
one's dominant impression is of the variety of ways in which people preserve meaning and individuality as they age—even in a culture so often perceived as group-dominated and conformist.

—*John Creighton Campbell ('81)*

THE FOURTH AND RICHEST REICH

by Edwin Hartrich
Macmillan, 1980
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With the economy a top priority of the current U.S. administration, foreign remedies for curing the "American disease" are attracting a large audience. One of the most dramatic of these is the rubble-to-riches course engineered by West Germany after World War II. More important than demilitarization, denazification, and democratization of the Reich was the U.S. gamble on a little-known German professor, Ludwig Erhard, as chief of the recovery. Erhard's "social market economy" medicine was at first distasteful to a long-regimented people, but the resulting economic "miracle" (*Wirtschaftswunder*) cemented the democratic institutions of the Federal Republic. Instead of socialist nationalization of industry and full employment, Erhard favored capitalist competition, cushioned by a generous welfare system. His goal was full production, supported by tax breaks and other incentives for industry. It was accepted by labor, which exhibited unusual restraint in wage negotiations and a willingness to work hard in exchange for job security and a say in company management. Government also abetted the recovery and subsequent boom with its strictly balanced, noninflationary budgets. Hartrich, a journalist and economic consultant, makes a compelling story of Germany's passage from its tragic prewar "geopolitical" preoccupations to more benign and successful "ecopolitical" ventures. Conservatives will find, in the success of West Germany's unabashed capitalism, affirmation of their faith; but liberals would not be wrong in pointing out that this was, as well, "capitalism with a conscience."

—*Konrad H. Jarausch ('80)*