DEBATES WITHIN THE BUNDESWEHR ABOUT ORGANIZATION AND DOCTRINE
One of the most interesting and unique aspects of the creation of the Bundeswehr was the introduction of a new philosophy of military leadership and soldierly behavior. “Innere Fuehrung,” the name of the new concept, is one of those German terms that encompasses a broad spectrum of ideas and is exceptionally hard to render into English. Indeed, even the Germans have considerable trouble in discerning the clear meaning and intent of the term. Literally translated, the term means “inner leadership.” However, this only captures part of the meaning. One proposed translation is “code of military service.” This expression captures some of the philosophy of Innere Fuehrung, but not all, because it makes it sound like an externally imposed code. Another proposed term, “internal moral compass,” comes a bit closer but still fails to capture the full meaning of “Innere Fuehrung.” Therefore, throughout this chapter, the author uses the term “Innere Fuehrung” in the expectation that the reader will glean an understanding of the concept from the context of the discussion.

The battle over the concept and policy to make Innere Fuehrung part of the official culture of the Bundeswehr was not a single grand campaign ending in a decisive victory. Instead, it might best be described as a series of skirmishes that neither side of the debate clearly won. Thus, it is no surprise that the controversy lasted from the foundation years of the Bundeswehr into the 1970s. The battle over Innere Fuehrung was a product of the very particular aspects of the German military culture. At the center of the debate was the issue of which organizational principles and philosophy would guide the inner culture of the new military forces of the Federal Republic. These were not marginal issues, as they led to numerous other questions that involved West German society, the government, the military, and the Allied Powers.

In the 1950s and 1960s, when one heard about “Innere Fuehrung” being discussed, the public debate was always centered on the fundamental issue: What should the relationship among the military, the