



FRANKFURT WENT WEST

Mickey
Bohnacker

Photographs
1945-1965

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Mickey Bohnacker: Photographs 1945–1965

Introduction

“Frankfurt ... A wave of Americanisation rolled into town. No city in Germany embraced the American way of life as eagerly as Frankfurt did; nowhere else in Germany were young people so passionately infatuated with the symbols of the West: rivet trousers, chewing gum, Coca-Cola. [...] They say Frankfurt was a mixture of Little Chicago and Old Sachsenhausen. [...] Is it the smell of freedom that clings to these artefacts? Frankfurt may not be a beautiful city, but it has always remained free.” This is how the Frankfurt writer Horst Krüger described America’s influence on almost every aspect of urban life in the *Frankfurter Neue Presse* on 7 May 1965. Particularly young people, who had grown up during the war years and the immediate post-war period, were fascinated by the American way of life. One of them was the subsequent press photographer and paparazzo Karl-Heinz “Mickey” Bohnacker (1928–2017). Soon after the end of the war, he established links with the occupying forces in a German-American youth club in Frankfurt. Trained by an army photographer, Bohnacker began taking pictures for US army newspapers, and eventually, he was even part of Supreme Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower’s entourage.

The resulting photographs are very intimate, and they show numerous facets of Frankfurt’s Americanisation. Bohnacker illustrated the path which led from political uncertainty to democratic parliamentarism; from West Germany’s isolation in Europe to its integration into a Western alliance; from a cityscape in ruins to a modern metropolis; from hardship and poverty to widespread prosperity. As the starting point and the forerunner of the development outlined above, Frankfurt played an unmistakably decisive role in the young Federal Republic.

80 years after the occupation of Frankfurt by the US Army, Mickey Bohnacker’s visual legacy provides an opportunity for a fresh look at the rebuilding of the city, which was part of America’s occupation policy.



Mickey Bohnacker with his Porsche 356, c. 1951

The car was not only an expression of the joy inherent in going fast, but also a professional advantage: every one of the Frankfurt agency photographers wanted to be “first on the drum” with their photos – this referred to the “Bildtelegraphendienst”, the public picture telegraph service, which was allowed to operate again in January 1950. Since many photographs were taken outside of the city limits, it was always important to return to Frankfurt as quickly as possible. **S7Bo No. 51**

I: Democracy building (Demokratieaufbau)

After the end of the World War II, the Allied forces assumed supreme governmental authority in a politically incapacitated Germany. While the eastern parts of the country were occupied by the Soviet Union, the American, British, and French governments oversaw the future development of the western zones. Headed by the Americans, the allied forces agreed on measures which would enable political reconstruction as well as the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany on 23 May 1949. The headquarters of the highest US military command and the American military governor had their offices in the former I.G. Farben building in Frankfurt, making the city an important scene of Allied occupation policy in West Germany.



Aerial view of the I.G. Farben building

On 26 May 1945, the I.G. Farben building became the seat of the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force. General Dwight D. Eisenhower moved into an office in the former conference room of the central administration of “I.G.

Farbenindustrie AG”, which had been founded in Frankfurt in 1925/26. In addition to the military supreme command, Eisenhower performed the duties of a military governor, such as disarming, denazifying, and feeding the population as well as caring for displaced persons. The latter group included former forced labourers, prisoners of war, concentration camp survivors, and refugees from Eastern Europe. **S7Bo No. 83**



American officers in front of a map of the American occupied zone

On 19 September 1945, Eisenhower, as military governor of the American occupied zone, signed Proclamation No. 2 in the I.G. Farben building, determining the state borders of Bavaria and

Hesse and thus, in part, the structure of the future Federal Republic. Eisenhower left Frankfurt on 11 November 1945 to assume his position as Chief of Staff of the United States Army. **S7Bo No. 186**



General Dwight D. Eisenhower

The picture shows a famous photograph of Eisenhower by the American photojournalist Francis J. “Red” Grandy in 1951, allegedly capturing the general’s expression as he learns of General MacArthur’s dismissal from his command in Korea by President Harry Truman. Bohnacker’s snapshot with the female smoker in the foreground was included in an exhibition at the “Amerika-Haus” in Frankfurt. **S7Bo No. 2091**



US Military Governor Lucius D. Clay at Frankfurt Airport, Mickey Bohnacker in the foreground, c. 1948

General Clay had his office in the I.G. Farben building between March 1947 and May 1949. Together with the British and French military governors, he presented the “Frankfurt Documents” to the West German minister presidents on 1 July 1948. These documents contained the mandate to draw up a democratic federalist constitution, which was later given the name “Grundgesetz”, Basic Law. The I.G. Farben building – an industrial centre for military production and forced labour during the Nazi era – thus became the birthplace of West German democracy. **S7Bo No. 2142**



Inauguration of the newly built Paulskirche, 18 May 1948

At the inauguration of St Paul’s Church, the head of the American military government of Hesse, James Newman, decided not to give the speech he had initially planned to give. He believed the celebration in St Paul’s Church was a purely German affair. By withdrawing, he may also have sought to pre-empt accusations from the communist side that the democratisation of the western zones was only carried out on the orders of the Americans. **S7Bo No. 1590**



Rotunda of the planned plenary chamber of the Bundestag, later the seat of the Hessischer Rundfunk

St Paul's Church was associated with the prospect of Frankfurt becoming the new nation's seat of government. But while a parliamentary building was still under

construction in the city's Dornbusch area, it was decided that Bonn become the capital of the Federal Republic. The half-finished building became the rotunda of the Hessischer Rundfunk, the public broadcasting corporation of Hesse. **S7Bo No. 709**

II: Integration into the Western defence alliance (Integration in das westliche Verteidigungsbündnis)

In view of the expansion of the Soviet sphere of influence in the Eastern Bloc and the Berlin Blockade (24 June 1948 to 12 May 1949), securing Western Europe militarily was America's top priority. The Federal Republic, centrally located in Europe, was to be rearmed and thereby made to participate in a defence alliance with the Western Allies.

But since the war had been started by Germany, the French and British allies were hesitant to agree to German remilitarisation. Large sections of the population in the Federal Republic also rejected rearmament as well as German participation in NATO. On the federal level, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and its chairman Kurt Schumacher opposed the plans, and the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) demanded that West Germany remain neutral. In contrast, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) invoked the necessity of a military defence contribution and warned of "neutralisation tendencies that would make European integration impossible and would pave the way for being undermined by the communists" (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 7 April 1952).

Although the political balance had shifted in favour of the city on the Rhine with the election of Bonn as the seat of government, Frankfurt remained a key location for diplomatic activities in the context of alliance politics, since the responsible High Commissioner John J. McCloy's office was located in the I.G. Farben building between 1949 and 1952.



Meeting of three countries in Paris, 8–10 November 1949: the Foreign Ministers of France, Robert Schuman (left), and England, Ernest Bevin (right); in the middle, the British High Commissioner Brian Robertson

Germany's Integration into NATO, which was founded on 4 April 1949, was prevented by the Occupation Statute, which prohibited the Federal Republic from engaging in any military activities. In talks with the British and French allies, the American Secretary of State Dean Acheson tried in vain to change West Germany's legal status and bring about equal rights for the country to enable remilitarisation. **S7Bo No. 1563**



John J. McCloy (left), his wife Ellen in the centre, British High Commissioner Brian Robertson on the right, 19 January 1950

The American High Commissioner John J. McCloy welcomes his British counterpart Brian Robertson at Frankfurt Airport. Robertson arrived from Hamburg, where on the previous day in front of around 700 members of the Hamburg "Overseas Club", he had declared that Germany and England were no longer enemies, but were "facing the same danger", i.e. the Soviet Union, and therefore had to "cooperate". (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 January 1950) **S7Bo No. 175**



John J. McCloy in the I.G. building, his official residence, c. 1951

The Korean War – which had begun on 25 June 1950 after the North Korean attack on the south of the country and which was supported by both the Soviet Union and China – intensified American efforts to integrate the Federal Republic into Western defence efforts. At a press conference in Frankfurt on 27 December 1950, McCloy emphasised that this had to be done in a partnership of equals (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 December 1950). **S7Bo No. 166**



Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of NATO in Europe, at Frankfurt Airport; John J. McCloy in the background on the left, 21 January 1951

On 21 January 1951, Eisenhower made a stopover in Frankfurt on a trip across the NATO member states. At an airport press conference, he was asked whether a militarily effective defence of Europe was possible without German

participation, and he replied: "The more men I have on my side, the happier I will be."

(*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 22 January 1951) **S7Bo No. 154**



"Soviets protesting against German rearmament. Notes to Paris and London presented in Moscow / Western powers accused of preparing for war" (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 22 January 1951)

On 22 January 1951, McCloy hosted a reception in Eisenhower's honor at his private residence in Bad Homburg. Among the guests were Hans Speidel and Adolf Heusinger, two former Wehrmacht generals who, according to the *Frankfurter Rundschau* newspaper, presented their views on the defence of Western Europe to their former adversary. Members of communist organisations at home and abroad as well as pacifist groups protested, as they interpreted this as a sign of a renewed strengthening of Nazi militarism.



Ambassadors' conference at the I.G. Farben building, 5 February 1951

Despite protests, integration talks between American diplomats and civil servants continued at the I.G. Farben building. In addition to McCloy (right), Secretary of State George Perkins (to McCloy's left), Walter Sherman Gifford (US ambassador to the UK, far left)

and Henry Byroade (head of the US State Department's Germany Division, in the background on the left) all took part in the meeting. At the conference, the ambassadors discussed measures to increase Western European defence efforts within the framework of NATO.

(*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 February 1951) **S7Bo No. 170**

Quote McCloy

“Today as before, the United States and its allies maintain that there will be no German general staff in the old Prussian sense, no military caste in possession of its former political and social power, and no German national army that could become the instigator or instrument of future aggression. Any German defence contribution may only be made in the form of an armed force that is an integral part of a larger international organisation.” (Frankfurter Rundschau, 27 June 1951)



Farewell parade for Eisenhower at the Waldstadion, 30 April 1952

Before leaving for America, where he was running for president, General Eisenhower visited Frankfurt. To the sounds of the military band, gun salutes, and the flyover of 200 American fighter planes (*Frankfurter Neue Presse*, 1/2 May 1952), he participated in a parade of the army, navy, and air force at the Waldstadion. Eisenhower explained to the 4000 soldiers that they were “no longer conquerors, but defenders and representatives of the free Western way of life.” (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1/2 May 1952) **S7Bo No. 2589**



General Dwight D. Eisenhower paying a farewell visit to Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in Bonn. Front left, Mickey Bohnacker, 2 May 1952

Eisenhower considered the post-war order – which divided Western Europe into victors and vanquished – as a threat to the continent’s future. At the farewell reception in Palais Schaumburg, he emphasised that an effective defence of Europe was only possible with a German state that defended Europe’s freedom on an equal footing and alongside its Western partners. The Occupation Statute was abolished in 1955. That same year, West Germany was rearmed as part of the Federal Republic’s accession to NATO. **S7Bo No. 18**

III: Cold War (Kalter Krieg)

As a location for key political decisions and as a US military base, Frankfurt was an important theatre in the “Cold War”. In view of the Korean War (1950–1953), the USA moved four US divisions to Western Europe in 1951. Under a US general as commander-in-chief of NATO, American, British, Belgian, Dutch, and later West German combat units secured the border to the countries united under the Warsaw Pact.

US strategists were convinced that in the event of a conventional war, the enemy could make advances through the so-called “Fulda Gap”: a strategic “gap” through which large Soviet armoured units could have broken through into the Rhine-Main region from Thuringia within two days; they could have attacked the airports in Frankfurt and Wiesbaden, which were of great importance for supplies.

The US units stationed in Hesse were tasked with delaying the enemy’s advance until the arrival of NATO’s main forces. Therefore, the 4th Infantry Division was stationed in Frankfurt in 1951 (Drake Barracks, Preungesheim). Also, a large, armoured unit was stationed in the Gibbs barracks in Eckenheim, an infantry division was located in Würzburg, and an armoured division in Bad Kreuznach, which was part of the V Corps headquartered at the I.G-Farben building.

In 1956, the replacement of the 4th Infantry Division by the 3rd Armoured Division strengthened Frankfurt’s defences. The division had several hundred armoured vehicles at its disposal, with brigades in Kirchgöns, Butzbach, Friedberg, and Gelnhausen. Drake Barracks remained the headquarter, and support units were stationed at the neighbouring Edwards Barracks. The McNair barracks in Höchst housed telecommunications units; the air base was home to the Aviation Engineer Brigade, which coordinated the production of fighter aircraft in Western Europe; and the military hospital was located on Giessener Strasse. When the era of direct nuclear threats came to an end after the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1963, the conventional armed forces in the command area of the V Corps were reinforced once again.



Manoeuvre “Exercise Combine”, October 1951

During the Korean War, 160000 NATO soldiers trained to defend against an attack from the east on the territory of the former US zone, and against the occupation of Frankfurt. General Eisenhower (Supreme Commander of NATO Forces in Europe, centre) was the commander-in-chief. Second from the left is General Thomas Handy, commander-in-chief of US forces in Europe since September 1949. **S7Bo No. 193**



Amphibious vehicles in Stockstadt on the Main, c. 1952

The US Army was present in every aspect of daily life, and American military and civilian vehicles were a familiar sight even in ordinary towns and villages. Far beyond their training areas, they travelled in open terrain as well as on public roads. Any damages to fields, roads, or buildings were initially compensated

by the German authorities, who – in accordance with international law – subsequently demanded reimbursement from the US forces in accordance. **S7Bo No. 2509**



Mickey Bohnacker as a guest of the flying squadron “Skyblazers”, c. 1950

The “Lockheed T-33”, which Bohnacker is boarding here, is the two-seater version of the “Lockheed F-80C”, the first operational US fighter aircraft with a jet engine in 1944. Over 6500 such aircraft were built between 1949 and 1958. During rearmament, the

German Air Force received 192 aircraft as their basic equipment. **S7Bo No. 69**



“Lockheed T-33” of the flying squadron “Skyblazers”, c. 1950

The “Skyblazers Aerobatic Team” was created quite spontaneously: a group from the “36th Fighter Wing” had carried out coordinated formation flights for the first time on their way back to Fürstenfeldbruck from Malta. In May 1949, US Air Force headquarters ordered the unit to form a team for performing

aerobatic exercises in NATO countries. **S7Bo No. 2499**



S7Bo No. 219

“Open Day” at the Rhein-Main Air Base, 1955

The German-American Friendship Week always ended with “Armed Forces Day”, which included the first “Open Day” at the air base in 1955. Up to 10000 soldiers were stationed at the base, which was central to the logistics of the American armed forces. As many GIs set foot on European soil here for the first time, the air base was nicknamed the “Gateway to Europe”.



Entrance to the Soviet military liaison mission in Niederrad, c. 1950

The Soviet Union maintained its own liaison missions on the Western Allies’ territories. The facility in Neuwiesenstrasse was a piece of the Soviet Union in Frankfurt and attracted political rallies. **S7Bo No. 2557**



Shop window of the Frankfurt office of the Free German Youth after its ban in June 1951

The organisation “Freie Deutsche Jugend”, the “Free German Youth”, was founded in the Soviet zone in February 1946, and it was also permitted to form in Frankfurt in October 1946. However, in 1950, the German government banned members of eleven left-wing and two National Socialist organisations, including the Free German Youth and the Communist Party of Germany, from working in the public sector. The Free German Youth was banned in West Germany on 26 June 1951. **S7Bo No. 2564**



Issue of neutrality passports by the “Freedom League”, 1951

The “Freiheitsbund”, Freedom League, was led by the former politician of the Communist Party of Germany, Walter Kögler (1901-1968); it distributed a “neutrality card” from 1949 onward. This was informed by the view that non-aligned, unarmed neutrality would enable faster reunification and prevent Germany from becoming a theatre of war. The “neutralists” included supporters of political splinter groups as well as prominent politicians. **S7Bo No. 1542**



Demonstration against rearmament and conscription, 15 January 1955

Rearmament, which had been prepared since 1949, was openly pursued when the Federal Republic joined NATO in 1955. Opposition to German rearmament had formed early on. Former war veterans’ “without me” attitude quickly gave rise to a growing movement which included church representatives, intellectuals, socialist youth, sections of the trade unions and the Social Democrats, the women’s peace movement, the Communist Party of Germany, and others. In response to the demonstration seen here, Adenauer appeared at a rally of the Christian Democrats on the Frankfurt exhibition grounds on 8 February 1955, and this subsequently fuelled further protests. **S7Bo No. 1597**



Rally of the German Trade Union Confederation on the Römerberg against nuclear armament and emergency laws, 15 June 1965

As early as 1953, the US Army began preparations for the deployment of nuclear warheads and delivery systems in the Federal Republic of Germany, which only came to light in 1957. More nuclear warheads were added in 1958 as part of the “nuclear sharing arrangement”. The storage of around 1500 nuclear warheads on West German soil dominated the political debate for years to come. Since 1957, Frankfurt has repeatedly been the scene of protest rallies against nuclear weapons; the protests were supported by a growing non-parliamentary movement. **S7Bo No. 1619**

IV: Hub (Drehkreuz)

Frankfurt's central location at the intersection of important transport routes remained fundamental to the city's development in the period after the war. In 1930, the city council decided to relocate the airport to the city forest and to participate in a Hamburg-Frankfurt-Basel motorway. The National Socialists adopted these plans, opened the motorway section towards Darmstadt, inaugurated the new airport, and laid out what would later become the motorway interchange "Frankfurter Kreuz". Before the start of the war, 27 airlines flew to "Rhein-Main" airport, until the area was placed under the control of the Luftwaffe.

After taking over, the Americans restored the airfield for use as a supply hub. The first civilian aircraft to land was an American Overseas Airlines DC-4 in May 1946. The following month, the military government, the minister president, the city council, and the construction company Holzmann signed a contract to expand the airfield into an international airport.

Subsequently, the Americans, who established the Rhine-Main Air Base in the southern part of the city, handed over responsibilities: The company "Verkehrsaktiengesellschaft Rhein-Main" (VAG), founded in 1947, was initially primarily responsible for the infrastructure. Two years later, civil organisational tasks on the ground were transferred to the company as well. On 1 June 1950, the airport site became the property and responsibility of VAG. Restrictions for German air travellers were lifted in the following year, leading to a rapid increase in civil air traffic.

With the founding of the "Bundesanstalt für Flugsicherung", the Federal Institute for Air Traffic Control, in 1953, the supervision of air traffic was once again in the hands of German authorities. In 1954, the Supervisory Board and General Assembly of the VAG decided to change its name to "Flughafen Aktiengesellschaft Frankfurt" (FAG), and the Rhine-Main Airport was renamed "Flughafen Frankfurt", Frankfurt Airport. The shares in the FAG were distributed as follows: State of Hesse 45%, City of Frankfurt 29%, Federal Government 26%. In 1959, the federal government declared that Frankfurt was to be developed into Germany's first jet airport.



The new aviation symbol, 1948

A peace dove on a globe orbited by aeroplanes replaces the imperial eagle on an obelisk erected by the National Socialists. The design modelled by the artist Margarete Fendler from Höchst – a symbol of hope for peaceful aviation – was the result of a competition among US soldiers. **S7Bo No. 2449**



Check-in counter of “Pan American World Airways”, c. 1948

In 1947, “Pan Am” launched the “Around the World” flight service in Frankfurt. By 1950, five airlines in addition to Pan Am had included Rhine-Main in their route network. Flights to Frankfurt included some cities in the USA, where Frankfurt was becoming increasingly well-known thanks to its airport. By 1955, a further twenty destinations had been added, from Western Europe, South America, Africa, Asia to Australia. Ten years later, around fifty airlines from all over the world flew to Frankfurt, including from Eastern Europe. **S7Bo No. 20**



Visitors’ terrace, c. 1951

The airport was an enormous attraction as a symbol of progress. Many people felt a great desire to fly, but the price of a ticket was still unaffordable for most. This made trips to the visitors’ terrace, which reopened in 1950, all the more popular. In 1952, the “Frankfurter Verein für Luftfahrt”, the Frankfurt aviation association, together with the VAG, the US Air Force, Pan Am, and TWA organised a major air show that attracted over 60000 spectators. **S7Bo No. 291**



Lufthansa passes the million mark, 18 August 1960

Following its reestablishment and the start of scheduled services in 1954/55, Lufthansa welcomed its one millionth passenger in Frankfurt in 1960. The company acquired the trademark rights of the old “Luft Hansa” (founded in 1926), which had been liquidated by the Allies; the company acted in this way to dispute the rights of “Deutsche Lufthansa Ost”. The first international flights were to the USA. **S7Bo No. 2421**



To the south with a Douglas DC-7, c. 1963

The charter airline “Südflug” was founded in 1952 under the name “Süddeutsche Bedarfsflug”. Due to the occupation statutes, it initially operated a small aircraft registered in Switzerland. After the founding of German aviation companies legally operated again after the abolition of the occupation statute in 1955, the aircraft were given West German licence plates. At the same time, “Südflug” acquired passenger aircraft for charter flights to the Mediterranean and the Canary Islands. **S7Bo No. 312**



Airport, seen from the south-west, c. 1955

Within just ten years, the airport had become the second largest in Europe: a second runway went into operation in 1949; new handling facilities were opened in 1952, a maintenance hangar, an office building, and the first West German airmail office were added in 1953. In 1955, Mayor Walter Kolb (SPD) inaugurated new cargo halls, and the American passenger centre comprising 872 beds was added as well. The unfinished “Frankfurter Kreuz” is visible in the background. **S7Bo No. 2450**



Aerial view of the airport, c. 1965

The airport is expanding: After the construction of a new control tower in 1957 and the extension of the northern runway, the airport was connected to jet air traffic in 1959. A baggage handling system (1961) and an international waiting hall (1963) increased capacity to five million passengers per year. In 1965, construction began on “Terminal Mitte”, the central terminal, and the FAG applied for the construction of a runway to the south (“Startbahn West”). The expansion of the airport for economic growth was prioritised, so that even disadvantageous consequences such as land consumption and aircraft noise were accepted. **S7Bo No. 332**



Passing through: The Beatles, 1964

The airport brought a large number of international celebrities to Frankfurt. Ringo Starr, Paul McCartney, John Lennon, and George Harrison (from right) never performed in Frankfurt, but during a stopover at the airport on 2 July 1964, they met photographers and fans, who greeted them with signs saying “We love Beatles”.

S7Bo No. 1165

V: Construction (Aufbau)

Had the Western Allies not decided to establish the administration of the Bizone, the “Bank deutscher Länder” (Bank of the German States, BdL) as well as the “Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau” (Credit Institute for Reconstruction, KfW) for the distribution of Marshall Plan funds in Frankfurt, the city’s development would have taken a very different course. The associated construction plans attracted labourers, while associations and supervisory authorities opened their offices in the city. In the competition for the seat of the German government, the municipal authorities favoured the construction of large office buildings. Even though Frankfurt ultimately lost out to Bonn, the conditions for Frankfurt’s business infrastructure had improved considerably.

In 1951, the municipal authorities decided to rebuild the city centre under municipal control by means of the “Aufbau AG”. This was made possible by the Hessian Development Act of 1948 (purchase, reorganisation, and consolidation or expropriation of smaller plots of land). The “general alignment plan” adopted in 1948 was now also implemented: In view of the intended development into an economic location and a centre of trade fairs, the magistrate wanted to draw the increasing car traffic into the city on four-lane thoroughfares.

To compensate for the reduction in plot size due to the widening of the roads, the business community built upwards, which was initially met with reservations. At the city council meeting on 30 November 1949, the head of the building department Moritz Wolf asked how far one should surrender to the unrestrained American architectural style. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* warned that Frankfurt was not Manhattan; high-rise buildings should only be built in prominent locations (16 August 1950).

The speed of development was due to the local economy and the city authorities’ business-friendly attitude. The influx of companies and skilled workers allowed the city to become the economic and financial centre and the tax-richest municipality in the country. On the other hand, architectural monuments had been demolished, and due to the relocation of residential areas to the outer districts of town, the city centre was only vibrant during business hours.



Financial centre: Bank of the German States, Taunusanlage 4 (former Reichsbank branch), c. 1948

On 1 March 1948, the US and British military governments founded the “Bank deutscher Länder” (Bank of the German States, BdL). The British proposal for a single central bank had prevailed, while the Americans had chosen Frankfurt as the bank’s location. This laid the foundation for the city’s development into a West German financial centre. During the currency reform, the BdL was responsible for distributing the “Deutsche Mark” banknotes – which were printed in the US – to issuing offices across the country. The BdL was bound by the instructions of the Allied Banking Commission for another three years, and in 1957 it was transformed into the German Bundesbank. **S7Bo No. 2943**



Financial centre: Secretary of State George Marshall (2nd from right) and President Truman (centre), c. 1948

Between 1948 and 1952 Marshall implemented a development programme with an endowment of roughly \$13 billion, which primarily aided Great Britain, France, Italy, and the Federal Republic of Germany. In Germany, the “Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau” (Credit Institute for Reconstruction, KfW), founded in Frankfurt in 1948, was responsible for the distribution of the funds. The so-called Marshall Plan comprised loans, raw materials, food and industrial goods; it accelerated economic recovery, promoted European integration, and reduced the attraction of socialist economic models. **S7Bo No. 1531**



Financial centre: construction of the Rhein-Main-Bank office building, Gallusanlage 7, 1951

The three major banks based in Berlin – Deutsche Bank, Commerzbank and Dresdner Bank – were expropriated in the Soviet zone in 1945 and broken up in the Western zone. Branch groups were created, including the Rhein-Main-Bank in Hesse, which was located in Frankfurt. When the major banks were allowed to reorganise themselves at the federal level in 1957, they trended towards Frankfurt for creating new headquarters. **S7Bo No. 2940**



Financial centre: Mayor Kolb thanks the Americans for their help in building the city, 27 January 1951

John J. McCloy, his wife Ellen, and State Commissioner James Newman headed the guest list at a reception for representatives of the American High Commission. The head of the city emphasised the good relations with US agencies; this cooperation had significantly promoted Frankfurt's development into an international economic and financial centre. McCloy replied that people in the USA were well aware that the city of St Paul's Church was a stronghold of freedom and democracy. **S7Bo No. 1560**



Construction: The old town centre as a car park, c. 1962

The decision to reconstruct the city centre in 1951 also included the decision to rebuild area of the old town. The Römer and its adjacent buildings were reconstructed in 1952. The old town centre, however, was not, since no consensus could be reached on the implementation of various planning concepts, including those resulting from competitions. While in cities such as Nuremberg the reconstruction of the historic centre was based on earlier plot sizes, in Frankfurt the Römerberg was not restored as a closed square until 1983. **S7Bo No. 752**



Construction: Demolition of the walls of the salt house, c. 1951

In Frankfurt, "reconstruction" initially meant demolishing the old. Here, the walls of the "Salzhaus", the salt house, on the Römerberg are razed to the ground. Ruins of older buildings, which could have been reconstructed in the same way as the Römer or the Steinernes Haus, were removed in favour of new building lines and taken to the rubble recycling plant. **S7Bo No. 737**



Construction: New building lines – Old Town, 1953

The "city centre reconstruction" was also intended to give the old town a new face. Between 1951 and 1954, rows of housing estates and residential courtyards were constructed, and some of them were part of social housing programmes. In the foreground on the left, there are the rows of the new "Trierischer Hof" on the site of 15 old town lanes; to the right, there is the skeletal scaffolding of the new "Kleinmarkthalle", the indoor market; in the background, the residential and commercial buildings on the new Berliner Strasse. **S7Bo No. 2815**



Construction: Old and new building line – Grosse Eschenheimer Strasse, 1949 and 1953

The Grosse Eschenheimer Strasse was one of the traffic routes which was widened to twice its previous width in favour of moving and stationary traffic on the basis of the “Genereller Fluchtlinienplan”, the general alignment plan, from 1948. The new buildings on the eastbound building line were completed in 1953, as were the block of flats on Stiftstrasse 34–36 as well as the Bayerhaus. The Eschenheimer Turm became a traffic island within a roundabout. **S7Bo No. 720 and 732**



High-rise construction: Topping-out ceremony for the Rhein-Main-Bank office block, 1952

At 12 storeys, the new Rhein-Main-Bank building was briefly Frankfurt’s tallest office block. In 1952, the AEG high-rise, the Juniorhaus, the Bayerhaus, and the high-rise of the Federal Railway Administration had already been completed. Construction had already begun on the Degussa high-rise, the telecommunications tower block, and the Bienenkorbhaus. **S7Bo No. 2937**



High-rise construction: City centre, c. 1953

The city’s eye-catcher and new landmark was the “Fernmeldehochhaus”, the telecommunications tower block, whose west tower reached a height of 67 metres. The complex housed telecommunications offices with a technology centre and an administration consisting of 4000 employees. The cityscape was defined by an ensemble of post-war architecture through the “Fernmeldehochhaus”, the “Rundschauhaus” (behind the Eschenheimer Turm), the Bayerhaus (in front with the pitched roof), and later the “Landwirtschaftliche Rentenbank”. **S7C No. 1998-6287**



High-rise: Zürichhaus, Bockenheimer Landstrasse 1, c. 1962

Zurich Insurance erected office buildings in major German cities as investment properties. The complex in Frankfurt consisted of a high-rise that was 19 storeys (or 68 metres) tall, along with an eight-storey longitudinal building. One of the first tenants was the US Trade Centre, which was

commissioned by the US Department of Commerce to deepen economic ties with the countries of the common European market. At the opening of the Zürichhaus, Mayor Werner Bockelmann (SPD) declared that the city's Westend district was to become an expansion area for the city centre. **S7Bo No. 758**



Trade fair: International Motor Show, 1951

In the competition to succeed Leipzig as the most important trade fair city in Germany, Frankfurt, Hanover, and Cologne built ever more exhibition space. In the end, these three cities remained the major trade fair centres of the country, and more and more trade

fairs moved there. Frankfurt, for instance, became the site of the sanitary and heating trade fair, the fur fair, theACHEMA (General Chemical and Apparatus Engineering Fair) and the "Internationale Automobilausstellung" (International Motor Show Germany, IAA), which had still been located in Berlin in 1950. The relocation of the German Association of the Automotive Industry to the city on the Main was a preliminary decision in favour of Frankfurt's bid. **S7Bo No. 2867**



Trade fair: Dornier "Delta" at the International Motor Show, 1955

The "Delta", a vehicle in which the occupants sat back-to-back, belonged to the scooter class: at that time, a driving licence for motorcycles and small vehicles allowed drivers to operate vehicles up to 250 cm³. Although the International Motor Show presented luxury models and state-of-the-art commercial vehicles, it was also

characterised by the mass motorisation that had already occurred in the USA; the steadily growing number of visitors was interested not least in affordable compact cars. **S7Bo No. 3032**



Traffic-friendly city: urban motorway (later “A661”) at the Ratsweg roundabout (under construction), c. 1965

Based on American models and in order to facilitate smooth road usage, cars were to be separated from other types of vehicles and traffic, by means of several lanes, pedestrian tunnels, overpasses, and subways, etc. Although it had already been established in the USA that new roads tended to increase traffic, more and more four-lane roads were constructed, especially in war-torn West German cities. For a long time, driving one’s car to work or to the shops remained an expression of the modern lifestyle. **S7Bo No. 910**



Traffic-orientated city: “Autodienst Frankfurt”, Eckenheimer Landstrasse, c. 1953

As the number of motor vehicles increased, car dealerships, garages, car washes, and serviced petrol stations shaped the cities; well-known film stars such as Heinz Rühmann were often hired for advertising. The “Deutsch-Amerikanische Petroleum Gesellschaft” (German-American Petroleum Company, DAPG), founded in 1890 and largely owned by American Standard Oil, was renamed Esso-AG in 1950. The name “Esso” was derived from the pronunciation of the first letters of Standard (S=Ess) Oil (O). **S7Bo No. 2773**



Traffic-oriented city: City Councillor Walter Möller (SPD) and the underground railway, 1964

The traffic that Frankfurt had attracted now threatened to overwhelm the city. In 1959, one in twelve people in West Germany owned a car, and in Frankfurt, one in eight people was a car owner. By 1963, the number of commuters had risen to 110000. In the US, architect and author Peter Blake denounced the destruction of the city and the landscape by excess traffic (“God’s Own Junkyard”, 1964). In 1960, on the initiative of Walter Möller, the city authorities decided to build an underground railway. **S7Bo No. 1665**



Italian “Gastarbeiters” at the main railway station, 1961

With the German-Italian Worker Treaty of 1955, the first “Gastarbeiters” (“guest workers”) arrived in Frankfurt. The workforce was viewed as a flexible labour reserve dependent on the economic cycle, and was initially housed in barracks and makeshift dormitories. The labourers were employed in industry and the service sector as well as in public construction projects such as the building of the underground railway, roadworks, at trade fairs, and at the airport. It’s unclear whether the photo shows a departure for a holiday or a final return home. **S7FR No. 6162**

VI: Dealing with the Nazi era (Umgang mit der NS-Zeit)

Political and economic reconstruction allowed people to look towards the future. But amid covering the successful new beginning in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the press also reported on the atrocities committed in concentration camps and elsewhere. However, the frequency with which the press reported on Nazi crimes cannot hide the fact the public silence that reigned about the Holocaust and how people were not prepared to face up to the committed crimes and to the prevailing guilt. Already in the “Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt” by the Protestant Church from 1945, Jewish victims and other groups of victims of the National Socialists weren’t mentioned explicitly. There was a pronounced willingness on the part of the investigating authorities to believe claims of innocence. This was evident, for example, in the DEGESCH trial, which took place from 1949 to 1955. Only the Auschwitz trials (1963–1968), which revealed the full extent of the Auschwitz extermination complex in court, led to a “turning point in the collective memory of the Germans” (Eugen Kogon, journalist, former concentration camp prisoner and witness in trials against Nazi perpetrators).



The defendant Dr. Gerhard Peters (centre, standing) in the DEGESCH trial in court in Frankfurt, 1949

In 1949, the court initiated proceedings against Gerhard Peters, the managing director of the Frankfurt company DEGESCH (“Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schädlingbekämpfung”, German Corporation for Pest Control) during the Nazi era. The company had supplied the poison gas Zyklon B to concentration camps, where it had been used to murder millions of people. Around 200 people from academic circles and public life signed a petition for clemency for the accused, who was acquitted in 1955. The protest of the Central Council of Jews had no effect. **S7Bo No. 1545**



Remembrance of Auschwitz at the New Jewish Cemetery,

On 11 May 1959, the Jewish community of Frankfurt and the Auschwitz Group in Hesse dedicated a memorial at the New Jewish Cemetery on Eckenheimer Landstrasse. It includes an urn containing the ashes of victims of the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, which had been brought to Frankfurt by former prisoners of the camp. A survivor of Auschwitz is carrying the urn. In the centre: Rabbi Isaak Emil Lichtigfeld. **S7Bo No. 1604**



On the occasion of his seventieth birthday, the city council honoured the “Landesrabbiner”, the head of the Jewish community in Hesse, Isaak Emil Lichtigfeld with the plaque of honour of the city of Frankfurt; Minister of Culture Ernst Schütte conveyed congratulations from the Hessian state government, 1959

Lichtigfeld had headed the Jewish communities in Hesse as a rabbi and lawyer since 1954 and was their prominent public representative. At the memorial service, he called on people to heed the warning of the murdered: How often do we hear, said Lichtigfeld, that we should finally forget; but who could possibly presume the right to forget six million human lives destroyed by cowards? Only God has the power to forget, man can only redeem himself in a co-operation based on the truth. (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11 May 1959)
S7FR No. 17851

VII: Freedom of information and cultural policy (Informationsfreiheit und Kulturpolitik)

The press organs *Frankfurter Rundschau* and *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, founded under American supervision, were an integral building block in the establishment of a democratic community. The licence was granted to men who had suffered persecution as opponents of the Nazi state: social democrats, communists, and representatives of political Catholicism. Their democratic “Gruppenzeitungen”, group newspapers, were intended to unite anti-fascist parties and forces instead of promoting their division through partisan newspapers; their function was therefore to spread the idea of liberal parliamentarianism. The separation of news and opinion, a cornerstone of any free, independent journalism, was also of central importance. With the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, the licence requirement came to an end.

The reconstruction of the opera house and the theatre was also supported by the American Department of Culture. The occupying authorities supported private theatres such as the “Little Theater” located in the building of the stock exchange, the “Kleine Theater” (later the “Fritz Rémond Theater”) in the partly destroyed Zoogesellschaftshaus, and other independent theatres of which some were politically active. At the “Amerika-Haus”, they sought to promote Western values such as democracy, human rights, and personal freedom after the twelve years of National Socialist rule and in the face of the looming Cold War.

In addition to freedom of information and high culture, commercial culture was imported to the city as well. Despite a lack of building materials but with American support, Frankfurt’s cinema scene was regrown immediately after the end of the war. The musical tastes of the younger generation were significantly influenced by the AFN radio station. Jazz concerts and show performances by American film stars in the Franz-Althoff-Bau at the zoo as well as beauty contests were highlights in the entertainment industry inspired and promoted by America. At the forefront was Elvis Presley, who captured the hearts of so many young people. While more conservative people dismissed American films, comic books, jazz music, and rock’n’roll – often based on racist undertones – as “Hollywood trash” and branded them as the cause of moral decay and neglect, to young people the American way of life seemed to usher in a new era.



Frankfurter Rundschau

The first issue of the *Frankfurter Rundschau* newspaper was published on 1 August 1945. It was soon able to be published without any censorship by the military government. However, against the backdrop of the Cold War, two communist licence holders were dismissed in 1947. The *Frankfurter Rundschau*

and the *Frankfurter Neue Presse* (founded on 15 April 1946) were important pillars in the emergence of a democratic public sphere, and the newspapers supported the establishment of democratic parties; they were indispensable for the local elections in September 1946. **S7Bo No.**



***Abendpost* advert in front of the Hauptwache, c. 1950**

Together with the *Abendpost* (1948), the *Nachtausgabe* (1949), and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the press organs resumed Frankfurt's tradition as a newspaper city, which had been destroyed during the Nazi era. **S7Bo No. 2689**



Reader of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on tram line 7, c. 1951

This even happens to a clever mind: The reader of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, which lay in front of her, had fallen asleep and needed to be woken up by the conductor. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* was founded on 1 November 1949. The Americans had initially forbidden its founding, because the paper was seen as the successor to the former *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which the military government believed had pandered to the Nazis. **S7Bo No. 955**



Eberhard Beckmann (left) and Mayor Walter Kolb

In September 1945, at the suggestion of the Americans, Eberhard Beckmann was appointed head of the new "Amt für die Städtischen Bühnen und Konzerte", the Office for Municipal Theatres and Concerts, which reported directly to Mayor Walter Kolb. Despite the city treasurer's resistance and despite the hardships following the war years, Beckmann succeeded in obtaining the release of the former large trading floor of the stock exchange for theatre and opera performances from the Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

S7Bo No. 2788



DIE SCHMIERE, non-subsidised and likely the first political cabaret in West Germany after the Second World War, c. 1953

With the new wind of free expression blowing in from America, the great era of cabaret began. Regnald Nonsens (see picture) joined the theatre "DIE SCHMIERE" in 1951. As a "representative of the common sense of the people", he touted barroom clichés and platitudes on stage, which were then regularly debunked and ridiculed by his opponent Rudolf Rolfs. In 1953, the *New York Times* wrote: "DIE SCHMIERE, one of the rare curiosities of our time, has become one of the places Frankfurt is known for." **S7Bo No. 2771**



American show in the Franz Althoff Building, 1951

The success story of the Franz Althoff Building on the grounds of the zoo began in 1948. Contrary to its original intended usage, the movable building never hosted a circus event. Instead, the people of Frankfurt were able to see American movie stars they knew from the cinema in person here, movie stars such as Janet Leigh and her husband Tony Curtis. The singer and actor Frank Sinatra and his wife, the actress Ava Gardner, were also part of the ensemble performing here. **S7Bo No. 276**



Max Greger with saxophone (far right) in the Franz Althoff Building, c. 1950

Max Greger – a pioneer of the post-war jazz scene in Germany – plays bebop and blues with Carlo Bohländer, Fred Wunder (trumpet), Louis Freichel (vibraphone), Bernhard “Barney” Spieler (bass), and Gert Huhn (guitar). Werner Scharfenberger (piano), Cyrus Woodridge (drums), and Kurt Becker (flute) are not pictured here. The collaborations between American and German jazz musicians turned Frankfurt into the jazz capital of the country in the 1950s. **S7Bo No. 2682**



The Lionel Hampton Orchestra, 1950

As the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reported, jazz aficionados from Frankfurt were able to listen to tenor saxophonist Don Byas, who played in the orchestra of famous American jazz musician and bandleader Lionel Hampton, at a “Jazz Conference” on 13 August 1950. The proceeds from the event were donated to the German Youth Activities. **S7Bo No. 2662**



Wrestling show in the Franz Althoff Bau, c. 1950

In addition to operettas, revues, ballet performances, readings, theatre performances, dances, political and trade union events, popular American sports such as wrestling also found their way into the Franz Althoff Building, which intermittently became a “stronghold of professional wrestling”. This “bizarre world” (Madlen Lorei) of the Althoff Building ended after 1953 with the reconstruction of large event spaces in the city; the makeshift building on the grounds of the zoo was no longer needed and was eventually dismantled. **S7Bo No. 2684**



Susanne Erichsen became “Miss Germany” in 1950

Baden-Baden was the venue for the Miss Germany pageants. Based on the American model, these pageants were held in West Germany from the end of the 1940s onwards. In Frankfurt, the candidates appeared in preliminary competitions at the exhibition centre. Being crowned Miss Germany was seen as a career boost; many of the candidates hoped it would catapult them to the US and into the film business. Susanne Erichsen made a career as a model and entrepreneur. **S7Bo No. 1096**



Hessischer Rundfunk on tour in the morning, c. 1952

The early morning radio show “Der Frankfurter Wecker” (The Frankfurt Alarm Clock) was launched on 4 May 1952. Eberhard Beckmann, director of the radio station, had discovered the format in America and imported it to Hesse. The station went on tour through the broadcasting area early in the morning with the station’s dance orchestra. The programme, which developed a cult following, was intended to promote a sense of unity in the newly formed state of Hesse, where many refugees lived; in many ways the state was united in name only, not ideologically or culturally. **S7Bo No. 2787**



Jukebox

The US had been the market leader in jukebox production since the 1930s. The machines also became popular in Germany in the 1950s thanks to the GIs stationed in the country. With the triumph of rock’n’roll and through artists such as Elvis Presley, the jukebox made its ultimate breakthrough. There was hardly a pub without such a coin-fed record player and its colourful plastic design. **S7Bo No. 3109**



Elvis Presley with girlfriend Margit Buergin and young fans in the Kurpark Bad Homburg, 5 October 1958

The singer performed his military service with the 32nd Armoured Battalion in Friedberg from October 1958 to March 1960. As the “King of Rock-’n’-Roll” in a soldier’s uniform, he not only inspired people with his music and hip-shaking moves, he also put a friendly face on the American occupying forces. Many older and conservative people took offence at the American way of life, including the “rock’n’roll noise”. However, this didn’t detract from the popularity that the idol enjoyed among teenagers and young adults. **S7Bo No. 2306**



Jacob Sisters, c. 1962

The first girl group in German-language popular music originally called itself “Geschwister Jacob” (The Jacob Siblings). After international success in America, where the singing quartet performed together with Louis Armstrong, Sammy Davis Jr. and Duke Ellington, the four singers named themselves “Jacob Sisters”. Their trademarks were four white poodles, which were essential to their performances. In the picture, the sisters are promoting their music in an advertisement for the Frankfurt business Betten-Raab. **S7Bo No. 1136**



Drive-in cinema, Frankfurter Rundschau 24 August 1962

Based on the American idea, the first drive-in cinema is opened in Germany (near Gravenbruch) on 1 April 1960 as a “cinema in the breezy summer night”. Located in the catchment area of three major cities (Frankfurt, Offenbach, Darmstadt), the theatre had a capacity of 1200 vehicles. Anyone driving past on the road in the evening might have seen the western heroes Gary Cooper or Henry Fonda appear as giants in front of them in the dark.

VIII: From defeated to protected: German-American friendship (Von Besiegten zu Beschützten: deutsch-amerikanische Freundschaft)

“Non-Fraternisation” (no fraternisation with the defeated Germans) – the US army leadership adhered to this principle until the end of 1945, even if the doctrine proved to be of little use in everyday life on account of spontaneous personal and professional contacts. In February 1946, President Truman initiated the transition to a rehabilitative occupation policy. One visible expression of this shift in Frankfurt was the first release of confiscated flats, and later the dismantling of the fence around the US restricted area.

With the onset of the Cold War, the US saw West Germany as a potential ally in the fight against communism. Denazification was transferred to German tribunals, and at Christmas 1946, military governor Joseph T. McNarney announced an amnesty for ordinary members of the Nazi party. The US ordered an extensive halt to dismantling activities in its zone, while Great Britain and France continued to pursue their dismantling plans until 1951. The Western Allies were united in organising the Berlin Airlift, and since half of the flights departed from the Rhine-Main Air Base, America’s contribution became a lasting symbol.

The gestures of friendship continued: professor exchanges between Frankfurt and Chicago, German guests of honour at the “Day of the US Armed Forces”, assurances of military assistance, a German-American advisory committee, and the German-American Friendship Week. At a 1955 reception for the new US commander, Frankfurt’s Mayor Walter Leiske (CDU) greeted the guests as “friends and allies”. The first highlight was the handover of responsibility for the protection of all American citizens and military facilities in Frankfurt to the city’s fire brigade. From 1958, the German flag also flew outside the I.G. Farben building. This development was also aided by the fact that Frankfurt’s municipal politicians had been in favour of westernisation from the very beginning.

In just ten years, the German-American relationship had been completely transformed: West Germans went from being defeated enemies to protected and friendly allies. John F. Kennedy’s visit in 1963 marked the high point of a growing, if not uncritical, enthusiasm for America, before the expansion of the Vietnam War began to tarnish America’s image in Germany.



“German Youth Activities” (GYA): Bohnacker’s youth group, c. 1948

In the summer of 1946, the municipal authorities and the military government focused on young people. As a result, they dedicated themselves to the coordination of youth work, which in many places had been initiated by US soldiers on their own under the name

“German Youth Activities”. **S7Bo No. 2317**



“German Youth Activities” (GYA): Football on the GYA grounds on Rheingauallee, c. 1948

Within the GYA, members of the army taught young people how to box, play baseball and ice hockey; handicrafts, crafts, and game nights were also very popular. A home economics school for girls was opened as part of the Frankfurt GYA in 1946; the first GYA clubhouse was opened in Eckenheim in 1947, and a large GYA home was inaugurated on Rheingauallee behind the exhibition hall in 1948. The programme included theatre performances, cinema and musical events, education, a lending library, discussion evenings, summer camps, and sports. **S7Bo No. 2651**



“German Youth Activities”: Playing music together, c. 1948

GYA, as well as trade unions, political parties, churches, and radio stations were aimed at 14 to 18-year-olds who had been indoctrinated in the Hitler Youth (“Hitlerjugend”, HJ) or the League of German Girls (“Bund deutscher Mädel”, BDM) during the National Socialists reign and were now to be introduced to democracy. In the GYA, this was accomplished informally through youth work, which did not require membership in a club, adherence to a specific religious or political ideology, or regular event attendance. **S7Bo No. 2694**



Christmas party for orphans, 1948

US Army units had collected clothes and toys in a campaign called “Action Christmas”, and they invited children from an orphanage in Unterliederbach to the canteen of the pioneer unit in Höchst. With the support of the army, civilian aid organisations, or private donors, similar events were held at many locations every year at Thanksgiving, Saint Nicholas Day, or Christmas. Santa Claus also rode up to retirement homes in his sleigh. **S7Bo No. 2715**



Fireworks on Independence Day, 4 July 1949, seen from the quay under the Obermain Bridge S7Bo No. 2664



Ball of the Steuben-Schurz Society, c. 1950

Steuben and Schurz became spiritual forebears of friendship between Germany and America, and they also served as namesakes for neighbourhoods, streets, and schools in Frankfurt. The balls organised by the Steuben-Schurz Society, founded in 1950, were social events. The society, based in Frankfurt, organised charity events together with the International Women's Club, such as in December 1951 in the Palmengarten for children's and old people's homes. Today, the society still awards the Transatlanticist Award. **S7Bo No. 2599**

Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben (*1730 Magdeburg, †1794 Utica/New York) was a general under Frederick II, then Inspector General of the American Army. He is considered the "architect" of American independence on a military level.

Carl Christian Schurz (*1829 Liblar/Rhineland, † 1906 New York) emigrated to the US after the failed Baden Revolution of 1849. During the American Civil War, he commanded German volunteers as a general in the Army of the Northern States. President Hayes (1877-1881) appointed him Secretary of the Interior.



Parade float at the German Singers' Festival, 17 June 1951

The highlight of the German Singers' Festival was the large parade that led from the zoo via **Konstablerwache, Zeil (here in front of Zeil 122), Hauptwache, and Bahnhofplatz to the Festhalle**. The event was attended by 50000 people, including American choirs, which this float references. Guests of honour were the German President Theodor Heuss, High Commissioner John J. McCloy, Odd Nansen (co-founder of UNICEF) as the representative of the European Youth, as well as ministers of the Hessian state government. **S7Bo No. 2584**



Headquarters of the 4th Infantry Division in the Drake Barracks, Homburger Landstrasse, c. 1953

After the USA had initially reduced the number of its soldiers stationed in Europe, tensions with the USSR led to the transfer of additional divisions to West Germany from 1950 onward; one of these was the 4th Infantry Division. On several occasions, the division invited the citizens of Frankfurt to parades and sporting events. During the Korean War, soldiers from the division were sent there to compensate for losses. In 1956, the 4th Division was ordered to return to the US. **S7Bo No. 2513**



Ellen and John McCloy at a reception in Bad Homburg (Villa Hohenbuchen) marking the 175th anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1951

Ellen Zinsser (Ellen McCloy from 1930), who was of German descent, had been involved in nursing schools in the US, and she led the New York chapter of the “Girls Clubs of America”. During the three years she spent in West Germany, she spoke at numerous events; in fluent German, she called on women to become more actively involved in political life. **S7Bo No. 173**



Christmas manger in front of the I.G. Farben Building, 1961

The nativity scene formed the backdrop to a German-American Christmas celebration at which Minister of Culture Ernst Schütte and General of the V Corps, John K. Waters, lit the candles of a Christmas tree on the roof above the entrance to the I.G. Farben building. Schütte recalled the human ties that had been formed between the members of both nations, and US generals read out Christmas messages; the Christmas blessing was given by a German pastor and an American military preacher. **S7FR No. 5991**



Former housing estate for members of the High Commission (left) and US department store (right) on Eschersheimer Landstrasse, c. 1963

In 1950, the city councillors had decided to hand over an area west of Hansaallee to the military government for the construction of housing estates. By 1957, 2655 US housing units had been built in Frankfurt, for example at the “Hansaallee”, “Hügelstrasse”, “Platenstrasse” and “von Steuben” estates. Unlike US department stores, these estates were accessible to German citizens as well. After the withdrawal of the troops, the buildings were to be returned to the Federal Republic. **S7Bo No. 893**



John F. Kennedy in Frankfurt, 25 June 1963

During his trip to Germany, President Kennedy visited Frankfurt to the cheers of tens of thousands of people. After signing his name in the city's Golden Book, in his speech on the Römerberg, Kennedy commended Frankfurt's achievements, the democratic tradition, and the friendship between the peoples of both nations. In St. Paul's Church, he emphasised the importance of transatlantic defence and economic ties, and at the reception hosted by the state government in Wiesbaden, Kennedy expressed his delight at the harmonious coexistence between German citizens and the American military personnel stationed in Hesse. **S7Bo No. 1646**

IX: Consumer society (Konsumgesellschaft)

Thanks to aid provided through the Marshall Plan, currency reform, and the abolition of rationing under CDU Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard (1949-1963, subsequently Federal Chancellor), the general shortage of goods was overcome by 1949. Business activity picked up noticeably and, within a very short time, triggered a consumer goods boom of surprising proportions. The distrust of the Reichsmark had led to many traders hoarding their goods. Overnight, shop windows were now stacked, while half-empty stalls were replaced by gleaming department stores with an astonishing variety of merchandise. The so-called "Otto-Normal-Verbraucher" – a term used for ration card recipients in the post-war period who, unlike heavy labourers or pregnant women, for example, had no special calorie requirements – became the main consumer.



Surviving the harsh winter of 1946/47

In the immediate period after the war, obtaining heating fuel from coal trains was part of many freezing and starving people's survival strategy. Cardinal Joseph Frings of Cologne showed great sympathy for those who committed emergency robberies for the sake of their own and their children's survival; he expressed sympathy for people who had a rather loose definition of ownership. The nocturnal activities of "organising" were therefore called "Fringsen" in his honor – a term that found its way into the vernacular. **S7Bo No. 1530**



Provisional shops, c. 1948

In the years immediately after the war, the black market and barter economy flourished immensely. In the ruins, simple sheds and patched-together stalls sprang up everywhere, even if they frequently remained empty. The meagre supply of goods due to the loss of production was nowhere near enough to cover the gigantic demand for consumer goods. This was especially true for those who had lost everything in the war. **S7Bo No. 990**



Self-service shop Latscha

In the American colony on Miquelallee, there existed a self-service shop for American customers. After the currency reform, the first shop of this kind also opened for local customers on 17 December 1949. The larger selection and time saving that came with this form of shopping were great advantages, and packaging and labelling replaced the usual sales talk. The first self-service shops were not yet “supermarkets”; with a sales space of around 100-200 square metres, Latscha was a relatively small shop. **S7C No. 1998-64615**



Stall with tropical fruit on Grosse Eschenheimer Strasse, c. 1955

Citrus fruits, fresh bananas, and grapes were in great demand, and the markets were abundantly supplied with tropical fruits. Although the population’s standard of living could not be gauged from the stalls filled with expensive goods or from the luxury goods in the shop windows, these wares did show the fascination emanating from the aspects of prosperity following the hardship and misery of the previous years. **S7Bo No. 3005**



A bike as a raffle prize for a Neckermann employee. Left: Company founder Josef Neckermann

The city administration wanted to attract new companies to the urban area. In 1951, it rented Josef Neckermann a plot of land near the Ostbahnhof railway station at a favourable price. His business model – which also served the rural population and its many displaced persons and refugees by means of catalogue orders at low prices – made him Frankfurt’s “uncrowned king” (Horst Krüger). The flagship store was the new building erected on the Zeil in 1956. **S7Bo No. 1660**



The Zeil, the city’s reconstructed main shopping street, around 1955

Alongside the Königsallee in Düsseldorf and the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin, the Zeil was a symbol of mass consumption on the rise. Following the American example, the street presented the “world as a commodity” (Horst Krüger). The shopping mile, at that time still a busy thoroughfare, attracted shoppers from far beyond the Rhine-Main region. **S7Bo No. 751**



Main-Taunus-Zentrum, the first shopping centre in Europe, 1964

In 1964, the Main-Taunus-Zentrum was opened on the outskirts of Frankfurt: “a shopping centre in an open field, where all the companies in the city were represented once again, and now they were even more modern, even more inviting than ever before” (Horst Krüger). In a location far away from the narrow city centre and close to the A66 motorway, the centre enabled “effortless shopping with ample parking and without long trips to and from the store”. The increasing number of drivers were given a car-friendly department store modelled on American malls. **S7Bo No. 2974, 2975, 2978 and 297**



View from a shop for electrical appliances on Grosse Eschenheimer Strasse, 1963

At Max Braun AG in Frankfurt, production growth was particularly high in the “kitchen machines and household appliances” division. The company’s electrical appliances made housework much easier and more efficient. Their simple and functional designs, which the company developed in collaboration with the Ulm School of Design, appealed to the public. The New York Museum of Modern Art also took notice and showed the entire range of Braun designs in an exhibition in 1964. **S7Bo No. 103**

X: Chicago on the Main (Chicago am Main)

In the 1950s and 60s, Frankfurt gained questionable fame due to an enormous rise in crime. There were veritable gang wars in the district around the central station. Robbery, the theft of furs, the theft of and damage to motor vehicles caused crime statistics to skyrocket. Under the headline “Facts indicting capital”, a Soviet newspaper called Frankfurt the “Chicago on the Main” in 1966.

In addition to continued and widespread poverty amid increasing prosperity, socio-geographical factors related to the growing economy were largely responsible for this development: the massive passenger railway station, the international airport, the trade fairs with visitors in the thousands. This trend was also reinforced by offences committed by American soldiers stationed in Frankfurt and the surrounding area, as these offences were included indiscriminately in the crime statistics. If one adds up all criminal offences, Frankfurt was at the top of the list of the most criminal major German cities in 1963. By the following year, however, the more populous city of Cologne had already overtaken Frankfurt as the “Chicago on the Rhine”.



Kaiserstrasse

The “entertainment district” near the central station was the dark side of the miraculously prosperous city. With human trafficking, brothels and bars, the district was a breeding ground for crime. Mickey Bohnacker reacted to this fact in 1957 with a photo in which Kaiserstrasse and the main railway station are bathed in a terrifying gloom. Images like these deterred people across the nation from coming to Frankfurt. **S7Bo No. 745**



Mickey Bohnacker and his school friend, the gangster Henry

Karl-Heinz Jäger, nicknamed “Henry”, was the head of a trio of criminals who committed numerous offences between 1952 and 1954. During his time in prison, Jäger wrote his first novel *Die Festung* (The Fortress), which was quite successful and led to his early release in 1963. In 1955, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote: “His unusual wealth of experience, ... his knowledge of the milieu, his experiences of success and the values of a former career criminal” were his literary capital. **S7Bo No. 1379**



Prostitute murders

The scene of several prostitute murders was this apartment building, which was also home to the pub “Zur Letzten Instanz” (The Last Resort) near Breite Gasse, a counterpart to Herbertstrasse in Hamburg. The pub’s name was derived from the fact that the place was located near the Frankfurt court buildings. It was here that 28-year-old prostitute Elfriede B. was murdered on New Year’s Day 1962. A suspect was arrested but acquitted for lack of evidence. **S7Bo No. 1389**



Helga Matura in a white Mercedes convertible, 1963

In 1965, the health authorities estimated that around 2000 prostitutes were working in Frankfurt. One of them was Helga Matura, who was found stabbed to death in her flat on 7 January 1966. She was a prominent figure in the trade and shared many of her contemporaries’ fondness for luxury cars. As in the case of Rosemarie Nitribitt, who was murdered in 1957, the crime remained unsolved and dominated the headlines of the tabloid press for a long time. **S7Bo No. 2334**

XI: Tradition and entertainment in transition (Tradition und Unterhaltung im Wandel)

The rapid transformation of the city was accompanied by the revival of urban entertainment traditions. Regardless of whether these forms of entertainment were continued unchanged or whether they were transplanted to new locations and given new shapes, they quickly became a prominent feature of Frankfurt's urban life. Amidst the ruins and the onset of reconstruction, the Christmas market, the Mainuferfest, the carnival, and sporting events, cinemas, and the zoo all enjoyed great, if not overwhelming, popularity.

The reign of National Socialism, the war, and the post-war hardships that still prevailed seem in these pictures to have receded into the background. Obviously, it was not only the economic and political reconstruction that afforded people a distraction from the Nazi era, the catastrophic destruction of the war, and its still unresolved consequences; the shared participation in traditional forms of urban life also contributed to this form of distraction.



Festival on the riverbank between the cathedral and the Römer, c. 1960

In 1950, the Mainuferfest, a festival on the riverbank, which dates back to the late Middle Ages, was celebrated for the first time since the war. As in the past, the festival initially took place on the banks of the river Main; due to increasing traffic, it was moved to the

Römerberg in 1957. The former heart of the old town was a completely empty area now and became the site of the festival – only to be transformed back into a car park after three days.

S7Bo No. 1631



Children's festival at the zoo: attached to the balloons were vouchers for discounted admission. The water tower in the background, 1950

After the end of the war, the largely devastated zoo was set to be closed. However, director Bernhard Grzimek managed to reopen the institution with the few remaining animals on 1 July 1945. Entrance fees from ice skating revues, circus performances, children's festivals, a dancing tent, a cinema at the zoo, a roller coaster, and a carousel on the grounds made it possible to create an oasis in the devastated city. With 2.1 million visitors in 1947, the Frankfurt Zoo was the city's most popular attraction. **S7Bo No. 3099**



Marika Kilius and Franz Ningel on the roller-skating rink on the banks of the Main, c. 1950

While parts of the city centre still lay in ruins, people were fascinated by the lightness of being with which ice skaters Marika Kilius (born 1943) and her partner Franz Ningel, who was six and a half years her senior, performed aerial jumps and pirouettes. Exhibition evenings on the roller-skating rink attracted audiences of up to 3000 people. In 1952, the two won their first title as national junior champions in pair skating, aged 8 and 14 respectively. Many national and international successes were to follow. **S7Bo No. 2757**



Christmas market on the Römerberg, December 1949

After the currency reform, the so-called “Christkinnches-Markt”, the Christmas market, was transformed into an open-air department store. Although the Christmas carols of the Protestant church’s trombone choir still echoed from the roof of St. Nicholas Church, the Christmas market with its children’s carousels and American bumper cars bore little resemblance to the tranquillity of days gone by. The market closed every day at the same time as shops did: at 7pm on weekdays and at 6pm on advent Sundays, when shops were allowed to be open. **S7Bo No. 3141**



Carnival show at the Botanical Garden Society Centre, c. 1956

In 1957, the city had 42 carnival clubs. The “Bernemer” and “Heddemer Käwwern” sometimes met for a joint show at the Palmengarten, the Botanical Garden. Many local politicians were made fun of from the “Bütt”, the lectern where comedians gave humorous speeches. Even American generals and site commanders did not remain unscathed when the “Grand Council” awarded them jester caps as an “award for special merit” (*Frankfurter Neue Presse*, 19 January 1956). A site order allowed every American soldier to decorate his uniform with the Frankfurt carnival emblem during the days of the carnival (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 February 1957). **S7Bo No. 3149**



Tower Palace at the Eschenheimer Turm, 1952

At its peak in the mid-1950s, there were 82 cinemas in the city, 24 of them in the city centre alone. Large posters on the façades of the cinemas, some of which were still surrounded by ruins, brought glamour to the otherwise dreary cityscape and – as in the case of the film *Verbotene Strasse* – attracted droves of visitors. The admission fee of 1 Deutschmark made an evening of entertainment affordable. From 1957 onwards, as television was becoming more and more popular, ticket sales at cinemas fell dramatically. **S7Bo No. 2736**



Motor-paced racing on the cycling track on Whitsunday 1951

One of the popular sports that has largely gone out of fashion today was motor-paced racing, where cyclists maintained high speeds in the slipstream of a motorbike over longer periods of time and across great distances. After the war-damaged cycling track was reconstructed in 1950, national and international competitions were held here. At the race for the “Kleiner” and “Grosser Stadtwaldpreis” on Whitsunday 1951, 16000 people cheered on the racers. **S7Bo No. 1307**



View from the Henninger Turm, opened in 1961

The tower quickly became one of Frankfurt’s most popular destinations for excursions. From what was the highest building in the city at the time – at 120 metres the structure towered over the 98-metre cathedral – it was possible to enjoy a panoramic view of the city from the revolving restaurant located at the top of the tower. The city’s sights such as bridges, the cathedral, the Römer, and St. Paul’s Church now served as landmarks in an urban landscape that had been reshaped by high-rise buildings, housing estates, and streets filled with cars. The millionth guest was welcomed at the Henninger Turm in 1963. **S7Bo No. 895**

XII: The photographer: Mickey Bohnacker (Der Fotograf: Mickey Bohnacker)

Bohnacker's career is difficult to grasp, owing to the many stories and anecdotes that he told in a variety of ways. He was born on 24 April 1928 at Pestalozziplatz in Bornheim. His mother Else had moved to Frankfurt from Lauterbach, where she met Heinz Bohnacker, a plumber at the municipal utility company. Bohnacker, an only child, was christened Karl-Heinz, even though the boy was soon called "Mickey" after the cartoon character "Mickey Mouse". He later registered the nickname as his stage name.

Bohnacker grew up in Bornheim and trained to become a precision engineer at his parents' request. In 1948 at the latest, he joined the "German Youth Activities", where with his box camera, he photographed prominent guests. The local army newspaper also hired him as its photographer and paid him with coffee and chocolate. Soon afterwards, a US picture agency hired him, and he continued to work with the agency until 1954. He visited the US a number of times, and during these early encounters, he developed a special interest in the country.

For years afterwards, he was self-employment, even if he regularly worked for the same clients (the airport, Lufthansa, the papers *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Neue Presse*, *Nachtausgabe*, *Abendpost*, as well as magazines, and the fur industry) – both for political topics and for entertainment purposes. According to Bohnacker himself, it was still possible to establish "friendly" relations with Hollywood celebrities at the time, since their films usually had their European premieres in Frankfurt. Reporting trips took him to Greece, Morocco, and India, and for Lufthansa he travelled to the Bahamas and other places. As a photojournalist, he had a flair for events and fashions which were characteristic of the zeitgeist.

Because of his short stature, Bohnacker jokingly called himself the "King of the Lilliputians", and he took pride in the fact that Eisenhower called him "Shorty". He regularly attended events at the Frankfurt Press Club until his death on 28 February 2017. His unorganised photographic estate went to the Institute for the History of Frankfurt in 2016/17.



The teacher, 1948

US Corporal Bob Hardin, photographer for the Frankfurt army newspaper *The Occupation Chronicle*, arranged for Bohnacker to work for the same publication, gave him an older "Graflex Speed Graphic" camera, and taught him how to develop negatives.

S7Bo No. 9



Bohnacker and the airport, c. 1950

One of Bohnacker's first workplaces was the airport, where "America" felt particularly close: the first civil aircraft to land after 1945 were planes from US airlines, such as Pan American World Airways, which soon named its aircraft after German cities. The "Clipper Munich", chosen as the background here, a

Douglas DC-4, was in service from 1950 to 1962. **S7Bo No. 19**



Humour as a character trait

Bohnacker was accepted as an honorary member of the local "Klub langer Menschen" ("Club of Tall People") and became friends with Frankfurt's tallest policeman. This proved an advantage during the Beatles' stopover at the airport in 1964: lifted up by strong hands, the photographer managed to take a few good pictures. **S7Bo No. 85**



Last shots for the airport, c. 1990

Flying was Bohnacker's great passion, and this always kept him in close contact with the airport. We also have him to thank for a whole series of aerial photographs taken from small aeroplanes and, before 1955, from US helicopters when German aircraft were not yet allowed to take off. **S7Bo No. 122**