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Source: *Comparative Politics*, Oct., 1969, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Oct., 1969), pp. 79-110

Published by: Comparative Politics, Ph.D. Programs in Political Science, City University of New York

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The German NPD

A Psycho-Sociological Analysis of "Neo-Naziism"

Lowell Dittmer*

*Hoerend die Reden die aus deinem Hause dringen,
lacht man. Aber wer dich sieht, der greift nach dem
Messer . . .*

B. Brecht, "Deutschland"***

This article attempts to describe the ideology¹ of the *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (NPD) as expressed in interviews of party leaders² published in the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*, in campaign rhetoric, and in the contents of the official party organ, *Deutsche Nachrichten* (DN). Limited space restricts documentation to one or two quotations illustrating each idea. This description is followed by an analysis of the etiology of these ideas within a conceptual framework constructed on the basis of recent research on the relationship of opinions to personality, employing certain of the analytic techniques of cognitive and dynamic psychology as well as more conventional sociological procedures.

The party's history is short and dramatically successful. The

* I am indebted to N. Leites and L. I. Rudolph of the University of Chicago Political Science Department, to W. Hass of the Department of Human Development, to G. Caspar of the Chicago Law School, and to Dr. G. Pollock of the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis for assistance on this article. All translations (and all faults) are my own.

** *Gesammelte Werke*, IX (Frankfurt, 1967), p. 488.

¹ Ideology is an "ideal" concept, a "synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent . . . concrete individuals." Max Weber, *Methodology of the Social Sciences*, trans. by Edward C. Shils and Henry A. Finch (Glencoe, 1949), p. 90. The component ideas of the party ideology may not be ascribed in their entirety to all NPD voters or even to all members; whenever possible, the description of leaders' beliefs will be augmented by findings of public opinion polls indicating the extent of this acceptance among members and among the general electorate.

² Leaders is here defined to include members who campaign for public office as well as formal party officials.

NPD was conceived in Bielefeld on August 22, 1964, when Adolf von Thadden, a war veteran of aristocratic descent and a seasoned reactionary activist,³ met with several other right-wing leaders and agreed to convoke a founding meeting. On November 28, 708 people attended this meeting; of these, 473 spontaneously applied for membership. One of them was Fritz Thielen, a Hamburg cement manufacturer, who later became president of the party, with Thadden as vice-president.

Despite protests by NPD leaders that the "Bonn parties" exclude the masses from decision-making, one of the few organizational innovations which distinguish the NPD from other German parties allows decision-making power to be concentrated within the hands of an active minority. Paragraph 7 of the constitution rules that within an hour after the beginning of a meeting members are empowered to make decisions "without regard to the number of members present." The effect of this provision, in combination with differential defection rates, has led to the gradual capture of the power structure by the extreme right wing of the party. When Bavarian NPD leader Franz Florian Winter left in June 1966, about 100 others left with him; all defections decimated moderate ranks. The final defeat of the moderates occurred after a comic feud in the summer of 1967 when Thielen, after twice failing to oust the more radical Thadden from the party, was himself expelled, with no recourse but to found his own ill-fated splinter party.⁴

The party was organized on the basis of the already existing structure of the DRP (which was dissolved on December 4, 1965, in order "not to stand in the way [of the NPD] any longer") with the help of about 8,500 activists from the DRP, SRP, and other right-wing groups. By September 1965 there were functioning *Land* (state) organizations in each of the 11 German *Laender*, with 66 *Bezirk* (district), 240 *Ort* (regional), and 336 *Kreis* (local) organizations, representing the NPD in 70 percent of the *Kreise* of the Federal Republic. By April 1, 1966, the number of *Kreis* organizations had increased by 130. A report published by the Ministry of the Interior indicates that the party's rate of expansion in 1966 made it by far the fastest growing political party in West Germany. It gained 11,000 members in 1966, and total membership at the end of the year was 23,000. By March 24, 1967, membership had

³ Thadden was one of six representatives of the *Deutsche Reichspartei* (DRP) in the first *Bundestag* (1949), editor of the *Reichsruf*, and, beginning in 1953, a member of the DRP executive committee.

⁴ Reinhard Kuehn, et al. *Die NPD: Struktur, Programm, und Ideologie einer neo-faschistischen Partei* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 24-26.

climbed to 30,000; by comparison, the SPD at that time had 650,000, the CDU 270,000, the CSU 90,000, and the FDP 10,000 members.⁵

The leaders proceeded cautiously, entering only those elections in which they felt sure of success. In the *Bundestag* election of September 1965, one year after its founding, the party received 2 percent of the vote. Half a year later, in *Gemeinde* (communal) elections in Bavaria and Schleswig-Holstein and in the Hamburg *Buergerschaft* elections, the party doubled or tripled its fall total: in Hamburg 3.9 percent of the vote was won, compared with 1.8 percent five months before; in the 11 Schleswig-Holstein *Gemeinden* in which the party competed it won an average of 10.5 percent of the votes, in contrast with an average of 6 percent in the previous *Bundestag* election. The party won 8.4 percent of the vote in Bayreuth, 8.2 percent in Erlangen, and 7.3 percent in Nuremberg. In sum, 126 NPD representatives were elected to *Kreis* and *Gemeinde* parliaments by the end of 1966.⁶

Evidently emboldened by its successes in local elections, the party subsequently entered selective *Landtag* elections, with impressive results: in Hessian *Landtag* elections in November 1966 it won 7.9 percent of the vote and eight mandates, tripling its share of the vote within a year (and claiming so many former GDP/BHE constituents that the latter party fell below the 5 percent required and was excluded from both *Landtag* and cabinet). In November 1966 in Bavaria the NPD received 7.4 percent of the vote and thirteen mandates, averaging four times its share of the vote in September 1965 (1.8 percent). In October 1967 in Bremen the party received 9 percent of the vote and eight mandates, and in the April 1968 elections in Baden-Wuerttemberg it got 9.8 percent of the vote. Although in the Lower Saxony *Kreis* elections in the Fall of 1968 the party suffered its first setback, drawing only 5.2 percent of the votes, it seems likely that it will win at least 40 of the *Bundestag's* 496 seats in the September 1969 West German general elections.⁷

Political Beliefs

The NPD notion of time, contrary to currently prevailing notions, is that the past was a time of order, virtue, and harmony, while the

⁵ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 July 1966; *New York Times*, 27 May 1967, p. 11. Parties are SPD, Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands; CDU, Christlich-Demokratische Union; CSU, Christlich-Soziale Union; FDP, Freie Demokratische Partei.

⁶ *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), 4 April 1966; *Die Zeit*, 21 March 1967, pp. 3, 19.

⁷ *Die Zeit*, 21 March 1967, p. 19; *Newsweek*, 16 October 1967, pp. 43-44; *Time*, 11 October 1968, p. 24. (This article went to press in July 1969. Ed.)

present is a period of chaos and vice. Because the party devotes such an unusual (even for Germany) amount of attention to past events, the following description of its ideology is divided chronologically. The first section deals with the orientation to the current world, the second with retrospective dispositions.

I. Germany and Her Place in the World

Party image and public image The most prevalent images in the party's self-referring statements are those expressing feelings of monolithic unity, purity, and great power. While the other parties are divisive influences on German political life, the NPD is no *Interessenpartei* but rather a "party of all the people," a "defense movement against the chaotic tendencies which the victory of Bolshevism in alliance with the American left-liberal . . . Roosevelt-circle . . . spread throughout the world." Thielen calls his party a "clean basin for the Germans who turn from the other parties." The feeling that the party embodies massive, burgeoning power is expressed in metaphors in which this power is demonstrated through the infliction of crushing damage: the party is a "national fist" which "sits on the neck" of the Bonn parties; it is swelling on a "great wave of nationalism that is coming on us in Germany like an avalanche."⁸

While the party self-image is unambiguously favorable, its public image is one of disrepute bordering on stigmatization—not only is the NPD explicitly designated "neo-Nazi" in the media, this designation has received legal sanction. Because any "undemocratic" association is constitutionally prohibited in West Germany (the court declared unconstitutional Gen. Remer's *Sozialistische Reichspartei* [SRP] on October 23, 1952; on August 17, 1956, the Communist party was disbanded), the party sought to prevent this identification through a series of lawsuits. The court granted partial satisfaction to the first NPD libel charge, but reversed its decision four months after the 1965 *Bundestag* elections in which the NPD polled 2 percent; the party also lost suits for compensation in Konstanz and Hamburg. Powerless to prevent "general freedom to insult the NPD" through legal channels, the party terminated all trials in process and has since concentrated upon internal disciplinary measures.⁹ Speakers are forbidden indulgence in "*weltanschauliche*" debates or discussions of the "so-called Jewish ques-

⁸ Waldemar Schuetz, ed. *Das Politische Lexikon* (Munich, 1966), p. 97; *Spiegel*, 28 November 1966, pp. 33-53; *New York Times*, 17 November 1966, p. 18.

⁹ *Spiegel*, 31 January 1966, pp. 27-28; *Spiegel*, 26 December 1966, pp. 24-26.

tion" and are evicted upon the slightest indiscretion. *Musterreden* ("model addresses") are centrally distributed and followed so faithfully that a *Landtag* candidate in Goettingen once gave the same answer to a question as *Land* representative Stoeckicht in Stuttgart and Thadden in Erlangen. Despite the panoply of defenses, occasionally invading "slips" suggest that leaders unconsciously identify NPD with NSDAP. Thadden, for example, once referred to the party as "National Socialists" instead of "National Democrats" during an English-language television interview.¹⁰

The state of the nation Germany is felt to be in decline, and the emotional reaction of the NPD to this is expressed in *decomposition* imagery. Though decay is manifest in all cultural spheres—in a "shocking increase in crime," in growing sexual permissiveness, in climbing divorce rates, in a yawning generation gap, in the attenuation of nationalism, in "chaotic" trends in modern art—it arises in all cases from the same failing: a lack of "*Halt*" or self-control. Any sort of emancipation appears as decadence or "nihilism." Relaxation of discipline is responsible not only for the attenuation of "German virtues, selfless dedication unto death, hard work and fulfillment of duty," but for the loss of a "*nationale Gesinnung*"—Germans no longer feel proud of being Germans.¹¹ To restore this *Gesinnung* (which may be translated "consciousness" but also connotes "resolve"), the party manifesto calls for an education to a national *Haltung*: "Not this dissolute (*auschweifende*) life, working ever less and wanting to live ever better. . . . The youth should engage in athletics, do their duty and be joyful. But . . . being unbridled (*Zuegellosigkeit*) is no freedom."¹² The NPD people assume that man's natural impulses are so destruc-

¹⁰ *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966; Kuehnl, pp. 158 ff.; *Spiegel*, 28 November 1966, pp. 33-53.

¹¹ *Spiegel*, 28 November 1966, pp. 33-53. A recent survey by the Allensbach Institut fuer Demoskopie provides empirical support for the content of this assertion. In 1965, 26 percent of the respondents saw no especially advantageous characteristics in their own *Volk*, while in 1953 the corresponding percentage was 6 percent. Otto von der Gablentz, "Nationalismus und Nationalgefuehl im heutigen Deutschland," *Neue Deutsche Hefte*, No. 109, Heft 1 (1966), pp. 3-16.

¹² *Spiegel*, 14 November 1966, pp. 44-47. These sentiments concerning the virtue of rigidity and the vice of freedom resemble those espoused by Erich Jaensch, Hitler-appointed president of the German Psychological Association until his death in 1940. His "antitype" is characterized by tendencies to "slackening" and "dissolution." His ideal German, by contrast, has unambiguous reactions to stimuli—a one-to-one relationship of stimulus and response. Cf. Erich Jaensch, *Der Gegentypus* (Leipzig, 1938).

tive that, left without some sort of "bridle" (*Zuegel*), he will create an abominable mess (*Schweinerei*). Yet their indignation with regard to those who go without *Zuegel* conceals a note of suppressed envy, as if to relax the reins and indulge in a *Schweinerei* must surely be an occasion of savage glee.

With regard to sex, as NPD members value the nurturant role of the "*Mutter und Hausfrau*" but disvalue the sexually arousing (and hence *Halt*-endangering) role of *das Weib*, they object to the commercially lucrative (and hence increasingly frequent) depiction in the media of the German woman as a seductress and the diminishing idealization of *tuechtige* motherhood. This alleged change in image is felt to be a "daily indignity" to the German *Frau*, who is assumed to share the NPD role preference.

While the "shocking increase in crime" is decried in the abstract, the fact that whenever "crime" is qualified as to specific type it is a variant of sexual deviation ("*Sittlichkeitsverbrechen*") suggests a close association between sex and crime in the NPD idea-system, a relationship of mutual implication if not synonymy. It is of interest, for instance, that Thielen calls proponents of a more manifestly sexually motivated approach to mate-selection "criminals of the most evil and brutal sort." Not surprisingly, the NPD enjoins imposition of "severe" sanctions against sex offenders.¹³

If "slackening" is responsible for Germany's decay, what is its cause and how can it be arrested? The reason for the loss of internal moral control is the weakening of *external* authority structures which formerly instilled *Halt*, such as the family: "The family . . . [is] most strongly threatened by the general dissolution and decomposition. . . . Single mothers, whose sassy sons stay home and dissipate while they earn the daily bread . . . plump fathers with thick briefcases who extravagantly put a sports car to the disposal of their offspring, former Nazis who let their pseudo-intellectual sons tell them what to think about their own past. . . . In this way an only apparent superiority of the youth is overvalued, and it's no wonder a gap often appears between parents and children." The authority structure of the schools has also been impaired, according to Thielen. "This continues in the dissolution . . . of all really binding concepts."¹⁴

Two groups are held responsible for the dissolution of authority structures. First, American occupation troops polluted German morality by introducing a "sex wave." Second, an "unscrupulous

¹³ *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966; Kuehnl, pp. 158 ff.

¹⁴ Kuehnl, pp. 158 ff.; *Zeit*, 28 June 1966, p. 6.

clique” “systematically undermines German values.” The most frequently alleged members of this “clique” are the (never specified) directors of the communications and aesthetic media, who the NPD suspect act primarily as instigators rather than as reflections of German cultural and moral changes. “. . . We experience in painting and sculpture no longer the depiction of the beautiful and sublime but rather the abortion (*Ausgeburt*) of sick fantasy, which is then honored with art prizes . . . Radio, television, magazines and newspapers all incite a general disposition to reject every form of authority . . . The intention to cause a general schizophrenia . . . of our people is unmistakable.” (In the role counterposed by the NPD, art and education would be dedicated to “moral purity.”¹⁵)

Since the greatest danger to the tight self-control (*Halt*) valued by the NPD is the sudden outbreak of overwhelming emotional (usually sexual/aggressive) impulse, one might expect a defense against this contingency to take the form of willful rational mastery of impulse accompanied by anaesthetization of emotional experience, but in fact the party advocates a quite different mental stance. The NPD repines over the rationalization of life and the corresponding atrophy of emotional experience and calls for a renaissance of emotion—for “feeling” and “soul,” for “*Blut und Erde*”: “He is healthy who still brings forth strength for inwardness, romantic sensibility and mystic climax (*Innerlichkeit, romantisches Empfinden und mystische Steigerung*), free from the so-called “pluralistic” tendencies of rootless rationalists losing themselves in nihilism.”¹⁶ The party chides Germans for not *feeling* intensely enough about the fate of their nation: “Foreigners who come to Germany must get the impression that Germans don’t torture themselves day and night with their [nation’s] truncated fate but rather . . . fully indulge in a life of pleasure.” This unexpected romanticism may arise because the emotional life of the typical NPD votary is desiccating under the relentless superposition of conscience and will, and the nostalgia for intense feeling is an expression of vaguely sensed personal dysphoria over internal deadening. Of course, the emotions the party seeks to revive are also concentrated upon the *collectivity* rather than upon the individual, thus apt to reinforce rather than threaten solidarity. And nationalism has been linked with bucolic romanticism in Germany since the Napoleonic Wars.¹⁷

¹⁵ *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966; *Deutsche Nachrichten*, No. 39, 1967.

¹⁶ *DN*, No. 26, 1967.

¹⁷ The NPD extol farmers as “*Haupttraeger volklicher Erbgesundheit, den Jungbrunnen des Volkes.*”

In other respects the stance the party advocates is quite consistent. As dissolution of authority is responsible for loss of *Halt*, the loss may be restituted by shoring up sagging authority structures. "Tradition" is a model for this reconstruction; its infallibility may in no case be questioned. When asked his opinion concerning the desirability of a proposed innovation allowing troops to eat individually rather than in formation, Bundeswehr Captain and NPD *Landtag* representative Wolfgang Ross replied: "There are people who say the soldiers are herded to eat like cattle. But in that case our fathers and grandfathers were all just cattleherds. I am of the opinion . . . that everything should be regimented." By referring to the inadmissible¹⁸ implications of the objection (i.e., "our fathers . . . cattleherds") Ross seems to think he has refuted it beyond need for further argument. When asked whether the *Bundeswehr* should occupy a "position of greater social esteem," he said: "Certainly . . . It has always been that way in German history."¹⁹

Foreign relations NPD ideas about Germany's place in the international arena are saturated with feelings of persecution and self-pity which have long characterized the German Right. (a) *Everyone is against us.* "We live in a world which opposes us and does not wish us well." (b) *Those who are against us are in collusion.* The NPD people allege existence of a secret "partnership between the USA and the USSR" with the goal of "final division of the world into American, Soviet and Chinese spheres." (c) *Our reinforcement schedule is incommensurate with our great worth.* Leaders express humiliation at the country's self-effacing, dependent status. "We are not part of the American East Coast," protests Thadden. "Economically the Federal Republic is a world power, but politically she is a nothing, a pawn . . . We have become the creatures of a foreign commitment. Our dignity is lost, the German *Volk* is surrendering a personality which should be the inspiration of Europe."²⁰ (d) *Although others constantly take advantage of us, we do nothing about it.* Germany's passivity in the face of the outrages visited upon her arouses feelings of rage and self-pity, eloquently expressed in talk of the "unearned packass-fate (*Packesel-Schick-*

¹⁸ " 'Weil,' so schloss er, messerscharf, / 'Nicht sein kann was nicht sein darf.' " Christian Morgenstern.

¹⁹ *Spiegel*, 6 February 1967, pp. 26 ff.

²⁰ *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966; *Spiegel*, 14 November 1966, pp. 44-47; *Zeit*, 28 February 1967, p. 2; *New York Times*, 19 June 1966, VI, pp. 95-99.

sal) of the Germans.” NPD people feel trammled, subject to public shaming: “We are tired of standing in the pillory of the world;” “We Germans are like a cow that stares straight ahead and is milked by everyone who passes by and yet dares not even kick over the bucket.”²¹ (e) *If we act more aggressively, we will be accorded deference and achieve our goals.* While in its domestic policy the party favors deceleration of change which alarms, in foreign policy it urges untrammled, dramatic movement to break the nation loose from its depressing postwar stasis and to secure the “respect of the world.” Thadden would talk to the Russians and the East Germans about reunification “without awaiting permission from the United States.” Though the party in most contexts is hard-line anti-communist, it would be “the task of a natural diplomacy” to seek China’s alliance in the struggle for reunification, and there is even a certain sympathy for the DDR, which is authoritarian and orderly, fosters family life, makes the hippies work, and does not tolerate avant-garde culture. The party denounces supranational confederations such as the UN, NATO, and the Common Market; these are no more than “cleverly camouflaged means for the exploitation of Germany.”²² Basing its own ambitious territorial demands upon the principle of national self-determination, the party expresses indifference to its application “in Bucharest, Budapest, Prague and Warsaw.” This interpretation of the principle of self-determination entails not only the recovery of East Germany, but the areas east of the Oder-Neisse, the Sudetenland, Danzig, and the Memelland, perhaps even Austria (“Our main goal is the reunification of Germany, not the possible annexation [*Anschluss*] of Austria” [emphasis in the original]). And these ends are felt to justify considerable latitude in the selection of means, perhaps even force. The NPD is determined to achieve reunification “with the will of the Moscow colonial-imperialists or against it!”²³

The enemy Enemies change with their contexts. In the interna-

²¹ *Spiegel*, 13 March 1967, pp. 14 ff.; *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966; *Zeit*, 4 April 1966, pp. 44-47.

²² *New York Times*, 26 May 1966, p. 10; *Spiegel*, 26 December 1966, pp. 24-26; Walter Laqueur, “‘Bonn is not Weimar’: Reflections on the Radical Right in Germany,” *Commentary*, No. 3 (March 1967), pp. 33-45; *DN*, No. 1, 1967.

²³ *DN*, No. 5, 1967. The following lines are excerpted from a “song” appearing in *DN*: “Papiernes Recht sind die Verträge nur,/ Auf die die Schwachen ihre Hoffnung setzen./ Gewalt bricht Recht, die Willkür jeden Schwur./ Und den Vertrag zerreißt die Macht in Fetzen” (Treaties are but paper right/ On which the weak stake their hopes/ Power shatters right, the will breaks every oath,/ And might rips the treaty to shreds).

tional arena, though all nations are felt to be hostile, the United States is most intensely resented and De Gaulle's France admired ("A temporary French hegemony would still be a lesser evil than permanent dependency on the USA"). Domestically, the enemies are foreign industrial workers, the *Gammler* (hippies), the intellectuals, the media barons, the government, and the established political parties.

How do enemies comport themselves? The nature of the threat they pose seems to depend on their perceived power and legitimacy relative to ego (which also shifts according to context: in international affairs, ego is Germany; in domestic affairs, the NPD). Those possessing superior power and legitimacy—the United States internationally, the media barons, the intellectuals, the government, and the "Bonn parties" domestically—are resented chiefly because they monopolize power and other values to the deliberate exclusion of ego. The Americans take but they give not, draining the nation's capital but unwilling to help it reunify and unwilling to fight for it: "Can anyone reasonably suppose that these Americans would defend Europe . . . if it put the security of their own country into hazard? Of course they would not. Then let us be quit of them."²⁴ An "unscrupulous clique" of intellectuals and media managers are likewise accused of monopolizing power: "The founding father had no inkling that this nation would develop into a television-democracy in which a handful of Communist-infected intellectuals create public opinion. What is left to the *Volk*, which should be the actual sovereign? To the German citizen is left the role of the bystander (*Zuschauer*)." As to the Bonn regime, "The ruling political powers in West Germany act as if the state were their private property, as if they had monopoly right to its leadership and use."²⁵

Those perceived to possess inferior power and legitimacy, on the other hand, are chiefly intent upon ravishing German women and thus undermining the nations "*volklische Substanz*." With regard to foreign workers the party warns of the "danger to our *Volkstum* which the presence of so many mostly young men of foreign nationality bodes." *Gammler* represent tendencies "which one could compare to the awakening of baser instincts." On the international scene, the colored races are resisted under the assumption that they wish to mate with Caucasians.²⁶

In the face of the great number and confusing diversity of

²⁴ *Zeit*, 28 February 1967, p. 2; *New York Times*, 19 June 1966, VI, pp. 95-99.

²⁵ Kuehnl, pp. 158 ff.

²⁶ *DN, Sonderdruck*, B/67; *DN*, No. 14, 1967; *DN*, No. 3, 1965.

enemies, the party employs *unitary reduction*. All enemies are but deviously varying manifestations of monolithic communism (which embraces virtually every political persuasion to the left of the NPD). The migrant workers are communist: "A majority of the Italian *Gastarbeiter* who are especially numerous in Bavaria are communists." That the Bavarian regime has not yet acted leads to the suspicion that the CSU, too, is in league with the communists. On television and radio, "commentators who don't even try to hide their communist convictions evening after evening propagate their sympathy for the foreign policy of the Kremlin." "Hundreds of Marxist 'political scientists' " infest the universities. Poets like Grass and Enzensberger and professors like Flechtheim are "left-radical literati." The *Gammler*, too, "in their *Haltlosigkeit*, are mostly 'left-radical!'" In the ultimate reduction, "Capitalism and Bolshevism are just two sides of the same thing."²⁷

Though the primary defense against enemies is the purge ("our political enemies . . . know quite well that they will be *swept from the political stage* as soon as our Volk understands the true situation" [emphasis added]), a minor one is defense through *inoculation*. In the name "National Democrats" the main adversary is titularly incorporated within the self (just as was the case in the name "National Socialists").²⁸

Allocation of resources The NPD ideal resource-allocation pattern corresponds closely to the Freudian "anal character" paradigm. The party believes: (a) *Resources should be hoarded and spent only after great deliberation*. "We demand simplicity, thrift . . . we are against every sort of waste." Though NPD campaign promises of economic support to workers and peasants and additional subsidization of health and education bely this intention, intraparty finances have seemingly been consistent; the party collected 5,000 marks at its first meeting, and has always avoided debts. (b) *Resource allocation should be confined to the in-group*. Reduction of both foreign aid and restitution payments is advocated and justified by reference to the pitiable lot of the in-group. Explaining the party's position on foreign aid, Thielen said "we should first build hospitals in Germany . . . before we go into the jungle with such projects." The expulsion of foreign workers is justified on the same ground: "Germans are . . . unemployed while

²⁷ DN, No. 45, 1966; Kuehnl, p. 75; DN, No. 49, 1966; DN, No. 39, 1967; DN, No. 3, 1967.

²⁸ Kuehnl, pp. 158 ff.

foreigners here have plenty." (c) *Though resources ought to be accumulated for the collective cause, their use for self-indulgence is not permitted.* "We are against . . . every sort of public luxury (etc.)." Before elections at the beginning of 1966 members were willing not only to contribute their 5 Mark dues, but to give blood for the party; 80 of about 500 Hamburg members donated and gave the 145 Mark honorarium to the party.²⁹ (d) *The subversive acquisition of resources by members of the out-groups must be prevented.* Thielen perceives foreign investment in German industry as a sapping of national strength: "The danger exists here of foreign monopolies. If it goes on like this we will soon be fully dependent on foreign oil." The manifesto claims that autarky is necessary for the "protection of political independence."³⁰

Political power The NPD leaders entertain the following beliefs about the nature and proper use of political power: (a) Like Aesop's Wind in his contest with the Sun, NPD leaders believe *the possession and resolute demonstration of power will bring its wielders submission and deference.* NPD plans for reunification are unusually ambitious, even in Germany, yet Thielen expressed confidence that the Germans need but show great strength and unity to ensure Soviet compliance: "For the Russians conduct national politics (*Nationalpolitik*) like any *Volk*, and the Russians too will value the chance finally to negotiate with a regime which is competent in the national sense." (b) *Any division of political power implies its diminution.* As loss of monolithicity means decay, enemies (who are felt to have little difficulty maintaining solidarity) are filled with *Schadenfreude* by any evidence of disunity in Germany: "For twenty years our enemies have been able to make fun of the splintering of our national strength. This time of suffering is over!" The party also asserts its own monolithicity: "Whoever hopes the NPD will someday split asunder through internal feuds is mistaken!" said Thielen. "I see as my principal task prohibition of all intrigues."³¹ Loss of monolithicity is so disturbing a

²⁶ *Spiegel*, 14 November 1966, pp. 44-47; *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966. In autumn 1965 an investigation of the possibilities of a radical right party showed that "a collective orientation, which demands an unequivocal subordination of the individual to the needs of the *Gemeinschaft* . . . is affirmed by a majority in Germany."

³⁰ *Zeit*, 15 November 1966, pp. 2-3; *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966. Cf. also Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, *The American Challenge* (New York, 1968).

³¹ *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966; *Zeit*, 21 March 1967, pp. 3, 19. When the party did "split asunder through internal feuds," the split was alleged to be the result of "betrayal. . . A malicious attack launched from forces outside the NPD against which the faithful should stand "united and true." *DN*, No. 14, 1967.

contingency that even its possibility is denied: pluralism is not the finding but the “invention” of sociologists and political scientists. (c) It follows from (a) and (b) that *the best form of government is one in which power is monocratically concentrated*. Admiration is high for De Gaulle and Salazar “the great” as preparers of the way for the “recreation” of strong nations—“Men of their stature one seeks in Bonn in vain,” sighs Hess. In a recent poll the question “Would you in an election vote for a man like Hitler?” elicited the following responses:³²

	NPD-members	NPD-sympathizers	NPD-opponents
Against a man			
like Hitler ...	42%	62%	93%
For a man			
like Hitler ...	36%	11%	1%
No answer ...	22%	27%	6%

(d) The party’s attitude toward democratic power distribution is ambiguous. On the one hand, “democracy” is unequivocally supported. Thielen stated at the 1965 national party convention in Hanover: “The National Democratic Party of Germany is a democratic party. That means, she pledges allegiance not only to the free constitution of our state, but is ready and determined to participate actively in its shaping.” On the other, this support is committed to nothing in *this world*, but to a definition: a “genuine, German” democracy is imagined, and when reality fails to square with the ideal, it is dismissed as a “phony democracy” of lies and hypocrisy. Indications of the “mendacity (*Verlogenheit*) of the system” are ubiquitous. Parliament engages in “show-window oratory”; the Federal Republic is a “*Staat des Interessengegeneinander*” run by “parties ruled by egoistic groups.”³³ The NPD conception of democracy is so exalted that Dr. Anrich doubts it can ever be realized: “The belief that the entire population can, through adequate educational opportunities, be put in the position to really rule themselves overlooks . . . defectiveness of endowment.” Unable to achieve the ideal, the party embraces its opposite extreme (“[The

³² DN, No. 38, 1965; *Spiegel*, 28 November 1966, pp. 33-53; *Zeit*, 4 April 1969, pp. 11-12.

³³ DN, No. 20, 1965; Hans-Helmuth Knuetter, “Demokratische Institutionen in der Sicht rechtsrakkikaler Kreise der Bundesrepublik,” *Politische Vierteljahrschrift*, Heft 2 (June 1966), pp. 189-208; DN, No. 3, 1965; DN, No. 1, 1966. These ideas are by no means limited to NPD members. Karl Jaspers expresses similar ideas in his recent book, *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?*

state is] an *Urform* of life [which must have] power to command the individual and the total mass of men living at any one time") rather than compromise with any ambiguous half-way measures.³⁴ (e) political interest is regarded disjunctively: *Any given policy is either in our interest or in the interest of the other, but not both.* As Thielen put it, "We say quite clearly, that the fulfillment of American wishes is not German policy."³⁵

II. Conquest of the Past ("Die Vergangenheitsbewältigung")

NPD leaders think and talk a great deal about Germany's past, especially of her role in World War II. This is not unusual—most Germans are interested in their past. Like the victims of war neurosis encountered by Freud during World War I, in whose dreams recurred the very situation which precipitated the neurosis, the Germans constantly make vicarious returns through journalistic, scholarly, and aesthetic media to the scene of their national trauma. *Zeitgeschichte* (which includes newspaper and magazine serials and television documentaries on such topics as "Nazi Justice" and "The SS State") is not only widely disseminated but avidly consumed. A November 1960 survey of Hamburg residents showed that, within a few weeks after the premiere on German television of a series on the Third Reich, 70 percent of the respondents had heard of the series, 34 percent were already listening to it, and 27 percent said they would do so henceforth (39 percent expressed no interest). Even 45 percent of those who "seldom" watched TV had heard of the series. Another poll showed that within a month after the beginning of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem 90 percent of the respondents had heard of the trial, and 81 percent knew where it was taking place.³⁶

Freud theorized that the intent of repeated mental returns to the scene of the trauma was the development of fear. "These dreams are attempts at restoring control of the stimuli by developing apprehension, the pretermission of which caused the traumatic neurosis." There is no obscured intent to evade but only an attempt to meet the situation, to make a new effort of control. The patient "repeats the unpleasant experiences because through this activity

³⁴ Anrich, *Mensch—Volk—Staat—Demokratie* (Hanover, 1966), pp. 5 ff., quoted in Kuehnl.

³⁵ *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966.

³⁶ Wolfgang Hartenstein and Guenter Schubert, *Mitlaufen oder Mitbestimmen: Untersuchung zum demokratischen Bewusstsein und zur politischen Tradition* (Frankfurt, 1961), pp. 67-80 et passim.

he gains a far more thorough mastery of the strong impression than was possible by mere passive experience.”

Much of the NPD ideology is an ambivalent reaction to this national repetition compulsion. On the one hand, the NPD wish to suppress all further thinking about the past. On the other, they wish to launch a thorough *reinterpretation* of the past which will result in national exoneration. These conflicting impulses stem from three needs: the need for suppression, the need for guilt-reduction, and the need for consonance.

The need for suppression The NPD holds that discussion of the past is damaging to Germany and ought to be suppressed.³⁷ As Thadden says: “We must stop this harking back to the past, this indictment of Germans for so-called war crimes, when countless thousands of people who committed crimes against the German nation go free . . . for two decades German politics have been corrupted by this theory of a collective guilt. What after all was so wrong about us?” While the call for surcease is grounded in concern for national “face,” it is evident that this concern is aggravated by a sense of being *personally* “fed up” which may derive from guilt feelings. A Hamburg member has “had this whining national masochism up to the neck, this eternal outcry that we were the greatest swine in the world.” “Evening after evening” Germans must endure *Bewaeltigungsfilme* in which “some appear who fairly reek with nobility (*die vor Edelmut kaum laufen koennen*)—these are always Jews. The others are wretched, cowardly types you wouldn’t trust with a Mark—those are Germans.” They must watch helplessly as their children are educated to feel contempt for them: “Our children, who have had no opportunity to compare, are taught to reject their own *Volk*, their own fathers.” Surely the Germans are “overtaxed” (*ueberfordert*) when the

³⁷ The desire for suppression in response to reminders of past misdeeds is by no means confined to NPD members. A “strong majority” of the German press attacks the *Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung* as “Nestbeschmutzung” (soiling the nest). Cf. Reinhard Kuehnl, *Das Dritte Reich in der Presse der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt, 1966), pp. 61 ff. One question in the 1960 Hamburg survey was how thorough a treatment of the extermination of the Jews should children hear in school: 54 percent said “as thorough as possible,” but 36 percent said “as short as possible,” grounding their preference with many of the same reasons used by the NPD: “One should leave the past in peace” (9 percent); “The youth should not be burdened” (8 percent); “Others also made mistakes” (1 percent). Those desiring a short treatment were more likely to be women than men and tended to be older, less educated, with lower social status than the others. Hartenstein, pp. 80 ff.

scorn of the world is amplified by self-abuse. Yet they seem perversely to bask in this ignominy. "The Germans remind me of sailors, whom Hemingway described somewhere and who let men urinate in their beards for one dollar. Only: the Germans don't get a dollar. They even give 10 dollars to have their beards urinated in."³⁸

Rather than endure the insistent return of distasteful memories, the NPD would prohibit their intrusion into consciousness and henceforth live "exemplary lives" in compensation. According to Hess, this policy is already followed in the party: "Anyone who has ever in his life been guilty of base thoughts towards another cannot occupy the same room with us. I say it in every meeting. The best form of *Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung* is to pursue a policy today that prevents such types from ever again having anything to say, that prevents that sort of thing from ever again appearing."³⁹

The need for guilt-reduction Like the Nazis, who led an "untiring, fanatical struggle . . . against the lie of German guilt," the NPD disputes "the lie of Germany's sole guilt." It protests that the correct account of the war has been distorted by the victors to make the Germans seem much more guilty than they really were. Through a systematic "brain-washing" undertaken by the allies after the war, the Germans have been persuaded to accept this distorted account: "The German youth were educated in schools according to the principles of the victors . . . until 1945 everything was wrong and criminal, after 1945 everything is noble and right . . . a picture of history which in its one-sidedness stretches the natural tension between generations to an open break."⁴⁰ Means other than the education system which were employed by the allies in this brain-washing process were *Entnazifizierung*; the "occupation of certain leadership positions by selected personnel"; the "license system" for mass media, for political parties, etc. (licenses were

³⁸ *New York Times*, 19 June 1966, VI, pp. 95-99; *Zeit*, 28 June 1966, p. 6; *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966; *Spiegel*, 28 November 1966, pp. 33-35; *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966.

³⁹ *Spiegel*, 6 February 1967, pp. 26 ff.; *Spiegel*, 28 November 1966, pp. 33-53.

⁴⁰ Caspar Freiherr von Schrenk-Notzing, *Charakterwaesche* (Stuttgart, 1965), p. 132; Wolfgang Hoffman, "Eine Welle von Rechts?" *Der Monat*, No. 215 (August 1966), pp. 90-93. Apparently those unjustly maligned in this rewriting of history included certain Nazi "war criminals." In September 1966 a group of party officials deposited wreaths on the graves of a number of Nazis executed by the allies in the fortress of Landsberg. Thadden said the party was not honoring all war criminals but only the eighteen who were "innocent."

allotted by the allies after 1945 on the basis of a “psychoanalytic X-raying [*Durchleuchtung*] in which . . . premature sexual intercourse and the rejection of one’s own father were especially favorably evaluated”) and even the introduction of departments of “political science” to German universities. The result is a catastrophic “decomposition” of the German mentality, the crumbling of resistance to Bolshevism, and the *apertura a sinistra* of “left-liberalism.”⁴¹

NPD leaders use four principal modes of guilt-reduction. The first is to object that the blame-quantum allotted to Germany exceeds the nation’s guilt-quantum. This results in disputes over the number of Jews killed by the Nazis, as if the precise number were of surpassing importance. Hamburg NPD speaker Dr. Karl Schikorski: “In Germany debates over the number of dead Jews are suppressed,” and it is time “to clarify the number historically. Sometimes it’s six million, sometimes less.” In Schuetz’s *Lexikon* we read that it “cannot be denied that in the second world war *hundreds of thousands* of Jews (*relatively credible* data vacillate between 300,000 and 1 million) were killed by Germans *or by those serving in German special units without the awareness of the public*” (emphasis of extenuating locutions added). But “a command systematically to exterminate the Jewish population has not been documented.”⁴²

A second method is to shift attention to the guilt of non-Germans who have been exempt from punishment. This results in no absolute reduction of German guilt but rather in *relative* reduction, by elevating the guilt-quantum of other nations closer to parity. Selection of allied guilty deeds as foci of invidious attention is quite indiscriminate—the operating principle appears to be “any stick to beat a dog”—but the main theses are that the allies contributed to the outbreak of war, and that they committed atrocities in its course. In the NPD version of the outbreak of war Germany’s actions, by an extension of social determinism (and responsibility) beyond her borders, become the passive outcome of such factors as the Versailles Treaty. “From 60 to 90 percent of the foreign policy of a nation is dictated by the . . . measures of other nations, including the necessity to risk and wage war.” In 1939, “Czechoslovakian President Hacha himself went to Hitler and asked help for his country”; the Czechs “wanted . . . protection against the attacks of the Poles and Russians in Slovakia.” As the Reich was engaged in this rescue operation the New Order was “stopped” by

⁴¹ *Spiegel*, 13 March 1967, pp. 14 ff.; Schrenk-Notzing, p. 245.

⁴² *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966; *Lexikon*, p. 119.

Poland: "The war against Poland in 1939 was a defensive war."⁴³

As to the atrocities of the allies, these were so egregious (e.g., "the slaughter of millions of German women and children") that the extermination of the Jews "cannot be distinguished from the general barbarization of war . . . since 1939." The use of the atomic bomb was a "moral defeat" for the Americans which "removed every justification for them to prosecute war criminals in Tokyo and Nuremberg, as the German Jew-gassers and mass-murdering . . . Japanese were just their colleagues." Hess will make a "pilgrimage" to Auschwitz only if the British make one to Dresden.⁴⁴

A third mode of guilt reduction, given wide notoriety by Eichmann, is to relegate all responsibility to the very apex of the command pyramid: ". . . the crimes of the Third Reich were committed by a paper-thin stratum (*hauchduenne Schicht*) while the mass of our people had no inkling. . . . The German *Volk* knew as much about those crimes as you and I, namely nothing."⁴⁵

A fourth method is to redefine guilt so that it fails to apply. The most common redefinition, facilitated by the intensity of collective identification, is the *privatization* of collective guilt. "Guilt doesn't exist in politics. There is only guilt in private law." Hess, contending against payment of reparations to Israel, said, "We shouldn't let ourselves be blackmailed by anyone. I didn't murder any Jews." The implicit syllogism contained in such statements is: I am not guilty; I am a German; ergo, the Germans are not guilty.⁴⁶

In the fifth mode, the victims are blamed: *We were provoked beyond our power to resist lashing back*. The final solution was incited by "Judaism": the "extra-European nature" and claim to be the "chosen people" marked the Jews with such "marked peculiarity" (*betontes Anderssein*) that the resentment of the populace was inevitable. In one DN article, the long discredited "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" is even invoked again: "The right-radicalism

⁴³ Lexikon, p. 120; DN, No. 19, 1966; DN, No. 7, 1966.

⁴⁴ DN, No. 14, 1967; Ladislaus Singer, *Alle litten an Groessenwahn* (Stuttgart, 1966), quoted in Zeit review, 10 January 1967, p. 12; Spiegel, 12 December 1966, pp. 17-22. Nondiscriminating smugness in response to any recurrence of viciousness in the world continues: though anti-Communist, DN evinced an appalled reaction to the "murder" of 100,000 Communists in Indonesia, for instance. Herman Piwitt, "Vaterlandslose Gesellen von Rechts," *Der Monat*, Heft 211 (April 1966), pp. 91-94.

⁴⁵ Kuehnl, p. 188.

⁴⁶ Hoffman, pp. 90-93; Spiegel, 6 February 1967, pp. 26 ff. In a June 1961 poll, 88 percent of those questioned denied that "I share blame personally as a German for the extermination of the Jews." *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls 1947-1966* (Allensbach, 1967), p. 187.

of the Zionists bears perhaps more conscious guilt for the crimes of the Hitler period than the German Volk collectively."⁴⁷

The need for consonance There is an attempt by the NPD to reach some sort of compromise with the Hitler period, to piece together a collective identity which preserves temporal unity. Not only is the past distorted to achieve the desired consistency (*vide ante*), but certain aspects of Naziism are salvaged and reaffirmed.⁴⁸ Certain vestiges are politically inconsequential, such as Nazi art ("the works of art which were created under Hitler corresponded perfectly to my ideal of beauty"). A far more significant ideological keepsake is a belief in the existence of distinctive, value-relevant racial characteristics. This is manifest in implicit anti-Semitic feelings and in an explicit belief in the superiority of the Caucasian to the colored races.

1. The party's explicit stand toward Jews is above reproach. "In the NPD there is no anti-Semitism," avers Fussbender. Yet there are *implicit* in many of the party leaders' remarks certain reserva-

⁴⁷ *Lexikon*, p. 22; *DN*, No. 52, 1965. The "logic" of guilt-reduction (cf., We are not guilty because: (1) our crimes have been exaggerated, (2) others are also guilty but got away with it, (3) we were just following orders, (4) our victims provoked us, (5) we are innocent, didn't even know what was going on) resembles that found in self-exculpatory dreams, of which the classic example is Freud's "Dream of Irma's Injection." The dreamer (Freud) argues that persistence of his patient's symptoms is not his fault because it is (1) her fault, (2) due to an organic disease, (3) due to her widowhood, (4) the fault of the doctor who gave the wrong kind of injection. In both cases all defenses indeed refute the accusation, but also contradict each other. This regression to primary process thinking occurs in dreams because reason relaxes vigilance in sleep, in the NPD case perhaps because accusations of guilt were so characteristic of pre-1945 childhood experiences with authority (when the primary process is dominant) that an irrational pattern of over-defense becomes permanently fixated.

⁴⁸ Presence of a vigilant court makes the salvaging of the past a hazardous undertaking; to avoid censure the party tries to restate these old themes in respectable terms. One of the more common camouflage techniques is to utilize the "value-free" language of social science either to neutralize morally repugnant events (e.g., "concentration camp" is defined in the *Lexikon* as "a number of buildings constructed partly of wood, partly of stone, in which men in uniforms guarded others in striped uniforms") or surreptitiously to continue propagation of Nazi myths ("the anti-Semitism of the National Socialist era rested on the suspicion that Russian Judaism as well as Jewish banking houses in America played a decisive role in the rise of Bolshevism," a suspicion that was "strengthened . . . by the anti-German propaganda of Jewish organs"). Another qualification, to legitimize ties with the Nazi past, is to hold that the NSDAP was a "decent national movement" in 1928, but was later sullied by penetration of enemies.

tions concerning the acceptability of Jews in German society. When asked whether a Jew might become an NPD member, Thielen replied: "Certainly. Anyone can become a member, be he Christian, Muslim, or Jew. He must be a good German." But what is a good German? "Anyone who stands true to our German Volk in good times or bad and who puts the interests of his Vaterland before his own." Thadden's reply to the same question (in Immenhausen) indicates that doubts are harbored with respect to the capability of Jews to meet this "zero-sum" criterion: "If he pledges allegiance to Germany as [he does] to Israel (pause) . . . but one can really have allegiance to only one country! (*man kann sich ja nur zu einem Land bekennen*)" Thadden furthermore suggests that current tolerance toward Jews is based on the fact that there are so few left to tolerate, and that these are content to be seen and not heard: "The Jews, yes; there were difficulties with the Jews. But, my dear sir, Germany no longer has a Jewish problem. In all Germany there are only about 30,000 Jews left. They are mostly old, and keep quiet. The young ones go away when they can; I suppose that is in a way understandable. The Jews no longer preoccupy us."⁴⁹ But when "Judaism" threatens to regain public influence hostility is kept suppressed only with some difficulty, as is indicated in ex-NPD representative Winter's description of a 1965 party meeting: "As . . . a vote was about to be taken whether the Munich district attorney . . . Keller should be a candidate for the NPD, it was mentioned that he is a member of the 'Christian-Jewish Cooperative.' Just because of this several quite openly began to oppose his candidacy. But . . . Thadden sprang up and suppressed this."⁵⁰ The more remote the target in time or space, the more virulent the expression of anti-Semitism permitted. Modern Israel is a permissible object of attack, German reparations payments to her a form of "political flagellation." "The Jewish problem has been replaced, don't you see, by the problem of Israel. Now there is what I mean by diplomatic blackmail. We have paid the Jews endless fortunes in indemnities in what is called 'restitution.' They never stop moaning about the past. They continually demand more. The Bonn Government accedes every time. How long is this supposed to go on?" The Israelis (not the NPD) are also "racists" in their immigration policies and "implacable foes" of Germany. The "German-baiting

⁴⁹ Spiegel, 14 November 1966, pp. 44-47; Spiegel, 4 April 1966; Zeit, 29 November 1966, p. 19; New York Times, 19 June 1966, VI, pp. 95-99.

⁵⁰ Spiegel, 26 December 1966, pp. 24-26.

which has lasted for years" in the United States "is led only by Jews."⁵¹

2. Though the party is cautious enough to avoid use of such terms as "aryan," it is clearly white-supremacist. Yet this supremacy is held to be a moral rather than an intellectual one. Negroes are distinguished from whites by a different conception of "right, morality, duty, responsibility" . . . a "hereditary defect" which can "therefore be overcome only to a very limited extent by education."⁵²

The chthonian nature of these forces threatens an "unbridled explosion . . . of primitive races against cultured peoples." In headlines such as "Negroes Inundate England," the party newspaper alerts its readers. Thadden foresees a change in global battle-lines from the communist-capitalist conflict to one between haves and have-nots, "that is to say, the black against the white."⁵³ (In contradistinction to the Nazis, he numbers the Germans among the "haves.")

What are civilized peoples to do in the face of this threat? NPD leaders advocate two expedients. First, miscegenation must be forbidden. A "geneticist" warns DN readers that the mixing of different "pure races" results in "uncouth mixtures" and mental deterioration (*Verdummung*). Second, it is the duty of all civilized peoples to keep the forces of chaos repressed. The DN proposes a straightforward division of the world between civilized and barbarian: Caucasians would get the northern half of the globe and "those areas in the southern half which they . . . settled" leaving the rest to the other races.⁵⁴

A second relic of Naziism which has been revived is the "stab-in-the-back" theory (*Dolchstoßlegende*). Once again the Jews are implicated: "The war was lost by internal enemies and by International Judaism, whose goal it was to annihilate Germany as an independent nation." Those primarily responsible for the debacle are however the conspirators who tried unsuccessfully to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944. "They betrayed the *Vaterland* in the hour of need and cooperated with the enemies of Germany; they forsook the national duty. For this they deserve to be brought to

⁵¹ DN, No. 8, 1966; *New York Times*, 19 June 1966, VI, pp. 95-99; DN, No. 15, 1965.

⁵² *Spiegel*, 13 March 1967, p. 14 et passim.

⁵³ DN, No. 13, 1965; DN, No. 3, 1965; *New York Times*, 19 June 1966, VI, pp. 95-99.

⁵⁴ DN, No. 38, 1965; DN, No. 1, 1967.

trial." This envious rage against those who kept their noses clean extends to Willy Brandt, who served in the Norwegian resistance (Thielen: "To stand as German against German is no honor!") and to those who fled (Schuetz said that a Nazi who was "decent" was "worth more than an emigrant").⁵⁵

The Etiology of Belief

Why do the NPD believe as they do? Within the human sciences and within the structure of ordinary language upon which these are based a conventional distinction is made between "real" reasons for believing something and "good" (or ideal) reasons for doing so: the former includes a set of variables which the *analyst* holds on various grounds to be decisive in determining belief, the latter only those factors which the *actor* holds to be influential. The social scientist refers to factors which will shape belief in a way which is (at least in theory) predictable *whether or not* the subject is aware of them; as a relatively stable basis for prediction he tends to focus on the actor rather than on his fluctuating field of perception—Freud thought childhood traumata and such unconscious processes as identification fix men's thought-patterns; Marx considered the relations of production primary determinants. But while the scientist searches for causes which will explain formation of a given idea, the actor looks for reasons which will justify its acceptance;⁵⁶ he finds these in perceived stimulus properties of the object. Max Weber is best-known of those "phenomenological" methodologists who held that the analyst must assume the actor's point of view. Smith, Bruner, and White⁵⁷ (to whose monograph this analysis is indebted) avoid the Mannheimian confusion of the *quaestio facti* of the origin of a belief with the *quaestio juris* of its truth-value by incorporating *both* dimensions in a three-fold functional classification of bases for belief: cognitive, sociological, and psychodynamic.

⁵⁵ Hoffman, pp. 90-93; *Zeit*, 28 June 1966, p. 6. The NPD is in the minority in its defamation of the conspirators (attributed with every heroic virtue in the press). In a May 1964 poll, 5 percent of the respondents said that the conspirators served the country; only 15 percent said they betrayed it. *The Germans*, p. 187.

⁵⁶ For a critical analysis of the (still controversial) logical distinction between *cause* (which precedes effect and is value-free) and *reason* (which is intentional and value-relevant), see Keith S. Donnellan, "Reasons and Causes," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York, 1967), VII, pp. 85-88.

⁵⁷ M. Brewster Smith, Jerome Bruner and Robert White, *Opinion and Personality* (New York, 1964).

Cognitive analysis This dimension refers to the use of ideology as what Geertz called a “cognitive template” to conceptualize and cope with reality. Two aspects of reality-testing are important: the accuracy of perception and the functionality (from the actor’s standpoint) of consequent adaptation.

NPD beliefs reflect real events. Germany *has* rapidly descended from a great to a middle power, and its fate is still largely dependent on the decisions of other nations, despite an impressive economic recovery. After more than two decades of cooperation with the West, Germany is no nearer national reunification than it was in 1945.⁵⁸ The party’s ambiguity toward the past symptomizes a broad, vaguely sensed bewilderment over German identity—the question “What is the German’s Fatherland?” is harder to answer today than it was 100 years ago.⁵⁹ There is ground for calling the present arrangement “authoritarian”—formation of the SPD-CDU Grand Coalition eliminated effective parliamentary opposition.⁶⁰ A considerable portion of the electorate still holds nationalistic, xenophobic attitudes.⁶¹ None of the other parties has addressed itself to these facts.

⁵⁸ Although in every poll since 1953 Germans have called reunification their most fervent concern, and this concern has *increased* over the years. *The Germans*, p. 459.

⁵⁹ The present state is provisional—“This Basic Law loses validity when a constitution is freely decided by the whole German people,” states Article 146—to avoid permanence is to keep reunification hopes alive, and every step to consolidate makes reunification less feasible. Its sovereignty is limited—the occupation powers retain final jurisdiction over Berlin, reunification and conclusion of a peace treaty. Its ideological bases are crumbling—anti-Communism seems meaningless in the face of disparate varieties of Communism, the European ideology is nearly dead, and nationalism would not be tolerated by the international community. Its past is not “conquered.” Alfred Grosser, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Bilanz einer Entwicklung* (Tuebingen, 1967), pp. 14-17.

⁶⁰ Kuehn argues that the opportunity for democratic reform of German political, economic, and social structure following the war was missed during intensification of the cold war, when the allies lost interest in fostering reforms and focused on construction of a military bastion; consequently, old elites reentrenched themselves and the authoritarian family and education systems persisted. Critical reactions were stifled in the halcyon atmosphere of the *Wirtschaftswunder*. See also Ralf Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland* (Munich, 1965).

⁶¹ Though 75 percent of NPD members agreed with the statements: “National Socialism also had its good points. At least there was order and cleanliness,” 50 percent of CDU/CSU members, 56 percent of SPD members, and 74 percent of FDP members (70 percent of the populace) also agreed. Two-thirds of the populace favors reintroduction of the death penalty, half wishes “evacuation of foreign troops from the *Bundesrepublik*.” *Spiegel*, 23 December 1968, p. 36.

If the NPD reflects social reality, it does so distortedly. Party members see a world in which everyone else is hostile and purely self-interested and power alone decides disputes. Even in those cases in which the NPD reflects real problems, its reaction is often maladaptive *from its own standpoint*. The repudiation of the past must be expected to create an identity vacuum and sense of rootlessness, but its resumption is a solution that a majority of Germans, despite an apparently inveterate conservatism, will not accept.⁶² The NPD reaction is self-frustrating, demanding at once that the past be buried and that it be dug up again and white-washed. If Germany has reverted to authoritarianism, replacement of the present system with a more rigidly authoritarian one (which the NPD self-contradictorily also urges) would be self-frustrating. To explain such distortion in perception and maladaptiveness of response, we must go beyond the stimulus properties of the objective world.

Social background analysis Opinions not only influence patterns of intercourse, since usually people tend to associate with like-minded, but the existence of strata, classes, and groups limits one's probable opinions by establishing a relatively homogeneous form of life, with similar exposure to information and experience.

The party's retrospective orientation stems from the large proportion of former NSDAP members in the party and from the age of the membership. Of the eleven members of the NPD presidium, five were prominent Nazis; of the eighteen members of the *Bundesvorstand*, twelve were Nazis; 20 percent of the *Land* organizations, 13 percent of the *Kreis* organizations, and 9 percent of the membership belonged to the NSDAP before 1933 or were highly placed party officials. An analysis of voting patterns indicates that the NPD tends to be strongest in those areas which exhibited strongest support for the Nazis and for such *Voelkisch* parties of the late twenties and early thirties as the *Voelkischer Block* and *Deutschnationale Volkspartei*. In Nuremberg, the *Voelkisch* parties drew a third of *Reichstag* votes in 1924, and the Nazis six years later drew a fourth of the votes; the NPD received 13.1 percent in 1966—5.7 percent more than their *Land* average. In Bayreuth, 40 percent

⁶² Only 2 percent of those polled in July 1966 said they would actively support takeover of a "new National Socialist Party." *Zeit*, 24 January 1967, p. 8. Even among NPD members, a 1966 poll showed that 98 percent opposed repeat of such Nazi-redolent ceremonies as the NPD torchlight procession in Nuremberg or decoration of war criminals' graves at Landsberg. *Zeit*, 28 June 1966, p. 6.

voted Nazi in 1930, 13.9 percent voted NPD in 1966; in Kulmbach 38.1 percent voted Nazi in 1930, 11.2 percent NPD in 1966. In the cities of Hessa and Bavaria, Liepelt found a correlation coefficient of 0.71 between NPD votes in the 1966 *Landtag* election and NSDAP votes in the 1932 *Reichstag* election.⁶³

Despite attempts to improve its appeal to youth, 31 percent of NPD supporters⁶⁴ are forty-five to fifty-nine years old (vs. 24 percent of the populace), members of the World War II generation born between 1907 and 1921, who lived through the worst years of the Weimar Republic and for whom the advent of Nazi order, bread, Autobahns, and Olympics were epochal experiences. Though the percentage of "youth" (sixteen- to twenty-nine-year-olds) rose from 18 percent in February 1966 to 23 percent ten months later, it remained below the percentage of Germans in this age group—27 percent. The early NSDAP was by contrast relatively young: 42.2 percent of the 1932 membership was between eighteen and thirty, vs. 31.1 percent of the populace.⁶⁵

Lipset called fascism "extremism of the middle." The middle classes, lacking either the class-consciousness (and union membership) of labor or the economic security of the upper class, feel more vulnerable to threats to their "form of life," to which they respond with a more radical version of bourgeois values. Among NPD supporters, 54 percent are upper or middle class, compared with 44 percent of the populace. The party draws disproportionate support from the economically insecure "independent" professions (skilled artisans, professionals, merchants, etc.): 27 percent of NPD members are independents, vs. 22 percent of the populace. The 1933 NSDAP also had a high proportion of middle-class members (45.4 percent, vs. 26.7 percent of the populace); independents were overrepresented by 8.6 percent, workers underrepresented by 14.8 percent.⁶⁶

⁶³ *Spiegel*, 28 November 1966, pp. 33-53; Klaus Liepelt, "Anhaenger der neuen Rechtspartei: Ueber das Waehlerreservoir der NPD," *Politische Vierteljahrschrift* (June 1967), pp. 237-272.

⁶⁴ NPD supporters were determined through random interviews conducted by the Allensbach Institut fuer Demoskopie in February and November 1966.

⁶⁵ *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966; *Zeit*, 24 January 1967, p. 8; Daniel Lerner, "The Nazi Elite," in Harold D. Lasswell and Daniel Lerner, *World Revolutionary Elites* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), pp. 291-298; Hans Gerth, "The Nazi Party: Its Leadership and Composition," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLV (January 1940), 517-541.

⁶⁶ *Zeit*, 24 January 1967, p. 8; *Der demokratische Staat im Kampf gegen radikale Ausdrucksformen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Bonn, 1968), p. 5; Gerth, pp. 517-543.

The NPD also has an appeal to professional soldiers.⁶⁷ Defeated twice in a lifetime, more than a decade in the shadow of the United States Army, slavishly borrowing American weapons and doctrines, deprived of national aspirations and nuclear weapons, the morale of the *Bundeswehr* is sagging.

There appears to be a necessary but insufficient relationship between economic decline and right-radicalism in Germany. The propensity to react radically to economic reverses is not determined by absolute or relative loss, but by pessimistic psychological predispositions.⁶⁸ Inculcated by the bourgeois conviction that success depends solely on personal worth, members of the petit-bourgeoisie experience ego strain when ambitions are frustrated. In prosperous times the gap between "is" and "ought" may be "temporarily" tolerated, but during an economic slump the future seems too bleak for hope to be deferred, so rationalizations and scapegoats are sought.

The party's yearning for a *Halt* seems understandable in view of the labile social backgrounds of its supporters. "Voter-fluctuations are significantly greater in the NPD constituency than in the constituencies of the other parties."⁶⁹ Membership defects most frequently from the smaller parties and more frequently from the SPD than from the CDU/CSU. In elections the party appears to have drawn disproportionately from the FDP,⁷⁰ the refugee party GDP/BHE (which is ideologically akin),⁷¹ and from prior non-voters.⁷²

⁶⁷ Captain Ross estimated that 25 percent of the *Bundeswehr* would vote NPD in the next election. *Spiegel*, 6 February 1967, pp. 26 ff.

⁶⁸ Among the ca. seven million who felt near the end of 1966 that business was going better for them, 9 percent were potential NPD voters (A potential NPD voter is one who has an affirmative answer to the question, "Will you possibly vote NPD . . . or have you so voted?" which was asked a random sample of the populace several times in 1965, 1966, and 1967 by the Bad Godesberg Institut fuer angewandte Sozialwissenschaften); among those who thought it was getting worse, 19 percent were potential NPD voters. Among the six million who felt their economic situation would improve, 12 percent were potential NPD; of those twelve million who expected it to get worse, 18 percent favored NPD. A separate tally of potential NPD voters showed nearly half thought future prospects dim.

⁶⁹ Liepelt, pp. 237-272.

⁷⁰ In the Nuremberg communal elections of March 1966, the FDP sank from 13.2 percent to 6.9 percent when the NPD drew 7.3 percent. In the Rhineland-Palatinate, 37 percent of FDP supporters, 6 percent of CDU supporters, and 9 percent of SPD supporters were potential NPD voters. Kuehn, p. 61.

⁷¹ In Kaufbeuren the BHE got 20.1 percent in the 1962 *Landtag* election, but dropped to 2.7 percent in 1966, when the NPD drew 14.9 percent (*Spiegel*, 28 November 1966, pp. 33-53). In the March 1966 Bavarian communal elections 55

Supporters are predominantly male,⁷³ Protestant (or religiously unattached),⁷⁴ slightly more urban than rural,⁷⁵ and overrepresented in Schleswig-Holstein and Bavaria, with especial strength in areas of rapid population growth.⁷⁶ They are relatively well educated: 11 percent have their *Abitur*, vs. 4 percent of the populace; 32 percent completed some school beyond grade school, vs. 20 percent of the populace. The early Nazis were also well educated. Kuehnl suggests that the educated register political change more pronouncedly because of greater exposure to the media.⁷⁷

A considerable segment of the NPD constituency is made up of protest voters of temporary allegiance, alienated from the "loyal opposition" by the Grand Coalition. Of those voters who in a survey immediately following the Hessian *Landtag* election admitted voting NPD, only 8 percent adduced positive reasons for

percent of NPD votes came from Neu-Gablonz, the refugee section of Kaufbeuren, though only 34 percent of eligible voters live there. Kuehnl, p. 81.

⁷² The November 1966 poll showed that 16 percent of "permanent non-voters" are potential NPD voters. Liepelt, pp. 237-272. The percentage of voters voting in the Bavarian *Landtag* election rose from 76.5 percent in 1962 to 80.8 percent in 1966, and no other party benefited as much as the NPD. In Hesse turnout rose from 77.6 percent in 1962 *Landtag* elections to 81 percent in 1966; the NPD drew 7.94 percent and all other parties were disappointed. The rise of Hitler was also marked by a rise in electoral participation (as was Samuel Yorty's victory in the May 1969 Los Angeles mayoralty election).

⁷³ Of NPD members, 71 percent are males, vs. 46 percent of the populace. No other German party compares in this respect; the next ranking SPD has 60 percent male members.

⁷⁴ Of NPD supporters, 63 percent are Protestant (vs. 52 percent of the populace) and 28 percent Catholic. Surveys also indicate that pious Catholics—defined by frequency of church-visitation—are much less inclined to vote NPD than nominal Catholics. German Catholics actually tend to be more conservative than Protestants, but religion binds them to the CDU/CSU, just as unions bind organized labor to the SPD. Liepelt, pp. 237-272. The percentage of supporters belonging to neither major denomination is nearly double that of the populace (9 percent vs. 5 percent). *Zeit*, 24 January 1967, p. 8. The party's religious profile resembles that of the NSDAP: Nazi church membership in 1934 was 35.2 percent Protestant, 5.6 percent Catholic, and 59.1 percent other. Lerner, pp. 291-298.

⁷⁵ According to a November 1966 poll, 23 percent come from villages of less than 2,000 population vs. 22 percent of the populace; 24 percent from villages 2,000 to 20,000 vs. 29 percent of the populace; 18 percent from medium cities (20,000 to 100,000) vs. 16 percent of the populace; and 35 percent from large cities (more than 100,000) vs. 33 percent of the populace. *Zeit*, 24 January 1967, p. 8. Comparison with a poll taken ten months earlier by the same institute indicates transition from a rural to an urban base. Cf. *Spiegel*, 4 April 1966.

⁷⁶ Iring Fetscher, et al. *Rechtsradikalismus* (Frankfurt, 1967), pp. 159-171.

⁷⁷ *Zeit*, 24 January 1967, p. 8; Lerner, pp. 291-298; Kuehnl.

their decision ("They are for order and thrift"); the remaining 92 percent gave negative reasons ("The other parties are no good," etc.). Half the NPD voters in the 1968 Baden-Wuerttemberg *Landtag* election explicitly termed their action a protest vote. Only 25 percent of them identify with their party (*Land* average for all parties: 46 percent); 75 percent of the voters of the other three parties say they could never vote NPD, but only 25 percent of NPD voters would not consider voting for the other parties.⁷⁸

Psychodynamic analysis This dimension refers to conflicts in the mind of the actor which are projected to external events perceived to be analogous. In Lasswell's formulation, "Political Man" is the product of private motives displaced into the public arena and rationalized in terms of the public interest. As motive is (in Hull's terms) a postulated intervening variable, it can only be mediately deduced; we do this through *psychological reduction*, as formalized in the conditional syllogism: If A, then B; But B; Therefore A. The ideological themes (the NPD believe A, B, C) constitute the minor term; certain propositions of dynamic psychology (clinical experience shows that if patients have syndrome X, they then believe A, B, C) constitute the major term.

One of the most firmly established findings is that NPD members intensely identify with the collectivity. Party leaders repeatedly use the same *vocabulary of defenses* when referring to themselves as they do in reference to the party or the nation. They also show such facility in switching from collective defense to personal defense ("We shouldn't let ourselves be blackmailed . . . I didn't kill any Jews!") that one suspects a confusion of the two identities. Theodor W. Adorno theorizes that certain individuals are motivated by a sense of impotence to identify with the "power and glory" of the collectivity.⁷⁹

One nightmare preying upon the mind of the NPD man is the prospect of being the helpless, passive recipient of an especially debasing form of violence. He envisions his country in this position and reacts indignantly: the possibility that Germans might enjoy being in this position (the German not only allows others to urinate in his beard, but pays them to do so) only intensifies his fury (subjective feelings of happiness are irrelevant; only objective

⁷⁸ Liepelt, pp. 237-272; *Zeit*, 10 May 1968, p. 1.

⁷⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, "Was Bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit?" *Eingriffe* (Frankfurt, 1963), p. 135.

possession of *power* is important).⁸⁰ The act which is perpetrated upon his passive, indifferent country is violent (in NPD power imagery the victim is massively *crushed* from above, “like an avalanche”), humiliating, and sometimes involves forcible injection of a foreign substance (as in *Entnazifizierung*, in which the old content is flushed out and alien ideas are inserted).

Comparison with NPD pronouncements on the moral degeneration of the nation suggest a similarity between the violent defilement visited upon Germany and the NPD idea of sexual intercourse. The close association of sex and crime have been noted. When indications are encountered that some women might take *pleasure* in sex, the party laments a decay in ideals from *Mutter* to *Dirne* (whore). The possibility that intercourse might be an expression of love rather than contempt is not entertained; there is what Freud called a “non-coincidence of the tender and sexual tendencies.”

Freud found that patients suffering from disturbances of potency had two love objects: one whom they adored but with whom intercourse was impossible and one whom they despised and could debauch. He traced the origin of this conflict to the time of sexual enlightenment, when the boy found it impossible to reconcile his previous image of maternal purity with his discovery that she had been willingly engaging in coitus with his father at least since his birth. Since the boy thinks of sex as an aggressive assault of the male upon the female, the boy wishes to *rescue* and *protect* his mother. In like fashion NPD leaders express their determination not only to eliminate the ever-present possibility that their women be raped in the streets, but to stop *penetration* of foreign matter (culture, capital, workers), to expunge “national humiliation,” to prevent Germany from being constantly taken advantage of (“milked”), to arrest the “deep, deep debasement (*Erniedrigung*) of our *Volk*.”

Kurth, in an analysis of Hitler's addresses to the German nation, has noted a similar propensity to refer to the “people” or the

⁸⁰ MacClelland made a comparative study of children's primers in the mid-twenties and in 1955 which indicated that German stories were above the international average (at *both* times) in number of references to *power* and below average in references to *affiliation*. This fairly rare combination of story characteristics has been internationally associated with dictatorial regimes in almost every instance; it reflects strong concern for having one's way (*power*) which is not checked by concern for others (*affiliation*). David C. MacClelland, *Roots of Consciousness* (Princeton, 1964), pp. 62-93.

“masses” with the imagery of a virtuous woman and to generate hostility against German “enemies” by alleging their desire to molest this woman.⁸¹ The NPD attitude toward enemies is somewhat more complex, involving *decomposition* of ambivalence: fear-induced respect for the father is retained with regard to those enemies who are believed to be more powerful (the Bonn parties, the regime)—they are accused merely of monopolizing values—only enemies thought to be weaker (the hippies, the colored races) are explicitly accused of concupiscent interests.

Accompanying this dread of violation we find subtle clues suggesting an unconscious *desire* to be violated. There are constant references to heroism (thought to be in decline), but this heroism is not measured in terms of the destruction wrought upon the enemy, but in terms of the capacity of the self to withstand punishment without expression of pain.⁸² A high valuation of pain-endurance is characteristic of feminine masochism, which “includes phantasies of being pinioned, bound, beaten, mishandled, forced to obey unconditionally.”⁸³ MacClelland calls the “universal” feminine need to “surrender or go down in order to come up . . . *die to live*” the “Harlequin complex,” since it involves the association of death with an illicit seducer.⁸⁴ The association of NPD homoerotic tendencies with death imagery is explicit in the longing for “selfless giving of self unto death” (*selbstlose Hingabe bis zum Tode*). NPD men sense these dangerous unconscious yearnings to play the role of the violated woman, and defend against them by demanding clear distinction between a “powerful, awe-inspiring father” and a

⁸¹ Though he says, “I am a child of the people . . . and if necessary I would let myself be cut to pieces for the people,” Hitler reveals his ambivalence in a passage from *Mein Kampf*: “The psyche of the great masses is . . . like a woman, whose psychic feeling is less influenced by . . . reasoning than by an undefinable longing for complementary strength, who will submit to the strong.” In Gertrud M. Kurth, “Hitler’s Two Germanies: A Sidelight on Nationalism,” *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences*, II (New York, 1950), 293-312.

⁸² Ross, upon expressing contempt for mollicoddling of soldiers and calling for “just one decent maneuver,” was asked what he took to be a decent maneuver: “Well, I once staged a winter maneuver in 75 cm. of snow. That was tough. The people raved about it for a year and a half.” *Spiegel*, 6 February 1967, pp. 26 ff.

⁸³ J. C. Flugel, *Man, Morals and Society* (Edinburgh, 1945), p. 96. These images recur frequently in NPD ideology, and the party’s feeling about them is intense and ambivalent; on the one hand, “We are tired of being in the pillory of the world,” suffering “political flagellation”; yet, a *Halt* is *sine qua non*—to slacken the *Zuegel* leads to “decomposition,” “chaos,” “nihilism.”

⁸⁴ MacClelland, pp. 182-217.

“smart, restrained, and virtuous” *Frau*,⁸⁵ and by assuming a tough, swaggering, masculine posture.⁸⁶

Conclusion

What of the future? Will the NPD grow or die? The preceding analysis makes the following predictions possible.

The party's growth potential is limited: though Scheuch estimated its voter-reservoir at between 15 and 18 percent of the electorate,⁸⁷ its steep early growth rate leveled off in 1967 and 1968 and now hovers near the 10 percent level. Whether the party will resume growth to claim its full potential constituency appears dependent on the following factors: (1) Continuance of the Grand Coalition, stymieing effective parliamentary opposition to the regime. Though the alliance will hold through this year's *Bundestag* election, growing dissent in both parties makes its duration beyond this point doubtful. (2) Economic slowdown, intimidating the petty bourgeoisie. The German economy is currently booming. (3) Continuance of student agitation, inciting a backlash on the Right. Though the student movement has fragmented, agitation is likely to intensify.

Even if the party does not increase its present share of the vote, its present strength gives it considerable nuisance value. Sentimental vestiges of Naziism revive memories the Bonn regime would prefer to let lie; the party's notoriety (which tends to exceed its potential) is especially burdensome for German foreign policy. The Soviet Union uses it as a *bête noire* to threaten intervention in

⁸⁵ “The role of the man in political life *must be a different one* from that of the woman. . . . Where these spheres are fundamentally displaced, the man becomes unmasculine, the female unfeminine. Such a development must finally *destroy the state* as well as the family” (emphasis added). Kuehnl, pp. 158 ff.

⁸⁶ Recent clinical findings of H. E. Richter and Dr. Dieter Beckmann of the Psychosomatische Universitaetsklinik Giessen confirm those we attained by psychological reduction of rhetoric. Their interviews indicate that the typical NPD member distinguishes himself from members of the FDP, SPD, or CDU/CSU in these respects: (1) his relation with his spouse is “more aggressive than libidinal,” and his relation to others is generally conflictual, (2) he considers himself highly sexually potent but neither loved nor capable of loving, (3) he believes others consider him inferior, but in his striving for independence from others he professes indifference to their opinions, (4) he is fantasy-poor, and his unambiguously favorable self-assessment indicates little self-insight. *Spiegel*, 23 December 1968, pp. 32-33.

⁸⁷ *Zeit*, 10 May 1968, p. 1.

German politics and to strike fear and unity into its European satellites, frustrating Bonn's attempt to build bridges Eastward. In domestic politics, the NPD is Germany's fourth largest party; without change in its present strength it should win at least forty seats (8 percent of the total) in the 1969 *Bundestag*, where it will constitute a well-disciplined swing bloc. Its potential role in parliament was presaged in the March 5, 1969 election of a *Bundespraesident* in West Berlin. Because the FDP deserted the CDU for SPD's Heinemann, the CDU accepted NPD support. Had Schroeder won, West Germany would now have a "tainted" president, indebted to "neo-Nazis" for his election.

In view of such considerations, Interior Minister Ernst Benda gathered evidence to cause the party's dissolution by the constitutional court. Yet, after examining the evidence, Kiesinger's cabinet declined to prosecute, presumably because it was deemed insufficiently compelling to ensure conviction. For the court to rule for the NPD, said Kiesinger, "would be bad." Kiesinger is pressed on his right by Strauss, who objects to dissolving the NPD while allowing the reconstitution of a German Communist party.⁸⁸ To prohibit the party would drive it underground, releasing it from the demonstrably moderating need to solicit votes on the political market.

So the future of the party hangs in question. "The sword of Damocles must remain above them," says Kiesinger, determined to use the possibility of prohibition to whittle off a few percentage points in the next election. And the party defends itself through ideological moderation, vigilant self-policing, and legal counsel.

⁸⁸ It may be relevant that Strauss (and Kiesinger) could probably count on NPD parliamentary support; in a January-February 1967 poll, 45 percent of NPD members considered Strauss Germany's "most capable politician," and 25 percent chose Kiesinger; no other politician drew more than 6 percent. *Spiegel*, 13 March 1967.