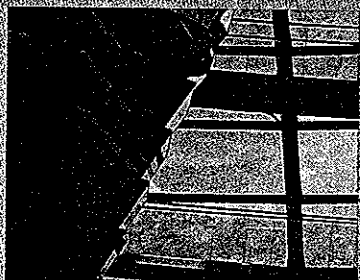
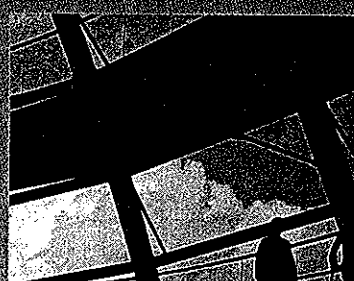


CHAPTER 12

GERMANY: THE IMPACT OF THE PAST



Britain has natural borders, France claims to have natural borders, but one of its six sides (the east) has been disputed. Germany, however, has natural borders only on its north and south (the Baltic Sea and Alps), and this fact has contributed to its tumultuous history. Germany has expanded and contracted over the centuries, at times stretching from Alsace (now French) to East Prussia (now Polish and Russian). After World War II its eastern wing was chopped off, and the country was divided into eastern and western occupation zones, which in 1949 became East and West Germany. The Federal Republic of Germany that reunified in 1990 is considerably smaller than the mighty Second Reich at the turn of the century.

Germany's location in the center of Europe and the flat, defenseless North European Plain imposed two unhappy options on it. When Germany was divided and militarily weak—its condition throughout most of history—it was Europe's battleground. On the other hand, when Germany united and became militarily strong enough to deter any combination of potential attackers, it was also strong enough to beat them all one at a time. When Germany unified in the nineteenth century, it automatically became a threat to the rest of Europe; it was big, populous, and strategically located. Some Europeans still fear a united Germany.

WHO ARE THE GERMANS?

Contrary to Nazi race theory, the Germans are an ethnic mixture. The original Germans identified by the Romans were a collection of several barbarian tribes, some of which became Romanized. The invasion of the Huns in the fourth century set off vast migrations throughout Europe. Many Germans sought refuge in Roman territory, and Rome hired some as mercenaries. Soon Germanic tribes were roaming through and destroying the Roman Empire and settling in various parts of it.

Since that time Germans have presented one face to the West and another to the East. To the West—to France and Italy—the heirs of Rome, they were respectful of their older high culture, which they tried to copy. To the East, however, they saw barbarians—first Huns, then Slavs—whom they either Germanized, exterminated, or pushed back. Whole Slavie- or Baltic-speaking areas were

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are Germany's geographic problems?
2. How was Germany the opposite of French centralization?
3. What did *cuius regio* attempt to solve? How?
4. What did Prussia contribute to Germany?
5. How did nationalism combine with racism in Germany?
6. What were the First, Second, and Third Reichs?
7. How did Bismarck retard Germany's democratic development?
8. Why was the Weimar Republic doomed?
9. What were the main elements of Nazism?



GERMANY

Germanized, and many of today's Germans are of East European descent. The Nazis hated to admit it, but Germans are a combination of Celts, Romans, Jews, several Germanic tribes, Slavs, and Balts. When the Nazis introduced their model of the perfect Nordic specimen, some quietly chuckled, for very few of the Nazi leaders matched the tall, athletic, blond, blue-eyed image.

THE FRAGMENTED NATION

The Germanic tribes were so impressed by Rome—whose empire they were destroying—that they pretended to continue the empire. When in 800 the Frankish king Charlemagne (German: Karl der Grosse) was crowned in Rome, he called his gigantic realm the Holy Roman Empire (which, Voltaire later quipped, was “neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire”). Although it soon fell apart, the German wing continued calling itself that until Napoleon ended the fiction in 1806.

In England, power between king and nobles was kept in balance, resulting in a constitutional monarchy that moved in spurts toward civil liberty, limited government, and rule by Parliament. In France, absolutism upset the balance as the French kings amassed power leading to a centralized, bureaucratic state. Germany went the other way: The nobles gained more power until, by the thirteenth century, the emperor was a mere figurehead while princes and leading churchmen ran ministates as they saw fit. Germany was not one country but a crazy quilt of hundreds of independent principalities and cities.

The split between Roman Catholics and Protestants accentuated Germany's fragmentation. Protestant reformer Martin Luther in the early sixteenth century reflected the feeling of much of northern Germany that the Roman church was corrupt and ungodly. The North German princes especially did not like paying taxes to Rome and found Lutheranism a good excuse to stop. South Germany and the Rhineland stayed mostly Catholic, the north and east predominantly Protestant, a pattern that still characterizes modern Germany.

Two wars resulted from the religious question. In the first, the Schmalkaldic War (named after the town of Schmalkalden where Protestant princes formed a coalition) of 1545–1555, the Habsburg Emperor Charles V nearly succeeded in crushing Lutheranism. The Protestants, however, allied with Catholic France to beat Charles. Trying to decide which parts of Germany should be Catholic and which Protestant, the Religious Peace of Augsburg in 1555 came up with the formula *cuius regio eius religio*—“whoever reigns, his religion.” Thus the religion of the local prince decided an area's religion, a point that deepened the disunity of Germany and the power of local princes.

The peace proved shaky, though, and in 1618, as the Habsburgs again tried to consolidate their power, a much worse war broke out, the Thirty Years War. Again, at first the Catholic Habsburgs won. By 1631, help from other countries arrived. Cardinal Richelieu feared Habsburg power would encircle France, so he aided the Protestants. In international relations, power and national interests are more important than religious or ideological affinity. A strong Swedish army under Gustavus Adolphus battled in Germany for the Protestants. Germany suffered terribly, losing perhaps 30 percent of its population, most by starvation. Until World War I, the Thirty Years War was the worst in human history. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 confirmed *cuius regio* and left Germany atomized into 360 separate political entities.

Habsburg Leading Catholic dynasty that once held Austria-Hungary, Spain, Latin America, and the Netherlands.

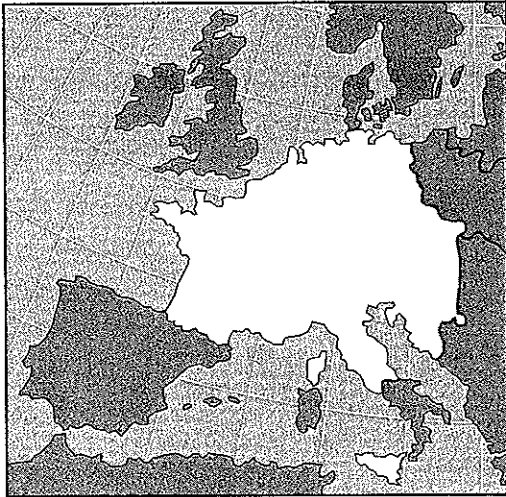
Thirty Years War 1618–1648
Habsburg attempt to conquer and Catholicize Europe.

Westphalia Treaty ending Thirty Years War.

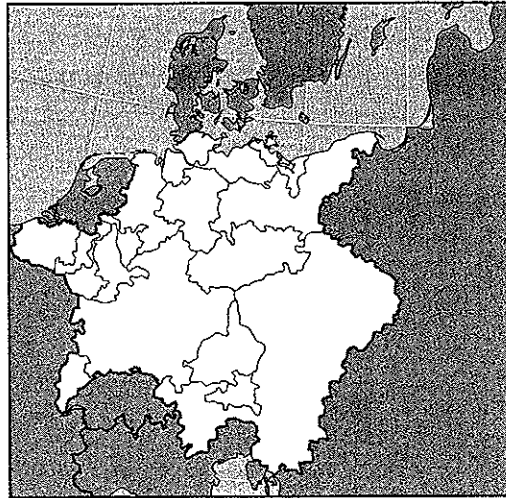
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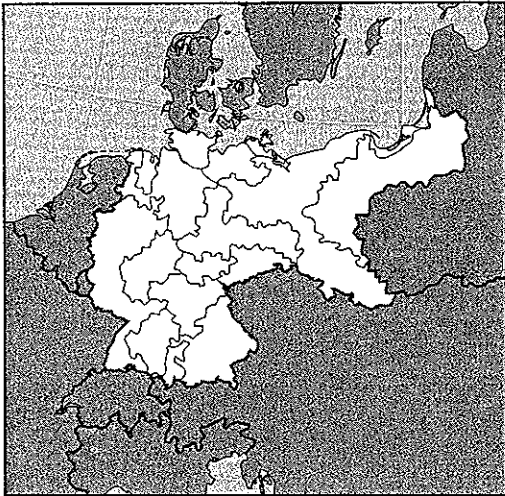
THE CHANGING SHAPE OF GERMANY



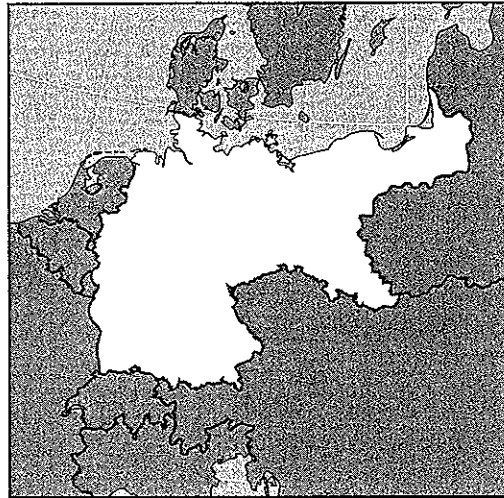
800: Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire



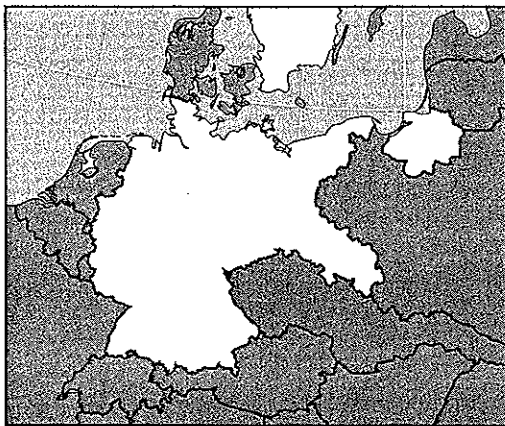
1648: After Westphalia



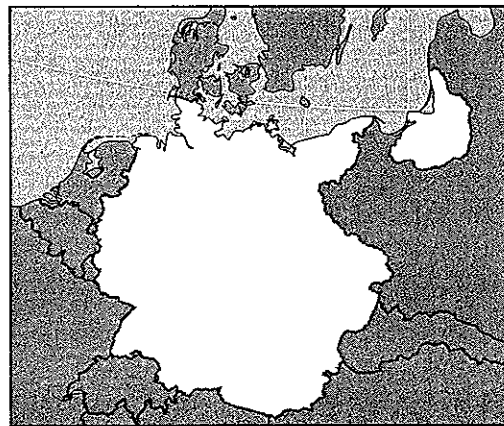
1815: The German Confederation



1871: The Second Reich

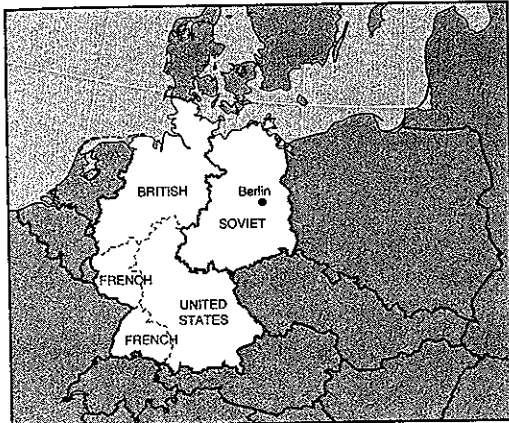


1919: The Weimar Republic

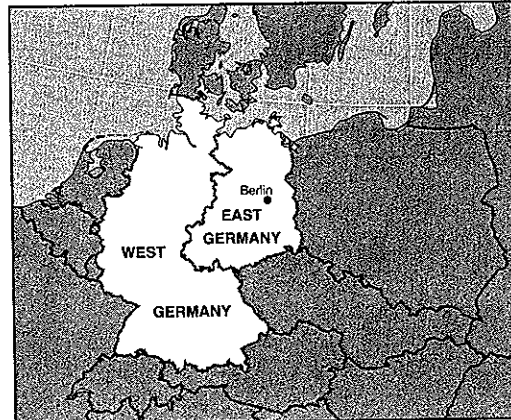


1939: Hitler's Third Reich

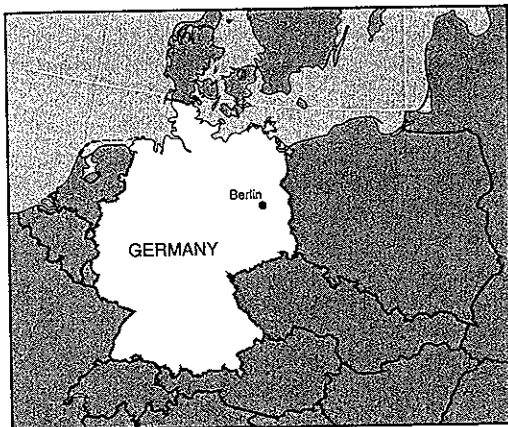
THE CHANGING SHAPE OF GERMANY (CONT.)



1945: Occupied Germany (Four Zones)



1949: Two Germanies



1990: Reunited Germany

Consider the political impact of religion on the three countries we have studied so far. England broke with Rome; the return of Catholic kings merely confirmed the power of Parliament. In France, the Catholic Church and *ancien régime* stayed loyal to one another while many French turned anticlerical, dividing French society into conservative Catholics and anticlerical radicals. Germany did not split into clerical and anticlerical but into Catholic and Protestant. The result was ghastly: a long and ruinous war, further breakup of an already fragmented country, and centuries of ill will between Germans of different faiths.

Prussia Powerful North German state; capital Berlin.

THE RISE OF PRUSSIA

One German state eventually came to dominate the others. Brandenburg, later known as Prussia, expanded greatly during the eighteenth century, taking over the eastern German conquests of the Middle Ages along the Baltic and adding Silesia and parts of the Rhineland. In the eastern Baltic regions, a type of nobility had developed, descended from the old Teutonic knights, which

Junker From *junge Herren*, young gentlemen, pronounced YOON care; Prussian nobility.

had a major impact on German history. The Junkers held great estates worked by obedient serfs. Unlike the English lords, however, they did not retain their independence and act as a counterweight to the king but became a state nobility, dependent on the government

GEOGRAPHY

BOUNDARIES: LINES ON A MAP

Precisely where one state leaves off and another begins is often unsettled. Looking at maps, you might think that boundary lines are real, perhaps decreed by nature or hallowed by time. In point of fact, almost all boundaries are artificial, some more artificial than others.

Germany's boundaries, for example, consolidated, expanded, and contracted with great fluidity. Consider the maps of Germany (on pages 164–165) over the centuries. Germany's boundaries were drawn widest under Bismarck in 1871 and under Hitler before and during World War II. The Second Reich included much of present-day Poland and a large sweep of Prussia to the east. With defeat in World War I, Germany lost part of Prussia and Pomerania to make a "Polish corridor" to the Baltic. Alsace returned to France. Hitler expanded the map of Germany by adding Austria, Bohemia (now the Czech Republic), Alsace, and parts of Poland. These lands were immediately stripped away with Germany's defeat in World War II. Germany was also two countries from 1949 to 1990.

Which are the "correct" boundaries for Germany? It is impossible to apply historical, moral, or even demographic standards to determine with certainty Germany's boundaries. One might attempt, as Hitler did, to draw Germany's borders so as to include all Germans. But the peoples of Europe—as in most of the world—are not neatly arrayed in demographic ranks, with, say, Germans on one side of a river and Poles on the other. Instead, they are often "interdigitized," with some German villages in Polish territory and Poles living in some German cities. Whatever border you draw will leave some Germans in Poland and some Poles in Germany.

Poland's boundaries are a perplexing example of border questions. As the empires that had partitioned Poland since the 1790s (German, Austrian, and Russian empires) collapsed in World War I, Polish patriots under

Pilsudski reestablished Poland, but it included many Lithuanians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians. Stalin never liked that boundary and during World War II pushed Soviet borders westward. In compensation, Poland got former German territories, so that now its western border is formed by the Oder and Neisse Rivers. Millions of Germans were expelled. In effect, Poland was picked up and moved over 100 miles westward! After much hesitation (because of German interest groups from the Oder-Neisse territories), Germany confirmed the new boundary.

Only boundaries that have been set up and observed over the centuries are without controversy. To be legal, a border must be agreed upon in a boundary treaty and demarcated with physical indicators, such as concrete pylons. Few borders in the world are like that.

Control of borders is a chief attribute of sovereignty, and nations go to great lengths to demonstrate that they alone are in charge of who and what goes in and goes out across their borders. One of the first points of violence in Lithuania and Slovenia were their passport and customs houses. In forcibly taking over these border checkpoints, Soviet and Yugoslav federal forces in 1991 respectively attempted to show that they, rather than the breakaway republics, were in charge of the entire national territory. They did not succeed, and their countries fragmented.

Boundary questions abound, such as India's border with Pakistan (especially over Kashmir), China's borders with India and with Russia, Venezuela with Guyana, Argentina with Chile (over Tierra del Fuego) and with Britain (over the Falklands), Syria with Lebanon (over the Bekaa Valley), Morocco with Algeria (over the former Spanish Sahara), and Iraq with Iran (over the Shatt al-Arab waterway). Such questions cause wars.

and controlling all the higher civil-service and military positions. Famous for their discipline and attention to detail, the Junkers contributed to modern Germany a passion for control in both military and civil administration.

Prussian kings, with potential enemies on all sides, became obsessed with military power, leading to Voltaire's wisecrack that "Prussia is not a country with an army but an army with a country." In the early eighteenth century, King Frederick William acted as drillmaster to his entire people, demanding military obedience and Prussian efficiency, not only on the parade ground—where he personally marched his handpicked corps of oversize soldiers—but in civilian life as well. Especially in Prussia, obedience to authority became a German character trait.

His son, Frederick the Great, who ruled from 1740 to 1786, inherited the Prussian army, which he kept in such a high state of readiness that it frightened the monarchs of larger states. Administering his kingdom personally, Frederick became known as the "enlightened despot" who brought art and culture (Voltaire stayed at his court for a while), as well as military triumphs and territorial expansion, to Prussia. A brilliant commander and daring strategist, Frederick served as a model for expansion-minded German nationalists. Trying to identify himself with Frederick the Great, Adolf Hitler in 1933 announced the founding of the Third Reich from Frederick's tomb in Berlin.

nationalism Belief in greatness and unity of one's country and hatred of rule by foreigners.

GERMAN NATIONALISM

At the time of the French Revolution, there were still over three hundred German states. Prussia and Austria were the strongest of them, but they, too, were pushovers for Napoleon's legions. German liberals, fed up with the backwardness and fragmentation of their country, at first welcomed the French as liberators and modernizers. Napoleon consolidated the many German ministates—but not Prussia or Austria—into about thirty, calling them the Confederation of the Rhine, and introduced new laws to free the economy and society from archaic laws.

The French brought with them more than liberalism, however; everywhere they went they infected conquered lands with the new idea of **nationalism**, the most contagious -ism of all; when one country catches it, so do neighboring lands. Soon Germans, Russians, and Spaniards were

GEOGRAPHY

MOUNTAINS

Mountains can serve as defensive barriers, making a country hard to invade. The Alps help guard Germany's southern flank; the Pyrenees do the same for France. Russia, with no mountains until the Urals rise up to form Europe's border with Asia, lay nearly defenseless before the horsemen of the east (who passed south of the Urals), the Swedes of the north, and the Germans of the west. Mountains can also slow political and

economic development. Very mountainous countries, such as Spain and Mexico, may be harder to unify, as the nation's capital cannot easily penetrate regions shielded by mountains. As the West Virginia motto says, *Montani Semper Liberi* (Mountaineers are always free). Because much of Japan is too mountainous for farms or factories, most Japanese live in narrow and crowded coastal strips.

Volksgeist German for "spirit of the people"; has racist connotations. (Note: All German nouns are capitalized.)

Lebensraum German for "living space" for an entire nation.

Metternichian system Contrived conservative system that tried to restore pre-Napoleon European monarchy and stability.

fired with anti-French nationalism. Napoleon, without realizing it, had let an imp out of the bottle; the push he gave to German nationalism indirectly led to three German invasions of France. Great historical events have unpredictable long-term consequences.

As we saw in the case of France's borrowing English and American notions of freedom, ideas conceived in one country often become warped when applied to another. This happened with German nationalism, which became romantic, angry, and racist and hearkened back to a mythical past. German nationalist intellectuals of the nineteenth century spoke of a **Volksgeist**, a combination of *Volk* (people) and *Geist* (spirit), that implied a Germanic tribal spirit that was superior to other peoples. German geographers coined the term

Lebensraum and argued that Germany was entitled to more territory. (Japanese militarists argued precisely the same.) Long before Hitler, many Germans favored expansionist nationalism.

Germany looked to Prussia for leadership in throwing off the French yoke, and Prussian troops did contribute to Napoleon's downfall. Like France, Germany after Napoleon was not the same. Caught up in nationalism and liberalism—more of the former than the latter—German thinkers wanted a unified and modernized nation. The reactionary Austrian Prince Metternich, who hated both nationalism and liberalism, helped create a German Confederation of thirty-nine states, which he thought would contribute to European stability after Napoleon.

In 1848 revolution broke out all over Europe as discontented liberals and nationalists sought to overthrow the **Metternichian system**. Amid urban uprisings, German liberals met in Frankfurt to set up a unified, democratic Germany. They sent a delegation to Berlin to offer the king of Prussia leadership of a German constitutional monarchy, but he contemptuously refused it with the remark that he "would not accept a crown from the gutter." The army cleared out the National Assembly in Frankfurt, and German liberals either converted to pure nationalism or immigrated to the United States.

THE SECOND REICH

In contrast to the attempts of liberal nationalists in 1848, German unification came not from the people but from above, from the growth of Prussia. Neither was it the work of liberals but rather of a staunch conservative, **Otto von Bismarck**, who had seen the liberals in action in 1848 and thought

GEOGRAPHY

BOUND GERMANY

Germany is bounded on the north by the Atlantic, Denmark, and the Baltic Sea;
on the east by Poland and the Czech Republic;
on the south by Austria and Switzerland;
and on the west by France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

To reinforce your knowledge, sketch out and label Germany and its neighbors. Note also the old border between East and West Germany that disappeared with unification in 1990.

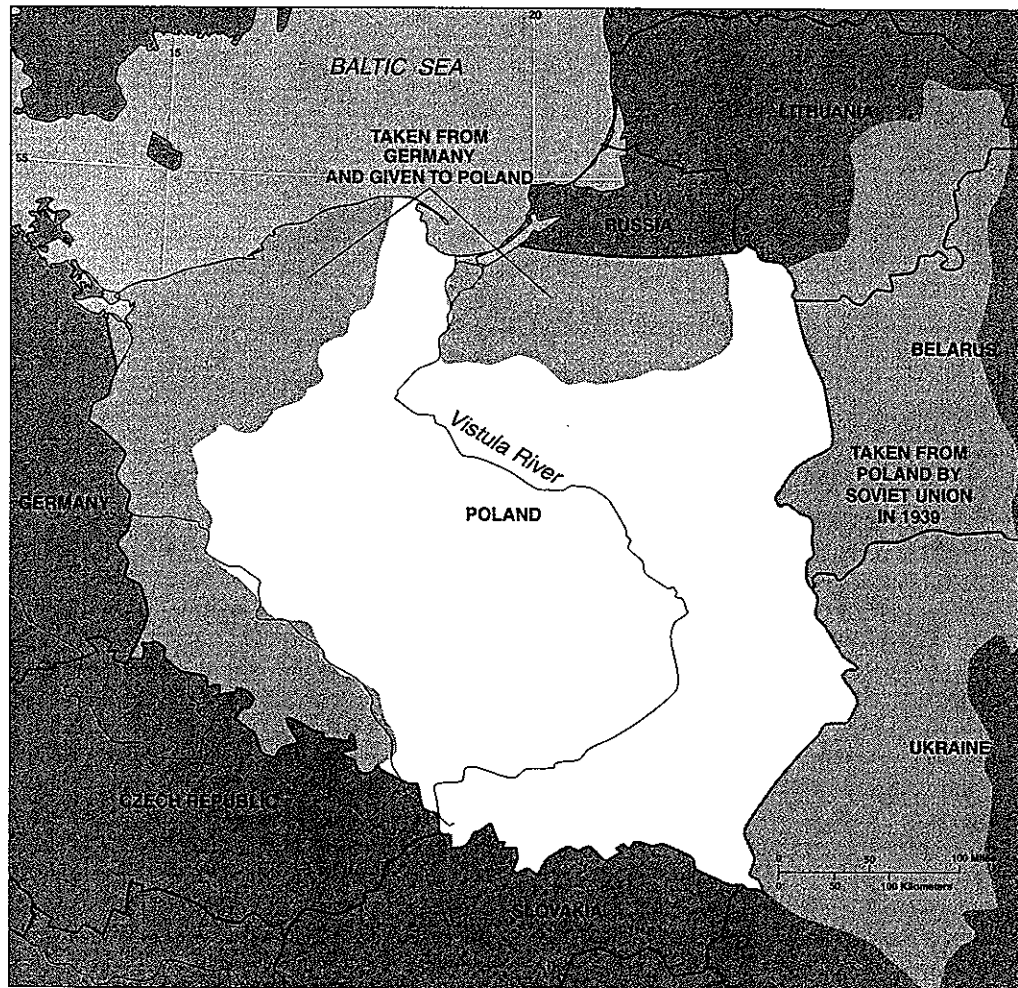
they were fools. Bismarck, who became Prussia's prime minister in 1862, was not really a German nationalist; he was first and foremost a loyal Junker servant of his king who saw German unification under Prussian leadership as the only way to preserve and defend Prussia. As such, Bismarck's goals were quite limited; he had no intention of turning a united Germany into a military, expansionist state.

GEOGRAPHY

BOUND POLAND

Poland is bounded on the north by the Baltic Sea, Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast), and Lithuania;
on the east by Belarus and Ukraine;

on the south by Slovakia and the Czech Republic;
and on the west by Germany.



Reich German for empire.

Kulturkampf Culture struggle, specifically Bismarck's with the Catholic Church.

Machtpolitik Power politics (cognate to "might").

Realpolitik Politics of realism.

For Bismarck, armies and warfare were just tools. In 1862, when the Prussian parliament was deadlocked over the military budget, Bismarck simply decreed new taxes and spent the money without parliamentary approval, declaring, "Not by speeches and majority decisions will the great questions of the time be decided—that was the fault of 1848 and 1849—but by iron and blood."

Bismarck used his military tools to solve the great question of his day: Who was to lead a unified Germany, Prussia or Austria? In a series of three limited wars—in 1864 against Denmark, in 1866 against

Austria, and in 1870 against France—Bismarck first consolidated the many German states behind Prussia, then got rid of Austria, then firmed up German unity. The new Second Reich (Charlesagne's was the first) was actually proclaimed in France, at Versailles Palace, in 1871.

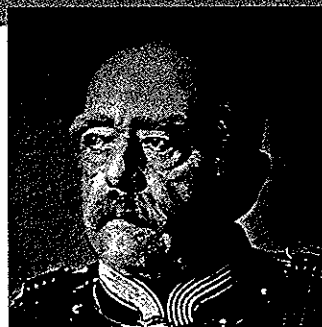
PERSONALITIES

BISMARCK'S DUBIOUS LEGACY

Otto von Bismarck, Germany's chancellor from 1871 to 1890, was a Prussian Junker to the bone, and the stamp he put on a unified Germany retarded its democratic development for decades. Bismarck and Disraeli knew and liked each other, and many compared them as dynamic conservatives. English and German conservatism, however, are two different things. Disraeli's Tories widened the electorate and welcomed a fair fight in Parliament. Bismarck hated parties, parliaments, and anyone who opposed him. Bismarck left Germany an authoritarian and one-man style of governance that was overcome only by Allied occupation following World War II. Bismarck's **Kulturkampf** with the Catholic Church, which he wished to subordinate to the German state, sharpened Catholic resentment against the Protestant north, a feeling that lingers.

Bismarck's most dangerous legacy to Germany was in his foreign policy. He practiced both **Machtpolitik** and **Realpolitik** to manipulate first his own Prussia and then the rest of Europe to produce a unified Germany. War for Bismarck was just a tool. Cynical amorality was another pattern Bismarck bequeathed to Germany.

Germany's real problem was that Bismarck was a tough act to follow. Bismarck used power politics for a limited end, the unification of Germany. His successors picked up his amoral **Machtpolitik** but forgot about the limits, the **Realpolitik**. Bismarck, for example, could have easily conquered all of Denmark, Austria, and France,



Otto von Bismarck

but he did not because he knew that would bring dangerous consequences. Bismarck used war in a controlled way, to unify Germany rather than to conquer Europe. Once he got his Second Reich, Bismarck concentrated on making sure potential enemies would not form coalitions against it.

Bismarck cautioned that an alliance with Austria, supporting Austrian ambitions in the Balkans, could eventually lead to war. "The entire Balkans," he said, were "not worth the bones of one Pomeranian grenadier." His fear came true, for that was precisely the way World War I came about. Bismarck's successors, men of far less ability and great ambition, let Austria pull them into war over the Balkans. The tragedy of Bismarck is that he constructed a delicate balance of European power that could not be maintained without himself as the master juggler.

The Second Reich, lasting from 1871 to 1918, was not a democracy. The legislature, the Reichstag, had only limited power, namely, to approve or reject the budget. The chancellor (prime minister) was not "responsible" to the parliament—that is, he could not be voted out—and handpicked his own ministers. The German Kaiser was not a figurehead but actually set policy. The individual states that had been enrolled into a united Germany retained their autonomy, a forerunner of the present federal system.

Germany, which had been industrially backward, surged ahead, especially in iron and steel. The once-pastoral Ruhr became a smoky workshop. With the growth of industry came a militant and well-organized German labor movement. In 1863 Ferdinand Lassalle formed the General German Workers' Association, partly a union and partly a party. In 1875 the group became the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD), now the oldest and one of the most successful social-democratic parties in the world.

Bismarck hated the SPD and suppressed it in 1878. He tried to take the wind out of the Socialists' sails by promoting numerous welfare measures himself in the Reichstag. In the 1880s Germany became the first country with medical and accident insurance, a pension plan, and state employment offices. Germany has been a welfare state ever since.

Reichstag Pre-Hitler German parliament; its building now houses Bundestag.

Kaiser German for Caesar; emperor.

SPD German Social Democratic party.

revisionism Rethinking an ideology or reinterpreting history.

THE CATASTROPHE: World War I

The Second Reich might have evolved into a democracy. Political parties became more important. After Bismarck was fired in 1890, the SPD came into the open to become, before World War I, Germany's largest party, with almost one-third of the Reichstag's seats. Gaining responsibility in elected offices, the German Socialists grew moderate, turning away from their Marxist roots and toward revisionism, the idea that socialism can grow gradually through democratic means rather than by radical revolution. So domesticated had the SPD become that in 1914, when the emergency war budget was placed before the Reichstag, SPD deputies forgot about the "international solidarity of all workers" and voted—for it.

After Bismarck, Germany's foreign policy turned expansionist. Kaiser Wilhelm II saw Germany as a great imperial power, dominant in Europe and competing with Britain overseas. A program of naval armament, begun by Germany in 1889, touched off a race with Britain to build more battle-ships. Wilhelm supported the Boers against the British in South Africa and the Austrians who were coming into conflict with the Russians over the Balkans. By the time the shots were fired in Sarajevo in 1914, Germany had managed to surround itself with enemies, exactly what Bismarck had worked to prevent.

GEOGRAPHY

BOUND HUNGARY

Hungary is bounded on the north by Slovakia;
on the east by Ukraine and Romania;

on the south by Serbia and Croatia;
and on the west by Slovenia and Austria.

Dolchstoss German for "stab in the back."

Versailles Treaty 1919 treaty ending World War I.

Weimar Republic 1919–1933 democratic German republic.

hyperinflation Very rapid inflation, more than 50 percent a month.

The Germans, with their quick victory of 1870 in mind, marched joyously off to war. In early August of 1914 the Kaiser told his troops: "You will be home before the leaves have fallen from the trees." All of Europe thought the war would be short, but it took four years and 10 million lives until Germany surrendered.

Many Germans could not believe they had lost militarily. Right-wing Germans swallowed the Dolchstoss myth that Germany had been betrayed on the home front by democrats, socialists, Bolsheviks, and Jews. Fed nothing but war propaganda, Germans did not understand that the army and the economy could give no more. The war

ended before there was any fighting on German soil, so Germans did not see their troops beaten. Worse was the Versailles Treaty, which blamed the war on Germany and demanded an impossible \$33 billion in reparations. Germany was stripped of its few colonies (in Africa and the South Pacific) and lost Alsace and the Polish corridor. Many Germans wanted revenge. The Versailles Treaty was a catastrophe, leading straight to Hitler and World War II.

Republic without Democrats

Looking back, we can see how the Weimar Republic—which got its name from the town of Weimar, where its federal constitution was drawn up—started with three strikes against it. First, Germans had no experience with a republic or a democracy, yet suddenly Germany became a democratic republic when the Kaiser fled to Holland at the war's end. Second, for many Germans, the Weimar Republic lacked legitimacy; it had been forced upon Germany by the victorious allies and "back stabbers" who had betrayed the Reich. Third, the Versailles Treaty was so punitive and its demands for payment so high that Germany was humiliated and economically hobbled.

It has been estimated that only about one German in four was a wholehearted democrat. Another quarter hated democracy. The rest went along with the new republic until the economy collapsed and then shifted their sympathies to authoritarian movements of the left or right. Weimar Germany, it has been said, was a republic without republicans and a democracy without democrats.

The German government, in a crisis with France over reparations, printed money without limit, bringing a hyperinflation so insane that by 1923 it took a wheelbarrowful of marks to buy a loaf of bread. Especially hard hit were middle-class families whose businesses and savings were wiped out; many of them became eager recruits for the Nazis. The period left an indelible mark on Germans, and to this day the German government emphasizes preventing inflation.

By the mid-1920s the economy stabilized and things looked better. Cabinets changed frequently: twenty-six in fourteen years. The Social Democrat, Catholic Center, and Conservative parties were the largest; the Nazis were tiny and considered something of a joke. Hitler did resemble Charlie Chaplin. Then the world Depression started in 1929, and German democracy went down the drain. Moderate parties declined, and extremist parties—the Nazis and the Communists—grew (see box on page 173). Unemployment was the key: The more people out of work, the higher the Nazi vote.

One combination might have blocked the Nazis' rise to power. If the Social Democrats and Communists had formed a united front, the Weimar system might have been saved. But the German Communists, who split off from the SPD after World War I, reviled the Social Democrats as "social fascists." Under Stalin's orders, the German Communists rejected a joint program with the Socialists on the theory that the Hitler regime would soon collapse and, the Communists would take over. This was one of Stalin's greatest blunders, and Communists and Socialists alike paid for it.

By late 1932, the Nazis had won a third of the German vote, and the aged President Hindenburg, a conservative general, named Hitler as chancellor in January 1933. The Weimar Republic, Germany's first try at democracy, died after a short, unstable life of fourteen years.

polarized pluralism A multiparty system that produces two extremist blocs with little in the center.

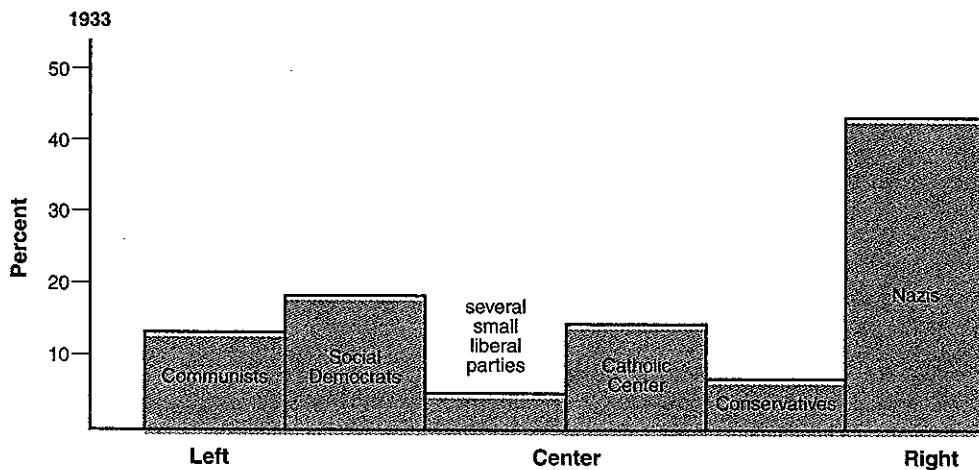
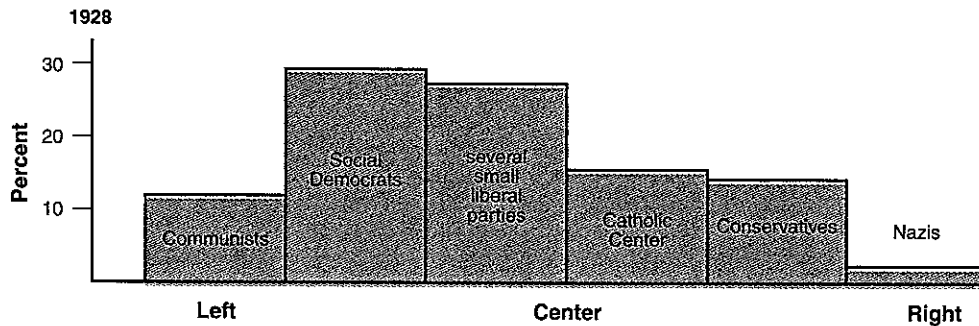
Key Concepts

THE HORRORS OF POLARIZED PLURALISM

Columbia University political scientist Giovanni Sartori described what happens when a multiparty democracy such as Weimar's or Spain's in the 1930s gets terribly sick. The leading parties in the center face nasty opposition on both their right and left. In competing for votes in a highly ideological atmosphere, parties engage in a "politics of outbidding" by offering more radical solutions.

Voters flee from the center to the extremes, to parties dedicated to overthrowing democracy. Sartori called this syndrome **polarized pluralism**, and the last years of Weimar are a good example of it.

Compare the percentage of votes parties got in 1928 with what they got in 1933, and the "center-fleeing" tendency is clear.



The Third Reich

Nazi was the German nickname for the National Socialist German Workers party. Nazism, like other forms of fascism, had a fake socialist component that promised jobs and welfare. The Nazis did not put industries under state ownership like the Communists in the Soviet Union; instead they practiced *Gleichschaltung* (coordination) of the economy under party supervision. Many Germans got work on government projects, such as building the new *Autobahn*. Although the Nazis never won a majority in a fair election, by the late 1930s a majority of Germans supported Hitler, whom they saw as restoring prosperity.

Gleichschaltung Nazi control of Germany's economy.

Autobahn Express highway, like U.S. interstate.

opportunist Unprincipled person out for himself or herself.

Most Germans had not been enthusiastic about democracy, and few protested the growth of tyranny. Some Communists and Socialists went underground, to prison, or into exile, and some old-style conservatives disliked Hitler, who, in their eyes, was nothing but an

Austrian guttersnipe. But most Germans got along by going along. Centuries of being taught to obey authority led them to accept Nazi rule.

For some, membership in the Nazi party offered better jobs and snappy uniforms. Many ex-Nazis claimed they joined only to further their careers, and most were probably telling the truth. You do not need true believers to staff a tyranny; opportunists will do just as well. The frightening thing about Nazi Germany was how it could turn normal humans into coldblooded mass murderers.

Among the first and worst to suffer were the Jews, who formed less than 1 percent of the German population. Exploiting widely held racist feelings, Hitler depicted the Jews as a poisonous, foreign element who aimed to enslave Germany in the service of international capitalism, international communism, or both. Logical consistency was never the Nazis' strong point. Jews were deprived, one step at a time, of their civil rights, their jobs, their property, their citizenship, and finally their lives.

Few Germans were aware of it, but Hitler ached for war. At first he seemed to just be consolidating Germany's boundaries, absorbing the Saar in 1935, Austria and the Sudetenland in 1938, and

Czech lands in 1939. Germany's enemies from World War I, still war weary, did nothing to stop the growth of German power and territory. Hitler's generals, it is now known, were ready to overthrow him if the British said no to his demands at Munich in 1938. But it looked as though Hitler could amass victories without even fighting, so the German generals suppressed their doubts. Finally, when Hitler invaded Poland in September 1939, Britain and France declared war. France was overrun, Britain contained beyond the Channel. By the summer of 1940 Germany or its allies ruled virtually all of Europe.



The main extermination camp of the Nazi regime was at Auschwitz-Birkenau in the south of Poland. Here millions of Jews and inconvenient Christians were gassed and incinerated.

In 1941 Hitler ordered his Final Solution to the Jewish question to begin. Death camps killed some six million Jews and a similar number of inconvenient Christians (Poles, gypsies, and others). A new word was added to mankind's vocabulary: genocide. The Nazis kept their death camps secret, and many Germans claimed they did not know what was going on.

Hitler—just a week before he attacked Poland in 1939—had completed a nonaggression pact with Stalin. In the summer of 1941, however, Hitler assembled the biggest army in history and gave the order for “Barbarossa,” the conquest and enslavement of the Soviet Union. Here, at last, Hitler's dream departed from reality. The Russian winter and surprising resistance of the Red Army devoured whole German divisions. From late 1942 on it was all downhill for Germany.

Final Solution Nazi program to exterminate Jews.

genocide Murder of an entire people.

nonaggression pact Treaty to not attack each other, specifically the 1939 treaty between Hitler and Stalin.

Cold War Period of armed tension and competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, approximately from 1947 to 1989.

The Occupation

This time there could be no Dolchstoss myth; Germans watched Russians, Americans, British, and French fight their way through Germany. German government ceased to exist, and the country was run by foreign occupiers. At Yalta in February 1945, the Allied leaders agreed to divide Germany into four zones for temporary occupation; Berlin, deep inside the Soviet zone, was similarly divided.

Initially, the Allies, shocked by the Nazi concentration camps, treated Germans harshly, but that reversed with the coming of the Cold War, which grew in large part out of the way the Soviets handled Germany. The Soviets, having lost some twenty-seven million people in the war, were intent on looting the conquered nation. They dismantled whole factories, shipped them home, and flooded the country with inflated military currency. The British and Americans, on the

Political Culture

GERMANY'S POLITICAL ERAS

Name	Years	Remembered for
Holy Roman Empire	800–1806	Charlemagne, fragmentation, religious wars.
Nineteenth century	1806–1871	Consolidation, modernization stir.
Second Reich	1871–1918	Bismarck unites Germany; industry and war.
Weimar Republic	1919–1933	Weak democracy; culture flourishes.
Nazis	1933–1945	Brutal dictatorship; war; mass murder.
Occupation	1945–1949	Allies divide and run Germany.
Federal Republic	1949–	Democracy; economic miracle; unification; from Bonn to Berlin.

Marshall Plan Massive U.S. financial aid for European recovery.

deutsche Mark German currency from 1948 to 2002.

Berlin airlift U.S.-British supply to West Berlin by air in 1948-1949.

other hand, distressed at the brutal Soviet takeover of East Europe, decided to revive German economic and political life in their zones. The U.S. **Marshall Plan** and other aid programs pumped billions of dollars into German recovery. In 1948 the British and Americans introduced a currency reform with a new **deutsche Mark (DM)**, which effectively ended Soviet looting of the western zones. In retaliation, the Russians blockaded Berlin, which was supplied for nearly a year by an incredible British-American Berlin airlift. The Cold

War was on, centered in Germany.

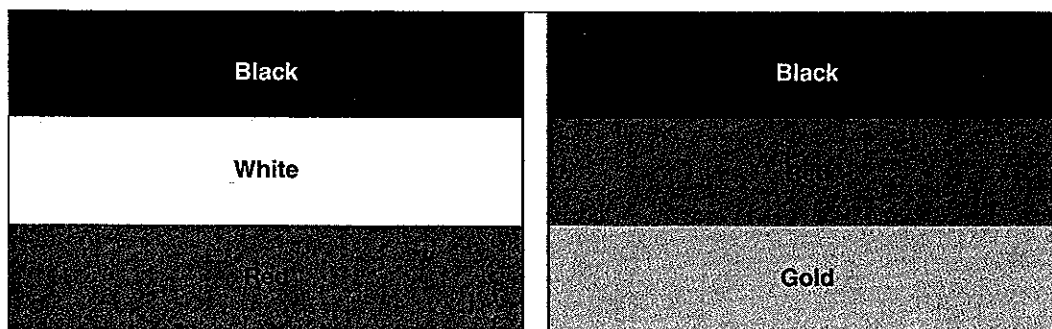
In 1949, the Western allies gave governing power back to West Germans in order to ensure their cooperation against Soviet power. A few months later, the Soviets set up East Germany. Both German regimes were children of the Cold War, with the Americans and the Soviets as the parents. When the Cold War ended—often dated to the fall of the Berlin Wall in late 1989—prosperous and democratic West Germany swallowed weak and dependent East Germany. To examine how West Germany succeeded, let us turn to Germany's institutions.

GEOGRAPHY

ANOTHER TALE OF TWO FLAGS

Like France, Germany's divided loyalties have been symbolized by its flags' colors. The German nationalist movement flag was black, red, and gold, colors of a Prussian regiment that fought Napoleon. By 1848 it symbolized a democratic, united Germany. Bismarck rejected it and for the Second Reich's flag chose Prussia's black and white, plus the white and red of the medieval Hansa commercial league.

The Reich's collapse in 1918 and the founding of the Weimar Republic brought back the democratic black, red, and gold German flag. Hitler, a fanatic for symbols, insisted on authoritarian black, red, and white colors. The Bonn republic designed the present German flag with the original democratic colors.



KEY TERMS

Autobahn (p. 174)	Kaiser (p. 171)	Prussia (p. 165)
Berlin airlift (p. 176)	Kulturkampf (p. 170)	Realpolitik (p. 170)
Cold War (p. 175)	Lebensraum (p. 168)	Reich (p. 170)
deutsche Mark (p. 176)	Machtpolitik (p. 170)	Reichstag (p. 171)
Dolchstoß (p. 172)	Marshall Plan (p. 176)	revisionism (p. 171)
Final Solution (p. 175)	Metternichian system	SPD (p. 171)
genocide (p. 175)	(p. 168)	Thirty Years War (p. 163)
Gleichschaltung (p. 174)	nationalism (p. 167)	Versailles Treaty (p. 172)
Habsburg (p. 163)	nonaggression pact (p. 175)	Volksgesit (p. 168)
hyperinflation (p. 172)	opportunist (p. 174)	Weimar Republic (p. 172)
Junker (p. 166)	polarized pluralism (p. 173)	Westphalia (p. 163)

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