The Christian Democratic Union of postwar Germany is the direct descendant of the former Catholic Center Party.

This party played an important role in the history of Imperial Germany and of the Weimar Republic and can trace its history back to the time when a group of Catholic deputies met in the Prussian legislature in 1882 and formed a political party of its own. Six years later this group adopted the name of Center Party. Its object was to combat disbelief and all the resultant phenomena in public life. The Catholic clergy tried to induce every good Roman Catholic to vote only for deputies belonging to the Center Party.

During the Franco-Prussian war, when it seemed inevitable that an empire consisting of the German states without Austria and with a Prussian monarch would be formed, all the Catholics of Germany, representing then about one-third of the population, combined to form a single German Center Party. Their party succeeded in getting a considerable number of its candidates returned at elections to the first Reichstag.

The Center Party did not actually work against Bismarck's empire, but tried to persuade it to further the interests of the Catholic Church throughout the world as far as possible. For example, the Center Party attempted to induce Germany to enter the lists for the restoration of the temporal power of the Pope, and tried likewise to introduce provisions in the constitution of the empire which would secure the Catholic Church against any form of state interference. In neither of these respects was it successful.

The Kulturkampf (Religious and Cultural Conflict) which was waged throughout Germany in the seventies gave a big impetus to the Center Party. For this Catholic political organization was the spearhead of the resistance to Bismarck's attempt to take the registration of births, deaths and marriages out of the hands of the clergy, to make the celebration of marriage exclusively a function of the state, and to abolish clerical supervision over schools. It was in the course of this struggle that Ludwig Windhorst, the most celebrated of Center Party leaders before World War I, achieved his celebrity; and it was largely owing to the energetic resistance of the Center Party that Bismarck was defeated in the Kulturkampf—the first serious defeat of his career.

The Center Party was also strongly influenced by the Christian Socialist doctrines preached by Bishop Wilhelm Emanuel Ketteler of Mainz. Furthermore, the Christian Catholic trades unions, which were especially strong in the Ruhr, formed a liberalizing element within the party.

The importance of the Center Party was greatly enhanced after the overthrow of the monarchy. It was, next to the SPD, the chief bulwark of the Weimar Republic. From its ranks arose some of the most distinguished leaders of the Republic, such as Joseph Wirth, Wilhelm Marx and Heinrich Brüning, all three of whom were chancellors.

Another Center Party leader was Matthias Erzberger, author of what was perhaps the most vital administrative distinction between the Empire and the Republic. For it was he who sponsored the provision whereby the Reich collected the taxes and apportioned them among the states, thereby reversing the process that obtained under the Empire, and contributing greatly towards strengthening the hands of the federal government.

The Center Party was the most stable of all the parties of the Weimar Republic. From 1919 to 1933 its poll never exceeded 19.7 percent of the total vote and never fell below 14.8 percent. For this reason as well as because of its central position between the Left and the Right, the party was an indispensable ingredient in the making of almost every coalition government during the lifetime of the Republic.

After Hitler became chancellor, however, the Center Party perpetrated the mistake of voting for the Enabling Act, conferring dictatorial powers upon the Fuehrer. If the party had joined with the SPD in opposing this bill, Hitler would never have obtained the two-thirds vote he required in order to secure its passage and therefore would have been obliged to enter on the path of illegality to establish his dictatorship over the Reich.

The Center Party shortly afterwards proceeded to commit political suicide by proclaiming its own dissolution in June 1933.

The Christian Democratic Union is not only one of the two major parties in western Germany today, but also the principal political organization in the country today that was not represented in the political scene of the Weimar Republic. It was founded in the belief that all Christians should band together to stem the rising tide of materialism embodied in Russian Communism.

Historically, the CDU is the political heir of the prewar Catholic Center Party. But its base has been broadened by the inclusion of Protestant elements. Thus, although the chairman of the party, Konrad Adenauer, is a Roman Catholic, the vice-chairman, Friedrich Holzapfel, is a Protestant. And in Wuerttemberg, the party has a rule that the chairmanship should be held, alternating from year to year, by a Protestant and a Catholic. Although a large

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part of its following comes from the Center Party of the Weimar Republic, the party has now attracted considerable support from the ranks of the prewar Democratic Party.

THE CDU has its largest following in the rural districts, particularly those that are predominantly Catholic. It is strongest in the Rhineland and the French Zone. Together with its Bavarian affiliate, the Christian Social Union, it has had the support of approximately 35 percent of the voters of western Germany.

The importance of the CDU in western Germany may be gauged by the fact that it is the largest party in five of the eleven states in western Germany, namely, North Rhine-Westphalia, Wurttemberg-Baden, and the three states of the French Zone, South Baden, Wurttemberg-Hohenzollern and Rhineland-Palatinate. Its Bavarian ally, the Christian Social Union, is the majority party in Bavaria. In the five other states of western Germany, the CDU is the second largest party.

CDU governors hold office in North Rhine-Westphalia, South Baden, Wurttemberg-Hohenzollern and Rhineland Palatinate. A CSU governor heads an exclusively CSU government in Bavaria. The CDU is represented in the coalition governments of Hesse and Lower Saxony. Only in Schleswig-Holstein and the two separate city-states of Hamburg and Bremen does the CDU have nothing to say in the government.

THE CLOSE relationship between the CDU and CSU is indicated by the fact that the two parties cooperate both in the Bizonal Economic Council at Frankfurt and in the Parliamentary Council at Bonn.

The CDU is not as closely knit and disciplined as is the SPD. Its left and right wings are about as widely separated from each other as are the progressive and conservative elements in the major political parties in the United States. The two poles of political thought existing side by side within the party are well exemplified by the personal rivalry existing between scholarly Adenauer, conservative advocate of Western European Federation, and Jakob Kaiser, trade-union leader, liberal and champion of German unity and irredentism in the east. A similar discrepancy of views within the CDU is to be found between the conservatism of the rural Rhineland and the socialistic trends of the Catholic trades unions in the Ruhr.

The CDU has played the role of "government" party in the German Bizonal Administration at Frankfurt, although the party holds only 40 of the 104 seats in the Economic Council. The CDU has indeed furnished the chairmanship of the German Executive Committee in Dr. Hermann Pender, former mayor of Cologne and state secretary in the Reich Chancellery in Berlin from 1926 to 1932, as well as the president of the Economic Council in the person of Dr. Erich Koehler.

Besides, the leader of the CDU, Dr. Adenauer, was president of the Parliamentary Council which drafted in Bonn the Basic Law for Western Germany.

THE CDU is fundamentally a political party that seeks to solve modern political, social and economic problems by applying the principles and teachings of the Christian religion.

The CDU platform therefore declares: "In place of the materialistic, the Christian Weltanschauung (view of the world or life) must step in; in place of the principles arising from materialism, the principles of Christian ethics must prevail. They must be dominant in the reconstruction of the State and in the limitation of its powers; they must prevail for the rights and duties of the individual, for economic and social life for our civilization and for the relationships of nations to one another. The Christian Weltanschauung alone guarantees right, order, the dignity and the liberty of the individual and therewith a true and genuine democracy which does not limit itself to the form of the State, but must permeate the life of the individual as well as the nation."

The CDU stands equally opposed to the conception of a Germany united on the basis of an Einheitsstaat (Unified State) and a Staatenbund (Confederation of States). It calls for a Bundesstaat (Federal State). The party holds that the central government must determine foreign policy and financial and economic measures and have equal rights with the state in finances. On the subject of the relationship between the central government and the states, the party platform takes a middle-of-the-road attitude, declaring that, "while the CDU rejects excessive concentration of powers in the hands of a central government, it likewise rejects exaggerated ideas of state rights."

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Sixty DP's from the IRO Camp in Bremen-Grohn made the first scheduled flight from Bremen to New York in Bremen's aviation history when a Transocean Airlines DC 4 hopped off on Aug. 25. The DP's, 22 men, 20 women and 18 children, included 12 orphans and were nationals of Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Yugoslavia, Hungary or Rumania.

(FIO OMG Bremen photo)
The CDU favors a bicameral parliament in which the two chambers possess equal powers. Originally, the CDU delegation led by Dr. Adenauer demanded that the second chamber consist of a senate, elected by the state legislatures, but eventually yielded to the pressure from the sister party, the CSU, to accept a Federal Council (Bundesrat), the members of which should be appointed by the state governments.

In regard to the financial powers of the central government, the CDU is in accord with the ideas set forth in the Allied "Aide Memoire" of Nov. 22, 1948, which declared that the "powers of the federal government in the field of public finance should be limited to the disposal of monies, including the raising of revenues, for purposes for which it is responsible," and that "while the federal government may set rates and legislate on the general principles of assessment with regard to other taxes for which uniformity is essential, the collection and utilization of such taxes should be left to the individual states."

In the Parliamentary Council at Bonn, the CDU strenuously fought the granting of excessive powers to the federal government and supported the principle of equality for the states in the field of finance. The CDU voted for the Basic Law as it was eventually drafted at Bonn.

In the field of economics, the CDU is largely under the inspiration of the Christian Socialism of Bishop Ketteler. This is clearly revealed in the platform which was drafted and adopted by the British Zonal CDU at Ahlen on Feb. 3, 1947.

The Ahlen Platform proclaims that the "capitalistic economic system does not do justice to the vital interests of the German people. After the fearful political, economic and social collapse, a new order must be built from the ground up as a consequence." The platform then goes on to state: "The new structure of German industry must be founded on the principle that the time of the unlimited mastery of private capitalism is gone. We must, however, prevent private capitalism from being replaced by state capitalism which is even more dangerous for the political and economic freedom of the individual."

Concretely, while opposing socialism, the Ahlen platform declares that the division-of-power principle must be introduced into enterprises of monopolistic nature, such as the coal, iron and steel industries of the Ruhr, in order to prevent them from being dominated by private individuals. For this purpose public agencies such as the federal government, the state, or the municipalities, as well as cooperatives and the workers employed in the firms, are to participate in these enterprises, but at the same time necessary play is to be left to the initiative of the owner. The percentage of shares permitted to be concentrated in one hand is to be limited by law.

Nevertheless, in spite of the clearly anti-capitalistic declarations contained in the Ahlen program the CDU stands solidly behind the policy of a free economy as pursued by Dr. Ludwig Erhard, director of economics in the Bizonal Administration. The party rejects, as Dr. Werner Hilpert, Hessian finance minister, said in an article written for Die Neue Zeitung on June 25, 1949, all forms of compulsion or planning as regards the economy. So solidly indeed had the CDU identified itself with the Erhardsian policy that it was not surprising to learn that the director of economics, the outstanding champion of the free enterprise system in western Germany, had consented to head the list of that party in North Wurttemberg for the Bundestag election.

The question of parents' rights remains dear to the CDU and it has tried hard to obtain recognition for them in the Bonn Basic Law. This means that parents and not the state should decide what sort of school their children should attend. The CDU also fought hard but unsuccessfully to get the Concordat adopted in the constitution. The party stands for confessional schools, stressing the importance of religious instruction in educational institutions.

The CDU stands for the majority, single-member system of voting. It is absolutely opposed to the system of proportional representation.

The CDU is in favor of a Western European Union, of a reconciliation between France and Germany, and of the extension of the internationalization of the Ruhr so as to include the heavy industry of all western Europe. It refuses, however, to recognize the Oder-Neisse line as Germany's frontier in the East.

Mr. John M. Gleason, chief of police of Greenwich, Conn., who visited Germany as a civilian expert to confer with German police chiefs, is shown above (center) during his Berlin visit between Mr. Ray Ashworth, chief of the Public Safety Branch, OMGPS, left, and Dr. Johannes Stumm, police president of Berlin, both of whom have flown to the US to attend a police chiefs' convention in Dallas, Texas.

(US Army photo)