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### **CDU / CSU: From the history of the alliance of two German parties**

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*Abstract.* The post-war history of Germany appears to be a complex intertwinement of interests between various political and social forces, organizations, parties and fractions operating in the Allied-occupied Germany. Under such extraordinary contradictory conditions, as it will be shown in the article, the two parts of Germany – the FRG and GDR – were created, each having its own constitution, political party system and electoral authorities formed by the citizens of these countries. In West Germany, the Christian parties, the CDU and the CSU, played the key role, having united in a single fraction at the federal level, which is still functional in modern Germany.

*Keywords:* Christian parties, federalism, Josef Müller, Konrad Adenauer, the Economic Council Germany, faction, Parliamentary Council, Basic Law, elections to the German Bundestag

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#### **Introduction**

Alliances, coalitions and agreements between parties are a common practice in political struggle for power. Most often, they are temporary, however there are exceptions. The union of two German parties, the Christian Democratic Union and the Christian Social Union, is among them. It officially exists since 1949, has withstood all the challenges from the split of the country to its unification in 1990, and further, already in modern Germany.

What formed the basis of this ‘alliance’ or ‘bloc’, as it was customary to call the CDU / CSU in the publications of the Soviet era? The Christian closeness of parties? To some extent, yes. Or the fact that these parties were ‘new’ and created in the first post-war years? This as well was important, as was the fact that the CDU and the CSU chose independent ‘masters’ as their social resources (in the Marxist terminolo-

gy – “petty bourgeoisie and middle classes”), however, the hired laborers – workers, employees and partially the youth, students, women and pensioners would also find themselves in the organizational structures of these parties. An essential factor in close convergence of the CDU and the CSU was that through this ‘alliance’, the principle of the federal system of West Germany was consolidated<sup>1</sup>.

In the national historiography, there are not so many works devoted to the CDU and CSU. As before, the most significant would be the monograph by S.L. Sokol'skii, in which the author, shifting away from the class-specific evaluations of the “party of big business”, tried to show the social shape of the CDU, as well as the content and characteristics of its domestic and foreign policies<sup>2</sup>. The early history of the CDU, formation and organizational development of the party are presented in the studies of B.V. Petelin,<sup>3</sup> and O.G. Nekrylova;<sup>4</sup> a lot of interesting information about the activities of the CDU / CSU and the leading Christian politicians can be found in the works of A.Yu. Vatlin, N.V. Pavlov and A.I. Patrushev<sup>5</sup>.

The work on the history of the CSU by Belarusian professor M.V. Strelets is of exceptional value for Russian researchers. He comprehensively analyzed the activities of the Bavarian Union based on the study of documentary sources from the Archives for Christian-Social Policy (ACSP) of the Hanns Seidel Foundation<sup>6</sup>. The organizational and ideological formation of the CSU in the first post-war years was shown

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<sup>1</sup> As the Marxist historian Hans Adamo from West Germany pointed out, “from the very beginning, the CSU advocated decisive federalism that would consider the characteristics of Bavaria and provide a sufficiently wide field of activity to those circles in Bavaria that dominated the economy and politics.” 1. Adamo G. *KhDS–KhSS. Sushchnost' i politika*. Moscow, 1979, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Sokol'skii S.L. *Khristiansko-demokraticeskii soiuz FRG: sotsiologiya i politika* [Christian Democratic Union of the FRG: Sociology and Politics]. Moscow, 1983.

<sup>3</sup> Petelin B.V. *Ranniaia istoriia Khristiansko-demokraticeskogo soiuz: Konrad Adenauer–Jakob Kaizer–Otto Nuschke. 1945–1952 gg.* [Early History of the Christian Democratic Union: Konrad Adenauer – Jakob Kaiser–Otto Nuschke. 1945–1952]. Cherepovets, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Nekrylova O.G. *Khristiansko-demokraticeskii soiuz v partiino-politicheskoi sisteme poslevoennoi Zapadnoi Germanii: problemy obrazovaniia v usloviakh okkupatsii (1945–1949 gg.)* [The Christian Democratic Union in the Political Party System in West Germany during the Post-war Period: The Problems of Formation under the Conditions of Occupation (1945–1949)]. Yelets, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Vatlin A.Iu. *Germanii v XX veke* [Germany in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century]. Moscow, 2005; Patrushev A.I. *Germaniia v XX veke* [Germany in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century]. Moscow, 2004; Pavlov N.V. *Rossii i Germaniia: nesostoiavshiiiasia all'ians (istoriia s prodolzheniem)* [Russia and Germany: Alliance Failure (A Continuation Story)]. Moscow, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Strelets M.V. *Khristiansko-sotsial'nyi soiuz v Bavarii (FRG): ideologiya i politika* [Christian Democratic Union in Bavaria (FRG): Sociology and Politics]. Brest, 2004.

in the dissertation research of Vologda historian I.D. Popov<sup>7</sup>. However, in these studies, the authors confined themselves only to the description of alliance between the CSU and the CDU, without coverage and analysis of the causes and factors of its origin, formation and development throughout the history of the FRG.

Naturally, the party history of the CSU and the CDU is represented in Germany by an impressive array of literature of various sources. First of all, the fundamental issue prepared by the Hanns Seidel Foundation for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CSU should be noted here, which comprehensively represents the activities of the Bavarian Christian Social Union.<sup>8</sup> Among the works on the history of the CDU, we will also mention the monograph by Frank Bösch, Hans-Otto Kleinmann,<sup>9</sup> the 'encyclopedia' of Christian democracy – *Lexikon zur Geschichte der Christlichen Demokratie in Deutschland*,<sup>10</sup> memoirs of Konrad Adenauer, the first German chancellor and chairman of the CDU,<sup>11</sup> and the minister-president of the state of Bavaria Franz Josef Strauss, the long-standing leader of the CSU.<sup>12</sup> The published materials of the Economic Council of the CDU and the Parliamentary Council engaged in the development of the Basic Law for the future FRG have direct relation to the establishment of the alliance between the CDU and the CSU.<sup>13</sup>

To understand why a new party system, which was different from the Weimar Republic, was formed in the post-war Germany divided into occupation zones, we will refer to the period of its existence: 1918–33. First, in Russian historiography, we refer to the works of the distinguished historian and German scholar M.E. Erin,<sup>14</sup> au-

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<sup>7</sup> See: Popov I.D. *Organizatsionnoe i ideinoe stanovlenie khristiansko-sotsial'nogo soiuzn v Bavarii: 1945–1949 gg.: dis. ... kand. ist. nauk* [The Organizational and Ideological Establishment of the Christian-Social Union in Bavaria: 1945–1949. Doctoral dissertation]. St Peterburg, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> *Geschichte einer Volkspartei. 50 Jahre CSU*. München, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Bösch F. *Die Adenauer- CDU. Gründung, Aufstieg und Krise einer Erfolgspartei 1945–1969*. München, 2001; Kleinmann H.-O. *Geschichte der CDU 1945–1982*. Stuttgart, 1993.

<sup>10</sup> *Lexikon zur Geschichte der Christlichen Demokratie in Deutschland; Herausgegeben von W. Becker, G. Buchstab, A. Doering-Manteuffel, R. Morsey*. Paderborn, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Adenauer K. *Erinnerungen 1945–1953*. Bd. I. Stuttgart, 1965.

<sup>12</sup> Strauss F.J. *Vospominaniia* [Memories]. Moscow, 1991.

<sup>13</sup> See: *Die CDU/CSU im Parlamentarischen Rat: Sitzungsprotokolle d.Unionsfraktion*. Stuttgart, 1981.

<sup>14</sup> Erin M.E. *Raspad partiinnoi sistemy i krakh Veimarskoi respubliki* [The Disintegration of the Party System and the Fall of the Weimar Republic]. Yaroslavl, 1992; *Istoriia Veimarskoi respubliki v noveishei germanskoi istoriografii* [History of the Weimar Republic in the contemporary German historiography]. Yaroslavl, 1997; Idem. *Genrikh Briuning. Kantsler i politik Biografiia* [Henry Brüning. Chancellor and Politician. Biography]. Yaroslavl, 2010.

thor's editions of Ivanovo State University Professor I.Ya. Bisk,<sup>15</sup> as well as multi-authored collections published by the staff of the above-mentioned university.<sup>16</sup>

Among the German publications translated into Russian, we can mention the fundamental monograph of the famous historian Heirich August Winkler,<sup>17</sup> as well as a monograph by another distinguished historian Hermann Möller, who rightly revealed that the German party system was modified under the influence of the war and revolution.<sup>18</sup> But the first experience of democracy on the German land was more than unsuccessful. Since the late 1920s, the deviation from its true democratic essence began, which ultimately led to the capitulation of the state. However, "Hitler received his chancellorship not only because of the intrigues of the power elites, but also thanks to the masses that lent their support to him, as before."<sup>19</sup> That is, the Weimar Republic failed not due to the lack of democracy, however because of its overabundance. Nevertheless, it just so happens that tyranny, as noted by philosophers in antiquity, grows out of such a democracy.

### Main text

The republican system in Germany was rebuilt considering the lessons of the Weimar Republic. As it was already noted, it was decided to abandon the legacy of the previous party. Although the lay Catholic political Center Party, like the Bavarian People's Party, resumed their activities after the war, they had no prospects in the future. Most Catholic politicians, like the evangelical politicians, supported the creation of an interfaith party. A similar idea was expressed earlier,<sup>20</sup> but only now it was possible to start its implementation.

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<sup>15</sup> Bisk I.Ia. *Istoriia povsednevnoi zhizni naseleniia v Veimarskoi respublike* [The History of Everyday Life in the Weimar Republic]. Ivanovo, 1990; Idem. *Pressa Veimarskoi Germanii* [Press of the Weimar Germany]. Ivanovo, 1995.

<sup>16</sup> See for example: *Veimarskaia respublika: istoriia i istochnikovedenie. Mezhevuzovskii sbornik nauchnykh trudov* [Weimar Republic: History, Historiography, Source studies: Interuniversity Collection of Scientific Works]. Ivanovo, 2001; *Veimarskaia respublika: istoriia, istoriografiia, istochnikovedenie: Mezhevuzovskii sbornik nauchnykh trudov* [Weimar Republic: History, Historiography, Source studies: Interuniversity Collection of Scientific Works]. Ivanovo, 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Winkler G.A. *Weimar 1918–1933: istoriia pervoi nemetskoj demokratii* [Weimar 1918–1933: The History of the First German Democracy]. Moscow, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Möller H. *Veimarskaia respublika: Opyt odnoi nezavershennoi Demokratii* [The Weimar Republic: Experience of one Unfinished Democracy]. Moscow, 2010, p. 76.

<sup>19</sup> Winkler G.A. *Weimar 1918–1933: istoriia pervoi nemetskoj demokratii* [Weimar 1918–1933: The History of the First German Democracy]. Moscow, 2013, p. 747.

<sup>20</sup> Petelin B.V. *Ranniaia istoriia Khristiansko-demokraticheskogo soiuz: Konrad Adenauer-Jakob Kaizer-Otto Nuschke. 1945–1952 gg.* [Early History of the Christian Democratic Union: Konrad Adenauer – Jakob Kaiser-Otto Nuschke. 1945–1952]. Cherepovets, 2014, pp. 11–12.

The CSU as a party was created earlier than the CDU. Bavaria is known for its historical peculiarities. Even in the days of Bismarck, Bavaria had its own army. "Nowhere in Germany", Professor N.V. Pavlov writes, "the folk traditions were preserved so carefully as here."<sup>21</sup> After the overthrow of the monarchy in 1918, Bavaria declared itself a 'free state'. In 1945, the American military administration as a matter of fact retained the territorial integrity of Bavaria, which remained the largest land in West Germany. Following the example of the Soviet Military Administration, which with Order No. 2 signed by the Chief Marshal of the SMAG, Marshal of the Soviet Union Georgy Zhukov, authorized the political activities of anti-fascist organizations and parties in the Soviet Occupation Zone,<sup>22</sup> the American authorities also contributed to the formation of political life in their relevant zones. Since the party system of the Weimar Republic 'failed', it "should not be revived or restored again," that was the thought of Franz Josef Strauss, the long-term chairman of the CSU and the head of the government of Bavaria<sup>23</sup>.

Despite the ideological and organizational differences between the creators of the CSU (the researchers point to the key role of Josef Müller (Munich) and Adam Stegerwald (Würzburg)), on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1946, the representatives from all parts of Bavaria gathered in Munich, where they announced the creation of a new party called the Christian Social Union<sup>24</sup>. At the end of January, the American occupation authorities granted the CSU with the permission to carry out their political activities throughout the territory of Bavaria. On 30–31<sup>st</sup> March 1946, Josef Müller was elected the party chairman at the meeting of the CSU 'land committee' in Bamberg (the official congress of the CSU would be held in Munich on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1946). In December 1946, the CSU already had almost 70 thousand members, and within a year it numbered almost 82 thousand<sup>25</sup>.

The founders of the CSU had come up with an idea to withdraw the party from Bavaria. Müller maintained close contact with Jakob Kaiser and his supporters in Berlin – the organizers of Christian-Democratic unions in East Germany. In his views and convictions, Müller was considered a left-wing politician who sympathized with

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<sup>21</sup> Pavlov N.V. *Germaniia na puti v tret'e tysiacheletie. Posobie po stranovedeniiu* [Germany on the Way to the Third Millennium. Textbook on Country Studies]. Moscow, 2001, pp. 223–224.

<sup>22</sup> *Sovetskaia Voennaia Administratsiia v Germanii (SVAG). Upravlenie propagandy (informatsii) i S.I. Tiul'panov. 1945–1949. Sb. Dokumentov* [The Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAG). Department of Propaganda (Information) and S.I. Tulpanov. 1945–1949. Collection of Documents]. Moscow, 2004, pp. 510–511.

<sup>23</sup> Strauss F.J. *Vospominaniia* [Memories]. Moscow, 1991, P. 82.

<sup>24</sup> Henzler Ch. *Die Christlich-Soziale Union in den ersten Nachkriegsjahren Geschichte einer Volkspartei. 50 Jahre CSU*, S. 117.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, S. 120.

the Soviet Union (during the Nazi period, Müller was forced to live in a concentration camp); he willingly met with representatives of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAG)<sup>26</sup>. Müller also formed business relations with Konrad Adenauer elected as chairman of the CDU in the British occupation zone in early February 1946. However, the process of the split in Germany affected the unity of political parties. The creation of the all-German CDU party failed: in East Germany, the CDU would soon be in the ranks of the 'builders of socialism'<sup>27</sup>, some Christian democrats who disagreed with this choice would create "the CDU in exile",<sup>28</sup> whereas the rest would become members of the CDU of Germany since 1949<sup>29</sup>.

The first real step in bringing the CSU and the CDU closer to each other was the meeting of Josef Müller and Konrad Adenauer in early April 1946 in Stuttgart. It was decided that the CSU and the CDU of the British occupation zone would seek working partnership, striving for sympathy of the occupation authorities. By these meetings with the politicians in Stuttgart (Jakob Kaiser – chairman of the CDU Berlin, who arrived from Berlin), Adenauer put together the separated Christian unions in West Germany. In December 1946, the American and British occupation authorities, one might say, met Adenauer halfway: it was decided to create the Bizone – the union of two western zones, except the French one. As Strauss rightly noted in his memoirs, this was dictated not only by economic reasons, but also with an eye to the future creation of a new state in the West<sup>30</sup>.

The creation of the Bizone contributed to the further convergence of the CSU and the CDU. On 6–7<sup>th</sup> February 1947, an agreement was concluded in Königstein on cooperation between the CDU and the CSU within the framework of the 'working community' of the two parties.<sup>31</sup> Many rank-and-file members, primarily from the

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<sup>26</sup> Müller did have contacts with SMAG; he met with Colonel S.I. Tul'panov, with whom they discussed the future of Germany. See: *Sovetskaia Voennaia Administratsiia v Germanii (SVAG). Upravlenie propagandy (informatsii) i S.I. Tiul'panov. 1945–1949. Sb. Dokumentov* [The Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAG). Department of Propaganda (Information) and S.I. Tulpanov. 1945–1949. Collection of Documents]. Moscow, 2006, pp. 85, 88.

<sup>27</sup> Dobrovol'skii E.S. *Khristianskaia demokratiia i stroitel'stvo sotsializma v Vostochnoi Germanii. GDR 1948–1952 gg.* [Christian democracy and construction of socialism in East Germany. GDR 1948–1952]. *Vestnik Cherepovetskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* [Bulletin of Cherepovets State University], 2013, no. 4 (51), vol. 1, pp. 34–37.

<sup>28</sup> See: Petelin B.V. 'KhDS v izgnanii': iz istorii Khristiansko-demokraticeskogo soiuzna Germanii [The CDU in exile: From the history of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany]. *Novvaia i noveishaia istoriia* [New and Contemporary History], 2012, no. 6, pp. 75–85.

<sup>29</sup> *The CDU held its first congress on 20–22<sup>nd</sup> October 1950 in Goslar.* Kleinmann H.-O. *Geschichte der CDU 1945–1982*, S. 126–127.

<sup>30</sup> Strauss F.J. *Op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>31</sup> *Lexikon zur Geschichte der Christlichen Demokratie in Deutschland*, S. 425–426.

CSU, showed dissatisfaction with the convergence with Adenauer's party, fearing for the fate of Bavaria's Christian Social Union. These understandable fears were groundless. The CDU, in opposition to the main political rival, the SPD, needed a loyal ally, which could only be the CSU itself.

The need for the factional unity of the CDU and the CSU was dictated by the creation of the Bizonal Economic Council on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1947 in Frankfurt, which began to engage itself in the economic policy.<sup>32</sup> Its first meeting was held on 21<sup>st</sup> July of the same year. Neither Adenauer nor Müller or Schumacher participated in the work of the Council, but that did not mean that they were not interested in the economic structure of West Germany. In total, 49 people from the CDU / CSU participated in the work of Economic Council in 1947–49; out of them, 15 people represented the CSU. The party disputes in the Council were acute and long-standing. The Social Democrats advocated introduction of centrally planned economy. But among the representatives of the CDU / CSU, there were firm supporters of market relations. Ludwig Erhard, 'the father of social and market economy', did not join the Council, but his views were supported in the CDU / CSU. Strauss (a participant of the Economic Council since 24<sup>th</sup> February 1948) wrote the following: "Professor Erhard was a serious scientist and a political fighter, who, like a lion, fought for his idea of social market economy"<sup>33</sup>.

From October 1947, Erhard took the most active part in the preparation of the monetary reform, leading an expert group (specifically created under the supervision of the 'control council'). However, as the Russian researcher Sergei Nevskii points out, the German version of the reform was not adopted<sup>34</sup>. As a result, the American version was implemented, the development of which was completed in 1946, and for more than two years it was kept in the strictest confidence. After the consent of the French occupation authorities to join the monetary reform, the date was set for 20<sup>th</sup> July 1948<sup>35</sup>.

The economic split in Germany factually happened; the issue of the political design for both Western and Eastern parts of Germany was on the agenda. In East Ger-

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<sup>32</sup> *The protocol on the establishment of the Council has not been preserved. See: Die CDU / CSU im Frankfurter Wirtschaftsrat: Protokolle der Unionsfraktion 1947–1949, S. 6.*

<sup>33</sup> Strauss F.J. Op. cit., p. 95. Strauss's sympathies for Erhard can also be explained by the fact that he was a 'Bavarian citizen by birth' (in 1945–46, Erhard was economics minister for Bavaria); he could join the CSU, however, he did not do so. *Lexikon zur Geschichte der Christlichen Demokratie in Deutschland*, S. 230–232.

<sup>34</sup> Nevskii S.I. *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskie reformy v poslevoennoi Zapadnoi Germanii: 1945–1949* [Socio-economic Reforms in West Germany during the Post-war Period: 1945–1949]. Moscow, 2008, p. 66–67.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 69.

many, this was done by the SMAG, with the help of the new party, the SED, created in 1946 from the Communists and left-wing Social Democrats. In Trizone<sup>36</sup>, representatives of the three occupying powers and the heads of government of 11 German states instructed their specialists to draft a constitution, which was to be discussed and adopted at a specially created Parliamentary Council. Strauss, who was not particularly servile to the Western Allies, primarily to the Americans, believed that the Economic and Parliamentary Councils were 'German organizations'. Of course, they were not exactly as such – the occupation status remained; however, the German politicians got a lot of freedom. Another German politician, Communist Max Reimann, wrote in his book that the Parliamentary Council did not have people's mandate, and its legitimization would be "Order No.1 of the military administrations"<sup>37</sup>. Due to the displeasure of German politicians, the word *order* was replaced by a more loyal word *recommendation*, which, however, did not change anything at all.

On 1<sup>st</sup> September 1948, the Parliamentary Council began its work in the zoological museum of the small Rhine town of Bonn. In the draft constitution prepared by the experts, the new state was proposed to be called as 'a union of German states'<sup>38</sup>. The composition of the Parliamentary Council was established based on the party principle. The CDU / CSU faction held its meeting on the eve of 31<sup>st</sup> August. Konrad Adenauer was presiding as the oldest member of the faction. At the same meeting, he was nominated as a candidate for presidency at the Parliamentary Council. On the side of Adenauer, there was a greater chance in obtaining this position than that of Kaiser or Müller. Kurt Schumacher, the leader of the Social Democrats, did not participate in the sessions of the Parliamentary Council. The CDU / CSU had 27 mandates in it, the SPD had the same number, whereas the KPD, the German Centre Party and the DRP had two mandates each. West Berlin was represented by two deputies with an advisory voice. The FDP had five mandates, and it was this liberal party that could influence the decision-making<sup>39</sup>.

The debates on the Basic Law (Constitution) in the Parliamentary Council was accompanied by sharp discussions, rebukes and accusations. The fact that the CDU / CSU faction was not so powerful revealed during the voting on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1949. The Basic Law attracted most votes, however 12 deputies (six from the CSU) voted against it. As they considered in the CSU, the project in scope did not fully consider the federal wishes of the party. "No to Basic Law, yes to Germany," Hans Ehard, the

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<sup>36</sup> After inclusion of the French zone into the British and American zones and adopting their plans and policies, the Bizonia entity became the Trizone.

<sup>37</sup> Reimann M. *Resheniia 1945–1956* [Decisions 1945–1956]. Moscow, 1975, p. 126.

<sup>38</sup> Vatlin A.Iu. Op. cit., p. 148.

<sup>39</sup> *Die CDU/CSU im Parlamentarischen Rat: Sitzungsprotokolle der Unionsfraktion*, S. 6–7.



elected Bavarian prime minister, expressed the position of the CSU. On 20<sup>th</sup> May, after hours of discussion regarding the Basic Law, the Landtag of Bavaria rejected the Germany Constitution by most votes: 101 – ‘against’, 63 – ‘for’<sup>40</sup>.

For the adoption of the Basic Law, the consent of two-thirds of the Landtags of the western states was required, so that the vote in Bavaria did not affect the result in general. On 24<sup>th</sup> May 1949, the Basic Law of the FRG came into effect. According to it, on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1949, the first elections to the Bundestag were held. 31% of the electorate voted for the CDU and the CSU, and they received 139 seats out of 402 in the Bundestag. The Christian Social Union in Bavaria delegated 24 parliamentarians to Bonn, whereas the CDU delegated 115. The parties decided to create a joint faction in the Bundestag. In addition, the CSU organized its ‘land (territorial) group’ in Bonn. The SPD won 131 seats, however it did not have any allies, and the party found itself in opposition<sup>41</sup>.

Despite the success during the election (Adenauer counted on the coalition with the FDP, however, he admitted the possibility of a ‘big coalition’ with the SPD), during the allocation of the ministerial portfolios, the clashes were no laughing matter. Within the CSU, there were even talks about breaking the alliance with the CDU, but in that case the Christian Social Union in Bavaria could lose a lot: the party remained regional. Eventually, the CSU received three ministries in the first cabinet led by Konrad Adenauer<sup>42</sup>. The chairman of the FDP, Theodor Heuss served as the President of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Until 1969, the CDU / CSU remained the ruling parties in the FRG. In 1957, during the elections to the Bundestag, they managed to get more than 50 % of the votes, which was and remains the unbeaten record for the political parties of the FRG. In the federal elections, the CSU steadily received more than 9 %, and more than 10 % of the votes during the years in opposition, 1969–1982. It goes without saying, some tension was observed between the CDU and the CSU, however the unity of the faction was threatened, in fact, once. The initiative came from Franz Joseph Strauss, who was a bright, but equally uncomfortable figure for the moderate democristians<sup>43</sup>. In the 1970s, protesting the CDU’s conciliatory position on foreign policy, Strauss announced the creation of the ‘fourth’ party in Germany, that is, transformation of the CSU into a federal party. However, this did not happen, although the threat of splitting the union with the CDU was in the air. In 1980, the CDU / CSU opted to put

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<sup>40</sup> *Geschichte einer Volkspartei. 50 Jahre CSU*, S. 155.

<sup>41</sup> *Lexikon zur Geschichte der Christlichen Demokratie in Deutschland*, S. 723.

<sup>42</sup> On 15<sup>th</sup> September 1949, Konrad Adenauer became West Germany’s first chancellor by the margin of one vote. *Adenauer K. Erinnerungen 1945–1953*, S. 231.

<sup>43</sup> Petelin B.V. Franc Jozef Shtraus [Franz Josef Strauss]. *Voprosy istorii* [Questions of History], 2000, no. 6, pp. 71–92.

forward Strauss as their 'chancellor-candidate', which influenced the unity of the faction. His defeat at the elections weakened the right wing in the CDU / CSU and helped strengthen the positions of 'moderate' figures, whose leader was Helmut Kohl.

Another attempt to promote a candidate from the CSU to the position of the Federal Chancellor was made in 2002: the Bavarian prime minister and Chairman of the CSU Edmund Stoiber became as such. However, he lost the elections to the Social Democrat Gerhard Schröder. The CSU, like the CDU, is now clearly experiencing a leadership crisis. The German Chancellor and the CDU party chair Angela Merkel, like the chairman of the CSU and the German Minister of Interior in the new government, Horst Seehofer, who earlier expressed his disagreement with the policies of the former government, simply do not see who they could hand over their party powers to. However, the situation in Germany, when new radical parties appear, contributes to the internal consolidation in the CDU / CSU.

### **Conclusion**

The long-standing union of the CDU and the CSU has proved its value. The Christian parties in the history of Germany, understanding their responsibility to the German people and, despite the inter-party differences, prevented any serious political crises in the country. An important historical event relates to these parties – the overcoming of the split in Germany, which could happen only if there was an internal factor – the consistent German policy of the CDU / CSU. Undoubtedly, the disagreements were both related to the issues of domestic and foreign policy, but this exactly what should be in the real political life. We should mention one more feature that is characteristic of the Christian parties. By belonging to the right-wing and considering themselves conservative, they meanwhile showed throughout their history the enviable adaptability to the changing conditions of development, both in Europe and worldwide. Indeed, Chancellor Merkel's migration policy has caused tensions between the parties. The Chairman of the CSU Horst Seehofer defiantly criticized such a policy. He showed independence in relation to Russia. However, the factional conflict that was growing inside was settled, and the migration policy was adjusted. The future of the CDU / CSU is directly related to the existence of the entire political party system in Germany. In Europe, there are already examples when the parties formed after World War II were dissolved or transformed into new associations and

movements. It is not impossible that this might happen in Germany as well. The Christian parties are no longer the same, even in their names<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> The CDU has long been discussing the change of the name of the party, since the denomination of confessionality “discourages” those voters, who are not Christians. See: Resing V. *Die Kanzler-Maschine. Wie die CDU funktioniert*. Freiburg, 2013, S. 173–174.

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