

## **European Integration, Ordoliberalism, and the Public Sphere.**

### **The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*'s economics department and the European Economic Community (EEC), 1950s – 1970s**

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When Hans Herbert Götz took up the job as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*'s (FAZ) European correspondent in Brussels in 1963, he saw himself on a clear mission. Götz came to the Belgian capital to cover the European Economic Community (EEC), an international organisation founded by France, Germany, and the Benelux states in 1958. The EEC's main task was to set up a Common Market and a Common Agricultural Policy among its six member states. However, for Götz the Community was about much more than tariff reductions and the fixing of prices of wheat, eggs, and meat. In his view, at stake in Brussels was nothing less than the future economic order of the 'free Europe'.

For that future order, Götz saw essentially two options. The European order could become "an order of cartels, of emasculating protectionism towards the outside, of exaggerated 'upward-harmonization' in social policy, and of constant interventionism". Such an order would generate inflation, produce no higher standards of living and thus weaken Western Europe in its struggle against communism. Instead, Götz argued that 'Europe' should build an economic order comprising strict rules on competition, open to international trade, limiting social transfers, preventing state-interventionism, and fighting inflation. In short, the European economic order should follow the German model of ordoliberalism, the FAZ's economic policy doctrine. Just as Götz and his colleagues in the economics department of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* had campaigned throughout the 1950s for the establishment of an ordoliberal market economy in the Federal Republic in the form of Ludwig Erhard's *Soziale Marktwirtschaft*, they would now continue the fight in Brussels at the 'European' level.<sup>1</sup>

However, the campaign of the FAZ's economics department for an ordoliberal 'Europe' would become more troublesome than Götz and his colleagues had expected. They soon had to realise that 'European integration' in the form it became dominant with the EEC during the late 1950s and 1960s developed in a way that was in many respects inconsistent with their liberal ideas. Therefore, it would have been only consequent for the FAZ's economic editors to reject the EEC – just as leading (ordo)liberal thinkers such as Wilhelm Röpke and – to a lesser degree – Ludwig Erhard did. Instead and surprisingly, the FAZ's economics department throughout the 1960s and 1970s adopted a generally positive stance on the EEC. I argue that this happened due to the influence of 'Europeanist' editors and correspondents who adopted an idealist 'pro-European' view of the EEC and were willing to largely compromise ordoliberal doctrines for the goal of 'European unity'.

The case study proposes a reinterpretation of the position of the Federal Republic's media towards 'European integration'. While the existing literature describes support for the EEC/EC in the German media in the postwar decades as something natural, the case study shows that for the FAZ's economic editors supporting the EEC/EC was actually an unnatural decision. Moreover, the case study illustrates the media dimension of an economic and foreign policy struggle that took place in the Federal Republic since the 1950s between supporters of Ludwig Erhard's economic liberalism on one side and supporters of Konrad Adenauer's foreign policy of *Westintegration* through the EEC on the other side. Finally, it sheds light on the largely unexplored role of economic journalism in the Federal Republic in the postwar decades. The case study draws from the private papers of FAZ journalists and EEC officials, German and French state archives, and the Historical Archives of the European Union.

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<sup>1</sup> "Wird diese Ordnung in Europe eine Ordnung der Kartelle sein, des verweichlichenden Protektionismus nach außen, der übertriebenen ‚herauf-harmonisierten‘ Sozialpolitik und eines gepflegten Interventionismus“, Hans Herbert Götz, *Weil Alle Besser Leben Wollen... Porträt Der Deutschen Wirtschaftspolitik* (Düsseldorf und Wien: Econ-Verlag, 1963), 328.