



Picture book of the week

WIRTSCHAFTSWUNDER: Germany after the War 1952-1967

by JOSEF HEINRICH DARCHINGER, Taschen £24.99

More than 1m tonnes of bombs were dropped on Germany during the second world war. Yet by the time Darchinger began his photographic journey round West Germany in 1952, one New York travel agency was offering "last chance" trips to see the few remaining bomb sites. Darchinger, who served in the Wehrmacht

and became a POW, reinvented himself in peacetime as a freelance photojournalist and set out to capture the era soon to be labelled *das Wirtschaftswunder* — the German economic miracle. In a mix of black-and-white and colour (fabulous 1950s colour, like a Douglas Sirk film), he charts the shift from austerity to prosperity, from the arrival of food aid to families on picnics beside their posh new cars. Politics fascinates him, too, from this 1956 shot in a Hamburg cabaret (the paper "helmet" shows the man opposes rearmament) to furtive Christian Democrats flyposting. The accompanying essay is eccentric, but the pictures speak for themselves. **Jane Ure-Smith**