



Volume 9. Two Germanies, 1961-1989

The Catholic Church, Abortion, and the Election Campaign (August 31, 1972)

The Central Committee of the Catholic Church condemns the ongoing legal and moral decay of society, which it believed the state was doing too little to combat. This criticism was part of the campaign against a bill permitting abortions in the first trimester. With new elections in the offing, the governing parties criticized the church for intervening in political affairs in support of the CDU/CSU, which opposed the bill.

The Central Committee of German Catholics Warns against Dirigiste Developments in Connection with the New Elections for the Bundestag; Critique from the SPD and FDP

According to *Die Welt*, the executive board of the Central Committee of German Catholics, under the chairmanship of Bernhard Vogel (CDU), Rhineland-Palatinate Minister of Culture, issued a statement on August 31 on the occasion of the early new elections for the German Bundestag. Among the points mentioned in the statement:

“The citizens of the FRG are supposed to vote this year on the future composition of the German Bundestag. The date of the special election reflects the gravity of the situation in our country. [. . .] The Central Committee of German Catholics turns to the public and asks everyone, in the election campaign and in the actual vote, to act in accordance with the critical situation in our country. Our people’s ties to law and moral values must be reinforced. More and more, personal freedom is confused with subjective popularity. Increasing brutality, the glorification and use of violence, and the attempt to take away legal protection for unborn lives are obvious signs of how far a certain socially damaging behavior determined by subjective popularity has come in our society. It is alarming that for several years the state has done less and less to oppose this moral and legal degeneracy. Today, the German Bundestag will be presented with drafts to reform Section 218 of the criminal code; these [drafts] will deny human life any and all legal protection in the first three months (so-called *Fristenlösung*, or term-limit regulation) or, by granting impunity for abortion for reasons of “general hardship,” as the draft bill by the government proposes, will *de facto* view the killing of human life as a means of fighting social hardship. The Central Committee has presented its unequivocal opinion on these issues and has called for constructive assistance.

Involvement out of one’s own sense of responsibility should not be sacrificed to dirigiste and provider-state developments. Recent years have witnessed strengthened tendencies to expand state intervention in the economy and society and to make it increasingly difficult for free social forces to satisfy public tasks. [. . .]”

The SPD press service has issued the following statement (excerpted):

This declaration contains, in addition to ideas that one could agree with, extensive one-sided qualities that betray the handwriting of the CDU. Some parts are pure jargon by the Christian Union and some passages carry a clear election-campaign character favoring the Union parties. It shows no understanding for reforms generally recognized as necessary to favor disadvantaged social strata and lacks [the suggestion of] any willingness to work together with other social and political groups that are striving for a more just order.

[. . .]

Source: "ZK der Deutschen Katholiken warnt vor dirigistischen Entwicklungen im Zusammenhang mit Bundestagsneuwahl; Kritik von SPD und FDP" ["The Central Committee of German Catholics Warns against Dirigist Developments in Connection with the New Elections for the Bundestag; Critique from the SPD and FDP"], *Archiv der Gegenwart*, vol. 6, August 31, 1972, p. 5767ff.

Translation: Allison Brown