raid drills were practiced at schools and places of employment. Geinitz ends his study of Freiburg im Breisgau with the conclusion that by the end of the war private and public initiatives to provide safety ultimately proved more effective than the army’s active air defense. This fact was openly acknowledged at the end of the war during a
meeting in Frankfurt-am-Main in which regional civilian government officials concluded “that the best protection against air attack lies in the behavior of the population itself.”

Thus, as early as the First World War one sees emerge many of the basic issues that dominated all subsequent German discussions about civil defense. As technological developments allowed military conflict to expand into new dimensions, warfare extended both geographically and psychologically. Strategic bombing, in particular, eradicated the boundary between the military and civil society, and forced national leaders to develop new means by which to protect German civilians. Moreover, by the end of the war the state of technology was such that military forces could not longer guarantee the safety of the civilian population. Reluctantly, military officials were forced to concede that civilians needed better protection.

**Uncertain Lessons: German Civil Defense in the Interwar Period**

The very fact that English and French bombers had reached Germany at all meant discussion about civil defense continued in the post-war period. Nearly all of Germany’s military planners and civilian strategists recognized the potential dangers posed by aircraft. While most post-war attention focused on the role of aircraft on the battlefield, the importance of such technology for waging war against civilians also received some attention in post-war publications. Military commanders such as General Erich Ludendorff, deputy chief of staff of the Germany army, and General Höppner, the wartime commander of the country’s air defenses, belatedly acknowledged the important role played by Germany’s anti-aircraft defenses in ensuring the safety of its

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67 Geinitz, “Strategic Bombing of German Cities,” 215-219. The meeting was attended by representatives from Saarbrücken, Frankfurt-am-Main, Cologne, Mannheim, Frankfurt im Breisgau, Kaiserslautern, Stuttgart, Mainz, and Metz—cities which experienced multiple aerial bombing attacks by the end of the war. Representatives from these cities continued to meet monthly until the end of the war. See Walter Haag, “Reichswehr und Luftschutz, 1919-1932 [Part One], 99-100.
population. Höpper, in particular, provided a decidedly optimistic assessment of Germany’s wartime defenses, noting “a comparison between rapid development of anti-aircraft and its ever-increasing list of victories is its best claim to glory, and showed that its technical development and tactical employment were based on sound principles.” Ludendorff, who in the closing year of the war was forced to make difficult decisions about how to divide the country’s scarce resources, was slightly more pessimistic. Noting that air defenses, especially those stationed around Germany’s cities, “cost us men and material, which the front had to do without,” Ludendorff accurately identified the single greatest problem with civil defense: its cost.

While German military officials basically agreed on the need to maintain a robust anti-aircraft defense, adopting practical measures to this end proved difficult. For much of the inter-war period the provisions of the Versailles Peace Treaty shaped German military planning. In an attempt to eliminate the country’s future war-making capability, the Allied and Associated powers placed strict limits on the size of Germany’s military (Article 163) and the quantity and types of weapons it could possess (Articles 165-167). Military training facilities were drastically reduced, as was the amount of time military recruits could spend in such programs (Articles 173-177). Nor was it possible to contravene the limits on personnel and training by turning to customs and law enforcement officials (Article 162). The final blow to an inter-war active civil defense program was the absolute prohibition on all military and naval air forces (Article 198).

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Even though the Versailles Treaty banned or limited most activities associated with active civil defense, passive civil defense measures—those that did not specifically involve aircraft or anti-aircraft artillery—remained very much an important topic of consideration for Weimar military commanders and politicians. Planning, implementing, and supporting a national civil defense system took place within both the Weimar government and the general public. To government officials fell the task of organizing and implementing a program that both offered some hope of protecting the country’s population and abided by the restrictions imposed by the Versailles Treaty. As its first action, the Weimar government addressed the problem of legal and administrative authority. In 1923, the Reich War Ministry [Reichswehrministerium] issued a preliminary set of instructions, the Anleitung für den Reichsluftschutz, for organizing and implementing the new Republic’s national civil defense program. Vague in terms of actual details, these guidelines were little more than an official acknowledgement by government officials of the importance of such a program for preventing a decline in the country’s morale and war-fighting capacity [Widerstandskraft] as a result of destruction, by enemy aerial bombardment, of its economy and industry.\(^71\)

Shortly after distributing its preliminary civil defense guidelines, the War Ministry took the first step in creating an actual administrative structure for a national civil defense program by sponsoring a plenary session attended by representatives from key government ministries. Held at the beginning of June 1923, the representatives quickly agreed upon the need for a comprehensive system of civil defense and of the impossibility of building such a program in secret. Practical considerations, not the least of which were the limitations imposed on the country’s military forces, suggested a civilian ministry should exercise official legal and

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\(^71\) Haag, “Reichswehr und Luftschutz” [Part One], 101.
administrative control over all civil defense-related activity. Strongly supported by military authorities, the idea of civilian control of the country’s civil defense program was a central aspect of the War Ministry’s revised civil defense guidelines, the “First Guidelines for the Organization of National Civil Defense” [Erste Richtlinien für die Organisation des Reichsflüchtlings], issued in 1925.\(^{72}\) Rejecting wartime experience, War Ministry officials asserted that national civil defense was a joint responsibility of military and civilian forces. This position was an important departure from wartime policy, and acknowledged the growing cooperation of the German military and civil government in the field of civil defense.

The final obstacle blocking German inter-war civil defense planning fell in 1926. In May of that year representatives of the major western European powers met in Paris to update the 1919 Convention Relating to Aerial Navigation, which governed commercial aviation in Europe. Though concerned primarily with the growing problem of overly-crowded air traffic in the region’s skies, the delegates touched upon the issue of civil defense by granting the German army the specific right to develop a ground-based anti-aircraft program. Shortly thereafter the Weimar government successfully petitioned the Allied Military Control Commission for permission to re-establish within the country’s war ministry a department for civil defense planning.\(^{73}\) But the domestic and international climate was such that complete military control of the Weimar’s civil defense...
defense program was unacceptable. (Moreover, military officials were reluctant to devote their scarce resources, especially personnel, to passive civil defense measures.) Accordingly, in November 1927, the Weimar government authorized the Interior Ministry to take over responsibility [Federeführung] for all passive civil defense planning in the country.\textsuperscript{74}

Even as they sought to create the legal and administrative framework in which to place their program, Weimar government officials began the more difficult task of implementation. In the 1920s, mindful of the restrictions imposed by the Versailles Treaty, Weimar officials began the process very quietly with small-scale exercises involving military personnel and police officers. The scope of these exercises was quite limited and focused mainly on establishing a reliable observation network to help locate and track enemy aircraft in German airspace. After 1927, training of law enforcement personnel in civil defense-related work increased, and at the end of that year Heinrich Paetsch, who served as the Prussian Interior Ministry’s chief civil defense official, established the “Civil Defense Police Academy” [Luftschutz- und Luftschutzpolizeischule] in Wendorff (near Berlin). Although the school initially lacked the resources necessary to conduct large-scale exercises, it nonetheless provided attendees with an opportunity to participate in civil defense-related tabletop simulations and classroom sessions. Moreover, the school’s very existence helped reinforce the importance of law enforcement personnel as the coordinating officials for regional and local civil defense programs, a policy greatly at odds with initial plans which called for authority to rest in the hands of civil government officials [kommunale Selbstverwaltungsorganisationen].\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{74} Wendorf, Zivilschutztruppen im Geschäftsbereich des BMI, 33; Haag, “Reichswehr und Luftschutz, 1919-1932” [Part Two], 159.

\textsuperscript{75} Erich Hampe, Der Zivile Luftschutz im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Dokumentation und Erfahrungsberichte über Aufbau und Einsatz. (Frankfurt-am-Main: Bernard und Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1963), 52, 54
Civil defense planning in the Weimar Republic took a major step forward in October 1930 with the country’s first large-scale civil defense exercise. Following the example set by similar exercises conducted abroad in cities such as London, Lyon, Warsaw, Königsgrätz, and Olmütz, German military and civilian officials hoped to gain both valuable experience and specific ideas about what elements of their extant program required additional work. Königsberg, located in East Prussia, the city selected by German officials, represented an ideal location for such an exercise. Not only did the military units stationed at the city fortress include the Germany army’s sole anti-aircraft artillery detachment, but the provincial governor (Oberpräsident der Provinz) had a long history of successful cooperation with local military commanders in civil defense-related matters. Attended by national, state, and local officials, the police and fire-fighting services, military officers, and representatives from industry, agriculture, volunteer emergency service organizations such as the German Red Cross [Deutsche Rote Kreuz], or DRK, and Arbeiter-Samariterbundes, the Emergency Technical Assistance Crop, and members of the public interested in civil defense, the exercise was hailed by all parties as a great success. During the three days, participants watched a demonstration of the local warning network [Luftschutzwarndienst], visited a camouflaged industrial complex, and saw first-hand the blackout measures adopted by the German railroad [Reichsbahn]. By far the most popular event, however, was a large-scale rescue exercise staged by local police, fire-fighting, rescue, and military units designed to simulate rescue efforts in the aftermath of a large-scale attack.

The impression left by the three-day exercise was sobering. While officials were generally pleased with the results of the exercise, the experience showed clearly the need for...
considerable revision of the existing civil defense plans.76 As one Interior Ministry official later concluded, it was not until the Königsburg exercise that he realized both the seriousness of the situation and the magnitude of the task confronting the country.77 A new set of guidelines issued one year later, the “Guidelines for the Organization of Civil Defense” [Richtlinien für die Organisation des zivilen Luftschutzes], incorporated these revisions and provided much clearer information about the role of civilian police units, local government officials, and volunteer rescue and recovery services in the nation’s emerging system of national civil defense. The 1931 guidelines remained the basic blueprint for German civil defense planning until the National Socialists took up the issue in the mid-1930s.

While the Weimar government initiated the majority of the serious civil defense planning which occurred during the 1920s, a number of developments occurred as a result of public initiative. Of greatest importance was the establishment of an Emergency Technical Assistance Corps [Technische Nothilfe], or TAC.78 The idea of a TAC was first proposed by Otto Lummitzsch, a former pioneer officer in the German Imperial Army, who at first hoped to convince the German military to create a special unit of personnel with the skills and training necessary to restore and continue vital city services in the event of a civil emergency. Lummitzsch first conceived of the idea in the chaotic months following the end of the First World War, and anticipated military authorities would use the unit to restore and maintain basic city services such as the flow of water, electricity, and gas during mass strikes. When it became clear

76 Beßlich, “Vom Heimatsuftschutz zum Zivilschutz,” 52.


78 For the purposes of this study the term TAC refers to volunteer rescue and recovery units under the Interior Ministry’s direct control. Prior to 1950, these units were called the Technische Hilfswerk, or TN. After 1950, the organization was renamed the Technisches Hilfswerk, or THW.
that the terms of the Versailles Treaty made it impossible to incorporate such a unit into Germany’s greatly reduced army, Lummitzsch turned to the civilian government. With the support of Gustav Noske, the Minister of War [Reichswehrminister], Lummitzsch convinced the government in November 1919 to authorize the creation of a civilian version of the TAC.79

While Weimar government officials supported the concept of the TAC in principle, defining the exact duties of the new organization proved difficult. The first official guidelines for the organization, issued by the Reich Interior Minister [Reichsminteks des Innern] in February 1920, were vague, describing the TAC as merely:

an organization of technical personnel who have declared themselves prepared to maintain and facilitate through emergency service the internal security, order, and reconstruction of German economic life [Wirtschaftsleben] in circumstances involving critical [lebenswichtiger] industries as well as emergency situations arising from general violence.80

This vague description worried opposition politicians. Those on the left, in particular, expressed concern about the TAC’s potential impact on mass strikes. Given the tendency of the TAC’s leadership, many of whom had served in paramilitary Freikorps units, to view themselves and the organization as a whole as “strike-breakers” [Streikbrecherfunktion], and the TAC’s increasing size—more than 22,000 members in 1920—this concern was likely justified. By the 1930s, however, concern about the TAC functioning primarily as “strike-breakers” diminished. New,


80 Quoted in Wendorf, Zivilschutztruppen im Geschäftsbereich des BMI, 31. German original: “Arbeitsgemeinschaft namentlich technisch vorgebildeter Arbeitskräfte, die sich bereit erklärt hat, zur Sicherung der inneren Ruhe und Ordnung und des Wiederaufbaues des deutschen Wirtschaftslebens Notstandsarbeiten dort zu verrichten, wo es sich um die Aufrechterhaltung gefährdeter lebenswichtiger Betriebe handelt, sowie in Fällen der Not durch höhere Gewalt…einzugreifen.”
stricter government guidelines helped alleviate concern among Social Democratic politicians. So, too, did the organization’s increasing emphasis on providing rescue and recovery assistance in the event of natural disaster or war. TAC leaders viewed the latter as important enough to justify the creation during the winter of 1930-1931 of special units trained to deal with the effects of aerial bombardments and gas attacks [Gas- und Lufschutzdienst].

Public initiative, in the form of private associations, also played an important role in inter-war German civil defense planning. Among the earliest of these of these organizations was the Flak Association [Flak Vereinen], established in 1920 by Hugo Grimme, an army officer with considerable wartime anti-aircraft experience. Founded, according to Grimme, as an informal forum in which interested persons could examine and discuss the problems of anti-aircraft and civil defense, the Flak Association quickly took on the character of a veterans’ organization. (Within a year of its founding the overwhelming majority of the Flak Association’s more than eight hundred members were former and active military officers.)81 By the end of the 1920s, the national preoccupation with the country’s vulnerability to aerial bombardment swelled, judging by the number and ranks of public organizations dedicated to promoting the importance of civil defense. The group German Civil Defense [Deutscher Luftschutz], founded in 1927, and German Civil Defense League [Deutsche Luftschutz-Liga], founded shortly thereafter, were national in their scope, but regional and local groups existed as well, as illustrated by the merging in the early-1930s of more than ninety different civil defense-related groups into the Schlesien Civil

81 During the First World War Grimme served as a senior officer in various anti-aircraft units. He remained in the German military after the war, primarily as an artillery commander. From 1933 to 1936, in addition to his military duties Grimme also served as President of the Reich Civil Defense Association [Reichsluftschutzverband] (see below). He retired from the military in 1936 with the rank of General of Anti-Aircraft Artillery [General der Flakartillerie] but continued to serve as a consultant to the Germany army and air force until his death in November 1943. See Haag, “Reichswehr und Luftschutz, 1919-1932 [Part One]: 102 (footnote twelve).
Defense Association [Luftschutzverband Schlesien]. Nor was public support for civil defense confined entirely to men. The German Women’s Civil Defense Service [Deutscher Frauen-Luftschutzdienst], founded in 1931 in Potsdam, and the Order of Young Germans [Jungdeutsche Orden e.V.] illustrate the extent to which such activity transcended age and gender divisions.\textsuperscript{82}

The fact that many of these organizations received substantial financial support from state and local governments illustrates their importance as adjuncts to official government programs. In 1929 and 1930, for example, city councils in Munich, Bremen, Hamburg, Colburg, and Frankfurt-am-Main passed resolutions supporting the work of private civil defense-oriented organizations. The state parliament of Württemberg passed a similar resolution in 1931 calling for the creation of a “sufficient system of civil defense [genügenden Luftschutzes]” with the support of local governments and private organizations.\textsuperscript{83} The most important symbol of state support for the new private civil defense associations occurred in July 1931 when the Prussian Interior Ministry authorized the founding of the “German Civil Defense League” [Deutschen Luftschutz Liga]. The new organization was dedicated primarily to education, and had as its overall goal the mission of informing the general public about the dangers of aerial attacks, especially the use of poison gas. The topic inspired tremendous concern among military planners during the interwar period, and caused them to call for widespread public support for programs and organizations intended to alleviate the physical danger associated with a poison gas attack.

With the help of prominent national politicians from a wide spectrum of political parties, such as

\textsuperscript{82} Peter Fritzsche, “Machine Dreams: Airmindedness and the Reinvention of Germany,” in American Historical Review 98:3 (June 1993): 694; Haag, “Reichswehr und Luftschutz, 1919-1932 [Part Two]: 163. The Order of Young Germans began its existence in 1920. Originally conceived by its founder Arthur Mahraun as a means to to reinforce ideals of democracy and develop a positive national identity, the Order of Young Germans supported active cooperation with the Weimar republican government. The organization was dissolved in 1933.

\textsuperscript{83} Haag, “Reichswehr und Luftschutz, 1919-1932 [Part Two]: 163.
the Social Democrat Georg Gradnauer from Saxony, and mayors of the country’s largest cities, including the future West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, the German Civil Defense League quickly became the premier non-governmental civil defense organization in Weimar Germany. Among its most important accomplishments prior to 1933 were the introduction of regular working groups and conferences dedicated to the question of civil defense, the publication of the country’s first civil defense periodical, *Gasschutz und Luftschutz*, and the creation of local chapters in most of the country’s states and large cities.84

Yet despite the considerable progress made by public and private proponents of such programs, German civil defense efforts on the eve of the National Socialist take-over remained very much uneven. Official government support for programs designed to protect the civilian population remained limited by the treaties signed after the First World War and the considerable force of international public opinion. Private organizations were far more successful in generating support for the country’s civil defense efforts, but success was most notable in those segments of German society pre-disposed to approve of such activity, such as veterans and those people who had experienced the consequences of war firsthand. Moreover, Weimar civil defense planning remained narrowly focused on an increasingly questionable threat conceptualization. For most government planners and enthusiastic public proponents, adequate civil defense was equated with technical and scientific advances: more effective gas-masks for the population, larger caliber anti-aircraft artillery, more sensitive warning apparatus, efficient plans for maintaining critical city services such as electricity and gas, and so on. Absent from most Weimar-era discussion was any real appreciation of the psychological aspects of civil defense

programs, or a genuine appreciation for how advances in military technology complicated the task facing civil defense planners.

**National Socialism and Civil Defense Prior to the Second World War**

The National Socialist ascension to power in January 1933 fundamentally changed German civil defense planning. In contrast to the Weimar governments, which tended to concentrate on the technical and scientific challenges associated with civil defense planning, the National Socialist regime was far more interested in the psychological aspects of a national system of protection. (The Nazis’ interest was understandable given the fact that they were thinking very specifically in terms of a new war, whereas Weimar officials, at least, hoped a war would never happen.) As Peter Fritsche argues in his review of inter-war German civil defense planning and attitudes towards aerial warfare, the threat the latter posed to the country’s civilian population and the state’s countermeasures represented potentially powerful means of motivating and securing public support for the new regime and its policies. More specifically, by stressing the need for and advantages of a comprehensive national civil defense program the National Socialist regime gained valuable support for its attempt to remilitarize the country and increase the state’s presence in the lives of ordinary Germans.85

Shortly after coming power, the National Socialist regime shifted responsibility for protecting the nation’s population and vital infrastructure from the Interior Ministry to the newly-created Reich Air Ministry [*Luftfahrministerium*], headed by Hermann Göring. The Ministry’s first task was to assess the situation in which the country found itself. Working closely with military and Nazi party leaders, officials in the Reich Air Ministry sought to identify the

fundamental goals of the country’s civil defense programs. This review quickly concluded that
creating a successful national civil defense program required political solutions. The technically
based approach favored by most Weimar planners, who equated the effects of aerial
bombardment with those of a large-scale industrial accident, was no longer sufficient. Horrified
by the possibility of societal collapse caused by mass panic and flight from Germany’s threatened
cities, Nazi civil defense officials argued in favor of strategies that would eliminate the individual
sense of self-preservation and instead promote a collective sense of responsibility to the entire
nation [Volksgemeinschaft]. Pursuing such strategies, officials further argued, acknowledged the
fact that the horrors of aerial bombardment affected the population as a whole and made no
distinction in terms of the class, status, or education of the victims. Only the state, and more
specifically an authoritarian regime willing to squelch the individualism generated by nineteenth-
century liberalism, possessed the means necessary to protect civilians. As one prominent civil
defense official noted in November 1933, only “a very strong authoritarian will” is able to “force
contrary elements of the population to understand and obey.”

The policies that emerged in the wake of the Reich Air Ministry’s review of Germany’s
civil defense needs clearly reflected this call for social mobilization, but just as clearly favored
maintaining industrial production over protecting the civilian population. Beginning in August
1934, officials in the Reich Air Ministry secretly classified German cities and towns into three

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86 Hans Rumpf, “Selbsthilfe der Bevölkerung im Brandschutz,” in Gasschutz und Luftschutz 3:11
(November 1933): 276. Quoted in Fritzsche, “Machine Dreams,” 699. For further contemporary
opinions on this subject see Erich Hampe, “Luftschutz als Schicksalsfrage,” in Der zivile Luftschutz:
Ein Sammelbuch über alle Fragen des Luftschutz, ed. Kurt Knipfer and Erich Hampe (Berlin:
Stollberg, 1934), and Edmund Heines, ed., Luftschutz: Die deutsche Schicksalsfrage (Stuttgart:
Plesken, 1934). A useful overview of the important concept of Volksgemeinschaft is found in Wolfram
Wette, “Ideology, Propaganda, and Internal Politics as Preconditions of the War Policy of the Third
Reich,” in Germany and the Second World War, Vol. 1, 147-155.
categories depending on their value for the war economy. For the most important cities and towns—numbering approximately one hundred—officials in the Reich Air Ministry developed civil defense plans that focused on the construction of protective shelters to house critical industrial equipment and workers. The roughly two hundred cities and towns in the second, less critical, category had to rely on what officials eventually called “enlarged emergency procedures.” These procedures included plans for the evacuation of non-essential people, stockpiling the supplies necessary for large-scale recovery and relief operations, and stationing government and volunteer rescue units in close proximity. According to the plan developed by Reich Air Ministry officials, those cities and towns that did not fall into the first two categories had to rely entirely on “self-protection” measures.\textsuperscript{87}

At the same time they sought to clarify the country’s civil defense priorities, policy-makers worked to establish a comprehensive legal and administrative framework for their new program. This goal was realized in 1935 with the passage of the Law for the Protection of the German People from Aerial Attack in Times of War, commonly known as the 1935 Civil Defense Law [Luftschutzgesetz]. Conceptually, the 1935 Civil Defense Law provided a clear statement of purpose for the National Socialist civil defense program. Of primary importance was protecting the country’s military forces [Kampfkraft], civilian work force [Arbeitskraft], and capacity for continued resistance [Widerstandswillen] from aerial attacks. The organizational framework established by the 1935 Civil Defense Law was that of a centrally controlled program. The national government, represented by the Reich Air Ministry, was responsible for conceptualizing

and organizing Germany’s civil defense program, and had final authority in all civil defense-related matters. Actual implementation of the program, however, occurred at the state [Land] and local [Gemeinde] level through the work of state- and local-level officials coordinating a mixture of mostly volunteer units. Oversight authority resulted in financial responsibility, with the central government required to cover all “extraordinary” [außerordentlich] costs of the civil defense program. Finally, the 1935 Civil Defense Law codified the idea of an individual’s personal duty [Pflicht] to participate in the government’s programs. All Germans were required to obey government wartime directives on blackouts and curfews. Moreover, during periods of acute crisis individuals were also liable for serving in one of the many civil defense and relief organizations (such as fire-fighting or rescue units), and knowing how to protect themselves in the event of an air attack, commonly referred to as “self-protection” [Selbstschutz]. The law contained provisions for penalties to ensure the population’s participation in civil defense programs, primarily in the form of fines and imprisonment. Despite numerous alterations and additions, the most serious of which occurred in 1943 after the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaign intensified, the system of civil defense established by the law remained unchanged until Germany’s defeat in May 1945.

88 In reality, however, the state and local governments never received full reimbursement for the expenses they incurred during the Second World War, especially for the construction of protective shelters.

89 The Reichsgesetzblatt of 8 September 1939 contains the complete text of the 1935 law. For legal commentary on this law see Helmut Roewer, ed., Zivilschutz und Zivilverteidigung. Handbuch für die Praxis (Karlsfeld: Jüngling Verlag für Verwaltung und Behörden, 1992), 16-18.

The broad legal and administrative framework outlined in the 1935 Civil Defense Law was clarified in the following months with a host of administrative guidelines and directives, and the establishment of new government offices. The Reich Air Ministry’s administrative guidance first dealt with the difficult issue of spheres of influence by dividing the overall defense of the country into three distinct missions: active defense, provided by anti-aircraft artillery and inceptors; observation and warning responsibilities, provided by the national aircraft spotting and alarm network; and passive defense. The passive defense ranged from camouflaging critical industrial sites to pre-positioning equipment and personnel for post-attack recovery operations. Reich Air Ministry officials then proceeded to further detail the scale and scope of the nation’s passive civil defense measures, assign responsibility to the various government and private civil defense-related organizations created since the end of the First World War, and clarify the civil defense chain of command. Given the many competing organizations and sources of authority within the National Socialist state, this last point was particularly important. After considerable debate, Reich Air Ministry officials decided to formalize planning begun by Weimar officials and assigned ultimate responsibility for civil defense activity to the police, especially in cities considered exceptionally critical to the future war effort. To coordinate and oversee the nation’s growing civil defense program the government created in the Reich Civil Defense Bureau [Reichsanstalt für Luftschutz] in June 1935, and created a separate office devoted entirely to civil defense planning [Abteilung Ziviler Luftschutz] within the Reich Air Ministry itself.91 It is important to note, however, that the Reich Air Ministry never had complete control over the

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91 Wendorf, Zivilschutztruppen im Geschäftsbereich des BMI, 36-37. See also Erich Hampe, Der Zivile Luftschutz im Zweiten Weltkrieg, passim. For a contemporary description of the National Socialist civil defense program see Erich Hampe, Der Mensch und die Luftgefähr (Berlin: Räder-Verlag, G.m.b.H., 1937).
country’s civil defense program. Creating an adequate system of protection in factories and important industrial sites remained the responsibility of the Reich Industrial Group \( \text{Reichsgruppe Industrie} \). Likewise, the military forces, post office, railroad, and individual transportation administrations (the \text{Wasserstraßenverwaltung} and \text{Reichsautobahn}) retained overall responsibility for civil defense measures within facilities they controlled.\(^{92}\)

Despite the legal and administrative framework provided by the 1935 Civil Defense Law, actual preparations for protecting Germany’s civilian population proceeded slowly for the remainder of the inter-war period. Several factors contributed to the slow pace of interwar civil defense preparations. The first was the country’s overall psychological attitude towards civil defense. To buttress support for the centrally controlled, militarized society they wished to create, National Socialist propaganda such as the July 1934 front cover of the illustrated magazine \text{Die Sirene} (Figure 2.2) continuously emphasized Germany’s vulnerability to aerial bombardment. The cover depicts a map of Germany over which fly Polish, French, and Czech bombers. For those readers who missed the message conveyed by these aircraft flying over German airspace, or the threatening dark clouds from which they emerge, the Reich Civil Defense Association included a helpful caption, “The Aerial Threat to Germany” \( \text{Luftgefahr für Deutschland} \). The premise of such propaganda was the idea that at least some enemy bombers (and perhaps many) would survive the country’s active air defenses and reach Germany’s cities and civilian population, thus necessitating the government’s civil defense program. However, propaganda of this type highlighted the fundamental problem facing the National Socialist regime: a very thin line existed between generating active support for the country’s civil defense program and inspiring paralyzing panic. National Socialist civil defense officials recognized that

their program’s success depended greatly on convincing Germans that they had, in fact, little to fear from aerial bombardment if they placed the needs of the community above those of the individual.

The problem of finding a balance between motivation and paralyzing fear was exacerbated by a second fundamental problem facing National Socialist civil defense officials: the lack of adequate financial and material resources. In the 1930s, expanding the country’s civil defense program was only one of many priorities for the National Socialist regime. Rearmament was the top priority, for strong military forces were absolutely necessary for fulfill Hitler’s expansionist foreign policy objectives. As a result, despite the Nazi leadership’s public commitment to passive civil defense measures, the programs developed by Reich Air Ministry officials and local governments never ranked higher than tenth in terms of budget priority. Moreover, passive civil defense measures competed with active civil defense measures—anti-aircraft artillery and inceptors—for resources. Forced to make difficult choices, National Socialist civil defense officials most often chose programs that promised greatest propaganda value. Thus, in the years leading up to the outbreak of war in September 1939, the Reich Air Ministry devoted considerable resources to education and public spectacles. The German Air Force staged dummy air raids on Berlin. At air shows throughout the country volunteer firemen and TAC personnel battled fires and rescued victims from carefully-prepared mock rural and urban attack sites. In city squares the Reich Civil Defense Association [Reichluftschutzverband], or RCDA, installed huge dummy bombs, over eight feet long and painted black, with eye-catching yellow stripes, to remind passers-by of the danger that threatened them daily.93 More practical programs included a

93 The Reich Civil Defense Association was a quasi-private organization founded to educate the public about civil defense procedures and their importance. During the National Socialist regime, the RCDA received considerable financial and material support from the central government. A brief discussion
nation-wide distribution of gas-masks, first-aid classes, mandatory exercises in schools to help students maintain composure during air raids, and the appointment of block and house wardens to oversee civil defense preparations. The National Socialist government also emphasized the superiority of German active air defenses over those of the other European powers. Shelter construction lagged, however, and in September 1939 very few existed to protect the country’s population. For example, in September 1939 the city of Berlin—the focal point of the National Socialist civil defense program—had constructed protective shelters capable of holding 2,045 people, fewer than one-half of one percent of the population.

**German Civil Defense and the Experience of World War**

In the opening months of the Second World War the unwillingness (and inability) of their enemies to threaten the German homeland seemed to confirm the optimism of the country’s civil defense officials. By the summer of 1940, however, the inadequacy of the country’s pre-war}

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95 As Horst Boog notes in his contribution to the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt’s massive study of the Second World War, this complacency resulted in part from a “German sense of superiority, which went hand in hand with offensive thinking, a deceptive consciousness of security, and ideological bias, was reflected in the assessment of the potential enemy in the air…even in 1938 [most Germans] believed that the Luftwaffe was at that time superior to any other European air force.” (Horst Boog, “The Anglo-American Strategic Air War over Europe and German Air Defense,” in *Germany and the Second World War*, Vol. VI, 482. Boog argues convincingly that technical overestimation contributed greatly to this sense of German superiority. Military authorities calculated in 1936-1937, for example, that only forty-seven shots from heavy anti-aircraft artillery was needed to down an enemy bomber (compared to the 5,040 shots needed in 1918). For a more complete discussion of German technical overestimation prior to the Second World War see Westermann, *Flak*, pp. 49-78.

preparations was clear. The considerable confusion and bureaucratic maneuvering that occurred as personal and administrative rivals sought to extend their control over the country’s civil defense program was partially to blame.\footnote{Exemplifying this confusion and bureaucratic maneuvering was the dispute over control of the civil defense-related “Security and Assistance Service” [\textit{Sicherheits- und Hilfsdienst}]. Divided into motorized and non-motorized units, the Security and Assistance Service nominally fell under the jurisdiction of local and regional civil defense officials who received their guidance from the Reich Air Ministry and the Reich Civil Defense Bureau. After the beginning of hostilities in September 1939 the Chief of the German Police [\textit{Chef der Deutschen Polizei}], Heinrich Himmler, attempted to gain control of these units, which in many cases included large numbers of police officers. This dispute was not settled until 1942 when an agreement was reached whereby the German Air Force took over command of the motorized detachments of the Security and Assistance Service and the organization’s non-motorized units were renamed “Civil Defense Police” and placed under the command of civilian police officials. See Wendorff, \textit{Zivilschutztruppen im Geschäftsbereich des BMI}, 41ff.} More serious, though, was an increase in the frequency and intensity of British bombing raids against targets in Germany itself, attacks that showed how misplaced pre-war confidence in the effectiveness of anti-aircraft artillery and inceptors had been.\footnote{The British strategic air offensive against Germany officially began with the 15 May 1950 Cabinet decision to authorize bombing raids not directly connected with land or sea operations. The first British bombing raid occurred that night on military targets (oil refineries, coking plans, and railroad marshalling yards) in the Ruhr. The scope of the strategic air offensive was widened considerably in a subsequent Air Ministry directive to all Royal Air Force headquarters that broadened the definition of “military” target. It was not until the end of the year, however, that the British launched the first deliberate terror raid on a German town—the 16 December 1940 raid against Mannheim, ordered in response to the German bombing of Coventry. See Horst Boog, “The Anglo-American Strategic Air War over Europe and German Air Defense,” \textit{op. cit.}; Charles Webster and Noble Frankland, \textit{The Strategic Air Offensive against Germany, 1939-1945}, 4 vols., History of the Second World War: Military Series, Campaigns (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1961); and Alan J. Levine, \textit{The Strategic Bombing of Germany, 1940-1945} (New York: Praeger, 1992).} These weaknesses finally commanded the full attention of the highest echelons of the National Socialist leadership on 25 August 1940 after a small force of British bombers managed to bomb Berlin. Although the approximately twenty-two tons of bombs dropped was small in comparison to later raids, the fact that any British bombers had reached the “best-defended” city in Germany at all was a considerable shock.\footnote{Michael Fœdrowitz, \textit{Bunkerwelten: Luftschutzanlagen in Norddeutschland} (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1998), 9.} Subsequent British raids against the capital further
demonstrated Berlin’s, and therefore Germany’s, vulnerability to aerial attack. Concerned that the population’s vulnerability to aerial bombardment might hamper the war effort, National Socialist leaders decided to devote considerable, and after 1943 increasingly scarce, resources to improving the country’s passive civil defense programs. These resources were channeled into three broad types of programs: mass evacuation of non-essential personnel from high-risk areas, a massive protective shelter program, and an expansion of the country’s rescue and recovery units.

Mass Evacuation. While it eventually played a major role in wartime civil defense, National Socialist leaders, no doubt fearful of losing control over the country’s population, paid little attention to mass evacuation prior to 1939. The personal correspondence of top Nazi officials shows that the idea of evacuating the country’s cities elicited considerable trepidation. For example, Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, whose many responsibilities included preserving homefront morale, worried about the message a mass evacuation strategy would send to the general public. The expedient policy of evacuating non-essential residents from areas targeted for destruction might make sense, Goebbels wrote repeatedly in his private diaries, but such action called into question the state’s ability to protect its people, thus weakening morale. ¹⁰⁰ Despite these reservations, removing large numbers of civilians from Germany’s key urban and industrial centers eventually became an integral part of the wartime experience. State-organized mass evacuation began in the winter of 1940-1941 with the Kinderlandsverschickung (literally, “sending children to the country”). This policy transferred young children from Germany’s endangered cities to the relative safety of the countryside, and was similar in concept to programs

enacted by the British and French governments. As they implemented the *Kinderlandsverschickung*, National Socialist officials also began concerted efforts to persuade non-essential workers living in Category One targets to relocate to safer Category Three locations. Despite upbeat National Socialist propaganda extolling the virtue of the government’s early evacuation programs, and financial support in the form of payment of an evacuee’s transportation expenses and guaranteed housing, these initial measures produced little enthusiasm in the general public. As Michael Krause shows in his study of the Second World War German homefront, the *Kinderlandsverschickung* was particularly unpopular.\footnote{Jörg Friedrich, *Der Brand: Deutschland im Bombenkrieg, 1940-1945* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2002), 457. On the *Kinderlandverschickung* in particular see Michael Krause, *Flucht vor dem Bombenkrieg: »Umquartierungen« im Zweiten Weltkrieg und die Wiedereingliederung der Evakuierten in Deutschland, 1943-1963*, Beiträge zur Geschichte des Parlamentarismus und der politischen Parteien, vol 109 (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1997), 45-66.} Unwilling to endure long-term separation from their children and deeply concerned by the unfamiliar conditions in which their sons and daughters might find themselves, most parents refused to participate in the program.

Surprisingly, public resistance to mass evacuation continued even after the scale and scope of the aerial bombardment increased in the fall and winter of 1941-1942. As one 1950s analysis of German wartime mass evacuation noted, even the first major raid against Cologne in May 1942 failed to convince people to leave the city voluntarily.\footnote{Schmidle, “Evakuierung in Vergangenheit und Zukunft,” in *Ziviler Luftschutz* 21:7/8 (July/August 1957): 188.} Contemporary reports and post-war accounts of the early war years reveal that diverse factors contributed to Germans’ general reluctance to leave their threatened cities.\footnote{Even in mid-1943, police authorities estimated that at least ten percent of people made homeless by the Anglo-American bombing campaign chose to remain in temporary accommodations or with family and friends. See Schmidle, “Evakuierung in Vergangenheit und Zukunft,” 189.} For men, evacuation was often difficult, if
not simply impossible. Legislation and administrative ordinances passed in the opening months of the war forbade the departure of workers in critical war industries.\(^{104}\) (Despite the manpower demands made by military mobilization, until mid-1943 the majority of workers in critical war industries were men.) The fact that laws passed by the National Socialist government required men to remain in the country’s cities helps explain the reluctance of women and children. Cities clearly represented a space of heightened threat, but families usually opted to stay and confront danger and adversity together, favoring the psychological security provided by unity over the physical security provided by relocation. Also present in contemporary reports of political and law enforcement officials is evidence of an equally strong motivating factor: mistrust tinged with fear. Men and women alike thought little of the government’s promise to safeguard their possessions and homes or apartments from casual theft or looting. Especially for women with husbands at the front, physical protection of treasured household property was possible only by occupying the family’s dwelling—an idea supported by veteran civil defense officials such as Hugo Grimme, head of the Reich Civil Defense Association.\(^{105}\)

Reliance on voluntary participation was only one weakness of German wartime mass evacuation policy, however. The beginning of widespread aerial bombardment by Anglo-American air forces in 1943 highlighted a second fundamental flaw: sparse or non-existent resources. As we have seen, in keeping with the national government’s emphasis on active civil defense measures—anti-aircraft artillery and inceptors—few regional or local governments made

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the necessary preparations to house, feed, and support large numbers of evacuees prior to the outbreak of war. Not surprisingly, as these authorities recognized that Anglo-American aerial bombardments would result in widespread injury and homelessness, they scrambled to readjust their priorities. By the beginning of 1943, new administrative ordinances required civil defense officials in most Category One targets to stockpile sufficient resources to feed and temporarily shelter (usually in tents) ten percent of their population.106

As the fortunes of war turned against Germany and the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaign further intensified, National Socialist officials grew increasingly concerned about their long-term physical and psychological effect. Writing in February 1943 shortly after the Stalingrad disaster,107 Goebbels confessed in his private diary that the “evacuation problem” was now critical and required emergency action.108 Less senior officials also recognized the situation’s urgency. A month after evacuation started making regular appearances in Goebbels’ diary as a topic of grave concern a senior Reich Interior Ministry official, Wilhelm Stuckart, wrote in a memorandum to his superiors that “the air war has entered a new phase.”109 This new phase, Stuckart continued, required the country to build more bunkers and examine carefully the advantages of removing non-essential civilians, especially those made homeless by the bombing raids.110 Implicit in both Goebbels and Stuckart’s comments was a growing realization that

107 On 2 February 1943 the last German troops in the Stalingrad pocket surrendered to the encircling Russian forces. The defeat cost Germany roughly 400,000 dead. The Soviet victory at Stalingrad is generally considered to be one of the Second World War’s important turning point.
109 Quoted in Krause, Flucht vor dem Bombenkrieg, 84.
110 Ibid.
localized efforts by city officials and volunteer organizations could no longer successfully cope with the situation. The July 1943 raid on Hamburg that killed and wounded tens of thousands and left 900,000 homeless underscored the overwhelming magnitude of the situation facing the country, as did raids on other densely settled urban targets such as Cologne, Düsseldorf, Dortmund, and Essen. The sheer magnitude of the destruction forced national officials to re-conceptualize their entire approach towards evacuating non-essential civilians from the country’s cities.

From this re-conceptualization emerged a new approach to clearing Germany’s cities. At the beginning of 1943, the Reich Interior Ministry ordered the National Socialist People’s Welfare Association [Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt], an organization that included as part of its work providing aid to war victims, to conduct a nation-wide survey of the country’s housing to determine the number of surplus [überschüssigen] rooms available for use as temporary accommodations. The promising results of the survey prompted National Socialist officials to issue at the end of February the Order Controlling Living Space [Verordnung zur Wohnraumlenkung], which required rural municipalities, in particular, to make “surplus” space available to victims of the Anglo-American bombing raids. This order was followed in April 1943 by the Decree on Re-accommodation Necessitated by the Threat of Damage Caused by Aerial Bombardment [Erlaß über Umquarteriungen wegen Luftgefahren und Bombenschäden], a pivotal document that signaled a clear shift in National Socialist mass evacuation policy, and dramatically expanded the central government’s role. In contrast to its detached involvement


112 Klee, Im ‘Luftschutzkeller des Reiches,’ 117 (footnote 158).
during the early war years, the central government and its various organizations now featured prominently, if not always benignly, in mass evacuation policy. At the heart of the April 1943 Decree was a mass evacuation plan devised by Reich Chancellery officials. In contrast to previous policy, the new measures established specific criteria for evacuation, imposed widespread mandatory participation, and most importantly, placed for the first time the disparate aspects of mass evacuation under firm central control.\textsuperscript{113} The system established by the 1943 Decree functioned more or less intact until the closing months of the war when the twin pressures of mass, uncontrolled flight by millions of people from the East and the near total breakdown of effective central government authority produced tragic results. Post-war civil defense planners would carefully note these developments.

\textbf{Protective Shelters.} As was the case with mass evacuation, bunkers played little role in interwar National Socialist civil defense planning, but eventually emerged as one of the defining elements of the civilian wartime experience. In one sense, the Nazis’ rejection of bunkers as an effective means to protect Germany’s civilian population is surprising. The notion of retreating underground to avoid the worst effects of bombardment is one that long predated the Second World War. Indeed, for millions of German men, and for a much smaller number of women and children, the defining twentieth century wartime experience (prior to 1945)—the First World War—was an abject lesson in the importance of physical protection. For Western Front veterans war had consisted of spending hours, and in many cases days, sheltering in holes, trenches, dugouts, and bunkers. Admittedly, compared to the campaigns waged just a generation later, a much smaller number of German civilians experienced the horrors of strategic bombing during

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 122-125.
the First World War. Yet as we saw above, even the limited Anglo-French strategic bombing campaign forced Germans to think seriously about the role of physical protection in any national civil defense strategy. Interwar advances in military technology and strategy served only to underscore the potential threat to civilians and heighten the perceived need for physical protection.

The Nazis’ early abhorrence of bunkers is more understandable, though, when we consider their overall approach towards civil defense. As Peter Fritzsche convincingly demonstrates in his study of interwar German “airmindedness,” the National Socialist regime exhibited a clear preference for civil defense strategies that stressed active public participation and strengthened civilian resolve. Illustrating this fact were the writings of the influential General Erich Hampe, who argued in 1937 that the sound of air-raid sirens should result not in a retreat underground but rather a renewed commitment on the part of the individual to muster the physical and psychological strength necessary for final victory. Thus, the technologically-oriented approach towards civil defense favored by Weimar officials—an approach heavily predicated on bunkers’ utility—was replaced by measures designed to reshape public psychology, avoid demoralization, and achieve public mobilization. In the minds of National Socialist officials, the passive protection provided by bunkers represented nothing less than an admission of impotence in the face of overwhelming danger. More specifically, the Nazi regime believed that in Germany’s vulnerable cities only the very young, the very old, and the sick should seek


115 Erich Hampe, “Luftschutz als Schicksalsfrage,” 120. On Hampe’s career as an civil defense expert in both Nazi Germany and the post-war Federal Republic, see Chapter Three (especially footnote 20).

116 Interestingly, while they eschewed the creation of a large-scale system of public shelters, National Socialist officials nonetheless supported efforts to help people seek protection in cellars and basements and appointed “block wardens” [Blockleiter] charged with maintaining discipline during attacks.
safety in protective shelters—the government expected most men and women to remain above ground and actively participate in their nation’s defense.

As a result of the resources they devoted to active air defense as well as their considerable effort to instill a sense of “airmindedness” in the country’s population, the National Socialist government entered the Second World War with the most advanced civil defense program of all the combatant nations, but one that paid little attention to physical protection.117 Indeed, it was not until August 1939 that the government issued its first meaningful administrative regulation on physical protection. The Ninth Administrative Decree on Fulfillment of the Civil Defense Law [9. Durchführungsverordnung zum Luftschutzgesetz] required owners of apartment blocks and individual houses to ensure the cellars of their buildings provided adequate protection during air raids. In practical terms this meant making the structural renovations necessary to prevent flying bomb splinters, falling debris, and poison gas from harming the occupants, and installing emergency exits. Given the very real danger of burial in the rubble of collapsed buildings, the final requirement was particularly important, and in some cases underground emergency exits eventually connected together whole city blocks.118 The serious blow the Nazis’ confidence suffered as a result of the first British aerial attack on Berlin in September 1939 provoked the construction of three “anti-aircraft fortresses” [Flakturm] in the

117 As two post-war commentators wrote, “the persistent, widespread belief that at the outbreak of war people living in Germany’s industrial heartland were well protected by [adequate space] in bunkers is simply not accurate.” The commentators—both of whom directed oversaw aspects of North-Rhine Westphalia’s wartime civil defense program—noted that in 1939 the heart of Germany industrial region contained shelter space for 480,000 of the region’s 6.5 million most endangered inhabitants. See Schnitzler and Schmidle, “Luftkriegserfahrungen im rheinisch-westfälischen Industriegebiet,” in Ziviler Luftschutz 20:3 (March 1956): 80. German original: “Die auch heute noch allgemeine verbreitete Ansicht, daß die Bevölkerung im industriellen Herzen Deutschlands bei Ausbruch des Krieges durch Luftschutzzräume geschützt war, entspricht nicht den Tatsachen.”

118 Friedrich, Der Brand, 375.
city. Massive concrete and reinforced steel structures, the “fortresses” housed heavy caliber artillery, directional and range-finding equipment, emergency medical facilities, and shelter space for several thousand people. Subsequent British attacks only intensified Nazi concern about civilian vulnerability, and on 10 October 1940 Hitler authorized an emergency bunker construction program, the *Führer-Sofortprogramm*, to strengthen the state of the country’s physical defenses.\footnote{Foedrowitz, *Bunkerwelten*, 12.} From this point onwards, physical protection constituted a central component of the Nazis’ civil defense strategy.

Although quickly limited to Category One cities and areas considered essential to the country’s war effort [*Wehrwirtschaftliche Gemeinden*], the *Führer-Sofortprogramm* nonetheless constituted one of the largest single-purpose construction projects completed in Europe to that point. Concerned primarily with ensuring the survival of the country’s industrial workforce, Reich Air Ministry officials quickly decided to concentrate their efforts on sixty-one cities with a combined population of approximately twenty million people. Later planning added thirty-one cities to this list with a combined population of fifteen million, and a great number of sites that required their own shelters (government buildings, railroad and utility installations, hospitals, schools, and museums). The actual construction occurred in three overlapping waves, and by May 1943 the country boasted more than six thousand shelters for use by the general public.

In addition to the *Führer-Sofortprogramm*, many cities and municipalities took their own steps to provide protection for the general public. As one recent history of Germany’s strategic bombing experience notes, every conceivable location, from abandoned mines to underground warehouses, was utilized.\footnote{Friedrich, *Der Brand*, 373.} Where available, cities used subway stations and underground

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\footnote{Foedrowitz, *Bunkerwelten*, 12.}
\footnote{Friedrich, *Der Brand*, 373.}
railroad tunnels to shelter the population. The cellars of large, well-constructed buildings such as churches, warehouses, and department stores were particularly popular. When sufficient space in public transportation systems and existing buildings was not available, cities dug. By the end of the war the city of Essen had constructed a system of underground shelters capable of housing 136,000 people. Nearby Dortmund constructed an intricate system of underground shelters and tunnels in which more than 80,000 people could seek shelter during air raids. By the end of the war Osnabrück had built more than five kilometers of underground tunnels and shelters capable of housing 45,600 people, about half the city’s population. Some cities even made use of underground passages dating back several hundred years. The city of Nuremberg, for example, opened the doors to its extensive system of medieval catacombs to provide shelter to fifteen thousand people. Nor did the cities neglect smaller, less secure types of shelters. In addition to providing free or low cost building materials to strengthen the cellars of apartment houses and private homes, most cities also construct thousands of smaller shelters that provided some protection against near misses and flying debris. Most often nothing more than reinforced trenches in parks, major thoroughfares, and other public locations, these shelters nonetheless played an important role in protecting people unable or unwilling to utilize the larger, more secure bunkers.121

To what extent did the practical results of the Führer-Sofortprogramm fulfill the National Socialist leadership’s actual objective of physically protecting the country’s civilian population? As with most aspects of the National Socialist regime, the ill-defined and often chaotic nature of Nazi civil defense planning makes a definitive answer difficult. According to historians such as Michael Foedrowitz, Hitler envisioned a system of protective bunkers of truly impressive

121 Ibid., 373-391.
proportions. At the end of September 1940, in response to mounting public criticism, he ordered the Reich Air Ministry, which exercised overall control of Germany’s civil defense program, to prepare plans for constructing between one and two thousand bunkers, each capable of sheltering one hundred people. In private conversations with high-ranking officials such as Fritz Todt during the same period, Hitler also expressed worry about the lack of protective shelter for people deemed “critical for the continued functioning of the state” [die für die Staatsführung unersetzlich sind] and demanded the construction of bunkers capable of withstanding a direct hit by 2,200 pound (1,000 kilogram) bombs. Yet Foedrowitz’s research also shows Hitler was concerned with more than mere preservation of the country’s leadership, and wished to build similar protection for critical administrative buildings, schools, and museums. As a result, the program outlined in the October 1940 decree envisioned as its ultimate goal the “complete protection for the entire civilian population.”

In reality, “complete protection” was neither possible nor desirable. Considerable evidence shows that the National Socialist government prioritized its bunker construction efforts, with geographical location constituting the most important factor for determining resource allocation. Despite initial public statements to the contrary, the massive construction program initiated by the Führer-Sofortprogramm was confined to Category One targets—large cities and critical economic installations. Furthermore, even within the country’s Category One targets, certain population segments received greater priority than others. In Berlin, for example, officials built seventy extra bunkers for the city’s “Mutter und Kind” [“Mother and Child”] program—

122 Georg Assmann, Beitrag zur Entwicklung des Schuttraumbaues für die Zivilbevölkerung nach den bisherigen Luftkriegserfahrungen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Sicherheitsbegriffs (Braunschweig: Technische Hochschule Dissertation, 1988) (as quoted in Foedrowitz, Bunkerwelten, 12). German original: “…absoluten Volltrefferschutz für die gesamte Zivilbevölkerung....”
shelter space expressly reserved for women with small children. The National Socialist
government also ordered the construction of special bunkers for high-ranking Nazi officials, civil
servants, the guests of the city’s elite hotels, and Berlin’s still-sizeable foreign diplomatic staff.
More generally, in keeping with the overall goal of the 1935 Civil Defense Law, authorities
throughout Germany placed greatest emphasis on maintaining the country’s war economy, and
limited the first “wave” of bunker construction (Fall 1940 to Summer 1941) to sixty-one of the
country’s most important industrial cities. This number dropped considerably during the second
“wave” (Fall 1941 to the beginning of 1943) of construction, and smaller cities were included in
the bunker construction program only after 1943.123 Within the cities, Nazi officials privileged
railroad and utility personnel and workers in the country’s armaments industry. Hundreds of
thousands of other civilians were forced to make do with less secure protection. Not surprisingly,
the government devoted even fewer resources to protecting foreign workers and prisoners of war
who also labored in war-critical industries (despite the fact they often worked on bunker
construction projects), and left the country’s slave laborers virtually unprotected. An unknown
number of these slave laborers died as a result of the Anglo-American strategic bombing
campaign.124

123 Foedrowitz, Bunkerwelten, 12-13.
124 Ibid., 119-122. The impact of the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaign on these people
remains understudied. In addition to photographic evidence, local histories provide the most
accessible treatment. See, for example, Ernst Kaiser and Michael Knorn, who in their study of the
Frankfurt Adlerwerken (»Wir lebten und schliefen zwischen den Toten Rüstungsproduction,
Zwangsarbeit und Vernichtung in den Frankfurter Adlerwerken, 3d. ed. (Frankfurt: Campus, 1998)
note that neither foreign workers nor concentration camp inmates employed by the factory had access
to adequate air raid bunkers. For a discussion about the vulnerability of Neuengamme concentration
camp inmates to air raids see Hermann Kaienburg, Das Konzentrationslager Neuengamme, 1938-1945
(Bonn: Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger, 1997), 196-207. On forced labor in general see Rimco
Spanjer, et.al., Zur Arbeit gezwungen: Zwangsarbeit in Deutschland, 1940-1945 (Bermen: Edition
Temmern, 1999), Mark Spoerer, Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz: Ausländische Zivilarbeiter,
Kriegsgefangene und Häftlinge im Deutschen Reich und im besetzten Europa, 1939-1945 (Stuttgart:
Unequal physical protection also occurred as a result of more mundane factors, such as the design and overall construction quality of individual shelters. Purpose-built bunkers provided the most reliable protection. Under the provisions of the Führer-Sofortprogramm, government authorities concentrated their construction resources on three basic types of bunkers: above-ground, multi-story buildings [Hochbunkern], bunkers located deep underground [Tiefbunkern], and less deeply-buried shelters intended to house hundreds, or sometimes thousands, of people [Luftschutzstollen]. Local conditions, available resources, and individual planning preferences produced variations of each basic type. (Officials in the Organisation Todt—Albert Speer’s mammoth construction concern—issued uniform construction guidelines only in the closing months of the war.) Above-ground bunkers, built primarily in regions where the water-table made deep tunneling impossible, ranged in size from very small structures capable of sheltering small groups of people to the mammoth steel and reinforced concrete blocks that dominated neighborhoods in cities such as Hamburg, Bremen, Düsseldorf, and Berlin. Likewise, underground bunkers consisted not only of the heavily-fortified structure that housed Hitler and his immediate personnel entourage in the closing days of the war, but also massive, multi-story affairs such as the 8,000 person shelter built underneath Hamburg’s Reeperbahn (the heart of the city’s red-light district). Tragically, not all bunkers offered the same level of protection. Wartime experience and post-war analysis revealed severe deficiencies in early bunkers, and reports of bombs penetrating roofs and exploding in the crowded chambers below occurred regularly. For the hundreds of thousands of people unable (or unwilling) to seek shelter in large bunkers, the reinforced cellars of apartment blocks and public buildings offered less certain

protection. Although some, like those underneath Frankfurt-am-Main’s small number of medieval houses, were as secure as the massive concrete structures built by the Nazi regime, a far larger number turned into tombs as buildings collapsed or fires engulfed the surrounding area.\(^{125}\)

**Rescue and Recovery Services.** The devastation of a country’s cities required not only the means with which to protect the inhabitants—physical shelter in the form of bunkers and evacuation of non-essential people—but also the resources to offer aid and recovery during and after an attack. In contrast to mass evacuation planning and bunker construction, preparing the German population to participate proactively in their own rescue and recovery efforts constituted a major part of Nazi pre-war civil defense policy. The National Socialist emphasis on rescue and recovery planning was a logical result of the party’s ideological foundations. Through systematic organization of the population and mandatory participation in civil defense-related groups and associations the National Socialist regime exercised greater control over Germans’ daily existence. The education and training people received as a result of their participation in these groups and associations helped them internalize (if not always accept) the inevitable war called for in Hitler’s virulently racist ideology. Finally, as the work of Peter Fritsche demonstrates, the National Socialist emphasis on rescue and rescue planning prepared Germans to withstand the challenges of a future war. Convinced the next conflict would include widespread aerial bombardment of German civilians, Nazi leaders needed a population capable of maintaining both morale and, more importantly, production of war-critical equipment as enemy bombers reduced the country’s cities to ruins.

\(^{125}\) Friedrich, *Der Brand*, 376.
To fulfill their goals, National Socialist civil defense planners embraced three distinct types of general preparations. The first centered on creating government-controlled rescue and recovery units, an idea that dated back to the earliest days of German civil defense. From the mid-1920s onwards, Weimar civil defense officials devoted considerable attention to the challenge of post-attack recovery. The creation of the Emergency Technical Assistance Corps in the chaotic years following the end of the First World War was followed in 1928 with the decision to establish regional [überörtlichen] command structures capable of coordinating the work of local rescue and recovery units.\(^\text{126}\) After they seized power, the National Socialist government continued the work of its predecessor, albeit in the chaotic fashion that characterized much of Nazi official policy. The country’s foremost rescue and recovery organization, the TAC, was placed under the control of the Reich Air Ministry in October 1933, and lost even more of its autonomy one year later with the complete dissolution of its national command structure and subsequent subordination to law enforcement authorities.\(^\text{127}\) The provisions of the 1935 Civil Defense Law, most particularly the introduction of a mandatory civil defense requirement, dramatically widened the scale and scope of government-controlled rescue and recovery units, but in reality did little to resolve the ongoing, multi-party clash between Göring, Himmler, and the military over control of the country’s civil defense assets. This struggle over government-controlled rescue and recovery units resulted in considerable duplication of effort.

This duplication of effort is clearly seen in a series of administrative guidelines issued after the 1935 Civil Defense Law. In these administrative guidelines National Socialist officials


\(^{127}\) Wendorf, Zivilschutztruppen im Geschäftsbereich des BMI, 35.
assigned important rescue and recovery tasks to a number of different, pre-existing organizations such as the police, fire-fighting units, city and regional constructions crews, and relief organizations such as the TAC and German Red Cross. Some unity was found in the person of the local civil defense official, a position the 1935 Civil Defense Law assigned to the police. Local civil defense officials exercised overall responsibility for all rescue and recovery units, including their proper training and equipping in times of peace, and most efficient deployment during times of war.

Despite the fact that the size and type of city shaped to a certain extent the size and organization of local rescue and recovery units, in general the organization of local and regional rescue and recovery units was similar throughout the country. Standard units included those with personnel trained for fire-fighting [the Feuerlöschdienst], conducting operations underground or in the midst of mountainous rubble [the Luftschutz-Instandsetzungsdienst], neutralizing chemical agents [the Luftschutz-Entgiftungsdienst], providing emergency medical care and overseeing public health-related operations [the Luftschutz-Sanitätsdienst], providing emergency medical care for animals [the Luftschutz-Veterinärdienst], and restoring vital city functions such as gas, electrical and water service [the Fachtrupps]. Stationed in port cities were units trained to restore disrupted water traffic operations. 128 In addition to the rescue and recovery units commanded by local and state police officials, the National Socialist civil defense program also included a sizeable number of personnel assigned to the German Air Force, or Luftwaffe [Luftschutzeinheiten der Luftwaffe]. Created only after the war began, these motorized units served as mobile reserve of highly trained civil defense personnel. 129 Organized regionally and

128 Hampe, Der zivile Luftschutz im Zweiten Weltkrieg, 323-332.
129 As noted above, the creation of these motorized units was the result of an ongoing fight between
generally stationed outside of high-risk areas, these rescue and recovery units reinforced local workers after particularly heavy attacks. At the outbreak of war in September 1939, Nazi civil defense officials had at their disposal the TAC, which was eventually absorbed into the German Wehrmacht, as well as units of the Security and Assistance Service (Sicherheits- und Hilfsdienst (SHD), controlled locally by police officials. (The Reich Interior Ministry retained overall administrative control, however.)

In addition to creating actual government-controlled rescue and recovery units, Nazi officials also supported and encouraged organizations that worked to instill an understanding of and appreciation for civil defense in the German population. While organizations such as the Hitler Youth and League of German Girls included civil defense exercises as part of their activities, the most important quasi-government organization to perform this work was the Reich Civil Defense Association (Reichluftschutzverband), or RCDA, which sponsored a variety of activities to increase public awareness of and support for civil defense. Large-scale civil defense exercises were supplemented by a plethora of informational brochures, posters, books, speakers, and visual displays.


130 Hampe, Der Zivile Luftschutz im Zweiten Weltkrieg, 345-345 and 351-353.

131 The Security and Assistance Service was established in 1937 to provide an organized mobile civil defense “strike force” for Category One targets. It eventually evolved into a conscripted service, which meant members were exempt from active duty military assignments but could not hold other employment. Security and Assistance Service personnel were housed in barracks, although roughly half a unit’s men were allowed to sleep at home on nights they were not called into service. On the Security and Assistance Service see Michael Foedrowitz, German Firefighting Vehicles in World War II (Atglen, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Military History, 1997).
By far the most important aspect of pre-war National Socialist rescue and recovery planning was its emphasis on “self-preparedness” [Selbstschutz]. As defined by the 1935 Civil Defense Law, this concept of “self-preparedness” centered on the idea of individual responsibility. Especially for those Germans who lived in the country’s vulnerable cities, safety from the anticipated aerial bombardment was achieved through personal knowledge and advanced preparation. In practical terms, the idea of “self-preparedness” took on many forms, some more onerous than others. In addition to reading official civil defense-related directives, government authorities encouraged men and women of all ages to complete a variety of training courses, including basic first-aid and fire fighting, and participate in civil defense exercises. In Germany’s cities, Nazi officials encouraged self-preparedness by organizing residents into small units, known as “blocks,” under the leadership of “house leaders” or “block leaders” [Hausleiter and Blockleiter], who helped monitor compliance with government directives. Great emphasis was also placed on physical preparation. Along with their essential documents and valuables, individuals were urged to stockpile a small amount of basic first-aid supplies, food, and other basic essentials. Government directives issued in the wake of the 1935 Civil Defense Law required block-leaders to purchase and maintain basic fire-fighting supplies such as water buckets, sand, axes, and shovels. For the more committed, the RCDA offered helpful informational pamphlets on how to convert cellar rooms into civil defense shelters, and in the late-1930s coordinated the sale of inexpensive gas-masks to the public. As the likelihood of war increased, civil defense officials issued detailed guidelines for preparing private residences for war, and ordered people to hang blackout curtains and clear attics of any flammable materials.132

As was the case with other civil defense programs, the outbreak of war in September 1939 exposed both strengths and weaknesses of the government’s prewar rescue and recovery planning. While Hans Rumpf’s optimistic, post-war assessment, that National Socialist civil defense preparations were sufficient to allow the vast majority of Germans to take the initial aerial bombardments against their cities in stride, was generally correct, considerable problems nonetheless existed and quickly came to light.\(^{133}\) Foremost among these were the questions of administrative organization, oversight and equipment. British attacks on German cities in the Spring and Summer of 1940 exposed glaring deficiencies in all three. In 1941, new government directives consolidated local rescue and recovery services into mobile and static Security and Assistance Service units, renamed the Civil Defense Police [Luftschutzpolizei], under the control of police officials. The increase in the scale and scope of the Anglo-American strategic bombing offensive that occurred in the Spring of 1942 prompted further changes. Rarely staffed by first-rate personnel, local Civil Defense Police units proved woefully incapable of coping with the devastation caused by massive aerial bombardment. As a result, in March 1942 motorized rescue and recovery units were transferred to the Luftwaffe and reorganized along military lines into regiments.\(^{134}\)

Reorganization alleviated only some of the problems with the country’s rescue and recovery services. As envisioned by the 1942 reorganization guidelines, the Luftwaffe’s motorized civil defense regiments constituted a powerful force of men and equipment. The 579 officers and men of each regiment were organized into two companies trained to fight fires and


contain chemical attacks [Feuerlöshe- und Entgiftungskompanien], and a third equipped to undertake rescue operations in the difficult environment of ruined cities [Instandsetzungs-Kompanie]. To support their work and facilitate transportation to disaster sites, the 1942 organizational guidelines called for generous allocations of equipment and vehicles, including specialized fire-fighting trucks, mobile kitchens, and mobile repair stations. In theory, regiments were capable of coping with any challenge stemming from aerial bombardment, from containing massive fires to rescuing people trapped under mounds of rubble. However, an insatiable German military meant that personnel and equipment shortages had existed as early as September 1939 and grew even more serious as the war progressed. Huge losses of men and material in the country’s war against the Soviet Union were exacerbated by the economic shortages caused by the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaigns. By the closing years of the war fewer and fewer resources were available for the country’s rescue and recovery units. As a result, after the opening years of the war the personnel in most civil defense units were older and less fit men. In the industrial region of Rhineland-Westphalia, for example, civil defense units trained and equipped to operate in urban ruins lacked between fifteen and twenty percent of their authorized strength. The average age of civil defense workers in Hamburg at the time of its destruction in the summer of 1943, fifty-four, also illustrates the difficulty local authorities had in recruiting qualified personnel. The transition to a war economy and full mobilization in 1943 only worsened the problems of civil defense officials and forced them to rely in some cases on involuntary and even slave labor. In the closing years of the conflict prisoners-of-war and

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concentration camp inmates were often assigned the dangerous duty of clearing the rubble and gathering the dead left in the wake of Allied air raids.

More generally, it is clear that flawed conceptualization hampered Germany’s rescue and recovery services during the opening years of the conflict. Pre-war planning envisioned rescue and recovery services patterned after peacetime fire-fighting units. During and immediately after attacks well equipped, mobile units would rush to stricken areas to first localize and then contain the damage caused by an aerial bombardment. Writing twenty years after the fact, West Germany’s foremost civil defense expert, Erich Hampe, acknowledged that the pre-war hope of identifying clear priorities for either local or regional rescue and recovery services proved hopelessly inadequate in the face of massive attacks that rained thousands upon thousands of high explosive and incendiary bombs on the country’s cities.137 Alternative strategies proved hard to find, however. Attempts to move the bulk of the country’s rescue and recovery personnel and equipment to less-threatened locations were hampered by high-ranking Nazi officials who feared that such a policy might further erode public confidence in the regime. Moreover, as the Anglo-American attacks intensified after the spring of 1943, local and regional civil defense coordinators found it increasing difficult to move much needed personnel and equipment into heavily damaged areas in a timely manner. As a result, public confidence in both civil defense and the Nazi regime eroded yet further as people grew increasingly skeptical about their chances for survival should they find themselves seriously injured or trapped underneath collapsed buildings.

Not surprisingly, the obstacles Germany’s wartime rescue and recovery services encountered as they attempted to perform their duties ultimately limited their overall effectiveness. Göring himself noted at the end of 1942, it was “impossible to preposition rescue and recovery service personnel and equipment in numbers sufficient to cope with the massive enemy attacks directed against Germany’s cities.” Particularly large attacks, such as those launched against Hamburg, the Ruhr industrial cities, Munich, and Dresden validated Göring’s observation. As discussed in greater detail at the end of this chapter, the August 1943 attack on Hamburg utterly overwhelmed local civil defense and fire-fighting units. The post-attack report compiled by the city’s Police President, the official in charge of local civil defense activities, noted problems ranging from a catastrophic failure of the city water system to poorly-trained, ill-equipped personnel overwhelmed (in some cases literally) by the magnitude of the disaster they sought to contain. From other German cities came equally disturbing reports about the difficulty of coordinating and conducting rescue operations during and after Allied attacks. In the aftermath of the “1,000 bomber raid” on Cologne in Spring 1942, for example, 154 fire units from cities as far away as Bonn and Bochum fought to contain more than 1,500 large fires. Two years later, during the RAF’s massive attack on Braunschweig, local fire fighters reported that the fires ignited by phosphorus incendiary bombs were so large and moved so rapidly as to make the streets virtually “impassable.”


139 Particularly illustrative is the series of articles written by Schnitzler and Schmidle about the civil defense experience of North-Rhine Westphalia, published as four installments in the 1956 volume of Ziviler Luftschutz, op. cit.

140 Friedrich, Der Brand, 421-423.
Nor were efforts to rescue survivors any less dangerous. Severe personnel shortages often forced local civil defense officials to rely on untrained personnel. Some post-attack rescue workers volunteered for the job, but the sheer magnitude of the situation also resulted in the use of forced labor: prisoners-of-war, foreign workers, and concentrate-camp inmates. The nightmarish world of smoking rubble into which these men and women ventured was littered with hazards. Unstable masonry and hidden drops were made even more dangerous by the Allied practice (ironically copied from the Germans) of dropping time-delayed bombs during their attacks. The scarcity of specialized equipment and need to avoid further injury to possible survivors meant that much of the heavy work was performed by hand. Not surprisingly, forced laborers often performed the most dangerous or unpleasant rescue tasks.\footnote{In In the Wake of War: American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945-1955 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Diefendorf notes in his brief discussion on the use of concentration camp inmates to clear ruined cities that some of the best evidence of this practice is found in photographs. For the use of Dachau prisoners in rubble-clearing operations in Munich see Kurt Preis, München unter Hakenkreuz: Die Hauptstadt der Bewegung: Zwischen Pracht und Trümmern (Munich: Ehrenwirth, 1980), 225. The use of Neuengramme prisoners for similar operations in Hamburg is detailed in Kaienburg, Das Konzentrationslager Neuengamme, 196-207.}

While the experience of living and working through the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaign played the most influential role in shaping post-war attitudes towards civil defense, it is important to note that post-war planning also reflected the chaos and uncertainty of the war’s closing year. In the spring and summer of 1944, multiple disastrous defeats on the Eastern Front forced the German Army to retreat from Russia and the occupied territories of Central Europe. By August of that year, fighting reached the frontiers of the Reich itself as elements of the Soviet army entered the region of Schillfelde, East Prussia (today part of modern-day Poland). For many soldiers in the Red Army who had survived the brutal, racially-motivated warfare that characterized fighting on the Eastern Front, their arrival in Germany was nothing
short of what the soldier-writer Ilja Ehrenburg described as “justice” for atrocities “never forgotten.” “In front of Königsberg, Breslau, and Schneidemühl,” Ehrenburg wrote for Soviet military newspapers, “we do not forget the ruins of Woronesh and Stalingrad…of how mothers in Leningrad pull the bodies of their dead children on tiny sleighs…of how Berlin has not yet paid us for the agony of Leningrad.”

The arrival of Red Army units on German soil spread fear and panic through the German population. Studies of the closing year of the war show that the Soviet march to Berlin was brutal and very destructive, especially for civilians. The inhabitants of the small village of Nemmersdorf were the first to experience the brutal occupation. Fearing arbitrary murder, injury, rape, and looting, hundreds of thousands of Germans fled the Russian advance. In the closing months of 1944, more than 200,000 ethnic Germans from the Baltic and territory formerly occupied by German forces moved westward. With the beginning of the Russian winter offensive in January 1945 the number of refugees increased dramatically as Germans from East Prussia and Pomerania joined the multitudes trekking westwards. Although some managed to secure space on the infrequent trains which still serviced the region, the majority traveled by foot.

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or horse-drawn wagon, while smaller numbers escaped on German naval vessels from encircled cities such as Königsberg, Danzig, and Kolberg. By the end of the war, an estimated twelve to thirteen million Germans had fled westward; one to two million of these people died in the attempt.¹⁴⁴

For German military authorities, government officials, and civilians the massive population shifts of 1944-1945 were a disaster of unmitigated proportions. The desperate attempt by millions of Germans to flee the advancing Red Army greatly hindered the attempt by military authorities to mount an effective defense. Logistical support and transportation of reinforcements was nearly impossible because of clogged roads and over-crowded trains. Equally worrying to military commanders was the problem of finding enough civilians to aid the army, either in the form of hastily conscripted and poorly equipped militia, the Volkssturm, or as workers to dig anti-tank ditches and build similar defensive positions. For government officials the mass exodus of Germans living in East Prussia, Pomerania, East Brandenburg, and other eastern provinces taxed them beyond their capacity to either control or support the local populations. Contemporary accounts from the winter of 1944-45 are replete with instances in which civilians ignored orders given by local government officials, Nazi party representatives, and even the police. These same accounts also show how attempts by civilian government officials to aid and support refugees very often failed miserably, either because of the magnitude of the situation or sheer incompetence.¹⁴⁵ For those civilians who survived, the trek westwards through bitter winter


weather remained a defining experience of their lives that shaped not only their attitudes towards war, but also their attitudes towards local and national governments.

**Conclusion: Evaluating an Uncertain Legacy**

In the immediate aftermath of the country’s final defeat few people living in Germany’s ruined cities thought about much beyond the challenges of short-term survival. The cessation of hostilities in May 1945 ended the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaign, but Germans, especially those who still lived in the cities, nonetheless saw daily reminders of the war’s destruction. By the end of the war the Allied air forces had bombed every major and most minor German urban areas. Large cities, especially those with critical war industries, received special treatment, and had been the targets of frequent, repeated raids. The British (and to a certain extent American) emphasis on area bombing resulted in widespread destruction, a fact illustrated by the many statistical estimates of destruction made during and after the war. While the specific results of these studies differ, the general conclusions are more or less consistent. Large cities with a pre-war population of 100,000 or more averaged about fifty-percent destruction of their built-up areas. Individual cities suffered far higher rates of damage. Eighty-nine percent of Würzburg, for example, was destroyed during the war, eighty-three percent of Remscheid and Bochum, and seventy-five percent of Hamburg and Wuppertal.146

For those Germans who survived the war the most visible legacy of this destruction were the ruins—block after block of fire-blackened shells and mounds of rubble that once were apartment houses, public buildings, and places of employment. Rubble was especially prevalent. The West German government’s estimates showed that while factors such as a city’s pre-war

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146 Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War*, 11.
composition, the number of times a city was bombed, and the intensity of the bombing contributed to considerable variation in the amount of extant rubble, the overall total was nearly beyond imagination. Berlin, for example, was buried under 55 million cubic tons of rubble, Hamburg 35.8 million, Cologne, 24 million, Dortmund, 16.7 million, and Essen 14.9 million. Visualizing the meaning of these numbers is difficult, a fact noted by both contemporary officials and current-day historians. Nonetheless, some sense of the enormous pile of debris covering the country is gained if one remembers that five million cubic tons of rubble is nearly twice the volume of the Great Pyramid of Egypt, or that if all the rubble contained in Hamburg at the end of the war were loaded into normal freight railroad cars, the train would reach around the earth. West German officials also tried to make the process of visualization easier by reducing the rubble to a per capita measurement, observing that while Cologne had 31.2 cubic meters of rubble per city inhabitant the residents of Hamburg had “only” 20.9. As one German wrote in 1947:

> The sign of our times is the ruins. They surround our lives. They line the streets of our cities. They are our reality. In their burned-out facades there blooms not the blue flower of romanticism but the daemonic spirit of destruction, decay, and the apocalypse….The ruins live in us as we in them. They are our new reality which is asking to be reshaped.

Widespread physical damage was not the only consequence of the Allied strategic bombing campaign, of course. Equally traumatic for German society was the toll in human life. As is the case with physical damage, the human cost of Allied strategic bombing remains difficult to calculate. Until the closing chaotic months of the war the Reich Statistical Office

147 Ibid. 15 (Tables 1.2 and 1.3).
148 Ibid., 14-16.
Reichsstatistikamt] attempted to maintain records on the number of people killed and wounded by the Allied air forces. Concern about civilian morale caused National Socialist leaders to keep the true extent of the casualties secret, however, and it was not until the early-1950s that reliable figures emerged.\footnote{Friedrich, Der Brand, 467.} As was the case with studies of the physical damage inflicted on the country, casualty estimates in the post-war period were mixed. Nonetheless, once again a clear general outline is apparent. Four hundred to six hundred thousand civilians died during the air raids and as many as 850,000 more suffered serious injuries. By way of comparison these numbers represent approximately twenty to thirty percent of the total number of German military personnel killed as a result of enemy action during the war, and fourteen to twenty percent the number wounded.\footnote{German military casualties during up to the end of January 1945 included 1,810,061 killed in action, 191,338 who died of other causes, and 4,387,701 wounded. An additional 1,902,704 were reported missing during the war. See Jürgen Förster, \textit{et. al.}, “Germany,” 469 (Table: “Germany, 6, Table 9: Total Losses of the Wehrmacht, 1 September 1939-31 January 1945). As Jürgen, \textit{et. al.} note in their explanation of the German losses reliable data for the closing months of the war are difficult to obtain. Reliable estimates of the losses after the end of January 1945 speak of 500,000 military personnel killed, wounded, or captured.}

The widespread physical damage and human suffering caused by the Allied strategic bombing campaign resulted in considerable post-war debate about the overall effectiveness of the country’s civil defense program. Not surprisingly, the German public expressed considerable differences of opinion on the subject. Proponents of the National Socialist civil defense program, especially government officials, labeled it a success. In very broad outlines the position advanced by the program’s supporters argued that while the nation’s active civil defense program (anti-aircraft artillery and interceptors) proved unequal to the task of protecting Germany, the passive civil defense program (bunkers, evacuation of non-essential city residents, and rescue and relief
units) significantly reduced the overall number of civilian casualties. Ironically, the statistics used to summarize the fearful physical and human damage caused by the Allied strategic bombing campaign supported this argument (see Figure 2.3). As supporters of the National Socialist civil defense program noted, physical damage was not the same as human casualties, and in comparison to the former, the latter were remarkably light. The statistics most commonly used to illustrate this point were the casualty estimates for the densely settled (post-1945) state of North Rhine Westphalia. Post-war surveys showed that while nearly all cities in the state suffered rates of physical destruction between sixty and ninety percent, less than two percent of the region’s pre-war population was killed or wounded. Cities such as Duisburg, Essen, and Münster experienced casualty rates of less than 1.5 percent of the pre-war population killed or wounded; the highest casualty rate occurred in Cologne with 2.6 percent.152

Critics of this rather sterile statistical argument tended to counter with visceral imagery, especially that of Hamburg and Dresden. Hamburg, a major industrial and population center in northern Germany, was reduced to ruins during the Battle of Hamburg in July 1943. While the exact number of casualties remains a subject some debate, post-war estimates put the total number of dead at approximately 45,000. Of this number the vast majority, 40,000, died as a result of the massive firestorm created by the second RAF raid. The number of dead in the Battle of Hamburg was only exceeded during the war in Europe by the Allied raids on Dresden in February 1945. Situated on the Elbe River, Dresden, the capital of Saxony, was particularly noted for its splendid architecture and its manufacture of fine china. The absence of heavy

152 Werner Lennartz and Manfred Michler, Schutz im Atomzeitalter—eine Utopie? Antworten zur Frage des zivilen Bevölkerungsschutzes, Schriftenreihe ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz, Vol. 1 (Cologne: Maximilian-Verlag, 1955: 15-17. While Lennartz and Michler were BLSV officials and clearly supportive of that organization’s goals, their statistics, drawn from official government statistics, are sound.
industry in the city meant that prior to 1945 it was attacked only once, a small raid conducted by U.S. bombers in October 1944. This situation changed in January 1945, when, in an effort to take advantage of the recently launched Soviet offensive, the British air ministry drew up plans for a series of heavy attacks against Berlin and other targets in eastern Germany. On 13 February 1945 more than 700 heavy British bombers attacked the city in two waves three hours apart, dropping 1,478 tons of high explosive bombs and 1,182 tons of incendiary. The following day, more than 300 U.S. bombers also struck the city adding to the extensive damage caused by the British. An estimated 50,000 people, including many refugees, died as a result of the raids.153

Nobody disputed that the attacks on both cities resulted in massive firestorms caused by wave after wave of high explosive bombs and incendiaries in which tens of thousands of people died in a matter of hours. The problem, according to those critical of the National Socialist civil defense measures, was not the lack of adequate protective measures, for both cities boasted a well-developed warning system and network of protective shelters.154 Rather, the problem was that the bunkers in which people sought shelter were unequal to the task. Shelters were most effective in protecting their occupants against explosions and flying debris. But in the fiery

153 The only other example of conventional bombing to produce more dead than Hamburg was the U.S. raid on Tokyo, which occurred during the night of 9-10 March 1945. The raid killed nearly twice as many people. To this day the citizens and city historians of Hamburg call the events of the summer of 1943 “die Katastrophe” [the catastrophe]. See Martin Middlebrook, The Battle of Hamburg: Allied Bomber Forces against a German City in 1943 (London: Allen Lane, 1980), Brunswig, Feuersturm über Hamburg, op. cit. On Dresden’s destruction see Oliver Reinhard, Das rote Leuchten: Dresden und der Bombenkrieg (Dresden: Saxo-Phen, 2005), Johannes A. Schöne, Die Nacht, als Dresden unterging—15. Februar 1945: Deutsche Städte im Bombenkrieg (Gudensberg: Wartberg-Verlag GmbH & Co., 2003), and Hamburg und Dresden im Dritten Reich: Bombenkrieg und Kriegsende, ed. Landeszentrale für Politischen Bildung (Hamburg: Landeszentrale für Politischen Bildung, 2000).

154 The state of the active defense was another matter entirely. While numerous inceptors and a well-organized array of anti-aircraft artillery protected Hamburg, Dresden did not possess similar defenses. Such was the weakness of the city’s defenses that only six British bombers were shot down during the two-day raid.
infernors created by thousands of incendiaries bombs the most deadly killers were ultimately heat and carbon monoxide poisoning. In the larger public shelters of Hamburg and Dresden rescue workers often found casualties of the intense heat “sitting or lying in the most natural position…as if talking to each other.”

Both the dry statistics and visceral imagery used to describe the success and failure of Germany’s Second World War civil defense program were colored by individual perception. This is clearly seen in examining wartime and post-war attitudes towards bunkers. On the one hand, people clearly supported the idea of government-financed physical protection. Despite the best efforts of National Socialist officials to instill a sense of disciplined “airmindedness” in the German population, even the small-scale attacks by the Royal Air Force in the Summer and Fall of 1940 resulted in widespread demand for physical shelters. The decision by many city governments to issue strict regulations about who could enter public bunkers in the war’s closing years also suggests a high degree of popularity. On the other hand, analyses of contemporary police reports and oral histories collected after the war show that widespread public mistrust in bunkers grew as the war progressed. The tragic failure of some bunkers to provide adequate protection was the single most important reason for this distrust—a fact Nazi officials tacitly acknowledged by attempting to keep any such disasters secret—but was by no means the only reason for concern. For many people, the prospect of spending extended periods of time with a crushing press of strangers in the dank, dark, airless confines of a bunker was too fearful to contemplate. Far better to try and cheat death in the company of one’s immediate family and close friends in the smaller shelters located in the cellars of apartment buildings. Other Germans

objected to the stringent rules that governed all aspects of bunker life. Still others simply rejected any form of physical protection. Among the millions who fled Germany’s threatened cities were assuredly many who did so because they no longer trusted their fate to any form of physical shelter.  

It is also worth noting that the country’s wartime experience with protective shelters disproportionately affected certain population segments. According to the Reich Air Ministry’s May 1941 guidelines on bunker use, access to alternative forms of physical protection determined whether a person was allowed inside government-built bunkers during an attack. Age and gender, according to the guidelines, meant little if a person enjoyed easy access to less secure forms of shelter such as those found in the cellars of apartment buildings. In reality, though, age and gender were the most important defining criteria, with shelter populations disproportionately made up of the very young, the elderly, and women. Men, for the most part, made up a far smaller proportion of the shelter population, especially after the air war’s intensification in 1943. One explanation for this discrepancy is, of course, obvious: millions of men experienced the horrors of war at the battlefront rather than at home. Equally important, however, was the fact that both government authorities and a sizeable portion of the public viewed men’s retreat into shelters as unpatriotic, unbecoming, and even threatening to the entire war effort. Local officials throughout the country echoed the sentiment expressed by Reich Air Minister Göring in May 1943 that those who controlled bunker access should “prevent men from entering in order to


avoid weakening the sense of “self-protection” in the country’s civil defense community.\textsuperscript{158}

The long-term consequence of men’s widespread exclusion from the country’s protective shelters is important. While it is perhaps stretching the argument to suggest bunkers represented “women’s space,” we cannot escape the fact that men and women had radically different wartime experiences with bunkers. Neither men nor women enjoyed the time spent time huddled in protective shelters, of course, but ultimately far fewer men experienced the claustrophobia-inducing, anxiety-ridden hours described in post-war accounts and more recent scholarly research. Moreover, the anecdotal evidence of post-war oral histories and literature suggests physical protection, especially the large public bunkers, presented different types of dangers to women, such as theft and rape, especially in the chaotic closing months of the war.\textsuperscript{159} However, because West Germany’s civil defense bureaucracy consisted entirely of middle-aged men (especially in the 1950s), women’s negative experiences received little attention and exerted no influence on post-war policy. Whether more than half the country’s population might reject bunkers for reasons entirely divorced from their overall effectiveness was a question civil defense experts failed to ask.

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 117. German original: “…zur Vermeidung einer Schwächung des Selbstschutzes in den Luftschutzgemeinschaften dazu übergegangen, männlichen Volksgenossen das Aufsuchen der LS-Bunker zu untersagen.” Representative comments include those of Hamburg’s Police President Hans Kehrl, who wrote shortly before the war’s end “men who seek unauthorized shelter in air-raid bunkers shirk their civil defense responsibilities. Not only do they contravene the basic principles of the [National Socialist] community, they also make themselves liable to prosecution.” See Hans Voigt and Herbert Brenne, \textit{Krefeld im Luftkrieg, 1939-1945} (Bonn: L. Röhrscheid Verlag, 1986), 78. German original: “Männer, die unberechtigt LS-Bunker oder öffentliche Luftschutträume aufsuchen, entziehen sich ihrer Luftschutzdienstpflicht. Sie verstoßen damit nicht nur gegen die Grundsätze der Volksgemeinschaft, sondern machen sich auch strafbar.”

\textsuperscript{159} Scholarly literature on this subject is sparse, although brief mention of the sexual violence that occurred in bunkers is found in Naimark’s \textit{The Russians in Germany} and Foedrowitz’s \textit{Bunkerwelten}. Memoirs and thinly-disguised fictional accounts are more useful. See, for example, Gert Ledig’s \textit{Vergeltung} (Frankfurt-am-Main: S. Fischer, 1956).
In turning to the country’s rescue and recovery services we see an equally mixed legacy. Few adults, especially those in the cities, escaped some contact with this aspect of the National Socialist civil defense program, especially after 1943. For many women contact with the program occurred as part of their official work. Faced with the mounting personnel shortages that resulted from the military’s insatiable demand, Hitler reluctantly allowed his officials to enlist women for civil defense work. As an ever-greater percentage of the country’s adult male population was drafted into the armed forces, German women, like their counterparts in other combatant countries, found themselves on the front-lines of the air war. While exact numbers are lacking, studies by scholars such as Claudia Koonz, Jill Stapleton, and Elizabeth Heineman show that by the spring of 1945, women worked in a variety of civil defense-related positions.\textsuperscript{160} In addition to the well-known \textit{Blitzmädchen} of the German Luftwaffe—women who helped operate anti-aircraft equipment—women also served as air-raid wardens, bunker leaders, medical personnel, and were even drafted into fire-fighting and rescue crews. Many more women worked in organizations such as the National Socialist People’s Welfare Association, the League of German Girls [\textit{Bund deutscher Mädel}], and the National Socialist Women’s Association [the \textit{NS-Frauenschaft}], groups assigned by Reich Civil Defense Inspector Goebbels to administer to the needs of civilians displaced by the war.\textsuperscript{161}

Even for those Germans not directly employed in the country’s many rescue and recovery organizations, the scale and scope of the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaign almost

\textsuperscript{160} Claudia Koonz, \textit{Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987), 398. See also Schneider, \textit{Frauen unter Hakenkreuz}, 141-151. Schneider reports that in September the peak of women’s mobilization was reached, with nearly sixteen million women were contributing to the German war effort. Of this number, nearly two million were foreigners. Both Koonz and Schneider note that deeply-engrained Nazi reluctance to force women into war service meant that a sizeable (but unspecified) percentage successfully avoided such work.

\textsuperscript{161} Friedrich, \textit{Der Brand}, 437.
inevitability ensured some contact with the work. In the country’s cities, for example, RCDA volunteers and local government officials labored to remind Germans about their personal protection responsibilities, while police reports reveal that more zealous house- and block-leaders continued to watch for violations of the country’s many civil defense ordinances. Evidence of widespread participation in (if not acceptance of) the Nazi self-protection program is found in post-war accounts, which usually ridiculed the rules that mandated people keep fire-fighting equipment and buckets of water on hand. The fact that this experience was central to West Germany’s post-war collective memory suggests a sizeable percentage of the population took the rules seriously, if only to avoid trouble with local police authorities. Inescapable, too, for Germany’s urban population, were post-attack recovery efforts. Contemporary accounts of the work reveal that volunteers often joined official rescue workers as they tried to rescue people trapped in the rubble of collapsed buildings and damaged bunkers, and hundreds of thousands of German civilians had some form of contact with organizations dedicated to alleviating their suffering. Finally, it is important to note that contact with the Nazi rescue and recovery strategy was not limited to Germany’s urban population. The voluntary and forced removal of millions of civilians from the country’s endangered cities helped merge the rural and urban experience of war. Even if they escaped the physical devastation caused by the war, rural communities that housed refugees from Germany’s cities nonetheless experienced indirectly the success and failure of the Nazi rescue and recovery strategy.

While a post-war consensus on civil defense never materialized, Germans could, ultimately, agree on one point. The decision of the world’s advanced industrialized societies to devote considerable resources to military research and development resulted in a shocking increase in the ability to kill. One telling, if gruesome, measure of this “progress” is found in comparing the human costs of the two world wars. Whereas during the period 1914-1918
roughly ten million Europeans, most of them soldiers, died as a result of military conflict, a
generation later the price paid reached into the tens of millions, many of them civilians. For
civilians in all countries, but especially those living and working in Germany, advances in
military technology and doctrine meant the division between the military and homefronts at first
blurred, and then disappeared.

For many German civilians this dramatic change in warfare was most apparent in the
aerial bombing campaigns waged against them. Fulfilling the apocalyptic visions of early-
twentieth century air-power writers, during the Second World War both Axis and Allied war
leaders unleashed their air forces against civilians. Although at first directed solely against
critical war industries, the strategies of aerial bombardment rapidly refocused on human
resources. For Germans, this meant the near total destruction of the country’s major population
centers and industrial cities—the transformation of thriving, modern metropolises into
nightmarish wastelands very similar to those described in *The Holocaust’s Survivors*. The
progress continued, and by the end of the war the invention of the atomic bomb dramatically
expanded the potential for destruction, hardly a comforting thought for a people living less than
an hour’s flying distance from the world’s most powerful military power.¹⁶²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Raids</th>
<th>Bombs Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>5,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>7,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>15,741</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1: Air Raids Conducted Against German Targets, 1914-1918


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Killed</th>
<th>Wounded</th>
<th>Total Casualities</th>
<th>Damage (Marks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1,001,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>829,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>1,383,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>6,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>1,117</td>
<td>15,522,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>1,843</td>
<td>2,589</td>
<td>25,035,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.2: German Civilian Losses to Aerial Bombardment During the First World War

Figure 2.3: Cover Page from the July 1934 Issue of *Die Sirene*.
Figure 2.4: “Vergleich.”
Used by the Federal Civil Defense Association in the 1950s to promote civil defense program, the graphic, entitled “Comparison,” summarized the Second World War experience of Stuttgart and Pforzheim. Stuttgart made a considerable effort to protect its residents, and constructed an extensive network of protective shelters. Pforzheim did not. As a result, Stuttgart, which experienced fifty-three air raids during the period 1939-1945, lost less than one percent of its population. Twenty-two percent of the Pforzheim’s civilian population, by way of comparison, died during the lone attack on the city. The “summary” found at the bottom of both columns helped viewers draw the correct conclusion: “Good Protection Measures: Few Dead; Bad Protective Measures: Many Dead.”

(Source: Bundesarchiv Koblenz, B372.12.)
In June 1957, as heat wave engulfed West Germany’s Rhine River valley, the moderate
temperatures and cool breezes that characterized early-summer weather in the region disappeared
in the face of unrelenting, record-setting temperatures and extended drought. Some people, it is
true, welcomed the warmth—local grape farmers, the press reported, looked forward to a
particularly fine harvest and the promise of an exceptional vintage. Most, however, did not, for
the stifling heat turned houses, stores, classrooms, and offices into sweatboxes tolerated by their
inhabitants only for so long as necessary. That the summer was off to a vile start was agreed
upon by nearly everyone who lived along the Rhine’s banks, including the 535 parliamentary
representatives still in session in the country’s capital, Bonn. The fierce heat notwithstanding,
that June the West German Bundestag held marathon sessions to complete as much of its
legislative agenda as possible before its summer adjournment. With temperatures so fierce that
the city’s fire department was enlisted to cool down the assembly hall by spraying water on its
roof, the Bundestag concluded its work with four straight days of debate. During these meetings,
each of which averaged fourteen hours, representatives debated and acted upon 122 separate
pieces of legislation, including the final reading the government’s first post-war civil defense law,
the Law on Activities Pertaining to Civil Defense [Gesetz über Maßnahmen auf dem Gebiete des
zivilen Luftschutzes], more commonly known as the 1957 Civil Defense Law.
The final reading of the 1957 Civil Defense Law was long in coming. Sponsored by Interior Minister Gerhard Schröder and submitted by Adenauer’s right-of-center government for consideration almost exactly two years previously in June 1955, the law had languished in front of no less than seven different Bundestag committees as representatives, government officials, expert witnesses, special interest groups, and even the general public debated the real and implied meaning of nearly every word of every paragraph. The process was long, exhausting, and as members of all political parties made clear during the final day of deliberation, ultimately unsatisfying. After two years of public debate, private discussion, and seemingly endless compromise the best the members could do was approve a version of the law that most agreed was as best “imperfect” and only “a good beginning.”\textsuperscript{163}

In the previous chapter of this study we examined German civil defense planning prior to 1945. Now we turn our attention to the process of creating the legal framework necessary to reconstruct a viable civil defense system in a country threatened by the possibility of catastrophic nuclear war. Because of their cultural heritage and recent historical experience, West Germans were particularly anxious to establish a secure legal basis for their program. As a result of historical forces unique to their culture, including the comprehensive and rapid assimilation of principles of Roman law and the process of nineteenth century legal codification, German society as a whole attached (and still attaches) enormous importance to two legal traditions. The first, best described as extensive legal codification, stresses the need to present laws as “…a unified whole” containing “not only specific rules but also the general and abstract rules and principles

\textsuperscript{163} See the comments of Dr. Helmut Schranz (DP\[FVP\]) in Verhandlungen des deutschen Bundestages. Stenographische Berichte, Vol. 36, Second Election Period, Session of 8 May 1957 (Bonn: Bundesdruckerei, 1957), 12798-12799 (hereafter cited as Bundestag Verhandlungen). Although a minor party today, the Germany Party [Deutsche Partei] was part of the national coalition that governed West Germany from 1949 until 1961, which nine of its members defected to the CDU.
that apply to all of the specific and general circumstances.”\textsuperscript{164} This cultural need for codification stems from a second long-standing German legal tradition, the principle of \textit{Rechtssicherheit}, the idea that individual rights, privileges, and responsibilities are clearly stated and amply protected by law.\textsuperscript{165} These traditions formed the basis of the German \textit{Rechtsstaat}—a state ruled by law—a concept that remained important to legislators in post-war West Germany despite the legal abuses of the National Socialist regime.

However, as we shall see, re-creating civil defense in early Cold War West Germany proved far from easy. In addition to the legal and administrative obstacles created by the Allies placed in the way at the end of the Second World War, proponents of a comprehensive domestic civil defense program were forced to confront the significant and widespread skepticism and resistance their plans engendered. While much of this resistance emanated from the general public, political divisions also existed. In addition to the resistance from the opposition the Social Democrats, West German civil defense proponents discovered that not all members of the country’s bureaucracy or the Adenauer government fully shared their vision. Strong differences of opinion emerged early in early discussions about the post-war legislation as government officials debated the exact nature of the threat facing the nation, and continued throughout subsequent debates in government ministries, the federal cabinet, and upper and lower houses of Parliament. In both cases, bureaucratic posturing accounted for much of this resistance, but the records from this period also reveal the importance of other factors, such as blatant political


\textsuperscript{165} For a useful overview of the concept of \textit{Rechtssicherheit} see Henry Friedlander, “German Law and German Crimes in the Nazi Era,” in F.C. Decoste and Bernard Schwartz, eds., \textit{The Holocaust’s Ghost: Writings on Art, Politics, Law, and Education} (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2000), 283-289.
calculation and widespread concern about how civil defense preparations might effect not only the country’s international standing, but also the fragile institution known as West German democracy.

**Conceptualizing War in the Ruins of Defeat**

The end of the Second World War marked a radical break in the history of German civil defense. As we have seen, prior to its final defeat in May 1945 Germany’s passive civil defense program had achieved a reasonably high degree of organization and was more effective than not. A regionally-coordinated warning network provided Germans with adequate notification of pending attacks; an extensive system of public and private shelters promised much of the population some form of physical protection during an air raid; and a multi-organizational rescue and recovery service was on hand to offer physical and psychological aid to the victims of the Allied bombing raids. While the overall program was far from perfect, especially in the chaotic closing months of the war, it nonetheless offered millions of Germans the possibility of surviving the dangers of total war.

All of this changed with Germany’s surrender in May 1945. As they consolidated their administrative and legal control over the country, the occupying Allied powers passed a series of directives and laws intended to eliminate the Germany’s war-making capacity. Allied Control Council Directive Twenty-four, “Removal from Office and from Positions of Responsibility of Nazis and of Persons Hostile to Allied Purposes,” passed 12 January 1945, dissolved the central administrative apparatus of the country’s civil defense organization (the Reich Air Ministry), its rescue and recovery units, central warning system, and Reich Civil Defense Association. Most of the country’s physical civil defense infrastructure was declared prohibited and therefore illegal by the provisions of Allied Control Council Law Twenty-three, “Prohibition of Military
Construction in Germany.” In addition to a general prohibition on all military installations, the law banned the “planning, designing or erection of any type of civil construction…[for the] possible utilization for war purposes.”\textsuperscript{166} The system of protective bunkers constructed by national, state, and local authorities during the war was specifically declared illegal by the law’s second article. Finally, Allied Control Law Eight, “Elimination and Prohibition of Military Training,” passed 30 November 1945, outlawed any organization, group of persons, or individuals which taught “directly or indirectly the theory, principles, technique or mechanics of war or prepares the participants for any war activity.”\textsuperscript{167} Although the law did not specifically mention paramilitary civil defense forces such as the, or public organizations such as the Reich Civil Defense Association, most Allied and German officials felt the wording of the third article was sufficiently broad to include such groups.\textsuperscript{168} The legislation, one contemporary civil defense official noted, meant that after 1945 “German civil defense ceased to exist.”\textsuperscript{169}

In the half-decade following the country’s surrender in May 1945, the immediate demands of first survival and then reconstruction precluded any serious effort at civil defense planning. However, the country’s political and military leaders could not ignore the delicate nature of the country’s geo-strategic position, and as early as 1948 secretly began to think about


\textsuperscript{168} Article III prohibited “all war veterans organisations and all organisations of groups which tend to perpetuate the Germany military tradition….” \textit{Ibid}. The origins of the TAC are discussed in the previous chapter.

future conflict. Although research on the topic of West Germany’s rearmament clearly shows that the vast majority of planning conducted during this period focused on active military defense, civil defense received some attention.\(^{170}\) One important voice in the early civil defense-related debate was that of the former Wehrmacht general Hans Speidel.\(^{171}\) In mid-1948, Speidel was one of several former high-ranking military officers to establish contact with the “German Office for Questions Concerning Peace” [Deutsches Büro für Friedensfragen], a quasi-private organization based in Stuttgart that was intended to serve as the basis of a future Foreign Ministry. For 150 Deutschmarks (DM), Speidel agreed to write a memorandum on the internal and external security threats facing a new West German state. In the subsequent study, entitled “Thoughts on the Protection of Western Europe” [Gedanken zur Sicherung Westeuropas], Speidel briefly discussed the differences between active and passive defense. In December 1948, Konrad Adenauer, West Germany’s future Chancellor, received Speidel to personally discuss the security situation in which a new German nation might find itself. Speidel summarized the results of the discussion in a memorandum he forwarded to Adenauer. As was the case in his first memorandum, the report Speidel drafted for Adenauer evaluated the necessity of providing both active and passive defense for the country’s population.\(^{172}\)

\(^{170}\) The historiography on West German rearmament is substantial. Sources used for this study are discussed in Chapter One.

\(^{171}\) Born in 1874, Speidel was a professional soldier who served continuously as an active officer from 1914 to 1944. After the war, Speidel became Konrad Adenauer’s chief military advisor, represented West Germany in NATO, headed the Army Department within the Federal Defense Ministry, and from 1957 to 1963 commanded all NATO forces in central Europe. Speidel retired from active service in 1964.

\(^{172}\) Donald Abenheim, Reforging the Iron Cross: The Search for Tradition in the West German Armed Forces (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988), 52 (footnote 11). The text of this study, and the other 1948-1950 paper written by Speidel, are found in Hans Speidel, Aus Unserer Zeit: Erinnerungen (Berlin: Propyläen, 1977), 470-475. On Speidel’s work with the Friedensbüro and memorandum for the future Chancellor see Alarie Searle, Wehrmacht Generals, West German Society, and the Debate
Despite this early progress civil defense proponents were hampered by the fact that both domestic and international opinion remained deeply divided about the possibility of West German remilitarization, a fact shown by ongoing public debates about the fate of former-Wehrmacht personnel still imprisoned for war crimes. The influential American High Commissioner for Germany, John McCloy, in particular worried how even discussion of remilitarization might inadvertently flame the smoldering embers of National Socialist sentiment still prevalent in a healthy minority of the country’s population. Thus, it was not until 1950 and the outbreak of the Korean War that the topic of civil defense really emerged as an important part of military and political policy discussions.

The broad outline of what eventually became the country’s first post-war civil defense program was initially discussed in three important position papers received by the federal government in the summer and fall of 1950. The first, sent to Housing Minister Eberhard Wildermuth in August 1950, was authored by three men very familiar with the National Socialist civil defense program: August Ehrhard, former Chief of Civil Defense in the General Staff of the Luftwaffe, Dr. Rudolf Hanslian, editor of Gasschutz und Luftschutz, the premier pre-war civil defense journal, and Heinrich Paetsch, organizer of the first civil defense program in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior and editor of West Germany’s first civil defense journal, Ziviler Luftschutz. Initially submitted to the Allied High Commission one month earlier, the report called upon the federal government to publicly acknowledge the need to rebuild West Germany’s

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civil defense program. The authors then outlined three broad steps to achieve this goal. First and foremost they recommended the West German government establish an “expert commission for scientific, technical and organizational questions about civil defense.” After creating such a commission, the authors continued, government officials should then begin planning a provisional civil defense program. Finally, the authors urged the Adenauer government to persuade the Allied occupation authorities to lift restrictions on developing, producing, and distributing “personal” civil defense equipment, such as gas masks. According to Ehrhard, Hanslian, and Paetsch, the final step, in particular, was necessary to provide some protection to the country’s civilian population from weapons of mass destruction.175

At approximately the same time the Housing Ministry first took up the issue of civil defense, Speidel submitted to Adenauer another broad-ranging study on the country’s physical security. Although again concerned primarily with active military defense, Speidel did address the problem of what he termed “passive defense measures.” Effective national defense, he argued, was possible only if the government pursued several broad courses of action. No doubt influenced by memories of the chaotic closing months of the war, Speidel urged government officials to create plans to oversee and control large numbers of refugees, implement rationing programs in times of crisis, and to maintain public order during wartime, augment regular police forces with auxiliary law enforcement units should war break out. Well aware of the problems the National Socialist government had in feeding and supplying its citizens after 1944, Speidel also argued in favor of stockpiling important civil defense-related equipment (medical equipment, food, and fuel). To protect civilians against the worst effects of aerial bombardment, Speidel urged the federal government to rebuild the country’s warning system and construct (or refurbish)  

175 Ibid.
shelters to house the country’s civilian population in times of war. As his final recommendation he noted the critical importance of creating a new legal framework within which to plan and organize the country’s civil defense program including, if necessary, altering the country’s constitution.176

Finally, moving beyond the recommendations contained in Speidel’s report was a 1950 paper written by a small group of former Wehrmacht officers who advised Adenauer on defense-related issues. The result of a four-day meeting held at the Abbey Himmerod in the Eifel Mountains in October 1950, the paper was a harbinger of West Germany’s future civil defense policy.177 As part of their analysis of the potential outcome of a conflict between the superpowers, the authors reached three important conclusions regarding the composition and organization of any future attempts by the West German government to protect its citizens. Once again, the recent experience of total war shaped their thinking. Federal authorities, the authors argued, needed first and foremost to support military operations by organizing units of “civilian auxiliaries” [zivile Hilfskräfte] and “technical troops” [technische Truppen] similar to those which existed during the Second World War. Because timely warning of attacks on military and civilian targets was essential, the federal government could achieve this by rebuilding the nation’s protective warning system [Luftschutzwarndienst]. Finally, the authors of the Himmerod

176 “Gedanken über die Fragen der äußern Sicherheit der Deutschen Bundesrepublik,” in Speidel, Aus unserer Zeit, 477ff.

177 It is important to note, though, that the vast majority of the study was devoted to the topic of military defense. For a detailed examination of the “Himmerod Memorandum” see Abenheim, Reforging the Iron Cross, 52-63, Hans-Jürgen Rautenberg and Norbert Wiggershaus, Die Himmeroder Denkschrift: Politische und militärische Überlegungen für einen Beitrag der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zur Westeuropäischen Verteidigung 2d ed. (Karlsruhe: 1985), 36ff, and Searle, Wehrmacht Generals, 57-65. A partial copy of the text is found in Werner Bührer, ed., Die Adenauer-Ära: Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1949-1963, Serie Piper Dokumentation (Munich, R. Piper GmbH & Co.: 1993), 68-72.
memorandum stressed the importance of subordinating civil defense to military defense. In a
telling passage the authors concluded:

[In a future war] masses of fleeing refugees can decisively threaten the physical security of the nation. Every effort must be made, therefore, through public education programs and propaganda, to reduce, if not to prevent, such activity. The presence of hundreds of thousands, or millions, of fleeing refugees will not only greatly complicate attempts by military commanders to coordinate necessary defensive operations, but will also increase fourfold the difficulty in conducting those operations…. One must also consider the very deadly results of enemy air-attacks on masses of refugees.178

Before turning to the decisions and actions that constituted the initial effort to provide the Federal Republic with a credible civil defense system, it is worth pausing to consider the work of the country’s early theorists. The recommendations set forth in the studies written by Speidel, Ehrhard, Hanslian, Paetsch, and the authors of the Himmerod memorandum contained three important characteristics that played an important role in subsequent debates. First, without exception the authors referenced the Second World War as the single most important event from which to draw conclusions about future needs. Second, civilians and military experts alike endorsed the idea of recreating a national civil defense system. While this support for civil defense is understandable in the case of civilians such as Ehrhard, Hanslian, and Paetsch, the fact that military officers such as Speidel also supported the idea boded well for future cooperation. Finally, it is important to note that while the Second World War featured prominently in the analyses, in all three cases civil defense was nonetheless presented primarily as a technical challenge. This approach, most clearly seen in the policy recommendations offered by Ehrhard, Hanslian, and Paetsch, harkened back to policy models created during the Weimar era. While this emphasis on technical experts providing technological solutions for the nation’s civil defense

178  Rautenberg and Wiggershaus, Die Himmeroder Denkschrift. (Emphasis mine.)
dilemma was not entirely misguided, it nonetheless established a paradigm for future policy formation that was to prove extremely problematic.

**Initial Efforts to Rebuild West German Civil Defense**

Towards the end of 1950, West German Interior Ministry [Bundesministerium des Inneres] State Secretary Hans Egidi forwarded to the Federal Chancellery [Bundeskanzleramt] the August 1950 study prepared by Ehrhard, Hanslian, Paetsch. Of concern to Egidi were both the report’s alarming title, *The Defenselessness of the German Population in the Event of Military Operations in Western Europe* [Die Schutzlosigkeit des deutschen Volkes im Falle militärischer Operationen in Westeuropa], and its grim portrayal of a future conflict. Egidi reminded his colleagues in the Federal Chancellery of what many had already read—that chemical, biological, and atomic weapons would have a devastating effect on soldiers and civilians alike. To counter this horrific scenario, the three authors urged the new West German government to “learn the lessons of the past” and begin the process of rebuilding the nation’s civil defense program, a conclusion Egidi fully endorsed in the memorandum he attached to the report. The Federal Chancellery, Egidi concluded, must begin discussions with the Allied High Commissioners to remove, or at least lessen, the restrictions imposed by Allied Control Directive Twenty-four and Allied Control Law Twenty-three.\(^\text{179}\) In Egidi’s opinion, increasing speculation by the West German press about the defenselessness of the German population provided strong incentive for the federal government to move forward.

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\(^\text{179}\) BA B106.19759, Memorandum, Hans Egidi to the Federal Chancellery [Bundeskanzleramt], 17 August 1950.
The timing of Egidi’s request was hardly coincidental. As Egidi himself noted, the changing international environment gave considerable incentive to the Western powers to reconsider their position on a broad range of security-related issues, including that of West German civil defense. Conceived of as a bulwark against the further spread of communism, West Germany was established in September 1949 as a result of the undeclared Cold War that existed between the United States and Soviet Union. However, from its inception the new country was threatened from the very moment of its creation by the sizeable Soviet military presence in Eastern Europe.\(^{180}\) The technological sophistication of the enemy underscored West-Germany’s grim geo-strategic position. By the late-1940s the Soviet military was well along in the process of transforming itself from the technologically-unsophisticated force that had defeated Germany in the Second World War to one equipped with military technology reserve-engineered from western prototypes.\(^{181}\) Moreover, in August 1949 the Soviet Union conducted its first successful test of an atomic bomb. From this point on western military planners, especially those in West Germany were forced to consider the possibility of increasingly sophisticated Soviet bombers unleashing nuclear annihilation on the region’s cities.

Both the Interior Ministry and Federal Chancellery chose not to comment publicly on the study prepared by Ehrhard, Hanslian, and Paetsch; nonetheless, it served as a catalyst for renewed West German civil defense planning. Serious planning began a month later in September 1950,

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\(^{180}\) While exact numbers remain difficult to determine, recent scholarship estimates that the Soviet ground forces peaked in mid-1952 at about six million. Throughout the 1950s, the U.S. intelligence community credited the Soviet Union with 175 divisions, plus satellite units. See Norman Friedman, *The Fifty-Year War: Conflict and Strategy in the Cold War* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2000), 115. The early history of the Cold War is the subject of an impressive body of scholarly work. In addition to Friedman’s work a useful overview used for this study is Priscilla Roberts, *The Cold War* (Phoenix Mill and Thrupp, Sutton Publishing Limited, 2000). Extensive bibliographical essays are found in both Friedman and Roberts.

when the government’s foremost civil defense expert, Erich Hampe, chaired the country’s first official conference on the subject. \(^{182}\) Although attended by only a small number of civilian experts and active and retired military officers, their expertise, experience, and official power nonetheless significantly shaped the scope and direction of future West German planning. In a summary of its most important findings the conference participants set forth an agenda for future work by outlining the critical first steps the West German government must take to re-establish a comprehensive civil defense system. These included creating a central office [Spitzenbehörde], or nerve center, to coordinate national civil defense policy, establishing an inter-ministerial coordinating working group and a scientific and technical advisory committee, conducting an immediate, nation-wide survey of exiting civil defense facilities, especially of existing bunkers, and working to provide extant relief and recovery services with at least rudimentary information about their potential civil defense work. \(^{183}\) The most important “first-step,” however, was

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\(^{182}\) Born 1889 in Thuringia, Erich Hampe entered the Imperial German Army as a young lieutenant in 1909. During the First World War he served as an infantry officer on the Western Front. At the war’s conclusion, Hampe transferred his service to the newly-formed Technical Assistance Corps, rising steadily through the ranks during the interwar period until he became Chief of the Reich Interior Ministry’s TAC Bureau [Chef des Reichsamtes] in 1941. In addition to his work with the TAC, Hampe also published widely on a variety of civil defense-related topics. After 1941, Hampe returned to the military. During the remainder of the Second World War he served in various positions in the Army General Staff [Oberkommando des Heeres]. By January 1945 he had obtained the rank of Brigadier General [Generalmajor] and commanded all “Technical Troops” under the General Staff’s control. Captured at the end of the war by U.S. forces, Hampe remained a prisoner-of-war until 1947. The fact that he was unburdened with a Nazi past allowed him to return to government service in 1950, first as a senior official in the West German Interior Ministry, and, after 1954 President of the Federal Office for Civil Defense [Bundesanstalt für zivile Luftschutz]. After his retirement from government service in 1956, Hampe continued to remain involved in civil defense-related activity, including the founding of the German Association for Helicopter Usage and Air Rescue [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hubrauberverwendung und Luftrettung e.V.] and the German Red Cross. Although historians have not yet deemed Hampe worthy of biographical treatment, reasonably complete accounts of his career are found in his autobiography, Als alles in Scherben fiel: Erinnerungen des Generalmajors a.D., ehem. Generals den technischen. Truppen und Präsidenten der Bundesanstalt für zivile Luftschutz (Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag, 1979) and own history of the TAC, Die unbekannte Armee: Die technische Truppen im 2. Weltkrieg (Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag, 1979).

\(^{183}\) BA B106.17569, Memorandum, Erich Hampe to the Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung I [Hans
eliminating legal restrictions on such work, for without permission from the Allies civil defense planning remained an illegal activity, and creating a new legal framework for subsequent planning.

Fortunately, Egidi’s belief that the Allied powers were receptive to the idea of a reconstituted West German civil defense program proved correct. In early November 1950, Federal Chancellery officials met with the security director of the Allied High Commission and presented their government’s rationale for eliminating the legal and administrative impediments to reconstituting the country’s passive civil defense program. This was followed in late December 1950 by a request from the Federal Chancellor himself. In a letter to the French Ambassador André François-Poncet, Adenauer argued forcefully but respectfully that the West German government, and not the Allies, must take full responsibility for the country’s passive civil defense program. Aware that his domestic and international critics might portray his request as the first step in the process of West German rearmament—a policy he firmly supported in private but distanced himself from in public—Adenauer was careful to assure the French ambassador that his planners would restrict their activity to passive civil defense and coordinate fully and openly with the western Allies.¹⁸⁴

Although the Allies publicly supported a renewal of West German civil defense activity, private reservations clearly remained, as evidenced by the fact that seven months passed before they and West German government officials finally met to clarify the details of Adenauer’s

¹⁸⁴ BA B136 5093, Letter, Konrad Adenauer to François-Poncet, 21 December 1950. The extant files do not reveal the ambassador’s response.
request. Even then concern among Allied officials remained high, and an immediate elimination of the ban failed to materialize. A full year after Adenauer first raised the subject he received word that domestic political considerations in the Allied countries precluded an outright elimination of the ban. (U.S. officials were far less opposed to the idea than their British and French counterparts, positions that reflected the country’s specific positions on the broader questions of German rearmament.) Even as they rejected the idea of eliminating the bans on such planning, however, the Allies informed West German civil defense officials that they would tacitly support attempts to study the issue of civil defense planning.

As the Allies prevaricated, the West Germans began the administrative work required to create the country’s first civil defense program. Federal officials began their practical planning efforts with the important question of overall control: who was responsible for creating and organizing the country’s first post-war system of civil defense? Wartime experience suggested two possible answers to this question: the West German military (which in 1951 still did not exist) or civilian government officials. The first was quickly rejected by the small cadre of strategists working in the “Blank Office” [Dienststelle Blank], the country’s unofficial Defense Ministry. Civil defense, Minister without Portfolio Theodor Blank argued, was not the same as

185 BA B106 17569, Internal Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung IC8, 20 July 1951.

186 Staatsarchiv der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (hereafter cited as SHH) 239.4-674, Minutes, Konferenz der Innenministern (und Senatoren) der Länder vom 08.05.1951, distributed as an attachment to Letter, Lothar Danner to the Hamburg Senat, 10 January 1952.

187 The “Blank Office was created after the forced resignation in October 1950 of the retired General Count Gerhard von Schwerin, Adenauer’s primary security advisor. Schwerin was replaced by the CDU Bundestag representative Theodor Blank as the “Chancellor’s appointee for the increase in Allied troops in Germany and related questions” [Beauftragter des Bundeskanzler für die Vermehrung der alliierten Truppen in Deutschland und zusammenhängenden Fragen]. The office’s primary responsibility was preparing for the country’s participation first in the European Defense Community [Europäische Verteidigungsgemeinschaft] and, after that organization’s collapse, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In July 1956, the Blank Office was granted ministerial status and
national defense. Indeed, in the minds of military strategists the distinction was critical. National defense was best defined as the task of defending the country as a whole from physical attack—a mission for which the military was well suited. Civil defense, on the other hand, encompassed the physical protection of the nation’s civilian population; a task most military commanders were ill-equipped to perform. While Blank Office officials acknowledged that physically protecting the nation’s population was an important mission given the devastating impact future wars would have on civilians, they asserted that an even more critical mission of any civil defense program was maintaining law and order in potential combat zones.

Given their experience during the Second World War, this assertion was hardly surprising. In struggling to address the complex challenge of defending the country against a numerically superior enemy, the specter of hundreds of thousands panicked refugees clogging West Germany’s rail and road networks was particularly horrifying to military strategists, who needed the country’s transportation infrastructure to move troops and equipment. Additionally, West German military officials were no doubt influenced by the limited (and in 1952 non-existent) resources at their disposal. As a result, it is hardly surprising they felt law enforcement agencies and extant civilian relief and recover organizations should bear the primary responsibility for coordinating and executing future civil defense plans. More surprising, however, is the fact that other federal ministries supported the military strategists in the Blank Office and quickly decided that the Interior Ministry, which was responsible for internal security and law enforcement, should oversee the country’s civil defense program. Even in the early-

1950s, it was clear that such a program required control of considerable resources and Interior Ministry involvement in affairs beyond its official jurisdiction, such as housing construction, public health care, and transportation policy. Nonetheless, the position first advocated by the Dienststelle Blank was officially adopted at the 21 November 1951 meeting of the federal cabinet when ministers voted to give overall responsibility for the country’s civil defense program to the Interior Ministry. 188

After ensuring they would exercise overall control over the country’s new civil defense system, Interior Ministry officials next turned to the task of recreating the large civil-defense making community that had existed prior to 1945. In general, the government was successful, and by the end of the 1952 two important civil defense-related institutions were once again in place. The first, a commission of well-respected, and in some cases nationally-renowned scientific and technical experts, usually referred to the Schutzkommission, was established in the closing days of 1951 by Gustav Heinemann, then Interior Minister and later President of the Federal Republic. 189 The commission’s task, according to the preamble of its charter, was to bring together “notable and independent scientists” for the purpose of advising the Interior Minister on “all questions pertaining to the defense against atomic, biological, and chemical attacks.” 190 To help facilitate communication among civil defense experts, the Interior Ministry


189 The group was officially known as the Committee to Protect the Civilian Population Against Atomic, Biological, and Chemical Attacks [Kommission zum Schutz der Zivilbevölkerung gegen atomare, biologisch und chemische Angriffe].

also supported efforts to restart publication of *Ziviler Luftschutz* (known prior to the Second World War as *Gasschutz und Luftschutz*), the premier professional journal of the West German civil defense policy-making community. Here, too, the government met with success, with the first issue published in November 1952.\footnote{The first issue of *Gasschutz- und Luftschutz* was published in August 1931.}

As the experts assembled by the federal government delved more deeply into the subject of civil defense in the atomic age, they quickly identified three broad obstacles to success. The first was threat identification: how, exactly, did the emerging Cold War threaten the physical, psychological, and economic security of the country? On this issue, as with many others, considerable differences of opinion existed. In the early-1950s, most of the government’s experts believed air-attacks by long-range strategic bombers presented the greatest immediate threat to the country, but disagreed about what would happen when the bombers reached their targets. Many, like the retired general Hampe, whose civil defense experience dated back to the Weimar Republic, or Paetsch, whose involvement with civil defense included experience as the chief civil defense-planning official in the Prussian Interior Ministry during the Weimar Republic and first years of the National Socialist regime, felt air-attacks directed against West Germany’s civilian population would consist almost entirely of high-explosive and incendiary bombs. Therefore, Hampe and Paetsch argued, the Federal government should devote its attention to limiting the effects of such attacks in general, and firestorms in particular. A more extreme version of this idea was put forth by Botho Bauch, a senior Interior Ministry official who had worked for most of the war in the Berlin-located Reich Interior Ministry. Bauch practically dismissed outright the threat posed by non-conventional, and especially atomic, weapons. In a talk presented at a June 1953 government-sponsored conference on civil defense, for instance, he
argued that the potential effects of atomic weapons were “greatly exaggerated, especially in American propaganda.”

In light of what we now know about the lethality of atomic weapons, Bauch’s comments might strike the twenty-first century reader as absurd. Unfortunately, Bauch, who later acknowledged the danger such weapons posed to his country, left no record in the official files of the rationale underpinning his thinking; however, tentative explanations for his statement are possible. Given the environment in which Bauch and other senior civil defense officials worked and lived, the lack of concern about atomic weapons was not surprising. In the early-1950s, the extent to which either superpower would rely on atomic weapons in a future was as yet unclear. Admittedly, the arsenals of both superpowers contained such weapons, but official policy and actual reality obscured the role of these weapons in future conflict. While observers in and outside West Germany presumed that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, would resort to atomic weapons to stop a Soviet attack on Western Europe, the organization’s official strategy remained a closely guarded secret. Moreover, the fact that atomic weapons were not actually stationed on West German soil until the end of 1953 doubtless helped civil defense planners focus their attention (and the public’s) on other challenges.

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193 Although prior to Eisenhower’s election as President in 1952 U.S. military planners had proposed the idea of a new force structure that used low-yield nuclear weapons as a means to compensate for lower troop levels, the first tactical nuclear delivery systems (the dual-capable nine-inch “atomic gun”) did not arrive in West Germany until July 1953. U.S. officials waited an additional three months before publically acknowledging their plans to use nuclear weapons in a major European military conflict. See Hans-Jürgen Schraut, “U.S. Forces in Germany,” in U.S. Military Forces in Europe: The Early Years, 1945-1970, ed. Simon W. Duke and Wolfgang Krieger (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1993), 177-178.
Additionally, one cannot help but wonder if Bauch and his like-minded colleagues had dismissed the danger posed by atomic weapons because their known effects, while horrific, were nonetheless comprehensible to men and women who had lived through the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaign. By the mid-1950s West Germans had access to official and unofficial accounts of the awesome power of atomic weapons. Descriptions such as those found in John Hersey’s widely circulated Pulitzer Prize-winning report in The New Yorker, “August 6th, 1945”—first published in West Germany in 1947—while terrible, were not orders of magnitude worse than those from the bombed-out cities of the German Reich. Stated differently, many West Germans, including, most likely, those charged with reconstructing the country’s civil defense system, had seen conventional military technology equal to, and in some cases surpassing, the destruction caused by atomic weapons.

It is important to note that not all West German civil defense planners echoed Bauch’s sentiments. Some, like Dr. Heinz Dählmann, a senior Interior Ministry official and technical expert of considerable note, argued that rapid advances in weapons technology meant the country faced very new challenges. In stark contrast to Bauch, Dählmann emphasized the need to prepare for catastrophic damage caused by the widespread use of weapons of mass destruction. Still other experts pointed out that the real challenge facing the nation was not the damage caused by widespread damage to its cities, but rather panic and the resulting flood of refugees, a concern

194 John Hersey, a correspondent who traveled throughout Italy, Poland, and the Soviet Union during the Second World War, traveled to Hiroshima in May 1946 to report on the destruction and subsequent consequences caused by the first use of a nuclear weapon. Despite strong resistance from U.S. occupation authorities, Hersey was able to interview six survivors of the attack. The results of his research were first published in a special issue of The New Yorker and later translated and published world-wide. On Hersey’s work see Nancy Huse, The Survival Tales of John Hersey (Troy, New York: Whitston Publishing Company, 1983).

shared by other European civil defense planners. Even those experts who argued that atomic weapons would radically change the scale and scope of future conflict still tended to conceive them as simply larger, more powerful variants of the ordinance used during the Second World War. The critical problem of radioactive fallout remained largely ignored in early discussions—an omission that was to cause considerable problems when the policy-makers finally presented their plans to a wider audience. Notably, discussions during this period emphasized the consequences of a Soviet attack on the Federal Republic. The ramifications of Allied efforts to protect the nation remained largely unexamined.

Devising an effective system of protection constituted the second obstacle. Despite their disagreement over the issue of the type of threat facing the nation, West Germany’s civil defense policy-making community was more capable of reaching a consensus about how best to protect the country’s civilian population. Most experts favored a multifaceted response. Specifically, they believed the government should build a national warning system; construct new or renovate existing protective shelters, especially in urban centers; organize rescue and recovery units capable of assisting the civilian population after an attack; and establish outreach programs to educate the general public about civil defense issues.196 Some policy-makers, such as the former general Adolf Heusinger, also recommended that the federal government create plans to evacuate West German cities during times of acute crisis—an issue that had dogged peacetime civil defense planning since the early days of the Weimar Republic.197

196 The federal government’s early conceptualization of a civil defense program is detailed in a number of sources. See, for example, Botho Bauch, “Der Aufbau des zivilen Luftschutzes,” 24-29, and Werner Lennartz and Manfred Michler, Schutz im Atomzeitalter – eine Utopie? Antworten zur Frage des zivilen Bevölkerungsschutz (Cologne: Maximilian-Verlag, 1955), especially chapters one through three.

197 BA B106.17571, Internal Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung ZB [Botho Bauch], 23
Finally, there existed the very problematic issue of implementation. For West Germany’s civil defense community, this issue really consisted of two distinct questions. The first was whether the government, based on its understanding of the threat facing the nation, should try to move forward with its attempts to establish a comprehensive civil defense program. Almost all the country’s civil defense community answered this question with a resounding yes. In his preface to the premier issue of *Ziviler Luftschutz*, for example, Interior Minister Robert Lehr, no stranger to the devastation caused by total war, noted that civil defense was a “precautionary measure that no responsible government could afford to ignore.”  

Other prominent civil defense officials echoed this sentiment. During an October 1953 intra-ministerial meeting held to reach agreement on the details of a provisional civil defense program, Interior Ministry State Secretary Hans Ritter von Lex, no doubt influenced by his experience of living and working in Berlin from 1933 onwards, informed his colleagues that of all the western nations only the Federal Republic had yet to embrace the idea that a comprehensive civil defense program could dramatically reduce civilian casualties in the event of war. This sentiment was echoed by Heusinger and government officials from the Federal Ministries of Housing and Transportation [Bundesministerium für Verkehr].

The consensus that existed on the general need to create and

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November 1953; Subject: Besprechung der zuständigen Abteilungsleiter der beteiligten Ressorts über die Denkschrift des zivilen Luftschutzes vom 17.10.1953. Born in 1897, Heusinger entered the Imperial Army as a cadet in 1915, and served continuously as an army officer until 1944. After his release from Allied detention in 1948, he was appointed military adviser to Adenauer. Heusinger subsequently held a number of important positions within the West German military establishment, including a four-year stint as Chairman of NATO’s armed forces and an extended tour of duty in Washington, D.C.


199 Memorandum, “Besprechung der zuständigen Abteilungsleiter…vom 17.10.1953.”
implement a national civil defense program was far less prevalent when experts turned their attention to the type of program the country could afford to implement psychologically.

First Attempts to Create a Legislative Framework

As they worked to re-establish a professional network of scientific and technical civil defense experts to advise them, Interior Ministry officials also began what they considered a far more important task: the process of creating the legal and administrative framework necessary for future success. The first step was the creation of a series of administrative guidelines [Richtlinien] for distribution to state and local governments. Although the cover letter included with the draft administrative guidelines attempted to puff up their importance, in reality they were not. Because Interior Ministry officials lacked the authority to impose, or even recommend policies which resulted in specific financial or legal obligations, the draft administrative guidelines were very vague: state and local governments were urged, but not required to appoint their own civil defense officers. In keeping with their preference for a technical approach towards civil defense, Interior Ministry officials recommended state governments chose persons with prior experience in the field. In practical terms this vague recommendation meant law enforcement or fire-fighting personnel, or career civil servants whose service extended back to the Weimar Republic. The most specific part of the early draft guidelines was a suggestion that state and local authorities retain ownership of extant civil defense structures, especially bunkers and warning apparatus such as sirens. Federal officials believed that such action would spare

200 BA B136.5093, Letter, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung ZB [Botho Bauch] to the Länder, 26 February 1952; SHH 239.4-674, Minutes, Konferenz der Innenministern (und Senatoren) der Länder vom 08.05.1951, distributed as an attachment to Letter, Lothar Danner to [Hamburg Senat], 10 January 1952.

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considerable future expense, but for many municipalities such action was a difficult, if not impossible, goal, especially in the case of protective bunkers.

After completing the initial set of administrative guidelines, Interior Ministry officials turned their attention to replacing the suspended 1935/43 Civil Defense Law, which still served as the official legal framework for all civil defense-related activity. In July 1952, they completed and distributed the initial draft of their proposed replacement. Based primarily on the recommendations that emerged from the Interior Ministry’s September 1950 conference on civil defense, the proposed law was in many respects very similar to its 1935/43 predecessor. In the section on duty [Pflicht], for example, both laws included the idea that all Germans bore a legal obligation to actively participate in the government’s civil defense program when ordered to do so by government officials (§2-4 of the 1935/43 law; §5-7 of the 1952 draft law). Moreover, both laws clearly stipulated penalties for those who chose not to participate in the government’s civil defense program (§9-11 of the 1935/43 law; §26-28 of the 1942 draft law), primarily in the form of monetary fines.201

However, the two laws also differed in a number of important respects. The most striking change was the overall purpose of the country’s civil defense program. According to the 1935/43 law, civil defense provided first and foremost the organizational and technical infrastructure necessary to protect the country’s ability to wage war. By way of contrast, in their 1952 draft of the country’s first post-war civil defense law West German officials, mindful of the

201 “Luftschutzgesetzes vom 26. Juni 1935,” in Reichsgesetzblatt (8 September 1939), 827-837; “Neunte Änderungsverordnung zum Luftschutzrecht vom 31. August 1943,” in Reichsgesetzblatt (2 September 1943), 499-526. See §2-4 of the 1935/43 law and §5-7 of the 1952 draft law for details of the individual’s responsibility to participate in the government civil defense program, and §9-11 of the 1935/43 law and §26-28 of the 1952 draft law on the penalties imposed on reluctant members of the public.
legal and moral climate in which the country found itself in the early-1950s, chose to eliminate all reference to war-fighting capacity. They concentrated instead on the concept of protection, and included in the first paragraph of the law the statement that “the purpose of civil defense is to protect from the worst effects of aerial bombardment the lives, health, residences, and places of employment of persons [living in West Germany] as well as critical goods and services.”

The two laws also outlined very different civil defense organizations. Whereas the 1935/43 law provided considerable detail about a centrally-organized system of civil defense, the 1952 draft remained vague on actual organizational details, noting only that state and local officials bore primary responsibility for implementing the law on behalf of the national government (§3, 9, 19, 21). Finally, the two laws differed on how to pay for the country’s civil defense program. As detailed in the 1934/43 law the Reich Air Ministry bore all responsibility for any special costs incurred by state and local governments as they fulfilled their civil defense responsibilities. The 1952 draft law, on the other hand, called for state and local governments as well as individuals to pay for most of the civil defense-related costs they incurred. As specified in paragraph twenty-four of the draft law, the federal government was financially responsible only for the national warning system [zentraler Luftschutz-Warndienst] and for public shelters. Written at time when the demands of reconstruction still dominated the federal government’s budgetary agenda, the priorities implied by paragraph twenty-four doubtless made


204 SHH 136.11364, “Entwurf eines Gesetzes über den zivilen Luftschutz [Stand: 1952].”
perfect sense to Interior Ministry officials. Subsequent events proved this reasoning gravely mistaken.

The official record shows that the initial discussions about reconstructing the country’s civil defense program took place in relative isolation among like-minded proponents. Differences existed, of course, especially over the nature of the threat facing the country, but genuine disagreement was absent. But as the country’s civil defense bureaucrats moved forward in this planning they discovered that their theoretical scenarios sometimes failed to fully consider the situation in which the country actually found itself. Written at a time when the demands of reconstruction still dominated the federal government’s budgetary agenda, the priorities implied in the draft civil defense legislation were not ones acceptable to the myriad of bureaucratic and political interests that constituted West Germany’s political system.

Resistance to the Interior Ministry’s planning began even before the law’s distribution to state and local governments. In a 25 July 1952 meeting of senior bureaucrats from the Federal Ministries of Finance, Economics, and Housing and Reconstruction, the contentious nature of the Interior Ministry’s planning surfaced almost immediately. The minutes of this meeting show clearly that Interior Ministry contingent, headed by Bauch, hoped to focus their colleagues’ attention on the comparatively minor issue of implementation responsibility. To Bauch, the only unresolved question of substance was that of how the federal government planned to oversee and guide the actual work of state and local officials. Experienced bureaucrats such as the Finance Ministry’s Woelffel and the Housing Ministry’s Helmut Döscher thoroughly disagreed, and attacked the Interior Ministry’s focus as misguided. Both concentrated their attention on the issue of single greatest interest to any bureaucratic organization: resources. How, Döscher asked Bauch, did he propose to pay for the Interior Ministry’s expensive new program? In good bureaucratic fashion, Bauch addressed his colleagues’ concerns as obliquely as possible: first
ignoring them and, when pressed, later promising to discuss the question of funding “at a future meeting.”

Neither the official minutes of the meeting or the extant Interior Ministry correspondence immediately following it reveal if this response placated Woelffel and Döscher.

Much to the dismay of Bauch and other senior civil defense officials, state and local governments shared Woelffel and Döscher’s concerns. Four days after he faced skeptical federal bureaucrats, Bauch found himself once again defending the government’s proposed program, this time before a decidedly hostile audience. According to the Interior Ministry’s own correspondence, the 29 July 1952 meeting with state and local officials was held primarily to discuss the general ideas contained in the government’s 1952 draft civil defense law. The minutes of the meeting show that the officials who attended the meeting displayed little interest in or patience for such general discussion, to them actual details were far more important. They quickly focused their attention on what they saw as the weaknesses of the draft law: the vague description of the proposed organizational framework, the proposed role of the federal government, and the manner in which the federal government intended to finance its civil defense program. In one striking exchange representatives from the state governments of North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Bavaria questioned whether the Bundesrat, the upper house of the Federal Republic bi-cameral legislature, would accept the Interior Ministry’s idea of linking civil defense to the broader issue of national defense. The North Rhine-Westphalia representative, Dr. Kleinrahm, suggested the Interior Ministry consider instead presenting the idea of civil defense in terms of a wide-scale natural disaster, such as flooding or a blizzard—

situations in which the need for close coordination between federal and state governments was clearly evident.206

Because of the critical role they would play in any future civil defense planning and implementation, Bauch could not ignore or answer obliquely the questions posed by state and local officials. Of the three major issues raised in the opening discussion of the 29 July meeting, the first was the easiest to address by well-established bureaucratic tactics. Bauch simply noted that much of the proposed law was conceived and written prior to the time the Interior Ministry received official jurisdiction over civil defense planning, acknowledged the law’s organizational shortcomings, and assured his critics that additional details would be forthcoming.207 The second issue was more problematic, for Bauch and his colleagues knew that the role they envisioned for the federal government was based on questionable planning assumptions. But admitting this publicly was impossible without seriously weakening the Ministry’s institutional credibility. Thus, in responding to the pointed comments of state and local government officials, Bauch stressed that the country’s recent historical experience supported the role of the federal government outlined in the proposed law. Notably, neither Bauch nor the state and local civil defense officials mentioned the fact that Germany’s Second World War civil defense experience had occurred in a society and political system dramatically different from that of early Cold War West Germany.

That officials such as Kleinrahm and Bavaria’s Mayer—who later emerged as an outspoken critic of the government’s program—failed to press Bauch and his colleagues on the federal government’s role in the country’s civil defense program was almost assuredly because

206 Ibid.

207 SHH 136.1-1365, Memorandum, Nikolaus Jürgensen to Police Senator Lothar Danner, 29 July 1952.
they were more concerned about funding. In contrast to the civil defense experts in the Interior Ministry, who saw little reason to discuss the fiscal details of their program, the bureaucrats from Hamburg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bremen, and the other federal states clearly equated overall control of any future program with fiscal responsibility. Both before and during the 29 July meeting state and local officials argued that the two issues were inseparably linked. The federal government, in their opinion, therefore, bore both moral and fiscal responsibility for the country’s civil defense. For instance, in the internal review of the proposed law they conducted shortly after its proposed distribution Hamburg officials noted repeatedly that civil defense was essentially what today Americans would term an “unfunded mandate.” If implemented, Hamburg officials told the state government, the law would result in considerable additional expense to an already strained state budget. The Association of German Cities and Towns [Deutscher Städtetag], an umbrella organization that represented local municipal governments, expressed similar concerns in both the 29 July meeting and again in a 13 September 1952 letter to the Interior Ministry. Stating in no uncertain terms that protecting the country’s population was clearly the federal government’s responsibility, the chief officer of the Association called on Interior Ministry officials to assume financial responsibility for the program. Failure on the part of the federal government to do so, the Association warned, would dramatically limit the ability of local governments to pay for the cost of reconstruction. In almost all cases critics of the proposed program argued that the country’s constitution obligated the federal government to


209 SHH 136.1-1365, Letter, Chief Executive Secretary [Hauptgeschäftsführer], Association of German Cities and Towns to the Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung ZB, 13 September 1952; Subject: Entwurfs eines Gesetzes über den zivilen Luftschutz.
assume all responsibility for protecting the country’s population. Some even suggested the
government consider amending the constitution to explicitly state the federal government’s
predominant role in civil defense.\textsuperscript{210}

Although not explicitly discussed in early memoranda and other planning documents, the
proposal’s vague wording on funding suggests Bauch and his colleagues recognized the pitfalls
involved in any discussion of resources. No stranger to the budget process, the Interior Ministry
officials who drafted the civil defense law surely knew of the severe budget problems it entailed.
However, their attempts to avoid the issue not only failed, but ballooned into much larger debates
about the Interior Ministry’s overall conceptualization of how to protect the country’s population
in a future war. The draft law called for the protection of the “lives, health, residences, and places
of employment” of the country’s population as well as “critical goods and services.” But what
did this mean in reality?

Debate about this aspect of the Interior Ministry’s planning soon coalesced around the
subject of protective shelters. In November 1952, prominent members of a quasi-governmental
working group on industrial civil defense [Arbeitskreis Industrie-Luftschutz] sponsored by the
Housing Ministry spoke out in favor of physical protection. In a long letter sent to Theodor
Kristen, the chair of the Housing Ministry’s technical committee on physical civil defense
[Fachausschuss Bautechnischer Luftschutz], the members of the working group urged
government civil defense planners to emphasize “as much protection as possible” for the
country’s workers. An extensive and credible system of civil defense was imperative, the authors
of the letter argued, if only for psychological comfort it represented. The experience of the last

\textsuperscript{210} SHH 136.1-1365, Memorandum, Nikolaus Jürgensen to Hamburg Police Office, 31 July 1952;
Subject: Besprechung des Entwurfs eines Gesetzes über den zivilen Luftschutz mit den Vertretern der
Innenminister der Länder am 29. July 1952 im BMI.
war clearly showed, the members of the working group concluded, that only “bomb-proof”
shelters provided the necessary feeling of safety. To achieve this feeling of safety the members
of the working group favored creating a program very similar to the successful National Socialist
civil defense program and its emphasis on an extensive system of bunkers.211

There is little doubt that Bauch and his colleagues greeted the growing emphasis on
bunkers with very mixed feelings. On the one hand, they could not dismiss the call because the
policy made sense, especially as it came from people who had spent numerous evenings cowering
underground during the Second World War. On the other hand, they also could not ignore its
deeply troubling implications. Placing bunkers at the forefront of any civil defense-related debate
forced Interior Ministry officials to share the details of the vision of a future war. However, as
we have seen, the experts on whom Bauch and his colleagues relied could not themselves reach a
consensus on this issue, especially when discussing technological matters. If one presumed, as
most civil defense planners in the 1950s did, that countering atomic weapons was best viewed as
a technical challenge, then the answer seemed clear: reinforced concrete and steel could defend
against fiery blast and flying debris. But how much concrete and how much steel was necessary?

Unfortunately, for West Germany’s civil defense officials, little empirical data and even
less practical experience existed for them to study. The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and
Nagasaki represented the most useful models, but even these were problematic. As the Interior
Ministry’s own scientific and technical experts noted, Japanese cities, with their mainly wood and
paper construction, were very different from the stone, brick, concrete, and steel urban landscapes
the West German government hoped to rebuild. Moreover, U.S. observers who surveyed the

211 BA B106.17569, Letter, Beutler and Meendsen-Bohlken, Working Group on Industrial Civil Defense
[Arbeitskreis Industrie-Luftschutz], to Theodor Kristen, 4 November 1952.
Japanese cities shortly after their devastation noted the surprising fact that in both instances simple shelters made of earth-covered wood survived intact less than two hundred yards from the initial point of detonation. Was this a useful discovery? From the perspective of a policy-maker, maybe, for such shelters were cheap and easy to build. But running throughout the planning documents of the early-1950s is the clear sense that Bauch and his colleagues felt that such an option was technologically questionable, psychologically inadvisable, and politically impossible given the population’s experience in the last war. Statements that simple wood and earth shelters would protect people from weapons capable of leveling vast sections of a modern city might not resonate among people who had seen reinforced bunkers blown apart during the war’s bombing raids.

In January 1953, Interior Ministry officials revised their proposal and distributed a new draft of the law.\textsuperscript{212} Although the second draft addressed some of the concerns expressed by state and local officials about the program’s overall organization and the exact role of the federal government, the Interior Ministry’s basic vision remained essentially unchanged. Bauch and his colleagues still hoped to establish a comprehensive system of civil defense that included a nationwide warning system and widespread availability of public shelters. The correspondence that followed the second draft’s general distribution suggests the Interior Ministry hoped to forestall any lingering doubts about the organizational and administrative details by promising state and local officials the possibility of rapidly passing the actual legislation. This provided to be a forlorn hope, as Interior Ministry officials quickly discovered. In a February 1953 meeting with representatives from the Finance and Economics Ministries, Bauch expressed his sincere hope

\footnote{212} BA B136.1936, Letter, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung ZB [Botho Bauch], to all Federal Ministries, 24 January 1953.
that the Federal Cabinet would recognize “the [civil defense] law could no longer be held back” and forward it to the Bundestag before the end of the legislative period. Bauch’s statement was met with considerable skepticism. Bauch’s optimism was misplaced, and for the remainder of the year the Interior Ministry was forced to continue the difficult task of mustering support for its program.213

In October 1953, representatives from the various federal ministries involved met to evaluate the continuing effort to create the country’s first post-war civil defense program. The prognosis was not good. Few officials at the meeting doubted the necessity for civil defense, but all agreed on the need to resolve the program’s financial aspects before proceeding further. Notably, both the Federal Finance and Economics Ministries remained strongly opposed to the plan. Asserting that it was impossible for the 1954 budget to exceed that of 1953, the Finance Ministry insisted no money was available for civil defense. The only way to finance the program, Finance Ministry officials concluded, was to abandon the country’s free-market economy and return to some form of central planning.214 Representatives of the Economics Ministry were less pessimistic, but remained convinced that the Interior Ministry’s plan would result in an undue burden on West German industry. Financing the program through the country’s private capital markets was simply impossible. After an abortive effort to tap Marshall Fund monies to finance civil defense-related construction, the Housing Ministry, too, expressed deep pessimism about the


214 According to the Federal Finance Ministry official who attended the meeting, creating the Interior Ministry’s civil defense system was possible only by radically readjusting the country’s economic policies to include a greater element of central planning [Zentralverwaltungswirtschaft]. See BA B134.4745, Memorandum, Federal Housing Ministry [Bundesministerium für Wohnungswesen], Referat I/3, 21 October 1953; Subject: Abteilungsleiterbesprechung über die LS-Denkgschriften des BMI im Innenministerium am 17.10.1953 unter Leitung von Herrn Staatssekretär Ritter von Lex.
Interior Ministry’s program and concluded the country should first fund housing construction and a national army before turning to the question of civil defense. A second inter-ministerial meeting held a month later revealed little progress. As was the case at the October 1953 meeting, no participants questioned the Interior Ministry’s general assertion that the country needed some form of civil defense. General Heusinger, who represented the West German military at the meeting, captured the general sentiment of the meeting’s participants: a program of civil defense, which was vital both psychologically and physically to the country, should be implemented as quickly as possible. Admittedly, less unanimity existed on the question of urgency. While military officials urged their counterparts in the civilian ministries to adopt a comprehensive program as quickly as possible, other participants expressed greater reluctance. Representatives from the Finance Ministry, in particular, remained steadfast in their opposition to the program. Less strident criticism came from the Housing Ministry, which continued to support

\[215\] Ibid. Federal Housing Ministry officials first approached the Ministry in charge of overseeing Marshall Plan related expenditures, the Marshallplanministerium, in February 1953 about the possibility of using the Plan’s funds that year. With the Interior Ministry’s encouragement—which recommended the Housing Ministry argue that civil defense was necessary to protect the country’s workforce and therefore help it recovery economically—the Federal Housing Ministry hoped to receive fifty million marks per year to cover the cost of building protective shelters in publicly-financed housing. The Marshallplanministerium responded negatively, noting that nearly all of its resources for the 1953-1954 fiscal year were committed elsewhere. Officials also noted that Marshall Fund monies were usable only for the “economic reconstruction of West Germany” [wirtschaftlichen Wiederaufbau Westdeutschlands]. See BA B134.4745, Memorandum, Federal Housing Ministry, Referat I/3, to Federal Housing and Interior Ministeries, 23 February 1953, Subject: Änderungen im “Vorläufigen Finanzierungsprogramm für Massnahmen des baulichen Luftschutz;” and Memorandum, Federal Housing Ministry, Referat I/3, to Federal Housing and Interior Ministeries, 13 March 1953, Subject: Finanzierung des baulichen Luftschutzes—Möglichkeit eines Beitrages aus Mitteln des Marshallplanministeriums.

\[216\] BA B106.17571, Minutes, “Besprechung am 11.01.1954 im BMI über den Entwurf einer Kabinettsvorlage für das Luftschutzprogramm.”
the proposed program provided it did not curtail the long-term construction goals outlined in the First Housing Law.\textsuperscript{217}

Thus, in the opening months of 1954, the ultimate fate of West Germany’s first post-war civil defense program was still very much in doubt. Despite widespread support for the general concept of civil defense, only the Interior Ministry and the Blank Office enthusiastically embraced the new program as a necessary component of the nation’s defense. Other federal ministries concerned with the financial ramifications of the proposed program, most notably those of Finance, Economics, and Housing, remained less convinced. The Finance Ministry remained adamant in its opinion that it could not find money in the federal budget to fund the Interior Ministry’s civil defense program. The Housing Ministry, faced with new Interior Ministry estimates that adding protective shelters to all new housing construction would force the government to build 30,000 fewer living units [\textit{Wohnungen}], or apartments, than originally projected, declared emphatically that it was “more important to move people now living in temporary quarters into decent [\textit{anständigen}] housing than to build protective shelters.”\textsuperscript{218} Confronted with this opposition Interior Ministry officials could only remind their colleagues that West Germany was one of only three Western European countries without some form of national civil defense and repeat their firm belief that the security of the country’s population could not be sacrificed because of the cost.\textsuperscript{219} Faced with insurmountable divides, the career bureaucrats turned to their political masters for resolution.

\textsuperscript{217} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{218} BA B136.1936, Internal Memorandum, Federal Chancellery, Bauchmann to Gumbel, 24 February 1954.

\textsuperscript{219} \textit{Ibid.}
A Provisional Program, Draft Law, and Cabinet Dissention

During the course of the next year Adenauer and his ministers turned their attention to the problem of protecting the country’s civilian population in times of war. While their attention was sporadic and enthusiasm tepid at best, between April 1954 and October 1955 the country’s leading politicians managed to make a number of important decisions which fundamentally shaped the future of West Germany’s post-war civil defense effort. The first occurred in April 1954 with the submission of the new federal budget for parliamentary review. In contrast to previous budgets, the government’s 1954 financial blueprint contained in it a request for the resources necessary to fund a “provisional” civil defense program. The modest size of the proposed budget—DM 800,000—reflected the uncertainty that characterized all aspects of the Interior Ministry’s civil defense planning. Because they lacked the necessary legal and administrative authority to create and implement a broader program, and feared considerable resistance from both their ministerial skeptics and Bundestag representatives, Interior Ministry officials concentrated on implementing the uncontroversial aspects of their plan: an independent office to coordinate daily activity, a warning system, and support for educational and volunteer activities, including the Civil Defense Assistance Service [Luftschutzhilfsdienst], or CDAS.

The government’s request for renewed civil defense planning came at a critical juncture in the Federal Republic’s existence, for the same year the government unveiled its proposal to recreate a comprehensive system of national defense, Adenauer stepped up his efforts to integrate the country more firmly into the western anti-Communist coalition lead by the United States. Scholarship on the subject shows that Adenauer wanted his country to be a member of NATO and, ideally, an important member of an integrated European defense community, an idea first proposed by U.S. President Truman after the Korean War’s outbreak in June 1950. Adenauer’s efforts to include the country in some form of an European defense community were dashed in
August 1954 when the French National Assembly rejected their country’s participation in the venture. Fortunately for Adenauer the European Defense Community’s failure strengthened U.S. and British support for West Germany’s inclusion in NATO, an organization that desperately needed personnel and equipment in order to offer a robust non-nuclear defense of Western Europe. An arrangement that satisfied both the organization’s security needs and the concerns of Germany’s former enemies was reached during a series of conferences held in London in late-September 1954, and eight months later, in May 1955, the country officially joined NATO.220

The problem of civil defense was inextricably intertwined with that of rearmament. Adenauer’s determination to rearm his country and join the western security alliance was less than universally popular among the public.221 As a result, in order to muster public support for its rearmament policy, Adenauer’s government decided to increase its public commitment to civil defense. Although they were delighted by the political support they received, civil defense proponents recognized that it came with considerable risk, for it forced greater exposure of their planning to the general public. Stated differently, by committing itself to a specific national civil defense program, the government shifted debate about the program as a whole from the relatively secure venue of Bonn conference rooms to a more public and potentially more troublesome forum: the Bundestag. Would it survive such a test?

220 For a concise summary of the failed European Defense Community and West Germany’s entrance into NATO see Friedman, *The Fifty Year War*, 170-179.

221 At the beginning of the 1950s, for example, only one-third of West Germans supported the idea of rebuilding an independent German army. Support for Adenauer’s policies grew only slowly during the first half of the decade. Indeed, it was only in December 1956 that the large majority of opponents of the early-1950s had turned into a sizeable minority. See Michael Geyer, “Cold War Angst: The Case of West-German Opposition to Rearmament and Nuclear Weapons,” in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968*, ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 380-381.
The political opposition was skeptical, and seized the opportunity to question the government’s new public commitment to civil defense. At the beginning of the 8 April 1954 debate on the government’s proposed budget, SPD Representative Friedrich Maier, who represented a district in the industrial city Düsseldorf, attacked the government’s plans. “One thing is absolutely certain,” Maier informed his colleagues, “…a third world war and the use of atomic weapons will result in an uncountable number of civilian casualties, especially if the government fails to make adequate provision for defending the population.” The problem, Maier continued, was not that the government failed to recognize this fact, but that it had no plans nor any intention to create an effective, nation-wide civil defense program in the foreseeable future, as exemplified by the 1954 budget request. “Not a single mark,” Maier concluded, “is available for the construction of protective shelters,” the only civil defense measure he and the members of his party considered truly effective.

Speaking the next day in support of the government’s program, Interior Minister Gerhard Schröder tried to counter his critics. As the focal point of his own speech Schröder responded to what he, and presumably his ministerial colleagues, perceived as the single most important criticism leveled against civil the government’s program: the usefulness of *any* civil defense measures in an era of atomic weapons. Noting that articles in the West German press contained sensational, and in the government’s opinion very disturbing, headlines such as “Is Civil Defense Still Useful” and “Cobalt-Bombs Will Destroy All Life,” Schröder attacked what he perceived as

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an “unnatural sense of defeatism” [unnatürlicher Defaitismus] in the West German population.224

While he acknowledged that the nature of offensive technology had indeed changed considerably since the Second World War, Schröder argued that even atomic weapons were best viewed as a “technical and scientific problem” the solution for which required only additional research. The government’s plans, Schröder concluded, accounted for the challenges posed by modern war and provided effective protection for the country’s population.225

That rearmament and NATO membership dramatically affected West German civil defense planning was a fact not lost on the technical experts employed the Interior Ministry. In May 1955, Bauch sent Schröder a long memorandum on the subject of rearmament. Ratifying the Paris Treaty, Bauch concluded, meant the country was firmly committed to establishing a credible military defense. But what should this defense entail? As Bauch reminded the Minister, the very concept of military defense was worthless if the civilians for whom the soldiers fought remained unprotected from the worst effects of modern war. Left unsaid but nonetheless overshadowing Bauch’s assertion was the country’s recent past—in both world wars the national government struggled with the problem of homefront morale. The Interior Ministry’s comprehensive system civil defense program would solve this problem. “For this reason, and for

224 One such article appeared that the same day in Die Welt. The article, simply entitled “Luftschutz,” applauded the government for finally including civil defense-related expenditures in the budget, but at the same time questioned whether the government’s plans realistically accounted for the possible effects of a nuclear war. In general, articles about the usefulness of civil defense measures in an era of nuclear weapons began to appear in the West German press during the early-1950s. In West Germany, however, it was not until after the Bundestag budget debates of April 1954 and, later, Operation CARTE BLANCHE (discussed below) that the issue received more than sporadic attention. A representative sample of such articles is found in BA B106.50239.

225 “Hat Luftschutz noch einen Sinn?” in Ziviler Luftschutz 18:5 (March 1954): 109-110. Schröder noted the difficulty in finding the financial resources necessary to implement a comprehensive civil defense program, especially if it included the construction of protective shelters capable of withstanding the enormous destruction caused by atomic weapons.
political reasons,” Bauch concluded in his memorandum, “it is critical that the federal cabinet immediately take up this issue and decide in favor [of the Interior Ministry’s] program.”

Schröder agreed with his experts, and one month later, on 7 May 1955, submitted to the Federal Cabinet an official proposal to establish the country’s first comprehensive, post-war civil defense system.

Notwithstanding nearly three years of revision and debate, much of the proposal Schröder asked his ministerial colleagues to approve was mainly a modified version of the law first distributed to federal, state, and local officials in August 1952. As such it remained essentially technical in its focus. Like its predecessor, Schröder’s proposal focused the overall objective of civil defense planning on protecting the lives and health of West Germans and the country’s critical infrastructure. However, in response to widespread criticism by state and local officials, the draft law submitted by Schröder did detail the Interior Ministry’s overall vision of how to achieve this goal. The Interior Ministry retained overall responsibility and control for the country’s civil defense program and was responsible for creating the administrative framework necessary for its operation. Actual implementation of the country’s new civil defense program rested with state and local governments, however, even in times of national emergency. While not fully detailed in Schröder’s proposal, the plans clearly presumed that state governments

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226 BA B106.17572, Memorandum, Botho Bauch to Gerhard Schröder, 25 April 1955; Subject: Luftschutzprogramm. German original: “Es scheint mir—außer aus politischen Gründen—dringlich, daß sich das Kabinett sehr bald mit dem Luftschutzprogramm befaßt und zu einer positiven Entscheidung gelangt.”

would perform administrative, organizational, and implementation duties. Local governments [Gemeinden] became the basic unit of organization [Luftschutzort] for the proposed program. In a departure from previous drafts and a clear indication of the extent to which federal planning had progressed in at least one critical area, Schröder’s proposal also devoted considerable attention to the so-called “special administrative units” [Sonderverwaltung] overseen by the Federal Postal and Telephone Ministry, the Federal Defense Ministry, and the government railroad system [Deutsche Bundesbahn]. Reflecting the results of discussion between the Interior Ministry and skeptics within other ministries, the 1955 proposal assigned full responsibility for ensuring the organization and implementation of the country’s civil defense program on property they controlled. Additionally, industrial civil defense planning became the joint responsibility of the Federal Interior and Economics Ministries.

Three years of revision and debate had left their mark, however. A more mature effort, Schröder’s proposal also contained more detail about the actual programs Interior Ministry officials hoped to create. In addition to the nation-wide alert system [Luftschutzwarndienst] found in earlier drafts of the law Schröder’s cabinet proposal contained the familiar call for creating a nation-wide organization of rescue and recovery units [Luftschutzhilfsdienst]. However, in a definite departure from both the 1935/43 Reichsluftschutzgesetz and earlier post-1945 proposals, participation in both organizations was voluntary and, potentially, lucrative. While Schröder’s proposal still required volunteers to attend training courses and participate in

228 Ibid., §§2-3.
229 Ibid., §5.
230 Ibid., §§7-10.
local, state, and federal civil defense exercises, they now received adequate employment protection, financial compensation, and accident and health insurance.231

Yet as Interior Ministry officials themselves acknowledged in their internal correspondence, the proposal brought before the federal cabinet was still controversial. Particularly problematic were the sections that dealt with the now long-standing problems of protective bunkers and financing the proposed program. Undaunted by the arguments of their colleagues in the Finance and Housing Ministries, Interior Ministry officials, with Schröder’s approval, had retained their plans for widespread civil defense-related construction. In fact in this area little had changed between the draft law discussed in April 1954 at the inter-ministerial meetings and the proposal submitted nearly a year later to the federal cabinet. All new housing construction in cities and towns with a population in excess of ten thousand people was required to include provisions for “adequate” protection against aerial bombardment.232 Moreover, Schröder’s proposal also required state and local authorities to preserve, and where necessary renovate, civil defense facilities dating back to the Second World War. The only foreseeable exception to this rule, according to Interior Ministry officials, was an instance in which the facility was no longer capable of serving its intended function, or if such action was clearly not in the best interest of the common good.233

231 Ibid., §12-19.

232 §20 reads: “Lebens- oder verteidigungswichtige Betriebe und Einrichtungen sollen nur an Standorten errichtet werden, die von der Bundesregierung aufzustellenden Grundsätzen über die Berücksichtigung des Luftschutzes entsprechen.” The requirement that all new construction incorporate into the final design adequate protection for the inhabitants as well as the requirement that new utility (gas, water, electricity, and sewage) construction also take into account the need of the country’s civil defense program is found in §21.

233 Ibid., §25-27.
As the foregoing overview of the law’s main provisions suggests, state and local concern about the cost of the federal government’s civil defense program also received short shrift in Schröder’s proposal. In fact, little had changed between the draft laws distributed in 1953 and 1954 and the proposal sent to the federal cabinet. Paragraph twenty-three of the cabinet proposal stated in no uncertain terms that state and local governments would bear most of the cost of the new construction without additional federal funding, but also mandated that the need to incorporate protective shelters in new housing could not adversely affect the rent paid by poorer members of society [Bevölkerungsschichten mit geringerem Einkommen]. Even more controversial were the passages that outlined the way in which the federal government intended to pay for the new program. However, the federal government, the 1955 draft law declared, was responsible for one-third of the total cost incurred by state and local governments in establishing, equipping, and training the rescue and recovery units; constructing new or renovating existing protective shelters; and storing emergency medical supplies. The federal government planned to reimburse state and local governments only for costs they incurred as a result of specific provisions of the proposed law. The ongoing [laufende] costs associated with storing and maintaining civil defense equipment as well as “personnel and practical” administrative costs [persönliche und sächliche Verwaltungskosten] remained the responsibility of the state and local governments, which would split civil defense-related expenses equally.234

234 Ibid., §§30-31. The 1952 proposal, by way of contrast, required the federal government to pay the full cost of the central warning system and an unspecified percentage of the costs associated with the Civil Defense Assistance Service and construction of new and renovation of exiting protective structures. See §24 of “Entwürfe eines Gesetzes über den zivilen Luftschutz, Stand 1952,” located in SHH 136.1.1365.
In both the law’s official rationale [Begründung]235 and internal correspondence, Interior Ministry officials acknowledged the draft law was still a work in progress. The overall objective of the law, the authors noted, was to provide the legal framework necessary to implement the government’s provisional civil defense program. In practical terms this meant providing proper legal authority to national, state, and local civil defense officials; creating a nation-wide warning system; organizing volunteer recovery and relief units; stockpiling medical supplies; implementing a limited program of shelter construction; and stating unambiguously how the government proposed to pay for the program. Missing from the proposed law, however, was any mention of a “civil defense requirement” [Luftschutzpflicht]—the concept that individual West Germans bore a responsibility to participate in the new program. The omission clearly troubled the law’s authors, who noted in the official rationale that a civil defense requirement was the foundation for the concept of “self-help” [Selbstschutz]—the idea that personal protection in times of national crisis was first and foremost the responsibility of the individual. The law’s authors recognized, however, the difficulty of convincing a skeptical public of the need for a civil defense requirement, and opted to address the issue in a subsequent law.236

Ministerial response to Schröder’s proposal was for the most part predictable. His colleagues in the federal cabinet, like the bureaucrats who represented them in low-level discussions, agreed in principle with the overall concept outlined in the draft law, but objected to individual details. From Theodor Oberländer, Federal Minister for Refugees, Expellees, and War Victims [Bundesministerium für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und Kriegsgeschädigte], for example,

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235 The Begründung, or official rationale, is an integral element of all draft legislation. Best described as an annotated version of the law, the official rationale provides a detailed explanation of the law’s individual paragraphs.

came grave concern about the shelter construction program outlined in the draft legislation. Well aware that he represented the interests of the tens of millions of West Germans who still suffered physically and psychologically from the last war, Oberländer argued in favor of an expanded shelter construction program to ensure the population received the best protection possible.\textsuperscript{237} Undeterred by the fiscal conservatism of his CDU/CSU colleagues, Oberländer urged them to devote more public funds to bunkers.\textsuperscript{238}

Despite their reservations, a majority of the ministers decided on 2 June 1955 to approve the Interior Ministry’s proposed civil defense program with the caveat that the DM 96 million required for building protective shelters in government-financed housing be referred back to an inter-ministerial working committee for additional discussion.\textsuperscript{239} However, despite the fact that his colleagues, and the Chancellor himself, supported the Interior Minister’s proposal for a new nation-wide system of civil defense, the temperamentl Fritz Schäffer continued to resist the project. Four days after the final cabinet decision, Schäffer exercised his right to formally object to the cabinet’s decision. In a letter sent to State Secretary Hans Globke, Schäffer presented more than twenty general and specific objections to the program. In addition to often-expressed opinion that the Interior Ministry’s program was simply too expensive for a country currently burdened by declining tax revenue and rising fiscal commitments, Schäffer also presented a

\textsuperscript{237} Theodor Oberländer (1905-1998) was a surprising appointment to Adenauer’s second cabinet. A leading figure in the \textit{Blocks der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten} (BHE), which made a surprisingly strong showing in the 1953 parliamentary elections, Oberländer was included in the cabinet despite his well-known Nazi past. Oberländer joined the CSU in 1956, and continued to serve as a cabinet minister until 1960, after which revelations about his participation in the mass killing of Jewish civilians on the Eastern Front forced his resignation.

\textsuperscript{238} BA B106.17572, Letter, Theodor Oberländer to all Federal Ministers, 24 May 1955; Subject: Luftschutzprogramm.

\textsuperscript{239} BA B106.17572, Memorandum, Hans Schneppel to Gerhard Schröder, 28 June 1955.
number of new arguments. These included the assertion that large-scale civil defense programs were inherently unproductive; that the Interior Ministry’s plan was not based on a critical analysis of the current international political climate in which the country found itself; that the creation of a civil defense program should not precede the reconstitution of the country’s military forces; and elements of the proposed program would likely interfere with possible future military operations. Finally, Schäffer reminded Globke that contrary to the Interior Ministry’s rosy statements, neither the United States nor most other Western European countries had embraced a program as comprehensive as the one approved by the federal cabinet. The reason for this, Schäffer asserted, was because of grave uncertainty about the actual practicality of such programs and (in his opinion) the fact that large expenditures on civil defense might adversely effect individual prosperity and therefore provide unwelcome fodder for communist propaganda.240

After the federal cabinet decided in its next meeting to postpone discussion of Schäffer’s objections until the middle of the month, Schäffer took the opportunity to take his case to Adenauer directly. In a personal conversation with the Chancellor and subsequent letter, Schäffer complained about the timing of the Interior Minister’s submission—he was on vacation during the first week of June—but then turned to more substantive matters. While financial concerns again constituted the main points of Schäffer’s argument, he also elaborated on his early comments about the overall usefulness of civil defense. At the heart of Schäffer’s argument was a firm belief that the Interior Ministry simply did not understand the magnitude of the threat facing the nation. “I believe it is important,” Schäffer stressed in his letter to Adenauer, “to

consider civil defense not within the outdated conceptualization of conventional warfare, but rather within the framework of modern war." To do this, however, required further study, especially the topics of radioactive fallout and the use of evacuation as a means to protect the country’s civilian population from the worst effects of a nuclear war—a position, Schäffer noted, very similar to that of the U.S. civil defense expert Val Peterson. Schäffer also believed the cabinet as a whole should revisit the entire question of overall responsibility. Noting that the Swiss government gave the responsibility for implementing civil defense measures to the country’s military, Schäffer wondered if West Germany should adopt a similar policy.

Schäffer’s arguments were eminently reasonable and foreshadowed the course of future public debate about civil defense. Unfortunately, they also suffered from extremely unfortunate timing, for they reached the Chancellor nearly a month after Operation CARTE BLANCHE had directed public attention to the specter of atomic war. Conducted during the third week of June 1955, Operation CARTE BLANCHE was the first large-scale NATO military maneuver based on the alliance’s recently adopted strategy of massive retaliation. In the space of four days, nearly 3,000 aircraft from eleven nations simulated engagements in a battle zone stretching from Italy to Scandanavia. Included in the simulation was the use of more than 300 Hiroshima-sized atomic bombs (approximately ten to fifteen kilotons), two-thirds of which were directed against West


242 In his letter to Adenauer, Schäffer noted that the 10 June 1955 issue of the New York Times had quoted Peterson as saying that effective civil defense planning was impossible if the U.S. Congress was unwilling to fund future research on the possible effects of a nuclear war. Schröder used Paterson’s statement to justify his own call for increased civil defense spending, especially on research and development programs.
German targets. According to statistics obtained by the news magazine *Der Spiegel* and published shortly after the conclusion of the exercise, the simulated attacks showed that more than 1.7 million West Germans would perish in the attack while the smoldering ruins of the country’s cities would contain an additional 3.5 million wounded. The former figures, West German readers learned, did not include the millions likely to die from severe wounds or long-term starvation.243

The results of the Operation *CARTE BLANCHE* could not have come at a worse time for Adenauer. Intent on the bringing the country into NATO as quickly as possible, Adenauer had assured the hesitant Bundestag during the initial debate on the Paris Treaty in February 1955 that “if we are in NATO, Germany will no longer be the battlefield.”244 The extent to which Adenauer failed to recognize the ramifications of NATO’s increasingly emphasis on tactical nuclear weapons, and the question of whether he was unduly influenced by the experts working in the Blank Office, who, like their Interior Ministry civil defense colleagues remained committed to the idea of a conflict fought primarily with conventional forces, remains debatable.245 What is clear, however, is the fact that Operation *CARTE BLANCHE* raised very troubling questions for the government—questions that both the public and the political opposition were quick to raise. In the weeks following the first report on the maneuver, the nation’s press adopted a somber and


pessimistic tone about the situation in which West Germany found itself. Representative of this public inquiry was a series of articles written by Adelbert Weinstein, a former military officer and chief military correspondent for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. In asking whether West Germany’s military and political leaders “had become so cynical that [they] remained unmoved by the figure of 1.7 million dead and 3.5 wounded Germans,” Weinstein suggested yes, and then summed the prevailing public mood by writing:

> The first billions that are earmarked for rearmament would more wisely be spent on securing the populace against a nuclear attack. If it is politically impossible to prohibit atomic bombs, then at least the protection of the populace against such warfare ought not be treated as a negligible factor.\(^{246}\)

The same month, SPD Bundestag representatives publicly pressed the government to give an accounting of its efforts to establish a comprehensive national civil defense program. While not actually mentioned in his correspondence with Schäffer, Adenauer’s decision to override his Finance Minister and close friend almost assuredly was influenced by the sharpening public mood. In July 1955, with Adenauer’s expressed approval, the federal cabinet voted to reject Schäffer’s objection to the proposed bill and forward it to the Bundesrat for action.

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Parliamentary Debate, 1955-1957

West Germany’s complicated system of decentralized federalism required the Adenauer government to first seek approval for its proposed civil defense program from the country’s upper legislative body, the Bundesrat, whose members were appointed by state governments in the Federal Republic.²⁴⁷ For five months, the Bundesrat debated the strengths and weaknesses of the government’s request. Ultimately it approved the plan, but in doing so included in its final report to the Bundestag a number of recommendations that foreshadowed the major topics to emerge in subsequent parliamentary debates. Bundesrat representatives first raised two questions about the government’s program, both of which focused on the general issue of completeness: more specifically, they expressed concern that the program outlined in the draft legislation was inadequate for the country’s needs. By not including in the proposed law specific plans for how it would legislate the issue of individual involvement in civil defense, Bundesrat representatives wrote, the federal government made it difficult for the states to anticipate potential long-term problems or evaluate the overall consequences of the program. Additionally, the Bundesrat’s official comments clearly indicated that many representatives were unconvinced by the government’s conceptualization of future war. In its transmittal letter to the Bundestag the

²⁴⁷ According to §50 of the West German constitution the government is first required to present all proposed legislation to the Bundesrat for review. This review is required because the West German constitution requires the government to secure the Bundesrat’s consent (i.e., final approval) for any law that affects state revenue or administrative practices. As one scholar of the institution has noted, this requirement means the Bundesrat, while overshadowed by the more representative Bundestag—Bundesrat representatives are appointed by the state governments—nonetheless plays a pivotal role in the legislative process. While the country’s constitution does include a mechanism for the Bundestag to pass a law despite the objections of the Bundesrat, in reality this happens very infrequently. For a concise summary of the workings of the Bundesrat see Uwe Thaysen, *The Bundesrat, the Länder, and German Federalism*, Vol. 13 German Issues (Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 1994).
Bundesrat hoped federal officials might re-examine the entire question of protecting the country’s population in the event of an atomic war.248

The Bundesrat also included in its comments a number of suggestions for specific revisions. Chief among these was the suggestion that the Bundestag clarify the exact administrative relationship between federal and state authorities. As part of a broader system of national defense programs designed to protect the country’s population, civil defense was unquestionably the responsibility of the federal government, Bundesrat representatives concluded. However, in its final written report the Bundesrat also noted that the federalist structure codified in the country’s constitution did not allow for a formal legal relationship between the two. It was therefore impossible, Bundesrat representatives concluded, to mandate a future legal relationship between federal and local authorities. In practical terms this meant that the federal government would retain only nominal control over the actual implementation of its proposed civil defense program. Federal civil defense representatives could (and doubtless would) issue directives on how local governments should organize their civil defense programs, but lacked the legal authority to enforce their will.249

Not surprisingly, Bundesrat representatives also took exception to the government’s proposal for funding its proposed civil defense program. Ignoring the wishes of more moderate cabinet members such as Schröder, and alarming the fiscally conservative Schäffer, the Bundesrat recommended a radical revision of the government’s cost-sharing scheme. Instead of splitting the

248 The relevant passage of the Bundesrat’s official comments reads as follows: “Angesichts der Entwicklung der Atomwaffe wird die Bundesregierung dringend ersucht, in erster Linie zu prüfen, ob und welcher Schutz für Zivilbevölkerung im Falle eines Atomkrieges möglich und wirksam ist.” See Bundestag Drucksache II/1978, op. cit.

249 See points two and three of the “Änderungsvorschläge des Bundesrates,” in Bundestag Drucksache II/1978.
costs equally between federal, state, and local authorities, the Bundesrat recommended the federal
government cover eighty percent of the costs to state and local governments to organize and
implement a comprehensive system of civil defense. The underlying rationale for this suggestion
was neither new nor complicated. In keeping with their earlier argument that civil defense was,
ultimately, merely a larger part of a comprehensive system of national defense, the Bundesrat
asserted that the federal government bore primary fiscal responsibility for the program.
Moreover, as though the Bundesrat representatives recognized the need for state governments to
absorb some administrative and organizational costs—they admitted, for example, the
impracticality of expecting the federal government to pay the salaries of state government
employees—they set a limit of twenty percent on the contribution of state and local governments,
which were overburdened by the costs of reconstruction.250 Taken together, the Bundesrat’s
questions and concerns represented a lukewarm endorsement of the government’s civil defense
planning, and echoed the concerns raised by state officials in the previous years.

The government’s second, and far more serious hurdle was the Bundestag, which began
its own debate on the subject in June 1956. After its initial reading, the law was directed to four
different committees: Internal Affairs [Bundestagsausschuß für Angelegenheiten der inneren
Verwaltung], Local Politics [Bundestagsausschuß für Kommunalpolitik], Reconstruction and
Housing [Bundestagsausschuß für Wiederaufbau und Wohnungswesen], and Atomic Policy
[Bundestagsausschuß für Atomfragen].251 The basic tone of subsequent debate emerged in early

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250 Ibid., point 25.

251 The West German (and current German) legislative process calls for three official “readings” of any
    proposed legislation. The first occurs at a full meeting of the Bundestag. During this first reading the
    proposed law is introduced and entered into the official record along with the government’s
    justification for its creation and, if required, the Bundesrat’s official position. The second reading
    occurs at the end of committee deliberations. The third reading takes place once again during a full
meetings of the Internal Affairs Committee. In these meetings Interior Ministry representatives, most notably Interior Minister Schröder and State Secretary Ritter von Lex, repeatedly stressed that the law was merely a compromise [Zustimmungsgesetz]—a stop-gap measure until the completion of a more comprehensive plan. However, both the opposition SPD and the smaller parties in the governing coalition remained unconvinced. The SPD Representative from Passau, Carl Prennel, expressed the extreme position of his party when he declared the proposed program “worthless,” he was not alone.252 Annemarie Renger (SPD), who represented a district that included parts of Bonn, noted that both she and the public as a whole remained unconvinced by the government’s efforts, especially its intention to build protective bunkers. Even members normally supportive of the government’s policies, such as the German Party’s Helmuth Schranz, Herta Ilk, of the Free Democratic Party [Freie Demokratische Partei], or, FDP, and Karl von Buchka and Paul Lücke of the CDU, expressed considerable concern. Both Schranz and Ilk, for example, were critical of the government’s plans to establish a rescue and recovery service meeting of the Bundestag and includes the official submission of all committee reports as well as final debate by individual representatives. Bundestag representatives vote for the final time at the end of this debate. In very rare instances the Bundestag might vote to return the proposed legislation to committee for further consideration. Generally, the legislation is either approved or rejected.

capable of surviving a nuclear war, while Lücke raised pointed questions about the government’s plans for shelter construction. Not surprisingly, international developments featured prominently in the discussions, with Schranz, among others, questioning government officials pointedly about the viability of what he termed “white islands” — internationally recognized safety zones into which the government could evacuate women, children, the elderly, and sick in times of national emergency.

As the committee members continued to study the law, the more contentious issue of funding the proposed program quickly overtook concern about the government’s conceptualization of the threat facing the nation. In mid-November 1956, during a combined meeting of the Committees for Internal Affairs, Communal Politics, and Reconstruction and Housing, the committee members focused their full attention on this matter. The German Party’s Schranz opened the session with extended comments in which he made clear the committees’ unanimous opinion that the federal government was primarily responsible for funding civil defense. Schranz also informed the government officials present at the meeting that discussion of requiring state and local governments to pay for even part of the program was impossible without a “full clarification of the costs involved.”

Both Ritter von Lex and Schäffer attempted to convince committee members otherwise. Ritter von Lex suggested that because it was responsible for aspects of the proposed program such as the warning system and the federal office charged with overseeing implementation efforts, the federal government would actually pay far more than a third of the total cost. Although he sympathized with concern about the impact of civil defense expenditures on state and local budgets, the federal government was nonetheless...
firm in its opinion that that program was a joint responsibility. Schäffer, not surprisingly, was far less conciliatory in his remarks. Noting correctly that the federal government faced a looming financial crisis that legal maneuvering and accounting slight-of-hand could not resolve, he rejected outright the idea that the federal government pay for eighty percent of all civil defense-related costs. The rosy financial health of the state treasuries in comparison to the federal budget, Schäffer argued, meant such an option was neither fair nor possible.

Both opposition and representatives of the government coalition remained unmoved by the testimony they heard. In doing so, they outlined the basic position the parties would later present as the law made its way to general debate on the floor of the Bundestag. From the SPD came calls to subsume funding for civil defense into the annual budget of the country’s new military, a position the party had adopted at the very beginning of the debate. This option made sense, Schmitt and Prennel both argued, if one believed that civil defense was an essential component of the country’s overall national defense. Furthermore, Prennel argued, by making civil defense a component of military defense the federal government would solve the tricky problem of funding priorities. Prennel concluded his remarks by reminding his colleagues (and Schäffer) that the Finance Minister himself was on record as saying that “rearmament could proceed without raising taxes.” From Prennel’s SPD colleagues came the suggestion that the government buy fewer tanks in order to free up money for civil defense—an idea rejected by Schäffer as “simply not possible” given the current global political climate.

More reserved but nonetheless critical comments came from the coalition parties. Lücke reminded Ritter von Lex and Schäffer that the Bundestag could not approve a law which disadvantaged citizens in poorer communities, and dismissed the government’s idea of converting cellar rooms into effective protective bunkers as “unreal” [unreal]. Lücke also categorically rejected any plan to reduce federal support for reconstruction in order to pay for civil defense. By
the end of the meeting most committee members remained convinced that civil defense and national defense were intertwined and therefore primarily the responsibility of the federal government. Only a small minority objected. Among them was the CDU/CSU representative from a district near Würzburg, Karl Kihn, who drew a distinction between active and passive defense. Although the former was clearly the responsibility of the federal government, civil defense was, according to Kihn, a joint responsibility of the government and public alike.²⁵⁴ Because Kihn offered no other public comments during the course of subsequent debate, it is unclear why he adopted a position so clearly at odds with his party. One possible explanation is the fact that he represented a largely rural district far removed from major urban and industrial centers is one possible explanation, however.

For contemporary observers, the early positions adopted by the various political parties came as little surprise. For many within the SPD, including Kurt Schumacher—the party’s early, postwar leader and powerful moral force in the democratic renewal of Germany—little meaningful difference existed between reestablishing a national civil defense system and rearming the country. Both policies bore the unhealthy odor of a resurgent German militarism that threatened the party’s most important foreign-policy objective: resolution of the “German question.” Until the country gained (almost) full sovereignty in 1954, SPD leaders spoke about the country’s rearmament as little as possible, insisting that the country’s physical security was a task for the occupying powers.²⁵⁵ As fear about a possible Soviet invasion of Western Europe increased in the outbreak of the Korean War, prominent SPD leaders such as Schumacher and Carlo Schmid modified their stand on rearmament slightly, suggesting that the geo-strategic

²⁵⁴ Ibid.
²⁵⁵ Drummond, The German Social Democrats in Opposition, 37.
situation in which the country found itself required West Germans to take some responsibility for their own defense. However, as Schmacher made clear during the SPD’s 1950 Hamburg party conference, rearmament was acceptable only if certain conditions were met. These including maintaining efforts to introduce comprehensive social reforms, forcing the country’s allies (most particularly the United States) to commit themselves to a strategy of forward defense, and ensuring that any attempted rearmament did not result in the reemergence of a dominant military caste.256 Schumacher’s bold statements masked the Party’s internal divisions on the subject. Although seemingly committed to serious discussion about the country’s security, in actual fact the SPD achieved little in terms of formulating specific policy recommendations until after its disappointing showing in the 1953 federal elections.

The 1953 election failure came as a bitter blow to the SPD. Despite its election gains in the country’s second federal election, the SPD remained in opposition. As they struggled to understand their Party’s unexpectedly poor showing, SPD leaders concluded that they could not longer remain aloof from the country’s rearmament debate. There were considerable differences of opinion over the type of policy the Party should support. Erich Ollenhauer, who had led the party since Schumacher’s death in 1952, called for a “constructive” approach that emphasized working with the governing coalition parties to ensure the “democratic development and democratic control” of West Germany’s armed forces, a position supported by other reformists such as the ex-Communist Herbert Wehner, Fritz Erler, the party’s military expert, and Hamburg’s Helmut Schmidt. Ollenhauer constructivist approach was not universally accepted,

256 Ibid., 47-48.
however, a fact illustrated by two days of heated debate on the subject during the SPD’s 1954 Party Conference in Berlin.\(^{257}\)

The Party’s divisions were exacerbated by its involvement in extra-parliamentary opposition to rearmament. Emboldened by the socialists’ success in state elections held after September 1953 as well as by public opinions polls, SPD leaders tacitly supported the work of organizations such as the German Trade Union Federation [Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, or DGB] and youth groups which opposed the government’s rearmament policies. The symbolic climax came in January 1955 when Ollenhauer appeared on the rostrum of the Paulskirche meeting, a Congress held in response to Adenauer’s attempt to ratify the 1954 Paris Treaty and bring West Germany into NATO. Flanked by the DBG’s Ernst Reuter, the prominent Catholic theologian Johannes Hessen, the Protestant theologians Helmut Gollwitzer and Ernst Lange, and Gustav Heinemann, the co-leader of the neutralist Whole-German People’s Party [Gesamtdeutsche Volkspartei], Ollenhauer publicly reiterated his party’s commitment to the position that West German remilitarization could proceed only if achieved, or at the very least did not threaten, the more important goal of reunification.\(^{258}\) Yet as studies of this movement show, the Paulskirche movement, and by extension all of the extra-parliamentary opposition organized and supported by the SPD, failed in its objective of preventing West Germany’s joining NATO, or even significantly altering the national debate on rearmament.\(^{259}\) Moreover, as Gordon

\(^{257}\) Ibid., 125-126.


Drummond notes in his study of the West German rearmament debate, the rank-and-file’s linkage of reunification and rearmament forced their leadership to endorse a position that did little to enhance the Party’s overall reputation and made it “appear misguided, even irresponsible.”

Wrangling over the details of the proposed civil defense law continued until the opening months of the spring of 1957 when a series of events finally forced Adenauer to commit his formidable personal political capital to ensure the law’s passage. The first was Operation BLACK LION, a weeklong NATO exercise held at the end of March that simulated a major conflict between ground forces equipped with tactical nuclear weapons. Although this exercise was in many respects a morale victory for Adenauer—for the first time West German Bundeswehr units fully participated in a NATO exercise—it nonetheless reinforced the depressing lessons of Operation CARTE BLANCHE. In a special meeting of the Federal Cabinet held on May 29th at the Adenauer’s private residence, cabinet ministers learned from Defense Minister Heusinger the horrifying results of the exercise. According to NATO and West German officials, the Allied forces proved unequal to the task of stopping Warsaw Pact forces and were forced to withdraw behind the Ems-Rhine-Neckar line. In the exercise, the area abandoned by NATO forces suffered extremely heavy physical damage and an indeterminate number of civilian causalities. NATO and West German military planners also warned that the exercise showed the population would undoubtedly move westwards in an “uncontrollable” mass flight.

The German public never learned of the results of Operation BLACK LION—official reports on the exercise remain classified to this day. Nonetheless, the devastating effects of a

260 Drummond, The German Social Democrats in Opposition, 139.
261 Nearly eighty percent of West Germany, including nearly all its major industrial and urban centers, lay east of this line.
262 Kabinettsprotokolle, Vol. 10 (1957), 275 (footnote two).
possible nuclear war formed the central topic of the Göttingen Declaration, issued on 19 April—which was the second major event to force Adenauer’s hand. Signed by eighteen prominent physicists, including the Nobel Prize Laureates Max Born, Otto Hahn, Max von Laue, and Werner Heisenberg, the Göttingen Declaration was the German scientific community’s strongest warning to date on the dangers of an atomic war. Issued with the explicit intent of influencing public debate on one of the most important domestic and foreign policy issues of the year—arming West Germany’s Bundeswehr with atomic weapons—the Göttingen Declaration also thrust the issue of civil defense into the forefront of public consciousness.

The increased public awareness of and interest in atomic weapons hardened the tone and substance of the SPD’s criticism of the government’s civil defense program. This was particularly evident during the public debate over the Interior Ministry’s 1957 budget on 8 May, and, two days later, during the debate over a major inquiry [Grosse Anfrage] of the issue of atomic weapons. The 8 May debate on the Interior Ministry’s budget began badly for the government. Angry that Adenauer had chosen not to attend the session but had instead sent Interior Minister Schröder and State Secretary Hans Globke as his representatives, SPD representatives publicly criticized the Chancellor for failing his constitutional duties and trying to avoid responsibility for the policy priorities contained in the budget.263 In the mid-afternoon, debate began on the budget the government proposed for funding its 1958 civil defense program and the related SPD proposal to add one billion marks to the amount requested by Adenauer.264 Throughout the afternoon SPD and FDP representatives joined their colleagues from the All-German Bock-Union of Homeland-Expellees and Disfranchised [Gesamtdeutsche Block-Bund

264  Ibid., 11960.
der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechten], the GB-BHE, in attacking the government’s proposed budget as unrealistically small. The mildest criticism came from the FDP’s Lüdders, who refused to attack the government’s program but did question whether the amount included in the 1958 was sensible given the country’s experience in the past war. A more pointed attack came from the SPD’s Regner, who began her comments by asking colleagues what type of message the government sent when its own representatives (in this case Finance Minister Schäffer) asserted time and time again the impossibility of increasing “by one penny” the civil defense budget. Clearly, Regner concluded, the government was acting very irresponsibility [verantwortungslos] or had secretly reached the conclusion that no effective defense against atomic weapons existed. The GB/BHE’s Hans-Egon Engell was even blunter, and accused the government of politicizing the issue to cover its own procrastination. However, the SPD’s Helmut Schmidt issued the most caustic appraisal of the government’s proposed civil defense budget. Proclaiming himself “dissatisfied” by Schröder’s “dispassionate” rebuttal of the points raised by the preceding speakers, Schmidt asked if the Interior Minister had learned anything from U.S. and NATO civil defense officials, or given any serious consideration to the points raised in the Göttingen Manifesto. To the delight of his party and great annoyance of Vice President Dr. Jäger, the chair of the session, who found it impossible to silence the thunderous applause that punctuated the speech, Schmidt concluded:

I wish to ask you [Interior Minister Schröder] once again: is it true, as the Chancellor states, that you are really in a position to protect the country’s civilians and soldiers from the atomic weapons? Has the Chancellor spoken the truth, or has he lied, Mr. Schröder? If he spoke the truth then [the government] must fulfill it.265

265 Ibid., 11942. German original: “Ich möchte Sie [Schröder] noch einmal fragen: Stimmt das, was der Bundeskanzler gesagt hat, ist das Wahrheit, ist das Wirklichkeit, daß Sie in der Lage sind, die Zivilbevölkerung und die Soldaten vor den Atomwaffen zu schützen? Hat der Kanzler die Wahrheit gesprochen oder hat er geflunkert, Herr Schröder? Wenn er die Wahrheit sprach, dann muß das auch verwirklicht werden!”
Two days after these challenges, the government returned to the Bundestag to defend its vision of a future war and its plans to protect the nation. The only item of importance on the agenda was a discussion of the SPD’s interpellation \([\text{Große Anfrage}]\) about atomic weapons. The seriousness all parties attached to the debate was illustrated by the speakers: Adenauer, Franz-Josef Strauß, and other leading figures for the CDU/CSU, Erler, Ollenhauer, and the charismatic and articulate Schmidt for the SPD. Historians of the Federal Republic’s early existence generally agree that the 10 May debate marked a pivotal event in West German history as Adenauer and his supporters outlined and vigorously defended their vision of the country’s future.\(^{266}\) Although the issues of rearmament and West Germany’s acquisition of nuclear weapons were the central topics of the debate, it was impossible to separate a discussion of atomic weapons from their impact on the German population.\(^{267}\)

Dissent within his own party and cabinet proved the final and ultimately most important factor in forcing Adenauer’s hand. In May 1957, widespread concern about the financial arrangements outlined in the proposed law manifested itself in a proposal by the CDU parliamentary leadership \([\text{Fraktionsvorstand}]\) to remove the requirement that new housing construction include protective shelters.\(^{268}\) Agreeing with the Housing Minister that such action was extremely risky, Adenauer offered to contact Heinrich Krone, the chairperson of the CDU parliamentary faction, and urge him to support the government’s version of the law. The second

\(^{266}\) Large, *Germans to the Front*, 100-115.


source of dissent was predictable: Finance Minister Schäffer. Remaining true to the opinions he expressed repeatedly and forcibly in the Bundestag committee meetings, Schäffer officially urged the cabinet to delay passage of the government’s civil defense law until the next legislative session.\(^{269}\) Even though he never explained the reasoning behind his specific request, by delaying the law’s passage Schäffer clearly hoped to minimize its financial impact. Unsuccessful in April, Schäffer tried again in July. Clearly upset with the tone and substance of discussion in the Bundesrat-Bundestag mediation committee—Bundesrat representatives remained committed to their position of requiring the federal government to cover all civil defense-related costs—Schäffer again urged his colleagues and Chancellor to intervene, even if doing so meant delaying the law’s passage. Once again, however, Adenauer rejected Schäffer arguments. In a pivotal cabinet meeting held on 29 July 1957, Adenauer, after listening to Schäffer and Schröder argue yet again about the extent to which the federal government should fund its own civil defense program, told both men to accept any provisional settlement [\textit{vorläufige Regelung}] offered by the Bundestag-Bundesrat mediation committee.\(^{270}\)

By October 1957, Adenauer and his ministers had reached a workable compromise with their most vocal critics and approved the first civil defense law in the history of the Federal Republic. In doing so, the government committed itself to protecting “the civilian population, their homes and places of employment, and other important items necessary for a satisfying

\(^{269}\) See Schäffer’s \textit{Kabinettsvorlage} of 4 April 1957 in BA B134.4745. In addition to his official request to the federal cabinet, the file also contains a personal letter Schäffer sent to Adenauer in which he implored to Chancellor to consider the disastrous impact the proposed civil defense program might have on the country’s budget.

\(^{270}\) See the minutes of a special session of the Federal Cabinet, held 29 July 1957, in \textit{Kabinettsprotikolle}, Vol. 10, 351-352.
The 1957 Civil Defense Law assigned ultimate responsibility for the West German civil defense program to the federal government, but left most aspects of its implementation in the hands of the state and local governments. The civil defense program created by the law was a multi-faceted one. It included the creation of a national warning system; establishment of rescue, relief and rebuilding units (the Civil Defense Assistance Service); pre-positioning of critical supplies; the use of public education campaigns designed to encourage participation in civil defense efforts; provisions for the construction of new and renovation of existing protective shelters; and programs to protect vital cultural goods ranging from government records to important works of art. The law made no specific mention of evacuating West German cities in times of crisis. To finance the entire effort the 1957 Civil Defense Law outlined a complicated division of payments weighted heavily in favor of the state and local governments. Once again, West Germany had an official civil defense program.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion of West Germany’s efforts to create the legislative and administrative framework for its Cold War civil defense program raises a number of questions worth further consideration. The first is that of conceptualization; specifically, what factors ultimately shaped

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272 The federal government was required to pay the full cost of organizing and administering the program, and seventy percent of all expenses associated with creating and organizing the CDAS. Additionally, the 1957 Civil Defense Law obligated the federal government to pay seventy percent of the costs associated with building or renovating existing protective shelters. State and local governments were responsible in full only for the administrative costs of state and local programs. As Chapter Five examines in greater detail, exactly what constituted such costs became a matter of lengthy debate.
the civil defense programs outlined in the 1957 Civil Defense Law? Certainly, historical experience was of great importance, for as we have seen the program approved by West German lawmakers in 1957 reflected the German experience with strategic bombing during the Second World War. Indeed, even though they were created and approved by two very different political regimes, the 1935 and 1957 civil defense programs were remarkably similar. Both programs emphasized the use of protective shelters, rescue and recovery units, and pre-positioned supplies and equipment to mitigate the worst effects of war. More generally, both programs emphasized the physical and psychological value of protective shelters, and both focused considerable attention on post-attack recovery. The service requirement constituted the most important difference between the two programs. The 1935 Civil Defense Law was predicated on involuntary participation, an idea utterly absent, and far from viable, in the law created for the democratic Federal Republic. Yet even this difference is less important than it might first appear, for federal civil defense officials hoped to expand the program at a later date.

With the benefit of hindsight we can see this continuity in wartime and post-war West German policy was almost inevitable, for the Second World War’s legacy loomed large in civil defense planning in early-Cold War West Germany. One aspect of this legacy was a continuity in personnel. Throughout the 1950s, West Germany’s civil defense policy-making community consisted almost entirely of men whose experience dated back to the war, if not before. The influential General Hampe, who eventually headed the government’s Federal Office for Civil had commanded Germany’s Technical Troops during the Second World War.273 Heinrich Paetsch,

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273 Established in 1953 (although actual work did not begin until mid-1954), the Federal Office of Civil Defense provided administrative and technical support to the Interior Ministry’s civil defense bureaucracy, and oversaw the majority of the government’s civil defense-related public relations efforts. By the mid-1960s the FOCD employed more than 300 people. On the FOCD’s founding and early history see Erich Hampe, “Ein Jahr Bundesanstalt für zivilen Luftschutz,” in Ziviler Luftschutz.
the editor of the West Germany’s leading civil defense periodical in the 1950s, *Ziviler Luft- und Gasschutz*, performed a similar function in the 1930s, and began his career in the Prussian Interior Ministry organizing the state’s first civil defense program. Moreover, most of the federal officials who oversaw West German civil defense planning in the 1950s were men whose government experience dated at least to the National Socialist regime, and in the case of officials such as State Secretary Hans Ritter von Lex, to the Weimar Republic. While most of these officials did not specifically work on civil defense policy until after the Second World War, most had experience in the Third Reich’s Interior Ministry—which in the National Socialist regime had overall responsibility for maintaining domestic security and stability in times of national crisis (a topic that greatly concerned post-war planners). Moreover, while many post-war federal civil defense officials were too old for front-line military service in the Second World war, all had experienced the impact of the Anglo-American strategic bombing offensive and lived through the chaos and dislocation of the war’s end. For such men civil defense was a topic of vital concern rather than an intellectual exercise. The generational shift that occurred in the West German governmental bureaucracy beginning in 1960 diluted the influence of the wartime planners only gradually.

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274 This generational shift is seen in retirements and appointments that occurred in key civil defense-related posts within the Interior Ministry. Interior Minister Schröder received a new ministerial position in 1961. State Secretary Ritter von Lex retired from public service in 1960 and was replaced by the ineffectual Josef Hölzle. After Hampe’s retirement in 1956, the FOCD was headed by a succession of temporary successors until Dr. Rudolf Schmidt’s appointment in 1959. (Schmidt headed the office until 1969.) The official who oversaw the country’s TAC Office, Rudolf Schmid, retired in 1961, and Souiter, who led the Federal Civil Defense Association (see Chapter Four), retired in 1960. Interior Ministry organizational charts (see Appendix Two) show similar turnover in mid and lower level civil servants.
In addition to continuity in personnel, the legacy of the Second World also emerged in the early conceptualization and planning of a national civil defense program. If West German military planning in the early 1950s was, in the words of one contemporary observer, the noted historian Gordon Craig, “treated in terms of the past, as if any new conflict that might break out would differ in no significant respect from the Second World War…” the same was even more true for civil defense.\(^{275}\) As we have seen, the ways in which the country’s civil defense experts both envisioned the threat facing the nation and crafted a strategy to protect the country’s population were without question products of Germany’s (and the policy-makers’) prewar and wartime experience. Influential writers such as Hampe down-played or even dismissed the way in which atomic weapons had changed the world. Because they were filled with memories of the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaign and the Soviet invasion of Germany in the closing months of the war, it is hardly surprising that senior civil defense officials thought in terms of evacuation, renovating existing bomb shelters, and training recovery units to restore vital city-services as quickly as possible. More generally, present throughout all early-Cold War discussions was an implicit assumption that civil defense was an essentially technical problem best solved through technical means. Although the country’s civil defense planners knew of and, the files reveal, even privately acknowledged the geo-strategic challenges facing the country, they preferred to limit their assignment to the total amount of reinforced concrete needed to protection people from a nuclear explosion, or the logistical complexities of evacuating the country’s cities.

The fact that West Germany found itself in such a precarious position in the opening decades of the Cold War leads us to a second general question: why did it take bureaucrats and

politicians so long to draft and approve the 1957 Civil Defense Law? In the case of the government’s bureaucrats, the slow pace of civil defense planning was the direct result of two resource-related factors. The first centered on conflicting priorities. Throughout the early and mid-1950s West German existence was still dominated by the challenges of reconstruction and the problem of defining its status in the international community. Although the grave concerns of the immediate postwar period—such as feeding a hungry population, establishing a stable free-market economy, and finding employment for millions of demobilized men—became less menacing other problems such as widespread housing shortages and the need to rebuild a shattered urban infrastructure remained. Additionally, national sovereignty brought with it new international responsibilities. For Adenauer, the meant establishing the country as a solid contributor to the western security alliance and to the broader international community. Thus, while not specifically discussed in the extant files, we can nonetheless see that civil defense planning never received the full attention of any but a small handful of government bureaucrats at either the federal or state level, and the latter usually only when money was involved.

The resource allocation disputes also contributed to the slow pace of early-Cold War civil defense planning. The 1957 Civil Defense Law threatened to drain financial resources from other federal ministries and imposed new burdens on state governments. Admittedly, the potential effects were uneven. At the federal level, for example, domestic policy considerations and Adenauer’s personal preferences meant that some ministries, such as Defense, were unlikely to see their budgets suffer. (After 1955 the SPD regularly complained that the Bundeswehr received a hundred times the amount budgeted for civil defense.) Likewise, the potential burden of state civil defense expenditures differed considerably. The federal government’s own calculations showed, for example, that the cost of establishing rescue and recovery services in heavily
industrialized North-Rhine Westphalia would be greater than that of rural Bavaria. Nonetheless, the precarious nature of federal and state resources during the Cold War’s opening decades, combined with bureaucrats’ deeply engrained reluctance to lose control over the resources they controlled, was a sure recipe for inter-governmental bickering, and thus delay.

If the slow pace of civil defense-related planning in the country’s governmental bureaucracy is relatively easy to explain, the resistance the program encountered from West Germany’s elected politicians is not, especially in light of the fact that the 1957 Civil Defense Law eventually received overwhelming parliamentary approval. A closer look at the individual and collective concerns of representatives on the all-important Bundestag Internal Affairs Committee sheds some light on the problem (see Figure 3.1). Clearly, ideological considerations contributed to the law’s ponderous pace. In the case of the SPD’s Carl Prennel and Annemarie Regner, for example, the record of the committee’s early deliberations show that both thought of civil defense within the broader context of rearmament—a policy they (and their party) bitterly opposed because of negative impact on the all-important question of German reunification. Political ideology also played a role in the reluctance voiced by the German Party’s Helmut Schranz, albeit for very reasons quite different than those of Prennel and Regner. Although part of the governing coalition, for most of its existence the German Party enjoyed an extremely uneasy relationship with Adenauer’s CDU/CSU, a situation that only worsened in the mid-1950s as the Party’s overall popularity declined. As the country grew more affluent and the Free

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276 A federal report distributed to state governments in 1955 projected a total cost of more than DM 121.8 million for North-Rhine Westphalia and DM 30.7 million for Bavaria. Baden-Württemberg, which contained the same number of Category One targets as Bavaria, would, according to federal estimates, spend only DM 23.3 million to establish its rescue and recovery forces. See BA B106.17571, “Entwurf einer Denkschrift über den Aufbau eines zivilen Luftschutz in Deutschland,” undated [c. May 1955], Attachment Seven, “Zusammenstellung über die Höhe der Kosten des Luftschutzhilfsdienstes in besonders gefährdeten Luftschutzzonen.”
Democrats more influential, the German Party’s leadership sought issues around which they could rally the Party’s faithful and, hopefully, attract new adherents. Unfortunately, the fact that the German Party generally agreed with Adenauer’s basic foreign and economic policies forced it to concentrate on small “wedge” issues in the realm of domestic politics. Because it resonated within large segments of the West German public and enjoyed uneven support among the rank-and-file CDU/CSU membership, civil defense represented an ideal issue for the German Party to adopt as its own.277

Geography, or more specifically the location of electoral districts, was undoubtedly a second factor driving the resistance of individual committee members. As shown in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, the Committee’s most vocal opponents represented districts superficially very different but in actually very similar. Karl von Buchka was the only committee member to represent constituents in the northern third of the country. Regner, Rienhold Schmidt, Schranz, Lücke, and Hermann Schmidt-Volkerhausen represented districts in the middle-third of the country while those of Prennel and Herta Ilk were located in the south. This geographical diversity masks the fact that all the districts were in or near densely settled urban locations. Buchka’s district in Freiburg (Niederelbe) was located less than seventy kilometers (forty-three miles) from the center of Hamburg, West Germany’s largest city and the site of important economic and military facilities. Located in or near the densely settled industrial region of the Ruhrgebiet were the districts of Lücke, Schranz, and Renger. Augsburg, a major city in the south of the country, was home to the majority of Ilk’s constituents while Schmidt represented a district that bordered on

against the outskirts of Göttingen. Uniting all these districts was the fact that they appeared on the Interior Ministry’s list of “most likely” targets in the event of war.

Wartime experience was a third factor that united the most vocal opponents of the government’s program. All had first-hand experience of danger and suffering, represented districts that were heavily damaged during the Anglo-American strategic bombing offensive, or both. Of course, as was generally the case with the first generation of West German politicians, the representatives’ personal experience with war varied considerably. Buchka, Prennel, and Schmidt served in the German military during the Second World War. Prennel remained in Allied captivity until 1946, most likely in Russia. Schratz, born in 1897, was too old to serve with the German military in the opening years of the war, but his party connections, he had joined the Nazi Party in 1925, helped him become mayor of Offenbach am Main in 1933—a frequent target of bombing raids—a position he held until the end of the war. Lücke, born in 1914, had served as professional fire-fighter in his native Schöneborn (near Oberberg), a position that exempted him from active military service but doubtless resulted in considerable first-hand experience with the impact of bombing raids on civilian targets. Ilk, for her part, spent the entire war in Potsdam, a city that suffered heavily from repeated aerial bombardments, and had been a member of the local Red Cross before fleeing to Bavaria in the war’s closing months. Renger, like many Germans who lived through the war, suffered personal tragedy when her husband was killed during the 1940 campaign in France. After her husband’s death she decided to remain in Berlin and lived through the British and American bombing raids.

The wartime experience of the cities and the people the committee members represented was equally as varied. While Göttingen and Bonn did not suffer major damage during the war, the other cities were less lucky. Augsburg, an important industrial target because of the gigantic
MAN works located on the outskirts of the city, was bombed repeatedly. The fates of Cologne and Berlin, major urban and industrial targets, are well known. By the end of the war Allied bombing had damaged or destroyed vast sections of both cities, including more than a half million houses and apartment and houses in Berlin and seventy percent of all living space in Cologne. While it did not suffer quite as much damage as the neighboring Frankfurt-am-Main, Schratz’s Offenbach am Main was nonetheless subjected to repeated attacks, and was frequently required to provide assistance and aid to its larger neighbor. The experiences of Freiburg (Niederelbe) and Passau were different still. As smaller cities with few industrial facilities, they experienced fewer attacks. This made them an ideal destination for evacuees and refugees, however. Of the two, Passau recorded the greatest influx of people seeking safety from the bombs of the Anglo-American airforces and advancing Red Army. By April 1945, somewhere between five and ten percent of Passau and the surrounding area consisted of people evacuated from Germany’s vulnerable cities. Moreover, Passau became a favored destination of people fleeing from the east. By 1953, local officials had registered more than 35,000 refugees, the most of any Bavarian district [Kreis]. Thus, although the representatives’ personal experiences rarely intruded into official discussions about civil defense, those of their constituents did, and it

278 The most devastating raids occurred during the spring of 1943, when an attack by RAF forces left more than 100,000 homeless, and February 1944, when nearly 600 RAF bombers destroyed a quarter of the city’s buildings and killed 1,500 people. See Hermann Knell, To Destroy a City: Strategic Bombing and Its Human Consequences in World War II (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Da Capo Press, 2003), 211; Katja Klee, Im ‘Luftschutzkeller des Reiches.’ Evakuierte in Bayern, 1939-1953: Politik, soziale Lage, Erfahrungen, Schriftenreiche der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Vol. 78 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999), 178.


280 Klee, Im Luftschutzbunker des Reiches, 189 and 203-204 (Illustration, “Evakuiertenstatistik”).
is clear that reluctance to embrace the government’s program in part stemmed from careful reflection about the country’s past.

In the end, though, Adenauer overcame the parliamentary resistance to civil defense and convinced lawmakers to approve his plans. Why? On the one hand, Adenauer’s legislative victory was a foregone conclusion, for throughout the 1950s he enjoyed a comfortable parliamentary majority.\(^\text{281}\) The SPD and FDP might disagree with the contents and direction of Adenauer’s policies, but as the May 1957 vote on the SPD interpellation on nuclear weapons so clearly showed, party discipline was maintained. Because civil defense was intwined with rearmament and atomic weapons—issues to which Adenauer attached great importance—the SPD had no chance of breaking coalition discipline. CDU/CSU representatives might disagree with Adenauer’s policy—as evidenced by Krone’s dissent in May 1957—but almost none disagreed on his call for West German rearmament. Without defections from Adenauer’s own party and the complete support of the smaller political parties, the SPD was unable to influence the outcome of any parliamentary vote.

Still we must explain why in the spring and summer of 1957 Adenauer abandoned his passivity over civil defense and worked actively to ensure the law’s passage as quickly as possible. Why after seven years, and two years of parliamentary debate, did the Chancellor decide to prioritize civil defense. The extant correspondence and transcripts of relevant cabinet meetings suggest no altruistic motive. Instead it is glaringly obvious that crass political calculation lay behind the Chancellor’s actions. In the spring of 1957 Adenauer faced a looming

\(^{281}\) As a result of the 1953 federal elections, the CDU/CSU controlled 243 of 486 seats (45 percent); the SPD 151 seats (29 percent), the FDP/DVP 48 seats (9.5 percent), the GB/BHE 27 seats (5 percent), and the DP 15 seats (three percent). See Peter Schindler, *Datenhandbuch zur Geschichte des Deutschen Bundestages, 1949 bis 1999*, Vol. I (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1999), 165 (Table: “Wahl zum 2. Bundestag (1953)”).
national election. Trailing in the polls, badly buffeted by the public outcry that accompanied the Göttingen Declaration, and seen as out-of-touch with the dangerous geo-strategic situation in which the country found itself, Adenauer badly needed an effective means to counter widespread criticism of his rearmament policy. In a special meeting of the federal cabinet on 9 May 1957—one day before the important debate on the SPD official inquiry about the government’s quest for a nuclear-armed military—Adenauer told his ministers and leading members of the CDU/CSU parliamentary faction that it was imperative to understand that the public opinion on atomic weapons was deeply emotional and impervious to rational argument. Furthermore, Adenauer informed his colleagues, the SPD would assuredly try to capitalize on this emotionally charged issue in the upcoming election. Less than two weeks later, Adenauer urged Krone to abandon his plans to gut the proposed civil defense law of its symbolically important shelter construction provisions with the reminder that such action would assuredly provide the SPD with “easy, emotionally disturbing material” for the upcoming election. Two months later, the importance of a credible civil defense program to offset public discontent with the government’s rearmament policy emerged once again. In the same meeting that Schäffer pleaded with his colleagues to delay the law’s passage for a full year Schröder reminded Adenauer of the devastating impact on an election less than three weeks away. Adenauer was sympathetic, and informed the irate Schäffer that:

Therefore the law cannot fail, for the Social Democrats’ main campaign offensive, which will doubtless focus on the threat posed by nuclear weapons and how best to protect civilians from this threat, has yet to come.

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Ironically Adenauer’s victory in the August 1957 election and the final passage of the 1957 Civil Defense Law marked a beginning, not an end, to a vexing. The program outlined in the country’s first civil defense law was, in the minds of proponents and opponents alike, incomplete, but after October 1957 civil defense had attained a legal status in West German society. Opponents might not like the law’s provisions, but they were required to support it. Proponents found themselves in an even more awkward situation, however, as they prepared to implement a program of dubious utility calling for widespread support from a public decidedly tepid on the entire issue of civil defense.

sozialdemokratischen Propaganda noch kommen werde, und zwar im Zusammenhang mit der Atomgefahr und dem Schutz der Zivilbevölkerung gegen diese Gefahr.”
<table>
<thead>
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<td>GB/BHE</td>
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<td>FDP</td>
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<td>DP/FVP</td>
<td>Offenbach am Main (near Frankfurt-am-Main)</td>
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**Figure 3.1: Key Members of the Bundestag Committee for Internal Affairs.**
Figure 3.2: Electoral Districts of Key Members of the Bundestag Committee for Internal Affairs.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE CHALLENGE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Punctually at noon on 8 June 1964, Dortmund residents living and working near the city’s Sonnenstraße watched as 144 men and women carrying small suitcases and rucksacks gathered at the main entrance of the hulking, reinforced concrete form of the Sonnenbunker—a massive civil defense shelter built during the Second World War. As Dortmund residents looked on, local police escorted the group, which was strikingly absent of young men, and a cadre of health professionals past a small but vocal crowd of protestors carrying signs decrying yet further evidence of government-sanctioned warmongering. After they entered the cool, dimly-lit interior, the group walked to the central staircases located at the heart of the massive bunker, climbed to the third floor, and entered the recently renovated chambers they would call home for the next seven days. Of the available space, roughly half was taken up by machinery, either part of the bunker’s permanent equipment or installed temporarily for the upcoming test. Several rooms were allocated to the test: three “recreation” areas [Aufenthaltsraum] equipped with train-like seating and a “sleeping” chamber [Ruheraum] with narrow, three-tiered bunks. Rounding out the living-space were two combination toilet/washrooms and a small kitchen area. At 12:05 pm, Dr. Joseph Schunk, the test’s chief physician, asked participants to take their places, wished

284 The extant files of the Dortmund test do not reveal the reason why civil defense officials decided to exclude young adult males. Presumably they believed that this the demographic group would be unlikely (or unable) to seek safety in a bunker should war break out—a reasonable presumption given the country’s previous experience.
them all the best, and recorded the official start of West Germany’s first “atomic-proof” [atomsicherere] bunker.

For today’s readers well-acquainted with the early twenty-first century obsession with “reality” television, the press coverage of the Dortmund test strikes a familiar cord. Reports published by the country’s leading newspapers and news-magazines allowed readers nationwide to follow the trials and tribulations of the bunker test group. From these reports West Germans learned that limited space forced participants to sleep in six-hour shifts. When not sleeping, they spent their time reading, playing card games, writing and reading letters (the bunker enjoyed twice-daily mail service), undergoing physical and psychological exams performed by the attending medical personnel, and eating. The West German press paid particular attention to this final aspect of bunker life, informing readers about the carefully-researched diet of canned stew, canned dark bread, canned meat paste, packaged marmalade, tea, and water that provided each individual with 2,033 calories daily.

Understandably, the six-day test encountered a variety of unforeseen problems, some quite serious. Two days into the test a fifty-one year-old housewife collapsed from a form of epilepsy that required treatment in a local hospital. Shortly thereafter, an elderly retiree was forced to leave the bunker after learning his wife’s illness had taken a dramatic turn for the worse. However, lighter moments also occurred. A problem with uncontrollable heat in the sleeping chamber was resolved when supervising test officials discovered that it stemmed from a participant’s practice of hanging his underwear in front of the room’s air duct before retiring for the night. Readers also learned of the tantrum thrown by a seventeen year-old participant when she learned the bunker’s medical supplies did not include make-up to cover her acne, and the birthdays celebrated by two of the participants. Six days after they entered the Sonnenbunker those participants who remained listened to their last official announcement—a warning from Dr.
Schunk that they wear sunglasses and avoid overeating and copious drinking as they returned to their normal lives—and then concluded the test by exiting the bunker.285

The 1964 Dortmund **Sonnenbunker** test was only one of countless ways in which federal, state, and local officials tried to implement the program created by the 1957 Civil Defense Law. In keeping with the law’s main provisions, they focused their efforts on three broad strategies to protect the public: mass evacuation, bunker construction, and preparing for rescue and recovery operations in a post-attack environment. As we shall see, each strategy enjoyed both success and failure in the years following the law’s passage. Commitment to mass evacuation, a strategy which traced its conceptual and organizational roots back to Germany’s Second World War experience, faded over time in the face of geo-strategic reality and the country’s strengthening commitment to the western security alliance. Bunkers, the most politically explosive of the three strategies, also traced their conceptual and organizational antecedents to the experience of the total war. However, unlike the government’s mass evacuation strategy, the issue of bunker construction engendered widespread controversy in nearly every circle of West German society. Equally contentious were government efforts to prepare the country and its population for post-attack rescue and recovery operations. Also the product of the country’s Second World War experience, this strategy ultimately affected the greatest number of West Germans.

Before turning to individual studies, a few introductory remarks are necessary. The first is a short clarification of terminology. The English term “mass evacuation” used throughout this dissertation is, admittedly, broader than its German equivalents. Prior to the Second World War,

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German planning documents most commonly used the words *Evakuierung* and *Ausweichung*, both of which embody the same general meaning of the English term “evacuation” (although the literal meaning of *Ausweichung* is closer to “evasive maneuver”). During the period 1939-1945, the demands of total war resulted in the rapid inclusion of a new term, *Umquartierung* (literally “re-accommodation”), into wartime civil defense planning documents. Distinctions between the three words blurred by the end of the war, and Germans officials used all three interchangeably (although *Evakuierung* and *Ausweichung* remained the most common). This practice continued in the early-Cold War period, but by the early-1960s the term *Ausweichung* for the most part had given way to *Evakuierung*. While the Interior Ministry files are mostly silent on this shift in terminology, the country’s NATO membership likely played an important role in the change (in NATO’s second official language, French, the word for “evacuation” is the same, *évacuation*). In keeping with the reconceptualized civil defense vision contained in a legislative package sent to the Bundestag at the beginning of 1963, civil defense officials attempted to shift from the term *Evakuierung* to *Verlegung* (literally, “transfer”) when discussing the either the voluntary or forced re-location of large numbers of civilians.\(^\text{286}\) Although adopted in official planning documents, the term *Verlegung* was rarely used by the general public, which continued to think in terms of *Evakuierung*.\(^\text{287}\)

The term “bunker” [*Bunker*], used interchangeably with that of “protective shelter,” is simultaneously very broad and quite specific. While the exact origins of the English term are

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\(^\text{286}\) In January 1963 the Federal Cabinet began the process of winning approval of its “Emergency Law Package” [*Notstandsgesetzpakt*], a series of laws intended to update and expand the country’s civil defense program. The Emergency Law Package is discussed in Chapter Six.

unknown, most authorities agree the word entered common usage during the eighteenth century to describe a type of earthen seat or bench, and then again in the nineteenth to describe both a golf-course obstacle and storage areas onboard ships. It was not until the twentieth century, however, that the term took on military connotations. During the First World War, English-speaking military-forces used the word to describe underground, reinforced concrete shelters used to protect troops and equipment from artillery fire. Widespread German usage took longer. While the term enjoyed limited use during the First World War, the German military preferred the more literal Betonfort, or “concrete fort.” This changed after 1941, however, when National Socialist civil defense officials applied the term to structures that, paradoxically, offered the least amount of protection to their refugees. (National Socialist officials called the stronger, blast-proof shelters Wehrhäuser [military houses] or Luftschutzhäuser [civil defense houses].) For both aesthetic and practical reasons, most people abandoned the Nazi-favored terminology by the end of the war, and the term Bunker came to mean most any purpose-built underground (or in some cases above ground) structure designed to protect civilians from aerial bombardment. In West Germany, despite the best efforts of federal civil defense officials, this usage of the term persisted throughout the opening decades of the Cold War. The terms Schutzbauten [protective structures] and unterirdische Anlagen [underground installations] found resonance among politicians and bureaucrats anxious to dissociate their work from the country’s National Socialist past, but found few proponents in the public.²⁸⁸

Second, it is important to note that throughout the early and mid-1960s, the governments’ implementation efforts took place within a larger framework of future expansion. As the previous chapter details, federal officials in particular were extremely dissatisfied with the civil

defense program established by the 1957 Civil Defense Law. Their subsequent attempts to expand the program, both conceptually and legislatively, could not help but affect the ways in which they tried to reintroduce civil defense into West German society. It is also important to note, though, that even after an expanded civil defense law was introduced into the Bundestag, the country’s civil defense officials behaved as “good” bureaucrats and rarely exceeded their mandate. As a result, while they often talked about how the Emergency Laws would dramatically alter the country’s civil defense program, they focused most of their practical energy on measures first conceptualized nearly a decade before.

Finally, a brief word about evaluating success—specifically, how can we measure the extent to which civil defense officials actually implemented the program called for the 1957 Civil Defense Law? Unlike high-profile government initiatives such as housing construction, pension reform, or rearmament, civil defense received only sporadic press coverage for most of the 1950s and the 1960s. This makes the problem of tracking implementation efforts difficult, especially for mundane tasks such as purchasing uniforms for civil defense workers or commissioning studies about the type of air-filter to install in renovated bunkers. One solution is that of turning to government budgets, a innovative approach used by Richard Bessel in his study of interwar German society. The transparent nature of West German democracy was such that the federal government, like its counterparts in other Western European and North American countries, was required by law to publish annual accountings of its actual and projected expenditures. The numbers and their rationale are telling, and buried deep in the massive volumes printed each year by the Federal Printing Office [Bundesdruckerei] is a detailed account of how the government implemented its civil defense program.

289 Richard Bessel, Germany After the First World War (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Bessel relies heavily on economic data to support his study of Weimar society and culture.
Emptying the Cities

Of the three broad civil defense strategies the West German government pursued in the opening decades of the Cold War, mass evacuation engendered the most initial enthusiasm in the federal civil defense bureaucracy. In the early 1950s they seized upon the idea of removing non-essential civilians—especially women, children, the elderly, and hospital patients—as an ideal way to protect the country’s population from the worst effects of a future war. This initial support for mass evacuation was the result of the country’s Second World War experience and similar strategies adopted by West Germany’s Cold War allies. Federal enthusiasm faded in the closing years of the decades, however, and mass evacuation ultimately constituted only a minor part of the 1957 Civil Defense Law, decreasing even further in priority after the law’s passage. By the early-1960s, as federal officials shifted their planning to support official North Atlantic Treaty Organization civil defense doctrine, mass evacuation as a solution for the country’s difficult civil defense dilemma provoked only modest support at the state, local, and individual level.

The origins of West Germany’s Cold War mass evacuation strategy are not clear. It is likely that West Germany’s small civil defense community discussed the subject as they made their first tentative steps towards recreating a viable national program, but specific mention of mass evacuation does not appear in the extant correspondence until February 1951. That month a retired civil servant wrote Federal Chancellor Adenauer to urge the creation of an independent commission to study the entire question of wartime mass evacuation. Concerned that war would almost assuredly result in a partial occupation of the country and subsequent “severe repercussions,” including mass killings and transportation of civilians, forced labor, rape, robbery, and looting, the letter’s author called upon the government to evacuate essential men and women from areas likely to experience a Soviet invasion. In keeping with general conceptualizations of future warfare in the early-1950s, the proposed plan made little mention of
aerial bombardment—mass evacuation was presented as the logical response to a physical invasion of the country.  

The proposal received cursory attention in the Federal Chancellery, but provoked somewhat more discussion among Interior Ministry officials. In a series of review memorandums written in the months following their initial examination of the proposal, specialists in the Ministry’s nascent civil defense section raised three general concerns about the entire strategy of mass evacuation. The first—suitability—centered on the question of whether evacuating large segments of the country’s population was at all useful. The second—feasibility—questioned the country’s ability to successfully execute a comprehensive mass evacuation plan. If a mass evacuation strategy prove both useful and possible, there still remained the final question of desirability: should the West German government actually pursue such a policy? Not surprisingly, the Interior Ministry housed considerable differences of opinion. Accessible records of early discussions reveal that some officials feared even considering the idea of mass evacuation because of its possible psychological effect on the public. Others worried the country’s poor geo-strategic location made mass evacuation impossible, and noted the impossibility of finding suitable evacuation routes in a country divided by major rivers and


291 See BA B106.50707, Memorandum, Walter Bargatzky to Erich Hampe, 30 May 1951; Internal Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung IV/ZB [Hoffschild], 21 June 1951; Internal Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung IV/ZB3, 7 April 1952; and Internal Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung IC4 [Krause], 5 April 1951.

292 BA B106.50707, Internal Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung IV/ZB [Hoffschild], 21 June 1951.
waterways and within easy reach of the enemy’s forces. However, proponents of the strategy countered with assurances that widespread evacuation was useful, especially if combined with the idea of “safety zones,” [Sicherheitszonen] as defined by the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.\footnote{In response to the widespread atrocities perpetuated by Germans and others during the Second World War, delegates from more than a hundred nations met in Geneva, Switzerland in the spring and summer of 1949 to revise and expand the Geneva Convention to include statements about the rights of civilians in times of war. Deliberations concluded on 12 August 1949 with the adoption of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This convention reaffirmed the principles of earlier agreements (most specifically that of 1929) and outlawed hostage taking, mutilation and degradation of POWs, torture, executions, rape, and discrimination based on race, sex, religion, nationality or political affiliations. Of particular interest to West German civil defense officials was the Convention’s second part (“General Protection of Populations Against Certain Consequences of War”), especially articles thirteen through twenty. Article fourteen, the subject of much discussion among Interior Ministry officials, reads, “In time of peace, the High Contracting Parties and, after the outbreak of hostilities, the Parties thereto, may establish in their own territory and, if the need arises, in occupied areas, hospital and safety zones and localities so organized as to protect from the effects of war, wounded, sick and aged persons, children under fifteen, expectant mothers and mothers of children under seven.” (Emphasis mine) For a full text of the treaty see the website of the International Red Cross, http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf (accessed 21 April 2004). West Germany signed the Fourth Geneva Convention in December 1954. Its most likely opponent, the Soviet Union, signed the Convention (with reservations) in December 1949.}

The concern of many civil defense experts notwithstanding, the Interior Ministry continued to work on a mass evacuation strategy, and at the end of 1953 issued its first comprehensive report on the subject. The Study on Evacuation Inside the Federal Republic, which contained a series of key issues and policy recommendations that eventually formed the basis of the government’s official policy for the remainder of the decade, was based on three key planning assumptions.\footnote{BA B106.50707, “Denkschrift über eine Evakuierung innerhalb der Bundesrepublik,” 1 December 1953.} First, mass evacuation was both useful and desirable. Second, primary responsibility for organizing the effort to clear the country’s cities rested with the federal government. Third, peacetime preparation was absolutely essential if the strategy stood any chance of success. Emphasizing the final point was the country’s demographic quandary: of the Federal Republic’s nearly sixteen million people who lived in “Category One” targets more than
one-third were women, children, the elderly, or persons who suffered from some form of permanent physical disability. Moving and caring for these people presented a considerable, but not insurmountable problem, the report implied.

While few details of its contents reached the public, the 1953 Study triggered a firestorm of controversy with the country’s civil defense bureaucracy. Typical of the concerns expressed after the Study’s distribution were those raised by the Interior Ministry’s Botho Bauch. Bauch, whose objections were later echoed by a sizeable number of state and local civil defense officials, argued that mass evacuation planning to date suffered from a fundamental flaw: it emphasized aerial bombardment as the most serious threat facing the nation. Bauch, in contrast, believed the country needed to prepare for a land invasion. Most likely driven by different memories of the country’s Second World War experience, Bauch argued that a Soviet land invasion would displace a minimum of four to five million West Germans. Could the government, Bauch asked, find the resources necessary to cope with both emptying the country’s cities and supporting millions of homeless refugees? While he never directly answered the question, the tone of Bauch’s memorandums on the subject suggests considerable skepticism. Ultimately, his concerns attracted little attention, especially in higher political circles. Shortly after his plea for caution, Bauch received official word to base all future mass evacuation planning on the ambitious premise of removing at least fifty percent of the country’s civilian population from Category One cities.

Ironically, at the same time officials worked to plan the evacuation of the country’s cities, outside the Interior Ministry enthusiasm for the strategy plunged. At the end of 1954, for

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295 BA B106.50707, Internal Memorandum, Erich Hampe, 12 December 1953; Internal Memorandum, Botho Bauch, 05 January 1954.

instance, the Housing Ministry’s Urban Planning Working Group [Fachaußchusses Städtebau und Raumplanung] issued its final, extremely critical, report on the subject. While mass evacuation was not dismissed outright, the Group’s members questioned whether the government was truly capable of moving even thirty percent of the country’s urban population to places of safety, and recommended the Housing Minister instead support civil defense strategies that emphasized physical protection.\textsuperscript{297} Even stronger condemnation emerged from the Federal Ministry for Nutrition, Agriculture, and Forestry [Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft, und Forsten], or the Federal Agricultural Ministry. In a letter to his colleague Gerhard Schröder, Agricultural Minister Heinrich Lübke complained of the Interior Ministry’s proposal to relocate millions of men, women, and children to the country’s rural areas in times of war. Such a measure, Lübke reminded Schröder, would place a tremendous strain on local resources, and therefore he stressed the absolute necessity for the two ministries to coordinate their efforts to organize the country’s agricultural sector.\textsuperscript{298}

While a skeptical observer might characterize Lübke’s entreaties as little more than an effort to protect his resources, it is true that specters raised by Oskar Graf’s \textit{The Holocaust’s Survivors}—that of panicked, rampaging hordes descending on an unprepared countryside like the proverbial horde of locusts—were also ones repeatedly emphasized by state and local government officials. Extant files reveal the extent to which these officials viewed mass evacuation


differently from their federal colleagues. Whereas Interior Ministry officials in the 1950s included mass evacuation as an integral (if understated) component of any system of national civil defense, state and local governments were more hesitant to do so. State officials from Hamburg and North-Rhine Westphalia, in particular, worried that federal mass evacuation planning made unreasonably optimistic assumptions. In the same meeting of the Housing Ministry’s Urban Planning Working Group at which the participants reluctantly endorsed the idea of mass evacuation, the representatives from Hamburg and North-Rhine Westphalia questioned where the federal government expected their residents to flee. The North-Rhine Westphalian representative, in particular, noted pessimistically that evacuating even ten to fifteen percent of the region’s population was an optimistic goal. In addition to space, state and local representatives also worried about money; specifically, who bore ultimate responsibility for the cost of moving, sheltering, feeding, and caring for tens of millions of evacuees? Finally, as Hamburg’s Kurt Glässing, a senior legal advisor [Senats syndicus] for the Hamburg Senate, noted time and time again, developing any successful mass evacuation strategy required a regional rather than local or national approach. Hamburg, in particular, needed to emphasize coordinated planning with its neighbors, Bremen and Schlesweg-Holstein, rather than the country as a whole.

Given the tepid reception it received from other government officials, it is worth considering why the Interior Ministry’s civil defense experts continued to incorporate mass evacuation into their planning. Two explanations seem likely. First, West German civil defense


300 BA B106.50707, Letter, Kurt Glässing to the Interior Ministry, Abteilung IV/ZB (Botho Bauch) and the Bremen Senate, 13 May 1955; Subject: ‘Evakuierung’ der Bevölkerung im Rahmen des zivilen Bevölkerungsschutzes.
officials were clearly influenced, usually positively, by the work of their colleagues in the United States and Scandinavian countries, particularly Sweden. That West German officials followed events in the United States is hardly surprising, for the country’s standing as the world’s preeminent nuclear power conferred on it a scientific and technical credibility not available to other nations. Moreover, in the first half of the 1950s at least, U.S. civil defense officials devoted considerable intellectual (but considerably fewer financial) resources to formulating and implementing a mass evacuation strategy for its own citizens.\textsuperscript{301} As a result, West German officials followed U.S. experiments with mass evacuation, such as the \textit{OPERATION ALERT} exercises, with enormous interest, and even sent senior Interior Ministry officials to personally observe firsthand how the U.S. planned to protect its citizens. Interest in Danish and Swedish mass evacuation policy is also understandable, for the three countries shared the similar challenge of sheltering a largely urban population from nearby, nuclear-equipped enemy forces. Throughout the 1950s articles published in West German civil defense periodicals spoke enviously of the well-developed Danish and Swedish plans to evacuate thirty to fifty percent of the urban population in times of crisis.\textsuperscript{302} As was the case with the U.S., West German civil defense officials also visited their Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish colleagues (albeit not until


\textsuperscript{302} See, for example, “Der Bereitschaftszustand der norwegischen Zivilverteidigung,” in \textit{Ziviler Luftschutz} 20:1 (January 1956), 27; “Allgemeine richtlinien für die Zusammenarbeit der zivilen und militärischen Verteidigung in Dänemark,” 21:2 (January 1957), 21-22; and Rolf Thue, “Die Zivilverteidigung in Norwegen,” 22:8 (August 1958), 188-191. Of particular interest is the article by Udo Schützsack, “Trollhätten [Norway]—eine Stadt wandert,” in the December 1958 issue of \textit{Ziviler Luftschutz}. In his four page report on the mass evacuation exercise held in Trollhätten in October 1958, Schützsack concluded with the observation that “…foreign observers [of the exercise] could not help but return to their countries greatly influenced [by the results]…and consider whether their own civil defense programs might not benefit from serious revisions.”
the early-1960s)—experiences which only reinforced the advantages of the Scandinavian programs.303

The Federal Republic’s closer integration into the western security alliance is the second reason why Interior Ministry officials continued to work on a mass evacuation strategy. From the very beginning of the Organization’s creation, NATO military authorities worried about how great numbers of evacuees might effect the Alliance’s military operations, and in early-1950 concluded, not surprisingly, that evacuees and refugees posed a significant threat to military operations.304 The Organization’s civil defense experts were slow to address the issue, however, waiting until 1952 before forming the Working Group on Civil Organization in Times of War, AC/23, and its subordinate body, the Committee on Refugees and Evacuees, AC/23 (RE), to study the issue.305 The extant records of both the AC/23 Working Group and AC/23(RE)

303 Official working visits included those of a Bundestag delegation in September 1961; a party of Hamburg civil defense officials in March 1963; and federal civil defense officials in the Summer of 1964. On the 1960 Bundestag visit see Albert Schlang, “Die Organisation der Zivilverteidigung in Schweden,” in *Ziviler Luftschutz* 25:2 (February 1961): 49-53; on the Hamburg visit see the correspondence located in HH B136.1-0617; and on the 1964 visit see the series of articles written by Horst von Zitzewitz published in the December 1964, and January and April 1965 issues of *Zivilschutz*.


305 The Working Group on Civil Organization in Time of War (AC/23) was authorized in June 1952 by the NATO Council of Ministers. The Committee on Refugees and Evacuees (AC/23(RE)) was officially established during the NATO Council of Ministers meeting of 10 November 1952. For details see the minutes of each meeting, C-M(52)27 of 5 June 1952 and C-M(52)101 of 10 November 1952. It is important to note that the absence of an official history on NATO’s civil defense planning makes tracing the organization’s official activities in this area challenging, especially the official committees, sub-committees, and working groups created to examine the issue. Although founded in 1949, it was not until 1950 that the NATO Council devoted serious attention to the question of civil defense. During the period 1950-1958, the Council created a variety of boards, committees, and working groups to examine the issue, which was termed “civil emergency planning.” This term, rather than “civil defense,” was adopted to denote the peacetime plans and preparations member governments needed to make to ensure their homefronts would withstand the strain of war. As described by NATO’s first Secretary General, Lord Ismay, in *NATO: The First Five Years, 1949-1954* (Paris, 1954), the newly-created committee quickly focused its attention on two subjects: defending civilian populations from aerial bombardment and organizing refugees and evacuees. The committee created
Committee reveal that NATO mass evacuation policy evolved considerably during the 1950s before reaching a state of consistency in the 1960s. At the very beginning of their work NATO’s civil defense officials settled on three fundamental planning assumptions to form the basis of all future policy mass evacuation policy. The first was a firm commitment to primacy of military operations. Second, NATO civil defense officials and military authorities both agreed mass evacuation was essentially a national problem, but acknowledged a possible need for international coordination to resolve certain difficult logistical questions. Finally, the experts on NATO’s civil defense-related working groups and committees identified West Germany as the cause for greatest worry. On this final point NATO civil defense experts expressed two general concerns. First, a future conflict almost assuredly would result in the mass movement of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of West German refugees: panicked men, women and children who would impede critical military operations and tie up considerable war-related material and personnel. Second, the West German government gave little indication that it could

two sub-committees—the Civil Defense Committee (AC/23(CD)) and the Committee on Refugees and Evacuees (AC/23(RE))—to conduct in-depth analyses of the issues. Each sub-committee, in turn, established a number of working groups. Eventually, the bureaucratic morass lead to the creation of a “Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee,” or SCEPC (AC/98), the task of which was to oversee all civil emergency planning. As described in the minutes of the 100th meeting of the NATO Council as well as Annex B of Document AC/98-D/1, each nation was to be “represented at the highest possible level [on the SCEPC], whenever possible by the senior official responsible for the coordination of Civil Emergency Planning.” For West Germany this was often the Interior Ministry State Secretary who oversaw the civil defense department, although Foreign Office officials sometimes attended in their place.

But as both the 1950 SHAPE memorandum and a 1952 communiqué from the French government made clear, the problem was less one of identifying the actual threat to military operations than resolving the tricky political questions raised by mass evacuations, especially in regard to issues such as transportation, housing, support, and financial resources. See NATO Archives, Working Group on Civil Organization in Time of War, Document AC/23-D/19, “Note from the French Delegation about Protective Dispersal of Refugees and Evacuees,” 10 November 1952.

On the final point see NATO Archives, Committee on Refugees and Evacuees, Document AC/23(RE)-D/29, “Committee on Refugees and Evacuees, Report by the Seven-Country Group,” 28 April 1954 and Document AC/23-D/64, “Report by the Chairman of the Committee on Refugees and Evacuees,” 9 June 1954.
effectively control its citizens, or that it even understood the problem’s magnitude. As a 1954 report noted, formulating an effective, Alliance-wide response to the problem of mass evacuation was frustrated by a “complete lack of data on the measures to be taken in Germany by the German government for the prevention and/or control of mass movements of the civilian population.”

In 1955, new military planning assumptions forced NATO civil defense planners to revise their mass evacuation policy, and with certain minor exceptions the civil defense guidelines issued the same year remained in effect until 1965. Considered from 1955 onwards as part of the broader issue of “control of civilian populations in times of war,” NATO mass evacuation policy during this period centered on four deceptively simple goals. First and foremost was the need for civilian populations to maintain their wartime morale, willingly follow government directives, and take considerable personal initiative. Closely related to this first objective was the second: the creation of contingency plans to ensure government and administrative wartime continuity. Official adoption and active efforts on the part of national governments to implement the Organization’s new “stay-at-home” policy constituted the third overall objective of NATO mass evacuation policy. As NATO civil defense officials freely admitted, however, effective enforcement of the Organization’s “stay-at-home” policy was

308 NATO Archives, Committee on Refugees and Evacuees, Document AC/23-D/64, “Report by the Chairman of the Committee on Refugees and Evacuees,” 9 June 1954, paragraph three.

309 In 1964, the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (AC/98) conducted a reappraisal of NATO civil defense planning. In the committee’s final meeting, held 16-17 November 1965, the members issued a “reappraisal report” (AC/98-D/201, 20 September 1965) that contained a number of recommendations. Taken together, these recommendations consolidated all civil defense planning into a single, permanent committee charged with “ensuring to the greatest possible extent, in the event of attack, the survival of our [NATO] populations, the support of military operations, the protection and utilization of our vital resources, and the early recovery and rehabilitation of our nations” by “carrying out such planning as cannot adequately be undertaken by individual nations without coordination…” and keeping “NATO informed of the progress of national plans.” The new aims and objectives of NATO’s civil emergency planning are found in the 13 December 1965 report submitted to the NATO Council of Ministers (C-R(65)49), “Reappraisal of Civil Emergency Planning.”
practically impossible in a democratic country in the absence of widespread public cooperation. As a result, the fourth general objective of NATO mass evacuation policy centered on implementing meaningful national public relations campaigns to educate citizens about the rationale for NATO and national government policy. Declaration of martial law, NATO civil defense officials stressed, was an option of last resort.\textsuperscript{310} After 1955, NATO’s impact on the West German mass evacuation planning increased. In 1957, even as they celebrated the passage of the country’s first civil defense law, federal Interior Ministry officials continued work on mass evacuation guidelines, and clearly sought to coordinate their policies with those of NATO. They found the task difficult, for the ambiguous meaning of the phrase “control of the civilian population in wartime” caused considerable consternation among those who had worked for the repressive and ruthless National Socialist regime. By the end of that year, however, West German civilian and military officials expressed greater support for NATO’s policies, noting in an October report to NATO’s Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee their complete agreement with the position on the entire issue of mass evacuation.\textsuperscript{311}

As the Interior Ministry’s technocrats privately endorsed the idea of mass evacuation, they moved only slowly towards meaningful implementation. As late of November 1956, for example, the draft guidelines for establishing a national civil defense system contained only a single sentence about mass evacuation: state and local officials were promised detailed information at an unspecified future date. Indeed, it was not until after the 1957 Civil Defense

\textsuperscript{310} The clearest articulation of these concepts is found in Sir John Hodsdoll’s 6 September 1956 report to the Civil Defense Committee ("Control of Civilian Population Under Attack, Memorandum by Senior Civil Defense Advisor," Document AC/23(CD)-D/151, 6 September 1956). Sir John Hodsdoll, a Wing Commander in the British Royal Air Force, served as NATO’s senior civil defense advisor until 1961.

\textsuperscript{311} NATO Archives, Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee, “Note by the German Delegation on the Problem of Refugees,” Document AC/98-D/77, 6 October 1958.
Law’s passage that Interior Ministry officials provided state governments with preliminary mass evacuation guidelines.312

Recipients agreed the guidelines were of mixed quality. On the one hand, they provided a clear vision for the future. Beginning with an unambiguous statement about the dangers of war in the atomic age, the new guidelines asserted that effective protection was possible through a dual strategy of mass evacuation and an extensive system of protective shelters. State officials discovered that federal plans actually consisted of three general policies: near total evacuation for people who lived in areas likely to suffer the heaviest damage; partial evacuation of areas immediately adjacent to high priority targets; and a general “thinning” of the population in less vulnerable areas. State and local officials also learned of their obligation to distribute evacuees in such a ways that they never exceed the total number of original inhabitants, and to prevent any form of uncoordinated, unsanctioned mass flight [Fluchtbewegungen].313 Unfortunately, the guidelines were parsimonious with specific implementation details.314 This was most apparent in

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313 SHH 136-1.1326, Draft copy of “Richtlinien für die Verbereitung von Maßnahmen zur Evakuierung, Umquartierung und Flüchtlingslenkung für die Landesregierungen,” dated January 1958. The critical areas mentioned in the planning guidelines included oil refineries and nuclear power stations. The concept of near total evacuation was important, for federal officials acknowledged that a small number of people would remain to ensure vital city-services (gas, electricity, and sewerage) and transportation and communications networks remained intact and functioning. Government plans stressed the evacuation of women, children, the elderly, and sick and injured. Taken together, the proposed guidelines envisioned evacuating roughly fifty to sixty percent of the country’s most vulnerable population to areas between twenty to sixty kilometers from city centers, industrial installations, and military bases. As noted in the text, protection for people living in less vulnerable areas was provided for by a “thinning” of the population [Auflockerung]—a strategy used with great success during the Second World War. Less drastic in scale and scope than whole-scale mass evacuation, this aspect of the federal planning called for removing only thirty percent of the total population in these areas.

314 Ibid., 10-11. Typical unhelpful statements included instructions for state governments to “coordinate planning with the responsible territorial commanders” and develop plans to ensure “they [the civilian and military authorities] can account for the [size and composition] of the population during the day and at night, during workdays and on the weekend, and during periods of seasonal variation (vacationers, tourists, etc.)….” Interior Ministry officials also reminded state governments to consider the needs of foreign nationals, and to include in their planning (unspecified) special arrangements for
the closing pages of the document, which discussed unplanned flight. Dismissing the subject with a single, terse paragraph, state officials learned only they should “take appropriate measures” to prevent the possible spontaneous movement of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people. The planning guidelines concluded with the stern warning to classify all evacuation planning as “secret” to prevent the enemy gaining valuable intelligence about the country’s future war plans.315

In the end, the government’s mass evacuation policy died an inglorious death. Less than a year after they issued their first complete guidelines for executing mass evacuations of the country’s cities, Interior Ministry officials began a steady retreat from their initial strategic conceptualization. In August 1959, the head of the Interior Ministry’s Civil Defense Division, Walter Bargatzky, acknowledged the inadequacy of the federal government’s planning assumptions. No longer, Bartagsky wrote in a letter to the retired General Theodor Busse, could federal and state officials ignore the unpredictability of atomic weapons or the dangers of radioactive fallout. The dangers of both, he continued, suggested a need to immediately change mass evacuation planning. Indeed, what Bartagsky proposed was nothing less than a dramatic change in the very scale and scope of future mass evacuation. Instead of whole-scale evacuation of the country’s cities in the days leading up to a war, Bartagsky argued for a strategy of mass evacuation that centered on three very specific goals: evacuating civilians from the vicinity of “credible” targets of atomic strikes, such as airports or atomic reactors (generally the same types of targets against which NATO forces planned to direct their own atomic weapons); facilitating active military defense measures; and reducing the possibility that a region’s population density evacuating foreign military dependents. Notably, the guidelines made no mention of the fact that the public might fail to embrace their government’s plans.

might result in “higher than anticipated” casualties in the event of an atomic attack. Furthermore, Bartagzky argued that the new focus shifted the overall time-frame—mass evacuation operations could occur well into the actual outbreak of war.\textsuperscript{316} By the early-1960s, the necessity of supporting NATO’s “stay-at-home” policy caused the country’s civil defense planners to retreat even further from full-scale mass evacuation. As evidenced by those aspects of the 1963 Emergency Laws which governed civilian movement in times of war, West German planners no longer strove to move people out of the cities, but worked instead to prevent any repetition of the Second World War’s closing months.

\section*{A Nation Underground}

The second broad civil defense strategy developed by the West German government in the opening decades of the Cold War, providing protective shelters for the population, seemingly offered the greatest initial promise. While Allied occupation forces demolished a small number of protective shelters in the years immediately following the war, the vast majority remained intact throughout the 1950s and 1960s.\textsuperscript{317} Indeed, early official correspondence and writing reveals widespread support for bunkers. In the November 1952 inaugural issue of \textit{Ziviler Luftschutz}, for example, Erich Hampe expressed his support for physical protection in no uncertain terms,

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\textsuperscript{316} BA B106.50708, Internal Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII (Botho Bartagzky), 4 August 1959; Letter, Botho Bartagzky to General Theodor Busse, 31 August 1959. \\
\textsuperscript{317} U.S. and British occupation authorities initially focused their attention on military installations, such as the submarine bunkers in Hamburg and Bremen, or structures that served as the focal point of Germany’s air-defense system. Soviet occupation authorities exercised less restraint. See Michael Foedrowitz, \textit{Bunkervelten: Luftschutzanlagen in Norddeutschland} (Berlin: Charles Links Verlag, 1998), 152-168. The exact number of extant bunkers is not mentioned in the extant Interior Ministry files, but Foedrowitz writes that in the mid-1990s several thousand of the shelters built in northern Germany as part of the \textit{Führer Sofortprogramm} remained.
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writing that “protective shelters built in advance are absolutely essential for surviving a tremendous aerial attack.”

Joining Hampe were Interior Ministry officials such as Heinz Dählmann, who argued that “in a future war, improvised measures will do little to protect humans and the buildings in which they live...basement shelters and public bunkers should be built quickly to protect [West Germans] from as much risk as possible.” Dählmann also advanced the eminently logical argument that advances in military technology made bunkers psychologically imperative. “In order to provide the public with a sense of security and counter the primary threats they face,” Dählmann wrote, “[people must have access] to easily accessible protective shelters of suitable construction.” In other words, Dählmann argued that large concrete and reinforced steel structures offered an important psychological and physical symbol of the government’s willingness to protect civilians. Strikingly, enthusiastic support for protective shelters also existed outside the Interior Ministry. At the same 1950 meeting which produced the first working blueprint for a reconstituted national civil defense program, the civilian technical experts assembled by Hampe specifically recommended constructing individual and group shelters in the


321 See Chapter Three.
country’s most endangered cities. Two years later, a technical commission assembled by the Housing Ministry demanded “as much protection as possible” for the country’s industrial workers, and urged the government to heed the lessons of the last war by implementing a comprehensive shelter construction program. Nor was the Housing Ministry’s support purely rhetorical in nature. In May 1952, buttressing words with deeds, Housing Ministry officials issued the country’s first guidelines for bunker construction, stating in the introduction to the technical specifications that “…because of the cost of subsequent renovation…all new housing [in the Federal Republic] should include protective shelters.”

This initial positive attention accorded bunkers should not obscure the fact that civil defense experts recognized their limitations. For example, Dählmann, who, we have seen, generally supported the idea of bunkers, nonetheless cautioned the country’s civil defense community to recognize their inherent limitations, especially the above-ground type found in West Germany’s northern cities. As a result, Interior Ministry officials worked to avoid the subject in early drafts its legislation and administrative guidelines for reconstituting the nation’s civil defense program. The draft civil defense law distributed to state governments at the

322 BA B106.17569, “Vorschläge für einen Luftschutz der Bevölkerung,” included with Memorandum, Erich Hampe to Hans Ritter von Lex, 23 September 1950. The civilian technical experts included Heinrich Dräger, the manger of a Lübeck company which produced gas-masks and breathing equipment and Gerhard Stampe, who according to Hampe chaired “numerous government committees on protective equipment for countering gas attacks.”

323 BA B106.17569, Letter (Copy), Beutler and Meendsen-Bohken (Arbeitskreis Industrie-Luftschutz) to Kristen (Bundesministerium für Wohnungswesen, Fachausschuß Bautechnischer Luftschutz), 4 November 1952; Subject: Schutzraumbau im Industrie-Luftschutz.

324 Curiously, the extant files of the Federal Housing Ministry no longer contain a copy of this document. A full account of the guidelines is found in Wiendieck, “Worauf wartet man?” in Ziviler Luftschutz 17:2 (February 1953):32-33.

beginning of 1952 noted only that the federal government planned to protect the civilian population “through public civil defense organizations…and self-protection measures….”326 Subsequent drafts of the administrative guidelines distributed to state officials in August 1952 and May 1953 also devoted little attention to physical protection. When they addressed the topic at all federal officials mentioned only those shelters intended to protect key government and rescue and recovery personnel (including the civil defense leadership).327

Bunkers re-emerged in official planning documents after mid-1954, when the Interior Ministry distributed its most comprehensive vision of the country’s civil defense program, the “Study on the Creation of Civil Defense in Germany.”328 This study, which served as the fundamental basis of bunker-related planning for the remainder of the decade, called for finding or building some form of protection for the slightly more than eight million people expected to remain in the country’s cities after their evacuation, and secure facilities for about 1.5 million government officials and rescue and recovery workers. Interior Ministry officials also urged the Federal Cabinet to approve legislation that required all new housing construction to contain some form of shelter, a requirement that would result in protection for an additional 3.2 million people living outside Category One targets. Finally, acknowledging that geographical location determined vulnerability, the Study’s authors called for three million suburban West Germans to seek protection in shelters less capable of coping with the worst effects of an nuclear explosion. In most respects the plan outlined in the 1954 study was also present in the draft civil defense law

326 SHH 136-1.1365, Draft (Copy) “Entwürfe eines Gesetzes über den zivilen Luftschut,” 1952 [Distributed in with BA B136.1936, Letter (Copy), Schneppel (Bundesinnenministerium) to state governments, 20 August 1952]. German original: “…durch öffentliche Luftschutzeinrichtungen…[und] eigene Maßnahmen.”

327 Copies of the draft guidelines are found in SHH 136-1.1351.

Schröder submitted to the federal cabinet in October 1955.

Unfortunately for the Interior Ministry’s technocrats, their renewed commitment to protective shelters occurred at precisely the same time their colleagues in other federal ministries turned against the idea. Records of discussions conducted between senior civil servants and government ministers after June 1955 reveal the Ministries of Housing, Economics, and Finance, in particular, opposed the very idea of bunkers. Of greatest concern to Housing Ministry officials was the impact the Interior Ministry’s bunker strategy might have on their own programs. More specifically, the Ministry worried about the overall cost of the program and the Interior Ministry’s logical, if politically suicidal, proposal to offset civil defense construction expenditures through an increase in the rent charged for federally subsidized housing.\(^{329}\) It is important to note, however, that even though they rejected any effort to increase rental rates, Housing Ministry officials never truly joined the bitter opposition voiced by the Finance and Economics Ministries. While extant archival records do not fully explain the reason for this decision, some conjecture is possible. In the 1950s, housing construction remained a top priority of the Adenauer government, as evidenced in both public statements and the Chancellor’s private discussions with CDU leaders. The Housing Ministry also enjoyed considerable leverage in the form of legislative protection. The 1950 Law on Public Support for Housing Construction [Wohnungsbaugesetz] mandated a minimal level of annual construction. Moreover, housing was an issue that cut across party lines—the SPD-oriented unions greatly benefited from the country’s reconstruction program.\(^{330}\) Thus, it is highly probable that Housing Ministry officials never truly feared that

\(^{329}\) See Dr. Preusker’s comments during the 28 June 1955 meeting of senior bureaucrats in BA B134.4745, Memorandum, Federal Housing Ministry, Referat I/10, 28 June 1955; Subject: Finanzierung des baulichen Luftschutzes im Wohnungsbau—Chefbesprechung im BMI vom 25.07.1955.

\(^{330}\) To provide but one example, in 1951 German unions founded the construction company Neue Heimat [New Home]. The company eventually became the largest construction concern in Europe, employing
civil defense-related construction would adversely affect their building program. The political cost of even a mild reduction in new dwellings built or a small increase in the rents charged for public-financed housing was simply too great.331

If Interior Ministry officials could count on their Housing Ministry colleagues for lukewarm support for their bunker strategy, the same was not true when they turned to the bureaucrats in charge of the country’s economy and finances. While the surviving records show all parties recognized the general value of civil defense, both the Ministries of Economics and Finance expressed grave concerns about the details found in the Interior Ministry’s proposed plans. The Ministry of Economics, for example, no doubt heavily influenced by the numerous petitions it received from industrial leaders, unhesitatingly agreed with their Interior Ministry colleagues that the country’s workers deserved quick access to secure protective shelters. They disagreed, however, with plans to fund a mandatory construction program with funds raised from the private sector.332

Finance Ministry officials were far less reticent in their objections. Indeed, it is fair to say that prior to Schäffer’s appointment as Justice Minister after the 1957 election, Adenauer’s archconservative Finance Minister and his subordinates proffered the most determined, and

over 200,000 people and responsible for over half of all housing in West Germany. See Manfred Fuhrich, *Neue Heimat: Gewerkschaften und Wohnungspolitik* (Hamburg: VSA-Verlag, 1983).

331 On early Cold War West German housing policy see Günther Schulz, *Wideraufbau in Deutschland: Die Wohnungspolitik in den Westzonen und der Bundesrepublik* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1994).

332 See the comments of Federal Economics Ministry representatives at inter-ministerial meetings of senior bureaucrats in B134.4745, Internal Memorandum, Federal Housing Ministry, Referat I/3, 21 October 1953; Subject: Abteilungsleiterbesprechung über die LS-Denkschrift des BMI im Innenministerium am 17.10.1953 unter Leitung von Herrn Staatsssekretär Ritter von Lex; Internal Memorandum, Referat II/2, 26 January 1954; Subject: Luftschutzprogramm—Sitzung im BMI am 22.04.1955; Internal Memorandum, Federal Housing Ministry, Referat I/10, 29 April 1955; Subject: Luftschutzprogramm—Besprechung im BMI am 29 April 1955; and Internal Memorandum, Federal Housing Ministry, Referat I/9 (Hoffmann), 28 September 1956: Subject: Luftschutzprogramm; Auswirkung des Einbaues von Schutzräumen in Neubauten auf die Niete bzw. Belastung.
ultimately most damaging opposition to the Interior Ministry’s bunker strategy. Schäffer’s opposition to the Interior Ministry’s plans was the inevitable result of fundamental disagreements about resource allocations. More specifically, Schäffer was clearly horrified by the cost of sheltering the country’s population. In fairness to Schäffer, his fears were not baseless. In February 1952 Interior Ministry officials estimated that a “minimal” bunker strategy would cost the government roughly DM 449 million over a four year period. While this amount represented only a tiny fraction of the country’s budget (estimated at DM 21.6 billion for the 1952-1953 fiscal year), it also represented only a small fraction of the overall cost of the Ministry’s grander vision. The cost calculations included in the 1953 Study on the Creation of Civil Defense in Germany were more sobering. The DM 112 million required each year to fund the Interior Ministry’s “minimal” bunker strategy increased to nearly DM 900 million annually should the government decide to protect an estimated 14.5 million West Germans—the number of people not evacuated from Category One cities.

Schäffer cried foul when he learned of the Interior Ministry’s cost estimates. His ire, subsequently expressed as official Ministry policy, was fueled by two pressing concerns. The first was the sheer cost of the program. According to the Housing Ministry’s own estimates, a fully-funded bunker program required more than 1.4 billion marks in private investment (see Figure 4.1). Admittedly minor when compared to the amount spent by private investors to rebuild the country’s shattered industrial infrastructure, both Schäffer and Ludwid Erhard’s

333 This amount was in addition to the funds the Interior Ministry hoped to spend on rebuilding the country’s warning network; reestablishing a central civil defense administration; supporting rescue and recovery units and the FCDA; and constructing and refurbishing enough bunkers to shelter roughly 1.2 million federal, state, and local civil defense officials. See BA B134.4745, Internal Memorandum, Federal Housing Ministry, Referat I/3 [Dr. Bliesener], 31 January 1953; Subject: Die Finanzierung des Luftschutzes; and Internal Memorandum, Federal Housing Ministry, Referat I/3 [Dr. Bliesener]; Subject: Im öffentlichen Dienst zu schützende Personen.

subordinates in the Ministry of Economics nonetheless worried that the new financial commitment might retard economic growth. Moreover, Schäffer fretted about the Interior Ministry’s proposal to allow private industry to offset the cost of civil defense-related expenses through tax breaks. In meetings with senior-level Interior Ministry officials and his cabinet colleagues Schäffer adamantly rejected any plan that reduced future federal revenues. Of even greater concern, however, was the fact that only 280 of the 841 million marks that made up the government’s projected share of the costs was needed to construct public shelters—bunkers in high-traffic public areas. The remaining DM 561 million (roughly two-thirds of the total) was needed to cover the cost of ensuring renovated and new housing included protective shelters similar to those used during the Second World War.

The implications of this second point were immediately clear to all budget-conscious bureaucrats. As Housing Ministry’s officials noted in a long memorandum in February 1953, the fact that seventy-five percent of all new housing construction in the Federal Republic was financed partially or entirely by federal funds [soziale Wohnungen], including protective shelters in such buildings resulted in a real dilemma. To maintain the rate of private housing construction the federal government needed to find additional resources, either within the federal budget or the private capital markets, to cover the projected increased construction costs for federally financed housing—roughly DM 860 million over a three-year period, or DM 288 million per year. Not mentioned in the Housing Ministry’s report but raised repeatedly in subsequent inter-ministerial and cabinet-level discussion was the fact that over the same three-year period the federal government planned to spend roughly one billion marks annually on new housing construction,

335 BA B134.4745, Letter, Federal Housing Ministry to Federal Interior Ministry, 20 February 1953; Subject: Vorläufiges Finanzierungsprogramm für Maßnahmen des baulichen Luftschutzes.

336 Ibid.
scientific research, disaster relief, and cultural institutions. Failure to find additional resources in either the federal budget or private capital markets—a possibility vehemently rejected by the Ministries of Finance and Economics both—meant cutting the budgets for these activities by nearly a third. Given both the widespread popularity of these programs as well as the legal constraints of the country’s housing construction laws, such an option represented nothing short of a political nightmare.

The financial question surrounding the Interior Ministry’s proposed bunker strategy continued to cause considerable problems between 1955 and 1957. Unable to prevent Schröder from securing the cabinet votes necessary to send the law to the country’s legislative bodies, Schäffer and his subordinates took their concerns to the Bundestag. Here Schäffer encountered both considerable sympathy and severe disappointment. To his undoubted delight, parliamentary representatives quickly focused their attention on the overall cost of building bunkers, and repeatedly voiced considerable concern about the strategy’s potential burden to state and local governments. To Schäffer’s horror, though, both Bundesrat and Bundestag representatives opted to resolve the problem by shifting as much of the financial burden as possible to the federal government. Rejecting Schröder’s argument for an equitable cost division and Schäffer’s plea for understanding about how civil defense might adversely affect the country’s financial health, West German legislators initially decided the federal government should pay seventy percent of all bunker-related costs. Later, as disagreement about funding continued, a joint Bundesrat-Bundestag Mediation Committee opted for the path of least resistance and voted to indefinitely

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337 The First Housing Law [1. Wohnungsbaugesetz], passed in April 1950, was the federal government’s response to the ongoing scarcity of affordable housing in post-war West Germany. According to the law’s provisions, federal and state officials were obligated to prioritize new housing construction. The law called for the addition of 1.8 million new residences over a six-year period, and included specific guidelines on minimum construction requirements and maximum rental prices, both of which provided low-income families and individuals with access to quality housing.
suspend the 1957 Civil Defense Law’s controversial bunker provisions.

Thus, the first attempt to implement a bunker strategy in West Germany ended ambiguously. The benefit of hindsight shows this decision was practically inevitable. Enthusiastically supported by the Interior Ministry’s small cadre of civil defense experts, the fate of the government’s bunker strategy was clearly less important to the men and women who struggled to rebuild the country. In the mid-1950s, politicians of all levels remained focused on the country’s ongoing reconstruction program and integration into the Western alliance. For state officials in particular, building protective shelters was far less important than providing much needed living space, employment, and social services to constituents. Even Adenauer, who ultimately disregarded Schäffer’s protests and convinced his cabinet to accept the Bundestag’s revised 1957 Civil Defense Law, was motivated by short-term political considerations rather than a strong belief the benefits of in physical protection. Supporting Schröder’s bunker plans furthered Adenauer’s own, more important, agenda of mustering public support for an atomic-armed Bundeswehr—and of depriving the SPD of a potentially potent campaign issue. Unfortunately, these early decisions adversely effected West Germany’s bunker strategy for the remainder of the Cold War.

After the 1957 Civil Defense Law’s passage, officials in both the Interior and Housing Ministries struggled to formulate and implement a more effective bunker strategy. That protective shelters were important was still accepted by most civil defense experts. For example, at the end of 1959 the retired police major turned government consultant, Hans Schmidle, wrote, “after reviewing all the positive and negative factors that influence [the government’s] bunker policy one must conclude (whether one wants to or not) that constructing the necessary shelters
within a generation (the next fifteen to twenty years) is possible.\textsuperscript{338} Those working inside the government recognized, however, that advances in weapons technology and the enormous expense of protective shelters necessitated a fundamental strategic re-conceptualization. Thus, by the early-1960s, both the Interior and Housing Ministries turned to a new plan, that of a “tiered-approach” [\textit{Stufenprogramm}]. Unchanged from the previous decade was the consensus that the country needed as many shelters as possible in the cellars of apartment blocks and public buildings. The new strategy redefined the idea of protection, however, and introduced the idea of “basic protection” [\textit{Grundschutz}], a concept that emphasized the construction of shelters capable of protecting their inhabitants from radioactive fallout (fallout shelters). The new approach to physical protection demanded funding innovations, and under the new plan building-owners, rather than government authorities, bore the brunt of the cost.\textsuperscript{339}

After its initial introduction, government civil defense planners worked to implement their tiered-approach to physical protection, ceasing only in December 1965 after their final ignominious legislative defeat. From January 1963 onwards the most visible aspect of their efforts centered on gaining the public and political support necessary to pass the Shelter Construction Law.\textsuperscript{340} Ultimately, they achieved very mixed results. On the one hand, protective


\textsuperscript{339} The general outline of the government’s new bunker strategy was revealed in two memorandums written by Walter Bargatzky just before and shortly after the 7 July 1960 meeting of the Federal Defense Council [\textit{Bundesverteidigungsrat}]. See BA B106.54720, Memorandum, Walter Bargatzky to Gerhard Schröder, 7 July 1960; Subject: Schutzaumproblerm; and Memorandum, Walter Bargatzky to Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII, 8 July 1960; Subject: Schutzaumprogramm.

\textsuperscript{340} Under the provisions of the law, not all West Germans received equal protection. All bunkers, the proposed law mandated, must provide a minimum level of protection [\textit{Grundschutz}] from falling debris and radioactive fallout, and contain sufficient stocks of food, water, and emergency supplies for
shelters enjoyed considerable bipartisan support in the country’s national legislative bodies. Despite concerns about financing bunker construction, Bundesrat representatives consistently voted to support the government’s plans. Similar sentiment existed in the Bundestag. In the mid and late-1950s all of the major political parties endorsed the idea of protective shelters, although the CDU/CSU expressed considerably more reticence than their SPD colleagues. By the mid-1960s, Bundestag support for bunkers had grown, although once again unevenly as evidenced in the final debate on the Protective Shelter Law. “Bunkers,” the CDU Representative Kempfler thundered, “are the centerpiece and foundation of all civil defense…. without which all other action is senseless.” SPD speakers were considerably more restrained. After noting that his party had long pressed the government to provide the public with protective shelters, Hermann Hansing announced the SPD planned to approve the law, but reminded the assembled representatives that bunkers were “anything but popular” to a public all too familiar with the country’s past.

Bunkers received considerably less support at the state level, a fact illustrated by the Bundesrat’s deliberations. Comments made by Bundesrat representatives in the mid-1950s and early-1960s reveal three general concerns. The first was that of completeness: running throughout state-level debate about bunkers was a general sense that the federal government’s proposed bunker strategy was “incomplete” [lückenhaft], especially with regards to requiring protective shelters in pre-existing residential buildings. Closely related to this first general

an extended stay. Urban shelters—specifically those in cities with a population of 50,000 or greater—must also protect against atomic explosions [verstärktem Schutz]. The proposed law also included provisions for the construction of “open shelters” [öffentliche Schutzräume] by local authorities to protect people unable to reach the safety for their residence, and for retrofitting existing buildings.


342 Ibid., 9748.
reservation was concern that the government’s plans were too arbitrary in nature. By limiting the
collection of reinforced bunkers to larger population centers Länder representatives claimed
the federal government ignored the very real possibility that the short and long-term effects of
even a limited atomic attack might transcend administrative borders.

By far the greatest concern, however, was the issue of cost. Länder representatives
consistently endorsed the idea of protecting the country’s population from the worst effects of a
future war, but just as consistently fretted about how to pay for the country’s bunker strategy.
Exacerbating this concern was the general belief that the government’s figures were too
conservative. As a result, in both 1955 and 1963 Bundesrat representatives asked federal civil
defense officials to recheck their costs estimates and ensure the proposed sum would, in fact,
purchase the required level of physical protection.343 Finally, it is worth noting the Bundesrat’s
quick acceptance of the 1965 Law to Secure the Federal Budget and the fact that it recorded no
official disapproval of delaying the federal government’s bunker building plans. This strongly
suggests uneasiness on the part of state officials, many of whom undoubtedly breathed a sigh of
relief at the prospect of delaying the start of a multi-billion mark building program.344

Support for a widespread shelter construction program was weakest within the West
German public, a fact that likely doomed its ultimate existence. Notably, of the federal
government’s three general civil defense strategies, bunkers received a disproportionate share of
press attention in the late-1950s and early-1960s, much of it negative. To the chagrin of the
country’s civil defense establishment, negative press reports often cut across political lines. In

343 Anlagen zu der Verhandlungen des deutschen Bundestags, Fourth Election Period, Drucksache IV/896,
“Entwurf eines Gesetzes über bauliche Maßnahmen zum Schutz der Zivilbevölkerung
(Schutzbaugesetz),” 29-30 (“Stellungnahme des Bundesrates, Section II).

344 This supposition is supported by the fact that prior to 1965 state and local governments made few
efforts to build new or renovate existing bunkers.
the late-1950s, for example, newspapers such as the conservative *Industriekurier*, independent *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Die Welt*, and left-of-center *Deutsche Zeitung* ran numerous articles about the absent legal framework and sparse financial resources available for creating a credible system of physical defense. In the early and mid-1960s, the same papers focused their attention on the second attempt to craft and implement a comprehensive bunker building program, and again took the government to task. Moreover, notable public critiques such as the 1957 Göttingen Declaration and statement issued by the Federation of German Scientists [Vereinigung Deutsche Wissenschaftler e.V.] in 1962—both of which questioned the usefulness of bunkers—received considerable attention.\(^{345}\) To the undoubted annoyance of the country’s civil defense establishment, negative press coverage about the country’s bunker program usually peaked during critical moments in the ongoing debate about West German rearmament and preparations for future war. At the heart of the *Spiegel* Affair, for example, was the lengthy article published in that magazine about the results of the NATO military maneuver FALLEX 62—a report that lambasted the inadequacy of West German military and civil defense policy, including the lack of protective shelters for the country’s civilian population.\(^{346}\) Even positive developments often failed to escape sardonic attention, as *Die Welt*’s January 1961 cartoon shows (see Figure 4.1).


Resistance to the government’s bunker strategy also manifested itself in extra-parliamentary opposition. As was the case with the government’s decisions to establish West German military forces and arm them with atomic weapons, public resistance to a bunker strategy originated from many different segments of the public. Not surprisingly, the country’s sizeable disarmament and anti-nuclear community weighed in against civil defense in general, and bunkers in particular. Asserting that the government’s bunker strategy was tantamount to preparing the country for war, groups such as the War Resisters’ International [the *Internationale der Kriegsdienstgegner*] and Committee Against Atomic Armament [the *Komittee gegen Atomrüstung e.V.*], routinely issued statements about the ineffectiveness of bunkers. Most made their point with horrifying suppositions about the potential effects of an nuclear war on German soil, but a small minority adopted more subtle strategies. In a 1963 satirical pamphlet modeled after a widely-circulated FCDA informational sheet, for example, the Committee Against Atomic Rearmament listed the “government’s ten civil defense decrees.” Number five read:

“Go underground, make yourself part of the earth, or die!” is, according to Val Petersen, the head of American civil defense, the motto for civilians in a future war, which means specially-equipped cellars and bunkers are indispensable. Recent experience shows that the cellars and bunkers should be equipped to allow people to live and work in them for days on end. Naturally, they should be as inviting as possible, with full baths and other comforts, including a children’s play area...[for] in times of emergency, they replace the normal, trusted home!347

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347 SHH 614-2/12, Paket 40, Undated brochure [c. 1963], “Zehn Gebote für den Luftschutz. Was jeder Bürger der Bundesrepublik vom neuen Luftschutz wissen muß.” German original: “Geh unter die Erde, mach dich aus dem Staub, oder stirb!” ist nach Val Petersen, dem Chef der amerikanischen Zivilverteidigung, die Parole des künftigen Krieges für die Heimat, wonach also der ausgebaute Keller oder der Bunker weiterhin notwendig und unentbehrlich ist. Entsprechend den neuesten Erfahrungen müssen die Keller und Bunker so ausgestattet und eingerichtet werden, daß die Menschen darin mehrere Tage leben und arbeiten können, ohne die Unterkünfte verlassen zu müssen. Sie sollen natürlich gemütlich ausgebaut sein, mit Bad und allem Komfort, auch mit eigenen Kinderspielzimmern. So ersetzen sie im Ernstfall das gewohnte traute Heim. The brochure’s front cover featured a 1930s-era photograph of a class of small children and their teacher all wearing gasmasks. The brochure was likely based on the FCDA’s “Das Streitgespräch um den Luftschutz,” [“The Debate about Civil Defense”], which contrasted widely-held “myths” about civil defense with reassuring “official positions,” and “Ratgeber für den Selbschutz,” [“Self-Protection Advice”], which included the advice that a fully-prepared house would have a room capable of shielding occupants from the worst effects blast and radioactive fallout for “several days.” Examples of “Das
Supporting the anti-bunker sentiment found in the West German press and extra-parliamentary opposition were many of the country’s scientific and technical elite. Throughout the first half of 1960, for example, Düsseldorf’s chief city-planner, Professor Friedrich Tamms, offered frequent and sharply-worded criticisms of the government’s bunker strategy, which he called “extremely illusionary” [weitgehend illusorisch]. Even more telling was the stance taken by the Association of German Scientists, an organization which included in its membership pillars of the West German scientific community such as Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker and Nobel laureates Otto Hahn, Werner Heisenberg, and Max Born. In a widely-circulated 1963 memorandum entitled Civil Defense Today [Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz heute], the Association concluded that while bunkers must play an integral role in the country’s overall civil defense strategy, their effectiveness and the federal government’s plans for using them were questionable at best. While unquestionably the most prominent of the scientific critiques of the government’s bunker strategy published in the late-1950s and early-1960s, the Association’s memorandum was far from unique. In addition to numerous books that enjoyed healthy circulation among West German readers, scientific and technical critics of the government’s bunker strategy found voice in the country’s numerous specialty journals and mass press.


349 Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler e.V., Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz heute, 2. Auflage mit einer Stellungnahme zu den Gesetzentwürfen vom November 1962 (Frankfurt a.M.: Verlage E.S. Mittler & Sohn GmbH, 1963), 16, 35. The authors of the memorandum write that “civil defense against a massive enemy attack [Vernichtungsangriffe des Gegners] is practically unthinkable without protective shelters,” but then note in their conclusion that bunkers prove useful only in cases of limited conflict.

350 Among the earliest examples of such books was J. Braun’s Schutz vor der Atombombe (Hall: Prinzhorn-Verlag, 1951). Later works included J. Schubert and R.E. Lapp, Der unsichtbare Angriff (Die Gefahr der Strahlung) (Stuttgart: Henry Goverts Verlag, 1958), and Ballecke-Wunder’s Luftschutz-
Paradoxically, while they generated the most public debate and expressions of outrage about the government’s inadequate implementation of its own civil defense program, bunkers exerted only an uneven influence on post-war West Germany. In the immediate post-war period, bunkers dominated the physical and psychological landscape of the country. As a result of fading Allied commitment to destroying the country’s war-related physical infrastructure, a great number (the exact number remains unknown) of bunkers remained in the country’s reconstructed cities. Quite possibly much of West Germany’s daily contact with bunkers was benign and inspired little emotional response, but the photographic record of the period also suggests lingering unease. In contrast to fully intact structures, the ruins of aboveground bunkers in cities such as Kiel and Wilhelmshaven (see Figure 4.2 and 4.3) served as powerful reminders of the last war’s horror and destruction, even in instances where the installations’ destruction occurred after the war. The symbolically powerful presence of ruined bunkers made it difficult, if not impossible, to ignore their presence in Cold War West Germany.

However, by the mid-1960s, bunkers had all but disappeared from the West German cityscape. The massive structures that had dominated the cityscapes of the country’s major urban areas in the immediate postwar period were, through the process of reconstruction, relegated to the status of curious artifacts or non-entities. Eradicating the presence of underground shelters was easy, requiring in most cases little more than barring entrances, locking doors, and removing directional signs from city streets. Aboveground bunkers presented more significant challenges, but in most cases the addition of extra doors, windows, fresh paint, and commercial signs turned

Selbsthilfe für Jeden (Munich: ATOVOR-Gesellschaft, 1961), both of which included section sections on the role of bunkers in the atomic-era.

Some attempt was made to destroy installations that served no useful peacetime purpose [nicht notwendige Bunken], such as the German navy’s command bunker at Wilhelmshaven or the massive air-defense installations in Hamburg, Bremen, and Berlin. See Foedrowitz, Bunkerwelten, 152-168.
many into anonymous (if overly square) parts of the emerging postwar cityscapes. Even in cases where city officials opted not to convert aboveground bunkers to apartments, offices, or commercial space, new buildings and plantings, rubble-free roads, and healthy, confident people helped diminish their overtly militaristic character. Moreover, as illustrated in Figure 4.2, the lack of bunker-related funds throughout the 1950s and 1960s effectively ensured few new structures existed to remind West Germans about their possible future. In direct contrast to its National Socialist predecessor, the Adenauer government never embarked on a massive bunker-building program. Thus, the bunker-related discussion and planning which occurred during the 1950s and early-1960s yielded very few tangible results.

Psychologically, bunkers also exerted an uneven effect. For millions of people bunkers served as powerful symbols of the country’s recent inglorious past. Long after the war’s end in May 1945 they existed as monumental testimony to the efficiency and dedication of a ruthless authoritarian government that led Germany into a ruinous war. At the same time, by conjuring up memories of long, unpleasant nights spent sheltering from the Anglo-American bombing raids, bunkers also represented the Nazi regime’s absolute failure to fulfill its prewar promise to protect the country’s civilian population. While rarely spoken of publicly in the decades following the war, recent writing on the German wartime home-front leaves little doubt that the emotional scars that resulted from this trauma persisted long after the country’s physical recovery. For supporters of an atomic-era civil defense system predicated on protective shelters, this emotional trauma was devastating. To muster support for their program, civil defense officials needed to convince people to forget, or at least ignore, their wartime memories and embrace bunkers as a necessary part of Cold War West German existence. Sparse bunker-related resources made this extremely difficult, however. Because they lacked the money to build or renovate existing protective shelters, state and local governments were forced to make difficult decisions about resource
allocation. Understandably, they focused on measures designed to maximize chances for recovery, which in practical terms meant building bunkers to shelter key governmental personnel and rescue and recovery units. While eminently logical, such policies did little to alleviate widespread apprehension about bunkers. Rather than functioning as a potent symbol of a commitment to protecting as much of the country’s population as possible, the government’s bunker strategy served only to reinforce widespread public skepticism about civil defense.

Angels in the Ruins

The third of the West German government’s civil defense strategies, its attempt to organize and equip rescue and recovery services, ultimately proved the most successful. Yet as we shall see, even this strategy proved troublesome to implement, for federal civil defense officials more often than not found themselves at odds with their state and local colleagues over a variety of conceptual and organization questions. Mustering public support was no easier, especially with regards to finding sufficient volunteers to serve in the Civil Defense Assistance Service.

Interest in reestablishing rescue and recovery services first emerged during the initial discussions about recreating West German civil defense. At the October 1950 meeting in which government technocrats and scientific experts formulated recommendations for the country’s future civil defense program, for example, rescue and recovery services featured prominently in the discussions. The list of recommendations Hampe submitted to the Interior Ministry shortly after the meeting stressed the importance of rescue and recovery services, urged the collection of information on extant personnel and equipment resources, and encouraged the government to educate the public as quickly as possible about the work of organizations such as the German Red
Cross and Technical Assistance Corps. One year later, as West German officials met with their counterparts in the Allied High Commission to discuss civil defense preparations, rescue and recovery services again featured prominently on the agenda. In addition to clarifying the TAC’s legal status, West German officials sought approval to re-create state and regional command structures for the CDAS. As planning efforts gathered steam and federal officials began to involve their colleagues at the state and local level, rescue and recovery services continued to feature prominently in discussions, appearing as separate agenda items for the first four meetings of the government’s Standing Civil Defense Committee —the body federal officials used to coordinate their planning with state and local colleagues.

In contrast to its mass evacuation and bunker strategies, the government’s vision for postwar rescue and recovery services was a model of clarity, consistency, and transparency. Among the clearest public articulation of the government’s strategy was that published as part of Hampe’s study of civil defense in the nuclear era, The Strategy of Civil Defense [Strategie der


353 BA B106.17569, Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung IV/ZB (Botho Bauch), 23 August 1951; Subject: Besprechung mit BG Gourlay (UK) am 20 August 1951 in Köln. This memorandum summarized the results of a meeting between the United Kingdom’s Brigadier General Gourlay and West Germany’s Erich Hampe. Gourlay and Hampe met to discuss in advance the civil defense program the West German government planned to present to Allied High Commission representatives a week later.

354 See SHH 136.1-1292, Minutes, “Besprechung mit den Vertretern der Innenministerien der Länder und der kommunalen Spitzenverbände am 10.02.1953,” dated 28 February 1953; “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 22.06.1953;” and “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 09-10.12.1953.” The Standing Civil Defense Committee was the main institution through which federal officials coordinated their civil defense work with West Germany’s state and local governments. After its initial meeting in June 1953, the Committee met consistently, if not regularly, throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Committee records show that upwards of forty people attended each meeting. Roughly half the attendees at any given meeting were federal bureaucrats; state governments tended to send two to three representatives. Permanent and temporary sub-committees performed much of the Committee’s actual work.
Published in 1956 in the midst of the ongoing national debate about the government’s proposed civil defense legislation, Hampe’s part technical treatise and part propaganda tract introduced the subject of rescue and recovery services with the observation that “rapid assistance is a cardinal rule that permeates the entire task of civil defense.”\textsuperscript{355} Providing this rapid assistance, Hampe continued, was first and foremost the task of local organizations such as West Germany’s volunteer fire-fighting units, Red Cross, and TAC, supported by regionally-organized [überörtliche] rescue and recovery units trained to cope with the severe physical destruction and radioactive conditions caused by a nuclear explosion. To aid these organizations in their work of helping the country’s survivors, Hampe offered three practical suggestions. First, West Germans should provide rescue and recovery personnel with lavish quantities of the most advanced equipment and supplies. Second, to ensure their survival, the country should locate the bulk of the country’s rescue and recovery services in secure shelters located on the extreme fringes of potential targets. Finally, Hampe urged his readers, who doubtless included his colleagues in the government’s civil defense bureaucracy, to heed the lessons of the last war as they worked to establish a legal and administrative framework for post-attack rescue and recovery work. In addition to paying special attention to the problem of providing even minimal medical care in a devastated urban environment, Hampe urged government authorities to secure the service of volunteers, especially women.\textsuperscript{356}


\textsuperscript{356} \textit{Ibid.}, 76-78. Hampe wrote: “Es wird des Zusammenschlusses der staatlichn und privaten Wohlfahrtsseinrichtungen und –verbunde sowie eines Masseneinsatzes von Frauen aus der Frauenverbänden bedürfen….wenn diese gewaltige Arbeit an notleidenden Mitmenschen nur einigermaßen zufriedenstellend gelöst werden soll.”
Interior Ministry records confirm that in the early and mid-1950s the government’s civil defense bureaucracy was working on a rescue and recovery strategy that corresponded closely to Hampe’s suggestions. Working drafts of the Interior Ministry’s “Civil Defense Guidelines,” the planning document it eventually planned to distribute to state and local officials, outlined a surprisingly comprehensive plan as early as mid-1952. In it the government's civil defense experts called for a large corps of specialized personnel, including people whose areas of expertise ranged from combating chemical and biological weapons (the “Decontamination Service” [Entgiftungsdienst]) to treating injured animals (the “Civil Defense Veterinary Service” [Luftschutz-Veterinärdienst]). To ensure the highest possible level of efficiency possible, Interior Ministry officials called for the peacetime purchase and storage of critical supplies and equipment in, when possible, permanent protective shelters. Subsequent drafts of the guidelines provided additional details, including specific plans for regional and state-level CDAS units, but did not deviate significantly from the original plan in terms of overall organization or purpose. Nor did the civil defense legislation approved by Federal Cabinet and sent to the Bundesrat and Bundestag in late-1955 depart from Hampe’s vision, at least in terms of its proposed organization and mission.

That Interior Ministry officials heartily embraced the idea of rescue and recovery services is borne out not only by the attention it received in meetings with state and local officials, but also because it was among the first programs for which the government requested funding. As noted

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in chapter three, Schröder’s 1954 decision to include civil defense-related expenditures in the Interior Ministry’s budget request triggered the beginning of a more than decade-long debate about the role and usefulness of such activity in West German society. The SPD’s early opposition to the program centered not on the concept of actually recreating West German civil defense—although a sizeable minority of the party’s representatives felt such activities constituted nothing less than preparations for war—but on the fact that the government only requested funding for its warning system and rescue and recovery services.  

This bipartisan political support for reestablishing the country’s rescue and recovery services partially obscured the fact that considerable disagreement bubbled just beneath the surface of public acceptance. As was the case with the government’s other civil defense strategies, much of this disagreement emanated from state and local governments with cost, not surprisingly, underlying much of the discontent. While less expensive than building protective shelters or providing for millions of evacuees, reestablishing state and local-level rescue and recovery services nonetheless required considerable commitments from financially-strapped governments. Early government plans called for state and local authorities to pay fifty percent of all rescue and recovery service-related costs, or roughly DM 719 million over a three year period. Admittedly less than the amount spend by state and local authorities on reconstruction activity and public services, the financial burden was still large enough, one federal official conceded, “to possibly cause problems in the Bundestag and Länder parliaments.”

Of equal importance to state governments were larger questions about how the federal government proposed to organize and train its new Civil Defense Assistance Service. The

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360 Of the more than DM 94 million the Bundestag eventually approved for the government’s civil defense program for the 1955 fiscal year, fully four-fifths was allocated for equipping and training the CDAS.

government’s plan to create local, regional, and state-level CDAS units provoked considerable
dissent when first introduced. Some states, including Bavaria and Bremen, clearly objected to the
creation of yet another government bureaucracy, with the contentious Bavarian Herzog
suggesting that control of all CDAS personnel pass to the German Red Cross. Other states sought
clarification about the role of law enforcement personnel in CDAS units. Most supported the
Interior Ministry’s decision that law enforcement authorities should not exercise tactical control
of the CDAS units—an arrangement that deliberately rejected the National Socialist
organizational model—but wondered where state and local government could find qualified
leadership. From Baden-Wurttemburg came an additional concern about whether the federal
government could even order state and local governments to create a new bureaucracy, especially
if doing would alienate private organizations.362 Concern about the implications of a federally
mandated organization also spilled over into discussions about training, with Bavaria and North-
Rhine Westphalia leading the opposition to centralized instructional programs for CDAS
leadership.363

Finally, it is clear that several state and local civil defense officials were concerned with
the disconnect between the strategic vision of their federal colleagues and the reality they faced.
Apprehension increased as federal officials intensified their pressure on the Bundestag to approve

362 Hamburg, the city-state’s representatives noted in several meetings, presented a unique problem. The
fact that it had no Interior Ministry meant that Hamburg lacked even the basic administrative structure
in which to place its local and state-level CDAS units. See SHH 136.1-1292, “Protokoll der Sitzung
des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 9-10.12.1954,” agenda item two
(“Stellung der Polizei im Luftschutz”).

363 SHH 136.1-1293, “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung
vom 03.05.1956, agenda item three (“zentrale Ausbildungsstätten”). The minutes provide no
explanation for Bavaria and North-Rhine Westphalia’s opposition to centralize training. One plausible
explanation is that state civil defense officials wished to exercise greater control over the training their
personnel received. In any event, the minutes show that both Bavaria and North-Rhine Westphalia
dropped their objections when they learned how a centralized program would reduce their overall
training costs.
the government’s civil defense legislation, and most frequently revolved around the question of personnel. In the absence of a mandatory service requirement most state and local civil defense officials entertained little hope of finding the personnel called for in the Interior Ministry’s plans. Illustrating the problem was the situation in which Hamburg, the country’s smallest state but largest city, found itself. In a memorandum circulated to his colleagues in advance of the February 1956 meeting of the Standing Civil Defense Committee the city-state’s primary civil defense official, Wolfgang Schult, noted that federal plans called for Hamburg to enroll 23,850 personnel in its CDAS ranks. However, according to Schult’s own estimates, the city-state could muster less than half that number. Ideally, Hamburg could call upon the service of slightly more than 2,000 professional and volunteer fire-fighters; 1,300 trained Red Cross volunteers (687 of whom were women); 440 trained volunteers from other humanitarian organizations; slightly more than 1,300 TAC personnel (more than half of whom were more than thirty-five years old); and the 755 workers who constituted the city’s decontamination service. Whether all of Hamburg’s 9,273 rescue and recovery service personnel would actually report for service in the aftermath of an attack on the city was a different matter entirely. Indeed, Schult’s own study of Hamburg’s vulnerability estimated that a nuclear strike on the city would result in casualties ranging from tens of thousands killed to the horrific possibility of nearly eight hundred thousand dying in a surprise attack.

In the end, despite their skepticism, state and local governments made few serious efforts to alter the relevant paragraphs of the government’s proposed civil defense legislation, preferring

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364 SHH, 136.1-1293, Internal Memorandum, Wolfgang Schult, (undated); Subject: Sitzungsnotiz den Sitzungen des ständigen Ausschußes für die zivile Notstandsplanung vom 28.02.1956.


366 SHH, 136.1-1329, Memorandum, Wolfgang Schult, 17 December 1956; Subject: Verlustberechnungen für den Angriff auf Hamburg mit Wasserstoffbomben oder Atombomben gleicher Wirkung.
instead to concentrate on the problematic issues of bunker construction and the program’s overall funding. As a result, the rescue and recovery services called for in the 1957 Civil Defense Law differed only slightly from the model first proposed by civil defense technocrats in the early-1950s. The law called for a shared responsibility among local, state, and federal authorities. Local governments in threatened areas were expected to organize and equip their local CDAS units. To state governments fell the responsibility of organizing and equipping regional and state CDAS units, and purchasing and storing emergency equipment, including medical supplies. At both the local and state level participation in CDAS units was strictly voluntary. Volunteers received a small stipend for their work and assurance that employers could not penalize them should their service require an extended absence. Federal officials oversaw the entire system of rescue and recovery units. The federal government also agreed to pay for much, but not all, CDAS-related costs, including equipment purchase, training, and personnel costs. State and local governments needed merely to pay the “administrative” expenses of their CDAS units, an arrangement that was to cause considerable strife in the years following the law’s passage.367

After securing the required legislative framework to reconstitute West Germany’s civil defense program, federal officials worked diligently to organize the country’s rescue and recovery services. Records from the Interior Ministry, the Federal Civil Defense Association, and state and local governments reveals their efforts focused on four broad activities. First, civil defense officials supported the efforts of humanitarian organizations to train West Germans in basic first aid and life-saving skills. Admittedly, government support was strictly monetary in nature and generally amounted to no more than a few hundred thousand marks per year. Nonetheless, civil defense officials considered the money well spent and pointed proudly to the

ever increasing number of West Germans theoretically capable of caring for minor to moderate injuries should the need arise.

Federal and state civil defense officials played a much more active role in organizing the nation’s Civil Defense Assistance Service. Surprisingly, given the level of attention the subject received in the early and mid-1950s, it was not until the end of December 1960 that the Interior Ministry issued its Administrative Guidelines for the Arrangement, Strength, and Deployment of the Civil Defense Assistance Corps [Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschrift über Gliederung, Stärke und Aufstellung des Luftschutzhilfsdiensts].368 In both organization and deployment the Interior Ministry’s guidelines called for an organization similar to that used during the Second World War. As detailed in the Interior Ministry’s Administrative Guidelines, the FCDA was divided into specialized units to fight fires, conduct rescue operations in devastated urban landscapes, ensure minimal levels of sanitation and public hygiene to prevent the outbreak of endemic diseases, provide emergency medical attention for humans and animals, cope with the disruption caused by chemical and biological weapons and radioactive fallout, offer psychological care to and physical assistance for survivors, and maintain the country’s emergency communications network.369 The Interior Ministry’s ambitious plans called for a mixture of local, regional, and state units, with more specialized elements concentrated at the top. The CDAS’s personnel requirements were impressive: 1.5 percent of the total population of the country’s Category One cities—roughly 270,000 people—plus an unspecified number of additional workers to feed and assist survivors.370 Equally impressive was the CDAS’s projected equipment requirements:


hundreds of pieces of specialized machinery such as portable generators, communications trailers, and cranes; thousands of trucks and automobiles; and untold numbers of smaller items such as hand-tools, helmets, personal radios, blankets, and uniforms.

To aid the country’s rescue and recovery services government officials worked to stockpile critical supplies and equipment. In the mid and late-1950s, most of the governments’ efforts in this area centered on purchasing and storing medical supplies, a reasonable course of action given the tremendous casualties the country would face in the wake of an attack. As was the case with the CDAS, the Interior Ministry’s technocrats issued elaborate guidelines for the purchase and storage of medical supplies. The records of discussions held during the meetings of the Standing Committee on Civil Defense reveal that both federal and state officials devoted considerable attention to the types of medical supplies the country might need. Past experience as well as an appreciation for the types of injuries produced by nuclear explosions resulted in considerable emphasis on treating burns, while at the same time giving little thought to the likely effects of chemical and biological weapons. By way of contrast, the problem of radioactive fallout received considerable attention even though most experts recognized successful treatment of such cases was practically impossible. Federal funding for the purchase of medical supplies was based on population rather than geographical size. At the beginning of the 1960s, federal and state experts also turned their attention to other types of supplies. Anticipating the provisions

371 The minutes of the Standing Civil Defense Committee reveal that the sparse attention chemical and biological weapons received adversely affected the creation of the highly specialized Decontamination Service [Entgiftungsdienst]. Even the decision to create the more inclusive Atomic, Biological, and Chemical [ABC] Service [ABC-Hilfsdienst]—failed to resolve the problem.

372 An explicit breakdown is provided in SHH 136-1.1293, Memorandum, “Vermerk über die Sitzungen des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 03.05.1956,” written by the Hamburg representative at the meeting. Hamburg was to receive ten percent of the total medical supplies ordered and paid for by the federal government. North-Rhine Westphalia, the country’s largest state, was to receive 43.5 percent, while Rhineland-Palatinate, the country’s least populated state, was to receive just three percent of the total.
of the various Emergency Laws, civil defense officials worked to stockpile other types of critical supplies, such as food, fuel, equipment to keep vital city services intact and functioning, and even pre-fabricated bridges.

The fourth broad field of activity was that of educating and training the West German public. As discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter, federal and state officials hoped to fulfill two, inter-related goals. First and foremost, West Germans needed to learn how to take care of themselves before, during, and after a period of severe crisis—a task civil defense officials summed up with the term “Self-Protection” [Selbstschutz]. Clearly the product of Germany’s National Socialist and wartime experience, self-protection stressed the idea that successful civil defense was predicated on the well-prepared individual. In practical terms, self-protection encompassed a multitude of different ideas. In the early and mid-1950s, civil defense officials ask the country’s citizens to achieve basic competency in first-aid and life-saving skills. After the 1957 Civil Defense Law’s passage, self-protection grew to include more extensive peacetime preparation. Young men and women alike were encouraged to join the CDAS, TAC, or one of the country’s many volunteer humanitarian organizations. To the heads of families fell the task of preparing basic supplies such as blankets, spare clothing, and duplicate copies of important family records, while housewives were encouraged to maintain stockpiles of basic foods, first-aid supplies, and medicine.

The concept of self-protection changed yet again in the early and mid-1960s as federal officials worked to pass their expanded civil defense legislation. In general, the concept of self-protection expanded, becoming, in the minds of many West Germans, more onerous. Training remained an important part of self-protection but now civil defense officials hoped to make it mandatory for all adult West Germans. As the government’s bunker strategy faltered self-protection also evolved to include the idea of individuals and families taking a proactive role in
providing their own physical protection. Working in conjunction with the Interior and Housing Ministries, several private construction companies even designed family-sized shelters for the well-prepared family (see Figure 4.4 and 4.5).\textsuperscript{373} Even if people were unwilling to build a fallout shelter in their backyard, the government’s evolving concept of self-protection called for them to purchase and stockpile greater quantities of supplies and equipment. By 1965, housewives, the government-appointed guardians of the family’s emergency food stores, were encouraged to keep on-hand two weeks’ worth of supplies, including (for a family of four) four kilograms (8.8 pounds) each of rice, sugar, and potted or canned meat; two kilograms (4.4 pounds) of cooking oil or fat; condensed milk, bottled water, and canned juice; and “luxuries,” such as tinned cheese, instant coffee, and chocolate.\textsuperscript{374} The government’s expanded self-protection concept also required homeowners to purchase and maintain basic fire-fighting and rescue supplies, such as water buckets, shovels, and axes (see Figure 4.6), and organize themselves into local civil defense collectives extraordinarily reminiscent of those established by the National Socialist regime.

Education and training played an important role in preparing the country’s public to cope with disaster, but contemporary reports and Interior Ministry files show officials also hoped such activities would generate greater support for their civil defense program. Thus, civil defense officials devoted considerable effort to providing the country’s press and public with the

\textsuperscript{373} In October 1959, readers of Der Spiegel learned of Hamburg engineer Martin Ostermann’s new design for personal protective shelters: the Kugelbunker [“spherical bunker”]. Working from the premise that “old-fashioned bunkers are antiquated in the age of atomic weapons,” Ostermann’s new concept envisioned a six-meter in diameter sphere in which rested a smaller sphere protected by a layer of blast and radiation-proof material. Designed to shelter up to twelve people for several weeks, the new Kugelbunker, complete with equipment and emergency provisions, suffered from one critical weakness: it was expensive. With an estimated price-tag of DM 25,000, the Kugelbunker cost far more than the DM 1,300 required to construct similarly-sized bunkers based on the Housing Ministry’s 1955 guidelines. See “Atom-Bunker: Flucht in die Kugel,” in Der Spiegel 13:44 (28 October 1959): 88.

\textsuperscript{374} See the brochure “Der König auf dem Hafersack,” distributed in 1965 to all West German households by the Ministry for Nutrition, Agriculture, and Forestry [Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten], in SHH 614-2/12, Packet 41 (1965).
opportunity to observe carefully-staged training exercises and demonstrations ranging in size from small demonstrations performed by local FCDA units to elaborate, multi-day affairs that brought together thousands of volunteers and their equipment. Typical of the latter were the FCDA’s “Civil Defense Days.” Held annually in different cities, these events showcased the organization’s work through a combination of parades, speeches, displays, and practical demonstrations. People who attended the 1964 Hamburg Civil Defense Day, for example, could view full-scale models of personal fallout shelters, watch rescue and recovery service volunteers survive a fiery inferno wearing heat-resistant uniforms, and view the city while riding in one of the FCDA’s newly-purchased helicopters. While such events were clearly entertaining, they also served the very practical purpose of developing interest in and support for the country’s rescue and recovery services. Large shows portrayed a sense of organization and capability, and helped convinced viewers of the government’s commitment and ability to help them even after the worst possible disaster. Smaller events held by local FCDA units helped humanize and domesticate the service as West Germans saw their friends, neighbors, and colleagues at work.

Superficially, events such as the BSLV’s Civil Defense Days conveyed the sense that at least one of the government’s civil defense strategy was in good shape. Contemporary observers who followed West Germany’s civil defense program knew, however, that the FCDA’s carefully managed events and optimistic publications obscured serious problems. Despite concentrated attention on the part of the nation’s civil defense community and (relatively) lavish resources, the country’s rescue and recovery services remained a fragile force throughout the late-1950s and early-1960s.

Confirming the fragility of the country’s rescue and recovery services were the events of February 1962, a grim month for millions of West Germans. During the closing hours of

375 On the Hamburg “Civil Defense Day” see Chapter Five.
February 16th, the country’s northern coastal regions experienced a natural catastrophe of truly memorable proportions. Like many such events, the massive flood that eventually inundated the area appeared quickly and with little warning. On the morning of the fifteenth, West German personnel noted with alarm that an unfortuitous combination of high winds, steady rain, and a severe Atlantic storm had combined to result in much higher than average tides along the country’s northern coast and river estuaries, most notably those of the Elbe and the Wesser. Less than twenty-four hours later, officials in Lower Saxony, Bremen, Hamburg, and Schleswig-Holstein all recorded tides in excess of one and a half meters (five feet) above normal. When subsequent calculations suggested the evening tide might peak at as much as three meters (ten feet) above normal, state officials finally began serious efforts to mobilize their emergency forces. Already in a heightened state of alert because of the unfavorable weather, police and firefighting units, TAC and CDAS personnel, and even elements of the country’s military forces in all four states received orders to support efforts to strengthen the system of dikes and locks which protected the region, and begin preparations to evacuate civilians from low-lying areas. At the same time state and local governments, fearing the worse, also initiated efforts to assemble their emergency command posts.

Subsequent events lived up to the worse case scenarios envisioned by government officials. By the early hours of the seventeenth, reports received by the emergency command posts in Lower Saxony, Bremen, Hamburg, and Schleswig-Holstein gave some indication of the unfolding disaster. Despite a massive building program inspired by widespread flooding in the 1950s, the system of dikes and locks protecting the region proved unable to contain tides that surged to as much as four meters above normal. As holes in the dikes appeared, water rushed into low-lying areas. In Lower Saxony, floodwater eventually covered about 148 square miles (370 square kilometers) of land, forcing some 4,000 people to evacuate their homes. Although an
extensively strengthened system of dikes protected Bremen, its neighbor, Bremerhaven, was less well equipped, and Wesser’s flood tide eventually covered the homes of more than 300 people. Hamburg, the hardest hit of the four states, experienced widespread flooding as water rushed over or broke through more than sixty spots in the city’s defenses. While the total amount of land flooded—roughly sixty square miles (151 square kilometers) was less than that in Lower Saxony or Schleswig-Holstein, the fact that more than a tenth of the city’s total population—120,000 people—lived in the area greatly complicated the work of rescue workers. Eventually, government personnel evacuated 8,000 people from the flooded region, 2,000 from life-threatening situations. In contrast to the other three states, where fewer than fifty people lost their lives, the 1962 Hamburg flood catastrophe claimed 312 victims, and remains to this day a defining moment in the city’s collective memory.376

The disaster provided civil defense officials with a useful snapshot of the country’s ability to respond to a large-scale crisis, for the flooding experienced by West Germany’s northern coastal states constituted a severe test of the civil emergency system. Nature constituted the enemy in February 1962, but the resources state and local officials drew upon to battle their foe were, for the most part, the same ones they planned to use in the event of war. The command and control systems state and local officials used to plan and coordinate rescue and relief activity in the period following the flood were essentially the same systems they hoped to use as bombs, rather than water, rained down on the country. The network of sirens and radio broadcasts used to warn inhabitants in Lower Saxony, Bremen, Hamburg, and Schleswig-Holstein of the approaching disaster would, government officials planned, serve a similar role should Warsaw

376 Extensively covered in contemporary press reports, the 1962 flood catastrophe has received surprisingly little attention from English-language historians. The best contemporary overview of the disaster is found in June 1962 issue of Zivilschutz, which long excerpts from the official reports produced by each state. For a more recent account, see “Die Nacht, als die Deiche brachen. Die Sturmflutkatastrophe 1962 in Hamburg” (ARD Radio and TV, 2002).
Pact forces invade the country. With the exception of military personnel, the rescue workers called into service that winter were men and women who spent a considerable portion of their training time preparing to enter towns and cities devastated by a nuclear attack. Finally, the problems civilian officials faced in terms of housing and caring for a relatively large number of homeless, and in some cases injured, civilians provided at least a minor test of the challenges a future war might provide.

The 1962 snapshot proved highly unsatisfactory. While not the primary focus of contemporary press coverage, perceptive government officials quietly acknowledged the connection between the region’s inability to cope with natural disaster and broader concerns about the state of West German civil defense planning. In reports submitted to the state parliamentary assemblies of Schleswig-Holstein and Bremen, and in articles written for the readers of Zivilschutz, state officials painted a bleak picture. While it was true that the flood catastrophe resulted in relatively few injuries and an even smaller number of deaths, the experience nonetheless revealed a number of serious shortcomings in the states’ ability to cope with large-scale disaster. Publicly identified problems ranged from inadequate command and control networks—in Hamburg, for example, flood waters quickly disabled critical nodes of the telephone network local officials planned to use to coordinate their rescue and recovery efforts—to warning systems that either failed to function properly or were ignored by far too many members of the public. Equally distressing was the need to mobilize a great number of military personnel to cope with the disaster—more than 25,000 in Lower Saxony and nearly 7,000 in Hamburg—resources almost assuredly not available in the event of war; and the trouble local authorities experienced in finding adequate supplies to shelter and care for people forced to flee the flood waters. Finally, as Hamburg’s Eilers noted in his article for Zivilschutz, the lessons of
February 1962 raised distressing questions about the ability, and indeed willingness, of civilians to cope with large-scale disaster. In his concluding comments Eilers wrote:

Not only should government authorities understand the consequences of such a catastrophe, but the citizen’s as well. Their assistance, and especially their own precautions, must supplement government action. As people become more dependent on advancing technology, they are less prepared to think about the consequences should it fail. For people living in cities, the instinct for danger has gone astray. It is well known that most people choose to ignore all warnings. Nobody likes to lose his or her optimism. Nobody likes to think that they might someday face danger. A courageous, truthful, and thorough explanation about the possibilities of protection from catastrophe is therefore absolutely necessary.377

The shortcomings of the rescue and recovery operations conducted during the February 1962 flood disaster resulted from short and long-term problems with the federal government’s overall strategy. In the short-term, the efforts of state and local governments to organize and equip a comprehensive rescue and recovery services were impeded by the Interior Ministry’s surprising tardiness in issuing guidelines for their creation. As noted above, Interior Ministry officials began work on administrative guidelines in 1952, but waited until 1960 before distributing them. The minutes of the meetings of the Standing Civil Defense Committee record the discord this caused. In a memorandum sent to his immediate superior in advance of the January 1959 meeting, for instance, Hamburg’s Wolfgang Schult expressed his surprise over the federal government’s procrastination, noting that states had agreed in principle to the federal

government’s plan at the end of 1958. 378 Nine months later, state civil defense officials were still pleading for guidance. “In the newspapers we read ‘Civil Defense at a Dead-End!’” proclaimed North-Rhine Westphalia’s Schnitzler at the October 1959 meeting of the Standing Civil Defense Committee, “and we, too, are at an end. Local civil defense officials have no idea what to do because of the missing guidelines!”379 Other state officials expressed similar exasperation. “All practical civil defense work has stopped,” Bavaria’s Herzog stated, “because we lack guidelines.” Badden-Wurtenburg’s Rheinwald was even more direct. “A year ago we sat here together and you told us that we would meet more frequently and issue the guidelines. This has not happened…. Establish the FCDA! The federal government must give the order to start!”380

While state civil defense officials were quick to blame the federal government for failing to quickly organize its rescue and recovery services, the same minutes that record their accusations also show the Interior Ministry faced obstacles not easily overcome. State resistance to actual implementation remained a problem. According to the provisions of the 1957 Civil Defense Law, state and local governments were responsible only for the “administrative” expenses associated with the new CDAS units, but as subsequent meetings of the Standing Civil Defense Committee revealed, the exact nature of these expenses was unclear. In the months leading up to the law’s passage, federal and state officials battled over the cost of deploying and supporting CDAS personnel and equipment for non-military emergencies. State governments, not surprisingly, demanded the right to use their rescue and recovery services as they deemed


379 SHH 136-1.1296, “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 21-22.10.1959.”

380 Ibid. German original: “Vor einem Jahr waren wir hier zusammen und Sie haben gesagt, wir werden jetzt häufiger zusammentreten und die Richtlinien herausbringen. Das ist nicht geschehen. Wir bitten um eine schriftliche Aufforderung: Fangt mit dem LSHD an. Der Bund muß den Startbefehl geben!”
necessary, while Interior Ministry officials were reluctant to approve any work that might degrade their effectiveness for post-attack operations.\(^{381}\)

Interior Ministry officials also found their attempts to implement a comprehensive rescue and recovery strategy frustrated by conflicting priorities within the federal government. The country’s military authorities proved particularly adept at ignoring the requests of their civilian colleagues. On issues ranging from closer coordination between regional military commanders and state civil defense officials to the military’s support in budgetary battles, federal civil defense officials experienced frustrating results, leading one anonymous Interior Ministry employee to remark “civil defense receives only the crumbs dropped from the table.”\(^{382}\) Coordination problems emerged at the end of 1959 as the Interior Ministry struggled to finish its administrative guidelines for the CDAS, and again in the mid-1960s over the question of training rescue and recovery services.\(^{383}\)

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\(^{381}\) See SHH 136.1-1292, “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 21-22.02.1957,” agenda item four and “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 29.10.1957,” agenda items one and three (b).

\(^{382}\) SHH 136-1.1294, Memorandum for the Record, Wolfgang Schult, 27 November 1959. This memorandum records Schult’s private thoughts about the November 1959 meeting of the Standing Civil Defense Committee, as reported to him by Trost (see SHH 136-1.1294, Letter, Trost to Wolfgang Schult, 28 November 1958).

\(^{383}\) At the October 1959 meeting of the Standing Civil Defense Committee the Interior Ministry’s Ritter von Lex informed state representatives that further coordination with the military was impossible without intervention by the Federal Defense Council [Bundesverteidigungsrat]. See SHH 136.1-1396, “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 21-22.10.1959,” agenda item one. Problems with civil-military cooperation surfaced yet again in late-1963 as Interior Ministry officials sought to convince their federal colleagues about the necessity of establishing an independent civil defense training facility. In his report to the state representatives Hans-Arnold Thomsen reported on the Federal Defense Council’s decision to combine the proposed civil defense training facility with one planned for territorial defense, the Akademie für militärische Landesverteidigung, which was to feature a curriculum patterned after that taught at the Bundeswehr’s leadership academy, the Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr. Thomsen noted that the decision fell rather short of the Interior Ministry’s expectations, an opinion shared by the state representatives. See SHH 136.1-1295, Minutes, Committee, 13.05.1964, agenda item seven.
Non-existent personnel constituted the single greatest hurdle for civil defense planners to overcome. Throughout the late-1950s and 1960s the volunteers needed to staff the country’s rescue and recovery services never materialized. In December 1954, the Interior Ministry’s Bauch reported that twenty-two thousand people had volunteered for the CDAS, an impressive number given the fact that it competed with humanitarian organizations and the TAC for recruits.\(^{384}\) Seven years later, the numbers were less encouraging. Despite the FCDA’s best efforts, the CDAS numbered just slightly more than 27,000 volunteers.\(^{385}\) Notably, repeated international crises in the early-1960s did little to spur recruitment, and at the beginning of 1965 state officials could report little in the way of encouraging news. Of the 82,000 workers called for in the Interior Ministry’s plans, state and local officials could report the existence of only 11,000 volunteers and 7,000 draftees.\(^{386}\) According to the FCDA, the situation improved considerably if one also considered people who had completed one or more of the organization’s courses, which in 1963 amounted to more than 300,000.\(^{387}\) Two years later, FCDA proudly noted in their annual report that attendance at the organization’s national and state-level training

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\(^{385}\) SHH 136.1-1294, “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschußes für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 10-11.01.1961,” agenda item one. Interior Ministry officials noted, however, that only fourteen of the twenty-seven thousand volunteers regularly attended meetings and training exercises. In addition to the 27,000 FCDA volunteers, the country had its disposal the 58,000-strong TAC. (On the TAC see K. Schulze Hene, “Das Technische Hilfswerk in der Zivilen Notstandsplanung,” in Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz 24:4 (April 1960): 101-105).

\(^{386}\) SHH 136.1-1296, “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschußes für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 16.02.1965,” agenda item seven.

\(^{387}\) B372.010, Minutes, “Kurzprotokolle der Mitgliederversammlung des Bundesluftschutzverband am 02.08.1963.”
facilities continued to increase, while nearly 18,000 instructors and their assistants organized local training sessions throughout the country.  

Contemporary observers understood that most West Germans firmly rejected the idea of serving in the CDAS. To counter the country’s widespread antipathy, West German civil defense officials pursued two distinct strategies. The first focused on forging positive working relationships with other volunteer rescue and recovery and humanitarian organizations. Records of discussions between federal and state officials suggest that this issue was particularly important in the mid and late-1950s as the CDAS first came into existence, for the new organization drew upon the same pool of potential volunteer as that used by volunteers firefighting companies, the TAC, and the Red Cross. The importance of maintaining good working relationships with the country’s humanitarian organizations because clear in 1960 when the Standing Civil Defense Committee turned its attention to the problem of medical personnel. According to federal estimates, should war break out the country would need roughly 66,000 nurses to treat civilian casualties. Realistically acknowledging that less than half of the country’s nurses might survive the initial days of a conflict, Interior Ministry officials recommended the

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389 See SHH 136.1-1293, Minutes, “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 7.11.1957,” agenda item one. During this meeting Bauch and other Interior Ministry officials acknowledged state concerns about how maintaining both CDAS and TAC units was a wasteful duplication of effort, but stressed that the different missions of each precluded amalgamation of the two. Bauch argued that peacetime humanitarian organization could always request CDAS assistance during peacetime emergencies. See also SHH 136.1-1293, “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 30.10.1956,” agenda item five. Discussion during this meeting also covered the problem of local humanitarian organizations appropriating civil defense equipment for peacetime operations, a policy the Interior Ministry strenuously opposed. The question emerged again during the next two meetings and suggests that some states hoped the federally financed equipment might augment their reserves for peacetime operations. See SHH 136-1.1293, “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 14.12.1956,” agenda item five; and “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 21-22.02.1957,” agenda item four.
country work towards the goal of training 160,000 new nurses over a ten-year period (roughly two percent of all 18-45 year-old West German women). As Bauch noted in his concluding comments, in the absence of a mandatory civil defense service requirement the only means to achieve the goal of training 160,000 new nurses was through close work with the German Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations. (Left unsaid was the extent to which the federal government planned to underwrite the projected cost of DM 141 million.)

The Interior Ministry’s second strategy focused on legislative solutions, most notably the creation of mandatory civil defense service requirements. As detailed in the next chapter, in the late-1950s Interior Ministry officials began the complicated work of drafting legislation that required mandatory civil defense service. The sparse archival record of their work suggests they encountered considerable skepticism. Military authorities proved reluctant to surrender any claim to the country’s draftees, and further frustrated the Interior Ministry with the slow pace of their own planning. State governments, on the other hand, worried that without proper legislation carefully-trained rescue and recovery service personnel might disappear into the military during times of crisis. As Hamburg’s Schult noted in a letter to the city-state’s representative on the Standing Civil Defense Committee, in 1939 the German army drafted nearly half the men officially registered as local and state-level rescue and recovery workers, thus leaving civil defense authorities with frightful personnel problems.


391 To provide but one example, at the June 1960 meeting of the Standing Civil Defense Committee federal civil defense officials informed the state representatives that military authorities had not yet determined how many civilian medical personnel they might need should war break out. Given the fact that the Interior Ministry hoped to convince some of the country’s nurse-assistants [Schwesternhilferin] to join the CDAS, the military’s vague assumption that it would need at least 20,000 nurse-assistants was a major problem. See SHH 136.1-1294, “Protokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandplanung vom 30.06.1960,” agenda item five.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion of the effort to implement a national civil defense program raises the general question of why the federal government ultimately failed in its endeavors. Certainly, some responsibility for this failure rests with local and state civil defense officials. As we have seen, the latter, in particular, never truly warmed to the idea of civil defense. Admittedly, in the cases of mass evacuation planning and bunker construction the states’ reluctance made sense. After the 1958 Kohler affair the artificiality of the federal government’s mass evacuation planning was abundantly clear even to those officials unfamiliar with the country’s wartime experience. At the same time the combination of rapid technological obsolescence and tremendous cost made it difficult for states to seriously consider implementing even a modified form of the federal government’s bunker policy. However, the archival record also shows that state and local government balked even when the federal government was willing to spend its precious civil defense resources. Concerned they might not exert the control they deemed appropriate, state governments haggled over the details of purchasing and storing equipment for

393 In April 1958 Wehrkunde, a semi-official government publication oriented towards the country’s retired and active military personnel, published an article entitled “The Refugee Problem in the Federal Republic of Germany [‘Das Flüchtlingsproblem in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland’], by Major Wilhelm Kohler. At the heart of Kohler’s argument was the claim that federal authorities needed to evacuate eighty percent of the country’s population living within 100 to 150 kilometers of the eastern border in the event of war. The Wehrkunde article ignited a firestorm of national controversy. Shortly after its publication the Frankfurter Abendpost, a right-of-center daily prone to sensationalism, signaled the re-emergence of mass evacuation as a relevant topic of discussion with the bold headline, “In Case of War, We Shall Flee on Fifty Streets!” Government plans, the paper reported, called for the evacuation of twenty-four million West Germans guarded by 50,000 “special police” should war break out. The reported captured national attention, with major regional papers such as Der Telegraph, the Hamburger Echo, Der Mittag, and the Süddeutsche Zeitung echoing in varying degrees the disturbing report first carried in the Frankfurter Abendpost. See Wilhelm Kohler, “Das Flüchtlingsproblem in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” in Wehrkunde: Zeitschrift für alle Wehrfragen. Organ der Gesellschaft für Wehrkunde 7:4 (April 1957): 209-216; and “Im Kriegsfall sollen wir auf 50 Straßen flüchten!” in Abendpost [Frankfurt a.M.] (16 April 1958): 1. Copies of the subsequent press coverage are found in the files of the Federal Chancellery, specifically BA B136.5089.
rescue and recovery services, questioned the idea of centralized training for CDAS workers, and even blocked the FCDA’s attempts to bring civil defense education to the country’s schools.

Throughout the 1950s and early-1960s federal civil defense officials complained most often about their state and local colleagues, but said little about the politicians for whom they worked. Extant files show this was unfair, and both the country’s governing politicians and the bureaucracies they controlled must shoulder a greater share of the blame for the program’s failure because of their lack of visionary leadership. In the case of the CDU/CSU cabinet ministers and parliamentary leadership this singular lack of vision manifested itself in tepid political commitment to the country’s civil defense program. Admittedly, Adenauer and other leading politicians exerted the political capital necessary to pass the 1957 Civil Defense Law, but the same cannot be said for the law’s implementation. An examination of the government’s budgetary priorities for the period 1955-1965 is telling. As Figure 4.2 shows, it was not until the mid-1960s that the CDU/CSU governing coalition finally supported considerable civil defense expenditures, and even then the ratio of such spending to that devoted to West Germany’s military was approximately ten-to-one. Moreover, while civil defense spending experienced a surge of financial support in the wake of the Berlin Wall’s construction and the Cuban Missile Crisis, the CDU/CSU’s new-found faith occurred at exactly the same time the program’s strongest proponent, the SPD, began tentative steps towards a completely new solution for the country’s geo-strategic dilemma: a policy of greater engagement with the East. Whether an earlier, more meaningful commitment by the CDU/CSU leadership would have made a decisive difference is questionable, though, for in the end they were asked to support the implementation of a seriously flawed program.

The lack of vision displayed by the country’s federal civil defense technocrats was even more serious than that of the national politicians, for ultimately they created the program that
failed. Notably, many of the problems displayed by the West German civil defense bureaucracy prior to the 1957 Civil Defense Law’s passage continued unabated into the late-1950s and early-1960s. Of these problems one, a credibility gap, was partially beyond their control. When state officials questioned their federal colleagues about the government’s willingness to commit itself financially to civil defense, senior Interior Ministry technocrats were quick to point out the uncompromising positions they encountered in the conference rooms of Bonn. From the Defense Ministry came not only an extreme reluctance to share money spent on national defense, but also concerns about how the proposed and existing rescue and recovery services might exacerbate the military’s problems in finding qualified personnel. We have also seen how, for most of the late-1950s and early-1960s, the Ministries of Finance and Economics did everything possible to terminate expensive building programs and delay plans to purchase costly rescue and recovery equipment. As a result, during most of the period they tried to implement a comprehensive civil defense program, federal officials regularly found themselves negotiating from a position of weakness in their discussions with state and local governments. Senior experienced bureaucrats such as Ritter von Lex and Bauch could urge civil defense officials in Hamburg, Bremen, and other major cities to preserve Second World War-era bunkers, for example, but usually lacked the resources to mount a convincing, that is to say financially attractive, argument. Likewise, while they supported the idea of “dual-use” [Mehrzweck] structures as a means to solve the country’s shelter shortage, federal officials were forced to concede in the mid-1960s that they possessed few resources to help the states undertake such projects.

Not all of the technocrats’ systemic failings were the fault of others, however, for it is clear that they themselves failed to fully appreciate how their civil defense program resonated with the public. The program created by West Germany’s civil defense technocrats in the mid-1950s was one predicated on finding technical solutions for the country’s geo-strategic dilemma.
To West Germany’s eminently practical bureaucrats, this meant limiting the physical damage cause by war. Thus, in Bonn conference rooms this mentality manifested itself in the fact that civil defense was conceptualized and spoken of as a second, inevitable line of defense—should the Bundeswehr and its allies fail then it was the task of the country’s civil defense authorities to protect West Germany’s population. As a result, civil defense authorities spent countless hours thinking about the technical side of their program, activities that ranged from conducting tests on reinforced concrete walls to determining the number of bandages needed by the average CDAS worker. While such work played to the strength of the country’s civil defense bureaucracy, it also reinforced widely held negative public opinions about the program as a whole. For many West Germans, the bureaucratic fixation on plans, lists, schedules, and studies bore an uncomfortable resemblance to the National Socialists’ approach towards civil defense.

Ultimately, however, even if the bureaucrats’ civil defense planning had not borne an uncomfortable resemblance to the measures devised by their National Socialist predecessors, public acceptance was still unlikely given the perceived inadequacy of their planning. Simply stated, it is clear that great numbers of West Germans viewed the technical approach advocated by their government’s civil defense bureaucracy with considerable skepticism, especially once they gained a greater understanding of a war’s potential consequences. By the end of the 1950s, West Germans, like their counterparts in other European countries and the Unites States, were well informed about a nuclear war’s potential consequences. Even if government authorities refused to release the official results of nuclear tests, enough scientific and technical data was available for engaged individuals to fully appreciate the destructive power contained in the superpowers’ nuclear arsenals, and the dangers posed by radioactive fallout. Popular movies and literature made the same point for the less engaged. Books such as Hans Hellmut Kirst’s Keiner kommt davon (1957), Nevil Shute’s On the Beach (published in West Germany in 1958 under the
title Das Letzte Ufer), Edita Morris’ The Flowers of Hiroshima (translated into German in 1963 as Die Blumen von Hiroshima) circulated widely among West German readers. For those who preferred visual imagery, film adaptations in both English and German of On the Beach and Fail-safe made extended appearances in West German cinemas.

The future portrayed in the country’s media, popular literature, and films could not help but call into question the viability of West Germany’s civil defense program, a fact illustrated by a final concluding example. In 1959, the Hamburg-based Der Spiegel—a mass circulation weekly—published an extended article on the state of West German civil defense planning. The article featured two prominent illustrations that reinforced the inadequacy of Hamburg’s, and by extension the country’s, mass evacuation strategy (see Figures 4.7 and 4.8).394 The first, entitled “Twenty megatons on Hamburg” [“Zwanzig Megatonnen auf Hamburg”], showed readers the probable effects of a bomb that size dropped on the city. If targeted to detonate over the city center—a common assumption in Cold War West German civil defense planning—the resulting explosion would level everything with a three kilometer radius, and cause heavy damage and life-threatening injuries as far away as forty-five kilometers (roughly twenty-eight miles). While not explicitly highlighted in the Spiegel article, local readers could hardly miss the fact that the majority of the Elbe crossings were located in the zones of total or near-total destruction. The second illustration, “The Deadly Dust” [“Der tödliche Staub”] provided a damning critique of any government plans to empty the city’s inhabitants into the “safe” rural regions that surrounded it. Depicted in this illustration was the projected spread of radioactive dust from the same twenty megaton explosion. The Spiegel’s illustrators showed the prevailing winds spreading the fallout

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394 Not surprisingly, both illustrations featured prominently in anti-nuclear protest propaganda for the next decade. Representatives examples include the pamphlets distributed jointly by the German Peace Association [Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft], the Hamburg branch of the International War Resisters League [Internationale der Kriegsdienstgegner], and the Verband der Kriegsdienstverweigerer, copies of which are found in SHH 614-2/12, Packets 39 and 40.
as far south as Ulm, nearly six hundred kilometers (four hundred miles) away. Admittedly, the
inhabitants of Ulm were not fated to receive a fatal dose of radiation, but those living in Hannover
and Hildesheim—cities more than 150 kilometers (nearly ninety-five mile) south of Hamburg—
would. Again left unsaid but plainly clear to local inhabitants was the fact that flight southwards
or hastily constructed fallout shelters offered little chance for survival.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Total EstimatedCost</th>
<th>Total Expenditures (Private)</th>
<th>Total Expenditures (Public)</th>
<th>Federal Government Expenditures</th>
<th>State/Local Government Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>All programs excluding bunkers</td>
<td>432.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>432.2</td>
<td>216.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bunkers for government officials</td>
<td>295.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>295.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bunker for civil defense workers</td>
<td>448.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>448.5</td>
<td>224.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal (1-3)</strong></td>
<td>1176.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1176.2</td>
<td>470.2</td>
<td>707.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Construction of bunkers in new housing construction</td>
<td>2058.0</td>
<td>928.0</td>
<td>1130.0</td>
<td>508.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Construction of bunkers in renovated housing</td>
<td>778.0</td>
<td>496.0</td>
<td>282.0</td>
<td>141.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal (1-5)</strong></td>
<td>4012.2</td>
<td>1424.0</td>
<td>2588.2</td>
<td>1119.7</td>
<td>1468.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional bunker construction-related costs</strong></td>
<td>388.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>388.0</td>
<td>194.0</td>
<td>194.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>4400.2</td>
<td>1424.0</td>
<td>2976.2</td>
<td>1313.7</td>
<td>1661.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Projected costs based on Interior Ministry planning estimates.
b Projected costs based on Housing Ministry calculations and not included in Interior Ministry planning estimates.
c Supplemental government loans to the West German housing industry to cover civil defense-related costs.

Figure 4.1: Projected Four-Year Bunker Construction Expenditure, c. 1954-1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Physical Protection</th>
<th>Rescue and Recovery Efforts</th>
<th>Evacuation</th>
<th>Evacuation and Transportation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>54,729</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>50,177</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36,812</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>11,730</td>
<td>63,529</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>19,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>6,080</td>
<td>89,796</td>
<td>5,224</td>
<td>37,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>13,400</td>
<td>94,540</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>105,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>46,509</td>
<td>146,846</td>
<td>2,310</td>
<td>121,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>63,234</td>
<td>178,253</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>235,161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>76,103</td>
<td>197,711</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>235,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>70,987</td>
<td>175,387</td>
<td>21,960</td>
<td>102,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>58,933</td>
<td>142,576</td>
<td>15,050</td>
<td>79,946</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes allocations for all bunker-related construction, excluding funding for the civil defense warning service [LS-Warndienst].

b Includes allocations for CDAS recruitment and training costs, equipment and vehicle purchase and storage, and purchase and storage of emergency medical supplies.

c Includes allocations specifically identified for evacuation-related programs, such as construction of emergency hospitals, identification of emergency relocation accommodations, etc.

d Includes all evacuation-related allocations as well as funding for transportation infrastructure upgrades.

Figure 4.2: Summary of West German Civil Defense Expenditures, 1955-1965.

Source: *Bundeshaushaltsplan, 1955-1965*. (Additional budget details are provided in Appendix A of this dissertation.)
Figure 4.3: “Because of Reduced Construction Funding…”
This cartoon first appeared in January 1961 in the independent *Die Welt*. Published at the same time Hamburg officials announced the start of a federally-financed project to build a prototype bunker in the Altona section of the city, the cartoon offered a grim reminder about the state of the country’s preparations for protecting civilians during a future war. The sign reads: “Located here is a bunker for 48 people.”

Source: Hamburg State Archives
Figure 4.4: Ruined Bunker in Post-War Kiel
Ruins of an above-ground civil defense bunker in Kiel. While undated, the clear streets and intact residential housing on either side of the bunker suggest the photograph was taken sometime in the early 1950s. The bunker’s structural damage occurred after the war’s end, a fact not readily apparent to most observers.

Source: Foedrowitz, Bunkerwelten, 160.
Figure 4.5: Ruined Bunker in Post-War Wilhelmshaven
Ruins of a Second World War civil defense bunker located in the Freiligrathstraße, Wilhelmshaven. The photograph is undated, but the lack of buildings and considerable rubble around the main ruin suggests it was taken in the late 1940s. Notice the attentive gaze of the bicyclist.

Figure 4.6: Idealized Depiction of a Kugelbunker
Prototype of the Kugelbunker developed by the Hamburg engineer Martin Ostermann. Capable of withstanding close-proximity atomic explosions and sheltering twelve people from radioactive fallout for up to two weeks, the full-scale model pictured above was a permanent exhibit at Hamburg’s CDAS training facility. It is unclear why the CDAS opted not to show women relaxing in the safety of a Kugelbunker.

Source: Luftschutz Rundschau (September 1962).
Figure 4.7: Personal Bunker
As increased international tension caused West Germans to think more seriously about the possibility of a future war, the country’s manufacturing sector explored the commercial viability of small and mid-sized bunkers. Shown above is a medium-sized bunker displayed by RAIG at the 1962 West German Industrial Exhibition [Deutschen Industriemesse], held in Hanover. Manufactured by RAIG according to Swiss specifications, the bunker was “expandable,” ranging in size from very small structures capable of holding a family of three to a larger shelter with room for fifty. The cost of the blast-proof, radiation-proof bunker shown above was DM 500 to DM 1,159 per person, depending on its size.

Source: Luftschutz Rundschau (June 1962).
Figure 4.8: The Well-Prepared Civil Defense Volunteer

Source: Luftschutz Rundschau, September 1965.
Figure 4.9: “Twenty Megatons on Hamburg”
Although first published in Der Spiegel at the end of the 1950s, this illustration shows well the multifaceted challenges facing West Germany’s civil defense planners. Attempting to devise an effective plan of protection and recovery for an attack capable of utterly destroying most of West Germany’s largest city was difficult enough. Attempting to convince the city’s inhabitants, who lived less than 150 kilometers from the East German border, of the effectiveness of such plans was, in the words of one Hamburg civil defense planner, “nearly impossible.” Note that the majority of the Altstadt and city-center is located within the zone of total destruction [Völlige Zerstörung].

Source: Staatsarchiv Hamburg, B 614-2/12 [Verband der Kriegsdienstverweiger].
Figure 4.10: “The Deadly Dust”
Also published in *Der Spiegel*, this diagram of the projected path of radioactive fallout from a 20 MT attack on Hamburg vividly illustrates the way in which even a single atomic attack could affect the rest of the Federal Republic. Coordinating the rescue and relief efforts in the aftermath of an attack even half as devastating, a more likely scenario in the mid-1950s, would require close cooperation between a number of state and local governments.

Source: Staatsarchiv Hamburg, B 614-2/12 [Verband der Kriegsdienstverweiger].
CHAPTER FIVE
SELLING CIVIL DEFENSE

In the closing days of 1964, the West German Interior Minister Hermann Höcherl received a small package containing a copy of the recently distributed government pamphlet *Civil Defense Guidelines* [Zivilschutzfibel], sent in the fall of that year to every West German household, from a resident of Hamburg. In the letter that accompanied the pamphlet, Herr S. thanked the Interior Minister for the timely “Christmas present,” but then noted he was unwilling to keep it. After questioning the wisdom of distributing the pamphlet so close to a holiday meant to celebrate world peace and salvation, the writer, Herr S., lambasted the government for disseminating information he considered utterly worthless. Noting that both he and his wife had lived through the terrible events of 1943,\(^395\) Herr S. informed Höcherl that the pamphlet reminded me vividly of the local civil defense officials [the *Blockleiter* of the Second World War] and the rescue equipment, water buckets and hand-pumps, they advised us to gather and store away. How useful was this advice [during the summer of 1943]? We never, absolutely never, used the equipment.\(^396\)

\(^{395}\) The event to which Herr S. referred to in his letter was the July 1943 Battle of Hamburg. On the battle and its post-war legacy, see Chapter Two.


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Did the government, Herr S. asked, really expect people to gather together and store similar equipment for use in a future conflict? Concluding with a question that was common for the time, the incredules Herr S. asked, “Do you really believe life will continue after a nuclear war?” As the Interior Ministry’s civil defense staff knew only too well, Herr S.’s sentiments were not unique. While the negative editorials and letters they and their state colleagues read in the closing months of 1965 most often focused their attention on the recently-distributed *Civil Defense Guidelines*, the emotions contained therein were all too familiar to the men and women charged with overseeing the country’s civil defense program.

From the moment civil defense returned to the realm of public debate in the early-1950s, West Germany’s civil defense community encountered, as we have seen, opinions ranging from firm, if somewhat reluctant, acceptance of their work to outright incredules shock. Initially, the idea enjoyed considerable public support. In a survey conducted by the Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research at the end of 1953, forty-three percent of respondent said they favored civil defense. By the next year, the number of people who felt civil defense preparations were “necessary” [notwendig] had increased to fifty percent. According to the Allensbach Institute researchers, public support for civil defense reached a high point in mid-1957 when sixty-seven percent of the people surveyed affirmed the need for a national program. Thereafter, support declined, with public support for civil defense declining to fifty-eight percent by the end of that year.

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398 BA B106.50239, Memorandum, Federal Press and Information Office [*Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung*], “Berichterstattung über die Resultate der öffentlichen Meinungsforschung,” 19 March 1954, and BA 106.85502, Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Kirchner to Thomsen, 7 March 1964. Kirchner’s March 1964 memorandum contains a summary of the Allensbach Institute’s public opinion polls conducted since 1952. Interestingly, the decline in public support for civil defense
In this chapter we turn our attention to the subject of public opinion, and examine in detail the manner in which federal and state authorities sought to “sell” their civil defense program to the West German public. Previous chapters have shown how public interest in and support for civil defense ebbed and flowed throughout the 1950s and 1960s, from crests that coincided with major international crises and national elections to troughs that generally followed the introduction of major legislation. Civil defense officials, especially those nearest the country’s elected politicians, were well aware of the fickle nature of the public they served, and constantly worried about its impact on their work, which was predicated on broad-based consensus and support. As we have seen, the program outlined in the 1957 Civil Defense Law, itself the product of considerable bipartisan support in the country’s legislative institutions, required high levels of voluntary participation for success. The new legislation introduced in 1963 (see Chapter Six), while far less dependent on West Germans’ good intentions, was nonetheless unlikely to succeed without at least widespread public acceptance of the need for civil defense, a fact proven time and time again as the federal and state governments struggled to implement their first program. As was the case with active military defense, attempts to build West Germany’s second line of protection could succeed only if the public believed in their governments’ plans.

From the very beginning of their efforts to build a Cold War civil defense system, the technocrats charged with protecting the country’s public recognized they must accomplish three inter-related goals. First, and arguably most important, the country’s civil defense planners declined during a period characterized by increasing pessimism about the possibility of a future war. On West German public opinion and its stance on war see Michael Geyer, “Cold War Angst: The Case of West German Opposition to Rearmament and Nuclear Weapons,” in The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 376-408.
needed to prove to West Germans that they understood the challenges of future war. To do this, the country’s civil defense experts needed to show that they only understood the lessons of the apocalyptic Second World War, but also appreciated the potential ramifications of a new generation of incredibly destructive military technology. Second, civil defense officials needed to devise and articulate a believable response to the challenges of post-1945 warfare. Given the enormous uncertainty and fear that shrouded nuclear weapons in the 1950s, the latter point was particularly important. In the late-1920s and 1930s, Germans demanded that first the Weimar and then the National Socialist governments protect them from the frightful possibility of gas warfare—a weapon whose effectiveness derived as much from paralyzing dread as physical damage. After 1945, public fear shifted to the great unknown of the early-nuclear era: radioactive fallout. For the public to accept civil defense it needed to believe the government could combat the new demon of the nuclear era. Finally, civil defense proponents needed to convince the West German public that the country, as a whole, was capable of implementing their plans.

As we shall see, West German civil defense proponents, who included government officials and members of the Federal Civil Defense Association, adopted two broad strategies in order to convince the public to accept their plans. The first focused on information. Civil defense personnel at all levels recognized that much of the public apathy about civil defense stemmed from widespread uncertainty about government planning for the future. Most people, we have seen, believed the next war would devastate both the country and its population, and reasonably enough, wondered how the government intended to prevent both. In the first half of this chapter we shall evaluate three government efforts to inform the public about its civil defense options, all of which utilized print technology. The second strategy focused on propaganda. Best defined by Walter Lippmann and Noam Chomsky as “the manufacturing of consent,” propaganda
is best described as “the use of communication skills of all kinds to achieve attitudinal or behavioral changes among group of people or another.”

In both cases (informational campaigns and propaganda) the country’s civil defense experts drew heavily upon experience gained during the Second World and used new communications technologies, such as mass public relations campaigns and television. Initial efforts focused on the print media, but as the country’s prosperity increased, new technologies such as radio and television made their appearance. West German officials also followed developments in the United States, especially in the emerging fields of well-financed public relations and mass advertising, with great interest. They, like many people in the Federal Republic, might deplore the increasing “Americanization” of their society, but they could not help but acknowledge the well-organized and financed public relations campaigns waged by the U.S. Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization and its successor organization, the Office of Emergency Preparedness. Whether these techniques would work in Germany was, of course, a different question entirely.

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399 Quoted in Oliver Thomson, *Easily Led: A History of Propaganda* (Thrup [Great Britain]: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999), 5. As Robert Jackall argues in the introduction to *Propaganda* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 4-6, the process of “manufacturing consent” grew increasingly sophisticated during the first half of the twentieth century. The exigencies of war during the period 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 coincided with the maturation of some mass media (print, radio, and film) and the invention of still others (television). Print media, primarily in the form of mass-circulation daily and weekly newspapers and magazines, flourished with widening distribution networks. The hasty development of radio and telephone service for military purposes anticipated by only a few years the widespread commercial use of these technologies. The film industry, in its infancy at the beginning of the First World War, became a propaganda tool in the Second. Equally important as the maturation of existing and development of new communications technologies during this period was their increasing use by state propaganda machines. Beginning in 1914, all major world powers used a wide range of techniques to secure the allegiance and good will of their own civilization population. This work continued unabated after the end of hostilities in 1945. In addition to the works listed above see also John Boardman Whitton, *Propaganda and the Cold War* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984.

400 American scholars have recently focused considerable attention on U.S. Cold War civil defense...
Informing the Public

The First Attempt: Self-Help in Civil Defense. Informing the public about civil defense’s importance began well before the Bundestag’s final approval of the 1957 Civil Defense Law. Indeed, shortly after Federal Chancellor Adenauer authorized the start of reconstituting West German civil defense in the winter of 1950, people both within and outside the government raised the vital question of public support. In April 1951, Erich Hampe, the foremost expert in the Interior Ministry’s small civil defense cadre, reminded his colleagues that informing the public about their work was one of their most important tasks.401 Shortly thereafter, the Interior Ministry began its work in earnest.

Notably, Interior Ministry officials first looked outside the government for ideas on how best to inform the public about civil defense, thus establishing a pattern of private-sector involvement that was the endure, albeit fitfully, for the next fifteen years. Ernst Hoffschild, a long-time member of the Reich Civil Defense Association, was commissioned to write a short pamphlet about the role of civil defense in the next war. Superficially, at least, Hoffschild’s possessed impressive qualifications for the task. After serving as the RCDA’s director of education in Hamburg, the country’s second largest city, during the Second World War, Hoffschild continued to publish in the field of civil defense after the war’s end, writing both propaganda. See Guy Oakes, “The Cold War System of Emotion Management: Mobilizing the Home Front for the Third World War,” in Jackall, ed., Propaganda, 275-296; and Laura McEnaney, Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) and Kenneth D. Rose, One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

official studies and mass-market publications. Unfortunately, when Hoffsfeld finally delivered a draft of the commissioned informational pamphlet in June 1951, it proved woefully inadequate. Clearly the product of the author’s Second World War experience, the pamphlet’s contents struck the Interior Ministry’s reviewers as woefully obsolete. As a result, the Ministry’s own experts spent nearly a year editing and revising Hoffsfeld’s draft, and it was not until a year later that they distributed *Self-Help in Civil Defense* [*Selbsthilfe im Zivilen Luftschutz*] to disaster relief organizations, humanitarian services, and government civil defense experts for a preliminary review.

They received decidedly mixed feedback. Reviewers closely connected to disaster relief organizations and humanitarian services expressed considerable skepticism about the pamphlet’s usefulness. German Red Cross officials, for example, argued that the pamphlet contained just enough technical information to make it inaccessible to the average reader, but at the same time did not provide enough for interested experts. More pointed criticism came from national and state level government officials, who expressed opinions ranging from deep pessimism about the pamphlet’s usefulness to the firm conviction that the Interior Ministry should drop any immediate plans for its publication and distribution.

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403 BA B106.17577, Internal Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung IV/ZB5 [Schneppe], 14 August 1952.
Interestingly, in contrast to the cool response it received from civil defense professionals, the pamphlet received greater support from “ordinary” West Germans who had volunteered for service in the regional and local FCDA units. From FCDA organizations in Bavaria (Bayreuth and Oberfranken), came high praise from volunteers such as a former front-line German army chemical warfare officer and a young teacher, who urged the government to distribute a modified form of the pamphlet to students. Subsequent feedback from FCDA members in Bavaria, Bremen, Hesse, and Lower Saxony echoed this early positive reception. Among the more positive comments Interior Ministry officials received were those from the Amberg FCDA district [Kreisstelle] in Bavaria. Here, FCDA volunteers showed the pamphlet to students in the local women’s high school [Mädchen-Oberschule]. Virtually the entire instructional staff, the district FCDA leaders proudly reported, and 42 of 45 students in the eighth and ninth classes believed the pamphlet was either “very effective” or “effective.” One teacher even recommended the pamphlet’s immediate distribution to all instructors as a useful and effective means for increasing public understanding about civil defense.

Despite the generally positive, if limited, public reaction to Self-Help in Civil Defense, cautious Interior Ministry officials eventually decided to withhold its publication and distribution. Although only a sparse written record of the reason for this decision remains, it appears that three


general concerns contributed to this action. The first was the pamphlet’s ambiguous and unconvincing text, which offered readers little assurance that the federal government understood the nature of the threat facing the country. Admittedly, draft text offered plenty of reasons for concern. In searching for a response to the rhetorical question “does there exist an effective defense against atomic weapons,” for example, the reader learned only that a “known threat is only half a threat.” It is doubtful that this was a comforting reassurance to the reader, who while reading this platitude also saw on the same page a photograph of the devastated Japanese city of Hiroshima. Also questionable was whether the public, after reading about the effects of fire-storms similar to those experienced by the residents of Hamburg and Dresden, would take much comfort from the cheerful advice that covering the nose and body with a blanket (presumably wet, although this was not stated explicitly) was useful when trying to flee an area engulfed with flame (doing so offered protection against heat and sparks).

In addition to the problematic, non-convincing text, the pamphlet’s general statements about civil defense were also cause for concern. For example, readers learned that while protecting West Germany’s population was first and foremost a federal responsibility (as stated in the country’s constitution), this responsibility did not actually include support for civil defense. According to the pamphlet, each citizen was responsible for his or her own safety in the event of war, for, as readers learned, “the federal government [could] only create the administrative [behördlichen] framework of the country’s civil defense program.” Not surprisingly, the pamphlet’s reviewers noted the rather dramatic discontinuity between this emphasis on individual

408 German original: “Eine bekannte Gefahr ist eine halbe Gefahr.”
410 Ibid., 2. The pamphlet ignores the difficult issue of public space.
responsibility and later statements about the importance of blast-proof shelters for adequate protection. As reviews noted, mention of protective shelters raised the eminently reasonable question of whether federal authorities were willing to fund a construction program similar to that implemented by the National Socialist regime during the Second World War. An optimistic, but mistaken, reading of the pamphlet’s text suggested the government did, indeed, plan to finance such a program.

Finally, the Interior Ministry’s civil defense technocrats were forced to consider the pamphlet’s utility. Would it stimulate interest in and understanding of civil defense? While the response of “ordinary Germans” suggested yes, the government’s bureaucrats remained unconvinced. Writing shortly after the initial distribution of the draft pamphlet in August 1952, a member of the country’s foremost scientific and technical commission devoted to the problem of civil defense, the German Research Foundation’s [Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft] (DFS) Protection Commission [Schutzkommission], warned the Interior Ministry about the impossibility of anticipating the public’s reception. Former military officers provided even stronger warnings. At the end of a long letter in which he offered numerous suggestions for improvement, the retired colonel turned government consultant Karl-Günther Jacob stated flatly that the pamphlet was useless as a propaganda tool. Noting that “the majority [of the population] does not want to know about civil defense,” Jacob suggested that appealing to the public’s sense

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411 The German Research Foundation was (and is) the central, self-governing research organization that promotes research at universities and other publicly financed research institutes in West Germany. The Protection Commission was established in 1952 for the purpose of providing technical and scientific assistance to the Interior Ministry to counter the effects of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. On the history of the Protection Commission see Heinz Reichenbach, “Entwicklung und Aufgabe der Schutzkommission,” in Zivilschutzforschung: Schriftenreihe der Schutzkommission beim Bundesminister des Innern 1:1 (1975): 9-13.
of individual responsibility was pointless.\textsuperscript{412} It was far better, he suggested, for officials to find and distribute widely specific examples of how the civil defense measures of the last war actually saved lives. Without proper preparation in the form of an extensive and upbeat public relations campaign, Jacob concluded, any attempt to convince people that the usefulness of the government’s civil defense program was almost certainly doomed to failure.\textsuperscript{413} Jacob’s words prophesized the problems the government would experience in its second attempt to educate the public.

The Second Attempt: \textit{Everyone has a Chance!} During the period leading up to the 1957 Civil Defense Law’s passage, federal civil defense officials devote little attention to formally educating the public about their work. This is not to say that Interior Ministry and FCDA officials suspended all educational efforts, for the extant record shows that the latter, in particular, worked diligently to sway public opinion in favor of civil defense. However, as Interior Ministry officials correctly noted, massive, nation-wide educational campaigns were impossible until the country’s politicians had actually approved the structure and content of West Germany’s Cold War civil defense program. Thus, it was not until after the 1957 Civil Defense Law’s passage that the country’s civil defense experts once again turned to the challenge of educating the public.

Not all were happy to do so. Because of the heated public discussion about civil defense leading up to the 1957 Civil Defense Law’s passage, some officials, at least in private, questioned the utility and desirability of such a project. Others favored the general idea of informing the public about the government’s civil defense program, but raised questions about what, exactly,

\textsuperscript{412} BA B106.17577, Letter, Karl-Günther Jacob to Erich Hampe, 4 September 1952.

\textsuperscript{413} \textit{Ibid.}
this meant. Should the country’s civil defense experts continue efforts to reach out to people predisposed to support civil defense, such as TAC and Red Cross volunteers, or should it broaden the scope of its efforts. Other questions also needed answers. For example, should future work stress some aspects of civil defense over others, and about what aspects of future war did the public want, or need, to know? Was it in the public’s best interest to receive a brochure that discussed subjects such as the dangers of radioactive fallout, or was a focus on the practical measures people could take to protect themselves from the physical damage caused by blast and fire sufficient? Not surprisingly, the Interior Ministry’s cautious technocrats discussed these questions exhaustively, and thus made no effort to mount a nation-wide information campaign for more than a year after the Bundestag approved the 1957 Civil Defense Law. Indeed, it was not until the middle of 1959, more than year after the Law’s passage, that effort to mount its second mass educational campaign truly began.

Although Interior Ministry officials knew of the advantages to mounting a multi-media public-relations campaign, they chose to focus their efforts on producing a new educational pamphlet for mass distribution. Their reasoning for this decision is not entirely clear, but pressing need, past precedent, and cost likely played an important role in their decision. Public opinion polls from the late-1950s as well as casual surveys of newspapers showed a definite need

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414 As Mark Spicka notes in the introduction to his study on the West German government’s efforts to “sell” its economic policies to the public, adoption of American commercial advertising and public relations techniques played an important role in the CDU/CSU’s success. While the Interior Ministry was, for the most part, uninvolved with this campaign, which lasted throughout the 1950s, its Minister, State Secretaries, and high-ranking civil servants were doubtless aware, at least in general terms, of the Ministry of Economics and Federal Chancellery’s efforts to adopt the new American technologies for this own use. Moreover, as Spicka clearly demonstrates, even the minor Interior Ministry and FCDA bureaucrats saw the practical results of the campaign. See Mark Spicka, Selling the Economic Miracle: Economic Propaganda and Political Power in West Germany, 1949-1957 (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 2000).
to counteract increasing public disillusionment with the country’s newly established civil defense program. Emphasizing the point made by disheartening public opinion polls and negative press reports were the frantic calls from state and local governments, the representatives of which regularly urged their federal colleagues to proactively engage with the public.\(^{415}\) New methods of influencing public opinion offered significant promise, but for a generation of civil servants trained in the late-1930s and early-1940s, familiar tools were preferable to new techniques. Moreover, utilizing well-established communications technology such as mass-mailings allowed the government’s civil defense community to avoid repeating its uneven experience with outside consultants. Finally, government officials could not ignore cost considerations. With an estimated price-tag of less than seven hundred thousand marks, distributing a small pamphlet to West Germany’s 17.9 million registered households offered the cheapest means for reaching all, or nearly all, the country’s population.\(^{416}\)

To save themselves time and money, the people charged with creating the new brochure first sought to adapt an existing publication to serve as the basis of their informational campaign. They quickly settled on a revised version of the FCDA pamphlet, *Protection—Your Worry, Too!* \([Schutz auch deine Sorge!\)](Schutz+auch+deine+Sorge!)[, first published and distributed on a limited basis in 1957 and subsequently revised and reissued twice thereafter. The decision to revise and distribute *Protection—Your Worry, Too!* addressed the need for immediate action, but posed certain problems. As officials in both the Interior Ministry and the FCDA were quick note, because it

\(^{415}\) See, for example, comments made by several state representatives during the Standing Civil Defense Committee Meeting of 18 December 1958 in SHH 136-1.1296, Minutes, Kurzprotokoll der Sitzung des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandsplanung vom 18.12.1958 (agenda item 1).

\(^{416}\) BA B106.50243, Undated [c. June 1959] Westag Werbeagentur cost estimates for distributing a twelve-page pamphlet to all West German households.
was thinly disguised copy of American civil defense pamphlets published in the early-1950s, *Protection—Your Worry, Too?* was horribly obsolete.417 Thus, after just a few months of work, senior civil defense officials halted the project to reassess their plans and consider how best to incorporate the Interior Minister Schröder’s demand that the new pamphlet include information about the government’s plans for evacuation, provisions for refugees, and an explanation of the NATO’s new “stay-at-home” policy.418

During the course of the next several months, Schröder’s subordinates, assisted by FCDA personnel and a large number of scientific consultants and public-relations specialists, tried to fulfill his demand for drastic revision. Their subsequent work highlights the extent to which the Interior Ministry’s older generation of civil defense bureaucrats struggled with the difficult task of both manufacturing consent and educating the public about civil defense in the nuclear era. At first they focused primarily on the dense, outdated text—described by one reviewer as alternating between statements understandable only by specialists and vague [verklausuliert] passages that provided no firm guidance to the reader.419 They quickly decided, however, that presentation was as important as content. This fact was emphasized in a November 1959 memorandum written by the head of the Interior Ministry Press Section [Pressereferat], who dismissed the proposed layout of the pamphlet as “primitive” and “out-of-date.”420

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417 BA B106.17577, Draft, *Schutz auch deine Sorge*, dated 20 May 1959. Among the many examples of obsolete information was the advice that people who found themselves outdoors when an atomic weapon exploded should shelter themselves under unfolded newspapers.


After two years of effort, Interior Ministry officials finally admitted they lacked the expertise necessary to produce a pamphlet that incorporated new trends in mass advertising and public relations, and abandoned their efforts to revise *Protection, Your Worry, Too!* The worsening international political climate meant it was impossible to abandon the idea of informing the public about civil defense, however. To resolve their dilemma, Interior Ministry officials turned to a private advertising firm, Westag, for help. The partnership with Westag resulted in even more emphasis on the importance of visual images rather than textual descriptions to “sell” their product.

This growing attention to presentation is best illustrated by the multi-year debate over the pamphlet’s cover page. The original title page of *Protection, Your Worry, Too!* depicted two children staring at a mushroom-shaped atomic cloud rising off in the distance, an idea eventually abandoned as too crude. A replacement proved hard to find, and two years of discussion were required before an alternative was found: the photograph of a happy “nuclear” family, complete with two smiling, blonde-haired children, gathered outdoors around a table covered with the remains of a large afternoon meal. The record of meetings held to discuss the pamphlet’s cover page reveal that civil defense officials liked the photograph for its warmth and intimacy, and the not so subtle reminder of the main reason why West Germans should support their government’s civil defense program. The record also shows that officials not intimately involved with the program were less sure,\(^421\) and demanded a replacement. Subsequent attempts to find an existing alternative to the smiling family proved difficult, partially because of the Interior Ministry’s reluctance to spend the money for a commissioned photograph, but also because of the difficulty

\(^{421}\) During the Federal Defense Council meeting of 12 May 1960 several people questioned whether the photograph of an apparently unconcerned family portrayed the proper sentiment.
in finding meaningful images not tainted by the country’s past, or future wartime experience. In one telling example the Federal Press Agency suggested a photograph that depicted a rather glum family standing underneath a large umbrella. Why the head of the Federal Press Agency chose this photograph is unknown, although the fact that it was part of the Agency’s files, and therefore free, was doubtless important. This image was deemed unacceptable for it seemed to mock the very concept of civil defense.422

A third alternative, first suggested by Westag in late 1959 but not seriously considered until nearly a year later, ultimately proved more successful. For the front cover Westag representatives proposed a photograph that depicted a large crowd assembled for an unspecific outdoor event.423 Interior Ministry officials liked the idea because, in their opinion, it better expressed the general theme of the pamphlet: the importance of both individual and collective participation in civil defense. The photograph’s power, one official asserted, was that it showed a large crowd of virtually unprotected people under the superimposed title of “Jeder hat eine Chance” [Everyone has a Chance] thus suggesting that all West Germans did indeed, have a chance of surviving a nuclear war (see Figure 5.1).424 Once again reviewers outside the Interior Ministry balked. From the Federal Chancellery came complaints that it did not understand the photograph, a concern echoed by other offices represented on the Federal Defense Council. The Federal Defense Council’s main concern, however, reveals much about that body’s priorities. The problem with the photograph, the Interior Ministry’s senior civil defense bureaucrat learned, was not that Westag’s proposal might strike some viewers overly optimistic because it promised

422 BA B106.50243, Memorandum, Botho Bargatsky to Gerhard Schröder, 14 December 1960.
unattainable protection, but rather the fact that the people in the photograph appeared too “unfriendly” \[unfreundlich\] and informally dressed \[unordentlich angezogen\].\(^{425}\) Unfortunately, the Interior Ministry’s files contain no record of its response to this interesting critique.

Had the international climate not worsened in the summer of 1961, acrimonious debate about the cover may have continued for a considerable time to come. Events in Berlin ended discussion, however, as public concern about the government’s civil defense program once again surfaced both in the Bundestag and the West German press.\(^{426}\) By October 1961, both the Interior Ministry and the Federal Chancellery felt the tense situation precluded further delay. At the beginning of the month, Adenauer approved the mass distribution of the educational pamphlet without a signed forward.\(^{427}\) On the twenty-third, senior officials from the Interior Ministry, Federal Press Office, and the FCDA held a press conference to unveil \textit{Everyone has a Chance}.\(^{428}\)

Because of their past experience with a fickle public and press, government officials were not alarmed when \textit{Everyone has a Chance} received some negative reviews.\(^{429}\) What did surprise them, however, was the fact that the negative reviews were a minority. In fact, media coverage

\(^{425}\) BA B106.50243, Internal Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII [Kirchner], 5 December 1960.

\(^{426}\) On 13 August 1961 the East German government erected the Berlin Wall, thus precipitating a new period of heightened international tension. On the impact of the Wall’s construction on West German Civil Defense planning in general, see Chapter Six.

\(^{427}\) BA B106.50243, Internal Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII [Bargatzky], 4 October 1961.


\(^{429}\) Papers such as the \textit{Hannoversche Presse, Schwäbische Zeitung}, and \textit{Sarrbrücker Landeszeitung} complained about the inadequacy of government civil defense-related planning and progress. Others papers, mostly those with communist leanings, attacked the very idea of civil defense. See BA B106.50244, Letter, Heinrich Hartmann to Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII [Bargatzky] 21 November 1961. (Hartmann was the owner of Heinrich Hartmann Reutlingen Werbeberatung und Werberleitung, a private firm contracted by the Interior Ministry to track and analyze press reports on \textit{Everyone has a Chance}).
about the pamphlet was overwhelmingly positive—ninety percent of the articles published in the week after the pamphlet’s debut praised the new publication.\footnote{Ibid.} Equally important, in the minds of Interior Ministry officials, was the fact that most press accounts included more than a short announcement of the new pamphlet’s availability. Many newspapers printed articles which provided readers with details and analyses of the pamphlet’s contents. Interior Ministry officials were also pleased by the fact that as part of its coverage the press also published interviews with local civil defense officials, and described in detail the state of local civil defense programs—exactly the type of coverage the government sought! Not surprisingly, their initial euphoria subsided when they realized the media’s reaction did not reflect public opinion as a whole. As individuals and households received their copies of \textit{Everyone has a Chance} (and for many the pamphlet arrived just time for the Christmas holiday) press coverage changed for the worse. By January 1962 it was clear the pamphlet had only partially alleviated the fears and concerns of the general public.

What factors contributed to the ultimate failure of \textit{Everyone has a Chance}? Certainly, the pamphlet’s unfortunate title made the government’s job that much harder. But as contemporary analyses revealed, the pamphlet’s problems owed more to the government’s failure to satisfy two of the three fundamental goals it needed to achieve for a successful public relations campaign. First, in a sad repetition of its earlier work, the government failed to convince West Germans that it understood the magnitude of the situation in which the country found itself. By the early-1960s, few West Germans were ignorant of the country’s dangers they faced, for media reports, popular novels, films, and television and radio shows had widely disseminated horrifying (and not always accurate) descriptions of the effects of a nuclear war. Moreover, even West
Germans who had come of age in the decades following the Second World War had a clear idea of the personal and physical suffering any war (nuclear or conventional) entailed. For reasons not entirely explained in the voluminous correspondence detailing the pamphlet’s creation, the authors ultimately said little about the country’s actual situation, preferring instead to begin with encouraging statements about how well-prepared Japanese managed to survive the atomic-bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Even when they turned to the problem of future war, the authors chose a sterile, overly technical approach to describe the threats West Germans faced. Admittedly accurate—the Interior Ministry spent considerable resources in the mid and late-1950s to learn atomic explosions’ actual effects—the precise, almost pedantic prose convey no sense of urgency, much less concern, for the worries present in the minds of millions. Nor were the illustrations much better. Ludicrous suggestions such as advising people to cover their heads with an open briefcase if caught in the open when an atomic bomb exploded (see Figure 5.2) did little to establish the government’s credibility.

The pamphlet also failed in its goal of convincing people about the effectiveness of the government’s civil defense program. Stock-piling food, fire-fighting supplies, and rescue equipment certainly made sense, but offered scant comfort to people living in the country’s densely-settled urban regions. More disturbing still were the pamphlet’s explicit and implicit references to ill-developed or non-existent programs and facilities. For example, the year the government distributed Everyone has a Chance, despite the pamphlet’s implications to the contrary, the country possessed only two public shelters capable of protecting their occupants against the worst effects of an atomic explosion. More generally, despite the SPD’s best efforts, the CDU/CSU government consistently under-funded its own civil defense programs, spending only one mark for every hundred allocated for the country’s military. Although many West
Germans remained non-committal about this dramatic discrepancy when it came to funding public shelters—opinion on their usefulness remained sharply divided throughout the 1950s and early-1960s—the lack of funds for stock-piling rescue equipment and basic supplies was less understandable. Thus, the government’s persistent façade of optimism in the face of overwhelming potential disaster was, in the mind of most West Germans, a clear signal of stupidity, callousness, or both. People living in one of the country’s many cities found it difficult to reconcile the government’s message of “everybody has a chance” with media reports which showed, clearly, that this was not the case.

The Third Attempt: A Guide to Civil Defense. Even as they dealt with the negative public response to Everyone has a Chance, the Interior Ministry began its third major effort to inform the public about civil defense. In contrast to their previous efforts, this time officials decided from the start to entrust the conceptualization and design of the new brochure in the hands of professional advertising and public relations firms. In January 1962, detailed requirements for the new pamphlet were sent to a small number of firms. The new pamphlet, Interior Ministry officials wrote, needed to indicate clearly the publication’s official status and convince readers through forceful writing and compelling illustrations of its critical importance. Of foremost importance was straightforward text that de-emphasized technical concepts. Additionally, wishing to mimic new and successful trends in mass advertising, Interior Ministry officials stressed the importance of a multi-faceted approach in the use of illustrations, calling for a mixture of photographs, sketches, and informative charts and tables while at the same time ruling out the use of cartoons such as those used in Everyone has a Chance. Overall, government officials concluded, the new pamphlet should convey clearly but concisely that the country’s civil
defense program served an extremely useful purpose for people living outside the zones of highest danger.431

Despite the fact that the Interior Ministry at first asked for completed proposals on Easter Sunday, an error they discovered only a few weeks before the original deadline, five firms opted to respond. The criteria used by Interior Ministry officials to evaluate the submissions reflected the lessons they learned as a result of the disastrous Everyone has a Chance campaign. Devoting little attention to content, they concentrated instead imagery, and evaluated the graphics, overall organization, format, and color scheme of each proposal. At the beginning of July 1962, a committee consisting of representatives from the Federal Bureau for Civil Defense and the FCDA, an independent public relations expert, and a private-sector psychologist met to make a final decision. It selected the Westag proposal, noting that while the text required considerable revision, the firm had successfully condensed complex ideas into short, clear, concise sentences elucidated by illustrations which showed great flexibility [Beweglichkeit] and imagination [Phantasie].432

Their previous work on Everyone has a Chance notwithstanding, Westag proved unequal to the task of providing a new product, and required six months to deliver a disappointing first draft of the new pamphlet. Klaus Skibowski, an independent consultant retained by the Interior Ministry to help plan and oversee its public relations work, criticized Westag’s efforts for not fulfilling the government’s minimum requirements. Westag’s proposal, he informed the Interior


432 Ibid.
Ministry, failed utterly to either convince or educate. As an item of propaganda, Skibowski informed the Interior Minister, the pamphlet failed to convey a sense of security to the reader or convince the average German of the importance of volunteering for the government’s many civil defense-related activities. As a source of information the proposed pamphlet was equally useless. Turgid legalese \textit{[juristische Satzkonstruktionen]} and complicated illustrations obscured the information West Germans need to help them survive a war. Not surprisingly, Skibowski recommended drastic revisions: rewrite the entire proposal from the point-of-view of the “simplest” readers \textit{[einfachen Lesers]}\textsuperscript{433} The Ministry’s own experts concurred, calling the document “inelegant” and too complicated, and expressed the concern that it failed to reflect recent advances in military technology and policy. FCDA officials, in particular, were concerned that readers might gain the mistaken impression the country was threatened by hundreds of strategic nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{434}

To avoid repeating the poor showing of \textit{Everyone has a Chance}, Interior Ministry officials demanded Westag revise its concept.\textsuperscript{435} Successive drafts proved more promising, with the third drawing praise from a wide range of government reviewers. When forwarded for review

\textsuperscript{433} BA B106.50246, Letter, Otto Skibowski to Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII [Thomsen], undated [c. June 1964].

\textsuperscript{434} According to the committee, speeches by U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and German Defense Minister Kai-Uwe von Hassel showed clearly that widespread use of smaller tactical nuclear weapons represented a far greater physical threat to the country. FCDA officials emphasized the need to convey this information to the general public because of its psychological ramifications. (BA B106.50246, Letter, Federal Civil Defense Association, Abteilung VI to Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII [Thomsen], 21 January 1964.) No mention was made, however, of the physical destruction such weapons might cause.

\textsuperscript{435} BA B106.50246, Letter, Westag to Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII [Thomsen], 28 February 1964. Westag forwarded a second draft of the proposal to the Interior Ministry at the end of November 1963. The draft was only slightly different from the first and received only superficial consideration from government civil defense officials. See BA B106.50246, Internal Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII [Thomsen], 27 November 1963.
to the Federal Chancellery, Federal Defense Council, other federal ministries, and the Bundestag Committee for Internal Affairs, the pamphlet received mixed, but generally positive reviews.\footnote{Officials in the Federal Ministry of Transport [Bundesministerium des Verkehrs] felt the draft was “good” and would “not result in the same [sort] of criticism as...\textit{Jeder hat eine Chance}. The chair of the Bundestag’s Committee for Internal Affairs, Hermann Schmitt-Vockenhausen (SPD), voiced similar sentiments. Although he expressed concern that the informal nature of the pamphlet might obscure some important points, Schmitt-Vockenhausen nonetheless raised no fundamental objections to the draft. See BA B106.50246, Memorandum, Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII [Thomsen], 14 August 1964; BA B106.50247, Letter, Secretariat, Bundestag Committee for Internal Affairs to Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII [Thomsen], 4 August 1964.}

Pleased by its reception, the Interior Ministry began efforts to finalize printing and distribution details, optimistic that, seven years after 1957 Civil Defense Law’s passage, the public would finally receive accurate and credible information about the government’s civil defense program.\footnote{BA B106.50247, Letter, Westag Werbagentur to Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII [Thomsen], 10 August 1965; BA B106.40247, Letter, Klaus Skibowski to Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII/A10 [Vulpius], 20 August 1964.}

One last obstacle remained, however—concern among high-ranking officials in the Finance Ministry and Federal Chancellery about the timing of the proposed distribution. In a letter of 18 August 1964 regarding the proposed pamphlet, Finance Ministry officials raised specific questions about the text and illustrations. While most of these questions were technical rather than substantive in nature, Finance Ministry officials pointed out correctly that one possible interpretation of the proposed text was increased government financial support to the country’s civil defense program. Increasingly strained federal budgets, Finance Ministry officials argued, meant such support was simply not available.\footnote{A copy of the Finance Ministry’s letter of 18 August 1964 is found in BA B106.50247, Internal Memorandum Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII/A10 [Vulpius], 3 September 1964.} At the same time officials in the Federal Chancellery expressed concern about the government’s legislative agenda. Distributing the
proposed pamphlet immediately, they argued, might complicate the government’s efforts to pass the Emergency Laws. Anxious to forestall additional delay to the pamphlet’s distribution, Interior Minister Hörcherl himself took up the issue during the September 1964 meeting of the Federal Defense Council. Arguing that the new pamphlet provided essential information about both military and natural disasters, Hörcherl urged the Council to release it to the public as quickly as possible.439 Against the wishes of the Finance Minister, who remained convinced the pamphlet might instill in the West German public a greater expectation of federal support for civil defense, the Federal Defense Council approved distribution of the now officially-named *A Guide to Civil Defense.*440

Interior Ministry officials hoped distribution of the *A Guide to Civil Defense* would help restore public confidence in the government’s commitment to their protection. Yet within days of publicly announcing the government’s imminent distribution of its new pamphlet, Interior Ministry officials were forced to concede the possibility of total success. Admittedly, the media’s analysis of the new pamphlet was generally positive, and large, influential newspapers such as *Die Welt*, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* offered editorials supportive of the government’s efforts.441 The *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, for example, applauded the authors of *Zivilschutzfibel* for portraying the reality of a future war, an idea echoed by *Die Welt*, which praised the government for, “addressing realistically and honestly the results of a nuclear war…[and] giving few false hopes.” Even left-of-center newspapers such as the *Westfälische*


441 An extensive collection of newspaper editorials in found in BA B106 50248.
Rundschau and Kölner Stadtanzeiger conceded that West Germans should read the pamphlet regardless of their general opinion on the issue of civil defense. However, praise for Zivilschutzfibel also raised awkward questions about the programs it described. While most newspapers did not condemn the government’s program as harshly as the Communist-oriented Westdeutsche Zeitung—which the day after the government’s press conference ran the headline “In case of atomic attack close your eyes”—even the most supportive newspapers raised questions about the government’s financial and political commitment to the programs it advocated. Articles in the Ruhr-Nachrichten, Bremer Nachrichten, and Hamburger Echo, for example, reminded readers of the pamphlet’s apparent message and the government’s parsimonious support for the construction of protective shelters and stockpiling critical supplies (see Figure 5.3)

While press coverage of the new pamphlet was generally positive, once again the reaction of many individual West Germans was not. Part of the problem, Interior Ministry officials privately acknowledged afterwards, stemmed from logistical problems. Recalcitrance by the government controlled post-office—officials in the Federal Postal and Telephone Ministry [Bundesministerium für Post- und Fernmeldewesen] refused to distribute the pamphlet because it exceeded the maximum weight allowance of fifty grams—forced the Interior Ministry to turn instead to volunteers and private delivery companies. As several critics noted, this was hardly an ideal solution. From the Bundestag came concerns that the students, pensioners, and school

442 German original: “Bei Atomangriff fest die Augen schließen!”

children normally employed by private delivery companies might find it difficult to distribute the pamphlet to every household in the country.\textsuperscript{444} Subsequent events proved these observations correct. As the distribution proceeded, local police officers and FCDA officials reported numerous examples of boxes containing hundreds of pamphlets found abandoned in trashcans, under bridges, and in forests.\textsuperscript{445} A systematic investigation by the FCDA revealed the extent of the problem. On the basis of a physical survey of 34,000 households the FCDA concluded that seven to nineteen percent did not receive a copy of the\textit{Civil Defense Guidelines}. The reasons for non-delivery, FCDA officials reported, were highly varied. At least 18,000 copies of the pamphlet were found abandoned in forests, under bridges, and isolated roads.\textsuperscript{446}

Yet even successful delivery to a household did not guarantee a positive reception. In the weeks following the pamphlet’s distribution the Interior Ministry received hundreds of letters from the public. While a sizeable minority of this correspondence was either supportive of the government’s new effort to inform the public about its civil defense program or merely wanted additional copies of the pamphlet, more than half was extremely critical.\textsuperscript{447} Criticism of the government’s civil defense program in general, and of\textit{Civil Defense Guidelines} in particular, were the result of a number of different feelings. Many of the writers expressed deep pacifist

\textsuperscript{444} BA B106.50246, Letter, Annemarie Renger to Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII [Thomsen], 26 October 1964.

\textsuperscript{445} See, for example, the report in the\textit{Sieaener Zeitung} (19 January 1965).


\textsuperscript{447} My analysis of public reaction is based on the 128 postcards and letters contained in Interior Ministry files. Of this correspondence 23 expressed a positive opinion about\textit{A Guide to Civil Defense} and thirty-seven asked for additional copies of the pamphlet. The remainder of the correspondence expressed a negative or extremely negative opinion about the pamphlet and its distribution. The correspondence is located in BA B106.50248.
convictions. Herr B. in Bremen, Herr N. in Cologne, and Herr S. in Wiesbaden, for example, all sent letters condemning West German rearmament and the escalating nuclear arms race between the United States and Soviet Union. Herr S. from Frankfurt-am-Main noted the utter lack of support among his friends and colleagues for the very concept of civil defense and asked if the government was lying to the public and secretly preparing for war. Other writers argued that the experience of the past war clearly showed the futility of civil defense. Writing that ten members of her family were killed by the Allied bombing raids of the Second World War, Frau H. in Bruchsal informed Interior Ministry officials that their money was better spent on social programs and education, and still other writers echoed her outrage over what they viewed as the misuse of their tax money. Herr R. of Ludwigshafen-am-Rhein demanded the Interior Ministry “take better care of our taxes” while Herr F. of Saulgau questioned why the government did not use the money spent on producing and distributing Civil Defense Guidelines for a more useful purpose, such as building bunkers. After all, Herr F. continued, soldiers were not required to buy their own weapons, so why should civilians buy their own shelters? Many writers expressed a sense of hopelessness about their chances of survival should war occur. Herr B., of Manderbach, for example, politely asked if he might obtain an additional copy of the pamphlet. He wished to replace the copy, “thrown into the fire by his wife…who said she would rather die than survive the next war.”

Propaganda

Although they never explicitly used the term in the planning documents the generated, it is clear that West Germany’s civil defense experts sought to banalize their work and its effect on 

448 Ibid.
individuals. Admittedly, the programs established by in the first decades of the Cold War called for widespread support and participation, but they also envisioned a society in which civil defense was a routine, and therefore unremarkable, facet of daily existence. Stated differently, West German civil defense planners believed that people needed to think of civil defense in terms of civic responsibility rather than onerous burden—to see it as a task as important to the smooth functioning of a healthy democracy as paying taxes, voting, and obeying traffic laws. However, as we have seen elsewhere, for most of the 1950s and early-1960s millions of West Germans explicitly rejected this concept of civil defense. As a result, the country’s civil defense establishment was forced to wrestle with the problem of gaining widespread public support for its work. How was this best achieved?

From the very beginning of private discussions about winning over the public many civil defense experts argued in favor of carefully organized public relations campaigns, or propaganda, as a means to increase support for their work. By utilizing techniques developed and perfected in the 1930s and 1940s, propaganda proponents argued, the country’s civil defense establishment could persuade West Germans to internalize three critical ideas. First, active voluntary support of the government’s civil defense program was a responsibility shared by all people, regardless of age, gender, or socio-economic status. Second, because it did not impose an onerous burden on the individual, civil defense in the free and democratic Federal Republic was very different from the programs created by the National Socialist regime, or those in place in the German Democratic Republic. Finally, also in contrast to their National Socialist predecessors, West German officials stressed the importance of a strong *esprit de corps* among those people who embraced civil defense. A vibrant *esprit de corps*, they argued, was important not only to win over new converts, but also to retain interest in and enthusiasm for the program. As was the case
with its informational campaign, government propaganda efforts at first centered on the print media. Soon, though, Interior Ministry and FCDA officials realized they needed to employ different methods to achieve and retain the public’s support.

**Printed Propaganda.** Because televisions throughout the 1950s remained a luxury commodity owned only by a small minority of people, the popular press, and especially magazines played an important role in West German society. Beginning with the *Nordwestdeutschen Hefte*, first published in 1946, magazine circulation increased dramatically in the decades following the end of the Second World War. *Hör zu!*, a popular illustrated magazine intended to complement programming on the country’s major radio stations, also debuted in 1946, and by 1952 reached an estimated weekly circulation of 1.8 million—the highest of any illustrated magazine in Europe. 449 That same year marked the appearance of West Germany’s most (in)famous illustrated daily newspaper: *Das Bild*. Published by the Axel Springer Publishing Group, *Das Bild* quickly developed a large loyal following among the West German public and within two years achieved the status of West Germany’s most-read daily newspaper. 450 The 1950s also marked the golden age of the so-called West German “Yellow Press”—weekly and monthly magazines devoted to providing gossip and celebrity news to an insatiable public. Weekly publications such as *Das grüne Blatt, Neue Post, Das neue Post, Post*, and *Hiem und Welt* each week allowed millions of West Germans to follow in the comfort of their own living rooms the adventures, love affairs, and scandals of the wealthy and famous. By the mid-1950s, a sizeable percentage of the 140 different


illustrated magazines in existence enjoyed circulation rates of more than 50,000 per issue; more than twenty, including Frankfurter Illustrierte, Funk um die Familie, Hören und sehen, Kristall, Stern, Bild und Funk, and Deutsche Illustrierte were ready by more than 200,000 each week.\footnote{Ibid., 394.}

The general increase in prosperity that resulted from the “economic miracle” \(Wirtschaftswunder\) of the 1950s only helped increased the popularity of entertainment and newsmagazines, with West Germans buying an average of 13.4 to 17.3 million newspapers and magazines per day.\footnote{Ibid., 396.}

Government civil defense officials knew how important magazines were in West German society, and in 1956 made their first venture into the world of mass media with the inaugural issue of \textit{ZB-Illustrierte} [\textit{Civil Defense Illustrated}].\footnote{For the sake of clarity, I have elected to use the German titles in this chapter.} Consciously modeled after the country’s leading illustrated magazines, the first issue of \textit{ZB-Illustrierte} was twenty-four pages long, unbound, and printed on newsprint in easy-to-read type. The chief editor of \textit{ZB-Illustrierte} was Friedrich Walter Dinger, a FCDA employee also responsible for the coordination and oversight of that organization’s public relations activities. Supported financially by the Interior Ministry, the editorial office of the new magazine was housed in the FCDA headquarters in Cologne.\footnote{Rainer Schramm and Peter Trunk, “Von der Illustrierten zum Magazin,” in \textit{Bevölkerungsschutz: Magazin für Zivil- und Katastrophenschutz} (3:2001) at http://www.bzs.bund.de/bsmag/mag45jah.htm (accessed 5 June 2003). Readers quickly learned the title was a play on words. The letters “ZB” in fact formed part of the sub-title “Zeit-Berichte + Zeit-Bilder für Menschen in Atomzeitalter.”}

Although edited and published by the FCDA, the content of the new magazine varied widely. General articles on scientific and technical advances, civil defense, and current political events shared space with serialized thrillers and romances, and tabloid-like reporting, including photographs, of on movie stars and prominent celebrities. Early issues even contained jokes and

\footnote{For the sake of clarity, I have elected to use the German titles in this chapter.}
puzzles for children. In the early issues fiction and fact combined in a way that might seem strange to readers fifty years after the fact. In a serialized story entitled “Criminals traced by atoms!” [“Atome spüren Verbrecher auf”], for example, readers followed the adventures of a private detective on the trail of two notorious criminals. Commissioner “Atom” [Kommissar “Atom”], the nickname of the detective, finally finds the two criminals with the aid of a Geiger counter. From this story readers learned of one potentially cheap and effective means for protecting their property from theft: cover the floors underneath windows and in front of doors with a radioactive paste!⁴⁵⁵ Other issues contained reports on scientific expeditions to the Sahara Desert (complete with camels) or fanciful (but nonetheless creditable) depictions of future war (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2).⁴⁵⁶

This initial attempt to enter the world of mass media was only partially successful. With strong financial backing from the Interior Ministry the FCDA printed and distributed more than 25,000 issues per month—a notable accomplishment for a small magazine. Publicly, FCDA officials voiced their satisfaction with the public’s initial response to the new publication. Privately, however, they expressed greater concern. At the 1956 annual meeting of FCDA officers the organization’s president, Dr. Erich Walter Lotz, admitted the magazine’s future was still in doubt.⁴⁵⁷ The Interior Ministry’s representative at the meeting, Wolf von Dreising, confirmed the magazine’s uncertain future by noting the government expected a self-financing


⁴⁵⁷ BA B372.011, “Niederschrift über die Mitgliederversammlung des Bundesluftschutzverband am 08.06.1956,” 17-22.
publication, at least in terms of printing costs, “in the near future.” That same year, Finance Ministry imposed cuts to the FCDA’s budget forced the organization to re-think its publication strategy. Recognizing the importance of targeting specific audiences, FCDA officials redesigned the magazine, splitting it into two publications—one aimed at the general public and one intended primarily for the organization’s volunteers. At the same time both publications received a new title: *Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB*. However, despite selling an estimated 25,000 copies of the magazine each month to the general public, financial reality forced further changes. At the same time the Bundestag passed the 1957 Civil Defense Law, the FCDA quietly stopped publication of the edition targeted at the general public. The short era of selling civil defense through a combination of serialized adventure and crime stories, photographs of celebrities, brainteasers, and jokes was over.

In January 1959, the format of *Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB* changed once again. Most noticeable to its readers was a prominent announcement that the magazine was now produced with the Interior Ministry’s official support. The content and form changed as well. A more solid, professional-looking magazine printed on high quality paper replaced the newsprint editions of the mid-1950s. To draw the reader’s attention to important articles and concepts the redesigned magazine made extensive use of color and photographs. The most visually striking changes occurred to the magazine’s cover. After 1959 both the front and back covers contained large full-color photographs or illustrations clearly intended to reinforce one or more of the basic

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460 The original subtitle “Zeit-Berichte + Zeit-Bilder für Menschen in Atomzeitalter” was retained.

461 Schramm and Trunk, “Von der Illustrierten zum Magazin:” 2.
ideas civil defense officials hoped the public might internalize. Several examples illustrate this point. For instance, emphasizing the overall need for a comprehensive civil defense program was an ad that first appeared on the back cover of the June 1959 issue of Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB (see Figure 5.6). Under the bold title caption “Progress? Security?” \([\text{Forschritt? Sicherheit?}]\) readers saw stylized images of twentieth-century technological progress—jet aircraft, rockets, satellites, and radar—all of which had military applications. Gazing wondrously up at the symbols of technological progress and military threat are a small group of men. To make the connection clear, the ad ends with the statement, “Amazed, we watch the rapid development of technology. But do we not all too easily overlook the fact that it \([\text{technological development}]\) brings with it threats? Turn to the FCDA for information, advice, and instruction about all self-protection matters” (see Figure 5.6).\(^{462}\) Photographs of CDAS volunteers, diligent housewives stocking-up on emergency provisions, and meetings of middle-age women with CDAS officials (see Figures 5.7 through 5.10) conveyed the idea that civil defense was the joint responsibility of the entire population, and that a person’s responsibility manifested itself in many forms. Because they often featured smiling, cheerful subjects, the same photographs also helped present the idea that civil defense was a far from onerous duty.

It is important to note, however, that a few of the FCDA’s images conveyed more than officials hoped. Take the example of a problematic ad that appeared the year after “Progress? Security?” Dubbed the “red-light” ad by its critics, it featured nothing more than a red emergency light hanging from the ceiling of a dimly lighted room (see Figure 5.11). Its straightforward conveyed a blunt message: “Protective shelters provide a chance…prepare in advance

\(^{462}\) German original: “Staunend verfolgen wir die rasante Entwicklung der Technik. Übersehen wir dabei nicht allzu leicht, daß sie auch Bedrohungen mit sich bringt? Aufklärung, Beratung und Unterweisung in allen Fragen des Selbstschutzes durch den Bundesluftschutzverband.”
and use them! Advice, help, and free training [available from] the FCDA.” Used with great regularly in the months following the Berlin Wall and Cuban Missile Crises, FCDA officials hoped the red-light ad would convince people to construct and equip personal shelters in the cellars of these houses and apartment buildings. However, the “red-light” ad also conveyed other, more problematic messages. In the absence of records detailing its conceptualization and creation, we can only assume that the choice of a red-tinted light was hardly accidental and was intended to make a subtle reference to the red menace threatening the country. Unfortunately, the emergency light also likely conjured up memories of the type of equipment used in bunkers during the Second World War. Moreover, while civil defense officials wished to encourage people to think about constructing private protective shelters, the caption doubtless encouraged many West Germans to raise troubling questions about the possibility of state-constructed bunkers. If, as the ad implied, bunkers offered people a chance to survive a war, where were they?

The magazine’s content also changed to reflect the need to convey the basic civil defense tenants officials considered important. To dispel doubts about the utility of a comprehensive civil defense program the editors included serious, but essentially optimistic, articles about the effects of a nuclear explosion. The three-part article written by Alfred Koczy in the Winter of 1959 serves as a representative example. While stating plainly that a nuclear explosion would undoubtedly kill thousands, Koczy was quick to assure his readers that minimal preparations would allow a far greater number to survive, even in cases of a surprise attack.463 Frequent articles reporting on how ordinary West Germans were contributing to the country’s civil defense

effort underscored the idea of civil defense as both civic and familial responsibility. In this respect a review of the articles published in Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB shows that civil defense officials were particularly anxious to draw women to their cause. Readers learned that the state, like good housewives, proactively prepared for future catastrophe. Thus, in addition to special issues which focused solely on how women could contribute (and were contributing) to West German civil defense, the editors regularly included articles and photographs which featured women’s work. Among the most striking of the latter was the front cover of the November 1965 issue, which showed a young mother bandaging the arm of her child. “Prepared mothers,” the interior caption read, “have medical supplies in the house and know basic first-aid skills” (see Figure 5.12). Finally, to help develop the sense of esprit de corps they so clearly sought, the editors ensured readers received frequent updates on the activities of state and local CDAS organizations, with the regular feature “The state organizations report…” [Landesstellen berichten…] appearing in the final pages of each issue.

Non-Print Media. For much of the 1950s and 1960s government propaganda efforts centered on the print media. Interior Ministry officials considered financial support of specialized civil

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465 Special issues devoted entirely to women’s civil defense work include that of October 1959, Representative articles include “Noch in der Erprobung,” in Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB 7:8 (August 1962): 8-10, which reported on women’s experience testing gas-masks the government hoped to distribute to the population in the event of war; “Der BLSV in Deutschlands jüngster Stadt. Selbstschutzwöche in Dudweiler,” in Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB 7:12 (December 1962): 7-8, 30, which included an extended report on women’s participation in Dudweiler’s 1962 “Civil Defense Week;” and Rudolf Gunkel, “Brücken von Mensch zu Mensch,” in Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB 10:2 (February 1965): 20-22, which reported on the city of Ansbach’s special, week-long event highlighting women’s civil defense contributions. In their quest for public support the editors also highlighted the contributions of other specific population groups. See, for example, the July 1965 special issue devoted to civil defense in the agricultural sector.
defense periodicals such as *ZB-Illustratire* as the most cost-effective means for reaching the largest audience possible. They could not (and did not) ignore other types of communications technologies, however. While radio and the new technology of television never played as important a role in the government’s propaganda campaigns as the print media, officials did not neglect these technologies. Wartime experience doubtless convinced many officials of the power of radio and film as a useful propaganda tool.466 After the war, close professional and personal ties between West German civil defense officials and their counter-parts in NATO and the United States helped ensure they remained informed about using the new technologies.

West German civil defense officials turned to radio because of its familiarity and well-established presence. Despite the censorship imposed by both the National Socialist government during the Second World War and, after 1945, the military governments of the occupying powers, radio programming was an important source of both information and entertainment for most West Germans.467 Widespread radio ownership emerged in Germany in the 1930s, and after a short, post-war dip, continued to climb from the early-1950s onwards. By the mid-1950s, most West

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German households not only owned at least one radio receiver, but were replacing older models with new, more technically advanced units.468 While some variation in local programming did exist, in general West German radio stations all featured a mixed program of music and talk radio. In the mid-1950s, for example, the program structure of the Bavarian Radio included fifty-eight percent musical and forty-two percent non-musical programming. The non-musical programming included radio dramas, live-coverage of important political debates, political discussions, cultural and educational programming, and sports.469

Government officials worked to maintain friendly working relationships with the radio media. In late-1955, Interior Ministry officials met repeatedly with representatives of NWDR and NDR—the audiences of which lived in high-risk, densely-settled regions of the country—to discuss the possibility of creating a short report on the government’s civil defense program. Of concern to officials was their belief that NWDR and NDR news reports provided scant and inaccurate information about the government’s programs. In a memorandum written to his superiors after the meeting the Interior Ministry’s representative noted his concern that NWDR, in particular, needed to know more about the government’s plans, and suggested establishing a permanent liaison with the radio stations.470 For reasons not detailed in the extant files, senior Interior Ministry officials rejected this idea, and until the early-1960s made little active effort to influence radio reporting on civil defense issues. Appearances by senior Interior Ministry and


FCDA officials on radio news and talks shows was limited, even during critical periods such as the official Bundestag debate on the 1957 Civil Defense Law. Instead, civil defense officials confined their actions to closely monitoring the radio coverage their programs received.

Given the immense potential audience that existed in the 1950s, the Interior Ministry’s reluctance to gain support for its civil defense program through radio broadcasts is striking. In the absence of recorded discussions on the subject, we are left can only speculate as to why civil defense officials, most of whom were old enough to remember National Socialist radio exhortations, infrequently ventured into the airwaves. The status of the country’s radio stations provides one possible explanation. Although they allowed state-financing, the Allied occupation authorities who oversaw the creation of West Germany’s radio stations insisted on strict independence when it came to program and editorial content, a policy reaffirmed by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1962. As a result, market forces, in the form of ratings and listeners’ feedback, were far more important in determining what West Germans heard, with programming about the government’s activities created by journalists rather than bureaucrats. Yet even had they possessed the legal authority to order regular civil defense-related broadcasts, the subject’s complexity and program’s uncertain status may have dissuaded civil defense officials. Any war, but especially nuclear war, was a terrifying subject, and the inability to reference specific ways in which their work would result in (literally) concrete protection for West German civilians was something officials doubtless wished to avoid discussing.

The 1957 Civil Defense Law’s passage allowed officials to adopt a more proactive policy. Through positive radio coverage they hoped to increase interest in and support for its nascent program. As a result, beginning in 1958 both the Interior Ministry and FCDA encouraged local and state CDAS units to file reports on their activities, especially public
demonstrations and training exercises. The Interior Ministry also encouraged radio reports such as the one broadcast by SWF in May 1962, which highlighted the personal commitment of CDAS volunteers and their work in the government’s civil defense program.\footnote{See, for example, BA B106.85509, Transcript of Südwestrundfunk, 19 May 1962.} After their official introduction in 1963, government officials also worked to secure positive coverage of the various emergency laws. In an attempt to counter the considerable negative public sentiment the laws generated, Interior Ministry and FCDA officials actively sought out opportunities to talk to the public about civil defense, with senior officials routinely offering interviews and appearing on radio news programs such as “Germany Today” [Deutschland Heute].\footnote{“Selbstschutz und Zivildienstgesetz – Vorsorgemaßnahmen der Bundesregierung – Aufklärung der Bevölkerung,” in Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung 158:1963 (6 September 1963). Transcripts of several radio broadcasts are found in BA B106.85509.}

Television, unlike radio, played a lesser role in shaping the lives and opinions of West Germans during the early and mid-1950s. Nearly four years passed between the first television broadcast in West Germany on Christmas Day 1951 and the start of regular programming in late-1954 by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Rundfunkanstalten Deutschlands (ARD), more commonly known at the time as German Television [Deutsches Fernsehen]. (Today ARD is one of two state-operated television channels.) Technical limitations and the lack of a large audience precluded rapid growth until the closing years of the decade.\footnote{Axel Schildt, “Der Beginn des Fernsehzeitalters: Ein neues Massenmedium setzt sich durch,” in Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau, op. cit., 477. The early history of West German television is explored in Dieter Roß, “Start auf dem Heiligengeistfeld. Der Beginn der Fernsehens beim NWDR,” in Studienkreis Rundfunk und Geschichte. Mitteilungen, 12:1 (1986): 28-40.} Thereafter, the number of viewers grew steadily. Broadcasts of immensely popular events such the 1952 Summer Olympics, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II of England in 1953, and international football games helped transform television ownership from a luxury to an unremarkable item found in
family households of all income brackets.\textsuperscript{474} By the end of the 1950s, nearly ninety-five percent of the radio-owning population had also seen at least one television broadcast, and many looked forward to owning their own television as prices dropped.\textsuperscript{475} As important as increasing ownership was the demographic make-up of television viewers. Surveys conducted by the DIVO-Institute showed clearly that income, political affiliation, or occupation played very little role in television ownership. In an even shorter span of time than the radio, the television became popular “among the masses.”\textsuperscript{476}

As was the case with radio, Interior Ministry and FCDA officials were not slow to recognize the importance of television as a means for shaping public opinion, and during the late-1950s enjoyed some success with its use. In 1957, for example, the Interior Ministry cooperated extensively in the production of “Civil Defense in the Atomic Era” \textit{[Luftschutz im Atomzeitalter]}, a special ARD program intended to increase public awareness about the government’s work on its behalf. Filmed over the course of two days, ARD had nearly unlimited access to the FCDA training facilities in Waldbröl and Marienthall. To further emphasize the importance of civil defense to West Germans both Schröder and Bauch make themselves available for short presentations and a question-and-answer session at the end of the show. Other than a number of minor scheduling problems during the show’s production, the government considered “Civil Defense in the Atomic Era” a great success.\textsuperscript{477} Remarkably, despite increasing public criticism

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Ibid.}, 478; Arnold Sywottek, “From Starvation to Excess?,” 346.
\item Schildt, “Der Beginn des Fernsehzeitalters,” 480.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, 481. Schildt notes, however, that the DIVO-Institute (the full name of which is the \textit{DIVO-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, Sozialforschung und angewandte Mathematik}) surveys also showed that the elderly and people living in the country’s rural districts had far lower rates of television ownership until well into the 1960s.
\item BA B106.85509, Letter, Dr. Wolfgang Brobeil, Südwestfunk, to Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung 300
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
generated by the closing months of the Bundestag debate on the 1957 Civil Defense Law, the government’s positive experience with SDW programming continued. Two months before the law’s final passage, ARD aired a long report on a privately built shelter in Heilbronn, a small city roughly fifty kilometers (30 mile) north of Stuttgart. In an analysis prepared for the Interior Ministry, FCDA officials called the program “positive” because of its realistic but encouraging portrayal of the possibility of protection even during an nuclear war.478

The government’s early satisfaction did not last, however, and by the early-1960s government proponents of civil defense increasingly found themselves at odds with television producers. In November 1960, Bavarian Radio [Bayerischen Rundfunk] aired the program “Brighter than a Thousand Suns” [Heller als tausend Sonnen], a live conversation between Robert Jungk, the best-selling author of the book after which the program was titled, and the physicist Rudolf Kühn, an out-spoken critic of nuclear weapons. During the thirty-minute program Jungk and Kühn discussed how a nuclear war might affect West Germany. Decidedly pessimistic in tone, Jungk and Kühn used photographs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to illustrate the main points of their conversation.

Bavarian Radio’s “Brighter than a Thousand Suns” greatly upset Interior Ministry and FCDA officials. In an analysis written shortly after the program’s airing, FCDA employees dwelled on two aspects of the show which they felt “greatly harmed” future attempts to garner public support for civil defense. The first centered on content; specifically, Jungk and Kühn’s casualty estimates. To their credit, the scientists mentioned the fact that any casualty estimate

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was mostly the result of theoretical calculations rather than empirical experience, but the FCDA’s reviewers worried that listeners would only remember the statement that as little as twenty percent of the country’s population might survive a nuclear war. While this number did not directly contradict the government’s own numbers—throughout the 1950s and early-1960s West Germany’s civil defense officials rarely offered their own casualty estimates—it certainly cast doubt on the claim that a well-developed civil defense program and a well-prepared public could minimize the loss of human life outside the zones of near-total destruction.479 Of greater concern, however, was how Jungk and Kühn’s grim portrayal of the post-attack landscape might affect the morale of FCDA and CDAS workers and the ability of both organizations to attract future volunteers. Images of trying to aid millions of severely injured people in the nightmarish irradiated ruins of the country’s cities were unlikely to help the government’s case for civil defense, and might even cause greater numbers of people to embrace disarmament as an alternative. Jungk and Kühn’s grim scenarios, FCDA reviewers noted were “very unsettling” and required immediate action.480

The Interior Ministry’s “immediate action” was typical of similar damage-control exercises it found itself performing in the 1960s. The government’s response was twofold. In a letter to Kühn, Bargatzky expressed polite but firm displeasure over the show’s contents. Although he praised Kühn for raising a topic of fundamental importance to West German society,

An interesting contrast is provided by comparing Jungk and Kühn’s casualty estimates with those offered by Alfred Koczy a year before (see footnote sixty-nine, above). In a diagram depicting the various damage radii caused by the explosion of a twenty kiloton nuclear bomb, Koczy noted that people more than 2,400 meters from the explosion would suffer a less than one percent casualty rate. Radioactive fallout, a major focus in Jungk and Kühn’s discussion, clearly presented problems for Koczy, who chose not to include estimates of possible long-term casualty rates.

Bargatzky asserted the show presented too bleak a picture about nuclear war. Furthermore, Bargatzky wrote, the show failed to mention the government’s firm commitment to protecting as much of the country’s population as possible.\textsuperscript{481} Simultaneous with Bargatzky’s official protest, the Interior Ministry began talks with Bavarian Radio officials to air a form of rebuttal. In pursuit of this task they received aid from Kühn himself, who wished to silence public criticism about the show’s biased presentation. After considerable discussion, both sides agreed in principle to the production and broadcast of a second show that focused on the advantages of the government’s civil defense program.\textsuperscript{482}

Unfortunately, Interior Ministry officials failed to fully exploit their opportunity. After agreeing in principle to assist Kühn and Bavarian Radio to produce a second program on civil defense, Interior Ministry officials quickly backtracked. In a meeting with the television station’s management, FCDA officials agreed that a live round-table discussion represented the best format informing the public about the government’s civil defense program. Although not explicitly stated in the minutes of the meeting, FCDA officials no doubt hoped that the appearance of one or more top government officials, preferably the Interior Minister himself, would help counter the damage caused by “Brighter than a Thousand Suns” and restore public trust in civil defense.\textsuperscript{483} The Interior Ministry was less sure. In replying to the FCDA’s request for a senior government official, Bargatzky explained that civil defense was too complicated a


topic to present adequately during a round-table discussion. Ruling out any possibility of participation by the Interior Minister or senior ministerial officials, Bargatzky offered the FCDA only informal input and his willingness to review drafts of the script. Despite repeated urging by FCDA officials and Herzog, the Bavarian state government’s senior civil defense, the Interior Ministry remained firm, and the shows aired on 27 and 28 April 1961 (“Kernwaffen und Luftschutz” and “Unter uns gesagt”) contained no government representative, a fact noted in news coverage of the show.\textsuperscript{484}

Public Events. While radio and television were useful tools, public events remained the most successful propaganda tool in the government’s battle to win over the public. From the middle of the 1950s onwards the FCDA used public events to increase consciousness about the importance and effectiveness of civil defense. These public events ranged greatly in form and content. To small groups the FCDA lent propaganda filmstrips and films, and maintained lists of speakers willing to appear and talk about civil defense for a nominal fee or for free. To reach larger groups the FCDA created traveling exhibits—trucks, and later busses, featuring displays of civil defense-related photographs and equipment—and “mobile film units,” a method used with great success during the Second World War. Displays at trade-shows, such as those held by the Association of German Builders and Contractors each year in Düsseldorf or the yearly conference sponsored by

the German Association of Fire-Fighters [Deutscher Feuerwehrverband] in Cologne, also represented an important part of the FCDA’s public event oriented efforts. Finally, beginning in 1960, the Interior Ministry and FCDA jointly sponsored an annual “Day of the Helper” [Helfertag]. This multiple-day event, which was held in a different location each year, was a chance for FCDA and humanitarian organizations nationwide to meet and demonstrate their skills, thereby increasing public awareness of their activities. Widely successful, FCDA officials considered the annual “Day of the Helper” the most important means for reaching the general public.

The importance civil defense officials attached to public events is demonstrated by the fact that planning began immediately after the FCDA’s founding in 1951. Admittedly, scarce resources, most particularly volunteers, and the absence of a clearly articulated civil defense program hindered initial efforts, but by 1955 work was well underway and a basic framework for future efforts was in place. For the most part the basic strategy formulated in the early-1950s remained intact for a decade. The FCDA sponsored three general types of public events. Most important initially were conferences and informational sessions designed to educate individuals and groups about civil defense. Beginning in 1955, the FCDA regularly sponsored conferences for business owners, journalists, teachers and educators, public servants, retired military personnel, religious groups and even school classes. The vast majority of these meetings took place at the organization’s various state training facilities or the national training facility in Waldbröl, a small city located in the low mountain ranges of the Oberbergische Land, roughly fifty kilometers (thirty miles) north-east of Bonn. Sparking public enthusiasm was apparently just as important as imparting knowledge. In the words of one FCDA official, the meetings were
intended primarily to create a “snowball effect” [Schneeballsystem] by encouraging participants to “spread the word” about civil defense after returning home.\textsuperscript{485}

Ideally, conference participants agreed to volunteer for the “Speakers’ Bureau” [Rednerdienstes], and continue the work of advancing the cause of civil defense through personal interaction between a small but committed cadre of volunteers and public. Organized on an informal basis shortly after the FCDA’s founding, the Speakers’ Bureau recruited people capable of making presentations on the many diverse topics associated with civil defense. The topics included the current state of military technology, recent trends in scientific and technical research, the progress of relevant legislation in the Bundestag and Bundesrat, details of the government’s proposed system of civil defense, and effective rebuttal to the many arguments against civil defense. From the very beginning FCDA officials acknowledged that the Speakers’ Bureau functioned primarily as a propaganda tool. Offering audiences accurate information about civil defense was, of course, one goal of the Speakers’ Bureau, but so, too, was countering the propaganda [ideologischer Agitation] of the program’s opponents.\textsuperscript{486} Conferences and public speakers served a useful role in increasing support for the government’s civil defense program, and both achieved their greatest success with receptive audiences. Government officials knew, however, that this was not enough. Maintaining the support of a receptive audience was one matter, winning over skeptics was quite another.

To convince the larger population of uncommitted people and outright skeptics about civil defense’s importance and viability, the government officials turned to less interactive but

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\textsuperscript{486} \textit{Ibid.}, 286.
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more visually compelling public events such as static and traveling information displays and public screenings of civil defense-related movies. The FCDA’s first tested an informational display at the “Red Hand” [Der Rote Hand], the 1953 Fire Protection Exhibition held in Essen. The modest display, entitled “Fire Protection and Civil Defense” [Brandschutz im Luftschutz], provided visitors with general information about how best to protect themselves from large-scale fires, such as ones caused by nuclear explosions. For many people the FCDA’s display represented their first contact with atomic-era civil defense, and the organization received considerable positive feedback about its contents. Pleased with the results of both the 1953 exhibit and similar trial ventures a year later (see Figure 5.13), FCDA officials decided to increase the scale and scope of their efforts. At the annual meeting of the FCDA executive committee held in January 1955, President Lotz announced his intent to increase efforts to a level necessary to “cover all the large cities” of the country.487 In practical terms this meant introducing the first of the FCDA’s traveling exhibits in September of that year (see Figure 5.14). Consisting of a trailer and bus to which temporary exhibit space was attached while not moving, the traveling exhibit contained displays, photographs, and scale-models of civil defense equipment.488 As one informed observer noted, the traveling exhibit was clearly oriented towards generating public excitement rather than answering practical questions—a common activity when FCDA volunteers spoke to groups. The exhibit contained some practical information, of course, such as examples of the equipment and supplies well-prepared individuals and families should

487 “Die Arbeit des Bundes-Luftschutzverband (FCDA),” in Zivilerluftschutz 19:3 (February 1955): 44. Fiscal considerations forced the FCDA to scale back their 1955 program to four cities: Düsseldorf, Pyrmont, Würzburg, and Warenburg nach Bonn. See BA B372.011, “Niederschifft über die Mitgliederversammlung des FCDA am 08.06.1956.”

keep on hand at all times, but devoted far more effort to convincing skeptics that protection was indeed possible in the nuclear age. In 1958, the FCDA introduced another tool to bring the government’s message of civil defense to the general public: the “movie van” [*Filmwagen*]. Consisting of Mercedes-Benz van equipped with projection equipment, speakers and a trailer containing a large portable screen, the FCDA movie van was paired with other with the traveling exhibits. Used in both bad weather and good, it screened a variety of German and international civil defense-related films to audiences around the country. Popular early films included the short animated feature “Protection: Your Worry As Well!” [“Schutz auch Deine Sorge”] and “Tomorrow Will Always Come” [“Es wird immer wieder Morgen”], and a longer documentary about the experience of the Allied strategic bombing raids and civil defense in Hamburg and Bremen. By 1960 the number of movie vans had increased to six.

According to the FCDA’s leadership, the organization’s exhibits and movie vans proved extremely popular. In his 1956 annual report, for example, President Lotz announced proudly that in the previously year more than 45,000 people visited the organization’s new traveling exhibit on civil defense. By 1961 the FCDA estimated that at least 1.9 million people has

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attended at least one presentation or talk, or visited an exhibit. In 1965, shortly before passage of part of the emergency law package, FCDA President Robert Kuhn reported that the exhibits “Our Civil Defense” [Unser Zivilschutz] and “Self-Protection and Women” [Frau im Selbstschutz] routinely drew 100,000 viewers per year. Countless more West Germans saw the organization’s films and then paused to read the abundant literature or speak with local volunteers about how they might support the government’s civil defense program.495

Information sessions, exhibits, and public screening of civil defense-relates movies combined to form the most dramatic, and arguably the most successful, of the FCDA propaganda activities: the national “Civil Defense Day” [Luftschutztage], later “Civil Defense Week” [Luftschutzwoche]. As envisioned by the country’s civil defense leadership, these annual extravaganzas provided West Germans with the chance to view exhibits, watch demonstrations, explore actual civil defense equipment, and speak with volunteers, all in a festive setting complete with music, food, games, and parades. Of course, achieving their complete vision took time, and while subsequent meetings became major day-long events, the first “Civil Defense Day” was a humble affair.

Held in Oldenburg, a city located in the state of Lower Saxony fifty kilometers (31 miles) west of Bremen, in February 1956, the one-day event featured many of the elements later incorporated into subsequent “Civil Defense Days.” In the morning and afternoon a select audience of local officials and interested persons gathered in the large hall of the local castle to


495 According to FCDA officials a minimum of 140,000 people attended screenings during the Summer of 1964 as the movie van traveled to public campsites around the country. See BA B372.013, “Niederschrift über die Mitgliederversammlung des Bundesluftschutzverbands am 17.12.1965.”
hear politicians, military officers, faculty members from the Universities of Heidelberg and Freiburg, and national civil defense officials, including Erich Hampe, give a series of presentations on civil defense. While their parents attended the morning presentations, thousands of local schoolchildren crowded into the city’s convention facilities, the Weser-Ems-Halle, to watch screenings of civil defense films. That evening, the FCDA sponsored a much larger event open to the general public. According to the local press and the FCDA’s own reports, thousands of people crowded into the Weser-Ems-Halle to hear speeches by Hampe, who spoke about the geo-strategic reality of the country’s position between the two superpowers, the head of the Interior Ministry’s Office of Civil Defense, van Dreising, who outlined the government’s plans to protect the country’s population in times of war, and the keynote presentation by Minister for Atomic Policy [Minister für Atomfragen], Franz-Joseph Strauß, who delivered a talk entitled “The Atom—Threat or Promise?” [Atom – Drohung oder Verheißung?]. Strauß’s “emotional” and “clearly argued” speech drew thunderous applause from the audience, the not entirely unbiased FCDA observers later reported. Present throughout the day in the courtyard of the local castle was one of the FCDA moveable exhibits.496

The largest and most important of these public events was “Helfertag Hamburg” [Volunteer Day], held 30-31 May 1964 in the country’s largest city, Hamburg (see Figure 5.15). The record of discussions leading up to “Helfertag Hamburg” shows that FCDA officials, gravely concerned by the government’s inability to attract people for the CDAS, sought to highlight the importance volunteer service in the country’s various rescue and recovery organizations. Hamburg offered an ideal location for the event. In addition to an ideal physical location, the

*Heiligengeistfeld*—a large open expanse of land located south of the old city near the harbor, the city’s recent past, specifically the successful deployment of rescue and recovery volunteers during the February 1962 flood catastrophe, infused the event actual and symbolic meaning. FCDA officials clearly hoped to capitalize on the largely positive experience of that winter to win wider public support for the government’s civil defense program, both in Hamburg, where volunteer recruitment was sluggish, and nationally.  

Actual planning for “Helfertag Hamburg” began in early January under the direction of the Hamburg FCDA, Walter Jörn. The task was daunting. Unlike past FCDA-sponsored events, the organizers hoped for the physical presence of thousands—the original plans called for ten thousand—of volunteers and their equipment. Finalizing the logistical arrangements for so many participants was possible only with the help of hundreds of local volunteers and considerable good-will from the city and its inhabitants. However, with the help of local government officials and the Bundeswehr, preparations for the event proceeded smoothly. To further complicate matters the FCDA learned in mid-April of Hörcherl’s success in convincing Federal Chancellor Ludwig Erhard to give the opening address of the event. FCDA officials welcomed the news even though the Chancellor’s attendance further complicated the already difficult logistical arrangements.

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498 “Helfertag Hamburg,” 293.

499 BA B136.5094, Memorandum, Grundschöttel to Ludwig Erhard, 13 April 1964; Internal Memorandum, Federal Chancellery [Grundschöttel], 17 April 1964.
By any measure, “Helfertag Hamburg” was an enormous success. Set against the backdrop of the abandoned World War II era flak towers of the Heiligengeistfeld, 15,000 members of the CDAS, TAC, Red Cross, volunteer fire-fighting units, and the various ambulance services assembled for two days of speeches, parades, exercises, demonstrations, and other events. Joining the volunteers were civil defense representatives from twelve nations, including the United States. After a number of social activities Friday evening, the event began in earnest Saturday with a series of competitions and inspections on the Heiligengeistfeld. That afternoon, FCDA President Kuhn and Hamburg’s Vice-Mayor, Edgar Engelhardt, welcomed the multitude of volunteers, guests, and visitors. After Kuhn and Engelhardt, thunderous applause greeted the keynote speaker, Erhard, who spoke for twenty minutes about the importance of, and the government’s commitment to, civil defense. Hörcherl, who presented prizes and awards competition winners, followed Erhard. After long applause and a brief musical interlude provided by the Bundeswehr music corps, the bedecked winners and their equipment paraded past the reviewing stands. Saturday evening social events were followed the next morning by a service for victims of the 1942 air raid and a ceremony to honor distinguished FCDA volunteers, both of which were held in the newly-constructed Hamburg University auditorium.


While FCDA officials rejoiced in the fine weather, the volunteers’ enthusiastic participation, and public’s keen interest, the Federal Chancellor’s support was even more gratifying. After acknowledging the volunteers’ dedication and their many contributions to the country, Erhard spoke at length about the threats facing the nation. After reminding the assembled throng that recent events in Berlin and Cuba illustrated the still unstable international system’s instability and potential for devastating war, Erhard continued “[because] our life is not yet free of threats and danger, [the government] is committed to taking seriously its responsibility to protect the citizens of this country.” After reiterating again his government’s commitment to creating a workable and economically viable system of civil defense, Erhard concluded:

All of you who are gathered here today have committed yourself to humanity. You stepped forward for a critical service and have made personal sacrifices on its behalf. The German people and their government thank you for your public spirit and your selfless dedication as a whole. As long as a nation has people who are prepared to help each other, it has a future. This is something we must not weaken, but rather encourage together with careful thought…. Let us together build a shining future of peace and freedom for our people!502

With this, thunderous, sustained applause broke out from the assembled crowd. Under the clear blue skies and warm sun of the Hamburg spring, surrounded by thousands of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers, few members of the audience doubted that the future of civil defense looked bright indeed.

Conclusion: Hamburg’s False Promise

With the benefit of hindsight we now know that the success of “Helfertag Hamburg” and subsequent events, such as “Civil Defense Day Bielefeld,” heralded a false dawn. Less than two years after the Federal Chancellor stood in front of thousands of West Germans and publicly declared his government’s support to civil defense, Bundestag representatives effectively ended the program. Civil defense planning did not end in 1965, but after the Bundestag’s emphatic rejection of key aspects of the government’s program, the work of Interior Ministry and FCDA officials became more difficult. Not surprisingly, government efforts to sell civil defense to the West German public also changed after 1965. The need for civil defense still existed, of course. As supporters of the government’s programs correctly noted, the Bundestag’s decision to suspend parts of the country’s Cold War civil defense program did not eliminate the threat facing the country. By the mid-1960s, both superpowers were well on their way to introducing new generations of nuclear weapons. But the Bundestag’s action made it more difficult than ever to mount a creditable defense of the country’s population. Instead of shelters, an extensive organization of trained rescue units, and stockpiled supplies to support the post-war recovery, after 1965 Interior Ministry and FCDA officials had little to offer but vague promises that the government “cared” and continuing appeals for volunteers. Efforts to secure public support for the government’s civil defense program continued, but not with the energy and optimism seen during “Helfertag Hamburg.”
Figure 5.1: Front Cover of *Jeder hat eine Chance*

The final cover of the West German civil defense pamphlet *Jeder hat eine Chance*. Because it was distributed earlier than planned, the final photograph remained the one described by critics as too “unfriendly” (because of the serious faces) and informal.

Source: Bundesarchiv Koblenz, B106.17556.
Figure 5.2: Illustrations from *Jeder hat eine Chance*
These drawings suggested behavior for a person caught out in the open when an atomic bomb exploded. Almost identical to illustrations used in pamphlets first published in the early-1950s, the government’s suggestion that people use a briefcase for protection was particularly annoying to many readers.

Figure 5.3: Illustrations from A Guide to Civil Defense

The three illustrations here appeared in the government’s Civil Defense Guidelines. The first was intended to convey a sense of normality and confidence and help minimize public concern about a future war by depicting a scene familiar to most readers—the Sunday excursion. The illustration appeared immediately after the concluding paragraph in which readers received assurance from the government that with proper planning and training the chances of surviving a major catastrophe were good. The second illustration reminded readers that disaster came in many forms. The government hoped readers would remember its exemplary performance during the 1963 Hamburg flood disaster as they read about the details of its civil defense program. The bottom illustration, that of a young girl and a man who is presumably her father entering an underground shelter, was the most regrettable. Placed opposite the statement that blast-proof shelters offered the best chance of survival in the event of a nuclear war, this photograph only reminded many readers that few such shelters existed in West Germany in the mid-1960s.

Source: Zivilschutzfibel (1964).
Figure 5.4: Camels in the Desert
Front cover from an early issue of ZB Illustrierte, the monthly magazine intended to win support for the government’s civil defense programs. Patterned after successful illustrated magazines of the period, this issue featured a report and photomontage of the work of French scientists in Algeria.

Source: Staatsarchiv Hamburg, B 614-2/12 [Verband der Kriegsdienstverweiger].
Figure 5.5: *Future War*
A second example of the front cover of an early issue of *ZB Illustrierte*. This cover depicts in lurid color the geo-strategic dilemma facing the country: the fact that all of West German was threatened by atomic destruction.

Source: Staatsarchiv Hamburg, B 614-2/12 [Verband der Kriegsdienstverweiger].
Figure 5.6: Progress? Security?
One of several striking advertisements used by the Federal Civil Defense Association in the late-1950s to muster public support for its work.

Source: Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB, June 1959.
Figure 5.7: The Many Faces of Civil Defense I
An example of the visual imagery used by the Federal Civil Defense Association in the late-1950s to muster public support for its work. This photograph shows young female FCDA volunteers “rescuing” a victim during a training exercise. The photograph was doubtless intended to convey the idea that young women had an important role to play in the government’s civil defense program.

Source: Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB, June 1959.
Figure 5.8: The Many Faces of Civil Defense II
A second example of the visual imagery used by the Federal Civil Defense Association in the late-1950s to muster public support for its work. This photograph portrays the dominant role for married women as envisioned by federal civil defense officials: that of family guardian.

A third example of the visual imagery used by the Federal Civil Defense Association in the late-1950s to muster public support for its work. This photograph shows young male volunteers after a training exercise. In addition to showing what a typical CDAS training exercise looked like, FCDA officials doubtless also hoped the photograph would send a second message. By showing well-equipped volunteers carrying an injured survivor from a ruined street, readers were encouraged to think more positively about their chances of surviving an attack. Left unsaid, both in the photograph and the accompanying text, was mention of the government’s difficulty in recruiting volunteers for the CDAS.

Figure 5.10: The Many Faces of Civil Defense IV
A final example of the visual imagery used by the Federal Civil Defense Association in the late-1950s to muster public support for its work. This photograph shows women at a monthly meeting. While not explicitly stated in the accompanying text, the scene helped reinforce the idea that participating in the government’s civil defense program was not more onerous than attending monthly club meetings. The rapt attention given by the women to the speaker showed interested young women that by joining the organization they might learn new and important things; the presence of the glamorous young woman in the center might also encourage young men to join.

Source: Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB, June 1959.
Figure 5.11: “Bunkers Provide a Chance”
The problematic “red light” advertisement.

Source: Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB, June 1959.
Figure 5.12: “Prepared Mothers”
As the government’s civil defense program evolved into one predicated on widespread public participation, greater efforts were made to reach out to different segments of the country’s population. This photograph, which appeared on the front cover of a special issue dedicated to civil defense in rural areas, conveys two important messages: the importance of even basic skills such as rudimentary first-aid training, and the importance of the government’s program for protecting the most vulnerable members of West German society.

Source: Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB, November 1965.
Figure 5.13: Federal Civil Defense Association Public Relations Work I
Federal Civil Defense Association stationary exhibit at a trade show in the Saarland. By the mid-1960s, the FCDA claimed that more than 100,000 West Germans had seen such exhibits.

Source: ZB Illustrierte, March 1963.
Figure 5.14: Federal Civil Defense Association Public Relations Work II
Two photographs of the FCDA’s traveling exhibits, first introduced in 1955. Housed in converted buses, these exhibits brought the government’s civil defense message to both urban and rural communities.

Source: ZB Illustrierte, May 1964.
Figure 5.15: The Annual FCDA Public Gathering in Hamburg, May 1964
Official advertising poster for the 1964 Hilfertag Hamburg, the high point of the FCDA’s attempts to use public events to advertise and gain support for civil defense.

Source: ZB Illustrierte, March 1964.
While the 1957 Civil Defense Law provided the all-important legal foundation for future work, the program outlined in its provisions was far from complete, a fact noted by proponents and opponents alike. The law’s supporters lauded it as the critical “first step.” For the first time since the end of the Second World War, they argued, people living in the western section of pre-war Germany could take comfort in the fact that their government intended to safeguard their welfare should war break out again. Work remained, civil defense proponents admitted, but the remaining tasks would only involve clarifying and expanding the proposed program.

The law’s critics were less sanguine. They, too, viewed the 1957 Civil Defense Law as an all-important “first step” for creating a national program, but believed the magnitude of the task facing the nation was greater than proponents of the law acknowledged. Within the opposition SPD there existed considerable skepticism about the government’s overall commitment to civil defense program, especially with regards to the question of protective shelters—a reasonable doubt given the government’s funding priorities. State and local officials, on the other hand, spoke out frequently and quite heatedly about the financial and material burdens the federal government’s program imposed on them. A comprehensive national civil defense system was a fine idea in theory, they complained, but attempts to implement it revealed troubling issues about the proper relationship between local, state, and the federal government. More generally,
millions of West Germans questioned many of the program’s underlying premises, and asked if their government’s conceptualization really tallied with their own ideas about the future of West German democracy. Even the program’s creators—the technocrats in the Interior and Housing Ministries—featured prominently in the ranks of the disaffected, albeit for very different reasons. Publicly supportive of the program created as a result of the 1957 Civil Defense Law, they nonetheless longed for a more comprehensive approach that brought more of the nation’s resources under their control.

Given the level of dissatisfaction that existed in the late-1950s and early-1960s, an effort to refine and expand the original work was inevitable. As we shall see, this second debate about West German civil defense returned to long-discussed issues, but also raised new questions. This was inevitable for the fundamental dilemma facing both proponents and opponents of civil defense remained the same: namely, how could the nation best protect its civilian population in times of war? What had changed, however, was the domestic and international context within which West Germans debated the future of the program. By the mid-1960s—the highpoint of this renewed civil defense debate—the Federal Republic was no longer a semi-sovereign nation attempting to recover physically and psychologically from a devastating world war while at the same time trying to define its place in the post-war international system. Instead, West Germany was a vital member of the western military alliance, a rising economic and political power in Western Europe, and a country increasingly defined by its affluence. Whether the people charged with protecting the country’s inhabitants recognized these facts was another matter entirely.
Although the first tentative steps towards an expanded national civil defense system occurred even as the government sent what eventually became the 1957 Civil Defense Law to the country’s parliamentary institutions, it was only several years later that the West German public learned of their government’s work. Unfortunately, the archival record of early discussions of the subject in the Federal Chancellery and Interior Ministry is practically non-existent. It is probable, though, that the country’s civil defense technocrats focused their attention on the problem of governmental continuity. At the very least the government’s first public airing of its expanded civil defense conceptualization focused on this topic. In October 1958, at the annual meeting of the West German Police Federation [Gewerkschaft der Polizei], Interior Minister Gerhard Schröder delivered a talk entitled “Security Today” [Sicherheit heute] in which he explored the question of whether the country’s most important governmental institutions were capable of functioning even during periods of prolonged crisis.\(^{503}\) Intended primarily as a means to speak about impending government policy, Schröder’s speech to the assembled law enforcement officers made clear his (and the government’s) contention that the country was shockingly ill-prepared. In addition to the very real social and economic disruption caused by prolonged crisis, Schröder expressed concern about weaknesses in the country’s constitution [Grundgesetz]. To eliminate these weaknesses, Schröder informed his sympathetic audience, Adenauer’s government wished to crate

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new “Emergency Laws” [Notstandsgesetzen], including several amendments to the country’s constitution.

The decision to concentrate on the issue of government continuity was hardly accidental, for even in the absence of extensive archival records we can see that two broad considerations drove West German civil defense planners during this period. The first was a genuine concern about a flaw in the country’s democratic institutions. At the heart of this concern was the federal government’s interpretation of the Treaty Governing the Relations Between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Three Occupying Powers, signed in May 1952 and subsequently modified in October 1954. Among the treaty’s most important provisions were those that dealt with the status of U.S., British, and French troops stationed in West Germany—a contentious issue that constantly forced the federal government to balance its commitment to a strategy of forward defense with widespread domestic discontent about the presence of foreign troops in the Federal Republic. According to the Treaty’s fifth article, the Allied powers retained ultimate responsibility for the security of their forces should an external or internal crises cause a breakdown of West German governmental authority. While few people envisioned a situation in which internal crisis might cause sufficient disruption to force the Allies’ hand, external threats were more worrying. As a result, in the late-1950s the Adenauer government argued that because the country’s constitution provided no clearly-defined mechanism for maintaining government continuity during times of prolong civil crisis that might result in the wake of a Soviet invasion of the country, Allied military authorities could theoretically seize political control of the country. Closely related to this concern was the constitution’s vagueness about what should happen if a war prevented West Germany’s governmental institutions (specifically, the Federal Cabinet
and the Bundestag) from forming the quorum necessary to reach legally binding decisions.\textsuperscript{504}

Fueling this concern about the country’s flawed constitution was the second general consideration driving West German civil defense policy formulation: NATO’s evolving military and civil defense strategies. As we have seen, in the mid-1950s NATO’s overall military strategy, which first emphasized a strategic withdrawal to points west of the Ems-Rhine-Neckar line, evolved to one predicated on the idea of forward defense, a conceptual evolution calculated to appease West Germans and convince them to support the military alliance. NATO’s overall civil defense strategy reflected this shift. Whereas prior to 1955 the various national representatives who made up the organization’s Civil Defense Committee focused most of their attention on war material allocation and the problems posed by hordes of refugees, the directive issued by NATO’s Council of Ministers in April 1955 outlined three new assumptions. First, nuclear strikes against a wide variety of military and civilian targets were probable. Second, national civil defense planning should focus on measures to lessen the impact of these attacks in the “initial” survival stage of a future conflict (subsequently interpreted as the first thirty days of a war). Finally, and most importantly, the primary goal of future civil defense planning should be the maintenance of government and administrative continuity. (Notably, the preservation of human lives and tolerable living conditions remained secondary considerations.)\textsuperscript{505}

\textsuperscript{504} A useful contemporary overview of the legal complexities of West Germany’s early-Cold War sovereignty is found in Eric Waldman, \textit{Notstand und Demokratie: Studie zur Situation in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland} (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1968), 45-53.

\textsuperscript{505} NATO Archives, Deputy Secretary General, Document C-M(55)/48, The Applications of New Assumptions to the Work of Emergency Planning Committees, 21 April 1955. See also the minutes of Council meetings held 29 April, and 6 and 26 May 1955.
The guidelines issued by NATO’s Civil Defense Committee were non-binding, but its members, who included West German representatives, recognized their critical importance. NATO’s commitment to a forward defense strategy dramatically increased the likelihood of an extremely destructive war fought on German soil. Moreover, NATO’s intent to use nuclear weapons in order to offset the numerical superiority of Warsaw Pact forces expanded the scale and scope of potential physical damage to the country, and introduced the very troubling idea of radioactive fallout. NATO military commanders might argue that they planned to direct their nuclear weapons against troop concentrations rather than civilian targets, and suggest that their Soviets counterparts would likely do the same, but reality suggested that any use of the nuclear weapons would dramatically decease the West German government’s control over the country’s civilian population. At the very least West German (and NATO) authorities envisioned a scenario reminiscent of the dark, closing months of the Second World War: hordes of panicked refugees fleeing westwards, clogging the road and rail networks necessary to move soldiers and equipment to the front.506 While not detailed in the extant records of West Germany’s civil defense policy-making community, worst-case scenarios almost assuredly included visions of key political leaders and institutions accidentally or deliberately incinerated by nuclear and large-scale conventional attacks.507


507 While the archival record is not overly informative on this point, it is notable that that West German civil defense officials, like their counterparts in Western Europe and North America, began construction of secret protective shelters for important politicians and key personnel in the late-1950s. West Germany’s own ultra-secret government command complex was located roughly twelve miles (twenty kilometers) south of Bonn. Construction began in 1961. A closely guarded secret for most of the Cold War, it was not until the mid-1980s that the public
Schröder’s call for the creation of new “Emergency Laws” ignited a decade-long firestorm of domestic controversy.\textsuperscript{508} In contrast to the sympathetic law enforcement officers who made up the Interior Minister’s audience that October, much of the country’s press attacked the idea as incompatible with and a threat to West German democracy. Notably, criticism came from the entire political spectrum. The left-of-center \textit{Frankfurter Rundschau}, a staunch critic of the government’s past civil defense work, described Schröder proposal as a “bomb against freedom,” while the more conservative \textit{Christ und Welt} noted the country could not maintain its democratic system if the means to suspend it existed.\textsuperscript{509} The government’s political opponents were hardly less circumspect in their reaction. In a statement published in the weekly \textit{SPD Pressemitteilungen und Informationen}, the party leadership noted that “…certain passages of the Minister’s speech [were] either psychological mistakes or the outcome of extremely dangerous thinking.”\textsuperscript{510} Later comments by the party’s most respected authority on foreign and security policy, Erich Ollenhauser, reiterated, albeit more thoughtfully, the SPD’s opposition to any form of an Emergency Law, and at the end of the December the party’s Executive Committee [\textit{Vorstand}], working in conjunction with the SPD state Interior Ministers of Hamburg, Bremen, and Hessen, issued a formal


\textsuperscript{509} \textit{Ibid.}, 46.

\textsuperscript{510} Quoted in Schneider, \textit{Demokratie in Gefahr}, 46. German original: “…in gewissen Passagen ist die Rede des Bundesinnenministers entweder ein psychologischer Mißgriff oder der Ausfluß eines äußerst gefährlichen Denkens.”
resolution in support of the existing constitutional arrangements. Not surprisingly, the extra-parliamentary opposition that first mobilized in an (unsuccessful) attempt to stop the country’s rearmament and block Adenauer’s plan to equip the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons (see below) involved itself in the debate. The Socialist German Student Association [Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund] (SDS), for example, promised in May 1959 to fight the proposed emergency laws “with all the democratic weapons at its disposal.”

With the benefit of hindsight we can now see that Schröder’s proposal also suffered from unfortunate timing, for it came shortly after Adenauer’s quest to arm the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons—one of the most contentious political episodes in the Federal Republic’s brief history. Studies of this pivotal decision suggest multiple motivations drove Adenauer and his supporters to press for nuclear weapons. Physical security certainly mattered. As nuclear weapons became a more important part of NATO’s overall strategy for defending Western Europe, Adenauer argued that unilateral “renunciation of these weapons” was ridiculous. The nation’s safety required its military to possess the most modern weapons possible. Of greater importance, though, was the much broader issue of national prestige and the Federal Republic’s position in

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Western Europe and the international community. Obtaining control over nuclear weapons, regardless of where they were manufactured, placed West Germany on par with its major European rivals, Great Britain and France. As Bavaria’s Franz-Josef Strauß explained in a September 1956 conversation with Bundestag representatives, “power today is military power. Military power today is nuclear power. Without nuclear armaments, Germans will supply only the bakers and the kitchen-boys for the forces of the other allies.” In other words, controlling nuclear weapons meant the country wielded increased influence in NATO and ensure the U.S. remained committed to its defense of Western Europe.

Adenauer’s commitment to securing the country’s safety through a nuclear-equipped Bundeswehr was one supported by only a minority of West Germans. Unlike their highest elected officials, most West Germans disagreed that there was only a minor distinction between an nuclear-equipped military and one armed only with conventional weapons. Public support for the idea waned even further after April 1957, a month which witnessed both incautious remarks by Adenauer and Strauß about the arrival of U.S. medium-range missiles and the Göttingen Declaration. Whereas in March 1956 approximately one-third of public opinion supported the idea of a nuclear-armed Bundeswehr, by the end of April 1957 the number had dropped to below twenty percent. More disturbingly from the government’s point of view, was the fact that opposition to a nuclear-equipped Bundeswehr cut across traditional political and

514 Küntzel, *Bonn and the Bomb*, 14. At the time Strauß served as Adenauer’s Minister for Atomic Affairs [*Minister für Atomfragen*]. Of the two, Strauß was far more enthusiastic about the prospect of the obtaining nuclear weapons for the country’s military.

515 Ibid., 13.

516 Geyer, “Cold War Angst,” 392-393 (especially Figure 17.3: Atomic Weapons for the Bundeswehr?).
demographic boundaries. The Göttingen Declaration, written by Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker and signed by eighteen of the country’s most eminent physicists, including four Nobel Prize Laurets, was the most visible of such statement issued by the country’s cultural elite, but hardly the only one. In addition to traditional opposition such as the SPD and trade unions, churches, youth groups, and even the FDP, the minority coalition partner, expressed dismay about the government’s proposal.517

National debate about equipping the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons reached a climax in the months preceding and following the September 1957 federal parliamentary elections. Led by Erich Ollenhauer and joined by a considerable number of FDP Bundestag representatives, the SPD publicly pressed the government to prohibit stationing of nuclear weapons on West German soil. SPD campaign literature denounced the government’s policy course as the path towards “mass death.” Among the many striking campaign posters used by the SPD during the campaign one featured the slogan “Enough of that! Therefore SPD” superimposed over a billowing mushroom cloud while a second depicted the head of a corpse, disfigured by radiation, with the slogan: “Atomic armament mass death.”518 To the SPD’s deep disappointment, widespread discontent


518 Drummond, The German Social Democrats in Opposition, 201; Wittner, Resisting the Bomb, 63.
with Adenauer’s pro-nuclear policy failed to translate into electoral victory, and the party suffered its third, and most crushing, defeat at the hands of Adenauer’s CDU.  

Emboldened by his electoral victory and the fact that he enjoyed an absolute majority in the Bundestag, Adenauer continued to work towards his goal of arming the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons. Apparently unconcerned by the Soviet Union’s startling scientific achievement of launching the world’s first man-made satellite, and unwilling to seriously consider proposals to create nuclear weapon-free zones in Central Europe, Adenauer traveled to Paris to attend the December 1957 meeting of NATO ministers. While little of actual substance was accomplished at the meeting, Adenauer returned more committed than ever to the idea of obtaining nuclear weapons, a position he vigorously defended during a nationally broadcast Bundestag debate in January 1958.  

The issue continued to smolder until March of that year, when Adenauer decided to dispose the “nuclear question” once and for all. After a forty-hour debate filled with vitriolic comments from both coalition representatives and the opposition, the CDU/CSU-dominated Bundestag solidly endorsed Adenauer’s nuclear policy, including the plan to arm the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons.

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519 The CDU/CSU won just over fifty percent of the 1957 vote, up from forty-five percent the parties received in the previous election. The SPD improved from twenty-eight to slightly over thirty-one percent of the vote, while the FDP’s support declined to slightly under seven percent of the total votes cast. The result allowed Adenauer to form a coalition government consisting of the CDU/CSU and much smaller German Party. See Peter Schindler, Datenhandbuch zur Geschichte des Deutschen Bundestages, 1949 bis 1999, Vol. I (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1999), 166.

520 Verhandlungen des deutschen Bundestages. Stenographische Berichte, Vol. 39, Third Election Period, Session of 23 January 1958 (Bonn: Bundesdruckerei, 1958), 297-419. Hereafter cited as Bundestag Verhandlungen. Considered by historians to be one of the most important foreign policy debates in the country’s history, the speeches by Adenauer, Ollenhauer, and others received extensive coverage in the West German press.

521 Quoted in Drummond, The German Social Democrats in Opposition, 222.
To the government’s annoyance, the March 1958 Bundestag vote failed to end the national debate about nuclear weapons. Stymied by the government’s parliamentary majority, the anti-nuclear opposition turned to extra-parliamentary tactics and the state governments. In January 1958, the SPD leadership called upon its members to make “Fight Atomic Death” [“Kampf dem Atomtod”] the center of their political activities. The anti-nuclear movement quickly attracted support, and scientists, trade unionists, theologians and politicians came together to form local and regional “Fight Atomic Death” committees. In March, just a few days before the Bundestag voted on the issue, the national committee, headed by the SPD parliamentary whip Walter Menzel, issued its first public statement, which called upon the government not to “participate in the nuclear arms race but to support all efforts to create in Europe a zone free of nuclear weapons.”

Numerous pamphlets, films and brochures to make the public aware of the nuclear threat followed the committee’s first statement. The national committee and its regional affiliates also organized demonstrations throughout the country, including a massive event in Hamburg that drew as many as 120,000 people.

At approximately the same time as it worked to muster an highly-visible outpouring of anti-nuclear public sentiment, the SPD also sought to find an acceptable means for disenchanted voters to express themselves politically. The solution, first proposed by Ollenhauer at the end of the March 1958 Bundestag debate, was the idea of popular referendums. Unable to force the CDU/CSU-controlled Bundestag to support the

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522 Ibid.
idea, SPD leaders turned to the state governments by encouraging SPD parties in the eleven Länder to demand local surveys on the nuclear-weapons question. The idea proved less popular than the SPD’s national leadership hoped, and only the staunch SPD strongholds of Hamburg and Bremen agreed. But even this proved too much for Adenauer, and in early May he turned to the Federal Constitutional Court to block the scheduled referendums, declaring they were illegal (nuclear weapons related to defense matters, a federal responsibility) and contrary Basic Law’s spirit of representative government. The court agreed, and in July prohibited state and local governments from conducting referendums on the issue of nuclear weapons. The court’s decision split the SPD. While many members supported a radicalization of the of the campaign, including, if necessary, a general strike, a vocal minority, led by Fritz Erler, argued in favor of a more rational approach that focused on upcoming state elections and a more constructive, positive engagement with the entire issue of nuclear weapons in West Germany. Erler’s argument eventually prevailed and helped pave the way for the dramatic fundamental realignment of the SPD’s political aims articulated in the November 1959 Bad Godesberg Program.

524 In the Spring and Summer of 1958, the SPD was part of coalition governments in six Länder (Hamburg, Berlin, Bremen, Hessen, Baden-Württemberg, and Saarland), but was the primary partner in only four (Hamburg, Berlin, Ber men, and Hessen). See, Schindler, Datenhandbuch zur Geschichte des Deutschen Bundestags, Vol I., 1445-1447. Drummond (227-228) notes that the Berlin SPD’s surprising decision not to sponsor a state-level referendum pitted the newly-elected party chairperson Willy Brandt against party traditionalists and militant leftists, lead by Franz Neumann, the former chair. Brandt’s more cautious approach prevailed by only eight votes.

525 Thomas, Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany, 35; Drummond, German Social Democrats in Opposition, 226.

With the benefit of hindsight we can see that Adenauer’s victories in the Spring and Summer of 1958 were achieved at considerable political cost, the ramifications of which were significant for the future course of the country’s civil defense program. As both Detlef Bald and Michael Geyer note in their studies of West German rearmament, public opinion never coalesced around the idea of a nuclear-armed Bundeswehr.\(^{527}\) (Indeed, one poll conducted shortly after the September 1957 election showed that only nineteen percent of the population favored the idea.)\(^ {528}\) While the short-term political consequences of this disconnect were minor, the long-term ramifications were important and twofold. First, the long, bitter struggle over arming the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons galvanized the nation. The result was large numbers of previously apathetic West Germans paying greater attention to debates about how the government planned to protect the country. What is more, to the surprise and no doubt dismay of the ruling CDU/CSU coalition, public opinion polls showed that the main opposition to nuclear weapons was located in the politically committed groups. In contrast to the early-1950s, when polls showed that people less inclined to follow politics (and probably less inclined to vote) were more likely to support anti-militaristic policies, Adenauer and his supporters were confronted with the fact that “political knowledge,” and hence political participation, “did not favor the CDU/CSU.”\(^ {529}\)

Less appreciated at the time but of far greater long-term significance was the fact that the government’s flagrant disregard of public opinion eroded West Germans’ belief in their government. Histories of Cold War West Germany conclude that Adenauer

\(^{527}\) Bald, *Die Atombewaffnung der Bundeswehr*, 142; Geyer, “Cold War Angst,” 393-393.

\(^{528}\) Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb*, 54.

\(^{529}\) Geyer, “Cold War Angst,” 396-397.
deserves much of the blame for this development. In keeping with their firm belief in the “Chancellor-oriented” democratic system he had created [Kanzlerdemokratie], Adenauer and his supporters relied on a combination of propaganda, faits accomplis, and personal commitment to force the country to accept their nuclear weapons policy. The strategy worked, as it had many times before, but only at the cost of alienating large segments of the population. Public opinion polls conducted in the aftermath of the March 1958 Bundestag debate revealed that fewer than fifty percent of the population approved of the body. Moreover, as Geyer’s analysis of 1950s public opinion shows, the anti-nuclear protests of 1957-1958 were a harbinger of an important evolution in West Germans’ conception about the role of the state in a democratic society. While they ultimately were unsuccessful in preventing the deployment of nuclear weapons on West German soil, the SPD’s efforts highlighted the lingering presence of distinctly undemocratic traditions in the country’s political institutions. As a result, the old boundaries that had separated and protected the state according to its own raison d’état began to disappear as West Germans struggled for self-assertion against an overpowering state.530

Finally, it is important to note how the entire debate about obtaining nuclear weapons for the country’s military changed public conceptions about the actual meaning of security and defense. For Adenauer and Strauß in particular, nuclear weapons possessed both symbolic and actual meaning. Symbolically, nuclear weapons represented both increased international political prestige and greater influence within NATO. But Strauß, in particular, also viewed nuclear weapons as an absolutely essential component of a modern military force, for they represented the most advanced war-fighting technology available at the time. Stated differently, because of their enormous

530 Ibid., 399; Bald, Die Atombewaffnung der Bundeswehr, 143-144.
destructive capability, nuclear weapons were a technical solution for the geo-strategic
dilemma in which the country found itself. In the words of Adenauer, nuclear weapons
were just like bigger and better cannon.\textsuperscript{531} Bigger and better weapons, Strauß and like-
minded individuals argued, meant the country could more effectively implement the new
U.S. strategy of deterrence.\textsuperscript{532} With its overtones of technological prowess and cool crisis
management the CDU/CSU’s emphasis on “deterrence” was certainly far more palatable
than the SPD’s continued reference to “defense,” a term that conjured up memories of the
retreat in the defeat during the Second World War. However, what Adenauer, Strauß,
and other proponents failed to understand was that large segments of the West German
population viewed the concept of deterrence with extreme skepticism. Their objections
were rooted not so much in the weapons needed to execute the strategy but rather in the
strategy itself. Helmut Schmidt, who in the late-1950s emerged as one of the SPD’s
foremost security policy experts, rejected deterrence for precisely the same reasons
Adenauer, Strauß and other prominent proponents embraced it: the strategy represented
an overly-technological approach to security. What the country needed, Schmidt, and
after 1960 the SPD as whole, argued were new, less technical approaches to security.
Not fully grasped at the time by West Germany’s civil defense experts, this shifting
public attitude towards technological solutions for the country’s security boded ill for
their future plans.

Undaunted, West Germany’s top political leaders continued to make their case
for expanded emergency laws. At public appearances, in interviews and in various

\textsuperscript{531} Cico, \textit{Pax Atomica}, 42-43.

\textsuperscript{532} Strauß’s enthusiasm for nuclear weapons and their uses is the subject of Thomas Enders’
publications, politicians presented the idea as absolutely necessary for a viable, functioning democracy, as well as protecting the country and its population. One year after he first introduced the idea of creating new “emergency laws” for the country, Schröder provided more specific details of the government’s tentative plans were. In a nationally broadcasted radio address transmitted 9 October 1959, Schröder once again provided only general details about what the government’s plans, but did mention two ideas that later featured prominently in an expanded civil defense program. Of these the most important was the commitment to ensuring democracy, the rule of law, and the “continuation of our state and people” in times of emergency. Recognizing that public opinion was deeply divided about whether the country actually needed an emergency law of any sort, Schröder proposed referring the entire matter to the West German courts rather than the highly charged forum of public political debate. Only slightly less controversial was Schröder’s second proposal: an “emergency service law” [Notdienstgesetz], legislation intended to maintain basic services even during periods of grave crisis. In contrast to the already controversial constitutional amendment, Schröder proposed keeping debate about the emergency service law in the Bundestag—a forum in which the government required only a simple majority positive vote.


535 Ibid., 1902.
For the next two years the government worked to fulfill its plans. The legislative battle began in January 1960 after the government forwarded its Law to Amend the Federal Constitution [*Entwurf eines Gesetzes zur Änderung des Grundgesetzes*] to the Bundesrat for review and approval. Two months later, the government introduced its Emergency Service Law [*Notdiesntgesetz*], the main provisions of which required most men and women to participate in regular civil defense training exercises and obligated them for federal service during times of actual or “impending” national emergency. Both laws encountered considerable opposition. As one might expect, critics of the government’s laws included SPD politicians, student groups, most of the country’s trade unions, and intellectuals. However, the Bundesrat’s ultimate rejection of both laws shows *Länder* governments, too, harbored considerable misgivings.536 Several factors drove this parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition, but the most important was a widespread consensus that the proposed legislation was a grave threat to the very fabric of West German democracy. The prominent Bavarian SPD politician Wilhlem Hoegner, for example, described the law as “a bulldozer of political centralization for a uniform state,” while on the floor of the Bundesrat the Hessen Minister-President [*Ministerpräsident*] urged his colleagues to reject the law because it threatened many of the country’s basic constitutional rights and stood little chance of actually functioning should an emergency arise.537

Public opposition to, and *Länder* ambivalence towards, the proposed constitutional amendment and Emergency Service Law only partially explain their ultimate defeat, for public rallies and speeches by the political opposition could not alter

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536 On the Bundesrat’s deliberations see Schneider, *Demokratie im Gefahr*, 61-64.

537 Schneider, 62. German original: “…ein Bulldozer des Zentralismus für den Einheitsstaat.”
the fact that the CDU/CSU coalition controlled the Bundestag. Why, then, was the
government unable to secure passage of its legislation? Certainly widespread concern
about Germany’s prior experience with emergency laws was important. For even for the
stauncheest CDU/CSU representative the specter of Weimar and the National Socialist era
were difficult to ignore. Of equal importance, though, was the fact that the government’s
attempt to expand its civil defense system occurred at the beginning of an important
generational shift in West German politics. In the case of the Chancellorship this shift
manifested itself in a dramatic weakening of Adenauer’s grip on the political system he
had controlled since the country’s founding. Studies of early-Cold War West Germany
date this decline in power to Adenauer’s vacillating and ambivalent candidacy for the
position of Federal President.\footnote{See Manfred Görtemaker, \textit{Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: von der Gründung
bis zur Gegenwart} (Frankfurt-am-Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch Verlag, 2004), 365-370, and
\textit{Kampf um Kanzleramt: Erhard und Adenauer} (Stuttgart: 1987)} In rapid succession thereafter came a crisis with CDU-
state governments over the creation of a second national television channel and
irreconcilable differences with his long-time ally Theodor Oberländer, Minister for
Evacuees and Refugees.\footnote{Frank Bösch, \textit{Macht und Machverlust: Die Geschichte der CDU} (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-
Anstalt, 2002), 89.} Adenauer’s loss of control threw the government’s legislative
agenda into doubt. As early as September 1960 Heinrich Krone, the CDU’s
doubt eventually manifested itself in unwillingness by CDU/CSU parliamentary leaders
to force the Bundestag committees to even consider the proposed laws until after the
1961 election.
After the setback it experienced in the first half of 1961, further efforts to expand the country’s civil defense program were slowed as domestic and international political crises absorbed the government’s and public’s attention. The first signs of trouble actually began early in 1961 when Adenauer’s ill-health prompted questions about whether he could continue in office, and if he was capable of leading the government coalition through the next federal parliamentary election. Unproductive trips to France and the Untied States in the spring of that year did little to enhance the Chancellor’s standing at home, and the government’s credibility as a whole declined further in the wake of its poor response to the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961.  

Despite desperate pleas from his closest advisors, Adenauer refused to travel to Berlin during the first days of the crisis and express the government’s outrage over the East German government’s decision to seal the border, choosing instead to continue his election campaign. Adenauer’s compounded his poor handling of the Berlin Wall crisis by suggesting in subsequent speeches that the Wall was built to help the SPD in the upcoming elections, and with personal attacks on the SPD’s leader, Willy Brandt. Studies of the election show that Adenauer’s actions were politically disastrous. Admittedly, his party fared better in the federal elections than Adenauer’s late-August approval rating of thirty-five percent seemingly foreshadowed, but the CDU/CSU nonetheless lost its majority in the Bundestag and was forced once again to enter into a coalition government with the FDP.


542 Support for the CDU/CSU declined to roughly forty-five percent of the total votes cast. The
The 1961 federal parliamentary campaign had an important effect on future civil defense policy. As was the case in 1957, the 1961 elections were dominated by questions of foreign and security policy and focused, not surprisingly, on events in Berlin. Although rarely spoken of directly, most West Germans doubtless remembered the government’s insipid support of its civil defense program in front of a skeptical parliament just two months before the Berlin crisis, a fact that likely accelerated the government’s distribution of Everyone Has a Chance (see Chapter Five).\textsuperscript{543} Of greater importance, though, was the election’s impact on West Germany’s top-ranking civil defense official, the Interior Minister. Coalition with the FDP forced Adenauer to make a number of important ministerial changes. As a condition of their participation, the FDP demanded the resignation of Heinrich von Brentano as Foreign Minister. Unhappy with the most obvious choices for his replacement, Adenauer eventually asked Gerhard Schröder to fill the post, and appointed the CSU’s Hermann Hörcherl as the country’s new Interior Minister.

As one history of the Interior Ministry notes, Hörcherl was a far from obvious choice for the position. Born and raised in a small farming community, Hörcherl served on the Western Front during the First World War and then trained as a lawyer. Prior to

\textsuperscript{543} The June 1961 debate about civil defense was prompted by the SPD’s official inquiry about the state of the government’s civil defense plans. Press accounts of the debate reported on the government’s promise to distribute information as soon as possible, but noted that such declarations were not new. See Bundestag Verhandlungen, Vol. 49, Third Election Period, Session of 28 June 1961, 9443-9445. Contemporary press coverage includes “Schröder sorgt für Luftschutz,” Der Mittag, 29 June 1961, “Bald Luftschutz Merkblätter,” Frankfurter Rundschau, 29 June 1961, and “Luftschutz Merkblätter,” Bonner Rundschau, 29 June 1961, copies of which are located in BA B106.50243.
his appointment as Interior Minister, Hörcherl had since 1953 served as a directly elected Bundestag representative for the Regensburg district, and after 1957 as chair of the CSU state organization. A competent if not spectacular parliamentarian, Hörcherl had never expressed any great desire to head the country’s Interior Ministry, preferring instead either the Finance or Transportation portfolios. Moreover, Hörcherl’s outspoken Bavarian patriotism—he routinely traveled from Bonn to Regensburg on the weekends—caused many officials, especially within the Interior Ministry, to question his commitment to federalism and joke that the Bavarian lion would replace the federal eagle as the Ministry’s official symbol! Privately, Interior Ministry officials awaited Hörcherl’s arrival with considerable trepidation.544

The crises continued in 1962. Adenauer’s mounting mistrust of Kennedy’s foreign-policy agenda, and most particularly the U.S. President’s apparent willingness to sacrifice German reunification for Soviet concessions on the issue of non-proliferation, resulted in a complete split between the two leaders by mid-year.545 October proved even more difficult. On 10 October, the newsweekly Der Spiegel published an article entitled “Conditionally Prepared for Defense” [“Bedingt abwehrbereit”] a scathing attack on the Bundeswehr’s ability to defend the nation. Based on the results of the secret September NATO staff exercise FALLEX 62, the article not only claimed the country’s military forces were incapable of mounting a rapid defense of West Germany, but also depicted civil defense and emergency communications in the Federal Republic as wholly inadequate. Four days later, an U.S. U2 reconnaissance aircraft flying over San Cristóbald.


Cuba provided the first photographic evidence of a missile complex under construction. Taken together, the two events did little to convince West Germans that catastrophe was avoidable.\textsuperscript{546}

The sparse archival record for the years after 1957 makes it difficult to trace federal civil defense planning with any great accuracy, but the extant evidence suggests that work continued unabated in the months leading up to the Spiegel Affair and Cuban Missile Crisis. The minutes from the meetings of the government’s Standing Civil Defense Planning Committee show, for instance, ongoing efforts to resolve the problem of finding adequate personnel and supplies to help West Germans recover after a war, as well as the country’s options for sheltering its population underground.\textsuperscript{547} It is also clear that both the Berlin Wall’s construction and Cuban Missile Crisis profoundly affected at least some of the country’s civil defense experts. Articles in the November 1962 issue of Zivilschutz, for example, provided their readers with a gloomy assessment of the country’s progress to date, reaching the same conclusions as Der Spiegel’s reporters: the Federal Republic’s civil defense program was incapable of protecting West Germans.\textsuperscript{548}

Several reasons accounted for this sad state of affairs, the editors continued, including an


\textsuperscript{547} Copies of the minutes for 1961 and 1962 are found in Staatsarchiv der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (hereafter cited as SHH), 136.1-1395.

\textsuperscript{548} “Zur Lage,” in Zivilschutz 26:11 (November 1962): 363. The editors wrote: “Wäre die Bundesrepublik...imstande gewesen, ihre zivile Bevölkerung wirksam zu schützen? Die Antwort darauf ist ein eindeutiges NEIN!”
inadequate legislative and administrative framework, poorly clarified federal, state, and local responsibilities, insufficient personnel, and a poorly informed public.

In the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis federal civil defense officials accelerated the publication and distribution of their first civil defense brochure. They also suspended their coordination with the states to fully concentrate on their new civil defense legislation. The result, a package of “Emergency Laws” [Notstandsgesetzen], was approved by the Federal Cabinet in November. Less than a month later, the government’s new laws received the Bundesrat’s initial approval, albeit with a host of suggestions for possible revisions. Having overcome the first parliamentary hurdle, the government forwarded the laws as an “Emergency Law Package” [Notstandsgesetzpakt] to the Bundestag in January 1963.

Serving as the centerpiece of the government’s new civil defense legislation was a reworked version of its 1960 constitutional amendment. In a number of important respects, the reworked amendment differed from the one introduced two years previously. Unlike the 1960 legislation, the new proposed amendment included clear definitions for various types of emergencies and specific mechanisms for preserving government continuity in times of crisis. The Interior Ministry’s reworked constitutional amendment also included provisions for an expanded role for the Bundesrat, which would bear primary responsibility for declaring and prolonging a state of civil emergency. Inexplicily, however, the revised constitutional amendment also retained


many of the most controversial provisions found in the 1960 version, including the
federal government’s ability to suspend basic civil liberties such as Articles 2.2
(individual freedom), five (freedom of expression), eight (freedom of assembly), 9.1 and
9.2. (the right to form associations and societies, including trade unions and professional
organizations), eleven (freedom of movement), 12.2 and 12.3 (freedom from compulsory
service), and thirteen (the inviolability of the home). The law’s authors were quick to
note, however, that it dramatically curtailed the government’s right to suspend these
rights during period of internal unrest [inneren Gefahr] and natural disaster
[Katastrophenzustand].

A revised constitutional amendment was only part of the government’s expanded
civil defense conceptualization. Also included in the package were several additional
proposals referred to at the time as the “simple” laws [einfachen Gesetzen] that required
only a simple majority vote for passage. According to Hörcherl, who introduced the new
laws on 24 January 1963, the proposed legislation reflected a dramatically new defense
conceptualization. In keeping with recent trends in the United States and other NATO
countries, advanced preparation was now the most important element of a comprehensive
civil defense plan. Moreover, while the laws included some provisions for coping with
non-military crises, the government was mostly concerned with military threats. To add
a sense of urgency to the debate and spur their work, Hörcherl concluded his introductory
remarks with a warning that West German lagged far behind other western countries in
their civil defense preparations.

551 On the government’s constitutional amendment and new civil defense legislation see Alexat,
552 Bundestag Verhandlungen, Vol. 52, Third Election Period, Session of 24 January 1963, 2477
(D).
The Emergency Law package was indeed a dramatic departure from previous efforts. The scale and scope of the program was impressive. For example, in the Shelter Construction Law [Schutzbauge setz] the government sought to close the considerable loopholes on shelter building present in the existing legislation by creating a clear legal framework for peacetime construction. Second only to the proposed constitutional amendment in terms of importance, the Shelter Construction Law was the product of more than five years of implementation experience and study of foreign civil defense programs. Whereas for most of the 1950s federal officials believed the country should provide physical protection to as many people as possible, the start of the new decade brought with it considerably reduced expectations. Recognizing technological advances had complicated their planning, the country’s civil defense technocrats developed a new, “tiered-approach” [Stufenprogramm] for its shelter program. The central element of the new strategy was the concept of “basic protection” [Grundschatz], an idea called for constructing shelters capable of protecting their inhabitants from radioactive fallout (fallout shelters). Unchanged from earlier thinking was a consensus that West Germany needed as many shelters as possible in the cellars of apartment blocks and public buildings. In practical terms, the Shelter Construction Law acknowledged that not all West Germans could receive the same level of physical protection. The government expected all shelters to provide protection against falling debris and radioactive fallout,


554 The general outline of the government’s new bunker strategy is revealed in two memorandums written by Walter Bargatzky just before and shortly after the 7 July 1960 meeting of the Federal Defense Council. See BA B106.54720, Memorandum, Walter Bargatzky to Gerhard Schröder, 7 July 1960; Subject: Schutzraumproblem; and Internal Memorandum, Walter Bargatzky to Federal Interior Ministry, Abteilung VII [Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz], 8 July 1960; Subject: Schutzraumprogramm.
but now would require only those in urban areas to resist the worst effects of an nuclear explosion.\textsuperscript{555}

The greatest obstacle in implementing a credible civil defense program—lack of trained personnel—was the main focus of two laws. The first, the Emergency Service Law [\textit{Zivildienstgesetz}], dramatically expanded the scale and scope of the country’s rescue and recovery services by calling for the creation of a civil defense corps [\textit{Zivilschutzkorps}].\textsuperscript{556} The Self-Protection Law [\textit{Selbstschutzgesetz}], by way of contrast, focused on individual preparation and training. If passed, the law would obligate all West German property owners to purchase and maintain basic fire fighting, rescue, and survival equipment in addition to fourteen days worth of food and drinking water. The law also required all West Germans between the ages of sixteen and sixty-five attend ten hours of basic civil defense “training courses” [\textit{Ausbildungsveranstaltungen}], with additional requirements for employers and people who worked in institutions such as schools, hospitals, and nursing-homes.\textsuperscript{557}

Preservation of West Germany’s economic, societal, and cultural infrastructure was the overall goal of three laws: the Law to Protect the West German Economy [\textit{Wirtschaftssicherstellungsgesetz}], the Law to Protect the West German Transportation

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Infrastructure [Verkehrssicherstellungsgesetz], and the Law to Protect the West German Food Supply [Ernährungssicherstellungsgesetz]. (A fourth law, the Wassersicherstellungsgesetz, was introduced several months later.) Although individually complicated, the collective purpose of the four laws was to ensure the continued availability of essential goods and services during times of crisis.  

Finally, recognizing that the actions of its citizens determined the success or failure of future military operations, the West German government introduced the Law to Regulate the Movement of Civilians in Times of Civil Emergency (the Movement Regulation Law), which attempted once again to address the problem of mass evacuation and flight. Developed in repose to an evolving NATO civil defense policy that placed heavily emphasis on encouraging civilians to “stay at home” in the event of an attack on their territory, the Movement Regulation Law also reflected the country’s Second World War experience of the problems caused by the uncontrolled flight of millions of frightened people. Uncontrolled flight not only physically endangered the individuals; it also threatened the state’s political stability and dramatically reduced its ability to provide the most effective protection and support to the country’s inhabitants. Moreover, as noted in the law’s official rationale [Begründung] post-war developments in weapons


technology made mass flight an even riskier proposition. As terrifying and deadly as tanks and strafing aircraft were to columns of unharmed, exhausted refugees verging on mass panic, the threat posed by nuclear weapons was far worse, both in terms for their potential of physical destruction and the danger caused by radioactive fallout. Adhering to NATO’s official “stay-at-home” policy, the law’s authors argued, was a far better option for civilians than uncontrolled flight. To prevent unauthorized flight, the proposed legislation focused on a characteristically German solution: during periods of national crisis state and local governments could suspend all new residency registration. Persons attempting to change their official place of residence faced severe fines, and even the possibility of removal back to their original home.

To what extent did the 1963 legislation represent a departure from the civil defense program first outlined in the 1957 Civil Defense Law? In one important respect, at least, the 1963 legislation differently significantly from the West German government’s original civil defense conceptualization. Whereas the latter was conceived by experts who thought of war in terms of mass conventional attacks, the former was more firmly grounded in the post-Second World War era: weapons of mass destruction—whether nuclear, chemical, or biological—now constituted the most dangerous threat to the nation. The Civil Service Law, for example, made specific reference to training personnel to cope with the effects of chemical and biological weapons while the proposed Shelter Construction Law anticipated a network of shelters capable of protecting West Germans from both the blast effects of a nuclear explosion and radioactive fallout. More generally, specific mention of the radioactive fallout in the proposed legislation shows the extent to which the government’s conceptualization of war changed during the late-1950s and early-1960s.
Accessible contemporary archival records and public comments by politicians and government bureaucrats suggest, however, that in three important respects the government’s 1963 program was more a matter of significant refinement than dramatic revision. The first was the guiding principle underlying the new program. As was the case with the legislation proposed in 1955, the primary goal of laws presented to the Bundestag in early 1963 was that of protecting as many West Germans and as much of their society as possible. This theme is clearly seen in the official rationales of the various laws as well as comments made by sympathetic politicians during the laws’ first reading. For example, the idea of protecting as many people as possible is clearly illustrated in the official rationale for the Shelter Construction Law, in which government officials noted that the importance of physical protection for coping with the worst effects of conventional and nuclear warfare necessitated a dramatic escalation in the number of shelters available to the general public. Similarly, the emphasis on preserving West Germany’s most important societal and economic institutions formed the focal point of the legislation designed to protect West German’s economic, social, and cultural institutions.

The second general continuity in the government’s civil defense conceptualization was the strategy, or strategies, officials planned to use to protect the country’s population. The admittedly incomplete 1957 Civil Defense Law outlined two major means for safeguarding West Germans from the worst effects of conventional and nuclear attacks: protective shelters and highly-trained rescue and recovery personnel. (The government’s third major strategy, mass evacuation, was deliberately excluded from the country’s first civil defense law and received only oblique attention in the 1963 legislation.) Both strategies occupied prominent positions in the government’s expanded
civil defense program. As noted above, the Shelter Construction Law called for the construction of more protective shelters for the country’s inhabitants as well as the requirement that property owners stockpile emergency supplies and equipment during peacetime. The provisions of the Civil Service Law were intended to dramatically expand the number of West Germans trained to fight fires, administer to the sick and wounded, organize relief services for the homeless and clean up areas contaminated by radioactive fallout, chemical weapons, or biological agents.

The Interior Ministry officials who wrote the Movement Regulation Law did not, however, categorically dismiss the idea of evacuating large numbers of civilians in times of national emergency. Instead, their correspondence suggests they only sought a shift in the overall conception of mass evacuation. Illustrating the thought processes of federal government officials was the law’s new terminology. Instead of the word “evacuation” [Evakuierung], the new law used the term “shifting” [Verlegung]. The change in terminology was deliberate, for what the government officials hoped to achieve with the Movement Regulation Law was a new understanding of what was essentially an old strategy. “Unplanned flight results is no rescue,” declared one supporter of the law, but “carefully planned population shifts can be useful for purposes of civil defense, supporting military operations, and preventing unregulated mass flight.”560 In contrast to its earlier plans for mass evacuation of the country’s cities and industrial areas, government planners now proposed limited, “shifts” of endangered civilians. This new understanding of the term evacuation stressed strict avoidance of creating attractive

alterative targets for enemy forces *[neue Ballungsgebieten]*, and an emphasis on returning evacuees to their homes and normal lives as quickly as possible. (Left undiscussed in the proposed legislation was any mention of how to achieve this goal in a region ravaged, and likely left radioactive, by military operations.)

Finally, the Movement Restriction Law changed an individual’s relationship with the federal government’s civil defense strategy. Implicit in the government’s earlier mass evacuation planning was the presumption of widespread, and at times involuntary, participation. Emptying even part of West Germany’s cities and industrial centers effected not only tens of millions of urban residents, but also the population of rural areas designated by the federal and state authorities as the ultimate destination of urban evacuees. In contrast, the Movement Restriction Law stressed the idea of voluntary participation—should the government decide it necessary to evacuate a region of the country, people were given the choice of whether they wished to participate. (Less choice was available if military officials felt it necessary to clear a region of its civilian inhabitants.) On the other hand, because the third section of the proposed law stressed the idea of evacuating the sick and injured from urban hospitals and medical facilities, the Movement Restriction Law in fact implicitly mandated widespread, indirect public participation in the federal government’s evacuation program. Transporting and caring for seriously ill and injured people required considerable advanced preparation. The government’s plans required state and local authorities to identify buildings capable of serving as “evacuation hospitals” *[Ausweichkrankenhäuser]*, or to construct new facilities if necessary. Proper care of the sick and injured also required access to medical equipment and supplies. Included in the proposed law were provisions that required owners of potential “evacuation hospitals” to purchase and store such supplies. Given the
cost of building and equipping modern medical facilities, the new emphasis on evacuation hospitals entailed considerable additional expense for some state and local governments—expenses covered in part by public taxes.

Finally, as was the case with the 1957 Civil Defense Law, the 1963 legislation drew heavily on the country’s recent historical experience to justify its existence. For civil defense proponents, the country’s recent past offered plenty of rationale for the expanded program called for the Emergency Laws. Wartime experience, Hörcherl reminded his audience, provided a grim glimpse of West Germany’s future should it become engulfed in war. To muster support for the proposed constitutional amendment, the CDU’s Matthias Hoogen reminded Bundestag members of the political uncertainty and widespread social unrest Germany experienced during the interwar period. Reference to the country’s interwar and wartime experience also appeared in several of the official rationale and the many articles written by government officials and civil defense proponents in support of the program. From the opening sentence of the official rationale for the Shelter Construction Law, for example, readers learned that “the experience of the last war showed that protective shelters substantially reduced the potential losses caused during enemy aerial attacks.” Of course, allusion to the recent historical past was not always advantageous for the government. As Hoogen himself noted, the country’s recent history also included the Nazis’ tragic abuse of emergency powers at the end of the Weimar period—an episode, he admitted, very much on the minds of many of his colleagues. Glossed over by CDU/CSU speakers during the debate

was a second, even more recent event of significance—the *Spiegel* Affair. Hőrcherl’s claim that “the federal government is aware of its responsibility to democracy to maintain a free and open press, even in times of war”\footnote{Bundestag Verhandlungen, Vol 42, Fourth Election Period, Session of 24 January 1963, 2485(B). German original: “...die Bundesregierung ist sich der Aufgabe bewußt, die eine freie Presse innerhalb einer freieheitlichen Demokratie auch in Kriegszeiten zu erfüllen hat.” Hőrcherl continued, “die Bundesregierung ist aber auch der Auffassung, daß eine öffentliche aufgabe nicht nur Rechte, sondern auch Pflichten mit sich bringt...[D]ie Bundesregierung bemüht...ein System der freiwilligen Selbstkontrolle aufzubauen.”} was questioned by subsequent SPD and FDP speakers, with the FDP’s Wolfram Dorn drawing encouraging cries from the opposition SPD after referencing the catastrophic failure to maintain a free and open press in 1931.\footnote{Ibid., 2506 (D).}

After unveiling its package of emergency laws in January 1963, the West German government spent the next three years waging a sporadic battle on their behalf. The sporadic nature of the government’s efforts resulted in part from the fact that the laws quickly faded from the public eye. While West Germans remained concerned about the possibility of war, a series of international and domestic events focused public attention elsewhere for the remainder of the year. U.S. President John F. Kennedy’s official state visit to Frankfurt and Berlin in June was followed in August by the signing of a Treaty on the Banning of Nuclear Weapon Testing in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space, and Under Water, the October 1963 Berlin Crisis, and, in November, Kennedy’s assassination. Even more important events occurred domestically. Although he managed to weather the *Spiegel* crisis, Adenauer’s declining popularity and weakening political control finally forced him to endorse a successor, West Germany’s remarkable Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard, who took over power in October 1963. Other than...
drawing attention away from the proposed Emergency Laws, Erhard’s election as Chancellor actually changed little in regards to the government’s position on civil defense. The CDU/CSU continued to govern with the support of the FDP, Hörcherl remained as the Minister of the Interior, and the idea of “as much freedom as possible [but] as much responsibility as necessary” remained the guiding principle of the government’s civil defense planning.564

In addition to this series of important international and political events, the government also benefited from the slow and often contradictory actions of its opponents. The parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forces that had opposed the government’s original emergency law remained essentially intact. The SPD remained the government’s most strident parliamentary opposition. Despite the SPD leadership’s decision in January 1963 to support the government’s request for rapid action on its civil defense legislation, few of its rank-and-file membership supported the laws in their entirety. Extant correspondence also shows considerable trepidation on the part of state and local governments. As detailed in the second half of this dissertation, the federal government’s proposed civil defense program entailed even more responsibilities for state and local authorities. Cost, of course, remained a major consideration, but so, too were issues such as overall control of state and local resources in times of national emergency.

Extra-parliamentary opposition was more vocal in 1963 and 1964, but ultimately no more effective. Surprisingly, the outpouring of sentiment that occurred as a result of the government’s recreation of the West German armed forces and Adenauer’s

564 Zur Gesetzgebung für den Notstand (Rednerdienst), issued by the Christlich Demokratische Union, Bundesgeschäftsstelle Rednerdienst, Bonn, 1963 (quoted in Schneider, Demokratie in Gefahr, 111). An extended version of this argument is found in Hans Schäfer, Der Notstand im Rechtsstaat (Bonn: Presse und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 1964).
subsequent attempts to arm them with nuclear weapons failed to duplicate itself during public discussions about the proposed Emergency Laws. Histories of West German dissent during this period show that that trade unions, student groups, and the country’s intellectuals and cultural elite constituted the most vocal opposition. Trade unions continued to object to provisions of the proposed constitutional amendment that might limit their right to strike. Student groups decried the government’s commitment to democracy at the expense of what they viewed as much needed social reform. Intellectuals and West Germany’s cultural elite worried about the fragility of their country’s democracy and the soundness of its government’s plans. Yet as Lawrence S. Wittner and Michael Schneider show in their studies of protest movements during this period, the effectiveness of all three groups suffered from a lack of cooperation, missed opportunities for greater coordination, and the federal government’s efforts to limit their influence.\footnote{Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb*, 349-351. While this section of Wittner’s work primarily focuses on the West German disarmament movement, people who opposed the country’s rearmament also tended to reject the government’s civil defense plans.} As Schneider notes, prior to 1965, events such as the March 1963 declaration issued by students at the University of Marburg in support of the unions’ condemnation of the proposed emergency law, the *Aufruf von Vertretern geistiger Berufe zur Unterstützung der gewerkschaftlichen Ablehnung der Nostandsgesetzes,* or the better known memorandum circulated by the Association of German Scientists [*Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler*] generated considerable press coverage, but actually resulted in surprisingly little long-term shift in overall public awareness of or engagement in the subject.\footnote{Quoted in Schneider, 122.}

In 1965, the various Bundestag committees charged with studying and revising
the legislation neared the end of their work. Quiet work on the legislation in 1963 and 1964, had resulted in committee members making a number of significant revisions to the government’s original plans. Not surprisingly, the proposed constitutional amendment drew the most attention. Deeply concerned about the need to safeguard West German democracy (and their own political power), the members of the Bundestag Committee on Legal Affairs included new wording that dramatically reduced the government’s ability to suspend constitutional rights in the event of an internal emergency and maintained its accountability to the country’s parliamentary institutions.\(^{567}\) Less important, work occurred in other Bundestag committees such as those for International Affairs, Housing, and Local Affairs as members struggled to narrow the gap between the government’s civil defense vision and the demands of their constituents. Most problematic in this respect were the Shelter Construction and Civil Service laws. State and local governments mounted fierce opposition to the former because of its considerable financial burden while trade unions and professional organizations resisted the latter’s employment and organizing restrictions.\(^ {568}\) Nonetheless, despite a number of ongoing controversies about specific aspects of their program, the pace of discussion and degree of consensus was such that Interior Ministry officials expressed cautious optimism that a final vote was possible before the end of the year.\(^ {569}\)

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\(^{567}\) For a contemporary summary of the Legal Committee’s revisions see the *Der Spiegel* interview with Matthias Hoogen (“Das parlament darf keine Fahnenflucht begehen” in *Spiegel*, 18:37 (9 September 1964): 22-33.


\(^{569}\) SHH 136.101296, “Kurzprotokoll des ständigen Ausschusses für die zivile Notstandsplanung vom 15. Februar 1965,” agenda item four.
Public attention on the government’s proposed Emergency Laws also intensified in 1965. Beginning in the spring of that year, articles on various aspects of the laws regularly appeared in both mass circulation dailies, weekly newsmagazines, and more specialized publications. While a healthy number of the articles were positive or merely informative in content, an equally large number criticized at least some aspect of the government’s plans. As was the case with parliamentary debate on the subject, the proposed constitutional amendment received the most critical attention. Notably, writers from a wide spectrum of publications penned negative articles. Left-of-center cultural periodicals such as *neue kritik* and *Frankfurter Hefte* joined forces with more conservative publications such as *Deutsche Außenpolitik*, *Stimme der Gemeinde*, and *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, specialized legal publications such as *Neue Justiz*, and trade journals like *Metal*. Prominent members of the Protestant church, including the notable Martin Niemöller, joined voices with professional organizations like the German Press Council [*Deutsche Pressrat*] to express their severe misgivings about the government’s plans. University students and faculty and trade unions remained in the forefront of all protest, however. In January 1964, the publishers of *Blätter für deutsche

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und internationale Politik sponsored a forum of scientists, publicists [Publizisten] and representatives of select industrial concerns (IG Druck und Papier, IG Chemie, and IG Metall) that resulted in “Appeal to the Executive Committees and Parliamentary Groups of the Parties” [Appel an die Vorstände und Fraktionen der Parteien], a ringing condemnation of the militarization of everyday life. Later that spring, hundreds of university professors and members of the clergy added their names to the appeal.\(^{572}\) In April, more than a thousand students from a multitude of organizations met in Bonn for the Seventh German Student Congress [\textit{VII. Deutschen Studententages}] and issued a variety of resolutions condemning various aspects of the government’s plans.\(^{573}\) Despite the initial efforts of national leaders, the wave of protest that swept through the country in the first half of 1965 also affected the SPD’s rank-and-file membership. Local party organizations, especially those in Hessen, grew increasingly uncomfortable with the idea of supporting the government’s civil defense plans. By the time of the May 1965 SPD leadership congress in Saarbrücken, widespread sentiment against the government’s Emergency Laws forced the SPD leadership to reconsider its policy of tacit support. The eleven-point declaration issued at the end of the Saarbrücken Congress rejected the proposed constitutional amendment outright. The “simple laws” remained acceptable in principle, but required additional public debate.\(^{574}\)

Despite the manifestation of widespread public and political opposition to the government’s Emergency Laws, critics of the proposed program privately acknowledged

\(^{572}\) Schneider, \textit{Demokratie in Gefahr}, 128-129.


\(^{574}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 131-134. The text of the Saarbrücken Declaration is found in Friedrich Schäfer, \textit{Die Notstandsgesetze. Vorsorge für die Menschen und den demokratischen Rechtsstaats} (Cologne: Opladen, 1966), Attachment Three.
the near impossibility of blocking all the government’s legislation before the next election, scheduled for September 1965. Although Willy Brandt’s charismatic Chancellor candidacy provided considerable promise for the SPD’s first national electoral success, the party’s national leaders recognized the perils they faced. On the one hand, determined opposition to the government’s Emergency Laws helped secure the loyalty of West Germany’s powerful trade unions. However, as Herbert Wehner noted in the 28 May SPD party leadership meeting, “we cannot allow the CDU the opportunity to accuse [the SPD] of unreliability in matters of national security.”575 Moreover, because the CDU/CSU/FDP coalition still retained an absolute majority, the SPD was in no position to prevent the Bundestag from voting on the laws. Nor, in the end, did it try to do so. Despite spirited speeches in which SPD speakers took the federal government to task for the inadequacy of its civil defense activities, all of the less controversial elements of the Emergency Law Package passed with near unanimous approval.

The national civil defense system created by the government’s Emergency Law package lasted a little under six months. With the benefit of hindsight it is possible to trace the roots of its demise to the economic problems that started at the beginning of the decade. As scholars of 1960s West Germany have shown, the economic downturn the country experienced in the mid-1960s stemmed from a number of factors.576 First, as

575 Quoted in Schneider, Demokratie in Gefahr, 134. German original: “Die CDU dürfte nicht in die Lage kommen, uns der Unzuverlässigkeit in Sicherheitsfragen zu bezichtigen.”

West Germans grew more affluent, individual productivity declined. Second, the Berlin Wall’s construction in 1961 altered the dynamics of the West German labor market: instead of filling positions with highly-skilled labor from the East employers were forced to turn to less-skilled workers from Southern Europe. The influx of less-skilled workers into the country in turn allowed the country’s unions to demand, and receive, high annual wage increases. Third, after 1963 the widespread prosperity that enriched the West German public led prices and imports to rise alarmingly. Overshadowing all these factors, however, was the country’s increasingly expensive social welfare state and state-subsidies—the cost of which totaled more than thirty-seven percent of the federal budget in 1965.  

By mid-1965, West Germany’s deficit had reached DM 6,500 million—an amount that horrified the fiscally conservative Finance Minister Rolf Dahlgrün. To resolve the problem, the Finance Ministry proposed a dramatic solution: the 1965 Law to Protect the Federal Budget [Haushaltssicherungsgesetz]. Simple in concept if not in execution, the law reined in the country’s spiraling deficit through a combination of spending cuts and curtailment or elimination of future expenditures.

For the country’s newly approved civil defense program, the result was devastating. In the closing days of September 1965 the Bundestag voted overwhelmingly in favor of delaying the entry-into-force of the Self-Protection Law, the Shelter Construction Law, and the Civil Defense Service Law for three years. At the time the

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577 Presse und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Deutsche Politik 1965. Tätigkeitsbericht der Bundesregierung (Bonn: Deutscher Bundesverlag, 1965), 88/89 (Table: “Finanzen.”) By comparison thirty percent of the federal budget was spent on defense, the second single greatest category of expenditures. Support for transportation infrastructure upgrades and housing construction amounted to just slight over ten percent of the federal budget.

Bundestag vote merely postponed the start of programs called for in the laws by three years, a decision that both saved the government DM 210 million and made considerable sense given the government’s inability to muster sufficient support for the vital constitutional amendment.\textsuperscript{579} Extant correspondence shows the country’s most senior politicians, including Chancellor Erhard, considered the move a postponement rather than rejection of civil defense. For example, in a personal letter sent to Defense Minister Kai-Uwe von Hassel just before Christmas of that year Erhard informed him that the decision should not be seen as a lessening of the government’s commitment to a workable civil defense program. On the contrary, I consider it absolutely necessary to continue work in this area with the same energy, for [the government’s] responsibility to protect the country’s population in times of crisis remained unchanged.\textsuperscript{580}

The passage of time shows that the reality was somewhat different. By 1968, the year the delayed provisions of the three laws were to come into effect, the international and domestic environment in which West German civil defense planners worked had changed yet again. Escalating U.S. involvement in Vietnam, de Gaulle’s decision to withdraw French forces from NATO, and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia had altered the geo-strategic framework of the early-Cold War period. Closer to home, the CDU/CSU/FDP coalition that had governed West Germany for the first eighteen years of its existence collapsed after the latter’s withdrawal from the Federal Cabinet in October

\textsuperscript{579} On the government’s decision to postpone these elements of its civil defense program see the list of talking points prepared for the Defense Ministry State Secretary’s use at the 14 December 1965 Federal Cabinet meeting, which were included as an attachment to *Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv* (hereafter referred to as BA-MA), BW1.49062, Letter, Defense Ministry [Knauer] to Kabinettreferat über Chef Stab S, 14 December 1965; Subject: Kabinettssitzung am 15.12.1965.

\textsuperscript{580} BA-MA, BW1.49078, Letter, Ludwig Erhard to Kai-Uwe von Hassel, 22 December 1965; Subject: Weitere Behandlung der Zivilverteidigung.
1966. The creation of the “Grand Coalition” of the right (CDU/CSU) and left (SPD), and the appointment of the SPD’s Willy Brandt as Vice Chancellor and de facto head of the country’s Foreign Office [Auswärtigesamt] signaled the beginning of a dramatic shift towards greater domestic reform and a foreign policy predicated on peace, disarmament, and greater engagement with the East. Like all fundamental shifts, the changes first apparent in the mid-1960s took time to fully mature, and the government’s civil defense experts continued to devise and implement a form of national civil defense for the next several years. By the end of the decade, however, the ambitious plans of the early-Cold War period rarely emerged from the dusty file-drawers of bureaucrats who have moved on.

Conclusion
The foregoing discussion of West Germany’s second effort to create a national civil defense program allows us to return once again to the broader themes of continuity and national identity. In turning to the factors that ultimately shaped the civil defense program outlined in the 1963 Emergency Laws we see that continuity continued to exert a powerful, albeit it declining, influence. Admittedly, the experiences, both positive and negative, of the country’s friends and allies influenced the way in which West German civil defense planners sought to expand their program, and in both official files and civil defense-related technical literature we see constant reference to developments in the United States, Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland. The importance of foreign influence is most clearly seen in the evolution of the West German government’s emphasis on mass evacuation and bunkers as a means to protect the country’s population. As we have seen, civil defense technocrats enthusiastically endorsed both strategies in the
1950s, although for different reasons: mass evacuation offered a lower-cost means to protect the population while bunkers, although more expensive, had proved effective during the Second World War. Firm commitment to mass evacuation waned, however, with the Federal Republic’s closer relationship into NATO. Concerned by how millions of frightened refugees would affect a future war effort, NATO officials worked hard to convince national governments of the need to keep their populations at home, and after 1955 officially adopted the organization’s “stay-at-home” policy. After 1957, as West Germany integrated itself more closely into the Alliance’s official structure, the country’s military and political leaders tried to tailor their mass evacuation strategy to fit NATO policy. As we have seen, the task was far from easy—the ambiguous meaning of the phrase “control of the civilian population in wartime” caused considerable consternation—but ultimately resulted in the Law to Restrict Civilian Movement.

In contrast to its support for mass evacuation, the West German government’s commitment to bunkers increased throughout the late-1950s and early-1960s. This growing preference for bunkers stemmed in part from domestic demand—the government had to respond to their political opponents and their call for more and better protective shelters for the West German public—but also from a nearly-unshakable belief that the strategy represented the best possible chance for people to survive a general European war. A review of the country’s civil defense-related literature reveals the

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581 As revealed in a March 1958 memorandum to NATO’s Working Group on Civil Organization in Time of War, NATO officials clearly felt the phrase included the idea of encouraging, or if necessary coercing civilians to remained place in the event of war. West Germany’s representatives on the Working Group, well aware of the difficulty in implementing such a policy in a country “directly threatened by the enemy’s ground forces and whose population counts a great number of expellees and refugees from the last war,” refused to commit itself to the idea of possible coercion. See NATO Archives, Working Group on Civil Organization in Time of War, “Comments by the German Delegation on the Control of the Civilian Population in Wartime,” Document AC/23(CD)-D/244, 7 March 1958, points 4 (e) and 5.
extent to which West German officials followed bunker-related developments in other countries. In the late-1950s, civil defense technocrats traveled to the United States to observe the effects of nuclear explosions on German prototypes of small personnel shelters. During the early-1960s federal and state government officials traveled to Denmark and Sweden to visit the comprehensive bunker systems in those countries. As a result of these trips, the first half of the 1960s also witnessed the federal government’s efforts to drum-up public interest in shelters through the display of full-size models of the structures they hoped might shelter individuals and families in times of war, and the publication of several instructional manuals and guidelines for the amateur bunker builder.\textsuperscript{582}

However, allusion to and mimicry of foreign powers only obscured the fact that continuity, in the form of implicit and explicit references to the country’s wartime past, played an equally strong role in the program’s development. Notably, in terms of its continued emphasis on bunkers and rescue and recovery services, the 1963 Emergency Laws bore a striking similarity to the National Socialist civil defense program. Residential property owners were asked to provide homes and apartment buildings with protective shelters. State and local governments faced the prospect of having to renovate existing or construct new protective bunkers. Private citizens were expected to purchase and maintain emergency supplies and equipment. People of all ages were encouraged to join one of the West Germany’s many rescue and recovery services, participate in civil defense-related training courses and exercises, or both. Moreover, even the most obtuse observer could not fail to discern that the mandatory service requirement called for in the Civil Defense Service Law bore a striking resemblance to that imposed by the National

\textsuperscript{582} See Chapter Four.
Socialist regime, in content if not in burden.

Ultimately, the West German civil defense technocrats’ inability to break free from the past resulted in their program’s demise, which in turn had significant ramifications for the ongoing process of defining collective and individual identity. In the late-1950s and early-1960s, West German civil defense officials recognized the inadequacy of their plans to protect the country’s civilian population during wartime. To their credit, they managed to convince ambivalent politicians and skeptical, and occasionally hostile, bureaucrats in the federal and state governments to support the unpopular measures they considered necessary to create a better system of protection.

Unfortunately, they failed to realize that their expanded system of protection was increasingly incompatible with evolving ideas about the nature of West German democracy. By the early-1960s, the social and cultural consensus that had resulted from the need to overcome the twin challenges of reconstruction and reintegration into the world community began to fray. As this consensus fragmented, West Germans as a whole expressed less reluctance to critically examine the society and culture forged during the first decade of the Federal Republic’s existence. Furthermore, as Axel Schildt notes in a recent study on 1960s West Germany, attitudes towards the Soviet Union and its satellites also experienced an important evolution in the first half of the decade. Whereas in the 1950s the Soviet Union was viewed primarily in terms of the military threat it posed to Federal Republic, by the end of the 1960s an increasing number of West Germans were more concerned about the country as a scientific and technical rival.

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584 Ibid., 38.
For those people in West Germany who continued to believe in a strong civil defense program, the net result of these changes was disastrous, for an increasing number of people rejected the idea that individual and collective survival was linked to the Federal Republic’s partial militarization. In the end, West Germans continued to support the idea of a capable national military, but drew the line at the government’s effort to blur the line between a peaceful society and one organized to fight.
West German civil defense did not end in the mid-1960s, but the government’s unwillingness to fund its own program and inability to muster support for the proposed constitutional amendment forced significant changes after 1965. Not all these changes were negative. In 1966, for instance, Interior Ministry officials finally celebrated the opening of a new federal civil defense training facility on the outskirts of Bonn; in 1967 the country’s legislative bodies once again took up the issue of a constitutional amendment and expanded civil defense program; and in 1970 the civil defense community finally gained a permanent seat on the Federal Defense Council. When compared with the ambitious plans of the 1950s and early-1960s, however, civil defense at the end of the decade was a modest affair. The legislation passed by the “Grand Coalition” of the right and left in 1968—legislation which served as the basis of West German civil defense planning for the remainder of the Cold War—retained some provisions for military conflict, but also more firmly oriented the program towards coping with the aftermath of natural disasters. Ongoing public discontent with the idea of “emergency powers,” and after 1968 growing protest about an overly intrusive police state, only reinforced this trend.

The last major attempt to overhaul the country’s Cold War civil defense program occurred during the 1970s when a left-of-center coalition governed West Germany. The task proved no easier than it had in the opening years of the Cold War, and the decade’s most important developments centered on expanding West Germany’s emergency medical facilities and developing plans to cope with accidents at nuclear reactors. After this brief spark of interest
civil defense sank once again into the depths of unchanging incompleteness. Even when it remerged in the 1980s as a topic of considerable public interest, the scale and scope of West Germany’s domestic civil defense program changed surprisingly little in the closing decades of the Cold War. The meaningful progress that did occur after the 1960s was found mainly in the realm of foreign policy as West Germany worked with its neighbors to coordinate its civil defense activities and policies with other nations.

The passage of the Law for the Reorganization of Civil Defense [Gesetz zur Neuordnung des Zivilschutzes] in March 1997 officially ended West Germany’s Cold War civil defense program. Designed to update the country’s civil defense program in light of the fact that a massive military threat no longer loomed over the Federal Republic, which by 1997 also included the former East Germany, the law eliminated the nationwide warning system, closed the CDAS and FCDA’s central training facilities, stopped construction of emergency medical facilities, and suspended all self-protection initiatives and training.585 One year later, the country began to dismantle its siren network.586

In concluding this study we shall return to three questions that both help illuminate the broader significance of early-Cold War West German civil defense and suggest avenues for future study. The first is that of comparison and context: specifically, how did the Federal Republic’s civil defense experience compare with that of its friends and foes? When placed within the context of its most likely opponents and actual allies, the early-Cold War West German


586 See the comments of State Secretary Hartmut Bosch during the Second International Conference on Early Warning (EWC II), sponsored by the Federal Republic of Germany and supported by the United Nations inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) in October 2003. Bosch’s comments are available at the EWC II website, located as www.ecw2.org (access 1 March 2005).
civil defense program was neither the best nor the worst of the lot. In the Soviet Union, official
interest in civil defense virtually disappeared in the years following the Second World War as the
U.S.S.R. struggled to rebuild its shattered economy and society, but re-emerged as a priority in
1954 under Nikita Khrushchev. While details of the Soviet Union’s early-Cold War civil defense
program remain vague to this day, broad outlines are nonetheless clear. By the late-1950s, the
Soviet Union had organized and implemented what appeared to be a massive program predicated
on the idea, in the words of one western observer, that “civil defense [was] an integral part of
their defense capability and strategy.”587 In theory, the Soviet Union’s civil defense program was
designed to achieve the same goals as their western counterparts: protect the population from the
worst effects of a nuclear, chemical, or biological attack (although the extent to which planners
worried about the latter two is debatable); safeguard critical elements of the nation’s economy;
and implement large-scale, post-attack rescue and recovery operations. To achieve these goals
Soviet political leaders created a nationwide warning system, introduced mandatory civil defense
training for the entire population, invested considerable government resources in dual-use
underground structures, such as subways, to shelter civilians from attacks, and even attempted to
decentralize the country’s population and economic infrastructure.588 The extent to which the
Soviet Union’s early-Cold War civil defense planners achieved these goals is unclear, however.
While Western intelligence agencies routinely reported that the Soviet Union greatly exceeded its

587 Comments of Leon Gouré in “Would the Insects Inherit the Earth? and Other Subjects of Concern to
Those Who Worry About Nuclear War, ed. Jack C. Greene and Daniel J. Strom (New York: Pergamon
Professional Publishers, 1988), 24. The most widely recognized Cold War authority on the Soviet civil
defense program, Gouré, a Russian-born political scientist who lived in Germany and France prior to
immigrating to the United States in 1940, served with the U.S. Army Counter-Intelligence Corps
during the Second World War. After the war Gouré frequently consulted with U.S. military,
diplomatic, and civil defense agencies. His books Civil Defense in the Soviet Union (1962), War
remain the most comprehensive English-language studies on the subject.

western enemies in terms of annual civil defense expenditures, making the connection between fiscal support and actual efficiency is difficult. Moreover, because evidence of robust enemy programs helped justify their own work, officials in both the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic were quick to laude the other’s accomplishments, either real or imagined. This fact, too, complicates the problem of evaluating success.

The Federal Republic’s second most important foe, East Germany, also enjoyed a mixed civil defense experience characterized by the steady evolution towards a highly centralized, militaristic system. Like their western counterparts, the immediate post-war period found East German leaders with precious little time and few resources to devote to civil defense. However, as Cold War divisions grew more permanent and fear of a renewed European war grew, interest in the subject increased, and the East German government began efforts to establish its own program. By the mid-1950s, the country’s central government authorities had established an independent civil defense office within the country’s Interior Ministry and started sending personnel to the Soviet Union’s civil defense training facilities in Leningrad. In 1958, responding in part to developments in the Federal Republic, East Germany’s Chamber of Deputies [Volkskammer] passed the country’s first Cold War civil defense law.589

In many respects, East Germany’s new civil defense program was identical to that of the Federal Republic, a fact ignored by officials in both countries. Concerned primarily with protecting the country’s population, economy, and cultural institutions from the worst effects of a nuclear war (the law was more specific in identifying threats than its western counterpart), East German civil defense planners advocated a tripartite civil defense strategy of protective shelters,

rescue and recovery services, and self-protection. Originally conceived of as a civilian institution that relied heavily on volunteers, the program grew increasing centralized and militaristic after 1960. During the 1961 Berlin Wall Crisis the East German government mobilized civil defense workers from Karl-Marx-City [Chemnitz], Magdeburg, and Leigau in addition to regular military units. One year later, the National Defense Committee [Nationale Verteidigungsrat] began work on plans to reorganize its civil defense program along Soviet lines, a goal it had partially achieved by 1967, and fully accomplished by the end of 1970. Occurring simultaneously with these organizational developments was a corresponding trend in the extent to which civil defense intruded into the lives of East Germans. While this topic still requires serious scholarly examination, the basic progression is clear. Whereas in the early and mid-1950s few East Germans thought about, much less seriously participated in, the country’s civil defense program, such passivity proved increasing difficult. By the end of the 1960s, nearly all East Germans participated, at least in theory, in some form of civil defense activity, whether as young men and women conscripted (voluntarily!) into the country’s quasi-military rescue and recovery service, as participants in civil defense training courses, or as boosters during events intended to raise awareness of and interest in the government’s program.\(^{590}\) Ironically, aside from its integration into the nation’s military command structure, the civil defense system that eventually evolved in East Germany was almost identical to the one envisioned by West German officials, a fact that, not surprisingly, they were loath to admit.

Of the Federal Republic’s major European military and political allies, few boasted more advanced civil defense programs in the opening decades of the Cold War. Britain, with its considerable wartime civil defense experience, enjoyed initial success, and in the early-1950s updated its warning systems and continued to support a sizeable rescue and recovery service.

\(^{590}\) *Ibid.*

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However, as contemporary observers noted, post-war governments never truly attempted to transform the country’s Second World War-era civil defense program into one capable of meeting the challenges of the nuclear age. Instead of passive civil defense, Conservative and Labour governments alike focused on modernizing the country’s military forces, maintaining a credible overseas presence, and developing an independent nuclear force. As studies of early-Cold War Britain show, even these limited goals proved problematic in an era of scarce financial resources and considerable war weariness, and civil defense eventually focused on responding to natural disasters. When the issue reemerged in the 1980s as a topic of public concern Britons learned that their government had no realistic plans for protecting them from even a small-scale nuclear war.591

France’s situation was roughly similar, although the lack of any scholarly work on the subject makes definitive analyses difficult. Superficially, at least, the leaders of the Fourth Republic made considerable progress during the opening years of the Cold War. Although the country lacked Britain’s wartime experience, by the end of the 1950s France boasted a credible warning system, a legislative framework, and a well-organized civil defense bureaucracy, the Service de la Protection Civil. However, as was the case in Britain, the many demands of the post-war period meant that civil defense was swept by the wayside. Domestic political instability, austere budgets, and overseas commitments mandated a drastically different approach. As a result, active military defense rather than passive protection of the country’s population became the watchword of successive French governments, especially after General Charles de Gaulle’s ascension to power in 1958. Instead of mass evacuation and bunkers (two strategies

591 The British Cold War civil defense program remains an understudied subject. A brief, if somewhat dated introduction to the subject is provided in Lawrence Vak, The Limits of Civil Defense in the USA, Switzerland, Britain, and the Soviet Union: The Evolution of Politics Since 1945 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), and Michael Dewar, Defense of the Nation (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1989).
quickly dismissed because of their impracticality) or rescue and recovery services, the French government in the 1950s publicly advocated in favor of collective military security. France also privately worked towards the goal of establishing its own independent nuclear force, a goal it achieved in 1960. More important, in the opinion of one contemporary observer, was the fact that, despite official protestations to the contrary, the French refused to contemplate civil defense constructively, and failed “to take action that [would] materially improve its flaccid survival posture.”

Sweden and Switzerland, neutral countries to the north and south of the Federal Republic, were in far better shape, and for most of the early-Cold War period served as examples for what committed governments might achieve. Visitors to the headquarters of the Royal Swedish Civil Defense Administration in Stockholm—and in the 1950s and 1960s these visitors were many—saw plenty of tangible signs of a robust program. In addition to a long-established legislative and administrative framework, both of which predated the Second World War, the Swedish government had at its disposal a large, well-equipped rescue and recovery service, carefully thought-out evacuation plans, and an extensive network of underground bunkers that could, in theory, shelter nearly half the country’s population as well as a significant portion of its military forces. Moreover, unlike its European neighbors, during the opening decades of the Cold War Swedish authorities met with some success in convincing homeowners and businesses to build shelters in the basements of most new construction. Despite the lack of systematic scholarly studies on the subject, the available evidence suggests that the Swedish civil defense program enjoyed one other important resource: popular support. While not all Swedes were in favor of civil defense, especially after the mid-1950s when the viability of mass evacuation planning became increasingly tenuous, the fact remains that successive governments actively supported the

592 Murphey and Klinge, “Civil Defense Abroad,” 82.
program. More generally, most Swedes viewed a robust civil defense program as a vital means for remaining free of foreign influences and preserving their country’s neutrality.\textsuperscript{593}

Like the Swedes, the Swiss viewed civil defense as a critical part of the shield that defended their country. “Modern warfare knows no fronts or frontiers,” a Swiss officer wrote at the beginning of the 1960s, “[and] in case of conflict the army and civilian population will have the same fate and must be willing to make mutual sacrifices in order to survive and preserve their liberty and their independence.”\textsuperscript{594} In the early-1950s, the Korean War and development of the hydrogen bomb spurred the Swiss government into revamping its shelter efforts, and a decade later roughly half the civilian population had access to bunkers that provided protection from nuclear, chemical, and biological attacks. The immediate post-war period also witnessed the creation of a comprehensive legal and administrative framework for Switzerland’s civil defense program, and well-trained and equipped rescue and recovery services. International crises also caused the Swiss to reconsider their approach to voluntary participation in civil defense activities. The Federal Civil Protection Law, approved through a popular referendum at the end of 1962, made all able-bodied males liable for civil defense duty and required people to fully cooperate with civil defense officials in times of national emergency. However, despite (or perhaps because of) the comprehensive nature of their early-Cold War civil defense planning, Swiss officials constantly found themselves at odds with a considerable portion of the public. The 1962 Federal Civil Protection Law was, in fact, a scale-backed version of a measure rejected by Swiss voters in 1959. The extent of anti-civil defense sentiment within the Swiss population was such that

\textsuperscript{593} For a contemporary report on Swedish civil defense planning see Ake Sundelin, Der Stand des schwedischen Zivilschutzes, trans. Herbert Alboth (Bern: Bundesamt für Zivilschutz, 1966).

\textsuperscript{594} Ibid., 78-80.
throughout the late-1950s and 1960s government officials mounted ambitious public relations campaigns and underwrote the activities of the country’s largest private civil defense organization, the Swiss Union for Civil Protection [Union Suisse pour la protection civil or Schweizerischer Zivilschutzverband].

Comparisons with the Federal Republic’s most important non-European ally, the United States, are less clear-cut. On the one hand, U.S. Cold War civil defense planning began much earlier than similar efforts in the Federal Republic. Although never physically threatened by enemies, the U.S. nonetheless developed a comprehensive national civil defense system by the end of the Second World War, and much of this system remained intact in the years following. Admittedly, the immediate post-war period saw U.S. officials pay little attention to civil defense, relying instead on the country’s nuclear monopoly to protect the nation. But the Soviet Union’s first successful nuclear test in August 1949 shattered American complacency and forced the nation’s leaders to reevaluate their approach towards security. As U.S. officials scrambled to adjust their planning to reflect the reality of a nuclear-capable Soviet Union, civil defense reemerged as a topic of serious discussion. Subsequent international crises—the Korean War and apprehensions about the “loss of China” facilitated the quick passage of civil defense-related legislation. The most notable of this was the 1950 Federal Civil Defense Act, which created an independent agency, the Federal Civil Defense Administration, or FCDA, to oversee the country’s civil defense program.

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595 Scholars have devoted more attention to the Swiss Cold War civil defense program. Contemporary reports are found in Murphey and Klinge, “Civil Defense Abroad, 78-80; and the brief overview (“50 Ans de l’USPC”) provided the Swiss Civil Defense Office, the Union Suisse pour la protection civil, available on-line at http://www.szsv-uspc.ch/50jahre/50b.htm (accessed 1 March 2005).

On the other hand, as several recent studies of the early-Cold War U.S. civil defense program show, the 1950s and early-1960s witnessed very few actual accomplishments. After its establishment as an independent agency the FCDA proposed a number of measures intended to protect Americans from a nuclear strike, not a few of which today, a half century after the fact, seem absurd, pathetically inadequate, or both. The first Operation ALERT mass evacuation exercise held in 1955, for example, was marred by questionable planning assumptions—three of the fifty-three participating cities simply assumed that all the attacking Soviet bombers had been shot down before reading their target—and uneven seriousness on the part of participants—one cabinet member arrived late at their secret shelter because they stopped for lunch along the way!597 Congressional hesitation precluded any chance of implementing a large-scale bunker construction program, and by 1959 the country was capable of housing less than one percent of its population in blast-proof shelters.598 Even the greater emphasis on personal fallout shelters in the late-1950s and early-1960s was patently absurd in the face of official, if secret, government reports which showed how a nuclear war would blanket whole sections of the country, including most of the East Coast, with dangerous radioactive fallout in less than twenty-four hours. “Any shelter system short one that places the nation’s entire population and industry permanently underground,” the American Association for the Advancement of Science’s Committee on Science in the Promotion of Human Welfare proclaimed in 1962, “can be negated by a corresponding increase in the attacker’s power.”599


Finally, it is important to note that in one important respect, at least, West Germany’s civil defense officials enjoyed a considerable advantage over their U.S. colleagues. Until October 1962, U.S. civil defense planning and preparations took place in the form of an intellectual exercise. U.S. officials, and by the early-1960s the public, knew that a nuclear war would devastate their country and society, of course, but only in an abstract, intellectual sense. Admittedly, the bleak truth and morbid speculation of best-selling authors and popular television series such as *The Twilight Zone* conditioned Americans to think about nuclear war as an unending threat hovering in the background of daily life. However, as Val Patterson, Eisenhower’s director of the Civil Defense Administration noted in 1955, many Americans refused to move nuclear war from the realm of intellectual activity to actual fact. Patterson told reporters, “the American people have simply not accepted the possibility yet of an enemy attack by intercontinental bombers carrying these tremendous nuclear weapons.”

Seven years later, Kennedy’s first director of civil defense, Frank Ellis, also remarked on the inability of most Americans to fully appreciate the danger that threatened the nation. Given their country’s geographical location and historical experience, Americans’ ability to domesticate but not internalize that threat of nuclear war is understandable, for popular fiction, television shows, and government reports could only go so far in conveying the full implications of a nuclear war. Most West Germans, on the other hand, knew all too well what any war entailed. For the millions of men, women, and children who had lived through the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaign or desperate flight from the Soviet armies during the closing months of the war, concern about the future was based on fearful memories of the past.

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The second concluding question of this study centers on significance; specifically, why is the history of an ill-developed program worth serious scholarly attention. The answer to this question is twofold. First and foremost, the Federal Republic’s early-Cold War civil defense experience tells us much about the process by which West Germans individually and collectively worked to create a new national identity in the post-war period. Notably, the country’s civil defense program served different purposes for different people. For proponents of rearmament, civil defense served as a means to achieve the important but controversial goal of full integration into the Western security alliance. As we have seen, even when nuclear weapons were removed from the debate, West German rearmament polarized the nation. A slim majority of people accepted Adenauer’s argument that the nation’s (and Western Europe’s) security was best secured through a robust West German military, but a sizeable portion of the population did not. Opposition to Adenauer’s rearmament policy coalesced around several different arguments. For many opponents, committing the country to the western security alliance effectively precluded any chance of German reunification. Polls showed that many people felt Adenauer’s rearmament policy dramatically increased the chance that the country might find itself the victim of a devastating war. Still others wondered whether the money devoted to buying tanks and aircraft was not better spent on public housing, schools, and other social programs. While a national civil defense program could not allay all the criticism directed at the government’s efforts to rearm the country, it helped blunt some public concern that rearmament decreased West Germans’ overall safety. In other words, civil defense allowed CDU/CSU politicians to fulfill their vision of creating a West German identity that included a robust national military.

For the conservative political and social coalition that dominated the country in the 1950s and early-1960s, civil defense also served as a means to define the nature of West Germany’s nascent democracy. As we have seen, the programs outlined in the 1957 Civil Defense Law and
1963 Emergency Law Package both called for and presumed a federalist structure in which central government authorities possessed considerable power. This had practical ramifications. In the realm of intra-government relations, for example, the proposed civil defense program conferred the legal right to impose considerable burdens on state and local authorities. In the sphere of an individual’s relationship with the state, government civil defense proponents clearly felt that society’s collective need must, if necessary, take precedence over individual rights and desires. While it is unfair to suggest that civil defense proponents envisioned a state as omnipresent and intrusive as that advocated by the National Socialists, a sizeable minority clearly felt that West German democracy must include a strong central authority.

In addition to stressing the overall importance of a powerful central authority, West Germany’s early-Cold War civil defense program also helped perpetuate traditional, conservative social and cultural norms, especially in the 1950s. This is most clearly seen in official policy regarding CDAS recruitment and FCDA propaganda. Throughout the 1950s, federal and state civil defense officials expressed considerable ambivalence about accepting women into the CDAS. Even though they made important contributions to the country’s wartime rescue and recovery services, many civil defense proponents questioned whether women should perform a similar role in the post-war period, for doing so was at odds with the type of family structure they hoped to create. The historian Robert G. Moeller has argued convincingly “in the nuclear age of the Cold War, nuclear families were the first line of defense against the communist menace.”602 West German civil defense planners almost assuredly would have agreed with Moeller’s assessment, but nonetheless divided a family’s contributions along gender lines. As a result, during initial discussions about the CDAS’s mission and organization, the country’s civil defense

leadership, all of whom were men, relegated women to those services that mostly closely resembled the care and nurturing they traditionally provided to their families. In a post-attack environment women were expected to prepare food and coffee, distribute blankets and clothing, and care for lost children while their fathers, brothers, and husbands dug survivors out of country’s ruined cities or dealt with radioactive fallout. It was only after they experienced widespread recruiting shortfalls that civil defense officials proved more willing to accept women into all the CDAS’s different units.

Yet even this acceptance was uneven, for the FCDA’s propaganda and informational campaigns of the 1950s and early-1960s reveal that civil defense officials envisioned different roles for different groups of women. The illustrated Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz ZB, for example, routinely printed photographs of female CDAS volunteers, but apparently only if they were young, photogenic, and (although never explicitly stated) unmarried. For older women or those with children, the country’s civil defense leaders envisioned a much different role: that of the family guardian. Thus, as civil defense began serious implementation efforts in the late-1950s and early-1960s, West Germans saw images of attractive young women modeling gasmasks or bandaging wounded survivors juxtaposed with photographs of housewives dutifully storing the emergency provisions their families needed to survive.

Is it important to note, however, that the country’s civil defense program also served the needs of West Germans who opposed Adenauer’s vision of the future. For example, the SPD’s national leadership did not utterly reject the idea of civil defense as an important element of West German national identity. As we have seen, in the opening decades of the Cold War SPD politicians supported the government’s civil defense program far more enthusiastically than their right-of-center colleagues, and constantly sought to divert resources allocated for the country’s military to the task of protecting civilians. Of course, much of this support was motivated by
political considerations, for debate about civil defense helped highlight the SPD’s opposition to rearmament and Adenauer’s quest for nuclear weapons. However, SPD support for civil defense conformed to the Party’s broader vision of the country’s post-war identity. Throughout the 1950s and early-1960s the fundamental difference between CDU/CSU and SPD civil defense proponents was the extent to which they were willing to support the program financially. Unlike their CDU colleagues, SPD politicians apparently viewed civil defense in roughly the same terms as other social welfare programs. Just as the state had a responsibility provide a certain minimal existence in terms of housing, nutrition, education, and health care, it also bore the moral obligation to protect its citizens from the devastating effects of modern war.

In the end, however, it is the program’s political failure that is most important for expanding our understanding of West German national identity in the opening decades of the Cold War. As we have seen, three general factors contributed to the program’s ultimate failure: the CDU/CSU’s unwillingness to fund its own program; a general perception that the government’s plans were both horribly inadequate and overly intrusive; and widespread concern that effective civil defense required too much in terms of individual and collective sacrifice. The factors were interconnected. In the early and mid-1950s, West German civil defense planners developed what they believed was an effective means to protect the Federal Republic’s civilian population should the country find itself embroiled in another war. Ambitious in scale and scope, the program stood little chance of success without considerable political and financial support. Unfortunately, while national politicians were willing to provide the former, the latter was conspicuously absent for most of the 1950s and early-1960s. Even more problematic was the fact that national politicians chose to support those elements of the program that generated the least interest and support of the West German public. Early warning systems, communication infrastructure upgrades, and pre-positioned medical supplies were undoubtedly important, but
provided little psychological or physical comfort to a population conditioned to think of either mass evacuation or bunkers as the best means to survive a war. The government’s refusal to fund its own civil defense work in the late-1950s proved disastrous when it sought to expand the program’s scope at the beginning of the next decade.

The civil defense program called for in the 1963 Emergency Laws was, in fact, a mature vision predicated on a realistic assessment of the country’s vulnerability and resources. Unfortunately for federal civil defense officials, this mature vision of the country’s civil defense need demanded personal and collective sacrifice: state and local governments and individuals were asked to accept a greater federal presence as part of their daily existence. Neither state and local officials nor great numbers of West Germans proved willing to accept this sacrifice. The former, we have seen, repeatedly questioned the arrangements proposed by their federal colleagues and delayed implementation of more controversial ideas, such as constructing public shelters. In some cases, such as requiring mandatory civil defense training in schools, state officials refused outright to further the federal government’s civil defense agenda. The accessible archival record reveals that limited resources played an important role this recalcitrance, especially in the 1960s. The federal government’s failure in the mid- and late-1950s to adequately fund its civil defense work inevitably meant increased resistance to the idea of expanding the scope of its activities. Stated differently, politicians in Bremen, Düsseldorf, Hannover, Mainz and other state capitals had little reason to expect anything other than parsimonious support for the federally mandated programs called for in the 1963 Emergency Law Package. As a result, state and local officials might (and did) support civil defense in principle, but ultimately rejected the more centralized federalist system called for in West Germany’s Cold War civil defense legislation.
A similar dynamic is apparent when we turn our attention to the West German public. As we have seen, the civil defense program called for in the 1957 Civil Defense Law was far from perfect, and its narrow technical focus reaped bitter fruit. In the years following the law’s introduction and passage experts of all sorts attacked the government’s civil defense program as dated, unworkable, and insufficient for the nuclear era. In doing so they cast serious doubt on the ability of government planners to understand and formulate an adequate response to the dangers of modern war, which in turn lessened the power and prestige of the government’s technocratic bureaucracy. With the benefit of hindsight we can see once again that the federal government’s tragic failure to fund its own civil defense work only exacerbated the problem. The one civil defense strategy most experts considered even marginally effective—protective shelters—was the one most consistently under-funded. This placed the Interior Ministry’s civil defense experts in the awkward position of either expressing public support for measures their political superiors had no intention of funding, or supporting programs which the majority of West Germans considered pathetically inadequate. Given the credibility gap that existed in the late-1950s and early-1960s, it is not surprising that federal officials found the public so unwilling to embrace the expanded program called for the 1963 Emergency Laws. Even if the program made sense given the country’s geo-strategic position and limited resources, why should people support measures that imposed more onerous burdens on their daily lives and potentially threatened to curtail elements of their newly-created democracy? In other words, the government’s early failures provided West Germans with little incentive to curtail democratic freedoms for what they perceived as only an incremental increase in protection. By the mid-1960s, West Germans individually and collectively decided that civil defense was simply not worth the price. In doing so they made a momentous decision about the fundamental nature of the Federal Republic’s existence, its political system, and the structure of its society.
When viewed in this context, we can see clearly that West Germany’s early-Cold War civil defense experience is also significant for the way in which it enhances our understanding and appreciation of the challenge of writing twentieth-century German history. That such a challenge exists is an idea discussed by an increasing number of scholars as they work to understand and historicize a turbulent twentieth century. In the introduction to their thoughtful exploration on the subject, for example, the eminent scholars Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer suggest the need for a fundamental reassessment of how we examine the contradictory complexity that is the twentieth century German past, and emphasize most particularly the importance of joining the first half of the century with the second. However, as the authors note, achieving this fundamental reassessment is far from easy, for doing so requires us to deconstruct enduring conventions of periodization and focus.

Despite the fact that the current study is beholden to the conventions Jarausch and Geyer question, it nonetheless supports their point. The West German civil defense experience is unquestionably a subject that defies conventional periodization. While it is true that the programs approved by West German politicians in the late-1950s and early-1960s were “new” in the sense that their legislative and administrative frameworks were created after 1945, it is equally clear that the Weimar and National Socialist civil defense experience exerted an undue influence on the post-1945 process. The continuity between the two halves of the century is striking. In the opening decades of the nuclear era technocrats who served in the Weimar and National Socialist bureaucracies formulated a civil defense policy predicated as much on the country’s Second World War experience as on the challenges facing the Federal Republic. Likewise, public and private debate about the role of civil defense after 1945 centered on topics similar to those

discussed, albeit far less freely, prior to the birth of the nuclear age. In the 1930s, as in the 1950s, civilians wished to know how they might survive a war waged with weapons capable of widespread devastation. Moreover, the West German early-Cold War civil defense experience also reveals remarkable continuity in fears about poorly understood threats posed by well-known scientific and technical advances. Gas, the great horror of the interwar period, was replaced by radioactive fallout as the vaguely understood but nonetheless menacing horror that threatened the civilian populations. Finally, it is important to note that the problem of periodization is present not only in the origins, but also the conclusion of West German civil defense. Traditionally, twentieth century German history is organized into periods of stability book-ended, in the words of Jarausch and Geyer, by instances of rupture. Although further work on the country’s late-Cold War experience is still necessary, it is nonetheless possible to ask what we are to do with a program that ended not with the bang of 1968 or 1989, but rather the inconclusive whimper of 1965 and the early-1990s.

The example of West Germany’s early-Cold War civil defense program also supports Jarausch and Geyer’s call for rethinking commonly accepted research foci. A new approach to writing about the German experience, Jarausch and Geyer argue, “…needs to break through the crust of a single narrative history…[and dissolve] the single overarching story of the nation into multiple histories….” To achieve this, Jarausch and Geyer posit that future work must focus for themes that cut across politics, society, economy, and culture. Civil defense is one such theme. While this current study emphasizes the political aspect of West German civil defense, it nonetheless illustrates the topic’s larger social and cultural dimensions, and provides possibilities for future research. To fully understand the West German civil defense experience requires not

604 Ibid., 17.
605 Ibid.
only exploration of the country’s political and social history, but also an appreciation for how West German society and culture was affected by the specter of nuclear annihilation. It is here that considerable work still remains to be done. This final topic, in particular, offers considerable scope for future research, especially if compared with the Cold War experience of other countries.

The final concluding question of this study is that of continuing relevance: specifically, what can twenty-first century readers learn from West Germany’s early-Cold War civil defense experience? Here three observations seem particularly noteworthy. First, it is clear that the situation in which the Federal Republic found itself during the opening decades of the Cold War is strikingly similar to the one confronting the international community nearly a half-century later. This study demonstrates that in the 1950s and early-1960s, a country, its political leaders, and citizens were forced to consider the fundamental question: how could they protect a democratic, pluralistic society from an ill-defined but credible threat to their existence? The question was far from academic. Even though considerable existed as to their potential impact, few of the Federal Republic’s inhabitants doubted that either superpower would hesitate to use such weapons should war break out in Central Europe. Yet as destructive as these weapons were, many people, including those involved in the country’s civil defense program, believed, or at least frequently hoped, that adequate preparation would, and could, protect West Germans should a war occur. The question, of course, was at what price? As this dissertation shows, little consensus existed within West Germany about the extent to which people should sacrifice individual and collective freedoms in exchange for protection. A parallel situation exists today. After the September 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., the idea of a vague but menacing threat has re-emerged as an important subject in public and political
discourse, especially in the United States. As the flurry of recent legislation, books, news articles, television programs, and internet sites suggests, the threats facing democratic, pluralistic societies are potentially more menacing than those of the Cold War. Technological innovation and bubbling international instability fueled by economic inequality and religious and cultural intolerance is a deadly combination that demands creative, nuanced responses that threatened individuals and societies may be unable to find. Nonetheless, there also exists a widespread hope that the threat may be contained, whether by unilateral action, greater political and cultural sensitivity and engagement, or through other, as of yet untested, solutions.

Moreover, early-Cold War West German civil defense offers an important warning on how best to protect societies from vague, menacing threats by highlighting, above all else, the importance of patience. West Germans faced a number of challenges in the opening decades of the Cold War, but overshadowing all others was the need to prove the viability and durability of the country’s democratic institutions. The presence of large, nuclear-armed forces both explicitly and implicitly complicated the task of overcoming this challenge, as did the outbreak of repeated international crises. Given the vulnerable geo-strategic position in which the country found itself, the fact that the majority of West Germans demanded, and received, careful and thoughtful deliberation of how they might best protect themselves is remarkable indeed, especially in light of

\[606\] In contrast to the United States, terrorism is a familiar phenomenon for millions of people, a fact too often overlooked in contemporary American debates on the subject. As Yonah Alexander writes in the introduction to European Terrorism: Today and Tomorrow (New York: Brassey’s (US) Inc., 1992), “terrorism has become a permanent fixture of contemporary life.” In Europe, at least, the pressure of a vague but menacing threat roughly equivalent to today’s situation has existed at various times from the early Middle Ages onwards. The same feelings of unease, or full-blown dread, exhibited by many people as they contemplate the re-emergence of terrorist activity inspired by religious fundamentalism or anti-western sentiment are not so different from those of people forced to live through the Viking invasions of the ninth and tenth centuries, the “reign of terror” that occurred during the French Revolution, or the Russian Civil War. In the 1960s, as a result of the emergence of indigenous separatist movements, the rise of Palestinian extremism, and the expansion of state-sponsored by countries such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Libya, terrorism had become a permanent fixture in European life.
the disastrous interwar experience. Rather than unquestioningly accept the government’s protection prescription, the legislators charged with representing and safeguarding the public took the time necessary to thoroughly examine and understand the short- and long-term consequences of the civil defense program they were asked to approve. So, too, did a vast array of non-governmental organizations and groups, all of which contributed to the discussion about the proper role of civil defense in a pluralist, democratic society. As a result, when West Germans approved and rejected elements of the government’s conceptualization of civil defense in the 1950s and 1960s, they did so after a multi-year period of public debate and thoughtful reflection. While the ultimate decision to reject important elements of the 1963 Emergency Law Package may have raised questions about the short-term viability of West Germany’s democracy, the extensive public debate about the choice nonetheless strengthened that institution in the long run. The importance of meaningful, substantive public debate about public policy with the potential to dramatically reshape the foundational tenants of society is no less meaningful in today’s climate of uncertainty and instability than it was during the opening decades of the Cold War.

Finally, the Federal Republic’s attempt to create and implement a comprehensive system of national civil defense raises important questions about the extent to which a pluralist, democratic society must compromise itself in order to secure its existence. In the opening decades of the Cold War, the Federal Republic’s civil defense establishment offered West Germans a deceptively simple proposition: embrace the government’s civil defense program and enjoy some hope of surviving a future war. In practical terms this meant agreeing to a certain degree of sacrifice. In the 1950s, this sacrifice primarily took the form of financial support: preparations to evacuate the country’s cities, building bunkers, and equipping rescue and recovery services required money that could otherwise support the construction of schools and hospitals, fund pensions for war victims, or rebuild the country’s industrial economic infrastructure. While
it is true that the country’s actual civil defense expenditures remained relatively small throughout the 1950s, especially when compared to other major categories such as defense spending, the potential cost was very high indeed, a fact repeatedly noted by Finance Minister Schäffer and his successors. Full implementation of the protective shelter program called for in the 1957 Civil Defense Law would have unquestionably affected many other government programs. The fact that West German legislators refused to compromise these other programs at the expense of civil defense speaks volumes about the extent to which West Germans were willing to accept a partial militarization of daily existence.

West Germans’ unwillingness to compromise basic values is even more apparent in the early and mid-1960s during debate about the government’s expanded civil defense program. In contrast to the program outlined in the 1957 Civil Defense Law, the 1963 Emergency Law package demanded far more in terms of individual and collective sacrifice. To the burden of greater financial expenditures was added that of an unquestionable militarization of daily existence. Supporting their government’s plan for their survival required West Germans to accept involuntary personal service, greater state intrusion and regulation, and the probable restriction, or even outright termination, of democratic rights and freedoms during periods of national crisis. Were these unreasonable demands in light of the fact that they promised the possibility of surviving a future war? When all was said and done, West Germans believed they were. In 1965, Bundestag representatives rejected the more controversial elements proposed expansion of the government’s program because of the cost, stating, in effect, that civil defense was less important than social programs and continuing efforts to rebuild the country’s military forces. Subsequent debate and actions tacitly reinforced this decision.

Thus, in an era characterized by rapid and uncertain responses to a global war on terrorism, the significance of the West German experience is all the more meaningful. During the
period in which this study was written, more than fifty countries have passed new legislation intended to protect their citizens from this ill-defined but nonetheless credible menace, and have begun the task of reorganizing their society to fight this new threat. Simultaneously, people throughout the world are reassessing long-held, fundamental beliefs about personal freedom, the limits of democracy, and the personal and collective sacrifice necessary to perpetuate both. Like Cold War West Germans, today’s democracies will have to decide if greater security is worth sacrificing a measure of individual liberty.
APPENDIX A

FEDERAL INTERIOR MINISTRY, CIVIL DEFENSE DIVISION

ORGANIZATIONAL PLANS
Appendix A

Federal Interior Ministry, Civil Defense Division

Organizational Plans

As is the case with most government organizations, the civil defense bureaucracy within the West German Interior Ministry changed considerably during the 1950s and first half of the 1960s. The following organizational charts trace this evolution. A comparison of the nine organization charts not only reveals that the size of the country’s civil defense bureaucracy increased over time, but also the fact that it grew more complex and specialized. In the early-1950s, for example, civil defense was merely one of several sub-divisions that made up the Public Safety Division [Öffentliche Sicherheit], broadly defined as law enforcement, within the Interior Ministry. Within the civil defense sub-division, all planning and implementation activity was performed by a handful of officials with very broad areas of responsibility. At the end of 1965, by way of contrast, civil defense planning was no longer considered to be a part of the law enforcement. The chief of the Civil Defense Division reported directly to one of the Interior Ministry’s two state secretaries, and oversaw the work of sixteen separate offices staffed by civil servants and retired military officers whose work focused on narrow, and in some cases highly technical, subjects. The following organizational plans are adopted from the larger, Ministry-wide plans issued during the 1950s and first half of the 1960s. Copies of the original organizational plans are available in BA B106, “Organisationen Pläne.”
Organization Plan
Federal Interior Ministry, Civil Defense Division
(April 1952)

Interior Minister
(Dr. Lehr)

Staatssekretär I
(Ritter von Lex)

Abteilung IV
Öffentliche Sicherheit
(MIN DIR Egidi)

Unterabteilung ZB
Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz
(MIN DIRG Bauch)

Referat ZB 1
Allgemeine Angelegenheiten, Rechtsfragen, Zusammenarbeit mit den Ländern
(MIN RAT Bargatzky)

Referat ZB 2
Bundessachleistungsgesetz, Landbeschaffung
(VERW DIR Forschbach)

Referat ZB 3
Schutz- und Helfmassnahmen für die Bevölkerung, Einsatz des DRK, Schutzzonen
(ORR v. Vierack)

Referat ZB 4
Luftschutz (Planung, Forschung, Technik), THW
(MIN RAT Hampe)

Referat ZB 5
Luftschutz (Recht, Verwaltung, Selbstschutz)
(ORR Schneppel)

Referat ZB 6
Fernmeldwesen
(COL a.D. Frey)

Organization Plan
Federal Interior Ministry, Civil Defense Division
(October 1952)

Interior Minister
(Dr. Lehr)

Staatssekretär I
(Ritter von Lex)

Abteilung IV
Öffentliche Sicherheit
(MIN DIR Egidi)

Unterabteilung ZB
Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz
(MIN DIRG Bauch)

Referat ZB 1
Allgemeine Angelegenheiten, Rechtsfragen, Zusammenarbeit mit den Ländern
(MIN RAT Bargatzky)

Referat ZB 2
Bundessachleistungsgesetz, Landbeschaffung
(VERW DIR Forschbach)

Referat ZB 3
Schutz- und Helfmassnahmen für die Bevölkerung, Einsatz des DRK, Schutzzonen
(ORR v. Vierack)

Referat ZB 4
Luftschutz (Planung, Forschung, Technik), THW
(MIN RAT Hampe)

Referat ZB 5
Luftschutz (Recht, Verwaltung, Selbstschutz)
(ORR Schneppel)

Referat ZB 6
Fernmeldwesen
(COL a.D. Frey)
Organization Plan

Federal Interior Ministry, Civil Defense Division
(September 1953)

Interior Minister
(Dr. Lehr)

Staatssekretär I
(Ritter von Lex)

Abteilung IV
Öffentliche Sicherheit
(MIN DIR Egadi)

Unterabteilung ZB
Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz
(MIN DIR Bauch)

Referat ZB 1
Allgemeine Angelegenheiten, Rechtsfrage, ZuVG Betrag
(MIN RAT Bargatzky)

Referat ZB 2
Bundeswehrhilfsgesetz, Landbeschaffung
(VERW DIR Forschbach)

Referat ZB 3
Schutz- und Hilfsmassnahmen für die Bevölkerung, Einsätze des DRK, Schutzzonen
(MIN RAT Frhr. V. Fritsch)

Referat ZB 4
Luftschutz (Planung, Forschung, Technik), THW
(MIN RAT Hampe)

Referat ZB 5
Luftschutz (Recht, Verwaltung, Selbstschutz)
(ORR Scheppel)

Referat ZB 6
Ausbildung, Anweisung
(REG DIR Dr. Schmidt)

Referat ZB 7
Luftschutz (Wärmedienst, Alarm- u. Fernmeldewesen)
(COL a.D. Frey)

Organization Plan

Federal Interior Ministry, Civil Defense Division
(February 1957)

Interior Minister
(Dr. Schröder)

Staatssekretär I
(Ritter von Lex)

Abteilung ZB
Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz
(MIN DIR Bauch)

Referat ZB 1
Generalsreferat des ziv. Luftschutzes
(MIN RAT Schneppel)

Referat ZB 2
Ziv. Notstandsplannung
(ORR v. Wersebe)

Referat ZB 3
Zusammenarbeit m. NATO, Ziv. Bevölkerungsschutz im Ausland
(ORR v. Wersebe)

Referat ZB 4
Organisation u. Ausbildung d. ziv. Luftschutzes
(MIN RAT v. Dressing)

Referat ZB 5
Selbstschutz, Industrieluftschutz, Luftschutz d. bes. Verwaltungen
(i.V. MIN RAT v. Dresing)

Referat ZB 6
Recht und Gesetzgebung
(MIN RAT Dr. Schmidt)

Referat ZB 7
Haushalt, Beschaffungsges. u. Hilfsmassnahmen f.d. ziv. Bevölkerung
(MIN RAT Dr. Schaar)

Referat ZB 8
Techn. Aufgaben im Luftschutz
(REG DIR Schmitt)

Referat ZB 9
Atom- und Gasschutz
(i.V. MIN RAT Schneppel)

Referat ZB 10
LS-Warndienst, Fernmeldewesen im Luftschutz
(GEN a.D. Gosewisch)
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### Organization Plan

**Federal Interior Ministry, Civil Defense Division**

*(June 1962)*

**Interior Minister**
(Dr. Hörcherl)

**Staatssekretär**
(Prof. Dr. Hölzl)

#### Abteilung VII
Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz
(MIN DIR Bargatzky)

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<td>Übungen (COL a.D. Eckstein)</td>
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<td>Frage der personellen u. materiellen Bedarfsdeckung (ORR DIR Dr. Hey; ORR Dr. Eichstädt)</td>
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### Organization Plan

**Federal Interior Ministry, Civil Defense Division**

*(October 1964)*

**Interior Minister**
(Dr. Hörcherl)

**Staatssekretär**
(Prof. Dr. Hölzl)

#### Abteilung VII
Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz
(MIN DIR Thomsen)

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<td>Außenabteilung, Erkennungsdienst (ORR Bönsch)</td>
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<td>Zivildienset Gesetz, Erfassungswesen (REG DIR Dr. Hey)</td>
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<td>Leistungsschutz (MIN RAT Dr. Fischler)</td>
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<td>Zivile Alarmplanung (Open)</td>
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<td>Führung und Einsatz (COL a.D. von Boeltzig)</td>
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<td>Übungen (COL a.D. Eckstein)</td>
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<td>Referat VII B5</td>
<td>Frage der personellen u. materiellen Bedarfsdeckung (ORR DIR Dr. Hey; ORR Dr. Eichstädt)</td>
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<td>Referat VII B6</td>
<td>Fernmeldefragen d. ziv. Notstandsmassnahmen, Warn- u. Alarmdienst (COL i. BGS Boullay)</td>
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**Organisation Plan**

**Federal Interior Ministry, Civil Defense Division**

(December 1965)

**Interior Minister**  
(Dr. Lücke)

| Staatssekretär  
(Prof. Dr. Ernst)

**Abteilung VII**  
Ziviler Bevölkerungsschutz  
(MIN DIR Thomsen)

---

**Unterabteilung VII A**  
Zivilschutz, Zivildienstgesetz, Leistungszweck  
(MIN RAT von Wersebe)

- Referat VII A1: Generalfalter  
- (MIN RAT von Wersebe)
- Referat VII A2: Organisations- und Grundsatzfragen des Zivilschutzes  
  (ORR Hölder)
- Referat VII A3: Ausbildung und Desamtsvorsorge des Zivilschutzes, Dienstrechtliche Vorschriften  
  (MIN RAT Dr. Hey)
- Referat VII A4: Zivildienstgesetz, Erlasswesen, Leistungszweck  
  (MIN RAT Platz)
- Referat VII A5: Selbstschutzgesetz (MIN RAT Dr. Roeder)
- Referat VII A6: Technisch-wissenschaftliche Fragen des Zivilschutzes  
  (MIN RAT Dipl.-Ing. Schmitt)
- Referat VII A7: Baubarmmaßnahmen (ORR Dr. Ing. Michel)
- Referat VII A8: LSHD, Hilfsorganisationen, Katastrophenhilfe  
  (ORR Dr. Scheller)
- Referat VII A9: Aufklärung und Werbung (öffentlichkeitsarbeit), Verkehr mit dem Ausland (auss. NATO)  
  (ORR Dr. Vulpius)

**Unterabteilung VII B**  
Planung, Koordinierung und Leitung ziv. Notstandsmaßnahmen  
(MIN DIR Thomsen)

- Referat VII B1a: Fragen der Gesamtplanung der zivilen Verteidigung, Zivilvorsorgeakademie  
  (MIN RAT Dr. Eichstädt)
- Referat VII B1b: Planung und Koordinierung der zivilen Verteidigung  
  (REG DIR Dr. Schmitt)
- Referat VII B2: Zivile Alarmplanung (REG DIR Dr. Müller)
- Referat VII B3: Frage der personellen und materiellen Bedarfsdeckung  
  (ORR Dr. Aksenat)
- Referat VII B4: Einsatz und Übungen  
  (COL a.D. von Boettig)
- Referat VII B5: Fernmeldefragen der zivilen Verteidigung; Warn- und Alarmdienst  
  (COL i.BGS Boullay)
- Referat VII B6: Aufenthaltsregelung, Erkennungsdienst  
  (MIN RAT Bönsch)
APPENDIX B

WEST GERMAN CIVIL DEFENSE EXPENDITURES, 1955-1965
# Appendix B

West German Civil Defense Expenditures, 1955-1965

(DM million)

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<td>R&amp;D</td>
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**Spending Category Descriptions**

ADMIN: Administrative costs, including insurance for civil defense volunteers and office equipment purchase. (Excludes salaries for civil defense volunteers.)

BUNKER 01: Construction and operational costs associated with bunkers for non-CDAS government personnel.

BUNKER 02: Construction and operational costs associated with public bunkers.
Spending Category Descriptions (continued)

COMM  Communications infrastructure construction and upgrades (including command and control facilities and payments to radio and television stations).

FOOD  Purchase and storage of emergency food supplies.

FUEL  Purchase and storage of emergency fuel supplies, including those allocated to post-attack rescue and recovery operations.

EVAC  Mass evacuation planning and implementation costs, including funds designated to support the construction and equipping of emergency hospitals.

LSHDEQUIP  Purchase, storage, and maintenance of CDAS and TAC equipment, including vehicles.

LSHDTRAIN  Funds to support CDAS-related training and education. Includes funds to support the construction of the training and educational facilities.

LSWARN  Construction, maintenance, and staffing of the country’s early warning system.

MED  Construction, maintenance, and staffing of the country’s early warning system.

PAY01  Payments to government agencies and organizations, including local CDAS and TAC units. (Does not include annual support for the FCDA.)

PAY02  Payments to private agencies and organizations, including the German Red Cross and local volunteer fire-fighting units.

PAYBLSV  Annual support for the FCDA.

PERSONAL  All non-administrative costs for current and former civil defense personnel, including salaries of active-duty CDAS volunteers. (Does not include salary for full-time FCDA staff.)

CULTURE  Funds allocated for programs intended to protect important cultural goods, including collections of national museums and holdings of the federal archives.

PR  Support for public relations work, excluding CDAS recruitment campaigns.

R&D  Funds allocated for research and development activity of all types, including the construction of model protective shelters.

THWDEPLOY  TAC and CDAS peacetime deployment.

TRANSPORT  Transportation infrastructure construction and upgrades, including payments to supplement state transportation infrastructure-related construction projects.

POLICE  Funds to support the creation, equipage, and deployment of auxiliary police units [polizeiliche Hilfskräfte].

UTIL  Funds allocated for programs designed to protect and ensure continuity of vital utilities (electricity, gas, water, and sewage).

TRAIN  Training for non-CDAS and TAC personnel.

SELBST  Self-protection measures.

MONITOR  Funds to support national and international monitoring, primarily of levels of radioactive fallout.

ACADEMY  Construction, maintenance, and staffing of a national civil defense academy.

WATER  Water-transport infrastructure construction and upgrades, including purchase and storage of emergency bridging and port equipment.

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B 126 Bundesfinanzminister
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B 145 Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung
B 201 Bundesamt für zivile Bevölkerungsschutz
B 211 Bundesvereinigung detuschen Frauenverbände und Fraucengruppen gemischten Verbände e.V.
B 372 Bundesverband für den Selbstschutz
NL 0394 Otto Lumitzsch, Direkter der Bundesanstalt Technisches Hlfswerk
NL 1168 Fritz Schäffer
NL 1407 Hermann Höcherl
Zsg1 Schriftreihe *Informationen für die Frau* (hrsg. Informationsdienst für Frauenfragen e.V.)

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I-098 Theodor Blank
I-070 Hans Globke
I-028 Heinrich Krone
I-172 Otto Lenz
I-483 Gerhard Schröder
III-010 Landesverband Hamburg
V 003 Bürgerschaftsfraktion Hamburg
### Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Bestand Annemarie Renger  
Bestand Helmut Schmidt (Korrespondenz)  
Bestand Schmidt-Volkenhausen  
Schriftgutsammlung Informations- und Pressedienste

### Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv

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Bundesverband für den Selbstschutz (BVS), Landesstelle Bayern

### Staatarchiv der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg

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### North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Archives

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### Newspapers and Periodicals

*Bevölkerungsschutz: Magazin für Zivil- und Katastrophenschutz*  
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