Chapter 2. Historical Setting: 1945 to 1990

Half-timbered houses of the seventeenth century in Frankfurt am Main

GERMANY WAS UNITED ON OCTOBER 3, 1990. This event came after forty-five years of division that had begun with the partition of Germany into four occupation zones following its defeat in 1945 by the Four Powers—the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. Once a powerful nation, Germany lay vanquished at the end of World War II. The war's human cost had been staggering. Millions of Germans had died or had suffered terribly during the conflict, both in combat and on the home front. Intensive Allied bombing raids, invasions, and subsequent social upheaval had forced millions of Germans from their homes. Not since the ravages of the Thirty Years' War had Germans experienced such misery. Beyond the physical destruction, Germans had been confronted with the moral devastation of defeat.

Germans refer to the immediate aftermath of the war as the *Stunde Null* (Zero Hour), the point in time when Germany ceased to exist as a state and the rebuilding of the country would begin. At first, Germany was administered by the Four Powers, each with its own occupation zone. In time, Germans themselves began to play a role in the governing of these zones. Political parties were formed, and, within months of the war's end, the first elections were held. Although most people were concerned with mere physical survival, much was accomplished in rebuilding cities, fashioning a new economy, and integrating the millions of refugees from the eastern areas of Germany that had been lost after the war.

Overshadowing these events within Germany, however, was the gradual emergence of the Cold War during the second half of the 1940s. By the decade's end, the two superpowers—the United States and the Soviet Union—had faced off in an increasingly ideological confrontation. The Iron Curtain between them cut Germany in two. Although the Allies' original plans envisioned that Germany would remain a single state, Western and Eastern concepts of political, social, and economic organization gradually led the three Western zones to join together, becoming separate from the Soviet zone and ultimately leading to the formation in 1949 of two German states. The three Western occupation zones became the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, or West Germany), and the Soviet zone became the German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany).

During the next four decades, the two states led separate existences. West Germany joined the Western community of nations, while East Germany became the westernmost part of the Soviet empire. The two German states, with a common language and history, were separated by the mutual suspicion and hostility of the superpowers. In the mid-1950s, both German states rearmed. The FRG's armed forces, the Bundeswehr, became a vital part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The GDR's National People's Army (Nationale Volksarmee—NVA) became a key component of the Warsaw Pact. The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 by the GDR further divided the two states.

In West Germany, by the early 1950s a system of parliamentary democracy with free and contending political parties was firmly established. The Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union—CDU), along with its sister party, the Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union—CSU), led the coalitions that governed West Germany at the national level for two decades until late 1969. In that year, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands—SPD) formed the first of a series of coalition governments with the Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei—FDP) that governed the country until 1982. Late that year, the SPD was ousted from power when the CDU/CSU and the FDP formed a new coalition government. These parties ruled for the rest of the 1980s. As successful, however, as West Germany's adoption of democratic politics had been after 1945, the country's economic recovery was so strong that it was commonly referred to as the "economic miracle " (*Wirtschaftswunder*). By the 1960s, West Germany was among the world's wealthiest countries, and by the 1990s, Germany's economy and central bank played the leading role in Europe's economy.

East Germany was not so fortunate. A socialist dictatorship was put in place and carefully watched by its Soviet masters. As in the Soviet Union, political opposition was suppressed, the press censored, and the economy owned and controlled by the state. East Germany's economy performed modestly when compared with that of West Germany, but of all the socialist economies it was the most successful. Unlike West Germany, East Germany was not freely supported by its citizens. Indeed, force was needed to keep East Germans from fleeing to the West. Although some consolidation of the GDR was assured by the construction of the Berlin Wall, the GDR remained an artificial entity maintained by Soviet military power. Once this support was withdrawn, the GDR collapsed.

During the four decades of division, relations between the two German states were reserved and sometimes hostile. Despite their common language and history, the citizens of the two states had limited direct contact with one another. At times, during the 1960s, for example, contact was reduced to a minimum. During the 1970s, however, the two peoples began to mix more freely as their governments negotiated treaties that made relations between the two states more open. During the 1980s, although relations continued to improve and contacts between the two peoples became more frequent, persons attempting to flee from East Germany still died along its mined borders, GDR officials continued to harass and arrest dissidents, and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands—SED) rigidly controlled political life.

A key reason for the collapse of the GDR was the poor performance of its state-owned and centrally directed economy. The efforts of Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, beginning in the mid-1980s, to liberalize the Soviet Union and reform its economy were met with hostility by the GDR's top leadership. Word of these measures nevertheless reached East German grassroots opposition groups. Encouraged by the waves of reform in the Soviet Union and in neighboring socialist states, opposition in the East German population grew and became more and more vocal, despite increased state repression. By the second half of 1989, the East German opposition consisted of a number of groups with a variety of aims and was strong enough to stage large demonstrations.

The massive flow of East Germans to the West through neighboring socialist countries in the summer and fall of 1989, particularly through Hungary, was telling evidence that the GDR did not have the support of its citizens. Public opposition to the regime became ever more open and demanding. In late 1989, confronted with crushing economic problems, unable to control the borders of neighboring states, and told by the Soviet leadership not to expect outside help in quelling domestic protest, the GDR leadership resigned in the face of massive and constantly growing public demonstrations. After elections in the spring of 1990, the critics of the SED regime took over the government. On October 3, 1990, the GDR ceased to exist, and its territory and people were joined to the FRG. The division of Germany that had lasted decades was ended.

Postwar Occupation and Division

On May 8, 1945, the unconditional surrender of the German armed forces (Wehrmacht) was signed by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel in Berlin, ending World War II for Germany. The German people were suddenly confronted by a situation never before experienced in their history: the entire German territory was occupied by foreign armies, cities and infrastructure were largely reduced to rubble, the country was flooded with millions of refugees from the east, and large portions of the population were suffering from hunger and the loss of their homes. The nation-state founded by Otto von Bismarck in 1871 lay in ruins.

The Establishment of Occupation Zones

The total breakdown of civil administration throughout the country required immediate measures to ensure the rebuilding of civil authority. After deposing Admiral Karl Dönitz, Hitler's successor as head of state, and his government, the Allies issued a unilateral declaration on June 5, 1945, that proclaimed their supreme authority over German territory, short of annexation. The Allies would govern Germany through four occupation zones, one for each of the Four Powers—the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union.

The establishment of zones of occupation had been decided at a series of conferences. At the conference in Casablanca, held in January 1943, British prime minister Winston Churchill's proposal to invade the Balkans and East-Central Europe via Greece was rejected. This decision opened the road for Soviet occupation of eastern Germany. At the Tehran Conference in late 1943, the western border of postwar Poland and the division of Germany were among the topics discussed. As a result of the conference, a commission began to work out detailed plans for the occupation and administration of Germany after the war. At the Yalta Conference in February 1945, participants decided that in addition to United States, British, and Soviet occupation zones in Germany, the French were also to have an occupation zone, carved out of the United States and British zones.

The relative harmony that had prevailed among the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union began to show strains at the Potsdam Conference, held from July 17 to August 2, 1945. In most instances, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin was successful in getting the settlements he desired. One of his most far-reaching victories was securing the conference's approval of his decision to compensate Poland for the loss of territory in the east to the Soviet Union by awarding it administrative control over parts of Germany. Pending the negotiation of a peace treaty with Germany, Poland was to administer the German provinces of Pomerania, Silesia, and the southern portion of East Prussia. The forcible "transfer" to the west of Germans living in these provinces was likewise approved.

The movement westward of Germans living east of a line formed by the Oder and western Neisse rivers resulted in the death or disappearance of approximately 2 million Germans, while an estimated 12 million Germans lost their homes. The presence of these millions of refugees in what remained German territory in the west was a severe hardship for the local populations and the occupation authorities.

The conferees at Potsdam also decided that each occupying power was to receive reparations in the form of goods and industrial equipment in compensation for its losses during the war. Because most German industry lay outside its zone, it was agreed that the Soviet Union was to take industrial plants from the other zones and in exchange supply them with agricultural products. The Allies, remembering the political costs of financial reparations after World War I, had decided that reparations consisting of payments in kind were less likely to imperil the peace after World War II.

The final document of the Potsdam Conference, the Potsdam Accord, also included provisions for demilitarizing and denazifying Germany and for restructuring German political life on democratic principles. German economic unity was to be preserved.

The boundaries of the four occupation zones established at Yalta generally followed the borders of the former German federal states (*Länder*; sing., *Land*). Only Prussia constituted an exception: it was dissolved altogether, and its territory was absorbed by the remaining German *Länder* in northern and northwestern Germany. Prussia's former capital, Berlin, differed from the rest of Germany in that it was occupied by all four Allies—and thus had so-called Four Power status. The occupation zone of the United States consisted of the *Land* of Hesse, the northern half of the present-day *Land* of Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, and the southern part of Greater Berlin. The British zone consisted of the *Länder* of Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, and the western sector of Greater Berlin. The French were apportioned the *Länder* of Rhineland-Palatinate, the Saarland—which later received a special status—the southern half of Baden-Württemberg, and the northern sector of Greater Berlin. The Soviet Union controlled the *Länder* of Mecklenburg, Brandenburg, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia, and the eastern sector of Greater Berlin, which constituted almost half the total area of the city.

The zones were governed by the Allied Control Council (ACC), consisting of the four supreme commanders of the Allied Forces. The ACC's decisions were to be unanimous. If agreement could not be reached, the commanders would forego unified actions, and each would confine his attention to his own zone, where he had supreme authority. Indeed, the ACC had no executive authority of its own, but rather had to rely on the cooperation of each military governor to implement its decisions in his occupation zone. Given the immense problems involved in establishing a provisional administration, unanimity was often lacking, and occupation policies soon varied.

The French, for instance, vetoed the establishment of a central German administration, a decision that furthered the country's eventual division. Because they had not participated in the Potsdam Conference, the French did not feel bound to the conference's decision that the country would remain an economic unit. Instead, the French sought to extract as much as they could from Germany and even annexed the Saar area for a time.

The Soviet occupiers likewise sought to recover as much as possible from Germany as compensation for the losses their country had sustained during the war. Unlike the French, however, they sought to influence Germany as a whole and hoped to hold an expanded area of influence. In their own zone, the Soviet authorities quickly moved toward establishing a socialist society like their own.

The United States had the greatest interest in denazification and in the establishment of a liberal democratic system. Early plans, such as the Morgenthau Plan to keep Germans poor by basing their economy on agriculture, were dropped as the Soviet Union came to be seen as a threat and Germany as a potential ally.

Britain had the least ambitious plans for its zone. However, British authorities soon realized that unless Germany became economically self-sufficient, British taxpayers would bear the expense of feeding its population. To facilitate German economic self-sufficiency, United States and British occupation policies soon merged, and by the beginning of 1947 their zones had been joined into one economic area—the Bizone.

The Nuremberg Trials and Denazification

The Allies agreed that Germany should never again have the opportunity to destroy European peace as it had in the two world wars. A principal aim of the Allies was to prevent the resurgence of a powerful and aggressive Germany. As a first step toward demilitarizing, denazifying, and democratizing Germany, the Allies established an international military tribunal in August 1945 to jointly try individuals considered responsible for the outbreak of the war and for crimes committed by the Hitler regime (see The Third Reich, 1933–45, ch. 1). Nuremberg, the city where the most elaborate political rallies of the Hitler regime had been staged, was chosen as the location for the trials, which began in November 1945.

On trial were twenty-two men seen as principally responsible for the National Socialist regime, its administration, and the direction of the German armed forces, the Wehrmacht. Among the defendants accused of conspiracy, crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, and war crimes were Hermann Goering, Wilhelm Keitel, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Rudolf Hess, and Albert Speer. Although many Germans considered the accusation of conspiracy to be on questionable legal grounds, the accusers were successful in unveiling the background of developments that had led to the outbreak of World War II, as well as the extent of the atrocities committed in the name of the Hitler regime. Twelve of the accused were sentenced to death, seven received prison sentences, and three were acquitted.

The trials received wide publicity in Germany and throughout the world. Although many Germans maintained that it would have been better if the defendants had faced a German tribunal rather than one imposed by the war's foreign victors, they agreed that the trials made public much information about the mass murders and other crimes that otherwise might not have come to light. The German people and the rest of the world reacted with horror and dismay to the revelations. The trials of these more prominent figures of the Hitler regime were followed by the trials of thousands of lesser offenders.

The Allies did not seek merely to punish the leadership of the National Socialist regime, but to purge all elements of national socialism from public life. One phase of the denazification process dealt with lower-level personnel connected with the Nazi regime. Their pasts were reviewed to determine if the parts they had played in the regime were sufficiently grievous to warrant their exclusion from roles in a new Germany's politics or government. Germans with experience in government and not involved in the Nazi regime were needed to cooperate with occupation authorities in the administration of the zones.

The process of denazification was carried out diversely in the various zones. The most elaborate procedures were instituted in the United States zone, where investigated individuals were required to complete highly detailed questionnaires concerning their personal histories and to appear at hearings before panels of German adjudicators. In the British and French zones, denazification was pursued with less vigor because the authorities thought it more important to reestablish a functioning bureaucracy in their sectors.

Denazification was most rigorous in the Soviet sector. Civil servants, teachers, and legal officials with significant Nazi pasts were thoroughly purged. Denazification was also used as an instrument for seizing the resources of the so-called "class enemy": former Nazis who owned factories or estates were denounced and their property confiscated. After participating in the social transformation, some former Nazis were pardoned and even gained high positions within the new communist ruling class.

The denazification process mandated that simpler cases involving lesser offenders be tried before more complicated cases involving officials higher up in the Nazi regime. With time, however, prosecution became less severe, and the United States came to be more concerned with the Cold War. When denazification ended in March 1948, the more serious cases had not yet been tried. As a result, numerous former Nazi functionaries escaped justice, much to the regret of many Germans.

Political Parties and Democratization

The reintroduction of democratic political parties in Germany was one of the primary concerns of the Allies during the final phase of the war. The Soviet authorities were the first to reestablish political parties in their zone. They ordered the formation of political parties on June 10, 1945, well before such a directive was issued in the Western zones. In addition to seeking to control their own zone, they hoped to influence the emerging political constellations in the Western zones by the early mobilization of a strong leftist movement.

On June 11, the Communist Party of Germany (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands—KPD) was reestablished in the Soviet zone under a German leadership that, for the most part, had lived for years in Moscow. Wilhelm Pieck was its chairman. Shortly thereafter, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands—SPD) was also reconstituted, under the leadership of Otto Grotewohl. When it became obvious that the SPD would emerge as the most popular leftist party in the Soviet zone, the Soviet authorities forced the merger of the KPD and the SPD in April 1946 and subsequently, from this merger, the formation of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands—SED). The Communists clearly had the upper hand in SED leadership. Vigorous resistance to the merger of the two leftist parties came from Social Democrats in the Western zones, led by Kurt Schumacher, a veteran Social Democratic politician and member of the Reichstag during the Weimar Republic and a political prisoner during the Third Reich. As a result of this principled opposition to Communist control, the rebuilding of the SPD in the Western zones took a separate course.

The SED sought to retain the image of a political force open to the masses, and it governed through the active participation of its members. It also competed with other parties in regional elections. After the *Land* elections of October 1946 in which the SED failed to obtain an absolute majority, the party resorted to different tactics in order to secure its grip on the electorate. SED leaders created an Anti-Fascist Bloc consisting of all political parties that was to guarantee the introduction of an antifascist and democratic order in the Soviet zone. From the very beginning, the SED could veto any proposal from any other bloc party not in accordance with its ideals for a socialist society. As a result, the two other political parties authorized in the Soviet zone were purged of their leadership, and their party programs were realigned in support of SED goals. The two other parties were the Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union—CDU), which represented middle-class interests, and the Liberal Democratic Party of Germany (Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands—LDPD), which represented the liberal political tradition that dated back to the late 1840s.

Two additional bloc parties were established in 1948 in the Soviet zone to represent groups still without a specific political party. The Democratic Peasants' Party of Germany (Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands—DBD) was formed to prepare farmers for the planned land reform, which would involve extensive nationalizations. The second party, the National Democratic Party of Germany (National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands—NDPD), was to work at reintegrating into a socialist society approximately 2 million people of right-wing views. The group included veterans and a relatively large number of former members of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (National-Sozialistiche Deutsche Arbeiterpartei—NSDAP), Adolf Hitler's party.

The Social Democratic Party that operated in the Western zones was, in contrast to the Eastern SPD, markedly anticommunist (see Social Democratic Party of Germany, ch. 7). This attitude reflected a continuation of its bitter hostility to the Communists during the Weimar Republic. The reestablished party, headed by Kurt Schumacher and, after his death, by Erich Ollenhauer, could look back on a distinguished history of creating better living conditions for the working class within the context of parliamentary democracy. Although anticommunist, the SPD's leadership still regarded the party as Marxist and remained committed to working for a socialist economy. As such, the SPD envisioned a neutral socialist Germany located between the capitalist economies of the West and the Soviet dictatorship of the East. The SPD was able to build on its extensive working-class membership, which predated Hitler's seizure of power in 1933.

For the conservative forces, the political beginning after 1945 appeared more difficult because of past fragmentation on regional and denominational lines. The persecution and suppression suffered during the Third Reich by conservative Catholics and Protestants alike gave rise to a unified Christian conservative party, which would represent all who opposed communism and socialism and who held traditional Christian middle-class values. At first, several regional political organizations formed in Berlin, Cologne, and Frankfurt am Main. On December 16, 1945, it was agreed that their collective designation should be called the Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union—CDU) (see Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union, ch. 7).

During the initial phase of development, members of the Christian labor unions strongly influenced the program of the conservative movement. Although they did not dispute the concept of private ownership of property, they advocated state control for many principal industries. During the 1950s, a market-oriented policy that was combined with a strong social component came to dominate the party.

The Bavarian Christian conservative organization, the Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union—CSU), founded in October 1946, remained a separate party organization and kept its name even after the foundation of the FRG. It followed a more pronounced conservative ideological party line than the CDU.

Even more difficult than the political unification of Christian conservatives was the consolidation of the liberal movement in postwar Germany. Traditionally, the liberals had been divided into a conservative national liberal wing and a more leftist-oriented liberal movement. There was also a reservoir of voters who understood themselves to be truly liberal in that they did not commit themselves to any ideology. Common to all of the party groupings, however, was the rejection of a planned economy. A number of independent liberal party groups existed for a time in southwestern Germany and in Hesse, Hamburg, and Berlin. In November 1948, most of them united in the Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei—FDP), whose main figure, Theodor Heuss, became the first federal president of the FRG (see table 2, Appendix; Free Democratic Party, ch. 7).

The Creation of the Bizone

By early 1946, the Western Allies—the United States and Britain in particular—had become convinced that Soviet expansionism had to be contained. The Soviet Union's seizure of Polish territory and the drawing of the Oder-Neisse border (which gave formerly German territory to Poland), its antidemocratic actions in other countries occupied by Soviet forces, and its policies toward areas such as Greece and Turkey persuaded Western leaders that the Soviet Union was aiming for communist domination of Europe. Churchill's use of the expression "Iron Curtain" to describe the Soviet cordoning off of a sphere of influence in Europe illustrated a basic change in attitude toward Soviet intentions on the part of Western leaders. As a result of this change, Germany came to be seen more as a potential ally than as a defeated enemy.

The change in attitude led United States officials to take a more active role in Germany. A notable early example of this policy change was a speech given in Stuttgart in September 1946 by the United States secretary of state, James F. Byrnes, proposing the transfer of administrative functions from the existing military governments to a single civilian German administration. Byrnes stated that the United States had not defeated the Nazi dictatorship to keep Germans suppressed but instead wanted them to become a free, self-governing, and prosperous people. The speech was the first significant indication that Germany was not to remain an outcast but was, according to Byrnes, to have "an honorable place among the free and peace-loving nations of the world."

Neither the Soviet Union nor France desired a revitalized Germany, but after intensive negotiations, a unified economic zone, the Bizone, consisting of the United States and British zones, was proclaimed on January 1, 1947. After a difficult beginning, the Bizone proved itself a success, and its population of 40 million began to benefit from an improving economy. Only in the spring of 1949, after a period of sustained economic growth, did the French occupation zone join the Bizone, creating the Trizone.

In mid-1947 the European Recovery Program, or Marshall Plan as it is more widely known, was announced. The plan's aim was to stimulate the economies on the continent through the infusion of large-scale credits for the promotion of trade between Europe and the United States. The United States stipulated only that Europe's economy was to be united and that Europeans were to participate actively in the administration of the program. The Soviet Union suspected that the proposal was a means to prevent it from harvesting the fruits of the victory over fascism. Deeming the proposal a direct affront to its communist ideology by "American economic imperialism," the Soviet Union promptly rejected participation in the program, as did the East European states, obviously acting on Soviet orders.

To fulfill the precondition of economic cooperation in Europe, sixteen Western countries joined the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC—see Glossary) in early 1948. In April 1948, the United States Congress approved the Foreign Assistance Act, which arranged the provision of aid. Shortly thereafter, industrial products, consumer goods, credits, and outright monetary gifts started to flow into the impoverished economies of Western Europe. Cities, industries, and infrastructure destroyed during the war were rapidly rebuilt, and the economies of the war-torn countries began to recover. In the Western zones, aid from the Marshall Plan laid the foundations for the West German "economic miracle" of the 1950s.

A functioning currency system was also needed for a growing economy. The war economy of the National Socialist government had created an oversupply of currency not matched by a supply of goods. To combat the resulting black-market economy, especially noticeable in large cities, and to aid economic recovery in western Germany, a central bank was founded and a currency reform was proclaimed on June 19, 1948. The reform introduced the deutsche mark. In exchange for sixty reichsmarks, each citizen received DM40 (for value of the deutsche mark—see Glossary). Additionally, controls over prices and basic supplies were lifted by authorities, thus abruptly wiping out the black market.

The swift action of the Western powers took the Soviet authorities by surprise, and they quickly implemented a separate currency reform for their zone and all of Berlin. The Western powers, however, had already ordered the distribution of deutsche marks in their sectors of the city. This measure, which for the Soviet Union represented the culmination of the Western policy to undermine Soviet efforts to build a socialist society in its zone, produced a sudden dramatic reaction, the Soviet blockade of Berlin.

On June 24, 1948, Soviet troops blocked all road and rail connections to West Berlin. Within a few days, shipping on the Spree and Havel rivers was halted; electric power, which had been supplied to West Berlin by plants in the Soviet zone, was cut off; and supplies of fresh food from the surrounding countryside were suddenly unavailable. The Four Power status of Berlin, agreed upon by the Allied victors, had not included any provisions regarding traffic by land to and from Berlin through the Soviet zone. It had, however, established three air corridors from the Western zones to the city.

The three Western powers acted swiftly: an airlift of unprecedented dimensions was organized to supply the 2.5 million inhabitants of the Western sectors of Berlin with what they needed to survive. The United States military governor in Germany, General Lucius D. Clay, successfully coordinated the airlift, which deployed 230 United States and 150 British airplanes. Up to 10,000 tons of supplies were flown in daily, including coal and other heating fuels for the winter. Altogether, about 275,000 flights succeeded in keeping West Berliners alive for nearly a year.

The Soviet Union had not expected such Western resolve. Failing in its attempt to starve the Western Allies out of Berlin, it lifted the blockade on May 12, 1949. The Western Allies, led by the United States, had stood their ground without provoking armed conflict. Although the blockade had ended, its effects on Berlin were lasting. By June 16, 1948, realizing that it would not achieve its goal of a socialist Germany, the Soviet Union withdrew from the ACC, prompting the Western Allies to create a separate administration for their sectors. At the end of 1948, two municipal administrations existed, and Berlin had become a divided city. A more significant effect was perhaps that, in Western eyes, Berlin was no longer seen as the capital of Hitler's Germany but rather as a symbol of freedom and the struggle to preserve Western civic values.

The Birth of the Federal Republic of Germany

Participants at the Potsdam Conference had agreed that the foreign ministers of the four victorious powers should meet to implement and monitor the conference's decisions about postwar Europe. During their fifth meeting, held in London in late 1947, prospects for concluding a peace treaty with Germany were examined. Following lengthy discussions on the question of reparations, the conference ended without any concrete decisions.

The tense atmosphere during the talks and the uncooperative attitude of the Soviet participants convinced the Western Allies of the necessity of a common political order for the three Western zones. At the request of France, the Western Allies were joined by Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg at the subsequent Six Power Conference in London, which met in two sessions in the spring of 1948.

The recommendations of this conference were contained in the so-called Frankfurt Documents, which the military governors of the Western zones issued to German political leaders, the minister presidents of the Western *Länder* on July 1, 1948. The documents called for convening a national convention to draft a constitution for a German state formed from the Western occupation zones. The documents also contained the announcement of an Occupation Statute, which was to define the position of the occupation powers vis-à-vis the new state.

The minister presidents initially objected to the creation of a separate political entity in the west because they feared such an entity would cement the division of Germany. Gradually, however, it became apparent that the division of the country was already a fact. To emphasize the provisional nature of the document they were to draft, the minister presidents rejected the designation "constitution" and agreed on the term "Basic Law" (Grundgesetz). Final approval of the Basic Law, whose articles were to be worked out by a parliamentary council, was to be given by a vote of the *Land* diets, and not by referendum, as suggested in the Frankfurt Documents. Once the Allies had accepted these and other modifications, a constitutional convention was called to draft the Basic Law.

The convention met in August 1948 in Bavaria at Herrenchiemsee. After completing its work, the Parliamentary Council, consisting of sixty-five delegates from the respective *Land* diets and chaired by leading CDU politician Konrad Adenauer, met in Bonn in the fall of 1948 to work out the final details of the document. After months of debate, the final text of the Basic Law was approved by a vote of fifty-three to twelve on May 8, 1949. The new law was ratified by all *Land* diets, with the exception of the Bavarian parliament, which objected to the emphasis on a strong central authority for the new state. After approval by the Western military governors, the Basic Law was promulgated on May 23, 1949. A new state, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, or West Germany), had come into existence (see fig. 6).

The members of the Parliamentary Council that fashioned the articles of the Basic Law were fully aware of the constitutional deficiencies that had brought down the Weimar Republic. They sought, therefore, to approve a law that would make it

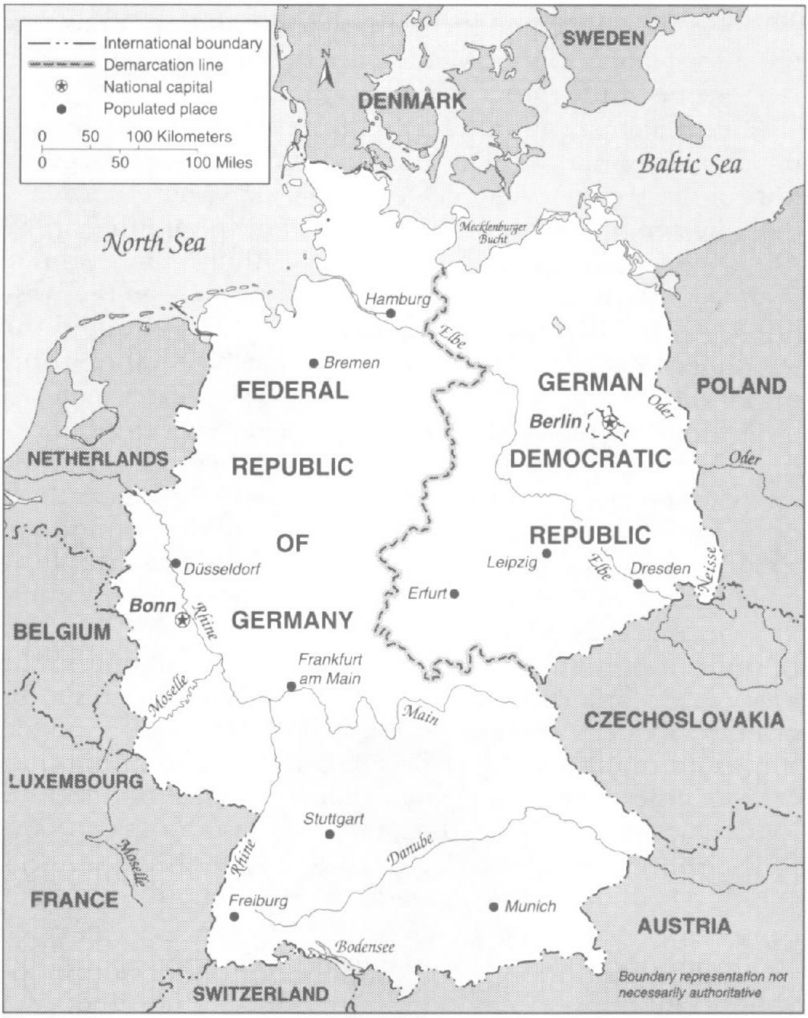

International boundary
Demarcation line
National capital
Populated place
0 50 100 Kilometers
0 50 100 Miles
SWEDEN
DENMARK
Baltic Sea
North Sea
Mecklenburger Bucht
Hamburg
Elbe
Bremen
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
POLAND
Oder
Berlin
NETHERLANDS
Düsseldorf
Leipzig
Elbe
Dresden
Neisse
Erfurt
Bonn
Rhine
BELGIUM
Frankfurt am Main
Moselle
Main
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
LUXEMBOURG
Stuttgart
Danube
Rhine
Moselle
FRANCE
Freiburg
Munich
AUSTRIA
Bodensee
SWITZERLAND
Boundary representation not necessarily authoritative

Figure 6. Germany, 1949–90

impossible to circumvent democratic procedures, as had occurred in the past. The powers of the lower house, the Bundestag, and the federal chancellor were enhanced considerably at the expense of the federal president, who was reduced to a figurehead (see Government Institutions, ch. 7). Prime consideration was given to the basic rights and the dignity of the individual. The significance of the *Länder* was enhanced by their direct influence on legislation through representation in the upper house, the Bundesrat. The Basic Law also safeguarded parliamentary government by protecting the federal chancellor from being forced from power through a simple vote of no-confidence. Instead, a constructive vote of no-confidence was required, that is, the vote's sponsors were required to name a replacement able to win the necessary parliamentary support. The Basic Law also supported the principle of a free market, as well as a strong social security system. In summary, the new Basic Law showed striking similarities to the constitution of the United States. To underscore its provisional character, Article 146 of the Basic Law stated that the document was to be replaced as soon as all German people were free to determine their own future.

According to the Basic Law, the Federal Constitutional Court could ban a political party that aimed at obstructing or abolishing the system of democracy. The activities of a number of openly antidemocratic parties during the Weimar Republic had inspired the authors of the Basic Law to include this strong provision. In 1952 the Socialist Reich Party (Sozialistische Reichspartei—SRP), a successor to the NSDAP, became the first party to be banned. The SRP had maintained that the Third Reich still existed legally, and it had denied the legitimacy of the FRG as a state. A few years later, the KPD was also suspended. Although the KPD was at first represented in all *Land* parliaments, it gradually lost support. After 1951 the leadership of the KPD began to pursue an openly revolutionary course and advocated the overthrow of the government. After five years of deliberations, the Federal Constitutional Court declared the KPD unconstitutional.

The Birth of the German Democratic Republic

As with the birth of the FRG, the formation of a separate nation-state in the Soviet zone also took only a few years. In late 1947, the SED convened the "German People's Congress for Unity and a Just Peace" in Berlin. To demonstrate the SED's claim of responsibility for the political future of all Germans, representatives from the Western zones were invited. The congress demanded the negotiation of a peace treaty for the whole of Germany and the establishment of a German central government. An SED-controlled organization was founded to win support for the realization of these demands in all occupation zones.

The Second People's Congress, held in March 1948, proposed a referendum on German unity, rejected the Marshall Plan, and recognized the Oder-Neisse border, which separated the Soviet zone from territory that was administered by Poland but that had once been part of Germany. Thereafter, few Western politicians had any doubts about the goals of the SED-sponsored congress. The congress elected a People's Council and created a constitutional committee to draft a constitution for a "German Democratic Republic," which was to apply to all of postwar Germany. The constitutional committee submitted the new constitution to the People's Council, and it was approved on March 19, 1949.

The Third People's Congress, its membership chosen by the SED, met in May 1949, just after the ending of the Berlin blockade. Apparently reacting to current events in the Western zones, where the Basic Law establishing the West German government in Bonn had just been approved, the congress approved the draft constitution of the German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany).

A new People's Council, elected during the Third People's Congress, was convened for the first time on October 7, 1949, and the constitution of the GDR went into effect the same day. The Soviet military administration was dissolved, and its administrative functions were transferred to East German authorities. The People's Council was renamed and began its work as the Volkskammer (People's Chamber), the parliament of the GDR. A second parliamentary chamber, the Länderkammer (Provincial Chamber), consisting of thirty-four deputies, was constituted by the five *Land* diets on October 11, 1949. Wilhelm Pieck became the first president of the GDR on the same day, and the newly formed cabinet, under the leadership of Otto Grotewohl, was installed on October 12, 1949.

According to the first constitution of the GDR, its citizens enjoyed certain basic rights, even the right to strike. In reality, however, there was little freedom. According to the constitution, both the Council of State (Staatsrat) and the Council of Ministers (Ministerrat) were elected by and responsible to the Volkskammer. All parties and mass organizations represented in this body were united in the National Front, under the ideological leadership of the SED. The Volkskammer was a mere forum for speeches and mock debates. In reality, all policy matters were decided by the Politburo of the SED, on which most important functionaries of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers had a seat.

The party structure of the SED had been reorganized in the image of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union even before the foundation of the GDR, and the system of *nomenklatura* (see Glossary), with its strict system of ideological education and selection of candidates for all functions in party and state, was introduced. Within a few months, East Germany became a model for all other satellites of the Soviet Union.

West Germany and the Community of Nations

At the end of World War II, Germany was a defeated nation occupied by foreign powers. It had lost its national sovereignty, and the world saw it as a pariah, guilty of crimes without parallel in history. In addition to rebuilding their shattered country in a physical sense, most leading German politicians saw their main goals in the coming decades as restoring their country's reputation, regaining its sovereignty, and becoming once again a member in good standing in the community of nations.

The figure who dominated West Germany's politics in its first two decades was Konrad Adenauer, a politician totally committed to restoring his country to an honored place among nations. He saw little likelihood that the Soviet occupation of East Germany would soon end; hence, he sought to build a strong West Germany firmly attached to the Western community of parliamentary democracies. As president of the Parliamentary Council, Adenauer had played a leading role in the process of finalizing and passing the Basic Law in 1949.

Even before he participated in fashioning the country's constitution, Adenauer had had a long and eventful political career. Born in 1876 in Cologne, he studied law and economics and became active in local politics. As a member of the Catholic-based Center Party, he became the mayor of his home town in 1917. The National Socialists deposed him in 1933, and, after the attempt on Hitler's life on July 20, 1944, he was arrested and imprisoned for four months. After the war, the United States reinstalled him as mayor of Cologne. The British military authorities, however, fired him from this position because of alleged incompetence. In March 1946, Adenauer became chairman of the CDU in the British occupation zone and, after having shown extraordinary leadership in the deliberations on the Basic Law, became the first chancellor of the newly formed state (see table 3, Appendix).

One of Adenauer's main goals was regaining his country's sovereignty. Although the Basic Law gave full legislative, executive, and judicial powers to the new FRG and its *Länder*, certain powers were reserved for the occupying authorities. The Occupation Statute, drawn up in April 1949 by the foreign ministers of the Four Powers, gave the occupation authorities the right to supervise the new state's foreign policy, trade, and civil aviation, as well as the right, under special circumstances, to assume complete control over their own occupation zones.

By means of another statute, the Ruhr Statute, likewise concluded in April 1949, the administration of the resources and industrial potential of the Ruhr area was also kept under foreign control. In the past, the area had been a key element in the building of Germany's military machine. France, in particular, sought safeguards against future threats to its national security by arranging the creation of the International Authority for the Ruhr, which, under the direction of France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, controlled the distribution of the area's resources.

Although the Ruhr Statute was designed to prevent Germany from ever again becoming a threat to its neighbors, it later served as the first instrument of economic cooperation for the region. In conformity with the Petersberg Agreement of November 1949 with the Western Allies, the FRG became a member of the International Authority for the Ruhr and was granted the right to establish consular relations with foreign countries. Furthermore, the dismantling of German industrial plants in the Ruhr area was largely stopped, and Germany was allowed to again build merchant ships. The winning of these important concessions was Adenauer's first major success as chancellor.

In the spring of 1950, French foreign minister Robert Schuman recommended the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) to revive European economic cooperation and prevent future conflict between France and Germany. According to Schuman's plan, countries willing to place their coal and steel industries under an independent authority could join.

Once again, Adenauer seized the opportunity to further integrate West Germany into Western Europe. Against the SPD's strong opposition, the FRG entered into negotiations with France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Italy on the formation of the ECSC. Negotiations were successfully concluded in June 1952. The ECSC superseded the International Authority for the Ruhr and laid the foundations of the future European Community (EC—see Glossary; see European Union, ch. 8). Adenauer's conciliatory but resolute foreign policy also secured the admission in 1951 of the FRG into the Council of Europe, a body established in May 1949 to promote European ideals and principles.

Another important step for the FRG on its path toward reentry into the community of nations was Adenauer's unwavering position on restitution to the victims of Nazi crimes. Of particular significance was the normalization of relations with Israel and with the Jewish people in general. Although the terrible atrocities that had occurred during the war could not be undone, material restitution could at least improve the lot of the survivors. In 1952 a reparations agreement with Israel was arranged that called for the payment of DM3 billion to the Jewish state over the next twelve years. Additional agreements with Jewish organizations provided for restitution to Jewish victims throughout the world. Through such actions, the FRG sought to meet its obligations as the legal successor to the German Reich, a position it had accepted since the FRG's founding.

Rearmament and the European Defense Community

The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 convinced Western leaders of the growing threat of international communism. The United States began to encourage the Europeans—the FRG in particular—to contribute to their own defense. For Germany, five years after having lost the most devastating of all wars, this meant forming an army, a step unthinkable for many Germans. Germany's rearmament was also anathema to some of its neighbors, especially France. As the Korean War continued, however, opposition to rearmament lessened within the FRG, and China's entry in the war caused France to revise its negative position toward German rearmament.

To contain a newly armed Germany, French officials proposed the creation of the European Defense Community (EDC) under the aegis of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Adenauer quickly agreed to join the EDC because he saw membership as likely to increase his country's sovereignty. The treaties establishing the EDC were signed in May 1952 in Bonn by the Western Allies and the FRG. Although the Bundestag ratified the treaties, the EDC was ultimately blocked by France's parliament, the National Assembly, because it opposed putting French troops under foreign command. The French veto meant that a new formula was needed to allay French fears of a strong Germany.

The negotiations surrounding the planned rearmament of the FRG and the creation of the EDC provoked a Soviet countermeasure. After a second East German proposal for talks on a possible unification of the two Germanys failed because of the FRG's demands for free elections in the GDR, the Soviet Union put forth a new proposal to the Western Allies in March 1952. The Soviet Union would agree to German unification if the Oder-Neisse border were recognized as final and if a unified Germany were to remain neutral. If the proposal were accepted, Allied troops would leave Germany within one year, and the country would obtain its full sovereignty.

Although the offer was directed to the Western Allies, its content was aimed directly at the West German public and aroused lively discussion about the country's future. Adenauer was convinced, however, that even if the Soviet proposal were serious, an acceptance of the plan would mean Germany's exclusion from the community of Western democracies and an uncertain future. Together with the Western Allies, which did not wish to act without his consent, Adenauer continued to demand free elections supervised by the United Nations (UN) in all of Germany as a precondition for negotiations. The Soviet Union declined and abandoned its proposal. Adenauer was harshly criticized by the opposition for not having seized this opportunity for unification. As his impressive victory in the Bundestag elections of 1953 clearly demonstrated, however, Adenauer had acted according to the wishes of the overwhelming majority of West Germans (see table 4, Appendix).

Adenauer's decision to turn down the Soviet proposal was convincing evidence that the FRG intended to remain firmly anchored in the Western defense community. After plans for the EDC had failed because of the French veto, negotiations were successfully concluded on the Treaties of Paris in May 1954, which ended the Occupation Statute and made the FRG a member of the Western European Union (WEU—see Glossary) and of NATO (see The North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Western European Union, ch. 8). On May 5, 1955, the FRG declared its sovereignty as a country and, as a new member of NATO, undertook to contribute to the organization's defense effort by building up its own armed forces, the Bundeswehr (see Creation of the Bundeswehr, ch. 9).

The FRG contributed to NATO's defense effort by building up the Bundeswehr, an undertaking that met with considerable opposition within the population. For many, the memories of the war were still too vivid. To avoid separating the army from the country's civilian and political life, as was the case during the Weimar Republic, laws were passed that guaranteed civilian control over the armed forces and gave the individual soldier a new status. Members of the conscription army were to be "citizens in uniform" and were encouraged to take an active part in democratic politics. Although West Germans generally remained less than enthusiastic about their new army, the majority accepted the responsibility of sharing the burden of defense with the United States and the other members of NATO.

By 1955 the Soviet Union had abandoned efforts to secure a neutralized Germany, having become convinced of the FRG's firm position within the Western Alliance. Following the Four Power Conference in Geneva in July 1955, Chancellor Adenauer accepted an invitation to visit Moscow, seeking to open new lines of communication with the East without compromising the FRG's firm commitment to the West. In Moscow in September, he arranged for the release of 10,000 German war prisoners. In addition, without having recognized the division of Germany or the Oder-Neisse line as permanent, West German negotiators also established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union had recognized the GDR as a state in 1954, and the two countries maintained diplomatic relations with one another. The FRG had not, however, recognized the GDR. And to dissuade other countries from recognizing East Germany, Adenauer's foreign policy adviser, Walter Hallstein, proposed that the FRG break diplomatic relations with any country that recognized the GDR. The proposal was based on the FRG's claim, as a democratic state, to be the only legitimate representative of the German people. The Hallstein Doctrine was adopted as a principle of West German foreign policy in September 1955 and remained in effect until the late 1960s.

Another important development in the FRG's relations with its neighbors was that the Saarland rejoined the FRG in 1957. After World War II, France had attempted to separate this region economically and politically from the rest of Germany. In 1947 the Saarland received its own constitution and was virtually autonomous. During negotiations leading to the Treaties of Paris, the FRG and France agreed, in the Saar Statute, that the Saarland should become a territory under the control of the Council of Europe. However, in the referendum of October 1955, which was supposed to confirm the Saar Statute, Saarland voters rejected the statute by a two-thirds majority, an indication that they wished their region to become part of the FRG. On January 1, 1957, the Saarland became a West German *Land.*

In addition to his success in building a close and firm relationship with the United States, another of Adenauer's great foreign policy achievements was reconciliation with France, with which Germany had been locked in rivalry and conflict for centuries. In spite of remaining disagreements on the areas of European integration and NATO, a basis for the development of more normal relations between their two countries was forged upon a good personal understanding between Adenauer and French president Charles de Gaulle, who had assumed the French presidency in 1958.

The German-French Friendship Treaty (Élysée Treaty), which went into effect in January 1963, called for regular consultations between the two governments, semiannual meetings of the chiefs of state, and a youth exchange program. The treaty was seen by many as a positive step in the history of a difficult relationship between the two countries. Of greater importance to the majority of West Germans, however, was the country's relationship with the United States and its secure place within the Western defense community.

Social Market Economy

Germany's economic growth during the first decades after the war at times overshadowed its marked success at joining the international community. In 1945 the country's economy was shattered. A good part of what survived was later dismantled and carried off by the victorious Allies. Within Germany there was much argument about how to rebuild the economy and what its nature should be. Socialist politicians argued for a central distribution system, extensive state controls, and the nationalization of banks and industry. Their main opponent was Ludwig Erhard, a liberal economist appointed to head the office of economic affairs in the Bizone, who later became minister for economics and ultimately FRG chancellor (1963–66), succeeding Adenauer.

Erhard's concept of a socially responsive market economy based on free trade and private enterprise, aided by the infusion of capital through the Marshall Plan, proved to be the ideal basis for the strong recovery of the West German economy, culminating in the economic miracle (*Wirtschaftswunder*) of the 1950s (see The Social Market Economy, ch. 5). In some areas, for instance in housing and in agriculture, prevailing circumstances required the introduction of price controls and subsidies. Controls to prevent the formation of cartels and to foster monetary stability also remained the state's responsibility. The state likewise furthered the accumulation of private capital and protected ordinary citizens by establishing a generous system of social services that included statutory health, unemployment, and pension insurance programs.

West Germany's economy functioned very well for several decades, and the country became one of the world's wealthiest (see The Economic Miracle and Beyond, ch. 5). Thanks to the strong social welfare component and the system of codetermination, which gave workers in factories some say about their management, West German industry enjoyed a long period of labor peace. The export-oriented economy received another boost with the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC—see Glossary) by the Treaty of Rome in March 1957. West Germany was one of the EEC's founding members.

Ludwig Erhard and the Grand Coalition

Konrad Adenauer assumed the chancellorship of the newly founded FRG in 1949, at the age of seventy-three. From the beginning, his primary foreign policy goals had been the achievement of German reunification through a policy of strength, the building of strong relations with the United States, and reconciliation with France.

Until the elections of 1961, Adenauer had enjoyed the support of a healthy CDU/CSU majority in the Bundestag. Various domestic issues and very likely also the Berlin crisis, however, reduced the CDU/CSU's strength in the Bundestag and forced the formation of a coalition government with the FDP. The work of this government was impeded by differences of opinion from the outset. Following the resignation of FDP cabinet members in protest over a controversy surrounding the arrest of Rudolf Augstein, editor of the newsmagazine *Der Spiegel*, for allegedly having reported classified material concerning NATO exercises, the working climate of the coalition deteriorated.

Forced to accept the resignation of his powerful minister of defense, Franz Josef Strauss, who had had Augstein arrested, and facing an erosion of support within the CDU, Adenauer resigned on October 15, 1963.

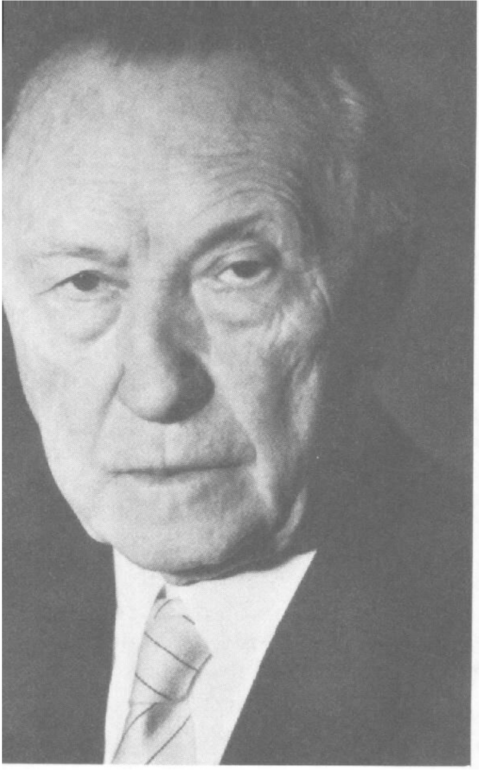
Ludwig Erhard succeeded Adenauer as chancellor. Under Erhard's leadership, the CDU/CSU-FDP coalition remained in power until 1966. Erhard's more liberal economic policy toward the East European states that maintained diplomatic relations with East Germany made maintaining the Hallstein Doctrine difficult. In addition, his position of favoring close coordination of German foreign policy with the United States was resisted by the "Gaullists," even those in his own party, who favored a continuation of Adenauer's close relations with France.

The CDU/CSU did well in the elections of 1965, but relations with the FDP had deteriorated. A recession and a budget crisis caused the FDP to drop out of the coalition. Erhard ruled with a minority government for a short time, but after the opposition's significant gains in several *Land* elections, his party formed a new coalition government with the SPD. Erhard resigned as chancellor in November 1966, less successful in that position than he had been as the "father of the economic miracle."

When the CDU/CSU entered into a coalition with the SPD in December 1966, West Germany was experiencing unprecedented economic troubles. High unemployment, a relatively high budget deficit, and an unexpected rise in support for right-wing groups, such as the National Democratic Party of Germany (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands—NPD), brought West Germany's largest parties together to form what was called the Grand Coalition. Kurt Georg Kiesinger (CDU), who had served as minister president of Baden-Württemberg, was appointed chancellor; Willy Brandt (SPD), the governing mayor of Berlin, became vice chancellor and minister of foreign affairs; and Karl Schiller (SPD) was appointed minister for economics. Considered by many as "unnatural" because the coalition partners came from opposite ends of the political spectrum, the coalition was seen as a temporary solution needed to gain the cooperation of the trade unions and stabilize the economy.

The Ulbricht Era, 1949–71

Soviet dictator Stalin died in March 1953. In large portions



Konrad Adenauer, federal chancellor, 1949–63
Ludwig Erhard, federal chancellor, 1963–66
Kurt Georg Kiesinger, federal chancellor, 1966–69
Courtesy German Information Center, New York

of the East German population, particularly among workers suffering under the high production quotas set by the SED, Stalin's death gave rise to hopes for an improvement in living conditions and for an easing of political terror. In an attempt to stave off increasing unrest among the population as living standards were worsening and production quotas were being raised, the East German leadership, headed by General Secretary Walter Ulbricht, announced new economic policies that would end price hikes and increase the availability of consumer goods. Ulbricht refused, however, to lower production goals for industry and construction, which had been increased by 10 percent on May 28, 1953.

On the new parade grounds at East Berlin's Stalin Allee, a symbol of communist pride, enraged workers assembled in protest on June 16. The following day, demonstrations were held in most industrial cities of the GDR. Demands were made for comprehensive economic reforms and political changes, including Ulbricht's resignation and free elections. Overwhelmed by such widespread opposition to their policies, the East German authorities were unable to quell the protests. Soviet military units stationed in East Germany were called in and, with the help of East German police units, suppressed the unrest within two days. Order was restored at a cost of an estimated several dozen deaths and 1,000 arrests. Ulbricht, the figure largely responsible for the causes of the demonstrations, had triumphed, but the uprising demonstrated the frailty of the East German regime and signaled the East German population's "will to freedom."

Born in Leipzig in 1893, Ulbricht had served on the Western Front in World War I and had joined the KPD in 1919. He advanced quickly in the party hierarchy, becoming Reichstag deputy in 1928. After Hitler's seizure of power, Ulbricht went into exile. From 1937 to 1945, he worked for the party in Moscow. After the war, he returned to Berlin to build up the KPD under the protection of the Soviet Union. By 1950 he was chairman of the SED and through a variety of positions ruled the East German state with an iron fist for the next two decades by successfully eliminating every potential competitor within the SED leadership.

Consolidation of the New State

The most important instrument employed by East German authorities to guarantee their absolute rule was the State Security Service (Staatssicherheitsdienst, commonly referred to as the Stasi). Founded in early 1950 as the secret service branch of the Ministry for State Security (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit—MfS), the Stasi came to exercise almost complete control over the population of the GDR. During the first five years of its existence, Stasi personnel were trained by Soviet instructors. In addition to its surveillance of the East German population—which was carried out with sinister thoroughness up until the final days of the GDR—the Stasi conducted extensive espionage activities in the West, particularly in the FRG.

Aside from its approximately 100,000 full-time employees, the Stasi could also rely on the assistance of nearly 2 million civilian spies, or so-called informal employees (*Informelle Mitarbeiter*—IM), who reported regularly from domestic listening posts or from abroad. Experts agree that before its dissolution in 1990, the Stasi had developed the most perfect spying system ever devised to watch over its own citizens. It had truly realized the idea of the "glass-citizen," whose every activity was known to and controlled by the state. In Stasi headquarters in East Berlin, detailed information on individual citizens was collected in huge archives, which survived, largely intact, the downfall of the East German state.

An equally important role in building a permanent power base for the SED was played by mass organizations. One of the most important was the Free German Youth (Freie Deutsche Jugend—FDJ), founded in March 1946, in which young people between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five were to be indoctrinated as members of a new socialist society. Together with its suborganization for youngsters from six to fourteen years of age, the Young Pioneers—later called the Pioneer Organization "Ernst Thälmann," in memory of the chief of the KPD during the Weimar Republic, who was killed in a concentration camp—the FDJ soon became an effective instrument for influencing the coming generations. An important part of its influence was that membership in the FDJ soon determined access to institutions of higher learning, recreation and sports facilities, and ultimately career opportunities.

Another important mass organization was the Free German Trade Union Federation (Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund—FDGB), which attempted to motivate the workforce to achieve production goals and also provided members with opportunities for inexpensive vacations at FDGB-owned sea-shore resorts. Similarly, the interests of women were served by the Democratic Women's Federation of Germany.

By the end of 1947, all facets of society were organized in associations and groupings under the control of the SED. The GDR authorities also sought to deprive potential enemies within the state of the traditions and institutions upon which the state and society had been founded. A primary target for complete transformation was the court system. Judges and attorneys soon came to be used as mere instruments to carry out Marxist-Leninist goals. The legality of actions was determined by the political leadership.

The SED also declared the traditional administrative division of East Germany into five *Länder* an obstacle to "efficient" governance. The five *Länder*, all grown out of long historical traditions, were abolished and fourteen administrative districts established. This measure gave the central government in East Berlin much greater control over the activities in these districts, which were now much smaller, and, equally important, allowed it to break with another aspect of Germany's despised bourgeois history.

Planned Economy

In the GDR, as in the other new "people's republics," the authorities' goal of abolishing private property and every trace of capitalism was to be implemented in several steps. By taking possession of all resources, as well as of the means of production and distribution, the socialist state hoped to be able to compete successfully with the capitalist West and finally demonstrate the superiority of the socialist system.

Patterned on the Soviet model, the East German economy was transformed into a state-controlled, centrally planned production and distribution system by 1948. Beginning in 1945, large tracts of real estate and factories were taken over by the state under reform programs for agriculture and industry. After the foundation of the GDR, these reforms were pursued with vigor. In 1949 the new state became a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), which included all other Soviet satellite states and had been created in order to coordinate economic planning in socialist states worldwide.

The concept of multiyear plans was introduced with the First Five-Year Plan of 1951. It was intended to make up war losses and also make possible reparations payments to the Soviet

Union. For this purpose, heavy industry was built up on a large scale. Production goals could not be reached, however, because of a chronic shortage of raw materials. The manufacture of consumer products was neglected completely.

The Second Five-Year Plan, started in 1956, aimed to complete the nationalization of all industrial concerns and the collectivization of agricultural enterprises. By the early 1960s, *Kombinate* (collective farms) accounted for about 90 percent of all farm production. Private farmers who resisted collectivization were arrested.

When production began to decline in the early 1960s, the SED introduced the so-called New Economic System of decentralized planning, which delegated some production decisions previously the prerogative of the central planning authorities to the Association of Publicly Owned Enterprises (Vereinigung Volkseigener Betriebe—VVB). The VVB was to foster specialized production within individual branches of industry, including the previously neglected production of consumer goods. Production declined even further, however, and it became increasingly evident to many East Germans that their "planned economy" had lost the economic battle with the capitalist West.

The Warsaw Pact and the National People's Army

The Warsaw Pact, which included the Soviet Union and all its satellite states in Eastern Europe, was created on May 14, 1955, just days after the FRG joined NATO. Like NATO, its Western counterpart, the Warsaw Pact guaranteed mutual military assistance to its members in the event of an attack and coordination of all member forces in a unified command. The existence of this command, which was situated in Moscow, allowed the Soviet Union to station troops on its allies' territories. Each member state was also obligated to establish its own armed forces. In the GDR, the People's Police (Volkspolizei, or Vopo) had created paramilitary units in 1952. The Soviet Union had unofficially helped form East German naval and air force units beginning in 1950.

On March 1, 1956, the National People's Army (Nationale Volksarmee—NVA) was officially created by transferring the existing paramilitary units of the People's Police to the NVA. The new army was officially under the leadership of the SED and under the direction of the newly created Ministry for National Defense. Initially, the NVA was to be staffed by volunteers only, but in 1962, when recruitment presented increasing difficulties for the SED and its support organizations, conscription was introduced. Before the construction of the Berlin Wall, conscription had been seen as impossible to enforce.

As early as the 1950s, the NVA became the most effective and best-equipped fighting force in the Warsaw Pact aside from the Soviet army. By the early 1980s, the NVA had an active strength of 167,000, of which approximately 60,000 were professional soldiers; there were approximately 3 million reservists. Most weapons were of Soviet origin.

The Berlin Wall

Besides its increasing economic difficulties, by the end of the 1950s the GDR encountered another problem that began to threaten its existence: large numbers of people were leaving East Germany for the West. Nearly half of those who fled the GDR were under twenty-five years of age. Although crossing the border between the two German states had become dangerous after new security measures were introduced in the early 1950s and severe penalties for the crime of "flight from the republic" (*Republikflucht*) were introduced by GDR authorities in 1957, a relatively safe escape route remained via West Berlin, which could be reached from East Berlin using the city's public transportation network. Once in West Berlin, refugees were registered and then transported to the FRG by air.

Alarmed by the continuous population drain, the East German Politburo ordered the erection of a wall along the border between West Berlin and East Berlin. On Sunday morning, August 13, 1961, workers began building a three-meter-high concrete wall along the border of the Soviet sector of the city. Within a few hours, public transportation lines were cut, and West Berlin was sealed off from East Germany. Chancellor Adenauer and West Berlin's governing mayor, Willy Brandt, sought to calm the outraged West Berliners. The Western Allies did not react with force because they were unwilling to endanger world peace. Up to that date, nearly 3.5 million had left the GDR for West Germany. After the building of the wall, the stream of refugees decreased to a mere trickle.

Despite the construction of the Berlin Wall, many East Germans still tried to escape. Several hundred of those attempting to leave the GDR were killed; others were captured, perhaps after being wounded by automatic guns or mines along the border, and sentenced to long prison terms. With the sealing off of East Berlin, the East German regime had solved the refugee situation.

The "Socialist State of the German Nation"

The building of the Wall effectively halted large-scale emigration from the GDR. Although the SED failed to gain the active support of the majority of the population, young people, especially, began to tolerate the regime, at least passively. In the absence of any alternatives, they fulfilled their routine duties in youth organizations, schools, and workplaces. By the mid-1960s, the regime could afford to lessen internal pressures on its citizens, who, encouraged by increased production of consumer goods, had largely given up their open resentment against the SED and had turned their attention to improving their standard of living.

Ulbricht's state visit to Egypt in 1965 ended the GDR's political isolation. A previously unknown pride in East German achievements and a feeling of distinct GDR identity began to develop, first among ruling party functionaries and then gradually among segments of the population. In 1967 the GDR leadership, encouraged by these developments, attempted to gain official recognition of its autonomy from the FRG. When the FRG refused to grant recognition, the GDR government proclaimed a separate GDR citizenship and introduced a visa requirement for West Germans traveling to West Berlin and to the GDR. With these measures, the GDR began to practice a policy of new assertiveness and ideological delimitation (*Abgrenzung*) in response to the FRG's policy of recognizing only one German citizenship.

Membership in the UN was a primary foreign policy goal of the GDR in the late 1960s. A veto by the Western powers in the UN Security Council blocked the GDR's bid, however. The GDR did gain admission to the International Olympic Committee, which permitted East German athletes to participate in the Olympic games as a separate team. For the GDR, however, the ultimate breakthrough in the area of foreign policy—a treaty with the FRG—came only after international political tensions began to ease under the new spirit of détente.

Following the conclusion of the Treaty of Moscow between the FRG and the Soviet Union in January 1970, a new era of communication began between the two German states that culminated in the signing of the Basic Treaty in December 1972. The next year, both states became members of the UN, and most countries came to recognize the GDR. Permanent diplomatic representations, in lieu of embassies, were established, respectively, by the FRG in East Berlin and by the GDR in Bonn, demonstrating the new climate of mutual respect and cooperation between the two German states.

In this new setting, there was no longer room for Walter Ulbricht, who had maintained a policy of confrontation with the West for many years. The Soviet Union, which had demonstrated considerably more flexibility than the GDR leadership during its negotiations with the FRG, was also irritated by the failure of Ulbricht's economic program and by his attempts to demonstrate ideological independence by adhering to conservative Marxist principles. In 1971 the Soviet authorities ordered that Ulbricht be relieved of power. His replacement was Erich Honecker, who, as secretary of the Central Committee of the SED for security matters, had been directly responsible for the building of the Berlin Wall.

The Social Democratic-Free Democratic Coalition, 1969–82

In the West German Bundestag elections of September 1969, the CDU/CSU remained the largest political group, holding eighteen more seats than the SPD. With the help of the FDP, which had earlier supported the candidacy of the SPD minister of justice Gustav Heinemann for the federal presidency, Willy Brandt was able to form an SPD-FDP coalition government, with himself as federal chancellor. The SPD-FDP coalition lasted until late 1982 and was noted for its accomplishments in the area of foreign policy. The formation of this new coalition forced the CDU/CSU into opposition for the first time in the history of West Germany.

Willy Brandt

Willy Brandt became the first democratically elected Social Democrat to hold the chancellorship. Born in Lübeck in 1913, Brandt first joined the SPD in 1930 and later joined a smaller leftist grouping, the Socialist Workers Party (Sozialistiche Arbeiterpartei—SAP). After Hitler came to power, Brandt emigrated to Norway, where he became a citizen and worked as a journalist. After Germany occupied Norway in 1940, he fled to Sweden. Brandt returned to Germany after the war as a news correspondent and later as a Norwegian diplomat in Berlin.

After he had again assumed German citizenship, Brandt rejoined the SPD in 1947. He became mayor of Berlin in 1957 and was the SPD candidate for the chancellorship in 1961. In the late 1950s, Brandt was a principal architect of the SPD's rejection of its Marxist past and adoption of the Bad Godesburg Program, in which the party accepted the free-market principle. The triumph of the CDU/CSU in the 1957 national elections and widespread and increasing prosperity made such a step necessary if the SPD were to win the electorate's favor. In 1964 Brandt became the chairman of the SPD. From 1966 to 1969, he served as minister for foreign affairs and vice chancellor in the Grand Coalition.

When Brandt became chancellor in 1969, he proposed a new policy toward the communist states of Eastern Europe; this policy later became known as Ostpolitik (policy toward the East). In recognition of his efforts toward détente in Europe, he received the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1971. In the early 1970s, Brandt also engineered a package of treaties that normalized the FRG's relations with the Soviet Union and with Poland, the GDR, and other Soviet-bloc nations. He successfully withstood a vote of no-confidence in the Bundestag in April 1972 and won the Bundestag elections in November 1972 with an impressive relative majority of nearly 45 percent. Brandt resigned in May 1974, shocked by the discovery that one of his personal assistants, Günter Guillaume, was a spy for the GDR.

In domestic policy, Brandt and his FDP coalition partners initiated legal reforms, including the passage of more liberal laws regarding divorce and abortion, the latter reform generating intense public discussion. Education reforms calling for new types of schools and for overhauling administration of the universities were only partially carried out. Brandt and his coalition partners were more successful in realizing their foreign policy goals than in achieving their domestic aims.

Ostpolitik

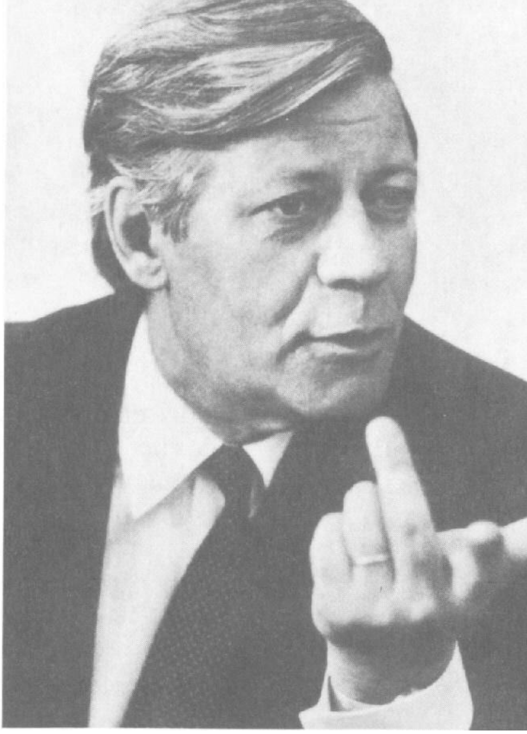
West Germany's relations with the East European states had virtually stagnated since the establishment of the Hallstein Doctrine in the mid-1950s. In 1970, in an attempt to lessen tensions in Europe, Brandt and his FDP minister for foreign affairs, Walter Scheel, agreed to negotiate with the communist bloc. For the first time since 1948, the top politicians of the FRG and the GDR held talks, with Brandt and the East German prime minister, Willi Stoph, meeting in Erfurt in East Germany and Kassel in West Germany. Although the talks produced no concrete results because Brandt refused to recognize the GDR as a sovereign state, communication lines were reopened.

After coordinating policy goals with the United States, the FRG also entered negotiations with the Soviet Union on a treaty normalizing relations, in which both countries renounced the use of force. The FRG agreed to make no territorial claims, and it recognized de facto the Oder-Neisse border and the border between the FRG and the GDR. FRG negotiators, however, insisted that such agreements did not alter the West German position on future reunification of the country and that the responsibilities of the Four Powers in Germany remained unchanged by the treaty. They also linked the signing of the treaty to a Soviet promise to open talks on normalizing the Berlin situation. After the Soviet Union had agreed to these conditions, the Treaty of Moscow was signed in August 1970. The agreement opened the road to negotiations with other countries of the Soviet bloc.

In December 1970, after ten months of complicated negotiations, the FRG and Poland signed the Treaty of Warsaw. The treaty contained essentially the same points as the Treaty of Moscow on the question of Poland's western border, the renunciation of territorial claims by the FRG, and the ongoing responsibilities of the Four Powers. In return, Poland agreed to allow ethnic Germans still in Poland to emigrate to the FRG. During the subsequent debates on the ratification of the two treaties, the CDU/CSU and part of the FDP made their consent contingent on the formulation of a strong statement by the Bundestag underscoring Germany's right to reunification in self-determination and of the Allies' responsibilities for Germany and Berlin.

Concurrent with the negotiations on the treaties of Moscow and Warsaw, the Four Powers undertook to end disagreement about the status of Berlin in talks that ultimately led to the Four Power Agreement (also known as the Quadripartite Agreement) of September 1971. The talks, which began in March 1970, got off to a difficult start because the Western Allies and the Soviet Union were deeply divided over their basic interpretation of the "status of Berlin." After they "agreed to disagree" on this point, progress was finally made, and all sides concurred that the status quo of Berlin should not be changed unilaterally.

Willy Brandt, federal chancellor, 1969–74
Courtesy German Information Center, New York



Helmut Schmidt, federal chancellor, 1974–82
Courtesy German Information Center, New York

The Soviet Union made two very important concessions: traffic to and from West Berlin would be unimpeded in the future, and the existing ties of West Berlin to the FRG were given de facto recognition. Soviet officials, however, insisted that West Berlin was not to be considered a territory belonging to the FRG and therefore was not to be governed by it. Furthermore, the Soviet Union made the conclusion of the agreement among the Four Powers contingent on the signing of the Treaty of Moscow between the FRG and the Soviet Union, which was still under negotiation. They thereby established the same linkage that the FRG had demanded, but in reverse.

The Four Power Agreement charged the governments of West Berlin and the GDR with negotiating an accord that would regulate access to and from West Berlin from the FRG and secure the right of West Berliners to visit East Berlin and the GDR. The Transit Agreement of May 1972 arranged these matters and also secured the rights of GDR citizens to visit the FRG, but only in cases of family emergency.

Following the negotiations on traffic between the FRG and the GDR, both sides recognized the feasibility of arriving at a more comprehensive treaty between the two German states. Talks began in August 1972 and culminated in December 1972 with the signing of the Basic Treaty. In the treaty, both states committed themselves to developing normal relations on the basis of equality, guaranteeing their mutual territorial integrity as well as the border between them, and recognizing each other's independence and sovereignty. They also agreed to the exchange of "permanent missions" in Bonn and East Berlin to further relations.

After the bitterly contested approval of the Basic Treaty by the SPD-FDP-controlled Bundestag in May 1973, a political decision that the CDU/CSU had warned against for decades became a reality: West Germany's de facto recognition of East Germany as a separate state. To many conservatives, the Basic Treaty represented the failure of the Hallstein Doctrine and a final blow to the possibility of Germany's reunification. Bavaria filed a suit in the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe to prevent the treaty's implementation, but the court held the treaty to be compatible with the provisions of the Basic Law. As a result of the treaty, the FRG and the GDR became members of the UN in June 1973.

Among the states to the east, Czechoslovakia remained the only neighbor with which West Germany had not yet normalized diplomatic relations. Negotiations with this country proved to be considerably more difficult than those with the Soviet Union or Poland. The main obstacle was a difference in interpreting the Munich Agreement of September 1938. On the one hand, the FRG maintained that the accord itself had to be considered legally valid but that the occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 had voided its provisions. Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, insisted that the accord be considered void from the very beginning. Both sides finally agreed that the accord was to be considered void, but that all legal proceedings in the occupied territory between 1938 and 1945 were to be upheld. Once this basic understanding had been reached, the treaty with Czechoslovakia, known as the Treaty of Prague, similar in content to the Treaty of Warsaw, was signed in December 1973, and diplomatic relations were established. Shortly thereafter, West Germany exchanged ambassadors with Hungary and Bulgaria.

Helmut Schmidt

Following Brandt's resignation in May 1974, the SPD-FDP coalition partners unanimously agreed that Minister of Finance Helmut Schmidt should head the new government. At fifty-five, Schmidt became the youngest chancellor of the FRG. Born in Hamburg in 1918, he served as an officer in World War II. After the war, he joined the SPD and served in Hamburg's municipal government, where he acquired a national reputation as a top-notch manager because of his competence in dealing with a severe flood in 1962. He was the SPD faction leader in the Bundestag and minister of defense in the first SPD-FDP cabinet. Schmidt gradually became recognized at home and abroad as a pragmatic politician and an expert in economic and defense matters. His first cabinet included the FDP's Hans-Dietrich Genscher as minister of foreign affairs. Genscher replaced Walter Scheel, who had been elected federal president in 1974.

Schmidt was confronted with a number of serious problems. The economic turbulence caused by the oil crisis of 1973 had affected the FRG, and a ban on the use of automobiles on Sundays had been introduced to preserve scarce fuel reserves. Perhaps as a result of the crisis, Germans began to recognize limitations to economic growth and simultaneously to become aware of ecological dangers to the environment inherent in their lifestyle. As a result, environmental movements sprang up throughout the FRG.

Worries about the environment and about long-term economic growth became widespread in the next few years, and the almost limitless optimism of the postwar period began to give way to a mood of uncertainty about the future. Unemployment was also on the rise, and labor unions, traditionally reliable allies of the SPD, began to depart from their position of solidarity with the SPD-FDP government. In this increasingly difficult economic and political environment, Schmidt tried to steer a steady course, one often too conservative for his party and from which necessary support was at times lacking.

The Student Movement and Terrorism

In addition to troubling economic and environmental problems for which no easy solutions were available, West Germany and its politicians had to contend with two new sources of social unrest: the student movement of the late 1960s and early

1970s, and left-wing terrorism, which originated in the late 1960s, but which had its greatest impact in the 1970s.

Inspired by the student movement in the United States and by the international movement opposing the war in Vietnam, as well as by rising opposition to the traditional administration of German universities, students organized protest movements at a number of German universities in the late 1960s. Sit-ins, disruption of lectures, and attacks against buildings housing major publishing companies, such as the Axel Springer Group, were staged by a minority of student groups, primarily those with Marxist ties. Protesters claimed that an "extra-parliamentary opposition" was needed to ensure representation of the people in a state that was governed largely by two major parties. The student protest movement had little support among the population, however, and was finally absorbed by the established parties.

Terrorism was also a concern during this period (see Dissidence and Terrorist Activity, ch. 9). A few radical student elements sought to realize their aims through political terrorism. Small groups launched violent attacks against "symbols of capitalism." They fire-bombed department stores in several cities, broke into police stations, robbed banks, and attacked United States military installations.

One terrorist group, notorious for its brutality, became known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang, named after its leaders, Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof. Calling themselves the Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Fraktion—RAF), their aim was to assassinate the "levers of the imperialist power structure," thereby provoking the state to abandon lawful methods of fighting terrorism. The arrest and imprisonment in 1972 of the main RAF leaders led to an intensification of terrorist acts by the group, which culminated in 1977 in the kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schleyer, the president of the Federation of German Employers' Associations (Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände—BDA) and in the hijacking six weeks later of a Lufthansa passenger airplane to Mogadishu, Somalia.

The aim of both these terrorist actions was the release of Baader and the other RAF prisoners. In a spectacular rescue action, the Lufthansa airplane was stormed by a special unit of the West German Federal Border Force, ending a five-day odyssey through the Middle East. Failing in their coup, Baader and three other RAF leaders committed suicide in their prison cells, and Schleyer was subsequently murdered by his kidnappers. The police had been successful in discovering hideouts, strategy papers, and caches of weapons, however, which led to the severe weakening of the organization of the RAF.

Nevertheless, supported by various international terrorist groups, including the GDR's Stasi, the RAF maintained a small network committed to assassinating prominent public figures. In 1989 they were responsible for the murder of Alfred Herrhausen, a top executive of the Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt, and in 1991 for the murder of Detlev Karsten Rohwedder, president of the Treuhandanstalt, the agency that managed the privatization of property in the former GDR (see Unification and Its Aftermath, ch. 5).

The Greens

In the aftermath of the oil crisis of 1973, regional political groups concerned with environmental issues began to put up candidates in communal and regional elections. In 1980 a number of ecological groups, alternative action movements, and various women's rights organizations banded together on the national level to form the political party that came to be called the Greens (Die Grünen).

Although the political views of the various groups in the new party were widely diverse, all agreed that the continuous expansion of the economy was detrimental to the environment and that disarmament was imperative if mankind were to survive. The Greens' support for radical peace movements and their demand that the FRG withdraw from NATO prevented many West Germans from taking the Greens seriously as a political force. In the Bundestag elections of 1980, they could muster only 1.5 percent of the vote, not enough to win any parliamentary seats. In the 1983 elections, however, they broke the 5 percent barrier and won twenty-seven seats in the Bundestag.

Differing ideological orientations within the Greens soon began to undermine the party's effectiveness in the political process. Two different factions emerged: the dogmatic fundamentalists (Fundis), who were unwilling to make any compromises on policy in order to win political allies; and the realists (Realos), who were ready to enter into a coalition with the SPD on the communal and *Land* level in order to put environmentalist ideas into practice.

Another cause of disagreement within the party organization of the Greens was the principle of rotation of seats in the

Bundestag and in *Land* diets. This policy required deputies to give up their seats after only half a term so that other Green candidates would have an opportunity to participate in the political process. As a result, experienced representatives who understood the workings of parliament were forced to relinquish their seats and were relegated to subordinate work in the party. Such unrealistic policies persuaded numerous talented Green politicians to withdraw from active politics, or to leave the party altogether. In 1984 a party leadership consisting only of women was elected, giving the Greens an image of practicing reverse discrimination.

Although the Realos among the Greens subsequently participated in *Land* governments as cabinet members, the party remained on the periphery of politics during the remainder of the 1980s (see The Greens, ch. 7). Nevertheless, the Greens positively influenced the views of the traditional political parties concerning the ecology and the preservation of natural resources.

The Christian Democratic/Christian Socialist-Free Democratic Coalition, 1983–

The SPD-FDP coalition formed in 1969 became increasingly strained in the early 1980s, leading to concerns among the FDP leadership about its stability. The SPD had become deeply divided because many of its members found Chancellor Schmidt's policies too conservative. Particularly troublesome was his position on NATO's Dual-Track Decision, which required the stationing of new missiles in West Germany if Soviet missiles were not withdrawn. FDP chairman Genscher feared that Schmidt would lose the backing of the SPD as its left wing became more influential. As a result of these fears, Genscher began to urge a change in the political constellation governing West Germany and the formation of a coalition with the CDU/CSU.

The SPD-FDP coalition broke apart in September 1982 when the FDP minister of economics, Otto Lambsdorff, advocated cutting social welfare expenditures. Schmidt countered by threatening to fire Lambsdorff. The threat prompted the resignation of all FDP cabinet members. Schmidt presided over a minority government for a few days until the FDP, together with the CDU/CSU, raised a constructive vote of no-confidence against the government. Schmidt lost the vote, and Helmut Kohl, head of the CDU, formed a new coalition government composed of the CDU, its sister party the CSU, and the FDP. Kohl himself became chancellor on October 1, 1982.

Born in 1930 in Ludwigshafen in the heavily Roman Catholic and conservative Rhineland-Palatinate, Kohl was a founding member and leader of the CDU youth organization in his hometown. He served as minister president of the Rhineland-Palatinate from 1969 to 1976, and in the 1976 national elections he ran unsuccessfully against SPD candidate Chancellor Schmidt for the office of chancellor.

In the 1980 national elections, Franz Josef Strauss was the CDU/CSU candidate for chancellor. Strauss, Bavaria's minister president and head of the CSU, was one of Germany's most influential and colorful politicians. He believed the CDU/CSU could come to power in Bonn without the help of the FDP. After Strauss lost the elections and Schmidt remained chancellor, however, Kohl began to steer toward an eventual coalition with the FDP because he did not think that conservatives could win an absolute majority at the national level.

New elections for the Bundestag were held in 1983, several months after Kohl had assumed the chancellorship. The results gave Kohl's government a clear majority and confirmed him as chancellor. Throughout his career, Kohl demonstrated a strong determination, extraordinary political skills, and a keen sense for the political will of the German people. His key role in the German reunification process has deservedly earned him a position of distinction in German history.

In the first half of the 1980s, West German politics were dominated by the heated discussion of NATO's Dual-Track Decision. The peace movement mounted numerous demonstrations to protest the possible stationing of United States missiles in West Germany should the Soviet Union not remove its newly stationed SS–20 missiles from Eastern Europe.

In the mid-1970s, the Soviet Union had decided to modernize its intermediate-range missile arsenal by the introduction and stationing of the advanced ground-based SS–20 systems. With a range of approximately 5,000 kilometers, the SS–20 was capable of delivering a 150-kiloton nuclear warhead within a target radius of 400 meters—a capability that could not be matched by any NATO weapon. It was clear that the missile's target area was Central Europe. Chancellor Schmidt had been among the first to warn of the danger posed by this new Soviet weapon system. The United States reacted quickly by developing two new weapon systems—the Pershing II intermediate-range rocket and the cruise missile. Although the Pershing II possessed a considerably shorter range and a much smaller warhead than the SS–20, it was capable of hitting its potential target with almost absolute accuracy.

At the NATO conference of foreign and defense ministers held in December 1979, officials decided to deploy 108 Pershing II rockets and 464 cruise missiles in Europe by the end of 1983. They also agreed to enter negotiations as soon as possible with the Soviet Union on the stationing of medium-range missiles in Europe. If Soviet missiles were withdrawn from Central Europe, United States missiles would not be positioned in West Germany. The United States-Soviet Union talks began in Geneva in November 1981 and continued for two years, but without achieving results.

NATO's Dual-Track Decision met with mounting opposition from the West German and European peace movement, and numerous rallies were held in the early 1980s. In the fall of 1983, protest demonstrations throughout the FRG were aimed at influencing the imminent decision of the Bundestag on deployment. Demonstrators feared that if missiles were stationed on German soil, the German population would be wiped out in the event of a possible nuclear exchange, while the Soviet Union would remain unaffected. With time, however, the peace movement became increasingly divided, and after 1983 it began to have less influence on public opinion. Most West Germans saw the Soviet Union as responsible for the escalation of the arms race by their deployment of the SS–20 and, in addition, mistrusted the Soviet Union's apparently keen interest in the peace movement in Western Europe.

Chancellor Kohl and his new government were determined to stand by West Germany's commitment to its NATO partners. After a lengthy debate in the Bundestag, the CDU/CSU-FDP majority coalition voted for deployment, with the SPD and the Greens opposing. Stationing of the missiles began immediately, and the Soviet Union withdrew from the Geneva negotiations. By the mid-1980s, as international tensions began to ease, public attention turned to new prospects for détente between West and East.

The Honecker Era, 1971–89

Ulbricht's successor in East Germany was Erich Honecker.

Born in 1913 in the Saarland, Honecker joined the Communist Party of Germany (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands—KPD) in 1929. As a full-time functionary of the party, he continued his work in the underground movement after Hitler came to power in 1933 and until arrested by the Nazis in 1935. Imprisoned until the end of World War II, Honecker resumed his career in 1945 as a leading KPD functionary, becoming Ulbricht's assistant on the latter's return to Germany from the Soviet Union in 1945. From 1946 to 1955, Honecker served as chairman of the youth organization, the Free German Youth (Freie Deutsche Jugend—FDJ). He became a member of the SED Politburo in 1958. As secretary for security matters of the SED Central Committee, Honecker was directly responsible for the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. When Ulbricht was removed from power in 1971, Honecker succeeded him in his party functions and became chief of the SED. Honecker was head of state of the GDR from 1976 until his resignation in 1989. After his fall from power, Honecker found refuge in the Embassy of Chile in Moscow until his extradition to Berlin in 1992, where he was brought to trial. He was released from custody in 1993 for health reasons and went to Chile, where he died in 1994. Although less rigid than Ulbricht, as evidenced by his willingness to sign agreements with the West that opened the GDR somewhat and made the lives of its citizens easier, Honecker remained a convinced communist until his death.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

Keen to gain international recognition of its sphere of interest and believing that such recognition would solidify its grip on its East European satellite states, the Soviet Union, beginning in the early 1970s, sponsored an initiative calling for the convening of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE—see Glossary). For the West, such meetings meant the possibility of tying the Soviet Union and its satellites to an international security system, thereby lessening tensions, furthering economic cooperation, and obtaining humanitarian improvements for the people of Eastern Europe. The first of the series of conferences opened in July 1973 in Helsinki and was attended by the foreign ministers of the thirty-five member states. At the conference's final meeting in 1975, the heads of state of all member countries were in attendance for the signing of the Final Act, or the Helsinki Accords.

As subsequent CSCE conferences showed, Soviet officials had totally underestimated the effect of the provisions for the exchange of information, which allowed for the unscrambled reception of Western media broadcasts within the geographic area of the Warsaw Pact countries. East Germans benefited especially from access to West German radio and television programs, which furnished previously unobtainable news about world events. Television viewers in the East also became aware of an obviously far superior standard of living in the West and developed a new awareness of the deficiencies of the communist regime, an awareness that fifteen years later led to the events that brought down that regime.

The New East German Constitution and the Question of Identity

Although the GDR had finally achieved its goal of international recognition with the signing of the Basic Treaty in December 1972, renewed concerns about the stability and identity of the GDR as a second German state drove the SED Politburo toward a policy of reaffirming the socialist nature of the state. As early as 1971, Honecker had launched a campaign to foster a socialist identity among East Germans and to counter West German emphasis on the historical unity of the German nation. In 1974 the GDR constitution was even amended to increase a sense of separate development. All references in the document to the "German nation" and to German national heritage were deleted.

The SED had long revised German history to make it conform to socialist purposes. Symbols of Prussian heritage in Berlin, such as the equestrian statue of Prussian king Frederick the Great, had been removed. And in 1950, Ulbricht had ordered the 500-year-old palace of the Hohenzollern Dynasty demolished because it was a symbol of "feudal repression."

Just as the SED was striving to develop a separate GDR consciousness and loyalty, however, the new access to Western media, arranged by the CSCE process and formalized in the Helsinki Accords of 1975, was engendering a growing enthusiasm among East Germans for West Germany's Ostpolitik. Honecker sought to counter this development by devising a new formula: "citizenship, GDR; nationality, German." After the SED's Ninth Party Congress in May 1976, Honecker went one step further: figures of Prussian history, such as the reformers Karl vom Stein, Karl August von Hardenberg, Gerhard von Scharnhorst, and the founder of Berlin University, Wilhelm von Humboldt, were rehabilitated and claimed as historical ancestors of the GDR. Frederick the Great and Otto von Bismarck were also restored to prominence. Even Martin Luther was judged a worthy historical figure who needed to be understood within the context of his times.

These concessions did not alter the regime's harsh policy toward dissidents, however. Primary targets were artists and writers who advocated reforms and democratization, including Wolf Biermann, a poet-singer popular among East German youth who was expelled from the GDR in 1976. A wave of persecution of other dissident intellectuals followed. Some were imprisoned; others were deported to West Germany. Nonetheless, political statements by East German intellectuals, some going so far as to advocate reunification, continued to appear anonymously in the West German press.

Relations Between the Two Germanys

Although Honecker pursued a tough policy against internal dissidents and carefully guarded the GDR's unique identity as the state in which the old Marxist dream of socialism had become a reality, he was keenly aware of the necessity for communication and reasonable working relations with the FRG. His dream of being received at the White House as a guest of state by United States president Ronald Reagan was never realized, but Honecker opened more lines of communication to Western politicians than had his predecessors.

As a consequence of the Helsinki Accords, the reception of Western news media broadcasts was tacitly allowed in the GDR. In the early 1980s, it also became possible for citizens of the GDR who were not yet pensioners to visit relatives in the West in cases involving urgent family matters. Under a new regulation, refugees who had gone to the West before 1981 and had therefore automatically lost their GDR citizenship could now enter the GDR with their West German passport. These measures benefited East Germans and, together with access to Western television, helped to create a new relaxed atmosphere in the GDR.

On the economic side, the GDR fully utilized the advantages of the Interzone Trading Agreement, which allowed special consideration for the export of goods from the GDR to the FRG and other EC member states, as well as the import of vital industrial products from the West. Diplomatic relations with the EC were established in 1988, a reversal of the former policy that saw the organization as a threat to the GDR's sovereignty. The annual Leipzig Industrial Fair also provided a convenient forum for meeting Western politicians and industrialists.

The severe shortage of Western currency in the GDR, one of the key concerns of the SED leadership, was alleviated by agreements with the FRG that tripled the bulk contributions to the East German postal administration by the FRG. Similar agreements, financially advantageous to the GDR, improved the highway links to West Berlin. More significant, however, was the granting of bank credits amounting to DM2 billion to the GDR during 1983 and 1984. The CSU leader and minister president of Bavaria, Franz Josef Strauss, was the principal negotiator of these credit agreements.

At first, the credits appeared to yield positive results along the inner-German border, where mines and automatic guns, which had so long posed a deadly threat to East Germans attempting to flee to the FRG, were dismantled. Later, however, it became clear that these devices had been replaced by nearly impenetrable electronic warning systems and with trained dogs at certain sectors along the border. The order to shoot at refugees was not rescinded but remained in effect almost until the end of the GDR regime. Also remaining in effect were strict controls for West German citizens at GDR border crossings and on transit routes to and from West Berlin, although there were no further reports of people being abused at border checkpoints.

However much relations improved between the two states in some areas, the stance of the SED leadership toward the FRG's NATO membership remained hostile. Harsh attacks in the East German press labeling the FRG as an "American missile launcher" became more frequent during the debates on the stationing of Pershing II and cruise missiles. On occasion, high-level official visits were canceled to signal the GDR's opposition to Western military policies. The FRG responded in kind. For example, Federal President Karl Carstens (1979–84) did not attend as planned the East German celebrations on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther in 1983.

In October 1987, when the two superpowers were striving for détente and disarmament and the relations between the two Germanys were cordial, Honecker visited Bonn as the GDR head of state. The visit, postponed several times, was in

Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl (1982–), right, at a meeting in Bonn in 1987 with Erich Honecker, leader of East Germany, 1971–89
Courtesy German Information Center, New York

response to Chancellor Schmidt's visit to East Germany in 1981. Honecker was in the West German capital for an "official working meeting." He signed agreements for cooperation in the areas of science and technology, as well as environmental protection. Honecker's statement that the border dividing the two Germanys would one day be seen as a line "connecting" the two states, similar to the border between the GDR and Poland, attracted thoughtful public attention in the West. Honecker was cordially received by members of the government, in the words of Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker (1984–94), as a "German among Germans." However, at various stages of the visit—which subsequently took him to several federal states, including his native Saarland—large numbers of demonstrators chanted, "The wall must go."

The East German media coverage of the visit provided the opportunity for Chancellor Kohl to speak to "all the people in Germany" and to call for the breaking down of barriers "in accordance with the wishes of the German people." Although the visit yielded no immediate concrete results and Honecker's hopes of increased political recognition for the GDR were not realized, a dialogue had begun that could make the division of Germany more bearable for the people involved. As of late 1987, however, there was still little hope of overcoming the division itself.

The Peace Movement and Internal Resistance

The GDR leadership welcomed protests against weapons and war as long as they occurred in the FRG. However, when a small group of East German pacifists advocating the conversion of "swords into plowshares" demonstrated in 1981 against the presence of Soviet missiles on GDR soil, as well as against the destruction of the environment by the dumping of industrial waste and the use of nuclear power generally, they were arrested, prosecuted, and in some cases expelled from the GDR. Church organizations in the GDR—considered subversive by their mere existence—and individual pastors who protected and defended demonstrators at risk to their own safety became targets of increased surveillance by the Stasi, as did individual churchgoers, who by 1988 were frequently arrested and interrogated.

The mounting nervousness of the GDR leadership became evident in June 1987 when large crowds of East Berlin youth gathered on their side of the Wall, along with young people from all over the GDR, to hear two rock concerts being held in West Berlin near the Reichstag building. When the crowd broke into frenzied cries for freedom and unification, police cleared the area, arresting and forcibly removing Western news reporters filming the incident.

In the local elections of May 17, 1989, the "united list" led by the SED received 98.9 percent of the vote, obviously the result of massive manipulation, which enraged large segments of the population who had previously remained silent. In the next months, persistent public complaints against the prevailing living conditions and lack of basic freedoms, voiced by church groups and by opposition groups, inspired the population to take to the streets in large numbers. The largest of the new opposition groups was the New Forum, founded in September 1989 by Bärbel Bohley, Jens Reich, and others.

During the fall of 1989, mass demonstrations of several hundred thousand people were taking place, first in what soon became traditional Monday demonstrations in Leipzig and later in Berlin and other large cities. For the first time, GDR rulers realized that they were losing control: the demonstrations were too massive to be quelled by intimidation or even mass arrests; and shooting at the demonstrators was out of the question because of the sheer size of the crowds and the absence of Soviet support for draconian measures.

Beginning in the summer of 1989, the regime was threatened by another development. Among the thousands of GDR citizens that traveled by car on "vacation" to the socialist "brother country" Hungary, some 600 were successful in crossing illegally into Austria, where they were enthusiastically welcomed before traveling on to the FRG. Others wanting to escape the GDR took refuge in the embassies of the FRG in Budapest, Prague, and Warsaw. On September 11, Hungary legalized travel over the border to Austria for GDR citizens heading for the FRG, enabling 15,000 to take this route within a few days. Eventually, the GDR leadership was forced to allow special trains to carry thousands of GDR refugees who had received permission to emigrate to the West after taking sanctuary in the FRG's embassies in Prague and Warsaw. As the trains traveled through the GDR, many more refugees tried to climb aboard, so the government refused to further allow such transports.

The Last Days of East Germany

In January 1988, Honecker paid a state visit to France. By all indications, the long stretch of international isolation appeared to have been successfully overcome. The GDR finally seemed to be taking its long-sought place among the international community of nations. In the minds of the GDR's old-guard communists, the long-awaited international political recognition was seen as a favorable omen that seemed to coincide symbolically with the fortieth anniversary of the East German state.

In spite of Honecker's declaration as late as January 1989 that "The Wall will still stand in fifty and also in a hundred years," the effects of *glasnost* and *perestroika* had begun to be evident in the Soviet Union and throughout Eastern Europe.

Although the GDR leadership tried to deny the reality of these developments, for most East Germans the reforms of Soviet leader Gorbachev were symbols of a new era that would inevitably also reach the GDR. The GDR leadership's frantic attempts to block the news coming out of the Soviet Union by preventing the distribution of Russian newsmagazines only strengthened growing protest within the population.

In Berlin, on October 7, the GDR leadership celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the East German state. In his address, Honecker sharply condemned the FRG for interfering in the GDR's internal affairs and for encouraging protesters. Still convinced of his mission to secure the survival of the GDR as a state, he proclaimed: "Socialism will be halted in its course neither by ox, nor ass." The prophetic retort by Gorbachev, honored guest at the celebrations, as quoted to the international press, more accurately reflected imminent realities: "He who comes too late will suffer the consequences of history."

The consequences of not having held in check the earlier large demonstrations against the regime's inflexibility came two days later when 70,000 protesters shouting "We are the people" demonstrated in Leipzig. When the police took no action during these historic hours of October 9, 1989, it became clear to everyone that the days of the GDR were numbered. After the crowds in Leipzig reached over 100,000 protesters on October 16, the Central Committee of the SED—previously kept in the background by Honecker and his comrades in the party leadership—took control. Honecker resigned from his offices as head of state and party leader on October 18.

Egon Krenz, longtime member of the Politburo and FDJ chairman, became Honecker's successor as general secretary of the SED. On October 24, Krenz also assumed the chairmanship of the Council of State. On his orders, all police actions against demonstrators were discontinued. On November 4, the largest demonstration in GDR history took place, with over 1 million people in East Berlin demanding democracy and free elections. Confronted with this wave of popular opposition, the GDR government, under Prime Minister Willi Stoph, resigned on November 7. The Politburo followed suit on November 8. Finally, on the evening of November 9, Politburo member Günter Schabowski announced the opening of the border crossings into the FRG.

East Germans fleeing to West Germany in 1989
Courtesy German Information Center, New York

Opening of the Berlin Wall and Unification

November 9, 1989, will be remembered as one of the great moments of German history. On that day, the dreadful Berlin Wall, which for twenty-eight years had been the symbol of German division, cutting through the heart of the old capital city, was unexpectedly opened by GDR border police. In joyful disbelief, Germans from both sides climbed up on the Wall, which had been called "the ugliest edifice in the world." They embraced each other and sang and danced in the streets. Some began chiseling away chips of the Wall as if to have a personal hand in tearing it down, or at least to carry away a piece of German history. East Germans immediately began pouring into West Germany. Within a few days, over 1 million persons per day had seized the chance to see their western neighbor firsthand.

On November 13, Hans Modrow was elected minister president of the GDR. After Chancellor Kohl had presented his Ten-Point Plan for the step-by-step unification of Germany to the Bundestag on November 28, the Volkskammer struck the leadership role of the SED from the constitution of the GDR on December 1 (see Unification, ch. 8). The SED Politburo resigned on December 3, and Krenz stepped down as chairman of the Council of State on December 6. One day later, the Round Table talks started among the SED, the GDR's other political parties, and the opposition. On December 22, the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin was opened for pedestrian traffic.

During January 1990, negotiations at the Round Table continued. Free elections to the Volkskammer were scheduled for March 18. The conservative opposition, under CDU leadership, waged a joint campaign under the banner of the Alliance for Germany, consisting of the CDU, the German Social Union (Deutsche Soziale Union—DSU), a sister party of the CSU, and the Democratic Awakening (Demokratischer Aufbruch—DA). The elections on March 18 produced a clear majority for the Alliance for Germany. On April 12, a CDU politician, Lothar de Maizière, was elected the new minister president.

The unusually poor showing of the SPD in these final East German elections may be explained by the party's reluctance to support German unification and also by the fact that the public was aware of the close contacts that the SPD leadership had maintained with the SED over the years. The success of the conservative parties was repeated in the communal elections on May 6, which were seen as a correction to the manipulated vote of the previous year.

As a precondition for German unity, the Two-Plus-Four Talks among the two German governments and the four victorious powers of World War II began on May 5. Held in four sessions, the last of which was on September 12, the talks culminated in the signing of the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany (the Two-Plus-Four Treaty). These talks settled questions relating to the eastern border of Germany, the strength of Germany's military forces, and the schedule of Allied troop withdrawal from German soil.

During a visit to Moscow in early February, Chancellor Kohl had received assurances from Gorbachev that the Soviet Union would respect the wishes of both Germanys to unite. Kohl realized that in order to seize this historic opportunity for Germany, swift action and final determination were crucial. In a cordial meeting between Gorbachev and Chancellor Kohl on July 16, unified Germany's membership in NATO and its full sovereignty were conceded by the Soviet president.

The first concrete step toward unification was the monetary, economic, and social union of West Germany and East Germany on July 1, as had been agreed in May in a treaty between the two German states. The monetary union introduced the deutsche mark into East Germany. Although there had been concern about the GDR's precarious financial situation, the full extent of the disastrous consequences of forty years of communist rule only came to light in the summer of 1990. It was soon clear that the first massive aid package for the East German economy, comprising DM115 billion, was just the beginning of a long and expensive rebuilding of a country reduced to shambles by the SED.

Divided by futile discussions about the speed of unification, the new government coalition in East Berlin had begun to fall apart during July 1990, when its SPD members resigned. Persuaded by the mounting economic and social problems that unification was necessary, the Volkskammer finally agreed on October 3, 1990, as the date of German unification.

On the occasion of the first free elections in the GDR, Chancellor Kohl took the opportunity to publicly express his gratitude to the United States, which had been Germany's most reliable ally during the process of unification. Once the first prerequisite for future unification had been established, namely, the willingness of Gorbachev to consider negotiations on unification in light of the dramatic events of the fall of 1989, the consent of the other victorious powers had to be secured.

Statements voicing concerns and even fears of a reemergence of an aggressive unified Germany suddenly appeared in the international press and media, as well as in unofficial remarks made by political figures throughout Europe. Even the FRG's major NATO partners in Europe—Britain and France—had become rather comfortable with the prevailing situation, that is, being allied with an economically potent, but politically weak, semisovereign West Germany.

Although lip service in support of future unification of Germany was common in the postwar era, no one dreamed of its eventual realization. When the historic constellation allowing unification appeared, swift and decisive action on the part of Chancellor Kohl and the unwavering, strong support given by the United States government for the early completion of the unification process were key elements in surmounting the last hurdles during the final phase of the Two-Plus-Four Talks.

The unification treaty, consisting of more than 1,000 pages, was approved by a large majority in the Bundestag and the Volkskammer on September 20, 1990. After this last procedural step, nothing stood in the way of formal unification. At midnight on October 3, the German Democratic Republic joined the Federal Republic of Germany. Unification celebrations were held all over Germany, especially in Berlin, where leading political figures from West and East joined the joyful crowds who filled the streets between the Reichstag building and Alexanderplatz to watch a fireworks display. Germans celebrated unity without a hint of nationalistic pathos, but with dignity and in an atmosphere reminiscent of a country fair. Yet the world realized that an historic epoch had come to a peaceful end.

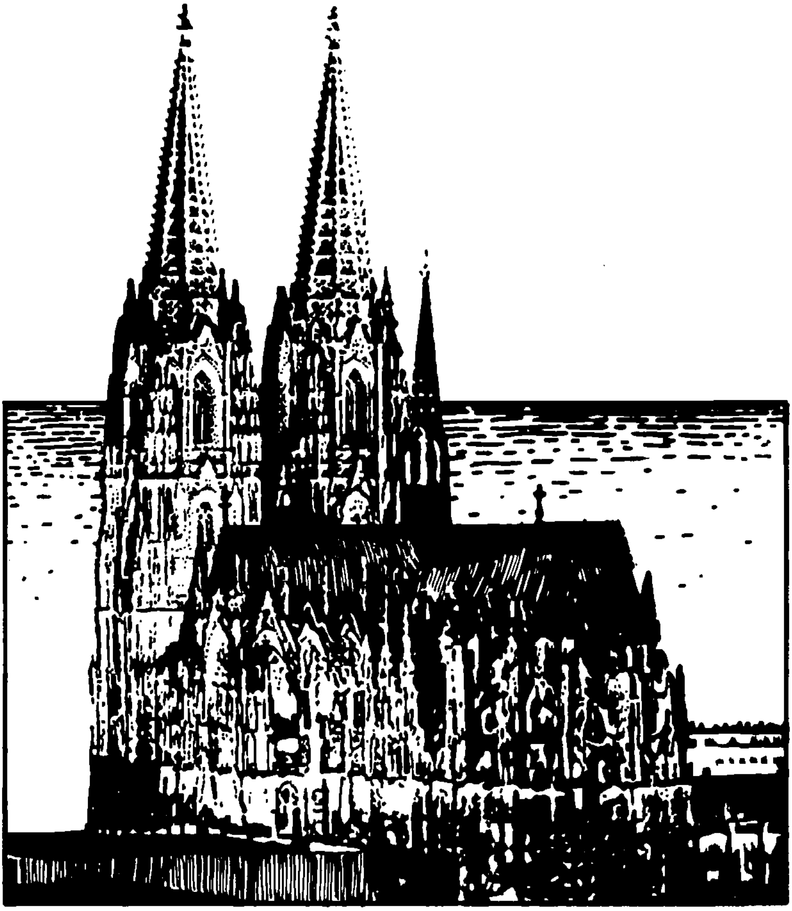
* * *

A good starting point for readers seeking to learn more about the founding, consolidation, and final reunification of the two German states is *Germany from Partition to Reunification* by Henry Ashby Turner, Jr. Another concise and expert account is Peter Pulzer's *German Politics, 1945–1995*. Longer accounts by noted historians are Volker Rolf Berghahn's *Modern Germany*, which starts with events at the turn of the century and ends in the mid-1980s, and Mary Fulbrook's *The Divided Nation*, which begins with the aftermath of World War I and ends with unification. Fulbrook's *The Two Germanies, 1945–1990* is a concise survey of the many ways historians have interpreted recent German history.

Dennis L. Bark and David R. Gress's detailed two-volume *A History of West Germany* is widely available. David Childs's *The GDR: Moscow's German Ally* is a highly readable history of the German Democratic Republic. Mary Fulbrook's *Anatomy of a Dictatorship* examines the nature of the East German state and how it failed.

A useful documentation of the postwar years and the question of reunification can be found in *The German Question*, edited by Walther Hubatsch, with Wolfgang Heidelmeyer et al. Timothy Garton Ash's *In Europe's Name* is a searching analysis of Ostpolitik, from Adenauer to Kohl. Konrad H. Jarausch provides a concise account of the events of 1989 and 1990 in his scholarly *The Rush to German Unity.* Stephen F. Szabo's *The Diplomacy of German Unification* is a good brief account of the international aspects of unification. A more detailed treatment of this subject is *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed* by Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 3. The Society and Its Environment



Cologne Cathedral, begun in 1248, was completed only in 1880.

THE OPENING OF THE BERLIN WALL on November 9, 1989, was one of the most dramatic events of the post-World War II period. In the ensuing months, much more than just the graffiti-covered concrete panels of that infamous structure came crashing down during carnival-like celebrations. After four decades, the division of an entire continent, a nation, and a society came to an abrupt end.

A powerful force setting the revolutionary change in motion was a substantial movement of people from the German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany) westward. Throughout its forty-year history, the GDR had resorted to extreme measures to control its borders and halt the exodus of productive workers. The most extreme of these measures was the erection in 1961 of the Berlin Wall to check the sustained movement of East Germans to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, or West Germany), whose booming economy had created millions of new jobs. Nearly three decades later, for a period of several years beginning in the summer of 1989, the appeal of West Germany, even with its economy mired in recession, prompted another wave of migration of more than 700,000 East Germans, most between the ages of eighteen and thirty.

The FRG's absorption of the GDR in 1990 enlarged its area by about 30 percent and increased its population about 20 percent. Integrating this new territory has proven to be a Herculean task. Prior to unification, West Germans enjoyed one of the highest standards of living in the world and a per capita income exceeding that of the United States. East Germans were prosperous by the standards of the communist world but had a living standard considerably below that of Western Europe. As the costs of unification have accumulated, the time when easterners will attain the standard of living of westerners has receded further into the future.

In the early 1990s, the five new eastern states (*Länder*; sing., *Land*) experienced substantial depopulation as a result of a plummeting birth rate and the internal migration of eastern Germans to the west. All social groups in the east were affected by the hasty merger, but the position of women was even more negatively affected. In particular, the rapid privatization of the socialist command economy led to much unemployment among women and the dismantling of an extensive child-care system. The east's elderly, who generally had incomes and savings much below their counterparts in the western *Länder,* also suffered hardship.

Unification inevitably revealed a series of unpleasant surprises about the closed economy and society of what had been East Germany. One of the most distressing was the deplorable state of the environment. Among the world's most environmentally conscious peoples, West Germans were shocked by the levels of ecological damage in the east. Environmental degradation, most noticeably badly polluted air and water, was perhaps a more important cause of the inequalities in living standards between east and west than smaller living quarters and lower wages. Surveying the dilapidated infrastructure and housing stock, observers dubbed the newly incorporated territory "Germany's Appalachia."

By mid-1995 it appeared that the physical and administrative mergers of the two German states would be far easier to accomplish than the social aspect of the union. In the postwar period, the two Germanys had assiduously developed two mutually exclusive models of society. Thus, the major challenge lay in harmonizing and integrating these societies, which were only gradually emerging from the long shadows cast by four decades of separate development in antagonistic systems.

Physical Setting

Roughly the size of Montana and situated even farther north, unified Germany has an area of 356,959 square kilometers. Extending 853 kilometers from its northern border with Denmark to the Alps in the south, it is the sixth largest country in Europe. At its widest, Germany measures approximately 650 kilometers from the Belgian-German border in the west to the Polish frontier in the east.

The territory of the former East Germany (divided into five new *Länder* in 1990) accounts for almost one-third of united Germany's territory and one-fifth of its population. After a close vote, in 1993 the Bundestag, the lower house of Germany's parliament, voted to transfer the capital from Bonn in the west to Berlin, a city-state in the east surrounded by the *Land* of Brandenburg. The relocation process is expected to be concluded by about the year 2000, following the transfer of the Bundestag, the Bundesrat, the Chancellory, and ten of the eighteen federal ministries.

Topography

With its irregular, elongated shape, Germany provides an excellent example of a recurring sequence of landforms found the world over. A plain dotted with lakes, moors, marshes, and heaths retreats from the sea and reaches inland, where it becomes a landscape of hills crisscrossed by streams, rivers, and valleys. These hills lead upward, gradually forming high plateaus and woodlands and eventually climaxing in spectacular mountain ranges.

As of the mid-1990s, about 37 percent of the country's area was arable; 17 percent consisted of meadows and pastures; 30 percent was forests and woodlands; and 16 percent was devoted to other uses. Geographers often divide Germany into four distinct topographic regions: the North German Lowland; the Central German Uplands; Southern Germany; and the Alpine Foreland and the Alps (see fig. 7).

North German Lowland

The North German Lowland is a part of the Great European Plain that sweeps across Europe from the Pyrenees in France to the Ural Mountains in Russia. All of the *Länder* of Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Bremen, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Brandenburg, Berlin, most of Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, and parts of Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia are located in this region.

Hills in the lowland only rarely reach 200 meters in height, and most of the region is well under 100 meters above sea level. The lowlands slope almost imperceptibly toward the sea. The North Sea portion of the coastline is devoid of cliffs and has wide expanses of sand, marsh, and mud flats (*Watten*). The mud flats between the Elbe estuary and the Netherlands border are believed to have been above sea level during Roman history and to have been inundated when the shoreline sank during the thirteenth century. In the western area, the former line of inshore sand dunes became the East Frisian Islands. The mud flats between the islands and the shore are exposed at very low tides and are crossed by innumerable channels varying in size from those cut by small creeks to those serving as the estuaries of the Elbe and Weser rivers. The mud and sand are constantly shifting, and all harbor and shipping channels require continuing maintenance.

The offshore islands have maximum elevations of fewer than thirty-five meters and have been subject to eroding forces that have washed away whole sections during severe storms. Shorelines most subject to eroding tides were stabilized during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Although the East Frisian Islands are strung along the coast in a nearly straight line, the North Frisian Islands are irregularly shaped and are haphazardly positioned. They were also once a part of the mainland, and a large portion of the mud flats between the islands and the coast is exposed during low tides.

The Baltic Sea coast of Schleswig-Holstein differs markedly from its North Sea coast. It is indented by a number of small, deep fjords with steep banks, which were carved by rivers when the land was covered with glacial ice. Farther to the east, the Baltic shore is flat and sandy. Rügen, Germany's largest island, lies just offshore of Stralsund.

Wherever the region's terrain is rolling and drainage is satisfactory, the land is highly productive. This is especially true of the areas that contain a very fertile siltlike loess soil, better than most German soils. Such areas, called *Börden* (sing., *Börde*), are located along the southern edge of the North German Lowland beginning west of the Rhine near the Ruhr Valley and extending eastward and into the Leipzig Basin. The Magdeburg *Börde* is the best known of these areas. Other *Börden* are located near Frankfurt am Main, northern Baden-Württemberg, and in an area to the north of Ulm and Munich. Because the areas with loess soil also have a moderate continental climate with a long growing season, they are considered Germany's breadbasket.

Central German Uplands

The Central German Uplands are Germany's portion of the Central European Uplands; they extend from the Massif Central in France to Poland and the Czech Republic. Germany's uplands are generally moderate in height and seldom reach elevations above 1,100 meters. The region encompasses all of the Saarland, Hesse, and Thuringia; the north of Rhineland-Palatinate; substantial southern portions of North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony, and Saxony-Anhalt; and western parts of Saxony.

In the west, the Central German Uplands begin with the Rheinish Uplands, a massive rectangular block of slate and shale with a gently rolling plateau of about 400 meters in elevation and peaks of about 800 to 900 meters. The Rheinish

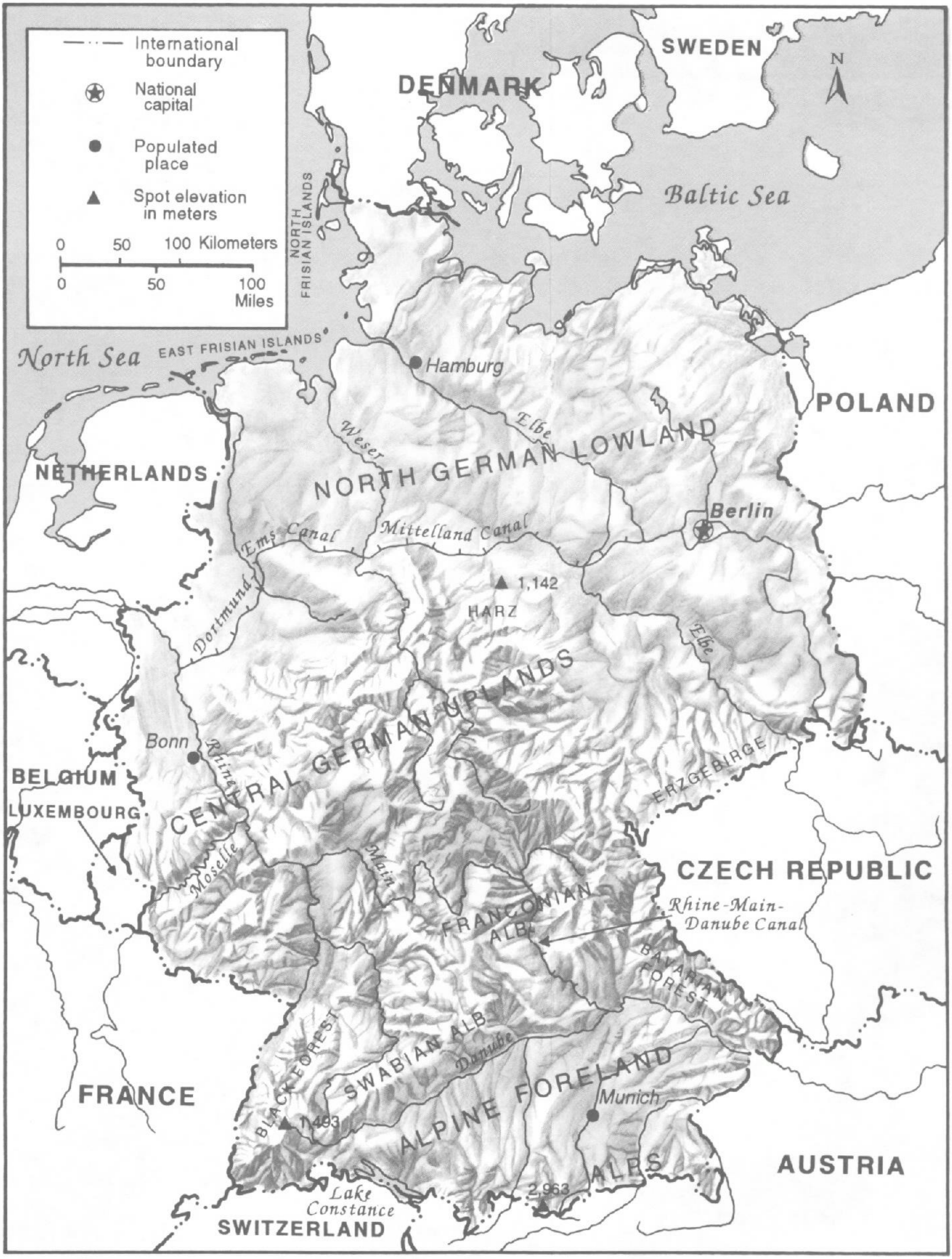

International boundary
National capital
Populated place
Spot elevation in meters
0 50 100 Kilometers
0 50 100 Miles
N
SWEDEN
DENMARK
Baltic Sea
NORTH FRISIAN ISLANDS
North Sea
EAST FRISIAN ISLANDS
Hamburg
POLAND
Weser
Elbe
NORTH GERMAN LOWLAND
NETHERLANDS
Berlin
Ems Canal
Mittelland Canal
Dortmund
1,142
HARZ
Elbe
CENTRAL GERMAN UPLANDS
Bonn
Rhine
BELGIUM
LUXEMBOURG
ERZGEBIRGE
Moselle
Main
CZECH REPUBLIC
FRANCONIAN ALB
Rhine-Main-Danube Canal
BAVARIAN FOREST
BLACK FOREST
SWABIAN ALB
Danube
ALPINE FORELAND
FRANCE
Munich
1,493
ALPS
AUSTRIA
2,963
Lake Constance
SWITZERLAND

Figure 7. Topography and Drainage

Uplands are divided by two deep and dramatic river valleys—the Moselle and the Rhine. The high hilly area to the south of the Moselle is the Hunsrück; the one to its north is the Eifel. The Rhine separates these areas from their extensions to the east, the Taunus, and, to the north, the Westerwald. To the north and east of the Westerwald are further distinct areas of the Rheinish Uplands, most notably the small range of hills known as the Siebengebirge, across the Rhine from Bonn, and the larger hilly regions—the Siegerland, Bergishes Land, Sauerland, and the Rothaargebirge. The higher elevations of the Rheinish Uplands are heavily forested; lower-lying areas are well suited for the growing of grain, fruit, and early potatoes.

Because of the low elevations of its valleys (200 to 350 meters), the Uplands of Hesse provide an easily traveled passageway through the Central German Uplands. Although not as dramatic as the Rhine Valley, for hundreds of years this passageway—the so-called Hessian Corridor—has been an important route between the south and the north, with Frankfurt am Main at one end and Hanover at the other, and Kassel on the Weser River in its center. The headwaters of the Weser have created a number of narrow but fertile valleys. The highlands of the Uplands of Hesse are volcanic in origin. The most notable of these volcanic highlands are the Rhön (950 meters) and the Vogelsburg (774 meters).

To the north of the Uplands of Hesse lie two low ranges, the Teutoburger Wald and the Wiehengebirge, which are the northernmost fringes of the Central German Uplands. It is at the Porta Westfalica near Minden that the Weser River breaks through the latter range to reach the North German Lowland.

One of the highest points in the Central German Uplands is at Brocken (1,142 meters) in the Harz Mountains. This range is situated about forty kilometers to the northeast of Göttingen and forms the northwestern boundary of the Leipzig Basin, an extension of the North German Lowland. The Harz are still largely forested at lower levels; barren moors cover higher elevations. An important center for tourism in the 1990s, the range was once an important source for many minerals.

The Thüringer Wald, located in southwestern Thuringia, is a narrow range about 100 kilometers long, with its highest point just under 1,000 meters. Running in a northwesterly direction, it links the Central German Uplands with the Bohemian Massif of the Czech Republic and forms the southwestern boundary of the Leipzig Basin. The basin's southeastern boundary is formed by the Erzgebirge range, which extends to the northeast at a right angle to the Thüringer Wald. Part of the Bohemian Massif, the Erzgebirge range reaches 1,214 meters at its highest point.

The southeasternmost portion of the Central German Uplands consists of the Bohemian Forest and the much smaller Bavarian Forest. Both ranges belong to the Bohemian Massif. The Bohemian Forest, with heights up to 1,450 meters, forms a natural boundary between Germany and the Czech Republic.

Southern Germany

Between the Central German Uplands and the Alpine Foreland and the Alps lies the geographical region of Southern Germany, which includes most of Baden-Württemberg, much of northern Bavaria, and portions of Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate. The Main River runs through the northern portion of this region. The Upper Rhine River Valley, nearly 300 kilometers long and about fifty kilometers wide, serves as its western boundary. The Rhine's wide river valley here is in sharp contrast to its high narrow valley in the Rheinish Uplands. The southern boundaries of the region of Southern Germany are formed by extensions of the Jura Mountains of France and Switzerland. These ranges are separate from those of the Central German Uplands. One of these Jura ranges forms the Black Forest, whose highest peak is the Feldberg at 1,493 meters, and, continuing north, the less elevated Odenwald and Spessart hills. Another Jura range forms the Swabian Alb (see Glossary) and its continuation, the Franconian Alb. Up to 1,000 meters in height and approximately forty kilometers wide, the two albs form a long arc—400 kilometers long—from the southern end of the Black Forest to near Bayreuth and the hills of the Frankenwald region, which is part of the Central German Uplands. The Hardt Mountains in Rhineland-Palatinate, located to the west of the Rhine, are also an offshoot of the Jura Mountains.

The landscape of the Southern Germany region is often that of scarp and vale, with the eroded sandstone and limestone scarps facing to the northwest. The lowland terraces of the Rhine, Main, and Neckar river valleys, with their dry and warm climate, are suitable for agriculture and are highly productive. The loess and loam soils of the Rhine-Main Plain are cultivated extensively, and orchards and vineyards flourish. The Rhine-Main Plain is densely populated, and Frankfurt am

Main, at its center, serves both as Germany's financial capital and as a major European transportation hub.

Alpine Foreland and the Alps

The Alpine Foreland makes up most of Bavaria and a good part of Baden-Württemberg. The foreland is roughly triangular in shape, about 400 kilometers long from west to east with a maximum width of about 150 kilometers north to south, and is bounded by Lake Constance and the Alps to the south, the Swabian and Franconian albs to the north, and the Bavarian Forest to the east. Elevation within the foreland rises gently from about 400 meters near the Danube, which flows along its north, to about 750 meters at the beginning of the Alpine foothills. With the exception of Munich and the small cities of Augsburg, Ingolstadt, and Ulm, the foreland is primarily rural. Soils are generally poor, with the exception of some areas with loess soil, and much of the region is pasture or is sown to hardy crops.

Germany's portion of the Alps accounts for a very small part of the country's area and consists only of a narrow fringe of mountains that runs along the country's border with Switzerland and Austria from Lake Constance in the west to Salzburg, Austria, in the east. The western section of the German Alps are the Algäuer Alps, located between Lake Constance and the Lech River. The Bavarian Alps, the central section, lie between the Lech and Inn rivers and contain Germany's highest peak, the Zugspitze (2,963 meters). The Salzburg Alps, which begin at the Inn River and encircle Berchtesgaden, make up the easternmost section of Germany's Alps.

Drainage

The greater part of the country drains into the North Sea via the Rhine, Ems, Weser, and Elbe rivers, which flow in a north-northwest direction. In the east, the Oder River and its tributary, the Neisse River, flow northward into the Baltic Sea and mark the border with Poland. With the exception of the Lahn River, which flows southward before joining the Rhine, most of the tributaries of these rivers flow in a west-to-east or east-to-west direction. In an exception to the south-north pattern of major rivers, the Danube River rises in the Black Forest and flows in a southeasterly direction, traversing Bavaria before crossing into Austria at Passau on the long journey to the Black

Sea. The Iller, Lech, Isar, and Inn rivers flow from the south into the Danube and drain the Alpine Foreland.

The Rhine, Germany's longest and most important river, originates in Switzerland, from where it flows into Lake Constance (actually a river basin). At the lake's west end, it begins a long course (800 kilometers) to the Netherlands, at first marking the boundary between Germany and Switzerland and later that between Germany and France. Of the Rhine's three most important tributaries, the Moselle River drains parts of the Rheinish Uplands, the Main drains areas between the Central German Uplands and the Franconian Alb, and the Neckar River drains the area between the Black Forest and the Swabian Alb. Because these rivers keep the Rhine high during the winter and because melting snow in the Alps keeps it high during the spring and summer, the river generally has a high steady flow, which accounts for its being the busiest waterway in Europe.

Climate

Although located mostly at latitudes north of the United States-Canadian border and thus closer to the Arctic Circle than to the equator, Germany's climate is moderate and is generally without sustained periods of cold or heat. Northwestern and coastal Germany have a maritime climate caused by warm westerly winds from the North Sea; the climate is characterized by warm summers and mild cloudy winters. Farther inland, the climate is continental, marked by greater diurnal and seasonal variations in temperature, with warmer summers and colder winters.

In addition to the maritime and continental climates that predominate over most of the country, the Alpine regions in the extreme south and, to a lesser degree, some areas of the Central German Uplands have a so-called mountain climate. This climate is characterized by lower temperatures because of higher altitudes and greater precipitation caused by air becoming moisture-laden as it lifts over higher terrain.

The major air masses contributing to the maritime weather are the Icelandic low-pressure system and the Azores high-pressure system. The Icelandic lows rotate in a counterclockwise direction and tend to move to the east and southeast as they approach Europe. The Azores highs move eastward and rotate in a clockwise direction. Both of these air masses furnish West-

Bamberg in northern Bavaria
One of Heidelberg's town gates
Courtesy Germany Information Center, New York

ern Europe with moisture-laden clouds propelled by westerly winds.

The northern lowlands frequently experience a situation (more often during the winter months) when they are between these air masses and are simultaneously influenced by both. At such times, winds come from the west and are usually strong. When only one of the systems is dominant, it is more often the Icelandic low. In spite of their nearly polar origin, Icelandic lows are warmed by the Gulf Stream, and areas on the country's North Sea coast have midwinter temperatures averaging more than 1.6° C. This temperature is more than three degrees above the average for the latitude, which is shared by central Labrador and some bitterly cold regions in Siberia.

When continental weather systems originating to the east are responsible for the weather, conditions are markedly different. In the winter months, these systems have high-pressure air masses that bring bright, clear, cold weather. The local people describe these air masses as Siberian highs and usually expect them to last for about two weeks. An occasional condition called *föhn*, or warm wind, arises when the center of a low-pressure system deviates to the south of its usual path and crosses the central part of the country. In this atmospheric condition, warm tropical air is drawn across the Alps and loses moisture on the southern slopes of the mountains. The air warms significantly as it compresses during its descent from the northern slopes. In the springtime, these winds dissipate the cloud cover and melt the snows. Many people respond to the rapid weather changes caused by the *föhn* with headaches, irritability, and circulatory problems.

The yearly mean temperature for the country is about 9° C. Other than for variations caused by shelter and elevation, the annual mean temperature is fairly constant throughout the country. Temperature extremes between night and day and summer and winter are considerably less in the north than in the south.

During January, the coldest month, the average temperature is approximately 1.6°C in the north and about –2°C in the south. In July, the warmest month, the situation reverses, and it is cooler in the north than in the south. The northern coastal region has July temperatures averaging between 16°C and 18°C; at some locations in the south, the average is 19.4°C or slightly higher.

Annual precipitation varies from 2,000 millimeters a year in the southern mountains to a low of 400 millimeters in the vicinity of Mainz. Over most of the country, it averages between 600 millimeters and 800 millimeters per annum.

The Environment

Unification abruptly transformed the Federal Republic from a country with a solid, even excellent, environmental record to one facing a whole range of ecological disasters—the result of the GDR's decades-long abuse of its natural habitat. The estimated costs of restoring the environment in the new *Länder* grew as information became available about how much damage it had sustained. Expert estimates of from DM130 billion to DM220 billion (for value of the deutsche mark—see Glossary) in the spring of 1990 had increased to a possible DM400 billion two years later.

The two Germanys differed greatly in their approaches toward protecting the environment. Beginning in the late 1960s, ecological concerns had become increasingly common in West Germany, as was repeatedly demonstrated in opinion polls. A 1990 poll, for example, found that more than 70 percent of those West Germans questioned held that environmental protection should be the highest priority for the government and the economy.

In East Germany, environmental activism was minimal. For decades the GDR had followed standard Soviet practices in regard to industrial and urban development, scrimping on or avoiding entirely key infrastructure investments such as water-treatment facilities and air-pollution abatement. The comprehensive and intelligent Socialist Environmental Management Act of 1968 was poorly implemented and, more important, largely ignored after the late 1970s when East German authorities decided that Western economic growth could only be matched by sacrificing the environment. This policy was followed throughout the 1980s.

West German environmental legislation initially lagged behind that of East Germany. For the first decades after World War II, West Germans were concerned with reconstructing their country and its economy. Early efforts to deal with the environment met with little interest. The attainment of widespread prosperity and the coming to maturity of a new generation with so-called postmaterialist values led to an interest in protecting the environment. The late 1960s and the early 1970s saw the passage of several dozen laws relating to the environment, the most important of which were the Waste Disposal Law and the Emission Protection Law, both passed in 1972. In 1974 the Federal Environmental Agency was established. The new legislation established the principles of Germany's environmental policies, still in effect in the mid-1990s: preventing pollution by monitoring new products and projects; requiring the polluter, rather than society at large, to pay damages; and relying on cooperation among government, industry, and society to protect the environment.

The oil crisis of 1973–74 and the ensuing worldwide recession led to a tapering off of environmental activism on the part of the West German government and the political parties. However, numerous citizens' groups formed and pressed for increased environmental protection (see Citizens' Initiative Associations, ch. 7). The accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in the United States in 1979 also spurred the growth of such groups. Elements of the environmental movement formed a political party, the Greens (Die Grünen) in 1980, which in 1983 won seats in the Bundestag (see The Greens, ch. 7). Of greatest importance were domestic ecological problems such as pollution in the Baltic Sea and the Rhine and Main rivers and damage to the country's forests from acid rain.

During the early 1980s, concerns about the environment became widespread in the general population, and all political parties were forced to address them. These concerns were raised still higher by a series of ecological disasters in 1986: the accident at the nuclear plant at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union and serious spills of dangerous chemicals into the Rhine at Basel in Switzerland. Immediately after the Chernobyl disaster, Chancellor Helmut Kohl created the Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Reactor Safety.

Stricter environmental controls led to marked improvements in air quality. Between 1966 and 1988, sulfur dioxide emissions in West Germany fell by one-third. Dust levels, which stood at 3.2 million tons in 1980, fell to 550,000 tons by the late 1980s. The quality of river water also improved. The Rhine and Main rivers, nearly "biologically dead" in the 1960s, supported several species of fish by the early 1990s. The Ruhr River, located in the heart of the country's largest manufacturing region, became the cleanest "industrial" river in West Germany after the construction of a series of dams and the reforestation of slag heaps and wastelands.

At unification, the ecological situation in the new *Länder* was quite different. Because 95 percent of industrial wastewater had been discharged without treatment and 32 percent of households were not connected to sewerage systems, more than 40 percent of the rivers of the new *Länder* and 24 percent of their lakes were totally unfit as sources of drinking water; only 3 percent of their rivers and 1 percent of their lakes were considered ecologically healthy. Some rivers had pollution levels 200 times higher than that permitted by European Community (EC—see Glossary) environmental standards. The widespread use of brown coal had resulted in record emissions of sulfur dioxide, which rose by one-fifth between 1980 and 1988. Moreover, decades of brown coal strip mining had left some eastern areas resembling a lunar landscape. Other areas had been contaminated by the mining and processing of uranium, primarily to service the Soviet nuclear sector.

Although East German per capita waste production had been much lower than that of West Germany, the East German government had negotiated away this advantage and jeopardized ecological security in the bargain. In the 1980s, the GDR had earned hard currency by importing and carelessly disposing of millions of tons of West Germany's trash, exacerbating soil degradation and groundwater contamination. Some 60 percent of industrial waste had been deposited without controls. Of about 11,000 landfill sites, more than 10,000 were uncontrolled. With more than 28,000 potentially hazardous sites, the cleanup effort required in the east appears comparable in scope to the Superfund campaign in the United States.

The Cold War had also damaged East Germany's environment and to a lesser extent that of West Germany. For nearly five decades, millions of troops from the East and the West had made intensive use of the territory of the two Germanys as military bases and training sites. Cleanup costs were estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars. In recognition of this situation, the United States Department of Defense allocated funds to repair environmental damage in the Federal Republic. In contrast, Soviet and later Russian forces, although they reportedly occupied as much as 2.5 percent of East German territory, were paid to leave the country and did so without compensating Germany for the extreme environmental damage they had caused.

With unification in 1990, the new *Länder* became subject to the environmental laws of the Federal Republic and the EC, although both sets of laws were to be applied gradually. Standards in some areas, such as emissions control, would not come into effect until after 2000. The ecological situation in the new *Länder* soon changed for the better, although much of the improvement stemmed less from the imposition of new standards than from the closing, for economic reasons, of outmoded plants that had caused much pollution. Projects such as constructing new air, water, and soil treatment plants and modernizing old ones, reducing the amounts of brown coal consumed, and cleaning up dump sites will gradually undo decades of ecological damage. Some environmental policies in the new *Länder*, like those in the old *Länder*, are preventive in nature. Because of the irresponsible practices of the former GDR, however, a great number are also restorative.

Serious environmental problems continue to confront Germany. Despite the efforts begun in the early 1970s, the "death of the forest" (*Waldsterben*) caused by acid rain continues. In 1992 about 68 percent of the country's trees had suffered significant ecological damage. Forests in northwestern Germany had suffered the least damage from acid rain, those in the south and east the most. Chemical emissions from automobiles are a serious cause of this problem. Only since 1993, however, have new vehicles been required to have catalytic converters. Germany's farmers also cause much pollution through intensive use of fertilizers. Because they are a powerful interest group, it has been difficult to pass legislation to regulate their farming methods.

Nuclear power presents a special dilemma for Germany. In western Germany, support for that power source, which in the mid-1990s supplied about 35 percent of the country's energy requirement, has fluctuated depending upon international events and crises. As of the mid-1990s, however, there appeared little chance that any more nuclear plants would be constructed in the near future.

Upon unification, the Federal Republic inherited East Germany's two nuclear power plants, which had been built to Soviet specifications. Decommissioning these plants would increase reliance on polluting coal-fired power plants. Despite this prospect, the likelihood of a Chernobyl-like disaster prompted the shutdown of these unsafe nuclear power plants. As of 1995, new, more ecologically friendly power plants are being built in the new *Länder* to replace nuclear power and brown coal-fired plants.

Population

The population of Germany manifests trends characteristic of most advanced industrial countries: lower marriage rates, delayed marriage and child-bearing, low fertility rates, small household size, high divorce rates, and extended life expectancy. The population of indigenous Germans has been in decline since 1972 in the west and since 1969 in the east because the number of births has not kept pace with the number of deaths. In 1990 only five of the sixteen *Länder* registered growth in population because of natural increase.

Household size decreased from 3.0 persons in 1950 to 2.3 in 1990. Marriage rates have slackened, while divorce rates have risen or remained stable at high rates. In the late 1980s, almost one-third of all marriages ended in divorce. Infant mortality has steadily declined, and life expectancy has risen, albeit more slowly in eastern Germany. As in the United States, a greater proportion of the population is moving into advanced age. In 1871 only 4.6 percent of the population was sixty-five years of age or older. By 1939 that proportion had risen to 7.8 percent, and by 1992 it had risen to about 15 percent. By 2000 it is estimated that one-quarter of the population will be sixty or older.

Since the 1950s, the population of Germany has become more diverse. Millions of foreigners have migrated to Germany, seeking employment, citizenship, or asylum. In contrast to the native population, foreigners in Germany tend to have more children and larger households. In 1988 their average household size was 3.5 persons. Depending upon their origins and social status, foreigners in Germany have been integrated into society in widely varying degrees.

Historical Background

Since the first unification of Germany in 1871 to form the German Empire, the population and territorial expanse of Germany have fluctuated considerably, chiefly as a result of gains and losses in war. At the time of its founding, the empire was home to some 41 million people, most of whom lived in villages or small towns (see table 5, Appendix). As industrialization and urbanization accelerated over the next forty years, the population increased significantly to 64.6 million, according to the 1910 census. About two-thirds of this population lived in towns with more than 2,000 inhabitants, and the number of large cities had grown from eight in 1871 to eighty-four in 1910. Stimulating population growth were improvements in sanitary and working conditions and in medicine. Another significant source of growth was an influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe, who came to Germany to work on farms and in mines and factories. This wave of immigrants, the first of several groups that would swell Germany's population in the succeeding decades, helped compensate for the millions of Germans who left their country in search of a better life, many of whom went to the United States.

At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the population of Germany had reached about 68 million. A major demographic catastrophe, the war claimed 2.8 million lives and caused a steep decline in the birth rate. In addition, the 1919 Treaty of Versailles awarded territories containing approximately 7 million German inhabitants to the victors and to newly independent or reconstituted countries in Eastern Europe.

In the 1930s, during the regime of Adolf Hitler, a period of expansion added both territory and population to the Third Reich. Following the annexation of Austria in 1938 and the Sudetenland (part of Czechoslovakia) in 1939, German territory and population encompassed 586,126 square kilometers and 79.7 million people, according to the 1939 census. The census found that women still outnumbered men (40.4 million to 38.7 million), despite a leveling trend in the interwar period.

The carnage of World War II surpassed that of World War I. German war losses alone were estimated at 7 million, about half of whom died in battle. Ruined, defeated, and divided into zones of occupation, a much smaller Germany emerged in 1945 with a population about the same as in 1910. In the immediate postwar period, however, more than 12 million persons—expelled Germans and displaced persons—immigrated to Germany or used the country as a transit point en route to other destinations, adding to the population.

By 1950 the newly established Federal Republic of Germany had a population of about 50 million, more than 9 million of whom were "expellees." The German Democratic Republic had about 4 million newcomers and 14 million natives (see table 6, Appendix). Most of the expellees came from East Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia, and the Sudetenland, all one-time German territories held by other countries at the end of World War II. The majority of the settlers in West Germany remained, found work in the rapidly recovering economy, and in time were successfully integrated into the society. Between 1950 and 1989, West Germany's population grew from 50 million to 62.1 million. Resettled Germans and refugees from former eastern territories and their families constituted approximately 20 percent of the country's population. From its earliest years, West Germany had become either a temporary or a final destination for millions of migrants. Yet despite this influx, the country did not develop an identity as a country of immigration as did, for example, the United States or Canada.

The situation in East Germany was much different. From its founding in 1949, the GDR struggled to stabilize its population and thwart emigration. In the course of its forty-year history, almost one-quarter of East Germany's population fled the state to settle in West Germany. In the 1950s alone, more than 2 million people moved west, a migration that triggered the regime's radical solution in August 1961—the construction of the Berlin Wall (see The Berlin Wall, ch. 2). During most of its existence, the only segment of East Germany's population permitted to leave for West Germany were retirees, whose resettlement there was unofficially encouraged to reduce the GDR's pension payments. As a result, the number of persons sixty years of age and older in the GDR fell from 22.1 percent in 1970 to 18.3 percent in 1985 and made the East German population younger than that of West Germany.

Deprived of a regular supply of workers by the construction of the Berlin Wall, the Federal Republic in the 1960s absorbed yet another wave of migrants. Laborers were recruited through agreements with seven countries: Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, Tunisia, and Morocco. Between 1955 and 1973, the number of foreign workers, called guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*) to emphasize the intended temporary nature of their contracts, grew from about 100,000 to about 2.5 million. Originally brought in for three-year shifts, most workers—mainly single men—remained and made a valuable contribution to the booming West German economy. In the early 1970s, however, a recession brought on by the international energy crisis slowed the West German economy; the importing of workers officially came to an end in 1973 (see Immigration, this ch.).

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the fourth and most controversial wave of immigrants to West Germany were asylum-seekers and political refugees—ethnic Germans from Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and territories belonging to the former Soviet Union and also East Germans who moved west as the GDR collapsed. Many Germans were angered by the financial and social costs these immigrants required because they believed many asylum-seekers were drawn to Germany more by the desire for a better standard of living than by the need to escape political oppression. Many ethnic Germans hardly seemed German: some did not even speak German.

Fertility

Despite the Berlin Wall and the fortified boundary that divided them, the two Germanys had many similar demographic developments in the postwar period. In the late 1950s and especially in the 1960s, both Germanys experienced a "baby boom," stimulated by increased economic prosperity and a heightened sense of security. During the second half of the 1960s, East Germany's population grew slightly, an unusual occurrence. In West Germany, the absolute peak in births, 1.3 million, was reached in 1965. In that year, births outnumbered deaths by 417,504.

After the baby boom, both countries experienced periods of zero population growth when the annual number of births failed to compensate for the annual number of deaths. As of 1993, with the exclusion of foreigners' births, deaths have outnumbered births every year since 1976 in the old *Länder*. Since 1986 the same has been true for the new *Länder*. When the West German total fertility rate reached its historic peacetime low of fewer than 1.3 children per woman of child-bearing age in 1985, popular newsmagazines caused a sensation with cover stories that warned of the eventual disappearance of the Germans. In the former GDR, a pronatalist policy temporarily had modest success in boosting the birth rate in the mid-1970s, but the population declined there for two reasons: emigration and low fertility. This was especially noticeable after the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 when emigration soared. Low fertility also continued to be a problem. Between 1989 and 1991, eastern Germany's total fertility rate fell by 38 percent. In 1991 the rate was 0.98, well below West Germany's lowest level.

Although its population was just one-fifth that of West Germany, until 1986 East Germany officially topped in absolute terms West Germany in both the number of births outside marriage and the number of abortions. This situation was accounted for in part by a chronic lack of birth control choices in the former Soviet bloc and the practice of using abortion as a regular means of curbing unwanted pregnancies. In 1988 one-third of all births in the GDR were to unwed mothers, whereas in the FRG only one-tenth were. The trend of out-of-wedlock births in the east continued to increase after unification. By 1992 nearly 42 percent of the babies born in the new *Länder* were to single mothers, compared with 12 percent in the old *Länder.*

Until mid-1993, when a more restrictive West German law came into effect, the eastern section of Germany recognized the right of abortion on demand. The highest rate was reached in 1972, when one-third of pregnancies were aborted. By 1989 the rate had declined, but the probability of an abortion was still one in every four pregnancies. In the old *Länder,* legal abortions were restricted to special circumstances based on such factors as the physical or mental health of the mother or fetus. In 1989 West Germany officially registered 75,297 abortions, compared with about 74,000 for East Germany. Social, cultural, and economic factors accounted for the differences in frequency of abortion and extramarital birth rates.

Following unification, a trend termed demographic paralysis was observed in the former East Germany when the number of births fell by 50 percent between 1990 and 1993. From 1988 to mid-1993, the crude birth rate fell from 12.9 per 1,000 to 5.3 per 1,000, an abrupt and precipitous decline unmatched in an industrial society in peacetime. Especially hard hit by skyrocketing unemployment and adrift in an alien market economy, record numbers of women in the new *Länder* stopped having children. Some reports indicated that by the summer of 1993 as many as two-thirds of working women in the east had lost their jobs since unification. In that same year, the marriage rate fell by half.

Age-Gender Distribution

In the early 1990s, an age-gender distribution pyramid of unified Germany's population displayed at its apex the legacy of heavy war casualties: a preponderance of elderly women too great to be explained by women's greater longevity. Official statistics show that in 1990 there were approximately 2.7 million more females than males (41.2 million versus 38.5 million) in Germany. In the same year, so many wives had outlived their husbands, either because of war deaths or because of the lower life expectancy of males, that the 4.9 million elderly widows in the country accounted for approximately 6 percent of the total population. Population specialists have forecast the transformation of the pyramid into a mushroom, as the effect of slackening birth rates pushes the population bulge higher up the age categories. In 1990 about 50 percent of the population was under thirty-seven years of age (see fig. 8).

The progressive aging of Germany's population has been rapid. In 1970 those aged seventeen or younger made up 27.2 percent of the population, those aged eighteen to sixty-five accounted for 59.1 percent, and those aged sixty-five and older were 13.7 percent. By 1990 these shares had changed to 19.2 percent, 65.8 percent, and 15 percent, respectively. The implications of this trend for social welfare and security are a cause of concern. In the early 1990s, one pensioner was financed by three employees. If present trends continue, forecasts indicate that by 2030 as much as 28 percent of Germany's population will be elderly, and there will be a 1:1 ratio between pensioners and workers.

Mortality

In the postwar period, the former GDR developed a comprehensive health care system that made steady advances in reducing infant mortality and extending life expectancy for both men and women. Early in the postwar period, life expectancy in some categories was actually longer for East Germans than for West Germans, and infant mortality was lower until 1980. However, starting in the mid-1970s, West Germany began to register longer life expectancies in every age-group, and after 1980 the infant mortality rate dropped below that of East Germany. In 1988 infant mortality in West Germany was 7.6 per 1,000 live births and 8.1 per 1,000 in East Germany.

The better health and longevity of West Germans probably stemmed from an increased interest in quality of life issues, personal health, and the environment. East Germans, in contrast, suffered the ill effects of the Soviet model of a traditional rust-belt industrial economy, with minimal concern for workers' safety and health and wanton disregard of the need to protect the environment. Improving environmental conditions and a more health-conscious way of living should gradually reduce remaining health differences among Germans. In mid-1995 unified Germany had an estimated mortality rate of about eleven per 1,000, and life expectancy was estimated at 76.6

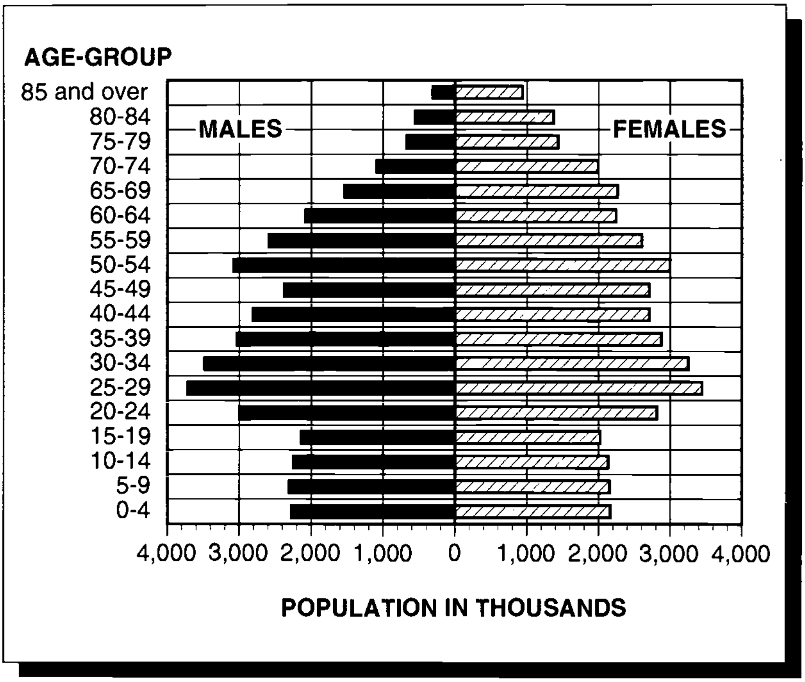
years (73.5 years for males and 79.9 years for females). The major causes of death were the same as those of other advanced countries (see Current Health Care Issues and Outlook for the Future, ch. 4).

Population Distribution and Urbanization

Following unification, the Federal Republic encompassed 356,958 square kilometers and was one of the largest countries in Europe. With about 81.3 million people in mid-1995, it ranked second behind Russia in population among the countries of Europe. Unification actually reduced the Federal Republic's population density, however, because East Germany, which had a large rural area, was more sparsely populated. With an average of 228 persons per square kilometer in late 1993, unified Germany ranked third in population density among European countries. It ranked behind the Netherlands and Belgium, which had 363 and 329 persons per square kilometer, respectively.

Germany's population density varies greatly. The most densely populated *Länder* are Berlin, Hamburg, and Bremen, with densities of 3,898, 2,236, and 1,697 persons per square kilometer, respectively, at the end of 1992 (see table 7, Appendix). The least densely populated are two new *Länder*, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Brandenburg, both mostly rural in character. They had population densities of eighty and eighty-six persons per square kilometer, respectively, at the end of 1992. Other *Länder* are closer to the national average: the largest *Land*, Bavaria, with 167 persons per square kilometer, is mostly rural, but its capital is the large city of Munich; Rhineland-Palatinate, with 196 persons per square kilometer, is also mostly rural but has numerous heavily populated areas along the Rhine; and Saxony, with 252 persons per square kilometer, also has a number of heavily populated areas.

The *Land* with the most population, one-fifth of the nation's total, is North Rhine-Westphalia. With a population density of 519 persons per square kilometer at the end of 1992, it is the most heavily settled of all *Länder*, with the exception of the three city *Länder* of Bremen, Hamburg, and Berlin. North Rhine-Westphalia's density is caused by its many cities; several dozen of these cities have populations above 100,000, including five with populations above 500,000. Many of these cities are located so close together that they form one of Europe's



Source: Based on information from Federal Republic of Germany, Statistisches Bundesamt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1994 für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Wiesbaden, 1994, 66.

Figure 8. Population by Age and Gender, 1992

largest urban agglomerations, the Ruhrstadt (Ruhr City), with a population of about 5 million.

The Federal Republic has few very large cities and many medium-sized ones, a reflection of the centuries when the name *Germany* designated a geographical area consisting of many small and medium-sized states, each with its own capital (see table 8, Appendix). Berlin, by far the largest city, with a population of 3.5 million at the end of 1993, is certain to grow in population as more of the government moves there in the second half of the 1990s and as businesses relocate their headquarters to the new capital. Some estimates predict that Greater Berlin will have a population of 8 million by early in the twenty-first century.

Berlin already dwarfs the only other cities having more than 1 million inhabitants: Hamburg with 1.7 million and Munich with 1.3 million. Ten cities have populations between 500,000 and 1 million, seventeen between 250,000 and 500,000, and fifty-four between 100,000 and 250,000. In the early 1990s, about one-third of the population lived in cities with 100,000 residents or more, one-third in cities and towns with populations between 50,000 and 100,000, and one-third in villages and small towns.

Other densely populated areas are located in the southwest. They are Greater Stuttgart; the Rhine-Main area with its center of Frankfurt am Main; and the Rhine-Neckar region with its center in Mannheim. The greater Nuremberg and Hanover regions are also significant population centers. The new *Länder* are thinly settled except for Berlin and the regions of Dresden-Leipzig and Chemnitz-Zwickau.

Urban areas in the east are more densely populated than those in the west because the GDR saw little of the suburbanization seen in West Germany. As a result, there is a greater contrast between urban and rural areas in the new *Länder* than in the west. West Germany's suburbanization, however, is not nearly as extensive as that experienced by the United States after the end of World War II. Compared with cities in the United States, German cities are fairly compact, and their inhabitants can quickly reach small villages and farmlands.

Germany's population growth has been slow since the late 1960s. Many regions have shown little or no growth, or have even declined in population. The greatest growth has been in the south, where the populations of Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria each increased by well over 1 million between 1970 and 1993. (Each had also grown by over 1 million in the 1960s.) North Rhine-Westphalia, which had grown by 1 million in the 1960s, added another 750,000 to its population between 1970 and 1993, a small increase, given a total population of nearly 18 million at the end of 1993. Bremen, Hamburg, and the Saarland experienced some population loss between 1970 and 1993. With the exception of united Berlin, all the new *Länder* lost population between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of 1993. In general, this development reflected long-term trends in East Germany, although the rate of decline has been higher since unification.

Immigration

Immigration has been a primary force shaping demographic developments in the two Germanys in the postwar period (see Historical Background, this ch.). After the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the immigration flow, first into West Germany and later into united Germany, consisted mainly of workers from southern Europe. In addition, the immigrants included several other groups: a small but steady stream of East German immigrants (*Übersiedler*) during the 1980s that exploded in size in 1990 (389,000) but by 1993 had fallen by more than half (172,000) and was somewhat offset by movement from west to east (119,000); several million ethnic Germans (*Aussiedler*) from East European countries, especially the former Soviet Union; and several million persons seeking asylum from political oppression, most of whom were from East European countries.

Foreign Residents

As of early 1994, approximately 6.8 million registered foreigners resided in Germany. Turks made up the largest group (1.9 million), followed by immigrants from the former Yugoslavia (930,000), Italians (565,000), Greeks (350,000), Poles (260,000), and Austrians (185,000). About 25 percent of these foreign residents, most of whom were born in Germany, are under the age of eighteen. Because of the higher birth rate of foreigners, one of every ten births in Germany is to a foreigner. However, because recruiting of *Gastarbeiter* stopped in 1973 at the onset of a worldwide recession, most foreign workers are middle-aged and have lived in Germany for several decades.

The foreign population is not distributed evenly. More than two-thirds live in the *Länder* of North Rhine-Westphalia, Baden-Württemberg, and Bavaria, where in 1990 they made up 9, 10, and 7 percent of the population, respectively. Foreigners live mainly in urban areas; in 1989 approximately 23 percent of foreign residents lived in Hamburg and Berlin. Foreigners often live in particular areas of large cities. (For example, Kreuzberg in Berlin and Kalk in Cologne both have large Turkish communities.) There are few foreigners in the new *Länder*. Of the roughly 190,000 foreigners living in the former GDR in 1989 because of work contracts, many have since been repatriated to Vietnam, Mozambique, Cuba, and other developing countries that were friendly to the GDR regime.

Foreigners began arriving in West Germany in large numbers in the 1960s after the construction of the Berlin Wall ended migration from East Germany. Recruited mainly from a number of countries in southern Europe, *Gastarbeiter* were not expected to stay beyond the terms of their work permits. However, many opted to remain in West Germany and subsequently

Residential area in Cologne
Courtesy Eric Solsten

brought their families there to live. As a result, and owing to higher birth rates, the foreign population in Germany has increased substantially (see table 9, Appendix). By offering financial incentives, West German authorities hoped to encourage some *Gastarbeiter* to return to their native countries, but relatively few took advantage of these provisions. A tightening of entry restrictions also caused many to remain in Germany rather than risk not being readmitted after spending time in their home country.

Although no longer recruited abroad, Germany's foreign residents remain vital to the economy, parts of which would shut down if they were to depart. They also contribute to the country's welfare and social insurance programs by paying twice as much in taxes and insurance premiums as they receive in benefits. In the long term, their presence may be seen as vital because they have a positive birth rate. The birth rate among native Germans is so low that some studies have estimated that Germany will require approximately 200,000 immigrants a year to maintain its population into the next century and support its array of social welfare benefits.

Most Germans do not see their country as a land of immigration like the United States or Canada, and no demographic or social issue has generated greater controversy than the presence of foreigners in the Federal Republic. In an opinion poll taken in 1982, two-thirds of West Germans said that there were too many foreigners in Germany, and one-half thought that foreigners should be sent back to their countries of origin. In 1992 another poll found that the "foreigner problem" ranked as the most serious issue for western Germans and was third in importance for eastern Germans.

According to the foreigners law that went into effect in mid-1993, foreigners living in Germany for fifteen years may become German citizens if they have no criminal record and renounce their original citizenship. Young foreigners who have resided eight years in Germany may become citizens if they have attended German schools for six years and apply for citizenship between the ages of sixteen and twenty-three. Usually, however, German citizenship depends not on where one is born (*ius solis*) but on the nationality of the father or, since 1974, on the mother (*ius sanguinis*). Thus, to many, German citizenship depends on being born German and cannot rightfully be acquired through a legal process. This notion makes it practically impossible for naturalized citizens or their children to be considered German. Some reformers advocate eliminating the concept of German blood in the 1913 law regulating citizenship, but the issue is an emotional one, and such a change has little popular support.

Ethnic Germans

Ethnic Germans have immigrated to Germany since the end of World War II. At first, these immigrants were Germans who had resided in areas that had formerly been German territory. Later, the offspring of German settlers who in previous centuries had settled in areas of Eastern Europe and Russia came to be regarded as ethnic Germans and as such had the right to German citizenship according to Article 116 of the Basic Law. Because they became citizens immediately upon arrival in Germany, ethnic Germans received much financial and social assistance to ease their integration into society. Housing, vocational training, and many other types of assistance, even language training—because many did not know the language of their forebears—were liberally provided.

With the gradual opening of the Soviet empire in the 1980s, the numbers of ethnic Germans coming to West Germany swelled. In the mid-1980s, about 40,000 came each year. In 1987 the number doubled and in 1988 doubled again. In 1990 nearly 400,000 ethnic Germans came to the Federal Republic. In the 1991–93 period, about 400,000 ethnic Germans settled in Germany. Since January 1993, immigration of ethnic Germans has been limited to 220,000 per year.

Because this influx could no longer be managed, especially because of the vast expense of unification, restrictions on the right of ethnic Germans to return to Germany became effective in January 1991. Under the new restrictions, once in Germany ethnic Germans are assigned to certain areas. If they leave these areas, they lose many of their benefits and are treated as if they were foreigners. The government has also established programs to encourage the estimated several million ethnic Germans who still live in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to remain there. Although ethnic Germans are entitled to German citizenship by virtue of their bloodlines, to many Germans they do not seem German, and their social integration has frequently been difficult.

Asylum-Seekers

To atone for the crimes of the Third Reich, Article 16/2 of West Germany's Basic Law offers liberal asylum rights to those suffering political persecution. Until the 1980s, relatively few refugees took advantage of this provision. But in the second half of the decade, a new class of "jet-age refugees" began to make its way to Europe and especially to West Germany, which accepted more than any other West European country. In the mid-1980s, many refugees came from Iran and Lebanon. By 1991 most refugees originated in regions of war-torn former Yugoslavia, Romania, or Turkey. From 1986 to 1989, about 380,000 refugees sought asylum inWest Germany. By comparison, in the 1990–92 period, nearly 900,000 people sought refuge in a united Germany.

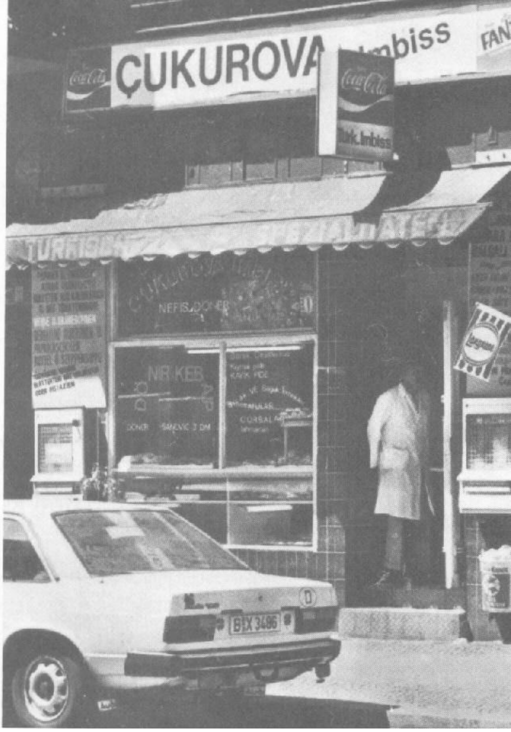
Although only about 5 percent of requests for asylum are approved, slow processing and appeals mean that many refugees remain in Germany for years. Because financial aid is also provided for the refugees' living expenses, their presence has become a burden on federal and local government. The resulting social tensions made imperative an amendment to the constitutional provision regarding asylum. After heated debate, in 1993 the Bundestag passed legislation that amended the Basic Law and tightened restrictions on granting asylum. One important change is that asylum-seekers are no longer to be admitted into Germany if they have applied from a third country. In addition, more funds are to be allotted to processing applications, so that asylum-seekers remain in Germany for shorter periods.

Ethnic Minorities

In the early 1990s, there were between 50,000 and 60,000 Gypsies in Germany. They were divided into two groups: the Sinti, who have lived for hundreds of years in Germany and who have largely adopted conventional modes of living and employment; and the Roma, many of whom fled Romania following the 1989 revolution that toppled the Nicolae Ceausescu regime. The lifestyle and work habits of the mobile Roma clash with those of most Germans. As a result, in 1992 the German government signed an agreement with Romania providing for the repatriation of thousands of Roma in exchange for cash payments to be used for housing and job training.

Several other minority groups, officially recognized and their languages protected, also live in Germany. For more than 1,000 years, the Sorbs, a Slavic nationality, have lived as an ethnic minority in Brandenburg and Saxony. As of 1993, there were about 120,000 Sorbs in Germany. In addition, about 60,000 Danish speakers live in Schleswig-Holstein, a reminder of the area's Danish past; and about 12,000 speakers of the Frisian language live on the Frisian Islands and on the northwestern coast.

Germany once had a prosperous and largely assimilated Jewish population of about 600,000. In the 1930s and 1940s, most German Jews were exiled, were imprisoned, or perished in Nazi death camps (see Total Mobilization, Resistance, and the Holocaust, ch. 1). By the early 1990s, Germany's Jewish community was only about 40,000. Its numbers were growing, however, as the result of the immigration of some Israelis and Russian Jews. One of the most eloquent spokespersons for the rights of minorities and a tireless advocate for greater tolerance is the community's leader, Ignaz Bubnis.


ÇUKUROVA
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NEFIS DÖNER

Turkish restaurant in Berlin
Courtesy German Information Center, New York
Italian grocery store in Cologne
Courtesy Eric Solsten

Coca-Cola
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Women in Society

For centuries, a woman's role in German society was summed up and circumscribed by the three "K" words: *Kinder* (children), *Kirche* (church), and *Küche* (kitchen). Throughout the twentieth century, however, women have gradually won victories in their quest for equal rights. In 1919 they received the right to vote. Profound changes also were wrought by World War II. During the war, women assumed positions traditionally held by men. After the war, the so-called *Trümmerfrauen* (women of the rubble) tended the wounded, buried the dead, salvaged belongings, and began the arduous task of rebuilding war-torn Germany by simply clearing away the rubble.

In West Germany, the Basic Law of 1949 declared that men and women were equal, but it was not until 1957 that the civil code was amended to conform with this statement. Even in the early 1950s, women could be dismissed from the civil service when they married. After World War II, despite the severe shortage of young men that made marriage impossible for many women, traditional marriage once again became society's ideal. Employment and social welfare programs remained predicated on the male breadwinner model. West Germany turned to millions of migrants or immigrants—including large numbers of GDR refugees—to satisfy its booming economy's labor requirements. Women became homemakers and mothers again and largely withdrew from employment outside the home.

In the east, however, women remained in the workforce. The Soviet-style system mandated women's participation in the economy, and the government implemented this key objective by opening up educational and vocational opportunities to women. As early as 1950, marriage and family laws also had been rewritten to accommodate working mothers. Abortion was legalized and funded by the state in the first trimester of pregnancy. An extensive system of social supports, such as a highly developed day-care network for children, was also put in place to permit women to be both mothers and workers. Emancipated "from above" for economic and ideological reasons, women in the east entered institutes of higher learning and the labor force in record numbers while still maintaining the household. East Germany had to rely on women because of its declining population; the situation was made more critical by the fact that most of those fleeing to West Germany were men.

Because of these developments, about 90 percent of East German women worked outside the home. They made up about half the membership in the two most important mass organizations of the former GDR—the Free German Trade Union Federation (Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund—FDGB) and the Free German Youth (Freie Deutsche Jugend—FDJ). In 1988 slightly more than one-third of the membership of the ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands—SED) consisted of women. In contrast, only about 4.4 percent of West German women were members of a political party.

After several decades of conforming to traditional social patterns, West German women began to demand changes. Following patterns in Europe and the United States, emancipation in the Federal Republic originated "from below," with women themselves. In the 1970s, the women's movement gathered momentum, having emerged as an outgrowth of student protests in the late 1960s (see Citizens' Initiative Associations, ch. 7). Rallying around the causes of equal rights (including the right to abortion, which was somewhat restricted in West Germany), the movement succeeded in having legislation passed in 1977 that granted a woman equal rights in marriage. A woman could work outside the home and file for divorce without her husband's permission. Divorce was permitted when the marriage partners could no longer be reconciled.

Women also made gains in education in both Germanys. By the mid-1960s, East German women accounted for about half of all secondary school graduates who had prepared to study at institutes of higher learning in the GDR; by the 1975–76 academic year, they were in the majority (53 percent). To assist women in completing their studies, an extensive support system, including supplementary payments and child care, was provided. Expanded educational opportunities for West German women were slower in coming and never equaled the levels reached in the east. Only in the early 1980s did West German women qualify for admission to universities in the same numbers as men. Although fewer than that number pursued college and university studies, between 1970 and 1989 the percentage of female students increased from 31 percent to 41 percent. Two factors were believed to be responsible for the discrepancy between eastern and western rates of attendance at institutes of higher learning: West German women had a stronger orientation toward traditional familial relations; and they had dimmer prospects for admission to particular academic departments and for professional employment after graduation.

Despite significant gains, discrimination remains in united Germany. Income inequalities persist: a woman's wages and salaries range between 65 percent and 78 percent of a man's for many positions. In most fields, women do not hold key positions. Generally, the higher the position, the more powerful is male dominance. For example, women are heavily represented in the traditional care-giving fields of health and education, but even in such fields there is a wide disparity between the number of females working in hospitals (75 percent of total staff) and schools (more than 50 percent) and the number of female physicians (4 percent) and principals (20 percent in the west and 32 percent in the east). In the late 1980s, only 5 percent of university professors in West Germany were women.

Although substantial barriers to equality of the sexes in Germany remain as a result of a persistently patriarchal family structure and work environment, women have managed to gain isolated high-profile victories. A separate national office for women's affairs was created in West Germany in 1980, and similar agencies have been established in most *Länder* in united Germany. Since the mid-1980s, offices responsible for working toward women's equality have been active, first in West Germany and after unification in the new *Länder*. The Equality Offices (*Gleichstellungstellen*) have as one of their tasks ensuring that women occupy a more equitable share of positions in the public sector.

Some women have succeeded in reaching positions of power. One of the most successful women in politics in the 1990s is Rita Süssmuth, president of the Bundestag. In the field of industry, Birgit Breuel assumed the leadership, following the assassination of Detlev Rohwedder in April 1991, of the Treuhandanstalt (Trust Agency), the powerful agency charged with privatizing the former East German economy. Other influential and prominent German women in the mid-1990s are Marion von Dönhoff, coeditor of *Die Zeit*, and Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann, director of the Allensbach Public Opinion Institute. Yet despite this progress, a 1991 article in an influential weekly magazine made it clear how far women must go to achieve equality. The magazine's list of the 100 most powerful people in Germany included only four women.

Almost all segments of eastern German society encountered tremendous difficulty in the unification process, but women suffered the most. Some reports indicated that two-thirds of working women in the new *Länder* were unemployed, and many more were turned into part-time workers as a result of privatization, downsizing of firms, and elimination of support services such as day-care and after-school centers. To improve their prospects for employment, some women in eastern Germany reportedly were resorting to sterilization, one of the factors contributing to the steep decline in births from twelve per 1,000 in 1989 to 5.3 per 1,000 in 1993.

Among the issues that demonstrated differences between women of the old and new *Länder*, one of the most contentious was abortion. In 1991 there were about 125,000 registered abortions performed in Germany, about 50,000 of which were in the east. Although the number of registered abortions in both parts of Germany had been declining in recent years, the actual number of abortions was estimated at about 250,000. For a time following unification, the restrictive western and permissive eastern legislation on abortion continued in force. In June 1992, however, the Bundestag voted to ease abortion restrictions and to permit the procedure during the first twelve weeks of pregnancy with compulsory counseling. Resorting to what had been a successful policy in the early 1970s, those opposed to the new law, including Chancellor Helmut Kohl, appealed to the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe to nullify the new law. Just before it was scheduled to take effect, the law was blocked when the court issued an injunction. Subsequently, a new restrictive law came to apply in all of Germany (see Political Developments since Unification, ch. 7).

Marriage and Family

Like most other advanced countries in the postwar era, Germany recorded fewer marriages, more divorces, and smaller families. In 1960 there were 690,000 marriages, compared with 516,000 in 1990. The total for 1993 amounted to only 442,000, but most of this decline was caused by a drop of than more 50 percent in the number of marriages in the new *Länder* between 1990 and 1993. Until 1990 the decline in marriages in East Germany had been appreciably greater than in West Germany (from 215,000 in 1950 to 137,000 in 1989, compared with 536,000 and 399,000 in the same years in West Germany), but not nearly as steep in the 1990–93 period. Just as the dramatic social changes brought to the new *Länder* by unification affected birth rates there, so they also affected marriages rates.

Another difference in marriage practices between the two Germanys had been that easterners marrying for the first time did so at an earlier age than westerners. Easterners did so, it is believed, because of their desire to have children and hence qualify for low-cost child care and housing benefits. Following unification this difference remained. In 1992 the average age at first marriage was 29.0 for men and 26.5 for women in the old *Länder*, compared with 27.1 for men and 25.1 for women in the new *Länder*. Since the mid-1970s, the average age at which people marry has slowly risen for both genders in both parts of Germany.

As the number of marriages declined, the frequency of divorce increased in both states. Between 1960 and 1990, the number of divorces in West Germany more than doubled, increasing from 49,000 to 123,000 and yielding a divorce rate of about 30 percent. Divorce was always more common in East Germany than it was in West Germany. The number of divorces roughly doubled between 1960 and 1988, going from 25,000 to 49,000. In 1986 there was a record divorce rate of 46 percent. Although home to only 20 percent of the total population, the new *Länder* accounted for 29 percent of all divorces in 1990. After unification, however, the incidence of divorce decreased greatly in the east, perhaps in response to the overall uncertainty and insecurity of future prospects for single mothers in unified Germany. In 1992 the number of divorces in the new *Länder* amounted to only 10,000. In 1993, however, this number rose to 18,000, an increase of 78 percent.

Despite the increasing likelihood of divorce, in 1990 about 89 percent of all families consisted of married couples, and about 70 percent of those of marriage age were married. In both east and west, however, the failure of these families to produce the necessary number of children for population replacement was striking. Of the 15 million married couples in the former West Germany, about 57 percent had children. Forty-seven percent of couples with children had one child, 38 percent had two children, and 13 percent had three or more children. In 1950 the average number of persons in German households was 3.0. By 1990 this figure had declined to 2.3. In 1991 four-person households accounted for 13 percent of the total number of households, three-person households for 16 percent, two-person households for 31 percent, and single-person households for 35 percent. In the early 1990s, only foreign families were regularly having two or more children, with the Turkish subgroup being the largest in terms of family size.

Like West Germany, East Germany had provided legislative protection for the family and married couples, together with generous maternity leave and pay provisions. In the east, however, it was assumed that the mother would rejoin the workforce soon after maternity leave, and an elaborate child-care system was put in place. Virtually all women could obtain excellent care for their children if they wished. In the west, many mothers gave up their careers or interrupted them for long periods following the birth of a child because child care was generally unavailable. As a result, in 1990 women of child-bearing age in the east had more children (1.67) than women in the west (1.42). Supported by the state, eastern women had long been accustomed to balancing child-rearing and a profession. After unification, however, the new *Länder* experienced a precipitous decline in births because of high unemployment, especially among women (see Fertility, this ch.).

By the mid-1990s, the newest trend in household formation was what became known as nonmarital living partnerships. Between 1972 and 1990, the number of such households increased sevenfold, to 963,000, or 2.7 percent of all households. Almost 90 percent of these were childless households. Most young people were opting to live together before deciding to marry. This factor pushed the average age at marriage higher.

Another sign of the movement away from the traditional concept of family and of the manifestation of sexual freedom was the rising number of out-of-wedlock births. In the late 1980s, about one in ten West German and three in ten East German births were to unmarried women.

In the postwar period, it became clear that marriage had lost its former position as the only legitimate locus for sexual activity. In the early 1990s, polls indicated that 60 percent of German sixteen-year-olds were sexually active, compared with 15 percent in the 1950s.

In the past, when regional differences were acute, convention held that marriages between a Prussian and a Bavarian, between a Catholic and a Protestant, and definitely between a Christian and a Jew were "mixed" marriages. In modern Germany, only unions between Germans and foreigners are considered mixed. Of 516,000 marriages in 1990, about 6 percent were between Germans and foreigners. Most often German women married Americans, Italians, Turks, and Yugoslavs, and German men married Yugoslavs, Poles, Filipinos, and Austrians. In 1974 legislation was passed conferring automatic citizenship on children born of these unions.

Housing

There is a wide range of housing stock in Germany, from mansions and country estates for the wealthy, to tents and welfare hotels for the needy and homeless. Most Germans live in self-contained apartments or in single-family houses. Single-story and two-story townhouse-like dwellings characterize the tidy neighborhoods of small towns and medium-sized cities, and high-rise apartment buildings are common in larger cities. In many communities, merchants, tradespeople, and shopkeepers continue to live above their stores, and clustered farmhouses still form the nucleus of many villages.

After World War II, West Germany faced a severe housing shortage. Not only had the war destroyed much of the housing, but the millions of refugees from the east had to find new accommodations. According to one estimate, there were 10 million dwellings for 17 million households. The housing shortage often forced several families to share a single dwelling. In the 1950s and 1960s, a tremendous surge in construction, supported heavily by the government, resulted in the construction of as many as 700,000 dwellings in a single year. Gradually, the housing crisis eased. The problems that persisted generally involved a shortage of affordable housing in urban areas. Housing conditions in East Germany also improved greatly. However, much of the housing was badly designed and poorly constructed, and even at the state's demise in 1990, the overall housing supply was inadequate.

Unification revealed significant differences in the quality, variety, and size of dwellings in the two Germanys. In West Germany, about 70 percent of the housing stock had been built after 1948, with 95 percent of the dwellings having their own bathrooms and 75 percent having central heating. In East Germany, 55 percent of the housing stock had been built before 1948, with only 75 percent of the dwellings having bathrooms and only 47 percent having central heating. In addition, much of the housing in East Germany was in poor condition because the authorities had maintained rents at such low levels that funds were not available for essential repairs.

In 1992 united Germany had approximately 34.5 million dwellings with 149 million rooms, for a total of 2.8 billion square meters of living space. Dwellings in the west were larger than those in the east. In 1992 dwellings in the old *Länder* had an average floor space of 82.7 square meters for an average of 35.1 square meters per person, compared with 64.5 square meters and an average of 29.0 square meters per person in the new *Länder.*

The federal government has responded with special measures to rectify housing problems in the new *Länder,* launching an ambitious program to upgrade and expand housing. By 1993 about 1.1 million units had been modernized. Specialists have estimated that bringing housing in the east up to western standards will require the construction of 140,000 new dwellings a year until 2005.

Unification also revealed significant differences with respect to home ownership. In the early 1990s, approximately 40 percent of residents owned their dwellings in the old *Länder,* compared with 25 percent in the new *Länder.*

Prior to unification, a housing shortage had developed in West Germany because of increased immigration and the rising number of single householders. The arrival of several million refugees, ethnic Germans, and eastern Germans coincided with a steep drop in the availability of inexpensive housing. Despite the construction of as many as 400,000 new dwellings each year, as of 1993 the need for housing outpaced the supply. A housing shortage exists because the country's 35 million households exceed the number of dwellings by about 500,000.

The housing shortage and a lack of available land for building in densely populated areas have driven up real estate prices. In 1992 a single-family free-standing house with 125 square meters of floor space cost DM300,000 in Dresden, DM450,000 in Hamburg, DM590,000 in Frankfurt am Main, DM800,000 in Berlin, and DM910,000 in Munich. In western Germany, the average price of building land was DM129 per square meter, compared with DM32 per square meter in the east.

Because decent housing is seen as a basic right in Germany, the government provides financial aid to households devoting too great a share of their income to housing costs. The aid can subsidize their rents or help pay mortgages. In the early 1990s, some 3 million households received this type of aid. Despite these programs, however, homelessness remains a problem. In the early 1990s, some specialists estimated the number of homeless at between 800,000 and 1 million, while others believed it to be as low as 150,000. The homeless receive aid from government and charitable organizations, which provide an array of social services and shelters (see Provisions of the Social Welfare System, ch. 4).

Religion

Roman Catholicism, one of Germany's two principal religions, traces its origins there to the eighth-century missionary work of Saint Boniface (see Medieval Germany, ch. 1). In the next centuries, Roman Catholicism made more converts and spread eastward. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Knights of the Teutonic Order spread German and Roman Catholic influence by force of arms along the southern Baltic Coast and into Russia. In 1517, however, Martin Luther challenged papal authority and what he saw as the commercialization of his faith. In the process, Luther changed the course of European and world history and established the second major faith in Germany—Protestantism (see The Protestant Reformation, ch. 1).

Religious differences played a decisive role in the Thirty Years' War (see The Thirty Years' War, 1618–48, ch. 1). An enduring legacy of the Protestant Reformation and this conflict was the division of Germany into fairly distinct regions of religious practice. Roman Catholicism remained the preeminent faith in the southern and western German states, while Protestantism became firmly established in the northeastern and central regions. Pockets of Roman Catholicism existed in Oldenburg in the north and in areas of Hesse. Protestant congregations could be found in north Baden and northeastern Bavaria.

The unification of Germany in 1871 under Prussian leadership led to the strengthening of Protestantism (see Bismarck and Unification, ch. 1). Otto von Bismarck sought to weaken Roman Catholic influence through an anti-Roman Catholic campaign, the Kulturkampf, in the early 1870s. The Jesuit order was prohibited in Germany, and its members were expelled from the country. In Prussia the "Falk laws," named for Adalbert Falk, Bismarck's minister of culture, mandated German citizenship and attendance at German universities for clergymen, state inspection of schools, and state confirmation of parish and episcopal appointments. Although relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the state were subsequently improved through negotiations with the Vatican, the Kulturkampf engendered in Roman Catholics a deep distrust of the empire and enmity toward Prussia.

Prior to World War II, about two-thirds of the German population was Protestant and the remainder Roman Catholic. Bavaria was a Roman Catholic stronghold. Roman Catholics were also well represented in the populations of Baden-Württemberg, the Saarland, and in much of the Rhineland. Elsewhere in Germany, especially in the north and northeast, Protestants were in the majority.

During the Hitler regime, except for individual acts of resistance, the established churches were unable or unwilling to mount a serious challenge to the supremacy of the state (see The Third Reich, 1933–45, ch. 1). A Nazi, Ludwig Müller, was installed as the Lutheran bishop in Berlin. Although raised a Roman Catholic, Hitler respected only the power and organization of the Roman Catholic Church, not its tenets. In July 1933, shortly after coming to power, the Nazis scored their first diplomatic success by concluding a concordat with the Vatican, regulating church-state relations. In return for keeping the right to maintain denominational schools nationwide, the Vatican assured the Nazis that Roman Catholic clergy would refrain from political activity, that the government would have a say in the choice of bishops, and that changes in diocesan boundaries would be subject to government approval. However, the Nazis soon violated the concordat's terms, and by the late 1930s almost all denominational schools had been abolished.

Toward the end of 1933, an opposition group under the leadership of Lutheran pastors Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer formed the "Confessing Church." The members of this church opposed the takeover of the Lutheran Church by the Nazis. Many of its members were eventually arrested, and some were executed—among them, Bonhoeffer—by the end of World War II.

Postwar Christianity

The postwar division of Germany left roughly equal numbers of Roman Catholics and Protestants in West Germany. East Germany had five times as many Protestants as Roman Catholics. There the authorities waged a persistent and largely successful campaign to minimize the influence and authority of the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches.

In the Federal Republic, freedom of religion is guaranteed by Article 4 of the Basic Law, and the churches enjoy a special legal status as corporate bodies. In theory, there is constitutional separation of church and state, but church financing complicates this separation. To support churches and their work, most Germans in the old *Länder* pay a voluntary church tax, amounting to an 8 or 9 percent surcharge on income tax paid. Living in a society known for consensus and conformity, few West Germans formally withdrew from the established churches before the 1980s and hence continued to pay the tax.

Beginning in the 1980s, negative attitudes toward the tax and the churches become more common, and people began leaving the churches in significant numbers. Between 1980 and 1992, about 1.0 million Roman Catholics and 1.2 million Protestants gave up their church memberships. A faltering economy and increased taxes caused many to withdraw for financial reasons. In a 1992 poll, approximately 42 percent of those queried stated that the church tax was "much too high"; 64 percent favored abolishing the tax and supporting the churches through voluntary contributions. Fourteen percent of those Roman Catholics and Protestants polled stated that they were likely to withdraw or definitely would withdraw from their church.

In a society increasingly materialist and secular, the spiritual and moral positions of the churches became irrelevant to many. Among the younger generation seeking autonomy and self-fulfillment, allegiance was no longer simply surrendered without question to institutions of authority. Attendance at services dropped off significantly, and the institution of the church quietly disappeared from the lives of many Germans.

In East Germany, although the constitution theoretically provided for freedom of religion, the Marxist-Leninist state placed formidable obstacles before those seeking to exercise that basic right. Enormous pressure was exerted on citizens to renounce religion. East Germans who practiced their religion were denied educational and professional opportunities, for example. Consequently, at unification the majority of East Germans were either not baptized or had left their church.

In the 1990s, polls in the new *Länder* revealed that more than 70 percent of East Germans did not believe in God. Young people were even less religious. Some polls found that only 16 percent of East German schoolchildren believed in God. An entire generation had been raised without the religious rituals that traditionally had marked life's milestones. Secular rituals had been substituted. For example, the *Jugendweihe* (youth dedication) gradually supplanted the Christian practice of confirmation.

After unification in 1990, there were nominally 30.2 million Protestants and 26.7 million Roman Catholics in united Germany. Roman Catholics and Protestants combined amounted to about 76 percent of the German population and 71 percent of the country's total population.

Although less extreme than in the past, attitudes toward religion continue to polarize German society. In the 1990s, especially in the western *Länder*, attitudinal differences separate many younger Germans with humanistic values (concern for the environment, the rights of women and minorities, and peace and disarmament issues) from an older generation who hold traditional religious values. Many others of the postwar generations have accepted the values of popular culture and consumerism and have left the churches because they no longer seem significant. Millions of Germans of all ages, however, continue to profess a religion for a variety of reasons, among them strong religious beliefs, social pressure to conform, preservation of educational and employment opportunities, support for essential church social-welfare activities, and (in the western *Länder*) the enduring appeal of Christian rituals surrounding baptism, marriage, and burial.

As of 1995, it was difficult to determine to what extent Germans in the new *Länder* would return to religion. In the early 1990s, popular magazines featured stories about the "heathenization" of Germany. Although such a provocative characterization of trends seems exaggerated, the incorporation of the former East Germany did dilute religious influence in united Germany. Conversely, however, the opening of eastern Germany gave missionaries from the old *Länder* and from around the world the chance to rekindle religious fervor. In the old *Länder*, the churches have continued their vitally important work of operating an extensive network of hospitals, nursing homes, and other social institutions. The need for such services and facilities is greatest in the five new *Länder*, and the churches quickly stepped in to help.

Roman Catholicism

With about 28.2 million members, the Roman Catholic Church in unified Germany is organized into five archdioceses, eighteen dioceses, three diocesan offices, and one apostolic administration. Two of the archdioceses are based in Bavaria (Munich/Freising and Bamberg) and two in North Rhine-Westphalia (Cologne and Paderborn). More than 57 percent of all German Roman Catholics live in these two *Länder*. Another 28 percent live in the three *Länder* of Baden-Württemberg, Hesse, and Rhineland-Palatinate. Only about 900 of the church's 13,000 parishes and other pastoral centers are located in the new *Länder*. The number of Roman Catholics in East Germany declined from 2 million shortly after the war to 800,000 by 1992. Serving these Roman Catholics are two dioceses, one in Brandenburg (Berlin) and the other in Saxony (Dresden).

Between 1970 and 1989, the number of Roman Catholics attending Sunday mass in West Germany declined from 37 percent to 23 percent. Between 1970 and 1990, the number of annual baptisms fell from about 370,000 to around 300,000. Approximately 470,000 Roman Catholics officially left the church between 1985 and 1990. In the same period, about 25,000 returned to the church, and another 25,000 converted to other religions.

Despite the diminishing numbers of Roman Catholics, the church tax enables the Roman Catholic Church to remain strong financially. In 1992 the church's share of tax revenues amounted to approximately DM8.5 billion. An additional DM8 billion was received in the form of government subsidies, service payments, property, and contributions. Much of this support is returned to society through an extensive network of church-operated kindergartens, senior citizen centers, and hospitals. The main Roman Catholic charitable organization is the Deutscher Caritasverband, which had about 400,000 employees in 1992.

As the FRG has become an increasingly secular society, the centuries-old traditional authority of the Roman Catholic Church in matters of morality has declined, especially among German youth. Many German Roman Catholics routinely ignore the church and in particular the pope's positions on such key issues as birth control, premarital sex, divorce, and abortion. For years the number of ordinations in Germany has declined. To address this issue, most German Catholics favor permitting priests to marry, and many support the ordination of women.

Periodically, independent reformist clergymen challenge the church hierarchy and doctrine. Often they do so with the support of many German Catholics. In the 1970s, Hans Küng, a theologian at Tübingen University, used his position and charisma to criticize the idea of papal infallibility and other dogmas. In the early 1990s, major differences of opinion between the laity and church authorities were revealed by a clash between a reform-minded priest and the archbishop in Paderborn, the most conservative German diocese. For beliefs deemed contrary to Vatican policies and dogma, Father Eugen Drewermann was defrocked by Archbishop Johannes Degenhardt. In the tradition of Luther, Drewermann continued to express his unorthodox views outside the church—at universities and in the media, including talk shows. A 1992 survey indicated that among all Germans, Drewermann was more popular than Pope John Paul II.

Protestantism

In the mid-1990s, most of the country's roughly 30 million Protestants were organized into twenty-four member churches of the Evangelical Church in Germany (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland—EKD), headquartered in Hanover. Later in the decade, the church's headquarters is scheduled to relocate to Berlin. The mainline Protestant churches belong to one of three groups: Lutheran (ten); Reformed, or Calvinist (two); and United, or Lutheran-Calvinist (twelve). The largest number of congregations is in Saxony, Berlin, Brandenburg, Lower Saxony, Bavaria, Thuringia, and Baden-Württemberg. Protestant clergy are permitted to marry, and women are actively engaged in the ministry. One of the most prominent women in the EKD and in Germany in the mid-1990s was Maria Jepsen, bishop of Hamburg.

In the early 1990s, about 5 percent of German Protestants attended weekly services. Annual baptisms declined from about 346,000 in 1970 to around 257,000 in 1990. Of the 257,000 baptisms in 1990, only about 12 percent took place in the former East Germany. Out of 219,000 confirmations in 1990, about 10 percent involved East German youth. Like their Roman Catholic counterparts, Protestant churches are well supported by taxes and contributions. The EKD also runs numerous hospitals and other social institutions and is a vitally important member of the country's system of social welfare. The main Protestant charitable organization is the Diakonisches Werk; it has about 350,000 employees.

In East Germany, Protestant churches became a focal point of opposition during the 1980s. This was possible because of an agreement with the authorities in 1978 that granted the churches a degree of independence. Opposition groups, composed of believers and nonbelievers alike, subsequently were able to meet at the churches, where they discussed peace issues and how East Germany could be reformed. In 1989 these churches, in particular those in Leipzig, became staging points for the massive demonstrations that led to the collapse of the communist regime (see The Peace Movement and Internal Resistance, ch. 2).

Free Churches

The free churches in Germany include about a dozen affiliated but independent churches and congregations that emerged from Protestant renewal movements, primarily in the nineteenth century. Some free churches practice baptism, and others accept a simple public declaration of faith. Prominent among the former are Baptists and Methodists, who set up religious communities in Germany in 1834 and 1849, respectively. Methodism was brought to Germany by immigrants returning from the United States. Since 1854 a third group, the Free Evangelical Congregations, has practiced baptism of believers, without making it a precondition for membership in the congregation.

Although the various free churches follow different practices, they differ from the two main religions in Germany in that they are independent of the state. The free churches, seeing themselves as "free churches in a free country," seek no special treatment from the state and are funded almost exclusively by members' voluntary contributions.

The emergence of these independent churches was accompanied by their persecution and denunciation as sects. For this reason, overcoming prejudice has been a long and arduous process. After World War II, the free churches were cofounders of the Study Group of Christian Churches in West Germany and West Berlin. They used this organization as a forum for fraternal interaction with other churches.

The tenets of the free churches stress the importance of the New Testament, freely expressed belief in Jesus Christ and a life of service devoted to him, personal piety, and the sanctity of human life. Conscientious objection to military service is a part of the teachings of some free churches. Many free churches emphasize the autonomy of the local parish and prefer to be called a community rather than a church.

Since 1926 the original members of the Free Churches in Germany have cooperated with one another through the Meeting of Evangelical Free Churches. These churches are the Association of Evangelical Free Church Congregations, the Association of Free Evangelical Congregations, and the Evangelical Methodist Church. Five additional churches have guest membership status: the Christian Study Group Mülheim/Ruhr, the Sacred Army in Germany, the European-Festland Fraternal Uniate, the Church of the Nazarene, and the Association of German Mennonite Communities. These eight free churches have a combined membership of approximately 195,000, organized in about 1,500 parishes or communities. Almost all these churches are legal corporate bodies.

In recent years, the free churches' interaction and cooperation with the established Protestant churches have intensified. A few such activities include missionary work, Bible groups, and humanitarian efforts such as "Bread for the World."

Orthodox Churches

Eastern Orthodox Christianity in Germany derives mainly from the hundreds of thousands of Serbs who came to the country in the 1960s and 1970s as *Gastarbeiter.* The breakup of the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s caused thousands more Serbs to come to Germany. Many of the Slavs from other East European countries also belong to the Eastern Orthodox Church. Germany's large Greek population belongs mostly to the Greek Orthodox Church.

Judaism

When Hitler came to power in 1933, approximately 600,000 Jews lived in Germany, some of whom were among the most prominent members of society. Over the next twelve years, most fled or were murdered, along with millions of East European Jews, Slavs, and other nationalities. As of January 1992, seventy-six Jewish congregations and *Land* associations had about 34,000 members, with the largest communities located in Berlin and Frankfurt am Main. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, several thousand Soviet Jews of German ancestry took advantage of liberalized Soviet emigration policies and German naturalization laws and resettled in the Federal Republic. However, since unification in 1990 and the outbreak of radical right-wing violence, some in the Jewish community, remembering similar events in the 1930s, have left. Although most hate-crimes and violence have been aimed at foreign workers and asylum-seekers, there have been scattered incidents of attacks on Jewish synagogues and memorials.

Islam

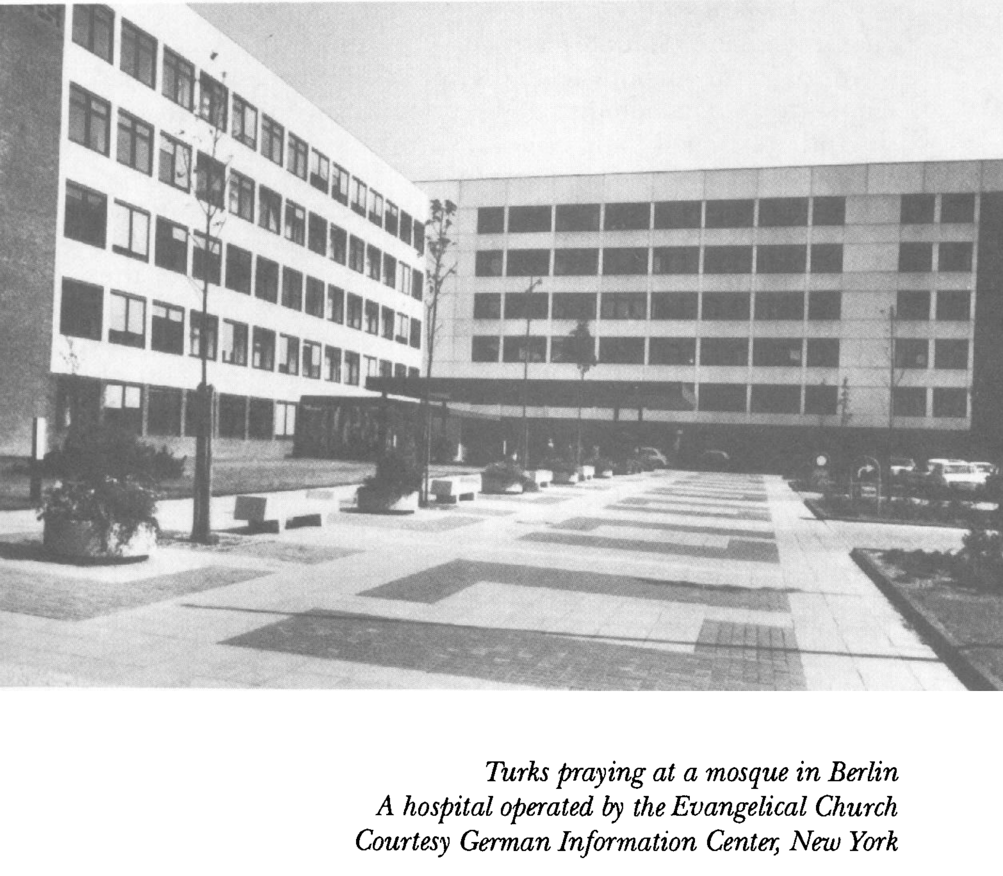
Following the influx of foreign laborers in the 1960s and early 1970s, Islam established a religious presence in Germany, making it the religion with the country's third largest membership. As of 1994, approximately 2 million Muslims resided in Germany. Most of the Muslims are either Turkish, Kurdish, Iranian, or Palestinian. Additional Muslims have entered the country as refugees, fleeing the ethnic and religious conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

Social Structure and Social Mobility

Despite continuing although lessening differences in living standards between the old and new *Länder*, in the mid-1990s German social structure consists mainly of a large, prosperous central stratum containing about 60 percent of the population. This stratum includes mid-level civil servants, most salaried employees, skilled blue-collar workers, and a shrinking pool of farmers. A smaller wealthier group consisting of an upper-middle class and an upper class offsets the poverty experienced by a poor lower class. Hence in terms of social indicators such as education, average income, and property ownership, Germany ranks among the world's leading countries. In terms of income, for example, in 1991 the average German family had a net monthly income of DM4,905, second highest among members of the EC.

Social Structure

Most of the workforce is employed in the services sector. West Germany completed the transition from an industrial economy to one dominated by the services sector in the 1970s, and by the late 1980s this sector employed two-thirds of the workforce. In contrast, when the Berlin Wall fell, East Germany still had not made this transition. Because more of the work-



Turks praying at a mosque in Berlin
A hospital operated by the Evangelical Church
Courtesy German Information Center, New York

force was engaged in industry and agriculture than in the services sector, its socioeconomic structure resembled that of West Germany in 1965.

Rainer Geissler, a German sociologist, has examined his country's social structure in light of the economic changes that have taken place in the postwar era. Because of the growth of the services sector and the doubling of state employees since 1950, he has discarded earlier divisions of German society into an elite class, middle class, and worker class, with a small services class consisting of employees of all levels. He has replaced this division with a more nuanced model that better reflects these postwar changes. As the economy of the new *Länder* is incorporated into the western economy, its much simpler social structure (elite, self-employed, salaried employees, and workers) will come to resemble that of the old *Länder*.

According to Geissler, at the end of the 1980s West Germany's largest group (28 percent of the population) was an educated salaried middle class, employed either in the services sector or in the manufacturing sector as educated, white-collar employees. Some members of this group earned very high salaries; others earned skilled blue-collar wages. This professional class has expanded at the expense of the old middle class, which amounted to only 7 percent of the population at the end of the 1980s. A less educated segment of the services sector, or white-collar employee sector, amounted to 9 percent of the population. Geissler divided the working class into three groups: an elite of the best-trained and best-paid workers (12 percent); skilled workers (18 percent), about 5 percent of whom are foreigners; and unskilled workers (15 percent), about 25 percent of whom are foreigners. A portion of this last group live below the poverty line. Farmers and their families make up 6 percent of the population. At the top of his model of the social structure, Geissler posits an elite of less than 1 percent.

The Elite

During the centuries when Germany was a collection of medium-and small-sized states, wealth and power were concentrated in the hands of the nobility, landed gentry, and wealthy merchants in the cities. With the collapse of the German Empire in 1918, the nobility and landed gentry suffered a major setback, but they still retained much power and influence. During the interwar years, however, much political power devolved to representatives of other classes. A vivid illustration of the transfer of power was former army corporal Adolf Hitler's assumption of the German presidency following the death of General Paul von Hindenburg in 1934.

The old propertied and monied elites suffered an additional loss of power after World War II. In the new worker-dominated GDR, they saw their property confiscated and their power evaporate. West German society was transformed by the rapidly expanding social market economy and the migration of millions of displaced persons from the east, many of whom were well educated and capable. Some of the old elite and their offspring retained positions of influence (most notably in the military and the diplomatic corps), but to an extent greater than ever before, the elite class became open to society as a whole.

According to Geissler, Germany's elite numbers just a few thousand, less than 1 percent of the population, but its influence far outweighs its numbers. The elite consists of persons occupying key positions in such social sectors as business, politics, labor unions, the civil service, the media, and the churches. Membership in the elite is based on performance and is rarely inherited. For this reason, Germany's elite is pluralist in nature because members of lower social strata can enter it by rising to the top of a social sector. The openness of elite positions varies. Sons of workers routinely come to hold high positions in labor unions or in the SPD, but rarely in banking or the diplomatic corps. A vital criterion for advancement is a university degree, most notably a law degree, because about one-third of Germany's elite consists of lawyers.

Entry into East Germany's elite was determined almost exclusively by ideological considerations. Small and entrenched, the East German elite has been characterized as monopolistic, in contrast to that of the West German elite, where numerous groups shared or competed for power. Most of the GDR elite has lost power since the fall of the Berlin Wall. As a result, a new elite similar to the pluralistic elite of the old *Länder* is forming in the new *Länder*.

The Self-Employed

The self-employed provide a service on their own or are the owners of firms that provide a service or a product. In West Germany in 1989, the self-employed constituted 8.8 percent of the workforce, compared with 16.0 percent in 1950; their decline was even steeper in East Germany, from 20.4 to 2.2 percent over the same period. The self-employed are a heterogeneous group, encompassing shipping magnates and seamstresses and artists and gas station owners. As a result, the earnings of the group's members vary considerably—some members are wealthy, most rank in the upper middle or middle class in terms of income and social prestige, and some (about 7 percent of this group) are poor. Excluding farmers, annual household income of the self-employed in the old *Länder* in 1991 amounted to about DM150,000, almost triple the average household income.

As property owners and food producers, farmers are a small but significant part of the self-employed. In both Germanys, the number of farmers fell dramatically in the postwar era: in the west, from 5 million (or 10 percent of the population) in 1950 to 864,000 (or 1.4 percent) in 1989; in the east, from 740,000 in 1951 to only 3,000 in the early 1990s.

A typical agricultural enterprise in the old *Länder* is a small- or medium-sized farm worked by the owner, assisted by one or two family members. Some farmers are wealthy, while others only earn a bare subsistence. Farmers' average household income is lower than that of most other self-employed but is about 25 percent higher than the national average.

Salaried Employees

The number of salaried employees grew greatly in the postwar era in West Germany, from 16 percent of the workforce in 1950, to 33 percent in 1974, and to 42 percent in 1989. Salaried employees work in three main areas: commercial, technical, and administrative. In 1989, 68 percent of salaried employees worked in the services sector and 32 percent in industry.

Geissler divides salaried employees (including civil servants) into two groups: a lower group that performs simple routine tasks (hairdressers, salesclerks, bus drivers, and low-level civil servants such as letter carriers) and that in 1989 accounted for 9 percent of West Germany's population; and an upper group with advanced education and responsibility, often unsupervised, that performs complex tasks (accountants, teachers, lawyers, and engineers) and that accounted for 28 percent of the population. The jobs of the upper group often involve much stress, and half its members have complained of it, compared with less than one-fourth of skilled workers.

In 1988 the households of salaried employees in West Germany earned on the whole 36 percent more than workers' households. Studies have found that despite their modest social prestige and income, only 13 percent of the lower group of salaried employees regard themselves as workers. Salaried employees as a whole see themselves as belonging to the middle class. According to various studies cited by Geissler, the social animosity that prevailed between salaried employees and workers in the first half of the twentieth century has evolved into a more subtle sense of belonging to different groups. This feeling of distinctness is most strongly felt by salaried employees far removed from the workbench, for example, those in banking.

Generally speaking, salaried employees tend to believe that they must look out for themselves on an individual basis, rather than collectively, as is more common among workers. The higher salaried employees rise in their profession, the more likely this is to be the case. In consequence, a smaller portion of salaried employees are members of labor unions than are workers.

Civil Servants

Civil servants (*Beamten*) have a long tradition in Germany. Their number more than doubled between 1950 and 1989, from 790,000 to 1.8 million in West Germany, where they accounted for 6.6 percent of the workforce. Because teachers and professors are civil servants in Germany, much of this increase came from the expansion of education in the postwar era. Only about one-third of those working for the state are regarded as civil servants. The remainder are either hourly or salaried employees without the special status and rights of civil servants. In 1989 civil servants and government employees accounted for 16.6 percent of the workforce.

Civil servants have complete job security, generous pensions, and higher net incomes than salaried employees. In return for these advantages, civil servants are to serve the state loyally and carry out their duties in a nonpartisan way. This does not, however, prevent civil servants from being active in politics and even being elected to public office.

Workers

Although West Germany became primarily a services-sector economy in the 1970s, blue-collar workers remain a vitally important segment of the workforce, even though they are outnumbered by salaried employees. At the end of the 1980s, workers accounted for two-fifths of the workforce in West Germany, a drop from three-fifths in 1900 and slightly more than one-half in 1960. The social market economy and powerful trade unions greatly improved workers' working conditions, job security, and living standards in the postwar era. Between 1970 and 1989, for example, their average net earnings increased 41 percent in real terms, more than any other group except for the self-employed (not including farmers) and pensioners. In the 1980s, about 43 percent of skilled workers and 29 percent of unskilled or partially trained workers lived in their own houses or apartments; automobile ownership and lengthy vacations (often abroad) had become the rule.

As a result of these changes, German workers no longer live separately from the rest of society as was the case in the nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth century. The gradual, so-called deproletarianization has caused some sociologists to maintain that it is no longer accurate to speak of German workers as a separate social group. Geissler is aware of the much-improved living standards of the workers and the gradual disappearance of a proletarian lifestyle, but he maintains that workers still constitute a distinct group because their earnings are lower than average, their work is physically demanding and closely supervised, and their children's opportunities for social advancement are not as good as those of most other groups. In addition, most workers still regard themselves as members of the working class, although a growing percentage see themselves as middle class.

According to Geissler, the working class is composed of three distinct subgroups: elite, skilled, and unskilled or partially trained workers. In the mid-1980s, about 12 percent of the population lived in the households of the worker elite, 19 percent in those of skilled workers, and 16 percent in those of the unskilled.

The worker elite, which is composed of supervisors and highly trained personnel, enjoys better pay than the other groups. Its work is less physically demanding and resembles that of salaried employees. Only one-third of the sons of the worker elite remain workers, and about one-half of the group see themselves as members of the middle class.

Skilled workers have completed a set course of vocational training. This group has expanded in recent decades and in the early 1990s outnumbered the unskilled, which even as late as 1970 accounted for 57 percent of workers.

Unskilled workers perform the poorest paid and dirtiest tasks. Foreigners account for about 25 percent of this group and German women for about 38 percent. A portion of this group lives below the poverty line. In addition to their other burdens, the unskilled are most likely to become unemployed and involved in criminal activity.

The Poor

As a large, urbanized, industrial country with a diverse population, Germany has a portion of its population living in poverty. The European Union (EU—see Glossary) classifies as poor those households that have less than half the average net income. According to this definition, in 1992 approximately 7.5 percent of the population in the old *Länder* and 14.8 percent in the new *Länder* were poor. The number of poor has been growing since 1970, when the number of those receiving social assistance reached its lowest point of 750,000. In the early 1990s, one study estimated that in 1992 there were 4.6 million recipients of various kinds of social assistance, nearly 700,000 of whom lived in the new *Länder*. Households with three or more children and single parents were the most likely recipients of social assistance.

Social Mobility

Upward social mobility, or the ability or chance of offspring to improve their social position relative to that of their parents, expanded in both Germanys during the postwar era. The growth of the services sector was the primary cause of this expansion. The large, well-trained workforce required by this sector was supplied by a greatly expanded education system. As a result, many Germans received a better education than had their parents.

The postwar era saw the formation of a large, newly educated middle class, which grew at the expense of the small traditional middle class, many of whose members were merchants and the owners of small firms. Joining this older middle class was difficult because membership required capital, property, and other kinds of assets. For this reason, it was a relatively closed class, and its members were usually the offspring of existing members. By contrast, joining the new professional middle class depended on academic training, something readily available in postwar West Germany, where education was inexpensive and financial aid was easily obtainable.

One study measuring social mobility in the postwar decades used a six-level model to track Germans born between 1930 and 1949. It found that 20 percent had moved up to the next higher level, 10 percent had moved up two levels, and 2 percent had moved up three levels. Some downward mobility was recorded as well. For example, 1 percent had dropped three levels.

Opportunities for upward social mobility varied, however, according to one's place in society. Blue-collar workers, for example, did not show as much social mobility as other classes, although their mobility increased somewhat in the late postwar decades. A commonly used index to measure social mobility is the percentage of sons remaining within the social stratum or milieu of their fathers. West German studies have shown that in 1970 only 5 percent of blue-collar workers' sons managed to move up into better paying, higher status professions in the services sector. By 1979 the percentage had more than doubled to 11 percent. The percentage of sons of lower-level salaried and public-sector employees moving into elevated professional positions had increased from 12 to 22 percent in the same period.

Another study examined the likelihood of different groups securing a position in the two top levels of the services sector. The first and upper level accounts for about 10 percent of total employment and consists of positions in medicine, law, higher education, upper levels of administration, and the like. The second and lower level accounts for about 15 percent of employment and consists of positions in teaching, mid-level management, retailing, computers, and the like. The study found that about two-thirds of those employed in the top level and nearly three-fifths of those in the second level are the offspring of persons employed in these levels. Only about 20 percent of the sons of workers are employed in these levels. Access to the top level is very restricted, with 4 percent of the sons of skilled workers and 2 percent of the sons of unskilled workers employed there. Almost no farmers' sons move into the top levels.

Geissler has found three occupational categories particularly conducive to upward mobility: the self-employed, the nonmanual service providers, and the worker elite. Self-recruitment in the three categories is relatively low. Geissler holds that this indicates that the offspring of those so employed are finding higher status positions. In contrast to these groups, 93 percent of farmers are the sons of farmers; farmers' offspring who leave the farm usually become either skilled or unskilled workers.

As of the first half of the 1990s, social mobility trends in the new *Länder* had not yet stabilized. Both upward and downward mobility are greater than in the old *Länder*. The widespread disqualification of the GDR elite meant downward mobility for many. The rapid transformation of the social structure through the replacement of a command socialist economy with a social market economy is also causing much social mobility, especially between generations. Children often do not work in the same sector as their parents. A new social class of entrepreneurs is being formed as the new *Länder* become integrated into the western economy.

The Search for a New National Identity

In the aftermath of unification, Germans are searching for a new identity. There appear to be at least two distinct German identities, and obstacles to their speedy fusion seem formidable.

In the postwar period, West Germany became an upwardly mobile, success-oriented society. By 1990 a broad and prosperous middle-class and upper-middle-class society had developed. Although they still worked hard to earn the vacation and working conditions among the best in the world, West Germans sought to create a "leisure society." There was a movement, for example, advocating the adoption of a four-day workweek. Work was intrinsically less important to West Germans than to East Germans; instead, they prized personal fulfillment, recreation, health, and the natural environment.

Through a remarkable transformation, West Germans had rehabilitated themselves, had become internationally oriented, and had assumed a leading role within the larger European community. Members of the older generation, especially those "blessed by a late birth" (too young to be Nazis), were self-assured and proud of the Federal Republic's political, economic, and social achievements. Starting in the 1960s, the younger generation discovered new freedoms and exercised them. In the 1970s and 1980s, youth- and student-led protests were mounted against nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants and in favor of peace, disarmament, and environmental protection.

By the early 1990s, most of the 1960s generation had been assimilated into the German establishment, but its experiences in challenging authority and winning concessions produced evolutionary changes in German society, economy, and culture. This generation's influence could be seen in the huge candlelight vigils staged by people of all ages to protest right-wing violence and xenophobia.

On the other side of the fortified border, East German society was decidedly working class, with comparatively minor class distinctions. Where there were significant income differentials, the extra money was of little consequence in an economy marked by shortages of most consumer goods. The state apparatus provided security in the form of guaranteed employment, free education and health care, and subsidized low rent. Homelessness was unknown in the GDR. Other social ills such as violent crime, drug abuse, and prostitution also were much less prevalent than in the west.

In terms of their attitude toward state authority and the family, easterners manifested values characteristic of westerners in the late 1950s and 1960s. On the factory floor or the collective farm, conditions were often primitive and the workweek long (forty-three or more hours). The workforce, too, was reminiscent of an earlier Germany, with greater numbers employed in smokestack industries or in fields and mines, and far fewer in the services or information sector. One of many revelations after unification was the information illiteracy of easterners.

With few external options or diversions, East Germans identified with home and family more than their counterparts in the west. Deprived of the means and liberty to travel outside communist Eastern Europe, they formed what some sociologists called a "niche society," retreating into an inner circle to find a degree of privacy.

For three generations, East Germans had been indoctrinated in the thought processes of two forms of totalitarianism in succession: nazism and communism. With the collapse of communism, Germans living in the new *Länder* had few values and beliefs, aside from personal ones, with which to identify. Embittered by the seemingly imperialistic imposition of all things West German, some easterners developed "an identity of defiance" (*Trotzidentität*).

In the initial stage of union, Germans focused on the profound differences that had evolved in the two states since the end of World War II. In the Federal Republic, one of the world's wealthiest countries, quality-of-life issues played key roles in defining one's place and identity in society. Home ownership, travel experiences, and leisure activities of all kinds were translated into powerful status symbols.

In stark contrast, the state owned practically all property in East Germany. Expectations of improving individual or family lifestyles were modest. Overall, the eastern *Länder* were decades behind the west in most categories measuring standard of living. Coming from a society grown accustomed to measuring itself and others by the yardstick of material prosperity, it was not surprising that West Germans felt more in common with their neighbors to the west, in whose countries they frequently traveled.

In some respects, the former GDR stood in relation to the FRG as a colony to an imperial power, and it was not long before westerners and easterners began acting out the roles of "know-it-alls" (westerners) and "whimpering easterners." Within several years of the opening of the Berlin Wall, the former East Germany was transformed from a full-employment society to one having more than 1 million unemployed and hundreds of thousands of part-time workers.

Forced resocialization has weighed heavily on eastern Germans' self-esteem. The cleft between east and west is sufficiently deep and wide to make easterners appear to be foreigners in their own land, or at best second-class citizens. By August 1992, the situation had deteriorated to the point where a headline on the cover of *Der Spiegel,* the influential weekly magazine, summed it up in three words: "Germans Against Germans."

In modern European history, the merging of two fundamentally different social, political, and economic systems such as those that evolved in the two Germanys has no precedent. Fortunately for the newly united country, most Germans still rely on the traditional traits of diligence, orderliness, discipline, and thrift, and these shared values ultimately should resolve the problems associated with the merger of two states and societies at vastly different levels of development and achievement.

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As of mid-1995, no postunification survey of German geography in English had been published. The standard text remains Roy E.H. Mellor's *The Two Germanies.* Alun Jones's *The New Germany,* published in 1994, deals with key social and economic developments since unification. *Developments in German Politics,* edited by Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl, and Stephen Padgett, includes chapters dealing with aspects of German society, including ones on women, the environment, and immigration policies. Each chapter has been written by a noted specialist and includes suggestions for further reading. *German Politics and Society,* a quarterly journal published by the Center for German and European Studies of the University of California at Berkeley, contains a variety of scholarly articles dealing with German society. A more journalistic approach is John Ardagh's widely available and highly informative *Germany and the Germans.*

Three articles especially illuminating on demographic developments are "Germany's Population: Turbulent Past, Uncertain Future" by Gerhard Heilig, Thomas Büttner, and Wolfgang Lutz; "Bericht 1990 zur demographischen Lage: Trends in beiden Teilen Deutschlands und Ausländer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland" by Charlotte Höhn, Ulrich Mammey, and Hartmut Wendt; and "Demographic Shocks after Communism: Eastern Germany, 1989–93" by Nicholas Eberstadt.

A comprehensive survey of German social structure is Rainer Geissler's *Die Sozialstruktur Deutschlands.* The German government's annual statistical survey, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland,* provides much statistical information about many aspects of German society. *Facts about Germany,* edited by Arno Kappler and Adriane Grevel, periodically updated and available from German embassies, contains brief surveys of several areas covered in this chapter. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 4. Social Welfare, Health Care, and Education

Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770–1827, received his early music training in Bonn.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL POLICY in Germany has followed a unique historical path. During a long process of growth and social experimentation, Germany combined a vigorous and highly competitive capitalist economy with a social welfare system that, with some exceptions, has provided its citizens cradle-to-grave security. The system's benefits are so extensive that by the 1990s annual total spending by the state, employers, and private households on health care, pensions, and other aspects of what Germans call the social safety net amounted to roughly DM1 trillion (for value of the deutsche mark—see Glossary) and accounted for about one-third of the country's gross national product (GNP—see Glossary). Unlike many of the world's advanced countries, however, Germany does not provide its citizens with health care, pensions, and other social welfare benefits through a centralized state-run system. Rather, it provides these benefits via a complex network of national agencies and a large number of independent regional and local entities—some public, some quasi-public, and many private and voluntary. Many of these structures date from the nineteenth century, and some from much earlier.

The legislation that established the basis of this system dates from the 1880s and was passed by imperial Germany's parliament, the Reichstag, with the dual purpose of helping German workers meet life's vicissitudes and thereby making them less susceptible to socialism. This legislation set the main principles that have guided the development of social policy in Germany to the present day: membership in insurance programs is mandated by law; the administration of these programs is delegated to nonstate bodies with representatives of the insured and employers; entitlement to benefits is linked to past contributions rather than need; benefits and contributions are related to earnings; and financing is secured through wage taxes levied on the employer and the employee and, depending on the program, sometimes through additional state financing.

These insurance programs were developed from the bottom up. They first covered elements of the working class and then extended coverage to ever broader segments of the population and incorporated additional risks. Over time, these programs came to provide a wide net of entitlements to those individuals having a steady work history.

By international standards, the German welfare system is comprehensive and generous. However, not everyone benefits equally. In the mid-1990s, the so-called safety net was deficient for the lower-income strata and the unemployed. It was also inadequate for persons needing what Germans term "social aid," that is, assistance in times of hardship. In 1994, for example, 4.6 million persons needed social aid, a 100 percent increase since the 1980s. Germans who had been citizens of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany), which became part of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, or West Germany) in 1990, tend to be overrepresented in each of these groups.

Women are more at a disadvantage than any other social group. This fact stems from the bias of German social insurance programs in favor of a male breadwinner model; most women receive social and health protection by virtue of their dependent status as spouse. Hence, despite the existence of a comprehensive interlocking social net, women face inequalities in accruing benefits in their own right because of periods spent rearing children or caring for an elderly parent. Divorced women also fare poorly because of the welfare system's provisions, as do widows, whose pensions are low.

In addition to these problems or shortcomings, Germany's social welfare and health programs have had to contend with the unification of the former West Germany and East Germany in 1990. West Germany's approach to social insurance, health insurance, unemployment insurance (which did not exist in the former GDR), accident insurance, and social aid and assistance has been applied to East Germany. This fact has meant that the complex and heterogeneous organizational and financial arrangements present in the former West Germany to deliver health and social services have had to be built up in the former East Germany, in many cases entirely from scratch.

The need for this extension of social welfare programs follows logically from the former East Germany's transition to a free-market economy in which employment, health care, and social insurance benefits have always been highly contingent upon each other. In the absence of an East German democratic tradition and attitudes supportive of the new institutions and, as well, of adequate private organizational resources and skilled manpower, Germany's attempt to integrate two entirely different systems of social protection, education, and health care purely by means of law, administrative provisions, and financial resources is bound to produce problems for years to come.

In the mid-1990s, representatives of Germany's political parties, businesses, unions, and voluntary social services agencies continued to wage a vigorous debate over social policy. At issue is the role to be played by state and/or nongovernmental voluntary charitable agencies, churches, and other social service providers and how to find a politically acceptable mix of public and private institutions. Ever since the nineteenth century, especially during periods of economic and social crisis, there has been a recurrent demand to shift from insurance-based programs to a universal flat-rate and tax-financed program in order to secure a minimum income for all. However, there has never been sufficient political support for eliminating insurance-based programs. In the postwar period, business groups and the Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union—CDU), with the exception of the left wing within the CDU, tended to support the continued segmentation of the labor force into separate insurance-based programs for various occupational groups. In contrast, the labor unions and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands—SPD) tended to support unitary programs for the entire labor force.

The great costs of unification have raised the possibility of ending the steady expansion of social welfare programs that had been going on for more than a century. The current conservative governing coalition has proposed reductions in benefits to finance unification. Other factors such as the increasingly competitive global economy and structural changes in the labor market have also raised questions about the continued affordability of German social policy. As a result, the government is increasingly listening to employers who insist that their share of employee benefit payments be reduced in order that German business remain competitive in a global economy.

The integration of the two entirely different education systems that emerged after the 1945 division of the country has also raised many controversial issues. No consensus has emerged on whether Germany should adopt the unified school system found in the former East Germany or the heterogeneous three-tiered system of the former West Germany. Nor is there consensus on whether to increase the number of school years by one year for students in eastern Germany or to reduce the thirteen years of schooling in western Germany to twelve years. A greater uniformity within the country's education system is also needed because the plethora of school tracks and the diversity of curricula and qualifying examinations might indeed endanger the mobility of students and teachers within Germany and within Europe in general.

Social Insurance and Welfare Programs

Historical Development

After Germany was united in 1871 under the direction of Otto von Bismarck, the nation developed a common government structure and social policy. But the fact that united Germany had been formed out of four kingdoms, five grand duchies, twelve duchies, twelve principalities, and three free cities was a crucial factor in the way social welfare was administrated. Although after unification social welfare policy was increasingly formulated on the national level, the social insurance programs implementing national policy were aimed at different social strata and were administered in highly decentralized ways.

The new social welfare system that developed after unification in 1871 used existing decentralized structures to provide an ever increasing range of benefits. Because of this, most social welfare programs in Germany are not administered by state bureaucracies. Instead, except for the period when Germany was ruled by the regime of Adolf Hitler (1933–45) and when the former East Germany (1949–90) established a state-run social welfare program, the organizations implementing social policy have been private voluntary entities, some of which date from the Middle Ages. Thus, Germany has implemented a national social policy through an extensive decentralized and pluralistic network of voluntary agencies.

Germans see their economy as a social market economy, that is, one that combines a capitalist mode of production with the belief that society should protect all its members from economic and social need. Such protection is provided by a system of social insurance to which people contribute according to their incomes with the understanding that they may someday need its assistance. The belief that society is responsible for the well-being of its members is called solidarity, or *Solidarität*, and is a key concept of German social policy.

Germans have combined the notion of solidarity with federal and decentralized arrangements of power sharing, or *Subsidarität*, another concept that lies at the heart of German political culture and is characteristic of all German-speaking countries. Fundamentally, *Subsidarität* means building social organizations and society from the bottom up rather than from the top down. As a result of this concept, Germans rely on grassroots social entities whenever possible to provide social services and make use of higher-level institutions only when lower-level ones are found to be inadequate.

Solidarität and *Subsidarität* have affected the development of a national social policy, but most of all they have shaped its implementation. For example, Germany's social insurance programs are quasi-public self-governing bodies subject in most cases to labor and management control, but they are largely independent of the public sector, which retains only supervisory powers. The primary providers of most social assistance services are private-sector voluntary organizations, most of which are church related. Government offices at the regional and local levels generally determine and handle cash benefits and allowances established at the national level.

Some of the most important voluntary social service agencies and church-related groups predate the unification of Germany in 1871; others date from the last decades of the nineteenth century. The first German chapter of the International Red Cross was founded in 1863. Out of it grew the German Red Cross, one of the country's key voluntary agencies. The Innere Mission, which later became the Diakonisches Werk of the Evangelical Church in Germany, was founded in 1848. The Roman Catholic charity Deutscher Caritasverband, the largest of the voluntary welfare associations, dates from 1897. The German Non-Denominational Welfare Association, as it became known after 1932, was founded in 1920 to represent all nonchurch-related hospitals. The Workers' Welfare Organization was founded in 1919 from numerous Social Democratic women's groups working for the well-being of children.

Despite the radically different political regimes in power in Germany since 1871, German social policy has shown a remarkable degree of continuity in organizational arrangements and financing. Change has been largely of an incremental nature, and new programs have conformed to previously existing principles and patterns.

The beginning of the national German social welfare system occurred in the 1880s while Bismarck was in power. A primary motivation for social legislation was the government's desire to erode support for socialism among workers and to establish the superiority of the Prussian state over the churches. The government hoped that provision of economic security in case of major risks and loss of income would promote political integration and political stability. Three laws laid the foundations of the German social welfare system: the Health Insurance of Workers Law of 1883, which provided protection against the temporary loss of income as a result of illness; the Accident Insurance Law of 1884, which aided workers injured on the job; and the Old Age and Invalidity Insurance Law of 1889. Initially, these three laws covered only the top segments of the blue-collar working class.

The second phase of the German social welfare system spanned the period from 1890, the year of Bismarck's resignation, to 1918. During this period, improvements were made in the initial programs.The National Insurance Code of 1911 integrated the three separate insurance programs into a unified social security system, and compulsory coverage and benefits were extended to white-collar workers. Survivors' pensions for widows were also introduced in 1911. (The many amendments to the National Insurance Code of 1911 were later integrated into the Social Insurance Code of 1988.) In 1916 survivors' benefits were increased, and the retirement age for workers was reduced from seventy to sixty-five. Because its cooperation was needed to maintain production during World War I, the working class acquired more political influence and won greater social protection and representation during this period. Efforts were also made to develop mechanisms for settling labor disputes and organizing voluntary employee committees, issues taken up by new labor legislation and decrees. Most efforts were completed by the mid-1920s.

The Weimar Republic (1918–33) saw a further expansion of social welfare programs. In 1920 war victims' benefits were added to the social welfare system. In 1922 the Youth Welfare Act was passed, which today continues to serve as the basic vehicle for all youth-related programs. Unemployment relief was consolidated in 1923 into a regular assistance program, financed by employees and employers. The same year, the 1913 agreement between doctors and sickness funds about who could treat sickness-funds patients was integrated into the

National Insurance Code. Also in 1923, a national law on miners created a single agency for the administration of social insurance programs for miners; before the law went into effect, 110 separate associations had administered the program. In 1924 a modern public assistance program replaced the poor relief legislation of 1870, and in 1925 the accident insurance program was reformed, allowing occupational diseases to become insurable risks. In 1927 a national unemployment insurance program was also established. These gains in social insurance and assistance programs were threatened by the Great Depression of the early 1930s, however. Reduced wages meant smaller contributions to social insurance and assistance programs, all of which were soon on the brink of bankruptcy.

The Hitler regime introduced major changes in individual programs and program administration. In 1934 the regime dismantled the self-governance structure of all social insurance programs and appointed directors who reported to the central authorities. The regime made many improvements in social insurance programs and benefits, but these changes were conceived to serve the regime rather than the population. In 1938 artisans came to be covered under compulsory social insurance, and in 1941 public health insurance coverage was extended to pensioners. In 1942 all wage-earners regardless of occupation were covered by accident insurance, health care became unlimited, and maternity leave was extended to twelve fully paid weeks with job protection.

Two separate German states evolved after World War II, each with its own social welfare programs. In the GDR, the state became even stronger than it had been under Hitler. The communist-directed Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands—SED) had a near monopoly of control over all social and political institutions, including those that administered social welfare programs.

Initially, the GDR retained separate social insurance plans, but by 1956 the plans had been unified into two compulsory, centrally controlled, and hierarchically organized systems that provided universal flat-rate benefits. Special programs also served the so-called technical and scientific intelligentsia, civil servants, police, and members of the National People's Army (Nationale Volksarmee—NVA) and other security organizations. All programs were heavily state subsidized, unlike those in West Germany. Because the right to work was guaranteed, unemployment insurance did not exist.

West Germany moved away from Hitler's central state direction and returned to decentralized administration and control. Social insurance and social protection programs under labor and management control, which were characteristic of the Weimar period, were restored. The return to separate earnings-related and means-tested benefits for different groups meant that social insurance, social compensation, and public assistance (or social aid) were not integrated into one overall administration, as some Germans wished and as the Allied Control Council had intended in 1946 when it drafted a unified national insurance system. In the mid-1970s, legislators attempted to consolidate the goals, the protection, and the entitlements as much as possible. But they failed to develop a coherently organized and uniform system that would have eliminated disparities in individual entitlements. Indeed, by the mid-1990s the disparities in welfare benefits entitlements in unified Germany had become more significant than ever before.

Provisions of the Social Welfare System

The German social welfare tradition divides entitlement programs into three types. The first and most common type consists of contributory social insurance programs that protect those who pay into them from loss of income and unplanned expenditures because of illness, accident, old age or disability, and unemployment. The second type consists of noncontributory social compensation programs that provide tax-financed social welfare (such as health care, pensions, and other benefits) to those—civil servants, for example—who perform a public service to society. Tax-financed social compensation is also provided to those who have suffered from income loss or disability as a result of military or other public service, and allowances are provided to their dependents in the case of death. Since 1976 victims of violent crimes have also been eligible for social compensation. In addition, social compensation can consist of payments to all members of society and includes tax-funded child, housing, and educational allowances. The third type of social welfare programs provides social aid, or assistance, to persons in need who are not eligible for assistance from the other two kinds of social entitlement programs or who need additional aid because they are still in need—for example, if their pensions are too small to provide them with decent housing. Aid can consist of general income maintenance payments (including payments for food, housing, clothing, and furniture) and assistance for those with special needs, such as the disabled, and individuals without health insurance (0.3 percent of the total German population).

In order to better measure the extent of social welfare expenditures, since 1960 the Germans have used the concept of a social budget to lump together all forms of social spending, whether by the government, by the country's large social insurance programs, or by other sources. The steady expansion of social welfare programs and the increased costs of such items as pensions and medical care caused West Germany's social budget to increase tenfold between 1960 and 1990, from DM68.9 billion in 1960 to DM703.1 billion in 1990. The West German economy expanded greatly in this period so that the social budget's share of GNP increased from about one-fifth in 1960 to about one-third by 1990. Roughly two-fifths of the 1990 social budget went to pension payments and one-third to health care. By 1992 the social budget had grown to about DM900 billion, a sharp increase caused by the unification of the two Germanys. Unification meant an increased population and many special needs of the five new states (*Länder*; sing., *Land*) in eastern Germany.

In 1990 the public sector (federal, *Land*, and local governments) paid for about 38 percent of the social budget, employers for 32 percent, and private households for about 29 percent. The remainder was financed by social insurance and private organizations.

The cost of the social budget for an average wage earner is difficult to assess. By the mid-1990s, however, a typical wage earner was estimated to pay about one-fifth of his or her income in direct taxes (only part of which went to the social budget) and another one-fifth for the compulsory social insurance programs. In addition, there were many indirect taxes, which accounted for about two-fifths of all tax revenue. The most important of the indirect taxes is the value-added tax (VAT—see Glossary), set in 1993 at 15 percent for most goods and at 7 percent for basic commodities each time it is assessed. Given Germany's demographic trends, the cost of the social budget is certain to increase in the coming decades.

Social Insurance

The social insurance program was established in 1889 and provides retirement pay. Although the central government has always formulated social insurance policy, the implementation of the program is decentralized. In unified Germany, control over the blue-collar insurance programs remains in the hands of twenty-three *Land*-based insurance agencies and four federal insurance agencies. In the old *Länder* in western Germany, eighteen *Land*-based insurance agencies serve people in geographical districts that conform to those established in the nineteenth century, not to the geographical entities created after 1945. With the assistance of staff from the West German insurance agencies, five *Land*-based and self-governing insurance agencies were established in the new *Länder*.

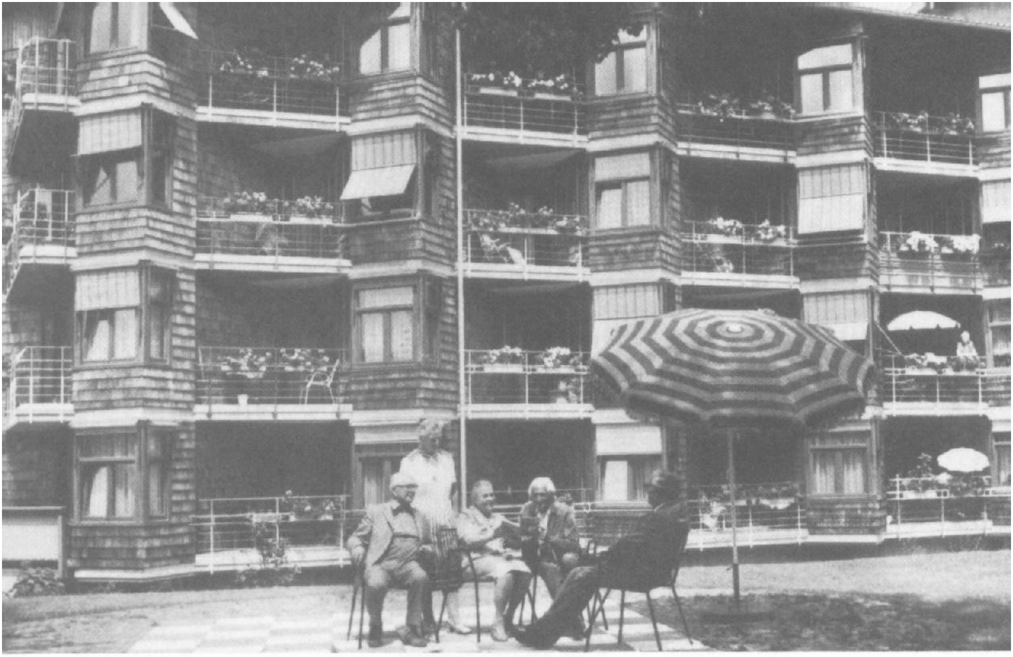
Four federal insurance agencies serve four groups in unified Germany: federal railroad workers, merchant marine seamen, miners, and white-collar workers. Civil servants and their dependents are covered by a separate retirement program financed by outlays from federal, *Land*, and local governments. Other retirement programs provide retirement income for registered craftsmen, agricultural workers, and self-employed professionals.

Because of population trends that indicate a worsening worker/retiree ratio and the likelihood of solvency problems in the next century, the pension reform of 1992 increased the usual retirement age from sixty-three to sixty-five, beginning in 2001. Whatever the legal retirement age, many Germans retire early for health reasons on disability pensions.

The amount of retirement pay is determined by the length and level of the insured person's contributions. Contributions in 1995 were scheduled to amount to 18.6 percent of an employee's annual gross income up to a maximum of DM93,600 in the old *Länder* and DM76,800 in the new *Länder*, with the employee and employer each paying half. In the early 1990s, the average retirement pension amounted to about DM1,600 per month for retired persons over the age of sixty. This meant that Germany had the fourth-highest pensions in Europe, surpassed only by Luxemburg, France, and Denmark. In 1957 legislation was passed that required pensions to be indexed, that is, raised according to average wage increases.

Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment insurance was introduced in 1927, relatively late in comparison with the pioneering programs of the nineteenth century. It replaced the welfare program for the unemployed that had been created in 1919. With the exception of



The exterior and a living room of an apartment house for pensioners
in Reutlingen, Baden-Württemberg
Courtesy German Information Center, New York

civil servants, all employed individuals and trainees, irrespective of salary or wage levels, are covered by the program. Contributions in 1995 to unemployment insurance were scheduled to amount to 6.5 percent of an employee's gross pay up to DM96,600 in the old *Länder* and DM76,800 in the new *Länder*, with the employee and employer each paying half. In return, the employee receives unemployment pay of 68 percent of net earnings for a married worker and 63 percent for a nonmarried worker, provided that the unemployed person has worked for 360 insurable days in the last three years before being laid off. Unemployment pay can be paid from the first day of unemployment for seventy-eight to 832 weekdays, depending on the length of insured employment and the age of the unemployed. In the early 1990s, unemployment pay averaged DM1,300 per month. Once unemployment pay runs out, the employee is eligible for unemployment aid, which averaged DM975 a month in the early 1990s. Because the unemployed frequently do not receive enough benefits to maintain their basic living standard, local social welfare entities often provide additional assistance. During unemployment, entitlements to benefits of other social insurance and health insurance programs remain in place.

The unemployment insurance program is administered through a three-tiered administration: a federal labor agency, regional labor agencies in the *Länder*, and local labor offices. Unlike the labor-management partnership in the administration of the other insurance programs, this program is controlled by tripartite boards composed of representatives of labor, management, and governments at the federal, *Land*, and local level. Because East Germany did not have an unemployment insurance program, the adoption of such a program in the new *Länder* has entailed numerous administrative problems. In addition, unemployment there is higher than in the old *Länder* (in 1994 about 15 percent, compared with 10 percent in the old *Länder*).

Accident Insurance

Enacted in 1884, the accident insurance program initially covered only accidents in the workplace. In 1925 occupational diseases also came to be covered. In the post-1945 era, cash and in-kind benefits such as rehabilitation and vocational training were expanded and improved. Travel to and from work is also now covered. If an accident leads to total disability, the injured person receives a pension amounting to 66 percent of the latest year's earnings. Survivor pensions can amount to a maximum of 80 percent of earnings. Disability pensions and survivors' benefits were indexed in 1957; that is, adjusted according to wage increases. In addition to covering members of the labor force, the plan also covers students and children; their coverage is paid for out of general tax revenues. Employers pay premiums for their employees; premiums amount to 1.44 percent of an employee's gross earnings. The self-employed are also able to enroll in the program.

Social Assistance

Social assistance is provided to persons who, for any of a number of reasons, are unable to provide themselves with a decent standard of living. In 1991 some 4.2 million persons received various forms of social assistance. In the same year, the most important reasons that people needed social assistance were unemployment (34 percent; social assistance is paid once unemployment pay runs out), pensions or incomes too small to allow their recipients a decent standard of living (11 and 7 percent, respectively), refusal of divorced fathers to pay child support (11 percent), and sickness (6 percent). Half of all recipients of social assistance are single elderly women. Foreigners residing in Germany also receive social assistance at a higher than average rate because they are more likely to be unemployed or earn low incomes.

Unlike the benefits provided by social insurance programs, social assistance is funded by taxes and is not determined by previous contributions. Social assistance is means tested, and recipients generally must have exhausted their savings. The incomes of a recipient's close relatives (parents and children) may also be considered when assessing the provision of social assistance. In the mid-1990s, social assistance for the head of household amounted to about DM500 a month in the old *Länder*; 80 percent of this amount was allocated for the spouse, and 50 to 90 percent of this amount was allocated for the children, depending on their ages. In addition to these benefits, social assistance can cover housing costs, medical care, clothing, winter heating, and many other expenses.

Other Social Benefits

In addition to social assistance, Germany's social welfare system provides many other tax-funded benefits. The most widely paid benefit is that of the child allowance. It is paid to parents of all income levels to lessen the burden of raising children. Benefits are generally paid until the child reaches the age of sixteen and thereafter up to the age of twenty-seven if the child is receiving an education. In the mid-1990s, DM70 a month was paid for the first child, DM130 for the second, DM220 for the third, and DM240 for the fourth and subsequent children. Upper-income parents receive smaller amounts. Child benefits are tax exempt. Taxpayers also have an annual income tax exemption of DM4,104 for each dependent child.

Since 1986 payments for child rearing have also been made to parents who are either unemployed or working only up to nineteen hours per week. In 1994 these payments amounted to DM600 a month per child for the first six months of the child's life; after this age, household income was considered. Payments continue until the child's second birthday. Beginning in 1994, a single parent with a net annual income of more than DM75,000 and a couple with a net annual income of more than DM100,000 were no longer eligible to receive this benefit.

A single parent raising a child and receiving inadequate financial support from the other parent is eligible to receive maintenance payments up to a child's twelfth birthday for a maximum period of seventy-two months. In 1994 in the old *Länder*, these payments could amount to as much as DM291 a month for children up to age six and DM353 a month for children between the ages of six and twelve.

Families and single individuals can also receive payments to help them with housing expenses if their incomes are insufficient to afford decent shelter. Unlike housing aid provided through social assistance, aid of this nature does not require that recipients exhaust their savings or lack close relatives to assist them.

The disabled are also served by a broad range of medical and vocational programs designed to provide them with humane living conditions. Statutory social insurance programs are responsible for meeting the various needs of their members who become disabled. In addition, government agencies at the federal, *Land*, and local levels seek to provide employment and help with special housing and transportation provisions. Employment of the disabled is furthered by federal legislation that requires firms employing more than fifteen persons to reserve 6 percent of positions for the disabled or to make annual compensatory payments. In 1994 Germany had nearly 600 sheltered workplaces able to provide special employment for about 140,000 disabled persons unable to find employment in the general economy.

Since 1995 German residents have been obliged to join a new social insurance program that arranges for its members' future need for long-term nursing care. Those with public health insurance will continue with that insurance; those with private health insurance are obliged to secure a new insurance policy to arrange long-term nursing care. The new insurance program will initially cover the expenses of long-term nursing provided at home; monthly benefits, in some special cases, will go up to DM3,750 but usually will be set at much lower levels depending on the kind of nursing care provided and the condition of the insured person's health. Some benefits will be provided in kind, such as visits by health care professionals to the home. Some benefits will be cash payments to friends or relatives who provide nonprofessional nursing care. Beginning in mid-1996, long-term institutional care will also be covered.

Until this program was instituted, the lack of long-term nursing care was seen as the single most important shortcoming in the country's system of social welfare. One effect of this shortcoming was that patients who should have been receiving nursing care at home or in a nursing institution remained instead in hospitals, a more expensive form of treatment. As of late 1994, officials had set an initial contribution of 1 percent of incomes up to DM68,400 a year in the old *Länder* and DM53,100 in the new *Länder*, with the employee and the employer each paying half. Part of the costs of long-term nursing care may in the future be covered by abolishing a public holiday that always falls on a workday. To cover the cost of long-term institutional nursing care, the contribution rate will increase to 1.7 percent in mid-1996. The great expense of this benefit may require the abolition of a second public holiday.

The administration of the nursing care insurance program is unique. It overlaps somewhat that of the sickness funds but will also include many federal, *Land*, and local agencies. In fact, the program will involve more implementors than all other social insurance programs combined. Implementation problems arise primarily from different entitlements and services provided through social assistance, or social aid, and by nursing care insurance. Problems also stem from differing evaluations by sickness-funds medical experts about who needs care and how much and what kind of nursing care is needed throughout Germany.

Current Social Welfare Issues and Outlook for the Future

As of mid-1995, the policy and institutional features that characterized the development of German social policy over the last century continued to provide the overall umbrella of social policy in Germany. This has meant the continuation of separate programs for different groups in the labor force; decentralized and mostly nongovernment, self-administering bodies and private grassroots voluntary social welfare agencies; an emphasis on earnings-related individualized cash benefits determined by past contributions rather than by need; and a continued reliance on social insurance programs. For most people living in Germany, these programs have worked well and in the postwar period have provided a continuous expansion of coverage and improved benefits.

Behind these achievements, however, are hidden inequities and inequalities. During the last forty years, the system favored the improvement of benefits for those with a continuous work record. For the most part, these were male workers and women who had never left the workforce. They received earnings-related insurance benefits while other population groups tended to receive means-tested benefits or a combination of the two.

The number of individuals receiving means-tested social assistance, however, was increasing in the former FRG even prior to unification. And in 1995, in a united Germany, the recipients of social assistance included a growing number of impoverished elderly women, female-headed single households, and families with several children. For example, a 1992 study found that households with a sick or disabled person needing constant home care, households with a newborn child, and non-German households had an increased likelihood of receiving social assistance benefits.

Women are more heavily represented among the disadvantaged than men. Their lower wages on average mean smaller benefits because of smaller contributions into insurance programs. In addition, the time women spend caring for children and other relatives generally means that women have shorter work histories, which affects their pension levels. German welfare regulations also place divorced and separated women at a disadvantage.

The new *Länder* present a challenge to Germany's social welfare system. From the perspective of individuals, unification brought a number of social and institutional innovations and improvements in living conditions, along with a few new entitlements—for example, disability pay, retirement for men under the age of sixty-five, and pensions for widows and widowers. However, the abolition of familiar social service centers, child-care facilities, and nursing homes, coupled with inexperienced staff in administrative agencies, has increased social and psychological stress for many in the east. Women of child-bearing age living in the new *Länder* have been particularly affected because before unification they had better prenatal and postnatal care, the right to abortion, and a fairly widespread network of day-care centers at work or in their communities.

The lack of private voluntary organizations in the new *Länder* has made the administration of social programs there difficult. Western German voluntary and church-related agencies have provided and still do provide much assistance. They have also assisted in setting up local and district government offices and have trained new manpower to decide on entitlements, calculate benefits, and interpret new laws. But a serious shortage of social workers and facilities to train or retrain them remains.

The difference between the two Germanys in terms of benefits received and resources available for different social strata will continue for some time. The resulting dissatisfaction and social decline can be considered time bombs that might bring future political, social, and psychological instability.

National Health Insurance and Medical Care

Germany's health care system provides its residents with nearly universal access to comprehensive high-quality medical care and a choice of physicians. Over 90 percent of the population receives health care through the country's statutory health care insurance program. Membership in this program is compulsory for all those earning less than a periodically revised income ceiling. Nearly all of the remainder of the population receives health care via private for-profit insurance companies. Everyone uses the same health care facilities.

Although the federal government has an important role in specifying national health care policies and although the *Länder* control the hospital sector, the country's health care system is not government run. Instead, it is administered by national and regional self-governing associations of payers and providers. These associations play key roles in specifying the details of national health policy and negotiate with one another about financing and providing health care. In addition, instead of being paid for by taxes, the system is financed mostly by health care insurance premiums, both compulsory and voluntary.

In early 1993, the Health Care Structural Reform Act (Gesundheitsstrukturgesetz—GSG) came into effect, marking the end of a more than a century-long period in which benefits and services under statutory public health insurance had been extended to ever larger segments of the population. Rising health expenditures may prompt policy makers to impose further restrictions on providers and consumers of health care. These high expenditures have been caused by a rapidly aging population (retirees' costs rose by 962 percent between 1972 and 1992), the intensive and costly use of advanced-technology medical procedures, and other economic and budgetary pressures. As of mid-1995, the drafting of new reform proposals was under way.

For residents of the former GDR, the era of free care ended in 1991. The political decision to adopt the FRG's health care system required the reorganization of nearly all components of health care in the new *Länder*. As of mid-1995, the reorganization of the health care system in the former GDR still was far from completion.

Development of the Health Care System

Nearly everyone residing in Germany is guaranteed access to high-quality comprehensive health care. Statutory health insurance (Gesetzliche Krankenversicherung—GKV) has provided an organizational framework for the delivery of public health care and has shaped the roles of payers, insurance or sickness funds, and providers, physicians, and hospitals since the Health Insurance Act was adopted in 1883. In 1885 the GKV provided medical protection for 26 percent of the lower-paid segments of the labor force, or 10 percent of the population. As with social insurance, health insurance coverage was gradually extended by including ever more occupational groups in the plan and by steadily raising the income ceiling. Those earning less than the ceiling were required to participate in the insurance program. In 1995 the income ceiling was an annual income of about DM70,00 in the old *Länder* and DM57,600 in the new *Länder*.

In 1901 transport and office workers came to be covered by public health insurance, followed in 1911 by agricultural and forestry workers and domestic servants, and in 1914 by civil servants. Coverage was extended to the unemployed in 1918, to seamen in 1927, and to all dependents in 1930. In 1941 legislation was passed that allowed workers whose incomes had risen above the income ceiling for compulsory membership to continue their insurance on a voluntary basis. The same year, coverage was extended to all retired Germans. Salespeople came under the plan in 1966, self-employed agricultural workers in 1972, and students and the disabled in 1975.

The 1883 health insurance law did not address the relationship between sickness funds and doctors. The funds had full authority to determine which doctors became participating doctors and to set the rules and conditions under which they did so. These rules and conditions were laid down in individual contracts. Doctors, who had grown increasingly dissatisfied with these contracts and their limited access to the practice of medicine with the sickness funds, mobilized and founded a professional association (Hartmannbund) in 1900 and even went on strike several times. In 1913 doctors and sickness funds established a system of collective bargaining to determine the distribution of licenses and doctors' remuneration. This approach is still practiced, although the system has undergone many modifications since 1913.

The formation of two German states in the second half of the 1940s resulted in two different German health systems. In East Germany, a centralized state-run system was put in place, and physicians became state employees. In West Germany, the prewar system was reestablished. It was supervised by the government but was not government run. According to the Basic Law of 1949, Germany's constitution, the federal government has exclusive authority in public health insurance matters and sets broad policy in relation to the GKV. The government's authority applies in particular to benefits, eligibility, compulsory membership, covered risks (physical, emotional, mental, curative, and preventive), income maintenance during temporary illness, employer-employee contributions to the GKV, and other central issues. However, except for the funding of some benefits and the planning and financing of hospitals, the responsibility for administering and providing health care has been delegated to nonstate entities, including national and regional associations of health care providers, *Land* hospital associations, nonprofit insurance funds, private insurance companies, and voluntary organizations.

Portability of coverage, eligibility, and benefits are independent of any regional and/or local reinterpretations by either insurers, politicians, administrators, or health care providers. Universal coverage is honored by any medical office or hospital. Check-ins at doctors' offices, hospitals, and specialized facilities are simple, and individuals receive immediate medical attention. No one in need of care can be turned away without running a risk of violating the code of medical ethics or *Land* hospital laws.

The health care system has achieved a high degree of equity and justice, despite its fragmented federal organization: no single group is in a position to dictate the terms of service delivery, reimbursement, remuneration, quality of care, or any other important concerns. The right to health care is regarded as sacrosanct. Universality of coverage, comprehensive benefits, the principle of the healthy paying for the sick, and a redistributive element in the financing of health care have been endorsed by all political parties and are secured in the Basic Law.

By the mid-1990s, health care benefits provided through the GKV were extensive and included ambulatory care (care provided by office-based physicians), choice of office-based physicians, hospital care, full pay to mothers (from six weeks before to eight weeks after childbirth), extensive home help, health checkups, sick leave to care for relatives, rehabilitation and physical therapy, medical appliances (such as artificial limbs), drugs, and stays of up to one month in health spas every few years. Persons who are unable to work because of illness receive full pay for six weeks, then 80 percent of their income for up to seventy-eight weeks. In an attempt to contain costs, beginning in the 1980s some of these benefits required copayments by the insured. Although these fees were generally very low, some copayments were substantial. For example, insured patients paid half the cost of dentures, although most other dental care was paid by health insurance.

The system has managed these achievements relatively economically. In 1992 about 8.1 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP—see Glossary) went into medical care, or US$1,232 per capita, compared with 12.1 percent of GDP and US$2,354 per capita in the United States. Even so, Germany devoted about one-third of its overall social budget to health care, an amount surpassed only by retirement payments.

The German health care community has made a serious and sustained effort to control the growth of health costs since the mid-1970s. The steep rise in health expenditures in the first half of the 1970s prompted the passage of the Health Insurance Cost Containment Act of 1977. The law established an advisory board, the Concerted Action in Health Care, to suggest nonbinding guidelines for health care costs. Chaired by the federal minister for health, its sixty members represent the most important interest groups having a stake in health care. The board has contributed to slowing the growth of health care costs, but further legislation has been necessary.

Modest copayments for medications, dental treatment, hospitalization, and other items were introduced in 1982 for members of sickness funds. These payments were further increased by the Health Care Reform Act of 1989 (Gesundheitsreformgesetz—GRG) and again by the Health Care Structural Reform Act (Gesundheitsstrukturgesetz—GSG) of 1993. The GSG also introduced new regulatory instruments to monitor more closely access to medical practice, to reorganize sickness-funds governance, and to control medication costs and prospective hospital payments. In addition, it proposed measures to overcome the separation between ambulatory medical care and hospital care that prevailed in the former FRG.

Health Insurance

Some 92 percent of Germany's residents receive health care through statutory health insurance, that is, the GKV. As of late 1992, the GKV relied on about 1,200 nonprofit sickness funds that collect premiums from their members and pay health care providers according to negotiated agreements. Those not insured through these funds, mostly civil servants and the self-employed, have private for-profit insurance. An estimated 0.3 percent of the population has no health insurance of any kind. They are generally the rich who do not need it and the very poor, who receive health care through social assistance.

Sickness funds are divided into two categories: primary funds and substitute funds. Workers earning less than the periodically revised income ceiling are required to belong to the primary funds; those earning more than this ceiling may be members on a voluntary basis. Some primary-fund members have a choice of funds. Others do not and become members of a particular fund because of their occupation or place of residence. According to figures from the Ministry of Labor and

Social Affairs for late 1992, of the six types of primary funds, local sickness funds, then about 270 in number, are the most important. Organized geographically, they supply about 46 percent of the insured workforce with health insurance. About 800 company-based funds, located in firms with more than 450 employees, cover about 11 percent of workers. Some 180 occupational funds organized by craft cover another 2.5 percent. There are three other kinds of primary funds (about two dozen in all); they supply insurance for self-employed farmers, sailors, and miners and cover about 4 percent of the workforce. There are also two kinds of substitute funds; they provide health insurance to white-collar and blue-collar workers earning more than the income ceiling. Substitute funds are organized on a national basis, and membership is voluntary. Such funds cover about 34 percent of insured workers.

Employers and employees each pay half of a member's premiums, which in the first half of the 1990s averaged between 12 and 13 percent of a worker's gross earnings up to the income ceiling. Premiums are set according to earnings rather than risk and are not affected by a member's marital status, family size, or health; they are the same for all members of a particular fund with the same earnings. In a household with two wage earners, each pays the full premium assessed by his or her sickness fund. The unemployed remain members of their sickness fund. Their contributions are paid by federal and local government offices, with one-third coming from local social assistance offices. The contributions of retirees are paid by the pensioners themselves and by their pension funds. Thus, the public health insurance program redistributes from higher to lower income groups, from the healthy to the sick, from the young to the old, from the employed to the unemployed, and from those without children to those with children.

Because some funds have poorer overall health profiles than others as a result of the occupations of their members, the number of dependents and pensioners among its members, or other factors, premiums can range from as low as about 6.5 percent to as much as 16.0 percent of a member's gross earnings. To counter this inequity, a national reserve fund makes payments to funds with high numbers of pensioners. The GSG of 1993 mandates an equalization of contribution rates across all sickness funds by authorizing payments to funds burdened with health risks associated with age and gender.

About 11 percent of Germans pay for private health insurance provided by about forty for-profit insurance carriers. A good portion of those choosing private insurance are civil servants who want insurance to cover the roughly 50 percent of their medical bills not covered by the government. Some sickness-fund members buy additional private insurance to secure such extras as a private room or a choice of physicians while in a hospital. Otherwise, the medical care provided to the publicly and privately insured is identical, and the same medical facilities are used. Self-employed persons earning above the income ceiling must have private insurance. Members of a sickness fund who leave it for a private insurance carrier will generally not be allowed to return to public insurance.

Although private insurance companies pay health care providers about twice the amount paid by the primary sickness funds, private insurance is often cheaper than statutory health insurance, especially for policyholders without dependents. As is the case for members of sickness funds, employees who have private insurance have half their premiums paid by their employers. German private health insurance is unusual in that whatever the insured person's age, his or her premium will remain that set for his or her age cohort when the policy initially was taken. Premiums rise only according to increases in overall health care costs. Policyholders generally stay with their original policy because if they change companies, they will pay the higher rates of an older age cohort.

Health Care Providers

Germany's principal health care providers are its physicians, dentists, and three types of hospitals (public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit). The health industry also includes large pharmaceutical companies and the manufacturers of various kinds of medical supplies. Public health departments, which are operated by the *Länder,* are not an important part of German health care. The public health clinics in the new *Länder* are being phased out during the integration of the two medical systems.

Germany's supply of physicians is high. Students who meet academic requirements have a constitutionally guaranteed right to study medicine. This fact, plus an excellent and inexpensive university system, has resulted in the country's educating physicians at a much higher per capita rate than the United States. Between 1970 and 1990, the number of physicians in the former West Germany more than doubled, and in 1991 the country had 3.2 physicians per 1,000 population, a higher ratio than most other members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD—see Glossary). (In 1990 the United States rate was 2.3 per 1,000.) With 11.5 physician visits per person per year in 1988, West Germans and Italians went to a doctor more frequently than other Europeans. (In 1989 the United States rate was 5.3 visits per person per year.) Even so, expenditures to physicians per capita amounted to less than half (US$193) of those in the United States (US$414).

German physicians have good incomes (dentists earn even more), although their average earnings have declined from six to three times the average wage since efforts at cost containment began in the 1970s. The high number of physicians could reduce physicians' earnings still further. In addition, many young physicians face unemployment. The GSG of 1993, for example, mandates a reduction in the number of office-based physicians who treat GKV patients (generally about 90 percent of physicians join the association that allows them this practice). The law also has the long-term goal of limiting the number of specialists in geographic areas where they are overrepresented.

German health care makes a sharp distinction between physicians who provide office-based or ambulatory care and physicians who work in hospitals. Office-based physicians are fee-for-service entrepreneurs whose incomes depend on the amount and kinds of medical care they provide. In contrast, hospital physicians are salaried employees of the hospitals in which they work. Very few hospital physicians are permitted to bill their patients. Until recent health reform legislation, the two types of physicians did not work together. Once an ambulatory-care physician decided that a patient should enter a hospital (only in emergencies could a patient go directly to a hospital), the patient's care was entirely taken over by a hospital-based physician. When a patient left the hospital, by law he or she again came under the care of an office-based physician. Since the late 1970s, hospital-based physicians have outnumbered ambulatory-care physicians. In 1990 there were about 96,000 of the former and 75,000 of the latter in the old *Länder.*

The GRG aimed at encouraging a better integration of office and hospital care, but little progress was made. The GSG of 1993 intended to lessen the traditional division by, among

University clinic in Münster,
North Rhine-Westphalia
Courtesy German Information
Center, New York

other reforms, making it possible for hospital-based physicians to see their patients after their release from the hospital. It is expected that lessening the separation of the types of medical care will reduce overall health care costs, but as of mid-1995 no marked successes in achieving this goal had been noticed. Additionally, new budgeting rules that go into effect in 1996 may cause outpatient surgery, still unusual in Germany, to become more common by making it more profitable for hospitals.

The ownership of hospitals (there were a total of about 3,100 hospitals in the early 1990s) is the outcome of historical development and regional traditions rather than conscious policy and has resulted in three types of hospitals: public, nonprofit, and private for-profit. Each type accounts for about one-third of the hospitals. Public-sector hospitals are mostly owned by the *Länder,* municipalities, and counties and provide about 50 percent of all hospital beds. Nonprofit hospitals, typically run by Catholic or Protestant organizations, provide about 35 percent of the beds, and for-profit hospitals account for 15 percent.

Germany has too many hospital resources. In 1988 the ratio of 10.9 patient beds per 1,000 population in the former West Germany was higher than the OECD average. The number of admissions as a percentage of the total German population was

21.5 percent, significantly above the OECD average of 16.1 percent. The average length of stay of 16.6 days was below the OECD average but quite high by United States standards. Germany's inpatient occupancy rate was 86.5 percent, also fairly high by international standards.

Between 1972 and 1986, the federal government and the *Länder* were jointly responsible for hospital policy making, but in 1986 the *Land* governments once again assumed sole responsibility. *Länder* own and partially finance medical school hospitals and accredited teaching hospitals. They enforce accreditation and licensing of health facilities and of health professionals working in social services. The *Länder* are responsible for policy development and implementation of social and nursing services, social assistance, youth services, and social work. Most important, the *Länder* remain responsible for the effective and efficient allocation and distribution of hospital resources.

Remuneration of Health Care Providers

Each year the national associations of sickness funds negotiate agreements with the national associations of sickness-funds physicians. The same bargaining procedures apply to dental care. The associations work with guidelines suggested by the Advisory Council for the Concerted Action in Health Care and establish umbrella agreements on guidelines for the delivery of medical care and fee schedules tied to the relative value scales of about 2,000 medical procedures. At the national level, the Federal Committee of Sickness Funds Physicians and Sickness Funds is a key player, although it is little known outside the circle of health care practitioners and experts. It sets spending limits on the practice of medicine in physicians' offices, determines the inclusion of new medical procedures and preventive services, adjusts the remuneration of physicians, and formulates guidelines on the distribution and joint use of sophisticated medical technology and equipment by ambulatory-care or office-based physicians and hospital physicians.

At the regional level, regional associations of sickness funds and regional associations of sickness-funds physicians negotiate specific contracts, including overall health budgets, reimbursement contracts for all physicians in a region, procedures for monitoring physicians, and reference standards for prescription drugs.

A key instrument for containing GKV health care costs is the global budget, introduced in the mid-1980s, which sets limits on total health care expenditures. The GSG of 1993 retained cost containment methods until 1996, when it is hoped that structural reforms will no longer make it necessary. By means of the global budget, regional increases in total medical expenditures are linked to overall wage increases of sickness-funds members. The sickness funds transfer monies amounting to the negotiated budget to the regional associations of sickness-funds physicians; the associations pay their members on the basis of points earned from services performed in a billing period. The value of the services is determined by the negotiated fee-for-service schedule, which assigns points to each service according to the relative value scale. No exchange of money occurs between sickness-fund patient and physician. Privately insured patients pay their physicians themselves and are reimbursed by their insurance companies.

The monetary value of a point is determined by dividing the total value of points billed by all sickness-funds physicians into the region's total negotiated health budget. A greater than expected number of services billed will mean that a point has less value, and a physician will earn less for a particular service than in a previous year. To prevent physicians from attempting to earn more by billing more services, committees of doctors and sickness funds closely scrutinize physician practices. Excess billing practices are easily detected by means of statistical profiles of diagnostic and therapeutic practices that identify departures of individual doctors from the group average (a form of community rating). Physicians found guilty of improper conduct are penalized. The same procedures apply to dentists.

Land hospital associations and *Land* associations of sickness funds negotiate the general standards for hospital care and procedures and criteria by which to monitor the appropriate and efficient delivery of medical care. Each hospital negotiates a contract on hospital care and the prices for hospital services with the regional sickness-funds association. Until 1993 hospitals' operating costs (of which salaries made up as much as 75 percent) were covered by per diem rates paid by public and private insurance. Hospital investments and equipment are financed by *Land* general revenues.

The GSG of 1993 developed a more sophisticated reimbursement method for hospitals than the simple per diem rate in an attempt to achieve greater hospital efficiency and thereby reduce costs. The law requires that four sets of costs be negotiated for each hospital: payments to diagnosis-related groups for the full treatment of a case, with the possibility of an extra payment if a patient is hospitalized for an unusual length of time; special payments for surgery and treatments before and after surgery; departmental allowances that reimburse the hospital for all nursing and medical procedures per patient per day; and finally a basic allowance for all nonmedical procedures and covered accommodations, food, television, and similar expenses. The law also introduced new aggregate spending targets and spending caps on hospitals for the period 1993 to 1995. Moreover, the law imposes more stringent capital spending controls on hospital construction and expensive medical equipment.

Current Health Care Issues and Outlook for the Future

German health care has long overemphasized curative medicine and neglected preventive medicine and health promotion. In 1994 the Advisory Council for the Concerted Action in Health Care recognized this imbalance and recommended improving prenatal and postnatal care, providing more vaccinations for young children, and better educating the public about the dangers of alcohol consumption and smoking both during pregnancy and at other times. The council also found that schoolchildren need more sports, dental care, and sex education, and that they should be taught better dietary habits. Adolescents require better information about the dangers of drug abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and obesity. All adults should exercise more and make better use of available cancer and dental screening. The council further recommended that fewer prescription drugs be taken (the cost for prescription drugs for the elderly is almost one-third higher than the cost of physician visits). Improving the control of blood pressure, counseling diabetics, eliminating occupational hazards, and promoting self-help groups are other goals.

The council also found that many older Germans have bad dietary habits. Although eating habits have improved in recent decades, the German diet is rich in fats, carbohydrates, and sugar and is deficient in fruits and vegetables. In addition, the consumption of tobacco and alcohol is high, although it decreased between 1980 and 1990 among both men and women. Because of these factors, specialists estimate that 30 to

40 percent of the population has health problems related to diet.

Cardiovascular diseases are the cause of about half of all deaths, followed by cancer, which accounts for about one-quarter of deaths (see table 10, Appendix). Modern medicine has largely eradicated traditional threats to health such as tuberculosis, diphtheria, and pneumonia. Marked improvements are also seen in other areas, such as infant and maternal mortality rates. In 1970 infant mortality rates (defined as deaths under one year of age per 1,000 live births) were 18.5 in the former East Germany and 23.4 in the former West Germany, compared with an estimated 6.3 in united Germany by 1995. Maternal deaths fell from 140 per 100,000 live births in the mid-1950s to fewer than ten per 100,000 by 1989 in the former West Germany. A similar improvement was measured in the former East Germany.

A new health problem is acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). By late 1994, a total of 11,854 AIDS cases had been reported in Germany.

Another institutional challenge is extending the old *Länder* health care system based on statutory health insurance to the new *Länder*. Achieving this goal has meant a complete overhaul of the GDR's state-run and highly centralized system; the introduction of insurance funds, private insurance, and voluntary organizations; and the training of physicians to become fee-for-service entrepreneurs, rather than salaried state employees as they were under the old system. The Treaty on Monetary, Economic, and Social Union of May 18, 1990, also set the goal of bringing hospitals in the former GDR up to the standards of those in the West. An ambitious program to invest about US$1 billion per year beginning in 1995 will be aimed at this last goal, with about 40 percent of funds coming from the federal government, another 40 percent from the new *Länder*, and 20 percent from public and private insurance carriers. It is expected that realization of the full integration of the two health systems will take many years, however.

Education

Germany has one of the world's best and most extensive school and university systems. Although shortcomings exist, on the whole the country's varied and multifaceted education system addresses well the needs of a population with widely differing characteristics and abilities. Some young people are best served by a traditional classroom-based education that prepares them for study at a wide choice of institutions of higher learning. Others profit more from vocational training and education consisting of on-the-job training combined with classroom instruction. At the end of this kind of education, graduates enter the workforce with a useful skill or profession. Other students may choose one of many combinations of elements of these two paths, or decide later in life to embark on one of them by means of adult education and night school. Because education in Germany costs little compared with that in the United States, for example, and because educational support of various kinds is widely available, Germans are likely to receive education and training suited to their abilities and desires.

But however well Germans have arranged their system of education, problems remain. The integration of two entirely different education systems within the country's highly federalized system had not been completed as of mid-1995. In addition, the country's vaunted system of higher education is beset by severe overcrowding despite its great expansion since the 1960s. Moreover, many who begin study at the university level are not adequately prepared to meet its demands. Many others who successfully complete their courses of study can find no suitable employment once they graduate. Solving these problems will engage the country's educators and public into the next century.

Historical Background

The origins of the German education system date back to church schools in the Middle Ages. The first university was founded in 1386 in Heidelberg; others were subsequently established in Cologne, Leipzig, Freiburg, and a number of other cities. These universities, which trained only a small intellectual elite of a few thousand, focused on the classics and religion. In the sixteenth century, the Reformation led to the founding of universities along sectarian lines. It was also in this century that cities promulgated the first regulations regarding elementary schools. By the eighteenth century, elementary schools had increasingly been separated from churches and had come under the direction of state authorities. Prussia, for example, made school attendance for all children between the ages of five and fourteen compulsory in 1763. A number of universities dedicated to science also came into being in the eighteenth century.

The defeat of Prussia by France led to a reform of education by the Berlin scholar Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835). His reforms in secondary schools have shaped the German education system to the present day. He required university-level training for high school teachers and modernized the structure and curriculum of the *Gymnasium*, the preparatory school. He also proposed an orientation phase after the *Gymnasium* and a qualifying examination known as the *Abitur* for university admission. In 1810 Humboldt founded the university in Berlin that now bears his name. Humboldt also introduced the three principles that guided German universities until the 1960s: academic freedom, the unity of teaching and research, and self-government by the professors. Also of much influence in education, both within Germany and abroad, was Friedrich Froebel's development of the kindergarten in 1837.

For much of the nineteenth century, Germany had two distinctive educational tracks: the *Gymnasium*, which provided a classical education for elites; and the *Volksschule*, which was attended for eight years by about 90 percent of children. The two schools were administered and supervised separately. Later in the century, two additional types of school emerged: the *Realgymnasium*, which substituted modern languages for the classics, and the *Oberrealschule*, which emphasized mathematics and science. Most children, however, could not attend the schools that prepared students for the professions or university entrance because of the schools' high standards and long duration. Hence, around the turn of the century, the *Mittelschule*, or middle school, was introduced to meet parental demand for expanded educational and economic opportunities. Children entered the *Mittelschule* after three years of elementary school, and they attended that school for six years.

In the nineteenth century, new universities were established in a number of major German cities, including Munich, Hamburg, and Frankfurt am Main. The older universities had been located mainly in smaller cities, such as Heidelberg. Many of the new universities were technical universities, and Germany soon attained a leadership in science that it lost only with World War II. Universities were state supported but largely independent in matters of curriculum and administration. A university degree brought much social status and was the prerequisite for entering the professions and the higher levels of the civil service.

A serious problem of German education before World War I was the rigid differentiation between primary education, received by all, and secondary education, received mainly by the children of the more prosperous classes. This division meant that most children of the poor had no access to secondary schooling and subsequent study at the university level. After the war, the Weimar constitution outlined a democratic vision of education that would address the problem: supervision by the state, with broad legislative powers over education; uniform teacher training; a minimum of eight years of primary school attendance; continuing education until the age of eighteen years; and free education and teaching materials. Many of these reform proposals never came to fruition, however.

During the Hitler era (1933–45), the national government reversed the tradition of provincial and local control of education and sought centralized control as part of the regime's aim to impose its political and racist ideology on society. Despite an agreement with the Vatican that theoretically guaranteed the independence of Roman Catholic schools, during the 1930s the regime considerably reduced church control of the parochial school system. Universities also lost their independence. By 1936 approximately 14 percent of all professors had been dismissed because of their political views or ethnic background. The introduction of two years of military service and six months of required labor led to a rapid decline in university enrollment. By 1939 all but six universities had closed.

After the defeat of the Hitler regime in 1945, the rebuilding of the education system in the occupied zones was influenced by the political interests and educational philosophy of the occupying powers: the United States, Britain, and France in what became West Germany; and the Soviet Union in East Germany. As a result, two different education systems developed. Their political, ideological, and cultural objectives and their core curricula reflected the socioeconomic and political-ideological environments that prevailed in the two parts of Germany from 1945 to 1989.

The Western Allies had differing views on education, but the insistence of the United States on the "reeducation" of German youth, meaning an education in and for democracy, proved the most persuasive. Thus, the West German education system was shaped by the democratic values of federalism, individualism,

Lunchtime in a Grundschule *in North Rhine-Westphalia*
Playground at a Grundschule *in Berlin*
Courtesy German Information Center, New York

and the provision of a range of educational choices and opportunities by a variety of public and private institutions. Students began to express themselves more freely than before and to exercise a greater degree of influence on education. In West Germany, religious institutions regained their footing and reputation. By contrast, the East German education system was centralized. The communist-controlled Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands—SED) retained a monopoly over education and subjected it to rigid control.

Both Germanys faced the task of "denazifying" teachers and reeducating students, but they moved in different directions. The authorities in the East sought teachers who had opposed fascism and who were committed to a Marxist-Leninist ideology. In the West, authorities dismissed several thousand teachers and replaced them with educators holding democratic values. The ensuing Western reform program included reconstructing facilities and reinvigorating the system. In 1953 reforms were introduced that aimed at standardizing education throughout the *Länder.* In the 1960s, reforms were undertaken that introduced apprentice shops and new instruction techniques for vocational training.

The 1970s saw further major educational reform, detailed in the document *Structural Plans for the Educational System.* The plan was approved in 1970 by the Council of Education, which was established in 1957 to serve as an advisory committee for the entire education system, and by each *Land* minister of education and cultural affairs. The main components of the reform program were the reorganization of the upper level of the *Gymnasium,* the recruitment of more students into colleges and universities, and the establishment of the comprehensive school (*Gesamtschule*). The *Gesamtschule* brings together the three kinds of secondary schools—the *Hauptschule,* the *Realschule,* and the *Gymnasium*—in an attempt to diminish what some perceived as the elitist bias of the traditional secondary education system. The program also proposed expanding adult education and vocational training programs.

The reform program achieved some but not all of its goals. The university entrance examination was made easier, and the number of students attending institutions of higher education rose from just over 200,000 in 1960 to about 1.9 million in the 1992–93 academic year (see table 11, Appendix). Between 1959 and 1979, twenty new universities were built, and university academic staff increased from 19,000 to 78,000. However, some Germans opposed the lowering of university entrance standards, and some also resisted the introduction of the *Gesamtschule*. In addition, the worldwide recession brought on by the oil crisis of 1973 caused serious financial problems for the government at all levels and made reforms difficult to realize.

Despite the different educational policies implemented by the two Germanys between 1945 and 1990, both systems regarded education as a constitutional right and a public responsibility, emphasized the importance of a broad general education (*Allgemeinbildung*), taught vocational education through the so-called dual system that combined classroom instruction with on-the-job training, required students to pass the *Abitur* examination before beginning university studies, and were committed to Humboldt's concept of university students' becoming educated by doing research. Despite these similarities, the systems differed in many important details, and the structural divergence was considerable.

Educational Policy Making and Administration

The Basic Law of 1949 reaffirmed the nineteenth-century tradition under which the *Länder* were responsible for education. Article 30 clearly established the autonomy of the *Länder* in most educational and cultural matters, including the financing of education, the maintenance of schools, teacher training, the setting of teachers' qualifications and educational standards, and the development of standardized curricula. In higher, or tertiary, education, the *Länder* share responsibility with the federal government. The federal government, for example, oversees vocational education and training, a very important component of Germany's system of education. The federal government also controls the financing of stipends and educational allowances and the promotion of research and support of young scientists through fellowships. In addition, the federal government also has passed framework laws on general principles of higher education. However, the federal government has no power to reform higher education institutions; this power remains a prerogative of the *Länder*.

Most teachers and university-level professors are civil servants with life tenure and high standing in society. They receive generous fringe benefits and relatively lucrative compensation, while making no contributions to social security programs. In Bavaria, for example, the average starting salary for an elementary or secondary school teacher in the early 1990s was about US$40,000. A senior teacher in a *Gymnasium* earned about US$53,000.

Postsecondary education is a shared responsibility implemented through "cooperative federalism" and joint policy areas. The federal government and the sixteen old *Länder* cooperate extensively with regard to the establishment, expansion, and modernization of institutions of higher education, including their financing.

To counterbalance decentralized authority and provide leadership in education, the development of educational policy and implementation is influenced by a number of nationwide joint permanent advisory bodies. These include the Planning Committee for the Construction of Institutions of Higher Learning and the Scientific Council. Planning for education and the promotion of research by the federal government and the *Länder* have become more important since unification and are implemented by the Federal and *Land* Commission on Educational Planning and the Promotion of Research.

Educational Finances

Education is the second largest item of public spending after social security and welfare and in the 1990–91 academic year amounted to 4 percent of GNP. Education is not paid for by local property taxes but rather out of general revenues. Since 1949 the federal government, the *Länder*, and the local governments, including in some cases intercommunal single or multipurpose districts (*Zweckverbände*), have shared in financing education. For elementary, primary, and secondary education, the *Länder* and the local governments are the major funding sources. The *Länder* are responsible for teachers' salaries, curriculum development, and the setting of standards and qualifications. Local governments are responsible for the maintenance and operation of school facilities. The *Länder* remain the main source of funding for higher education, but the federal government also plays a role. In 1991 the *Länder* paid about 74 percent of total education costs (68 percent in 1970); local governments contributed 16 percent (24 percent in 1970); and the federal government contributed 10 percent (8 percent in 1970).

The Education System

The Basic Law of 1949 grants every German citizen the right to self-fulfillment. In theory, citizens are able to choose the type of education they want and are given access to their preferred occupation or profession. The goal of educational policy is therefore to provide each citizen with opportunities to grow personally, professionally, and as a citizen in accordance with his or her abilities and preferences. The *Länder* are to provide equal educational opportunities and quality education for all through a variety of educational institutions.

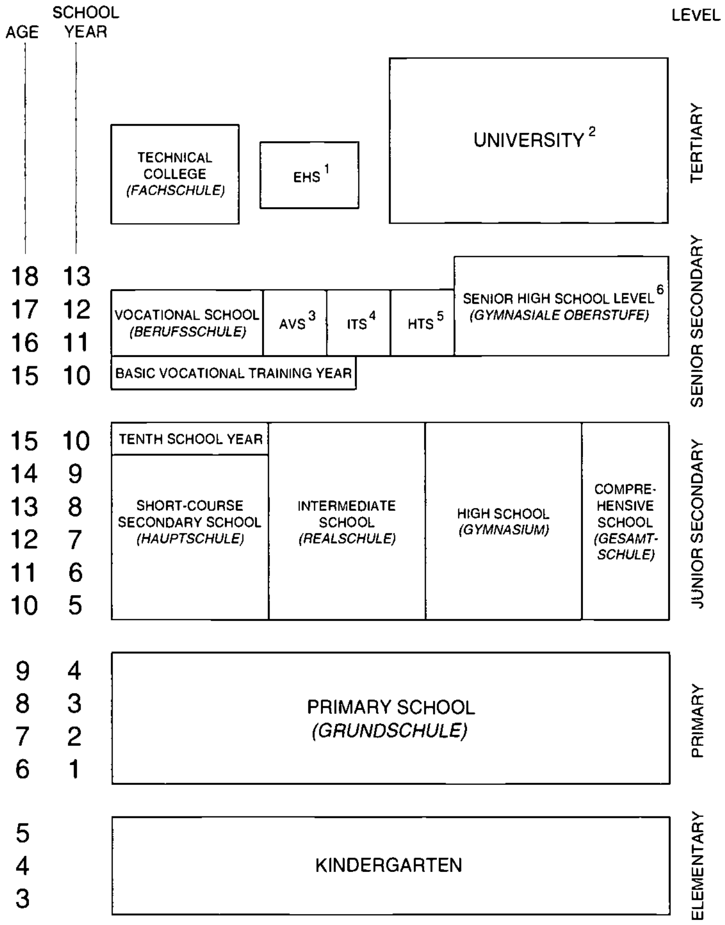
Education is free and in most types of school is coeducational. Almost all elementary and secondary schools and about 95 percent of higher education institutions are public. College, graduate, and postgraduate students pay a nominal fee ranging from DM35 to DM60 a semester, which includes extensive rights to health care and other social benefits. When churches or private organizations run kindergartens, they do so independently, and the public sector is not involved.

According to the terms of the Düsseldorf Treaty of 1955, the first major attempt to unify or coordinate the school systems of the *Länder*, school attendance is mandatory for a minimum of nine years (or in some *Länder* ten years), beginning at age six. A student who starts vocational training as an apprentice must attend a part-time vocational school until the age of eighteen.

Elementary and Primary Education

The first level of education is called elementary education and consists of kindergarten for children ages three to five (see fig. 9). Attendance is voluntary. In the first half of the 1990s, about 80 percent of children were in kindergarten. Beginning in 1996, all children will be guaranteed a place in kindergarten. Because the former GDR had maintained an extensive kindergarten system, the new *Länder* had enough kindergarten places to meet this requirement. In contrast, in the early 1990s the old *Länder* had only enough places to accommodate about 75 percent of children in the relevant age-group.

The second level of education is called primary education and consists of the *Grundschule* (basic school). Children between the ages of six and ten attend the *Grundschule* from grades one through four. Children are evaluated in the fourth grade and tracked according to their academic records, teacher evaluations, and parent-teacher discussions. The three tracks lead to different secondary schools and play a significant role in determining a child's subsequent educational options.


SCHOOL
AGE
YEAR
LEVEL
TECHNICAL COLLEGE (FACHSCHULE)
EHS 1
UNIVERSITY 2
TERTIARY
18 13
17 12
16 11
15 10
VOCATIONAL SCHOOL (BERUFSSCHULE)
AVS 3
ITS 4
HTS 5
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL 6 (GYMNASIALE OBERSTUFE)
BASIC VOCATIONAL TRAINING YEAR
SENIOR SECONDARY
15 10
14 9
13 8
12 7
11 6
10 5
TENTH SCHOOL YEAR
SHORT-COURSE SECONDARY SCHOOL (HAUPTSCHULE)
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL (REALSCHULE)
HIGH SCHOOL (GYMNASIUM)
COMPRE-HENSIVE SCHOOL (GESAMT-SCHULE)
JUNIOR SECONDARY
9 4
8 3
7 2
6 1
PRIMARY SCHOOL (GRUNDSCHULE)
PRIMARY
5
4
3
KINDERGARTEN
ELEMENTARY

1 EHS—Evening High School/College *(Abendgymnasium/Kolleg).*
2 Includes technical universities, teacher training colleges, academies of art, music conservatories, and other institutions of higher learning.
3 AVS—Advanced Vocational School *(Berufsaufbauschule).*
4 ITS—Intermediate Technical School *(Berufsfachschule).*
5 HTS—Higher Technical School *(Fachoberschule).*
6 Includes specialized high schools and comprehensive schools.

Source: Based on information from Arno Kappler and Adriane Grevel, eds., *Facts about Germany,* Frankfurt am Main, 1994, 407.

Figure 9. Structure of the Education System, 1994

Junior Secondary Education

Secondary education, the third level of education, is divided into two levels: junior secondary education (also called intermediate secondary education) and senior secondary education. Upon completion of the *Grundschule*, students between the ages of ten and sixteen attend one of the following types of secondary schools: the *Hauptschule*, the *Realschule*, the *Gymnasium*, the *Gesamtschule*, or the *Sonderschule* (for children with special educational needs). Students who complete this level of education receive an intermediate school certificate. Adults who attend two years of classes in evening schools can also earn these intermediate school certificates, which permit further study.

Junior secondary education starts with two years (grades five and six) of orientation courses during which students explore a variety of educational career paths open to them. The courses are designed to provide more time for the student and parents to decide upon appropriate subsequent education.

The *Hauptschule*, often called a short-course secondary school in English, lasts five or six years and consists of grades five to nine or five to ten depending on the *Land*. Some *Länder* require a compulsory tenth year or offer a two-year orientation program. About one-third of students completing primary school continue in the *Hauptschule*. The curriculum stresses preparation for a vocation as well as mathematics, history, geography, German, and one foreign language. After receiving their diploma, graduates either become apprentices in shops or factories while taking compulsory part-time courses or attend some form of full-time vocational school until the age of eighteen.

Another one-third of primary school graduates attend the *Realschule*, sometimes called the intermediate school. These schools include grades five through ten. Students seeking access to middle levels of government, industry, and business attend the *Realschule*. The curriculum is the same as that of the *Hauptschule*, but students take an additional foreign language, shorthand, wordprocessing, and bookkeeping, and they learn some computer skills. Graduation from the *Realschule* enables students to enter a *Fachoberschule* (a higher technical school) or a *Fachgymnasium* (a specialized high school or grammar school) for the next stage of secondary education. A special program makes it possible for a few students to transfer into the *Gymnasium*, but this is exceptional.

The *Gymnasium*, sometimes called high school or grammar school in English, begins upon completion of the *Grundschule* or the orientation grades and includes grades five through thirteen. The number of students attending the *Gymnasium* has increased dramatically in recent decades; by the mid-1990s, about one-third of all primary school graduates completed a course of study at the *Gymnasium*, which gives them the right to study at the university level. In the 1990s, the *Gymnasium* continued to be the primary educational route into the universities, although other routes have been created.

The *Gesamtschule* originated in the late 1960s to provide a broader range of educational opportunities for students than the traditional *Gymnasium*. The *Gesamtschule* has an all-inclusive curriculum for students ages ten to eighteen and a good deal of freedom to choose coursework. Some schools of this type have been established as all-day schools, unlike the *Gymnasium*, which is a part-day school with extensive homework assignments. The popularity of the *Gesamtschule* has been mixed. It has been resisted in more conservative areas, especially in Bavaria, where only one such school had been established by the beginning of the 1990s. A few more were established in Bavaria in the next few years; their presence is marginal when compared with the *Gymnasium*, of which there were 395 in 1994. Even North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany's most populous *Land* and an outspoken supporter of the *Gesamtschule*, had only 181, compared with 623 of the traditional *Gymasium*.

Senior Secondary Education

The variety of educational programs, tracks, and opportunities available to students increases at the senior secondary level. The largest single student group attends the senior level of the *Gymnasium*, the *Gymnasiale Oberstufe*. This level includes the traditional academically oriented *Gymnasium*, the vocational *Gymnasium*, the occupation-specific *Fachgymnasium*, and the *Gesamtschule*. Graduation from these schools requires passing the *Abitur*, the qualifying examination for studying at the university level. Until the late 1970s, nearly everyone who passed the *Abitur* had access to an institution of higher education. However, in the 1980s the *numerus clausus*, a restrictive quota system that had been introduced for the study of medicine in the late 1960s, began to be used for other popular fields of study. Strict selection criteria limiting access to higher education had become necessary because the demand for places at universities had become much greater than the supply.

Vocational Education and Training

The German education system has been praised for its ability to provide quality general education combined with excellent specific training for a profession or a skilled occupation. In 1992 about 65 percent of the country's workforce had been trained through vocational education. In the same year, 2.3 million young people were enrolled in vocational or trade schools.

Building upon the junior secondary program, the *Berufsschulen* are two- and three-year vocational schools that prepare young people for a profession. In the 1992–93 academic year, there were 1.8 million enrolled in these schools. About 264,000 individuals attended *Berufsfachschulen,* also called intermediate technical schools (ITS). These schools usually offer full-time vocation-specific programs. They are attended by students who want to train for a specialty or those already in the workforce who want to earn the equivalent of an intermediate school certificate from a *Realschule.* Full-time programs take between twelve and eighteen months, and part-time programs take between three and three-and-one-half years. Other types of schools designed to prepare students for different kinds of vocational careers are the higher technical school (HTS), the *Fachoberschule,* attended by about 75,000 persons in 1992–93, and the advanced vocational school (AVS), the *Berufsaufbauschule,* attended by about 6,500 persons in the same year. Students can choose to attend one of these three kinds of schools after graduating with an intermediate school certificate from a *Realschule* or an equivalent school.

The method of teaching used in vocational schools is called the dual system because it combines classroom study with a work-related apprenticeship system. The length of schooling/training depends on prior vocational experience and may entail one year of full-time instruction or up to three years of part-time training.

Students can earn the *Fachhochschulreife* after successfully completing vocational education and passing a qualifying entrance examination. The *Fachhochschulreife* entitles a student to enter a *Fachhochschule,* or a training college, and to continue postsecondary occupational or professional training in engineering or technical fields. Such programs last from six months to three years (full-time instruction) or six to eight years (part-time instruction). Some students with many years of practical experience or those with special skills may also attend a *Fachhochschule*.

Vocational education and training is a joint government-industry program. The federal government and the *Länder* share in the financing of vocational education in public vocational schools, with the federal government bearing a slightly higher share (58 percent in 1991) than the *Länder*. On-the-job vocational training, whose cost is entirely borne by companies and businesses, is more costly to provide than vocational education. In the early 1990s, companies and businesses annually spent 2 percent of their payrolls on training.

Tertiary or Higher Education

In the 1992–93 academic year, higher education was available at 314 institutions of higher learning, with about 1.9 million students enrolled. Institutions of higher learning included eighty-one universities and technical universities, seven comprehensive universities (*Gesamthochschulen*), eight teacher-training colleges, seventeen theological seminaries, 126 profession-specific technical colleges, thirty training facilities in public administration (*Verwaltungsfachhochschulen*), and forty-five academies for art, music, and literature. Nearly 80 percent, or 250, of these institutions were located in the old *Länder*, and sixty-four were in the new *Länder*. Baden-Württemberg and North Rhine-Westphalia had the largest share of these institutions, sixty-one and forty-nine, respectively. In 1990 about 69.7 percent of students at tertiary-level institutions went to universities and engineering schools, and another 21.7 percent attended vocational training colleges (*Fachhochschulen*).

German university students can complete their first degree in about five years, but on average university studies last seven years. Advanced degrees require further study. Because tuition at institutions of higher education amounts to no more than a nominal fee except at the handful of private universities, study at the university level means only meeting living expenses. An extensive federal and *Land* program provides interest-free loans to students coming from lower-income households. Half of the loan must be paid within five years of graduation. Students graduating in the top third of their class or within a shorter time than usual have portions of their loans forgiven. Loans are also available to students receiving technical and

A sixth-grade class at the Geschwister Scholl Gymnasium in Pulheim, North Rhine-Westphalia
Courtesy William Collins

vocational training. In the early 1990s, about half of all students were obliged to work while attending university.

Unlike the United States, Germany does not have a group of elite universities; none enjoys a reputation for greater overall excellence than is enjoyed by the others. Instead, particular departments of some universities are commonly seen as very good in their field. For example, the University of Cologne has a noted economics faculty. Also in contrast to the United States, German universities do not offer much in the way of campus life, and collegiate athletics are nearly nonexistent. Universities generally consist of small clusters of buildings dispersed throughout the city in which they are located. Students do not live on university property, although some are housed in student dormitories operated by churches or other nonprofit organizations.

Education in the New *Länder*

The Soviet-supported SED centralized and politicized education far more than had been the case during the Hitler era. About 70 percent of teachers and all school counselors, superintendents, members of the teachers' union, and school administrators were SED members, often performing both professional and party functions. In theory, parents were part of the educational process, but in practice they were expected to support party educational policy. Teacher-student ratios were low—1:5 compared with 1:18 in West Germany.

Under the new system, public education was expanded by establishing preschools and kindergartens. Because most women returned to work after six months of maternity leave, these new schools were widely attended. Lowered standards of admission and scholarships expanded access to higher education for working-class children and diminished its elitist bias. The state emphasized education in "socialist values" and Marxism-Leninism at all levels of the system, following the Soviet model. Students were required to spend one day per week working in a factory, in an office, or on a farm in order to reinforce the importance of labor.

In terms of organization, all types of schools were replaced by a uniform ten-grade polytechnical school, which emphasized technical education. Upon graduation from this school, about 85 percent of students entered a two-year vocational education school. The remaining students attended special classes to prepare for university studies, some going to an extension of secondary school for two years, others attending vocational school for three years. The GDR had six universities, nine technical universities, and several dozen specialized institutions of higher education. In the 1950s and 1960s, the children of workers were favored for university study. In later decades, the children of the intelligentsia (state officials, professionals, and academicians) again formed a greater part of the student population. However, in addition to passing the qualifying examination, students had to demonstrate political loyalty and commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideology. Throughout their schooling, children were constantly exposed to party ideology and values.

The system had a strong vocational element that focused on providing a bridge to adult work. The system was particularly successful in some respects; literacy was practically universal by 1989, and the proportion of unskilled workers and trainees in the workforce fell from 70 percent in 1955 to 13 percent in 1989. The system was best suited to the teaching of mathematics, the natural sciences, and other technical and nonideological subjects. It was less effective in teaching the social sciences, current affairs, and information technology. Language teaching emphasized Russian, which was compulsory. Few learned other European languages such as English or French.

The revolutionary events of November 1989 led to an abrupt transformation of the institutional, political, and philosophical foundations of education in the GDR. In heated debates, grassroots groups of parents, teachers, and citizens discussed the future of education and vocational training in the new *Länder*. By May 1990, the GDR educational leadership had been dismissed, and steps had been taken to reduce the bloated educational bureaucracy. Evaluation commissions reassessed the quality of research and academic institutions and their staff, and many social science departments suspended activity until they were evaluated. Departments of Marxism-Leninism were closed outright, and most institutions modeled on the Soviet system were dismantled.

In May 1990, the ministers of education of the *Länder* agreed that the new *Länder* should develop their own educational strategies. The unification treaty of August 31, 1990, specified that this should be done by June 30, 1991, when the new *Länder* were expected to have passed new laws on education. A major change effected by those laws is the replacement of the general polytechnic school with the range of educational models prevailing in West Germany. The five new *Länder*, with the exception of Brandenburg, introduced the four-year *Grundschule*. Brandenburg established a six-year *Grundschule*, like that found in Berlin. Secondary schooling also resembles that of the old *Länder* in that the *Gymnasium* is common to all; however, other schools at the junior secondary level differ somewhat in their names and organization. Education at the senior secondary level resembles closely that of the old *Länder*.

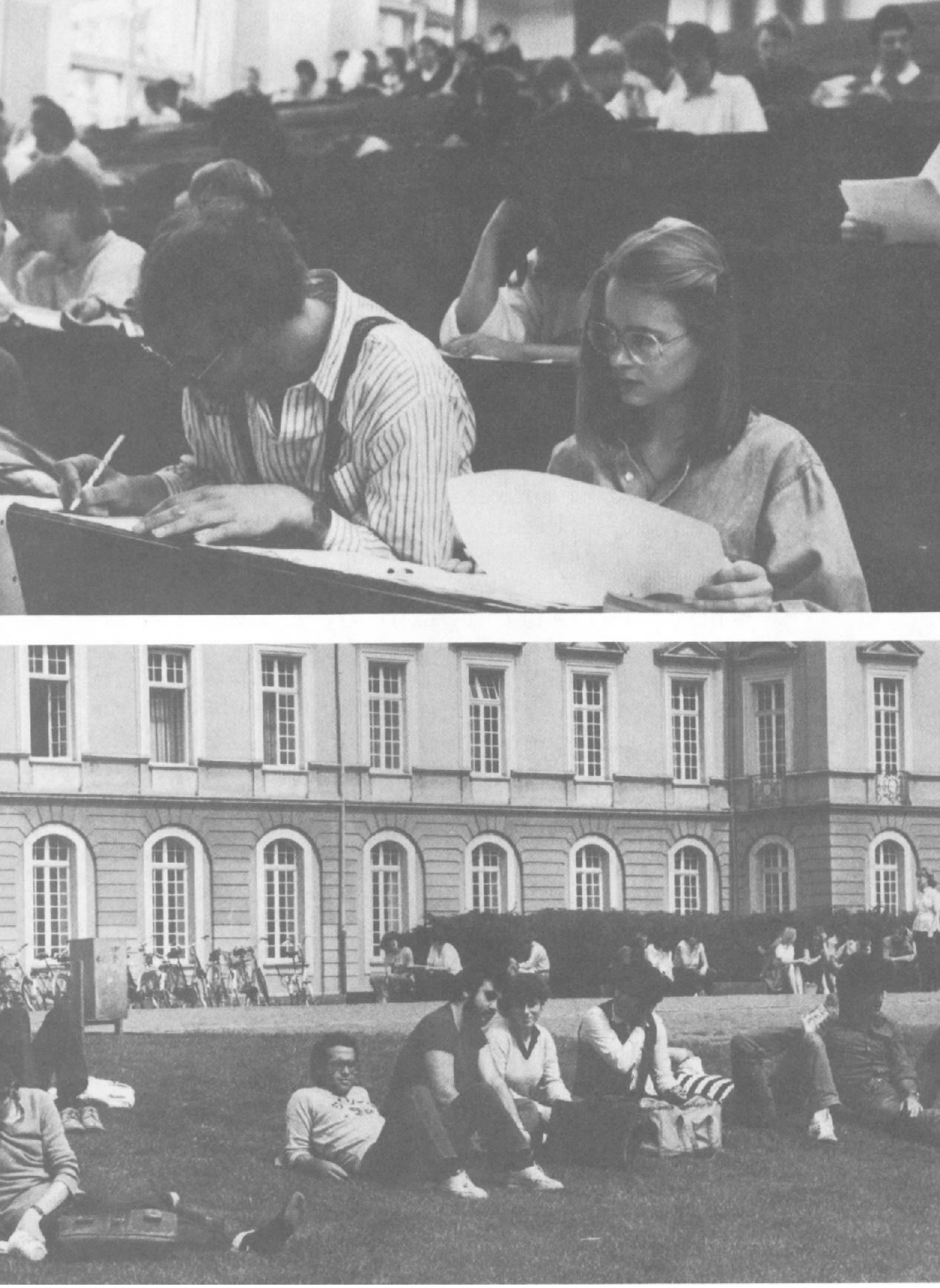
Higher education has also seen changes. To improve geographic access to higher education, regions previously without institutions of higher learning have received a number of such institutions. In other regions, institutions of higher learning have been abolished, some of which have been replaced by *Fachhochschulen*, nonexistent in the former GDR. University staffs have also been cut, sometimes by as much as 50 percent. Within two or three years of unification, about 25 percent of university faculty were arrivals from the old *Länder.* By late 1994, institutions of higher learning in the new *Länder* had benefited from annual payments from western Germany of about DM3 billion.

Although the old structure has been replaced, observers agree that the values and preferences internalized by parents, students, and teachers who came to maturity in the GDR can be expected to survive for many years. Because it lasted decades longer than nazism, the Marxist-Leninist influence on education in the new *Länder* will probably take far longer to overcome.

Current Education Issues and Outlook for the Future

Germany's system of education faces a number of challenges, among them a surplus of teachers in a period of declining birth rates. A chief problem is reconciling the tradition of *Land* responsibility for education, which has resulted in a variety of school types, programs, and standards, with the need for a uniform national system. This is the central problem concerning whether or how to integrate the education systems of the new *Länder* with those of the old *Länder.* Such an integration will entail deciding whether to increase the number of years of schooling by one year for eastern Germans or to reduce the thirteen years of schooling for western Germans to twelve. It will also mean deciding on whether to introduce a postsecondary vocational qualifying examination (*Fachabitur*) in the new *Länder* to mirror the one that has existed in the former FRG since the 1970s. Other unresolved issues relate to such questions as educational standards, qualifications, and the mutual recognition of qualifying examinations and diplomas. The diversity resulting from a reluctance to impose the same standard norms and diplomas in all *Länder,* in contrast to France and many other European countries, is so extreme that some observers think it may hinder the mobility of students and teachers within Germany and the larger Europe.

Unification has also thrown into sharp focus the ongoing debate about the weaknesses of the university system in the former FRG. Many West German universities are overcrowded, understaffed, underequipped, and underfinanced. Frequently criticized are the length and structure of degree courses, the excessive length of studies, the high number of long-term students, and the disturbingly high number of dropouts who leave higher education without graduating. Some of these problems



German university students
Students outside Bonn's Friedrich Wilhelm University
Courtesy German Information Center, New York

result from Germany's success in expanding access to secondary education. About 34 percent of all students graduated with the *Abitur* in 1990, compared with only 11 percent in 1970.

Critics charge that many students who fail to complete their university studies may not have been well educated. A 1994 study cast serious doubt on the assumption that passing the *Abitur* is adequate preparation for study at a university. It found that almost one-third of those who had passed the examination failed to complete their coursework at institutions of higher education and that the number of dropouts had quadrupled from 14,000 in the mid-1970s to 60,000 two decades later. The study also found that on average, dropouts left the university after three years, or six semesters, that women had a higher dropout rate than men, and that the highest dropout rate was in liberal arts, formerly the core of university studies.

Students cited a lack of correlation between curriculum content and career goals as one reason for breaking off their studies. One out of three students also reported feeling unprepared for higher education. Other reasons listed were the limited opportunities in the labor market, overcrowding, anonymity (impersonality), a lack of mentors, and the poor quality of teaching. Financial reasons also were mentioned more often than they had been in the mid-1970s.

As remedies, some advocate establishing a better balance between pure and applied research and teaching, making a distinction between first-degree courses offering training for a profession and research-oriented postgraduate courses, and substituting well-defined curricula for the existing uncoordinated requirements. Delegating a larger share of teaching to a new breed of middle-rank lecturers has also been recommended.

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The best and most comprehensive historical and comparative account of German social policy, although published in 1988, is a nearly book-length chapter by Jens Alber in *Growth to Limits* (Vol. 2), edited by Peter Flora. Peter J. Katzenstein also provides a good introduction to German social policy in *Policy and Politics in West Germany*. Stephan Leibfried is the author of valuable articles on various aspects of German social policy, as is Arnold J. Heidenheimer. Alfred J. Kahn and Sheila B. Kamerman have written on family and child care policies.

Analyses in English of recent developments regarding specific programs after unification are regrettably rare. An exception is "Social Policy: One State, Two-Tier Welfare" by Steen Mangen. A new British periodical, *Journal of European Social Policy*, publishes research findings in English and is beginning to fill the gap in this area. Examples of the journal's articles include Winifried Schmähl's article on the 1992 reform of public pensions; Wolfgang Voges and Götz Rohwer's very useful article on social assistance; Kirsten Scheiwe's report on poverty risks of mothers in Belgium, Germany, and Britain; and Rudolph Bauer's analysis of voluntary welfare associations in Germany and the United States.

The literature on the German health care system in English is extensive. Written for readers in the United States and dating from 1993, Richard A. Knox's *Germany: One Nation with Health Care for All* is an excellent discussion of the system's components. A more recent publication is Ullrich K. Hoffmeyer's long article "The Health Care System in Germany." It includes a discussion of the Health Care Structural Reform Act of 1993. Other useful sources are John K. Iglehart's articles in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Deborah A. Stone's article "German Unification: East Meets West in the Doctor's Office," and "Global Budgeting in Germany: Lessons for the United States" by Klaus-Dirk Henke, Margaret A. Murray, and Claudia Ade.

There is no recent one-volume comprehensive survey of the German education system. Christoph Führ's *Schools and Institutions of Higher Education in the Federal Republic of Germany*, dating from 1989, is still quite useful, however, as is his more recent book, *On the Education System in the Five New Laender of the Federal Republic of Germany*. Also valuable is Peter J. Katzenstein's discussion of university reform in his book *Policy and Politics in West Germany*. Val D. Rust and Diane Rust examine the difficulties of integrating the two German education systems in *The Unification of German Education*.

The Press and Information Office of the Federal Republic of Germany publishes brief accounts in English and German on a variety of topics, including social programs. These can be obtained through the German Information Center in New York. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)