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## **PREFACE**

The present study first appeared as the introduction to the documentary collection *Eine Chance zur Wiedervereinigung!*<sup>1</sup> The documentation took a long time to assemble. Under the Freedom of Information Act, the American documents were made available in 1980. But a publication based solely on American archival sources seemed to make little sense, given that the British had played an equally important role in handling the Stalin Note, as indeed they had in formulating all Western policy toward Germany since 1945.<sup>2</sup> Once the British documents became available in 1983, it was clear that waiting had been worthwhile.

This book aims to provide a solid basis for discussing one of the most controversial, difficult, and important chapters of German post-war history and to remove it from the usual realm of speculation. Readers can reevaluate the findings presented here and make their own judgments about what really occurred. What impressions, goals, and

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considerations motivated the Western powers and Konrad Adenauer in their "policy toward reunification"? To what extent can one justifiably continue to speak of the "myth of the missed opportunity"? To what extent is Adenauer's premise true, "that we will only attain Germany's reunification with the help of the three Western allies, never with the help of the Soviet Union"?

In May 1955, almost ten years to the day after the capitulation, occupation ended for the West German state. The Federal Republic became conditionally sovereign and a member of NATO. The perpetuation of Germany's division was the price paid. Whether this price was not perhaps too high, whether indeed another path for German history did not exist that would have been worth pursuing (or at least exploring) in the interests of German unity—these concerns formed the theme of bitter controversies in the early years of the republic. The astoundingly successful history of the Federal Republic in the following years did not end this controversy but only hid it from view. The arguments of Adenauer's critics have lost nothing of their validity even today. A younger generation has begun anew to discuss the old questions and controversies. And the more documents from the 1950s that become available, the more solid will be the basis on which this debate can be conducted. If the evidence I have gathered gives a new impulse to the discussion of this topic, and if possibly new answers can be given to the old questions, then much will have been gained and it will have been worth the effort.

I would like to thank the following people: the officials in the Department of State in Washington, D.C., and in the Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas, who helped me overcome so many of the obstacles on my way to the documents; the employees in the Public Record Office in London, especially Mr. C. D. Chalmers, head of the Search Department, who always had time for my questions and whose assistance in deciphering many individuals' handwriting was invaluable; the Keeper of Public Records for permission to reprint the documents; Mrs. Angela Houston, who provided research assistance; Sir Frank Roberts, head of the German section in the Foreign Office from 1951 to 1954 for a fascinating, open talk about British policy toward Germany; my secretary, Fräulein Anita Goestl, for deciphering my handwriting; my assistants, Dr. Thomas Albrich and Mag. Klaus Eisterer—who also conducted research in Paris—for their help in reading the galley proofs; the editorial staff of the *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* for including this work in their series; and especially to both Herr Dr. Dieter Dowe, whose great commitment benefited this project from its

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My work on this documentation occurred during a move from Hannover to Innsbruck; nevertheless, my wife oversaw my return to my study with the same degree of forbearance she always shows. Thus, I dedicate this book to her—for Eva.



# **THE GERMAN QUESTION**

