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Germany
a country study

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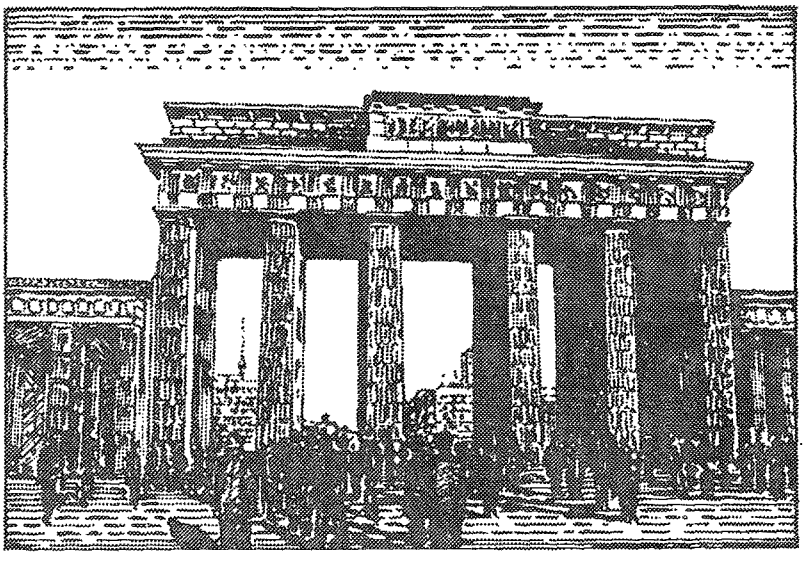

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Foreword

This volume is one in a continuing series of books prepared by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress under the Country Studies/Area Handbook Program sponsored by the Department of the Army. The last two pages of this book list the other published studies.

Most books in the series deal with a particular foreign country, describing and analyzing its political, economic, social, and national security systems and institutions, and examining the interrelationships of those systems and the ways they are shaped by historical and cultural factors. Each study is written by a multidisciplinary team of social scientists. The authors seek to provide a basic understanding of the observed society, striving for a dynamic rather than a static portrayal. Particular attention is devoted to the people who make up the society, their origins, dominant beliefs and values, their common interests and the issues on which they are divided, the nature and extent of their involvement with national institutions, and their attitudes toward each other and toward their social system and political order.

The books represent the analysis of the authors and should not be construed as an expression of an official United States government position, policy, or decision. The authors have sought to adhere to accepted standards of scholarly objectivity. Corrections, additions, and suggestions for changes from readers will be welcomed for use in future editions.

Louis R. Mortimer
Chief
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Washington, DC 20540–4840

Acknowledgments

This edition supersedes *East Germany: A Country Study*, published in 1988, and *Federal Republic of Germany: A Country Study*, published in 1982. The authors wish to acknowledge their use of portions of those volumes in the preparation of this book.

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Preface

Like its predecessors, *East Germany: A Country Study* and *Federal Republic of Germany: A Country Study*, this study attempts to review Germany's history and treat in a concise and objective manner its dominant social, political, economic, and military aspects. Sources of information included books, scholarly journals, foreign and domestic newspapers, official reports of government and international organizations, and numerous periodicals on German and international affairs.

The name *Germany* is used in three senses: first, it refers to the region in Central Europe commonly regarded as constituting Germany, even when there was no central German state, as was the case for most of Germany's history; second, it refers to the unified German state established in 1871 and existing until 1945; and third, since October 3, 1990, it refers to the united Germany, formed by the accession on this date of the German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany) to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, or West Germany). The name *Federal Republic of Germany* refers to West Germany from its founding on May 23, 1949, until German unification on October 3, 1990. After this date, it refers to united Germany. For the sake of brevity and variety, the Federal Republic of Germany is often called simply the Federal Republic.

The Federal Republic of Germany consists of sixteen states (*Länder;* sing., *Land*). Five of these *Länder* date from July 1990, when the territory of the German Democratic Republic was once again divided into *Länder.* For this reason, when discussing events since unification, Germans frequently refer to the territory of the former East Germany as the new or eastern *Länder* and call that of the former West Germany the old or western *Länder.* For the sake of convenience and variety, the text often follows this convention to distinguish eastern from western Germany.

Chapter bibliographies appear at the end of the book, and brief comments on some of the more valuable sources recommended for further reading appear at the end of each chapter. A Glossary also is included.

Spellings of place-names used in the book are in most cases those approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names. Exceptions are the use of the conventional English

names for a few important cities, rivers, and geographic regions. A list of these names is found in Table A.

Measurements are given in the metric system. A conversion table is provided to assist readers unfamiliar with metric measurements (see table 1, Appendix).

The body of the text reflects information available as of August 1995. Certain other portions of the text, however, have been updated. The Introduction discusses significant events that have occurred since the completion of research, the Country Profile and Glossary include updated information as available, and the Bibliography lists recently published sources thought to be particularly helpful to the reader.

Table A. English Equivalents of Selected German Place-Names

English	German
Baltic Sea	Ostsee
Bavaria	Bayern
Bavarian Forest	Bayerischer Wald
Black Forest	Schwarzwald
Bohemian Forest	Böhmer Wald
Cologne	Köln
Constance, Lake	Bodensee
Danube	Donau
Hanover	Hannover
Hesse	Hessen
Lower Saxony	Niedersachsen
North Sea	Nordsee
Nuremberg	Nürnberg
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Moselle	Mosel
Munich	München
North Rhine-Westphalia	Nordrhein-Westfalen
Rhine	Rhein
Rhineland-Palatinate	Rheinland-Pfalz
Saxony	Sachsen
Saxony-Anhalt	Sachsen-Anhalt
Thuringia	Thüringen

Table B. Selected Abbreviations

ACDA	Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
BDI	Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie (Federation of German Industry)
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Union)
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union (Christian Social Union)
DGB	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (Federation of German Trade Unions)
DIHT	Deutscher Industrie- und Handelstag (German Chambers of Industry and Commerce)
EC	European Community
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defence Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EMS	European Monetary System
EMU	European Monetary Union
ERM	exchange-rate mechanism
EU	European Union
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party)
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GKV	Gesetzliche Krankenversicherung (statutory health insurance)
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany)
MfS	Ministerium für Stadtssicherheit (Ministry for State Security)
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NVA	Nationale Volksarmee (National People's Army)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Co-operation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PDS	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (Party of Democratic Socialism)
PfP	Partnership for Peace
RAF	Rote Armee Fraktion (Red Army Faction)
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party of Germany)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
SS	Schutz-Staffel (Guard Detachment)
Stasi	Staatssicherheitsdienst (State Security Service)
WEU	Western European Union

Table C. Chronology of Important Events

Period	Description
ANCIENT PERIOD	
ca. 500 B.C.–A.D. 100	Germanic tribes settle in Germania. Roman army defeated by Suevian tribe at Battle of the Teutoburg Forest in A.D. 9 and pushed west of Rhine River. Romans subsequently reconquer some territory up to Rhine and Danube rivers and construct fortified frontiers.
ca. A.D. 100–600	Migration of Germanic peoples. Collapse of western Roman Empire. Last Roman emperor, Romulus Augustus, deposed in 476 by German armies led by Odovacar. Frankish tribes settle Gaul (France); Lombards settle northern Italy; Anglo-Saxons settle Britain.
MEDIEVAL GERMANY (500–1517)	
Merovingian Dynasty (ca. 500–751)	Merovingian kings rule Frankish tribes. Clovis, Frankish king (486–511), rules over Gaul's mixed Germanic-Roman people. Pepin the Younger, Frankish king (741–68), founds Carolingian Dynasty in 752. Christianization of Germany under leadership of Saint Boniface (ca. 675–754).
Carolingian Dynasty (752–911)	Frankish rule reaches from Spanish marches into central Germany. Charlemagne, Frankish king (768–814), conquers Lombardy in 774. Carolingian Empire established 800; Charlemagne crowned Holy Roman Emperor by pope. Louis I (Louis the Pious) Holy Roman Emperor 814–40. Treaty of Verdun (843) divides Carolingian Empire among three of Charlemagne's grandsons. Germany, France, and Middle Kingdom delineated, and imperial title linked with Middle Kingdom. Louis II (Louis the German) rules east Frankish tribes (843–76). Charles III (Charles the Fat), German king (876–87) and Holy Roman Emperor 881. Arnulf of Carinthia, German king (887–99) and Holy Roman Emperor 896. Barbarian invasions weaken Carolingian rule; German duchies of Franconia, Saxony, Lorraine, Swabia, and Bavaria rise to power. Louis IV, German king (900–911). Conrad I (Conrad of Franconia) elected German king (911–18) following extinction of Carolingian Empire in the east.
Saxon Dynasty (919–1024)	Frankish and Saxon nobles elect Henry I German king (919–36). Subordination of duchies. Otto I (Otto the Great), German king (936–73), gains control of Middle Kingdom, and Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation begins with his coronation as emperor in 962. German empire extends to Elbe River and southeast to Vienna. Otto II, Holy Roman Emperor (973–83). Otto III, Holy Roman Emperor (996–1002). Henry II, Holy Roman Emperor (1014–24).
Salian Dynasty (1024–1125)	Conrad II, Duke of Franconia, founds Salian Dynasty; elected Holy Roman Emperor (1027–39). Henry III, Holy Roman Emperor (1046–56). Henry IV, Holy Roman Emperor (1084–1106),

Table C. Chronology of Important Events

Period	Description
	challenges Pope Gregory VII. Investiture Contest and civil war, 1075–1122; German empire weakens, and German princes begin rise to power. Henry V, Holy Roman Emperor (1111–25). Compromise Concordat of Worms (1122) settles papal-imperial struggle. Lothar III, Saxon noble, elected Holy Roman Emperor (1133–37).
Hohenstaufen Dynasty (1138–1254)	Hohenstaufen kings struggle to restore imperial authority. Conrad III elected German king (1138–52). Frederick I (Frederick Barbarossa), Holy Roman Emperor (1155–90), seeks long and unsuccessfully to establish order and stability in the empire. Beginning of Age of Chivalry, marked by high achievements in literature. Italian expeditions to regain imperial control of Middle Kingdom. Henry VI, Holy Roman Emperor (1191–97). Civil war (1198–1214). Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor (1220–50), restores imperial administration in Italy and Sicily, but German princes gain concessions. Imperial statute of 1232 establishes secular and ecclesiastical princes as virtually independent rulers within their own territories (principalities). Great Interregnum, 1256–73; anarchy and civil war. German princes gain power and vie for imperial title.
Early Habsburg Dynasty (1273–1519)	Rudolf of Habsburg elected German king (1273–91); acquires Austria and Styria in 1282 and makes Habsburgs strongest German dynasty. Adolf of Nassau elected German king (1292–98). Albert I (Habsburg) elected German king (1298–1308). Henry VII of Luxembourg, Holy Roman Emperor (1312–13), founds dynasty that seriously rivals Habsburgs from its power base in Bohemia. Louis IV (Louis the Bavarian) of House of Wittelsbach, Holy Roman Emperor (1328–47). Charles IV of Luxembourg, Holy Roman Emperor (1355–78), issues Golden Bull of 1356, which grants German princes power to elect emperor and provides basic constitution of Holy Roman Empire. Wenceslas of Bohemia, German king (1378–1400). Rupert of Palatinate, German king (1400–10); Sigismund of Luxembourg, German king (1410–37), Holy Roman Emperor (1433–37), last non-Habsburg emperor until 1742; with this one exception, Habsburgs of Austria provide all emperors from mid-fifteenth century until dissolution of Holy Roman Empire in 1806. Frederick III, Holy Roman Emperor (1452–93). Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor (1508–1519).
PROTESTANT REFORMATION AND RELIGIOUS WARS (1517–1648)	Martin Luther posts his ninety-five theses in Wittenberg in 1517 and challenges papal authority. Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor (1519–56). Publication in 1520 of Luther's three revolutionary pamphlets. Luther banned by church and empire in 1521. Charles V's wars against France in 1521–26, 1526–29, 1536–38, and 1542–44. Vienna threatened by Turks in 1529. Diet of Augsburg,

Table C. Chronology of Important Events

Period	Description
	1530; Protestant "Augsburg Confession" presented, and Protestant League of Schmalkalden formed by German princes. War of Schmalkalden (1546–47) between Charles V and Protestant princes. Peace of Augsburg, 1555; Catholicism and Lutheranism formally recognized in Germany, and each prince given right to decide religion to be practiced in his territory. Ferdinand I, Holy Roman Emperor (1558–64). Maximilian II, Holy Roman Emperor (1564–76). Ferdinand II, Holy Roman Emperor (1619–37). Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor (1576–1612). Matthias, Holy Roman Emperor (1612–19). Bohemian Revolt, 1618; imperial armies defeat Bohemians at Battle of White Mountain near Prague in 1620. Thirty Years' War (1618–48); Treaty of Prague signed in 1635; continuation of war by France; Treaty of Westphalia, 1648. End of Holy Roman Empire as a major European power.
AGE OF ENLIGHTENED ABSOLUTISM AND FRENCH INVASION (1648–1815)	Frederick William, the Great Elector of Brandenburg-Prussia (1640–88), of Hohenzollern Dynasty, establishes absolute rule. Frederick I, elector of Brandenburg-Prussia (1688–1713), assumes title of king in 1701. Frederick William I, Prussian king (1713–40), creates Prussian civil and military bureaucracy. Frederick II (Frederick the Great), Prussian king (1740–86), reforms his country as enlightened despot. War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48) and Seven Years' War (1756–63) against Austria under Maria Theresa (1740–80) expand Prussian territory. Frederick William II, Prussian king (1786–97). Frederick William III, Prussian king (1797–1840). French invade Rhineland in 1792 and eventually control Germany. Prussia, Austria, and Russia defeat Napoleon at Battle of Leipzig in 1813.
REACTION, REVOLUTION, AND GERMAN UNIFICATION (1815–71)	Congress of Vienna (1814–15) after Napoleon's defeat in War of Liberation (1813–15) establishes German Confederation of thirty-seven states. Prince Clemens von Metternich, Austrian chancellor and foreign minister (1809–48), heads confederation. Reversion to old order of social distinctions under Age of Metternich. Struggle between absolutism and liberalism. Student unions agitate for democratic reform. Carlsbad Decrees (1819) outlaw radical student organizations. Weimar, Bavaria, Baden, and Württemberg enact constitutions, 1818–19. "July Revolution" in France, 1830, sparks revolutionary movements in Germany; Hesse and Saxony enact constitutions. Brunswick, Hanover, and Oldenburg enact constitutions in 1833. Zollverein (Customs Union) created in 1834. March 1848 revolution in Germany. National Assembly at Frankfurt (1848–49) plans constitutional German nation-state. Friedrich Wilhelm IV, Prussian king (1840–58), refuses German crown in 1849; National Assembly dissolved. German Confederation restored in 1851. Prussia agrees to relinquish plans for a Ger-

Table C. Chronology of Important Events

Period	Description
	man union under its leadership in Treaty of Olmütz. Wilhelm I, Prussian king (1858–88); Otto von Bismarck, chancellor (1862–90), unites Germany. Constitutional struggle, 1862–66; Prussian king vies with German liberals in parliament on issue of budget for military expansion; Prussia defeats Austria in Seven Weeks' War (1866); German Confederation dissolved, and Austria excluded from German politics. Austria-Hungary (also known as Austro-Hungarian Empire) created in 1867. North German Confederation formed, headed by Prussia. Franco-Prussian War, 1870–71. Germany united as nation-state—German Empire.
IMPERIAL GERMANY (1871–1918)	Wilhelm I, German emperor (1871–88). Bismarck, chancellor (1871–90). Kulturkampf against Roman Catholic Church begins in 1873. Antisocialist legislation enacted 1878. Dual Alliance (1879) between Germany and Austria-Hungary. Domestic alliance between aristocrats and industrialists in Tariff Agreement of 1879. Comprehensive social legislation program begins in 1881. Triple Alliance (1882) among Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. German colonies established 1884–85 in South-West Africa, Togo, the Cameroons, East Africa, and some Pacific islands. Frederick III, German emperor (March 9–June 15, 1888). Wilhelm II, German emperor (1888–1918). Bismarck's fall, 1890. Leo von Caprivi, chancellor (1890–94). Prince Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe, chancellor 1894–1900. Naval Bill (1898) begins naval race against Britain. Bernhard von Bülow, chancellor (1900–09). Moroccan crisis, 1905, in which Germany intervenes in French and British sphere of influence. Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, chancellor (1909–17). Moroccan crisis, 1911, in which Germany sends gunboat to port of Agadir. New Naval Bill, 1912. Balkan Wars, 1912–13, a nationalist rebellion against Ottoman rule. Assassination of Austria's Archduke Franz Ferdinand (June 28, 1914) in Sarajevo starts events that culminate in World War I (1914–18); Germany defeated.
WEIMAR REPUBLIC (1918–33)	November Revolution, 1918; Wilhelm II's abdication. Social Democrats proclaim republic. Suppression of left-wing revolt by army in January 1919. Treaty of Versailles, 1919. Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert elected president (1919–25). Right-wing Kapp Putsch attempted, 1920. Communist revolts in central Germany, Hamburg, and Ruhr district, 1921. Astronomical inflation, 1922–23. Occupation of Ruhr by French and Belgian troops, 1923. Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch attempted in Munich, 1923. Gustav Stresemann, chancellor (August–November 1923) and foreign minister (1923–29), formulates policy of rapprochement with West. Dawes Plan on reparations, 1924. French and Belgian troops withdrawn from Ruhr,

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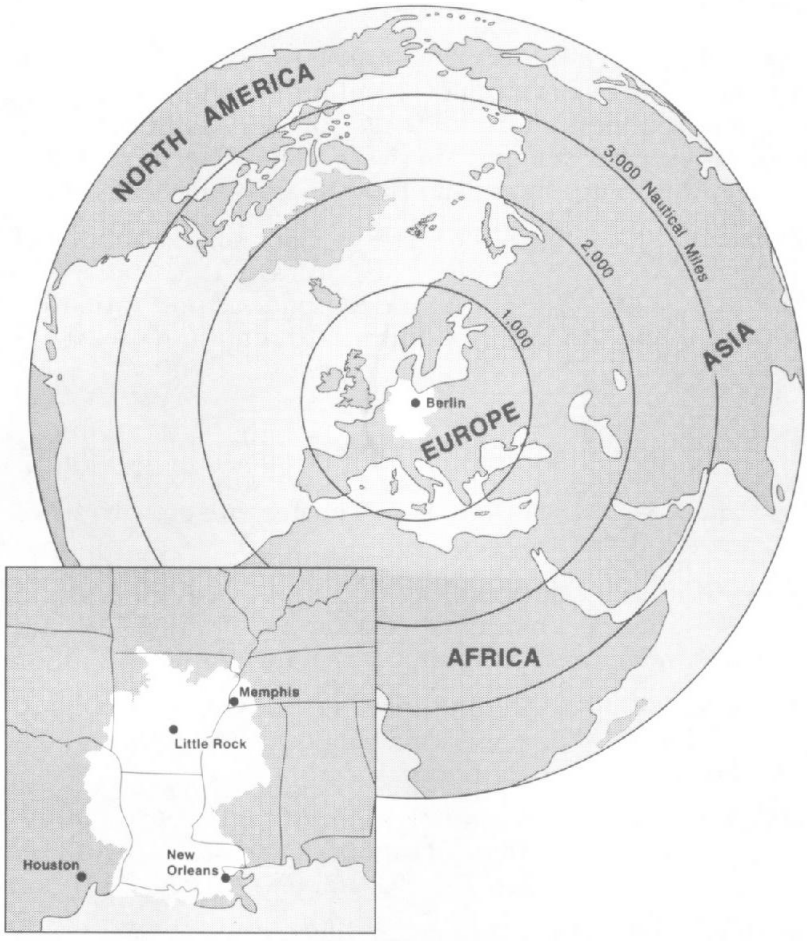
Period	Description
	1925. Paul von Hindenburg, World War I army commander, elected president (1925–34). Locarno treaties, 1925, and Treaty of Berlin with Soviet Union, 1926. Germany joins League of Nations, 1926. Young Plan on reparations, 1929; Allied troops withdrawn from Rhineland, 1930. Economic depression and cabinet crises, 1929–33. Heinrich Brüning, chancellor 1930–32; government by decree (Article 48 of Weimar Constitution). Franz von Papen, chancellor (May–December 1932); Hitler's National Socialists win Reichstag elections and emerge as Germany's strongest political party, July 1932. Kurt von Schleicher, chancellor (December 1932–January 1933). President Hindenburg appoints Hitler to chancellorship, January 30, 1933.
THIRD REICH (1933–45)	Reichstag fire; Hitler demands presidential emergency decree, February 1933. Enabling Act accords Hitler's cabinet dictatorial powers, March 1933. Germany declared one-party National Socialist state, July 1933. Death of Hindenburg, August 1934; Hitler combines offices of president and chancellor. German rearmament, 1935. Rhineland remilitarized and Berlin-Rome Axis formed, 1936. At secret conference, Hitler announces intention to begin eastward expansion, November 1937. Austrian Anschluss (annexation), March 1938. Czechoslovak Sudetenland annexed, October 1938. Germany occupies Czech-populated provinces of Bohemia and Moravia, March 1939. Poland invaded, September 1939. World War II (1939–45). Germany defeated.
POSTWAR DIVISION (1945–90)	Yalta Conference (February 1945) determines division of Germany into occupation zones. Three zones under United States, British, and French control become Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) in 1949. Soviet zone becomes German Democratic Republic (East Germany) same year. Konrad Adenauer of Christian Democratic Union elected first chancellor of West Germany (1949–63); Walter Ulbricht of Socialist Unity Party of Germany appointed head of East Germany (1949–71). West German economic boom in 1950s; Stalinization of East Germany in same period. Both states remilitarized in mid-1950s; West Germany becomes member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), East Germany joins Warsaw Pact. Treaty of Rome creating European Economic Community (EEC) signed, 1957, with West Germany as member. Berlin Wall built by East Germany (1961). Social Democrat Willy Brandt elected West German chancellor (1969–74); Ulbricht dismissed, and Erich Honecker named East German head (1971–89). Brandt's Ostpolitik results in treaties with Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Four Power Agreement on Berlin. Basic Treaty between East Germany and West Germany recognizes two Ger-

Table C. Chronology of Important Events

Period	Description
	man states, 1972. Admission of both Germanys to United Nations, 1973. Social Democrat Helmut Schmidt replaces Brandt as West German chancellor (1974–82). Christian Democrat Helmut Kohl becomes West German chancellor (1982–). Helsinki Final Act signed, July 1975. NATO's Dual-Track Decision announced, December 1979. Single European Act signed, December 1985. Growing economic difficulties and internal opposition, coupled with Mikhail Gorbachev's attempts to reform Soviet Union and its empire and his decision not to intervene militarily in East German affairs, lead to collapse of East German regime, late 1989–early 1990.
UNITED GERMANY (1990–)	Rapid path to unification of the two German states according to provisions of Article 23 of Basic Law chosen by popular pressure. First free elections in East Germany end with Christian Democratic victory, March 1990. Economic and currency union established between West Germany and East Germany, July 1, 1990. At meeting with Kohl in Soviet Union, Gorbachev agrees that united Germany may remain in NATO and Soviet troops will leave East Germany in four years, July 1990. Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany (the Two-Plus-Four Treaty) establishing Germany's full sovereignty signed, September 1990. Treaty on Good-Neighborliness, Partnership, and Cooperation between West Germany and Soviet Union signed, September 1990. Germany united, October 3, 1990. First all-German Bundestag election held; Christian Democratic victory, December 1990. Maastricht Treaty signed, December 1991. Article 16 of Basic Law amended, restricting right to asylum in Germany, July 1993. European Union established, November 1993. Federal Constitutional Court decides that Bundeswehr may participate in international military operations outside of NATO territory, provided that Bundestag approves, July 1994. Last Russian troops leave Germany, August 1994. Second all-German Bundestag election held; Christian Democratic victory, October 1994.

Country Profile



Country

Formal Name: Federal Republic of Germany.

Short Form: Germany or Federal Republic.

Term for Citizen(s): German(s).

Capital: Berlin.

Geography

Size: 356,959 square kilometers.

Topography: Terrain rises from northern coastal lowlands to belt of central uplands, complex and varied in form. To south of uplands, a high plain suddenly rises to Alps in country's extreme south. Most important rivers: Rhine, flowing to north; Elbe, flowing to northwest; and Danube, flowing to southeast.

Climate: Cool, continental climate with abundant rainfall and long overcast season. Lower temperatures with considerable snowfall in east and south. Prone to rapid weather variations from merging of Gulf Stream and extreme northeastern climate conditions.

Society

Population: 81,338,000 (July 1995 estimate) with growth rate of 0.26 percent (July 1995 estimate).

Ethnic Groups: 95.1 percent German, 2.3 percent Turkish, 1.7 percent Italian, 0.4 percent Greek, and 0.4 percent Polish; remainder mainly refugees from former Yugoslavia.

Languages: Standard German, with substantial differences in regional dialects. Three very small linguistic minorities, which speak Sorbian, Danish, or Frisian.

Religion: Protestants, mostly in Evangelical Church in Germany, 30 million; Roman Catholics, 28.2 million; Muslims, 2.5 million; free churches, 195,000; and Jews, 34,000.

Education and Literacy: 99 percent literacy rate in population over age fifteen (1991 estimate). Education compulsory until age eighteen. At age ten, after primary school (*Grundschule*), students attend one of five schools: short-course secondary school (*Hauptschule*); intermediate school (*Realschule*); high school (*Gymnasium*); comprehensive school (*Gesamtschule*); or a school for children with special educational needs (*Sonderschule*). At about age fifteen, students choose among a variety of vocational, technical, and academic schools. Higher education consists of many kinds of technical colleges, advanced vocational schools, and universities.

Health and Welfare: About 90 percent of population covered by comprehensive compulsory insurance for sickness,

accidents, disability, long-term care, and retirement. Most of remainder enrolled in voluntary insurance programs; the very poor are covered by state-financed welfare programs. Quality of medical care generally excellent. Comfortable pensions paid according to life-time earnings and indexed to meet cost-of-living increases. Wide variety of other social welfare benefits managed by both government and private agencies available to those in need. Life expectancy 76.6 years for total population (73.5 years for males and 79.9 years for females) (1995 estimates). Infant mortality rate 6.3 deaths per 1,000 live births (1995 estimate). Total fertility rate 1.5 children born per woman (1995 estimate).

Economy

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): In 1994 US$1,840 billion, or about US$27,800 per capita. Real growth rate 2.4 percent, inflation rate 3.0 percent, and unemployment rate 8.2 percent.

Agriculture: 3 percent of labor force and 1 percent of GDP in 1992. Main crops wheat, potatoes, sugar beets, and barley.

Industry: 38 percent of labor force and 38 percent of GDP in 1992. Products highly specialized goods, including machine products of all varieties, chemicals, electrical products, construction, food and beverages, lignite, textiles, and petroleum and gas refining.

Services: 59 percent of labor force and 61 percent of GDP in 1992.

Exports: US$428 billion in 1994, mainly highly specialized industrial products, including motor vehicles, machines, electronic goods, and chemicals.

Imports: US$376 billion in 1994, including food, petroleum products, manufactured goods, electrical products, automobiles, and apparel.

Foreign Trade by Region: Imports in 1994: European Union (EU) 47.6 percent, European Free Trade Association (EFTA) 14.0 percent, developing countries 11.5 percent, former European communist bloc countries 8.1 percent, United States and Canada 7.7 percent, Japan 5.6 percent, other dynamic Asian economies 3.7 percent, and Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) 2.0 percent. Exports in 1994: EU 48.9 percent, EFTA 15.1 percent, developing

countries 11.5 percent, United States and Canada 8.5 percent, former European communist bloc countries 7.1, Japan 2.6 percent, other dynamic Asian economies 3.5 percent, and OPEC 2.6 percent.

Balance of Payments: In 1994 trade balance US$52 billion; current account showed deficit of US$20 billion; capital account balance US$24 billion.

Fiscal Year: Calendar year.

Currency and Exchange Rate: Deutsche mark (DM). In April 1996, exchange rate US$1 = DM1.51.

Transportation and Telecommunications

Roads: 226,000 kilometers in 1992, of which 11,000 kilometers four lanes or more.

Railroads: 40,000 kilometers in 1994, of which 16,000 kilometers electrified.

Airports: 660 total. Twelve civilian airports provide passenger and cargo service within country and to rest of world.

Ports: Several dozen large, well-equipped ocean and inland ports.

Inland Waterways: 6,900 kilometers of navigable inland waterways, including extensive system of canals. Inland waterways account for about 20 percent of freight shipping.

Telecommunications: Highly developed, modern telecommunications service linking all parts of the country and connecting with systems abroad.

Government and Politics

Government: Basic Law of 1949, as amended, functions as constitution. Federalist system whereby federal government shares authority with sixteen state (*Land*; pl., *Länder*) governments. Dual executive consists of chancellor, who is head of government, and president, who is head of state. Two federal legislative bodies form national parliament: Bundesrat (Federal Council or upper house), consisting of sixty-nine members appointed by *Land* governments in proportion to population; and Bundestag (Federal Diet or lower house), main legislative body, consisting of 672 popularly elected

members. Chancellor is elected by Bundestag and functions as prime minister in cabinet.

Politics: Since 1982 a conservative coalition in power consisting of Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union—CDU); its sister party, Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union—CSU), based in Bavaria; and Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei—FDP). Opposition consists of Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands—SPD), Alliance 90/The Greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), Party of Democratic Socialism (Partei des Demokratischen Sozia-lismus—PDS), based mainly in territory of former German Democratic Republic, and a number of very small parties. Federal elections for Bundestag usually held every four years; *Land* and local elections scattered throughout term of federal officeholders. All citizens eighteen and older eligible to vote; high voter turnout.

Judicial System: Independent judiciary using civil law system. Highest court is Federal Constitutional Court.

International Affairs: Member of European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies, and Western European Union (WEU).

National Security

Armed Forces: In October 1995, Federal Armed Forces (Bundeswehr) consisted of army, navy, and air force, totaling 335,800, including 137,300 conscripts. Army personnel amounted to 234,000, including 112,800 conscripts; navy 28,500, including 4,500 Naval Air Arm personnel and 5,800 conscripts; and air force 73,300, including 18,700 conscripts. Reserves totaled 356,200 (337,100 in army, 12,600 in navy, and 6,500 in air force.). Enlisted personnel have reserve obligation to age forty-five; officers and noncommissioned officers, to age sixty.

Military Budget: In 1996, US$32.2 billion.

Internal Security Forces: Federal Border Force of 24,000 (early 1995) under Ministry of Interior. Trained and equipped as

light infantry, but duty does not include military activities. Each *Land* maintains units of Readiness Police similarly trained. Readiness Police can be moved across *Land* lines if needed for emergency duty, such as during civil disturbances.

Figure 1. Administrative Divisions of Germany, 1995

Introduction

GERMANY WAS UNITED on October 3, 1990. Unification brought together a people separated for more than four decades by the division of Europe into two hostile blocs in the aftermath of World War II. The line that divided the continent ran through a defeated and occupied Germany. By late 1949, two states had emerged in divided Germany: the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, or West Germany), a member of the Western bloc under the leadership of the United States; and the German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany), part of the Eastern bloc led by the Soviet Union. Although the two German states were composed of a people speaking one language and sharing the same traditions, they came to have the political systems of their respective blocs. West Germany developed into a democratic capitalist state like its Western neighbors; East Germany had imposed on it the Soviet Union's communist dictatorship and command economy.

Although the leaders of each state were committed to the eventual unification of Germany and often invoked its necessity, with the passage of time the likely realization of unification receded into the distant future. Relations between the two states worsened during the 1950s as several million East Germans, unwilling to live in an increasingly Stalinized society, fled to the West. August 1961 saw the sealing of the common German border with the construction of the Berlin Wall. In the early 1970s, however, diplomatic relations between the two states were regularized by the Basic Treaty, signed in 1972. During the remainder of the decade and during the 1980s, relations improved, and contacts between the citizens of the two states increased greatly. In 1987 Erich Honecker became the first East German leader to make a state visit to West Germany.

As of the late 1980s, however, no well-informed observer foresaw German unification as being likely in the near future. In fact, its prospect seemed so remote that some politicians advocated abandoning unification as a long-term goal. Those who remained committed to Germany's ultimate unification frankly admitted that decades would probably pass before it happened.

The events leading to unification in October 1990 were unexpected, and they occurred at a frantic pace. In the eleven months between the opening of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and unification, the forty-year-old East German dictatorship collapsed, Western political and economic systems were introduced in the East, new treaties altered long-standing diplomatic relationships between Germany and neighboring states, and two radically different societies began to grow together.

The rapid collapse of the East German regime surprised everyone. East Germany appeared to be the most economically successful of all Eastern-bloc countries. Its citizens enjoyed a modest yet decent standard of living and cradle-to-grave security provided by a government-run welfare system. They traveled to other East European countries for their summer vacations, watched West German television, and hoped for better living conditions and more freedom in the future. Most East Germans acquiesced in the communist regime's restrictions, having fashioned areas of personal freedom in their private lives. A small opposition movement operated within the shelter of the Protestant church, the country's sole relatively independent social institution. When opposition figures became too troublesome, the regime dealt with them by depriving them of their livelihood, sending them to prison, or expelling them to West Germany.

The regime's elderly, hard-line leadership opposed the reforms of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who sought to make socialism more efficient by introducing capitalist incentives and reducing central control. Encouraged by this liberalization and the application of Gorbachev's reforms in neighboring Poland and Hungary, the regime's opponents became bolder during the summer and fall of 1989 and mounted mass demonstrations that doubled and doubled again in size from week to week.

Soviet officials advised the Honecker regime not to expect outside support. Without foreign military assistance for the first time, the GDR leadership decided against the use of force to quell the burgeoning demonstrations. Honecker was ousted in mid-October, and more realistic leaders sought to save the regime by making concessions. In November travel abroad became possible, and East Germans swarmed into West Germany, many intending to remain there. Reforms could no

longer satisfy East Germans, however, who wanted the freedoms and living standard of West Germany.

West German chancellor Helmut Kohl (1982–) seized the political initiative in late November with his Ten-Point Plan for unification. Yet, even he thought several years and an intervening stage, such as a confederational structure, would be necessary before unification of the two Germanys could occur. By early 1990, however, the need to stop the massive flow of East Germans westward made speedy unification imperative. In addition, revolutionary change in other Eastern-bloc counties made solutions that a short time earlier had appeared out of the question suddenly seem feasible. The Treaty on Monetary, Economic, and Social Union between the two German states was signed in May and went into effect in July. The two Germanys signed the Unification Treaty in August. The Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany, the so-called Two-Plus-Four Treaty, was signed in September by the two Germanys and the four victors of World War II—Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States. The treaty restored full sovereignty to Germany and ended the Cold War era.

When unification occurred on October 3, 1990, it was a happy, yet subdued occasion. The many problems of joining such diverse societies were already apparent. The vaunted East German economy was coming to be seen as a Potemkin's village, with many of its most prestigious firms uncompetitive in a market economy. East German environmental problems were also proving much more serious than anyone had foreseen; remedies would cost astronomical sums. West Germans had discovered also that their long-lost eastern cousins differed from them in many ways and that relations between them were often rife with misunderstandings. A complete melding of the two societies would take years, perhaps even a generation or two. The legal unification arranged by the treaties of 1990 was only the beginning of a long process toward a truly united Germany.

In its long history, Germany has rarely been united. For most of the two millennia that central Europe has been inhabited by German-speaking peoples, the area called Germany was divided into hundreds of states, many quite small, including duchies, principalities, free cities, and ecclesiastical states. Not even the Romans united Germany under one government; they managed to occupy only its southern and western portions. At the beginning of the ninth century, Charlemagne

established an empire, but within a generation its existence was more symbolic than real.

Medieval Germany was marked by division. As France and England began their centuries-long evolution into united nation-states, Germany was racked by a ceaseless series of wars among local rulers. The Habsburg Dynasty's long monopoly of the crown of the Holy Roman Empire provided only the semblance of German unity. Within the empire, German princes warred against one another as before. The Protestant Reformation deprived Germany of even its religious unity, leaving its population Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist. These religious divisions gave military strife an added ferocity in the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), during which Germany was ravaged to a degree not seen again until World War II.

The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 left Germany divided into hundreds of states. During the next two centuries, the two largest of these states—Prussia and Austria—jockeyed for dominance. The smaller states sought to retain their independence by allying themselves with one, then the other, depending on local conditions. From the mid-1790s until Prussia, Austria, and Russia defeated Napoleon at the Battle of Leipzig in 1813 and drove him out of Germany, much of the country was occupied by French troops. Napoleon's officials abolished numerous small states, and, as a result, in 1815, after the Congress of Vienna, Germany consisted of about forty states.

During the next half-century, pressures for German unification grew. Scholars, bureaucrats, students, journalists, and businessmen agitated for a united Germany that would bring with it uniform laws and a single currency and that would replace the benighted absolutism of petty German states with democracy. The revolutions of 1848 seemed at first likely to realize this dream of unity and freedom, but the monarch who was offered the crown of a united Germany, King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, rejected it. The king, like the other rulers of Germany's kingdoms, opposed German unity because he saw it as a threat to his power.

Despite the opposition of conservative forces, German unification came just over two decades later, in 1871, when Germany was unified and transformed into an empire under Emperor Wilhelm I, king of Prussia. Unification was not brought about by revolutionary or liberal forces, but by a conservative Prussian aristocrat, Otto von Bismarck. Sensing the power of nationalism, Bismarck sought to use it for his own

aims, the preservation of a feudal social order and the triumph of his country, Prussia, in the long contest with Austria for preeminence in Germany. By a series of masterful diplomatic maneuvers and three brief and dazzlingly successful military campaigns, Bismarck achieved a united Germany without Austria. He brought together the so-called "small Germany," consisting of Prussia and the remaining German states, some of which had been subdued by Prussian armies before they became part of a Germany ruled by a Prussian emperor.

Although united Germany had a parliament, the Reichstag, elected through universal male suffrage, supreme power rested with the emperor and his ministers, who were not responsible to the Reichstag. Although the Reichstag could contest the government's decisions, in the end the emperor could largely govern as he saw fit. Supporting the emperor were the nobility, large rural landowners, business and financial elites, the civil service, the Protestant clergy, and the military. The military, which had made unification possible, enjoyed tremendous prestige. Led by an aristocratic officer corps sworn to feudal values and opposed to parliamentary democracy and the rights of a free citizenry, the military embodied the spirit of the German Empire.

Opposition to this authoritarian regime with its feudal structures was found mainly in the Roman Catholic Center Party, the Socialist Party, and in a variety of liberal and regional political groups opposed to Prussia's hegemony over Germany. In the long term, Bismarck and his successors were not able to subjugate this opposition. By 1912 the Socialists had come to have the largest number of representatives in the Reichstag. They and the Center Party made governing increasingly difficult for the empire's conservative leadership.

Despite the presence of these opposition groups, however, a truly representative parliamentary democracy did not exist. As a result, Germans had little opportunity to learn the art of practical politics. With few exceptions, this had also been the case throughout German history. Although Germany's states were usually well managed by an efficient and honest civil service, they were authoritarian. Government was seen as the business of the rulers; the ruled were to be obedient and silent.

Because they were inexperienced in democratic government, Germans in the nineteenth century were often viewed as political children, incapable of governing themselves. In addition, seeing the excesses of the French Revolution, many

thoughtful Germans came to the conclusion that democracy was not suitable for Germany. The success of democratic political institutions in Britain and the United States did not convince these skeptics; they feared that the passions of the ignorant masses could too easily be inflamed. Even many German liberals found the idea that ordinary citizens ought to determine how public business should be conducted too radical a notion. Instead, they recommended that parliaments consisting of the educated and the prosperous should serve as advisory bodies to noble rulers.

Germany's defeat in World War I in 1918 meant the end of the German Empire. The emperor was forced to abdicate, and a republic—the Weimar Republic—was established with a constitution that provided for a parliamentary democracy in which the government was ultimately responsible to the people. The new republic's first president and prime minister were convinced democrats, and Germany seemed ready at last to join the community of democratic nations.

The Weimar Republic ultimately disappointed those who had hoped it would introduce democracy to Germany. By mid-1933 it had been destroyed by Adolf Hitler, its declared enemy since his first days in the public arena. Hitler was a political genius who sensed and exploited the worries and resentments of many Germans, knew when to act, and possessed a sure instinct for power. His greatest weapon in his quest for political power, however, was the disdain many Germans felt for the new republic.

Many Germans held the Weimar Republic responsible for Germany's defeat. At the war's end, no foreign troops stood on German soil, and military victory still seemed likely. Instead of victory, however, in the view of many, the republic's Socialist politicians arranged a humiliating peace. Many Germans were also affronted by the spectacle of parliamentary politics. The republic's numerous small parties made forming stable and coherent coalition governments very difficult. Frequent elections failed to yield effective governments. Government policies also often failed to solve pressing social and economic problems.

These shortcomings undermined the legitimacy of the Weimar Republic. The upper classes, the judiciary, the police, the civil service, educators, the military, and much of the middle class gave the republic only halfhearted support at best. Many members of these groups despised the republic and

wanted it replaced with an authoritarian system of government. The early years of the Weimar Republic saw frequent attempts to destroy it by force, mostly from the right, but also from the left.

A modest economic recovery from 1924 to 1929 gave the Weimar Republic a brief respite. The severe social stress engendered by the Great Depression, however, swelled the vote received by extreme antidemocratic parties in the election of 1930 and the two elections of 1932. The government ruled by emergency decree. In January 1933, leading conservative politicians formed a new government with Hitler as chancellor. They intended to harness him and his party, now the country's largest, to realize their own aim of replacing the republic with an authoritarian government. Within a few months, however, Hitler had outmaneuvered them and established a totalitarian regime. Only in 1945 did a military alliance of dozens of nations succeed in deposing him, and only after his regime and the nation it ruled had committed crimes of unparalleled enormity.

In the aftermath of World War II, Germany came to consist of two states. One, East Germany, never attained real legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens and had to use force to prevent them from fleeing to the West. The other, West Germany, was resoundingly successful.Within two decades of defeat, it had become one of the world's richest nations, with a prosperity that extended to all segments of the population. The economy performed so successfully that eventually several million foreigners came to West Germany to work as well. West German and foreign workers alike were protected from need arising from sickness, accidents, and old age by an extensive, mostly nongovernment welfare system.

Along with this material success, a vigorous democracy developed. To avoid the Weimar Republic's weak coalition governments, the West German constitution, the Basic Law, permitted only those parties with at least 5 percent of the vote to sit in the Bundestag, the lower house of its parliament. This provision meant that stable parliamentary governments could be formed fairly easily, and efficient government became possible. In contrast to the Weimar Republic, the Basic Law banned political parties opposed to democracy.

From the first national election in 1949, West German politics has been dominated by two large catchall parties (*Volksparteien*; sing., *Volkspartei*), whose support came from voters

formerly allied to many smaller parties. The moderate Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union—CDU), allied with its small sister party active in Bavaria, the Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union—CSU), won the votes of a broad range of Roman Catholic and Protestant voters. For the first time in German history, members of the two religions worked together to attain their political goals. The CDU/CSU also had left and right wings, which had to cooperate if the alliance were to win elections and exercise power. After much debate, the CDU/CSU's various wings formulated the concept of a social market economy—free-market capitalism combined with an extensive social net. The CDU/CSU alliance has successfully held together its diverse membership and, with the exception of the 1969–82 period, has headed all the Federal Republic's governments since 1949, when CDU leader Konrad Adenauer became the country's first chancellor.

The Federal Republic's other large popular party is the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands—SPD), which receives much of the working-class vote. In the early years of the Federal Republic, the SPD was feared by many voters because of its socialist aims. With time, however, the party moderated its positions; for example, it accepted West German rearmament in the mid-1950s and came to support the social market economy. It also won the trust of suspicious voters by participating in many local and state (*Land*; pl., *Länder*) governments. After joining with the CDU/CSU to form a coalition government at the national level from 1966 to 1969, the SPD and the small, liberal Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei—FDP) formed a coalition government with SDP leader Willy Brandt as chancellor. The SPD-FDP coalition lasted until 1982. In that year, the FDP and the CDU/CSU formed a new coalition government with Helmut Kohl as chancellor, a coalition still in power in mid-1996.

Many observers maintain that German democracy is in a transition stage. The SPD has lost its most steady source of support as an increasingly advanced economy has reduced the size of the blue-collar working class. An increasingly secular and sophisticated society has also cut into the CDU/CSU stable pool of confessional voters. Thus, since the 1980s, the large catchall parties have been confronted with an increasingly volatile electorate. Both parties have experienced declining mem-

berships. As these parties have worked to woo a more diverse electorate, they have moderated their stances to such a degree that many voters have difficulty telling them apart.

Despite CDU losses in the October 1994 national elections, the CDU/CSU-FDP coalition survived, but with a majority of only ten seats. The SPD's share of the vote rose in these elections, but not enough to take power at the national level. The SPD has been more successful in elections at the *Land* level in recent years and has often controlled the Bundesrat, parliament's upper house. However, it lost its sole control of North Rhine-Westphalia in the elections of May 1995 and did even worse in October 1995 *Land* elections in Berlin. SPD leader Rudolf Sharping was deposed a month later and replaced by Oskar Lafontaine, who had led the party to defeat in the 1990 national elections. Lafontaine's resurrection did not appear to solve the party's long-standing leadership problem because it lost badly in the *Land* elections of March 1996 in Schleswig-Holstein, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Baden-Württemberg.

As the two large parties face diminishing pools of secure votes, growing numbers of young and educated voters have come to support the ecological party, Alliance 90/The Greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), which, after having elected its first representatives to the Bundestag in 1983, in 1994 became the body's third-largest party, displacing the FDP. As of mid-1996, the Greens had a skilled leader, Joschka Fischer, who has transformed the party from a group of apolitical idealists into a highly pragmatic, but still principled, political force that examines nearly every facet of German life from a fresh standpoint. Some observers hold that the party represents the future of German politics.

The party displaced by the Greens, the FDP, has been a partner in all coalition governments at the national level since 1969. Pledged to classic European liberal political values, the FDP has distinguished itself by its advocacy of the legal rights of the individual. In recent years, however, the party has struggled for its survival because of leadership problems and because its close embrace of the CDU/CSU has caused it to lose its political identity in the eyes of many voters. By late 1995, the party seemed on the verge of political extinction; it suffered a steep drop in its vote in the national election of October 1994 and a long string of losses in elections at the *Land* level. In March 1996, however, the FDP increased its vote and won seats in all three *Land* elections held during the month. Although the

FDP was represented in only four *Land* parliaments as of mid-1996, these election results allow the party to retain its role as a coalition-maker in governments at the national level.

In addition to the Greens, another new party that has altered German politics is the Party of Democratic Socialism (Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus—PDS). Able to win votes only in eastern Germany, the PDS has the support of voters who regret the extent to which or the way in which East Germany was swallowed up by the Federal Republic. Although the PDS is the successor to East Germany's communist Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands—SED), it does not recommend that the East German regime be restored. Rather, it demands that eastern German interests be given greater respect by western Germans, who are often seen as arrogant and overbearing by eastern Germans. The PDS has thirty seats in the Bundestag and is represented in the parliaments of the eastern *Länder,* but is not a partner in any coalition. Because the PDS owes its success to the sometimes legitimate anger of easterners at how they have fared in a united Germany, observers believe that the influence of the PDS will wane as these *Länder* become more integrated into united Germany.

In addition to the above parties, several small right-wing parties are politically active. None have representatives in the Bundestag. The Republikaner, which at about 25,000 members is the largest of these parties, has representatives in the Baden-Württemberg parliament after winning 11 percent of the vote in 1992 and 9 percent of the vote in elections there in March 1996. The campaigns of these right-wing parties are based mainly on a fervid nationalism and a dislike of Germany's foreign residents. They stop short of clearly espousing Hitlerian doctrines, however, because doing so would mean their being banned and their leaders possibly being imprisoned.

In addition to parties of the extreme right, authorities estimate that a few thousand violent right-wing extremists are active within Germany. Most are disaffected young males with few job prospects. Although comparatively few in number in a country of 80 million, they have received international attention when they have attacked or killed foreign workers living in Germany or vandalized Jewish cemeteries or synagogues. The world's alarm at such occurrences is easily understandable, given Germany's history in the first half of the twentieth century. Yet few observers believe that these extreme right-wing

elements pose a threat to German democracy or have any chance of gaining political influence, let alone coming to power.

Germans of the late twentieth century differ greatly from those of its first half. The extreme nationalism of the interwar period finds little support in the Germany of the 1990s, for example. Unlike Germany's failure to achieve victory in World War I, which to many Germans of the interwar period appeared to have been caused by the treachery of Socialist politicians rather than by military defeat, Germany's unconditional surrender in 1945 was obviously unavoidable given the military situation at the war's end. Moreover, because Hitler clearly started the war, Germany is judged, to some extent at least, to have deserved its terrible consequences. Thus, in contrast to Germans of the interwar period, few postwar Germans have demanded revenge for Germany's sufferings or advocated the seizure of lost territory. This absence of an aggressive nationalism can be seen in the foreign policy of the Federal Republic. Unlike the diplomacy of the empire and the Hitler regime, this foreign policy has always had as its first principle multilateralism, a principle realized through Germany's active membership in a great variety of international organizations.

Germans have also become convinced democrats. They understand and appreciate the workings of parliamentary democracy with its loyal opposition, concessions, and the peaceful passing of power from one government to another; they know the importance of an independent judiciary in protecting individual rights; and they value a free and powerful press. Under a democratic system of government, West Germans have experienced the most successful period of German history, and, whatever the system's failings, they are unwilling to reject it for panaceas of earlier eras. Eastern Germans are now learning Western democratic values after decades of political repression. Having experienced a multitude of political and economic disasters under totalitarian regimes of the right and the left, Germans have matured and become political adults no longer susceptible to the utopian promises of demagogues.

Germany does face some serious challenges in the second half of the 1990s and in the new century. The most immediate challenge is to fully integrate eastern Germany and its inhabitants into the advanced social market economy and society of western Germany.

As of mid-1996, much had already been done to foster the formation of a strong eastern economy and to bring its components up to global standards. In the 1990–95 period, more than US$650 billion had been transferred from western Germany to eastern Germany. This enormous financial infusion has markedly improved eastern living standards, and specialists believe that by the late 1990s, the east's infrastructure will be the most advanced in Europe. Unemployment in eastern Germany has consistently remained at about 15 percent, however, about one-third above the national level, despite eastern growth rates about three times higher than those in western Germany. Many of the older jobless are not likely to find employment comparable to what they had under the communist system. Yet, many eastern Germans have fared well in the new economy and have adapted well to its demands.

Achieving complete social unification is expected to take a generation or two. Decades of life in diverse societies have created two peoples with different attitudes. Easterners are generally less ambitious and concerned with their careers than their western counterparts. Their more relaxed work ethic sometimes raises the ire of western Germans. Many easterners also take offense at what has seemed to them arrogant or patronizing attitudes of westerners. The "implosion" of East Germany in 1990 prevented a slower, more nuanced introduction of Western institutions and habits of thought to the east that would have resulted in fewer bruised feelings. Polls of recent years have found a growing convergence of beliefs and opinions between the two peoples, however, a trend almost certain to continue.

The most serious problem confronting Germany in the long term is one faced by all advanced, high-wage industrial countries—how to meet the challenges posed by an increasingly globalized economy in which highly skilled workers of lesser developed countries are available at one-tenth the wages of wealthy countries. For Germany these countries are not located only in Asia, but next door in the former Eastern bloc. By the 1990s, German wages were among the world's highest, some 50 percent higher than those of the United States, for example. Germany's extensive social safety net is a principal reason for its high wage cost, yet no political party can expect to significantly cut into social programs and retain the favor of voters.

In addition to high wages, the German economy faces structural problems because the areas in which it has long been

strongest—the chemical industry and machine production, for example—are not areas in which most future economic growth will occur. Having been so successful in their traditional fields of expertise, German businessmen are somewhat conservative, not given to risky entrepreneurship, and have not invested in new areas such as computers and biotechnology. Economists see little reason to believe that Germany can overtake the leaders in these fields, most notably the United States and Japan.

Germany also faces serious demographic problems. Population growth in recent decades has been slow; in many years, the number of Germans has actually declined because the birth rate has been so low. Given this long-standing trend, specialists wonder how Germans will continue to maintain their generous pension system, an unfunded system that operates on the pay-as-you-go principle, according to which retirees are supported by today's workers. If present trends continue, by 2030 the ratio of retirees to workers will be one to one.

An obvious solution to this problem is to import workers. However, because Germans do not regard their country as a nation of immigrants, importing workers is not currently seen as a politically acceptable solution. As of the mid-1990s, Germany had about 7 million foreign residents, including 2 million Muslims, and more foreign workers are not wanted. Germany has not yet successfully integrated the foreigners already on its soil: archaic immigration laws make it difficult to became a German citizen, and xenophobic attitudes of many Germans often make foreign residents, even those born and raised in the country and speaking perfect German, feel unwanted. In time, demographic realities may cause Germans to view more favorably the permanent presence of a substantial non-German population and lead them to adopt more liberal notions of citizenship.

Unification and the ending of the Cold War have meant that Germany must adjust itself to a new international environment. The disastrous failures of German foreign policy in the first half of the twentieth century have caused Germans to approach this challenge warily. Until the demise of the Soviet Union, Germans could enjoy the certainties of the Cold War, both they and their neighbors secure in the knowledge that the superpowers would contain any possible German aggression.

Throughout the postwar era, West Germany was a model citizen of the community of nations, content to be the most devoted participant in the movement toward Europe's eco-

nomic and social unification. West German politicians shared the fears of their foreign neighbors of a resurgent, aggressive Germany and sought to ensure their country's containment by embedding it in international organizations. In the mid-1950s, for example, West Germany rearmed, but as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO—see Glossary).

Since the end of the Cold War, however, united Germany has occupied an exposed position in Central Europe, with settled, secure neighbors in the west and unpredictable and insecure neighbors to the east. Because of this exposure, German policy makers wish to extend the European Union (EU—see Glossary) and NATO eastward, at a minimum bringing Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary into both organizations. In the German view, these countries could serve as a buffer between Germany and uncertain developments in Russia and other members of the former Soviet Union. At the same time as this so-called widening of West European institutions is being undertaken, Germany is working for their deepening by pressing for increased European unity. As of mid-1996, Helmut Kohl remained the continent's most important advocate of realizing a common European currency through the European Monetary Union (EMU—see Glossary) by the turn of the century. However unrealistic this timetable may prove to be, in the postwar era Germany has steadfastly worked to realize German writer Thomas Mann's ideal of a Europeanized Germany and rejected his nightmare of a Germanized Europe.

June 19, 1996 Eric Solsten

Chapter 1. Historical Setting: Early History to 1945

Martin Luther, 1483–1546, the main figure of the Protestant Reformation

PEOPLE HAVE DWELLED for thousands of years in the territory now occupied by the Federal Republic of Germany. The first significant written account of this area's inhabitants is *Germania,* written about A.D. 98 by the Roman historian Tacitus. The Germanic tribes he describes are believed to have come from Scandinavia to Germany about 100 B.C., perhaps induced to migrate by overpopulation. The Germanic tribes living to the west of the Rhine River and south of the Main River were soon subdued by the Romans and incorporated into the Roman Empire. Tribes living to the east and north of these rivers remained free but had more or less friendly relations with the Romans for several centuries. Beginning in the fourth century A.D., new westward migrations of eastern peoples caused the Germanic tribes to move into the Roman Empire, which by the late fifth century ceased to exist.

One of the largest Germanic tribes, the Franks, came to control the territory that was to become France and much of what is now western Germany and Italy. In A.D. 800 their ruler, Charlemagne, was crowned in Rome by the pope as emperor of all of this territory. Because of its vastness, Charlemagne's empire split into three kingdoms within two generations, the inhabitants of the West Frankish Kingdom speaking an early form of French and those in the East Frankish Kingdom speaking an early form of German. The tribes of the eastern kingdom—Franconians, Saxons, Bavarians, Swabians, and several others—were ruled by descendants of Charlemagne until 911, when they elected a Franconian, Conrad I, to be their king. Some historians regard Conrad's election as the beginning of what can properly be considered German history.

German kings soon added the Middle Kingdom to their realm and adjudged themselves rulers of what would later be called the Holy Roman Empire. In 962 Otto I became the first of the German kings crowned emperor in Rome. By the middle of the next century, the German lands ruled by the emperors were the richest and most politically powerful part of Europe. German princes stopped the westward advances of the Magyar tribe, and Germans began moving eastward to begin a long process of colonization. During the next few centuries, however, the great expense of the wars to maintain the empire against its enemies, chiefly other German princes and the

wealthy and powerful papacy and its allies, depleted Germany's wealth and slowed its development. Unlike France or England, where a central royal power was slowly established over regional princes, Germany remained divided into a multitude of smaller entities often warring with one another or in combinations against the emperors. None of the local princes, or any of the emperors, were strong enough to control Germany for a sustained period.

Germany's so-called particularism, that is, the existence within it of many states of various sizes and kinds, such as principalities, electorates, ecclesiastical territories, and free cities, became characteristic by the early Middle Ages and persisted until 1871, when the country was finally united. This disunity was exacerbated by the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, which ended Germany's religious unity by converting many Germans to Lutheranism and Calvinism. For several centuries, adherents to these two varieties of Protestantism viewed each other with as much hostility and suspicion as they did Roman Catholics. For their part, Catholics frequently resorted to force to defend themselves against Protestants or to convert them. As a result, Germans were divided not only by territory but also by religion.

The terrible destruction of the Thirty Years' War of 1618–48, a war partially religious in nature, reduced German particularism, as did the reforms enacted during the age of enlightened absolutism (1648–1789) and later the growth of nationalism and industrialism in the nineteenth century. In 1815 the Congress of Vienna stipulated that the several hundred states existing in Germany before the French Revolution be replaced with thirty-eight states, some of them quite small. In subsequent decades, the two largest of these states, Austria and Prussia, vied for primacy in a Germany that was gradually unifying under a variety of social and economic pressures. The politician responsible for German unification was Otto von Bismarck, whose brilliant diplomacy and ruthless practice of statecraft secured Prussian hegemony in a united Germany in 1871. The new state, proclaimed the German Empire, did not include Austria and its extensive empire of many non-German territories and peoples.

Imperial Germany prospered. Its economy grew rapidly, and by the turn of the century it rivaled Britain's in size. Although the empire's constitution did not provide for a political system in which the government was responsible to parliament, politi-

cal parties were founded that represented the main social groups. Roman Catholic and socialist parties contended with conservative and progressive parties and with a conservative monarchy to determine how Germany should be governed.

After Bismarck's dismissal in 1890 by the young emperor Wilhelm II, Germany stepped up its competition with other European states for colonies and for what it considered its proper place among the great states. An aggressive program of military expansion instilled fear of Germany in its neighbors. Several decades of military and colonial competition and a number of diplomatic crises made for a tense international atmosphere by 1914. In the early summer of that year, Germany's rulers acted on the belief that their country's survival depended on a successful war against Russia and France. German strategists felt that a war against these countries had to be waged by 1916 if it were to be won because after that year Russian and French military reforms would be complete, making German victory doubtful. This logic led Germany to get drawn into a war between its ally Austria-Hungary and Russia. Within weeks, a complicated system of alliances escalated that regional conflict into World War I, which ended with Germany's defeat in November 1918.

The Weimar Republic, established at war's end, was the first attempt to institute parliamentary democracy in Germany. The republic never enjoyed the wholehearted support of many Germans, however, and from the start it was under savage attack from elements of the left and, more important, from the right. Moreover, it was burdened during its fifteen-year existence with serious economic problems. During the second half of the 1920s, when foreign loans fed German prosperity, parliamentary politics functioned better, yet many of the established elites remained hostile to it. With the onset of the Great Depression, parliamentary politics became impossible, and the government ruled by decree. Economic crisis favored extremist politicians, and Adolf Hitler's National Socialist German Workers' Party became the strongest party after the summer elections of 1932. In January 1933, the republic's elected president, Paul von Hindenburg, the World War I army commander, named a government headed by Hitler.

Within a few months, Hitler accomplished the "legal revolution" that removed his opponents. By 1935 his regime had transformed Germany into a totalitarian state. Hitler achieved notable economic and diplomatic successes during the first five

years of his rule. However, in September 1939 he made a fatal gamble by invading Poland and starting World War II. The eventual defeat of Hitler's Third Reich in 1945 occurred only after the loss of tens of millions of lives, many from military causes, many from sickness and starvation, and many from what has come to be called the Holocaust.

Early History

The Germanic tribes, which probably originated from a mixture of peoples along the Baltic Sea coast, inhabited the northern part of the European continent by about 500 B.C. By 100 B.C., they had advanced into the central and southern areas of present-day Germany. At that time, there were three major tribal groups: the eastern Germanic peoples lived along the Oder and Vistula rivers; the northern Germanic peoples inhabited the southern part of present-day Scandinavia; and the western Germanic peoples inhabited the extreme south of Jutland and the area between the North Sea and the Elbe, Rhine, and Main rivers. The Rhine provided a temporary boundary between Germanic and Roman territory after the defeat of the Suevian tribe by Julius Caesar about 70 B.C. The threatening presence of warlike tribes beyond the Rhine prompted the Romans to pursue a campaign of expansion into Germanic territory. However, the defeat of the provincial governor Varus by Arminius at the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest in A.D. 9 halted Roman expansion; Arminius had learned the enemy's strategies during his military training in the Roman armies. This battle brought about the liberation of the greater part of Germany from Roman domination. The Rhine River was once again the boundary line until the Romans reoccupied territory on its eastern bank and built the Limes, a fortification 300 kilometers long, in the first century A.D.

The second through the sixth centuries was a period of change and destruction in which eastern and western Germanic tribes left their native lands and settled in newly acquired territories. This period of Germanic history, which later supplied material for heroic epics, included the downfall of the Roman Empire and resulted in a considerable expansion of habitable area for the Germanic peoples. However, with the exception of those kingdoms established by Franks and Anglo-Saxons, Germanic kingdoms founded in such other parts of Europe as Italy and Spain were of relatively short duration because they were assimilated by the native populations.

The conquest of Roman Gaul by Frankish tribes in the late fifth century became a milestone of European history; it was the Franks who were to become the founders of a civilized German state.

Medieval Germany

The Merovingian Dynasty, ca. 500–751

In Gaul a fusion of Roman and Germanic societies occurred. Clovis, a Salian Frank belonging to a family supposedly descended from a mythical hero named Merovech, became the absolute ruler of a Germanic kingdom of mixed Roman-Germanic population in 486. He consolidated his rule with victories over the Gallo-Romans and all the Frankish tribes, and his successors made other Germanic tribes subjects of the Merovingian Dynasty. The remaining 250 years of the dynasty, however, were marked by internecine struggles and a gradual decline. During the period of Merovingian rule, the Franks reluctantly began to adopt Christianity following the baptism of Clovis, an event that inaugurated the alliance between the Frankish kingdom and the Roman Catholic Church. The most notable of the missionaries responsible for Christianizing the tribes living in Germany was Saint Boniface (ca. 675–754), an English missionary who is considered the founder of German Christianity.

The Carolingian Dynasty, 752–911

Charlemagne inherited the Frankish crown in 768. During his reign (768–814), he subdued Bavaria, conquered Lombardy and Saxony, and established his authority in central Italy. By the end of the eighth century, his kingdom, later to become known as the First Reich (empire in German), included present-day France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, as well as a narrow strip of northern Spain, much of Germany and Austria, and much of the northern half of Italy. Charlemagne, founder of an empire that was Roman, Christian, and Germanic, was crowned emperor in Rome by the pope in 800.

The Carolingian Empire was based on an alliance between the emperor, who was a temporal ruler supported by a military retinue, and the pope of the Roman Catholic Church, who granted spiritual sanction to the imperial mission. Charlemagne and his son Louis I (r. 814–40) established centralized

authority, appointed imperial counts as administrators, and developed a hierarchical feudal structure headed by the emperor. Reliant on personal leadership rather than the Roman concept of legalistic government, Charlemagne's empire lasted less than a century.

A period of warfare followed the death of Louis. The Treaty of Verdun (843) restored peace and divided the empire among three sons, geographically and politically delineating the approximate future territories of Germany, France, and the area between them, known as the Middle Kingdom (see fig. 2). The eastern Carolingian kings ruled the East Frankish Kingdom, what is now Germany and Austria; the western Carolingian kings ruled the West Frankish Kingdom, what became France. The imperial title, however, came to depend increasingly on rule over the Middle Kingdom. By this time, in addition to a geographical and political delineation, a cultural and linguistic split had occurred. The eastern Frankish tribes still spoke Germanic dialects; the language of the western Frankish tribes, under the influence of Gallo-Latin, had developed into Old French. Because of these linguistic differences, the Treaty of Verdun had to be written in two languages.

Not only had Charlemagne's empire been divided into three kingdoms, but the East Frankish Kingdom was being weakened by the rise of regional duchies, the so-called stem duchies of Franconia, Saxony, Bavaria, Swabia, and Lorraine, which acquired the trappings of petty kingdoms. The fragmentation in the east marked the beginning of German particularism, in which territorial rulers promoted their own interests and autonomy without regard to the kingdom as a whole. The duchies were strengthened when the Carolingian line died out in 911; subsequent kings would have no direct blood link to the throne with which to legitimate their claims to power against the territorial dukes.

The Saxon Dynasty, 919–1024

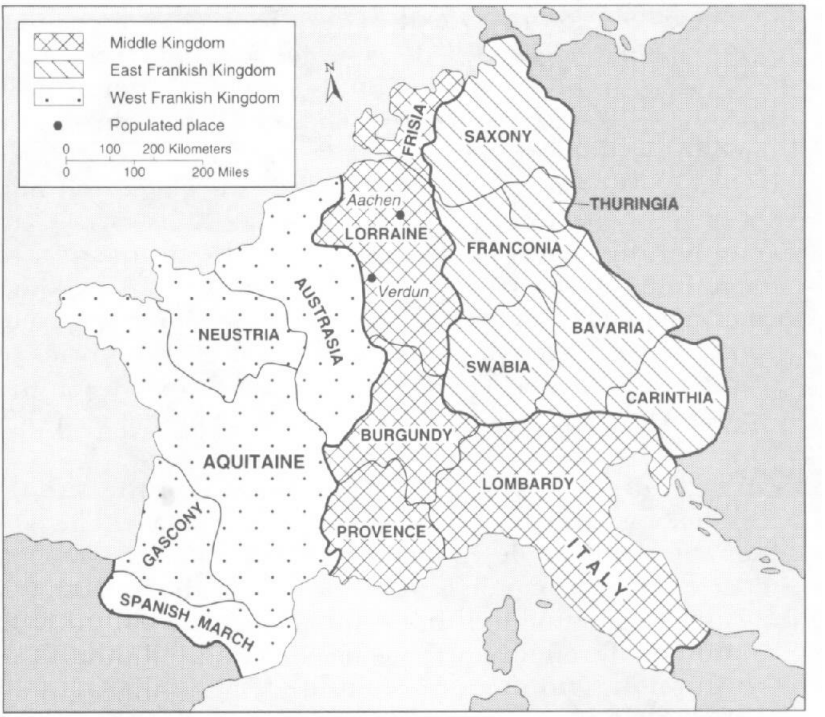
Because the dukes of the East Frankish Kingdom had wearied of being ruled by a foreign king, they elected a German to serve as their king once the Carolingian line expired. The election of Conrad I (r. 911–18), Duke of Franconia, as the first German king has been marked by some historians as the beginning of German history. Conrad's successor, Henry I (r. 919–36), Duke of Saxony, was powerful enough to designate his son Otto I (r. 936–73) as his successor. Otto was so able a ruler that

he came to be known as Otto the Great. He overpowered other territorial dukes who rebelled against his rule and reversed the particularist trend for a time. But he failed to establish the principle of hereditary succession, and the German dukes continued to elect one of their number as king. But through military successes and alliances with the church, which had extensive properties and military forces of its own, Otto expanded the crown lands, thus laying the foundation of monarchical power. Henry, Otto, and the later Saxon kings also encouraged eastward expansion and colonization, thereby extending German rule to parts of the Slavic territories of Poland and Bohemia. The Magyars' westward expansion was halted by Otto in 955 at the Battle of Lechfeld in southern Germany.

In 962 Otto, who had also gained control of the Middle Kingdom, was formally crowned king of the Romans. The possessor of this title would, in time, be known as the Holy Roman Emperor. The coronation came to be seen as the founding of the Holy Roman Empire, an institution that lasted until 1806 and profoundly influenced the course of German history. The coronation of Otto was a moment of glory for the German monarchy, but its long-term consequences were not beneficial because as German kings sought to exercise the offices of the empire they became involved in Italian affairs, often to such an extent that they neglected the governing of Germany. Because German kings were so often in Italy, the German nobility became stronger. In addition, the presence of German kings in Italy as emperors soon caused them to come into conflict with the papacy, which did not hesitate to seek allies in Italy or Germany to limit imperial power. A last problem was that the succession to the German throne was often uncertain or was hotly contested because it was not inheritable, but could only be attained through election by the German dukes. This circumstance made the formation of an orderly or stable central government nearly impossible. In the opinion of some historians, Otto's triumph in Rome in 962 ultimately was disastrous for Germany because it delayed German unification by centuries.

The Salian Dynasty, 1024–1125

After the death of the last Saxon king in 1024, the crown passed to the Salians, a Frankish tribe. The four Salian kings—Conrad II, Henry III, Henry IV, and Henry V—who ruled Germany as kings from 1024 to 1125, established their monarchy



Source: Based on information from Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Origins of Modern Germany*, Oxford, 1949, 12.

Figure 2. The Carolingian Empire Divided by the Treaty of Verdun, A.D. 843

as a major European power. Their main accomplishment was the development of a permanent administrative system based on a class of public officials answerable to the crown.

A principal reason for the success of the early Salians was their alliance with the church, a policy begun by Otto I, which gave them the material support they needed to subdue rebellious dukes. In time, however, the church came to regret this close relationship. The relationship broke down in 1075 during what came to be known as the Investiture Contest, a struggle in which the reformist pope, Gregory VII, demanded that Henry IV (r. 1056–1106) renounce his rights over the German church. The pope also attacked the concept of monarchy by divine right and gained the support of significant elements of the German nobility interested in limiting imperial absolutism. More important, the pope forbade church officials under pain of excommunication to support Henry as they had so freely

done in the past. In the end, Henry journeyed to Canossa in northern Italy in 1077 to do penance and to receive absolution from the pope. However, he resumed the practice of lay investiture (appointment of religious officials by civil authorities) and arranged the election of an antipope.

The German monarch's struggle with the papacy resulted in a war that ravaged German lands from 1077 until the Concordat of Worms in 1122. This agreement stipulated that the pope was to appoint high church officials but gave the German king the right to veto the papal choices. Imperial control of Italy was lost for a time, and the imperial crown became dependent on the political support of competing aristocratic factions. Feudalism also became more widespread as freemen sought protection by swearing allegiance to a lord. These powerful local rulers, having thereby acquired extensive territories and large military retinues, took over administration within their territories and organized it around an increasing number of castles. The most powerful of these local rulers came to be called princes rather than dukes.

According to the laws of the German feudal system, the king had no claims on the vassals of the other princes, only on those living within his family's territory. Lacking the support of the formerly independent vassals and weakened by the increasing hostility of the church, the monarchy lost its preeminence. Thus, the Investiture Contest strengthened local power in Germany in contrast to what was happening in France and England, where the growth of a centralized royal power was under way.

The Investiture Contest had an additional effect. The long struggle between emperor and pope hurt Germany's intellectual life—in this period largely confined to monasteries—and Germany no longer led or even kept pace with developments occurring in France and Italy. For instance, no universities were founded in Germany until the fourteenth century.

The Hohenstaufen Dynasty, 1138–1254

Following the death of Henry V (r. 1106–25), the last of the Salian kings, the dukes refused to elect his nephew because they feared that he might restore royal power. Instead, they elected a noble connected to the Saxon noble family Welf (often written as Guelf). This choice inflamed the Hohenstaufen family of Swabia, which also had a claim to the throne. Although a Hohenstaufen became king in 1138, the dynastic

feud with the Welfs continued. The feud became international in nature when the Welfs sided with the papacy and its allies, most notably the cities of northern Italy, against the imperial ambitions of the Hohenstaufen Dynasty.

The second of the Hohenstaufen rulers, Frederick I (r. 1152–90), also known as Frederick Barbarossa because of his red beard, struggled throughout his reign to restore the power and prestige of the German monarchy, but he had little success. Because the German dukes had grown stronger both during and after the Investiture Contest and because royal access to the resources of the church in Germany was much reduced, Frederick was forced to go to Italy to find the finances needed to restore the king's power in Germany. He was soon crowned emperor in Italy, but decades of warfare on the peninsula yielded scant results. The papacy and the prosperous city-states of northern Italy were traditional enemies, but the fear of imperial domination caused them to join ranks to fight Frederick. Under the skilled leadership of Pope Alexander III, the alliance suffered many defeats but ultimately was able to deny the emperor a complete victory in Italy. Frederick returned to Germany old and embittered. He had vanquished one notable opponent and member of the Welf family, Saxony's Henry the Lion, but his hopes of restoring the power and prestige of his family and the monarchy seemed unlikely to be met by the end of his life.

During Frederick's long stays in Italy, the German princes became stronger and began a successful colonization of Slavic lands. Offers of reduced taxes and manorial duties enticed many Germans to settle in the east as the area's original inhabitants were killed or driven away. Because of this colonization, the empire increased in size and came to include Pomerania, Silesia, Bohemia, and Moravia. A quickening economic life in Germany increased the number of towns and gave them greater importance. It was also during this period that castles and courts replaced monasteries as centers of culture. Growing out of this courtly culture, German medieval literature reached its peak in lyrical love poetry, the *Minnesang*, and in narrative epic poems such as *Tristan*, *Parzival*, and the *Nibelungenlied*.

Frederick died in 1190 while on a crusade and was succeeded by his son, Henry VI (r. 1190–97). Elected king even before his father's death, Henry went to Rome to be crowned emperor. A death in his wife's family gave him possession of Sicily, a source of vast wealth. Henry failed to make royal and

imperial succession hereditary, but in 1196 he succeeded in gaining a pledge that his infant son Frederick would receive the German crown. Faced with difficulties in Italy and confident that he would realize his wishes in Germany at a later date, Henry returned to the south, where it appeared he might unify the peninsula under the Hohenstaufen name. After a series of military victories, however, he died of natural causes in Sicily in 1197.

Because the election of the three-year-old Frederick to be German king appeared likely to make orderly rule difficult, the boy's uncle, Philip, was chosen to serve in his place. Other factions elected a Welf candidate, Otto IV, as counterking, and a long civil war began. Philip was murdered by Otto IV in 1208. Otto IV in turn was killed by the French at the Battle of Bouvines in 1214. Frederick returned to Germany in 1212 from Sicily, where he had grown up, and became king in 1215. As Frederick II (r. 1215–50), he spent little time in Germany because his main concerns lay in Italy. Frederick made significant concessions to the German nobles, such as those put forth in an imperial statute of 1232, which made princes virtually independent rulers within their territories. The clergy also became more powerful. Although Frederick was one of the most energetic, imaginative, and capable rulers of the Middle Ages, he did nothing to draw the disparate forces in Germany together. His legacy was thus that local rulers had more authority after his reign than before it.

By the time of Frederick's death in 1250, there was little centralized power in Germany. The Great Interregnum (1256–73), a period of anarchy in which there was no emperor and German princes vied for individual advantage, followed the death of Frederick's son Conrad IV in 1254. In this short period, the German nobility managed to strip many powers away from the already diminished monarchy. Rather than establish sovereign states, however, many nobles tended to look after their families. Their many heirs created more and smaller estates. A largely free class of officials also formed, many of whom eventually acquired hereditary rights to administrative and legal offices. These trends compounded political fragmentation within Germany.

Despite the political chaos of the Hohenstaufen period, the population grew from an estimated 8 million in 1200 to about 14 million in 1300, and the number of towns increased tenfold. The most heavily urbanized areas of Germany were located in

the south and the west. Towns often developed a degree of independence, but many were subordinate to local rulers or the emperor. Colonization of the east also continued in the thirteenth century, most notably through the efforts of the Knights of the Teutonic Order, a society of soldier-monks. German merchants also began trading extensively on the Baltic.

The Empire under the Early Habsburgs

The Great Interregnum ended in 1273 with the election of Rudolf of Habsburg as king-emperor. After the interregnum period, Germany's emperors came from three powerful dynastic houses: Luxemburg (in Bohemia), Wittelsbach (in Bavaria), and Habsburg (in Austria). These families alternated on the imperial throne until the crown returned in the mid-fifteenth century to the Habsburgs, who retained it with only one short break until the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806.

The Golden Bull of 1356, an edict promulgated by Emperor Charles IV (r. 1355–78) of the Luxemburg family, provided the basic constitution of the empire up to its dissolution. It formalized the practice of having seven electors—the archbishops of the cities of Trier, Cologne, and Mainz, and the rulers of the Palatinate, Saxony, Brandenburg, and Bohemia—choose the emperor, and it represented a further political consolidation of the principalities. The Golden Bull ended the long-standing attempt of various emperors to unite Germany under a hereditary monarchy. Henceforth, the emperor shared power with other great nobles like himself and was regarded as merely the first among equals. Without the cooperation of the other princes, he could not rule.

The princes were not absolute rulers either. They had made so many concessions to other secular and ecclesiastical powers in their struggle against the emperor that many smaller principalities, ecclesiastical states, and towns had retained a degree of independence. Some of the smaller noble holdings were so poor that they had to resort to outright extortion of travelers and merchants to sustain themselves, with the result that journeying through Germany could be perilous in the late Middle Ages. All of Germany was under the nominal control of the emperor, but because his power was so weak or uncertain, local authorities had to maintain order—yet another indication of Germany's political fragmentation.

Despite the lack of a strong central authority, Germany prospered during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Its popu-

lation increased from about 14 million in 1300 to about 16 million in 1500, even though the Black Death killed as much as one-third of the population in the mid-fourteenth century.

Located in the center of Europe, Germany was active in international trade. Rivers flowing to the north and the east and the Alpine passes made Germany a natural conduit conveying goods from the Mediterranean to northern Europe. Germany became a noted manufacturing center. Trade and manufacturing led to the growth of towns, and in 1500 an estimated 10 percent of the population lived in urban areas. Many towns became wealthy and were governed by a sophisticated and self-confident merchant oligarchy. Dozens of towns in northern Germany joined together to form the Hanseatic League, a trading federation that managed shipping and trade on the Baltic and in many inland areas, even into Bohemia and Hungary. The Hanseatic League had commercial offices in such widely dispersed towns as London, Bergen (in present-day Norway), and Novgorod (in present-day Russia). The league was at one time so powerful that it successfully waged war against the king of Denmark. In southern Germany, towns banded together on occasion to protect their interests against encroachments by either imperial or local powers. Although these urban confederations were not always strong enough to defeat their opponents, they sometimes succeeded in helping their members to avoid complete subjugation. In what was eventually to become Switzerland, one confederation of towns had sufficient military might to win virtual independence from the Holy Roman Empire in 1499.

The Knights of the Teutonic Order continued their settlement of the east until their dissolution early in the sixteenth century, in spite of a serious defeat at the hands of the Poles at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1410. The lands that came under the control of this monastic military, whose members were pledged to chastity and to the conquest and conversion of heathens, included territory that one day would become eastern Prussia and would be inhabited by Germans until 1945. German settlement in areas south of the territories controlled by the Knights of the Teutonic Order also continued, but generally at the behest of eastern rulers who valued the skills of German peasant-farmers. These new settlers were part of a long process of peaceful German immigration to the east that lasted for centuries, with Germans moving into all of eastern Europe and even deep into Russia.

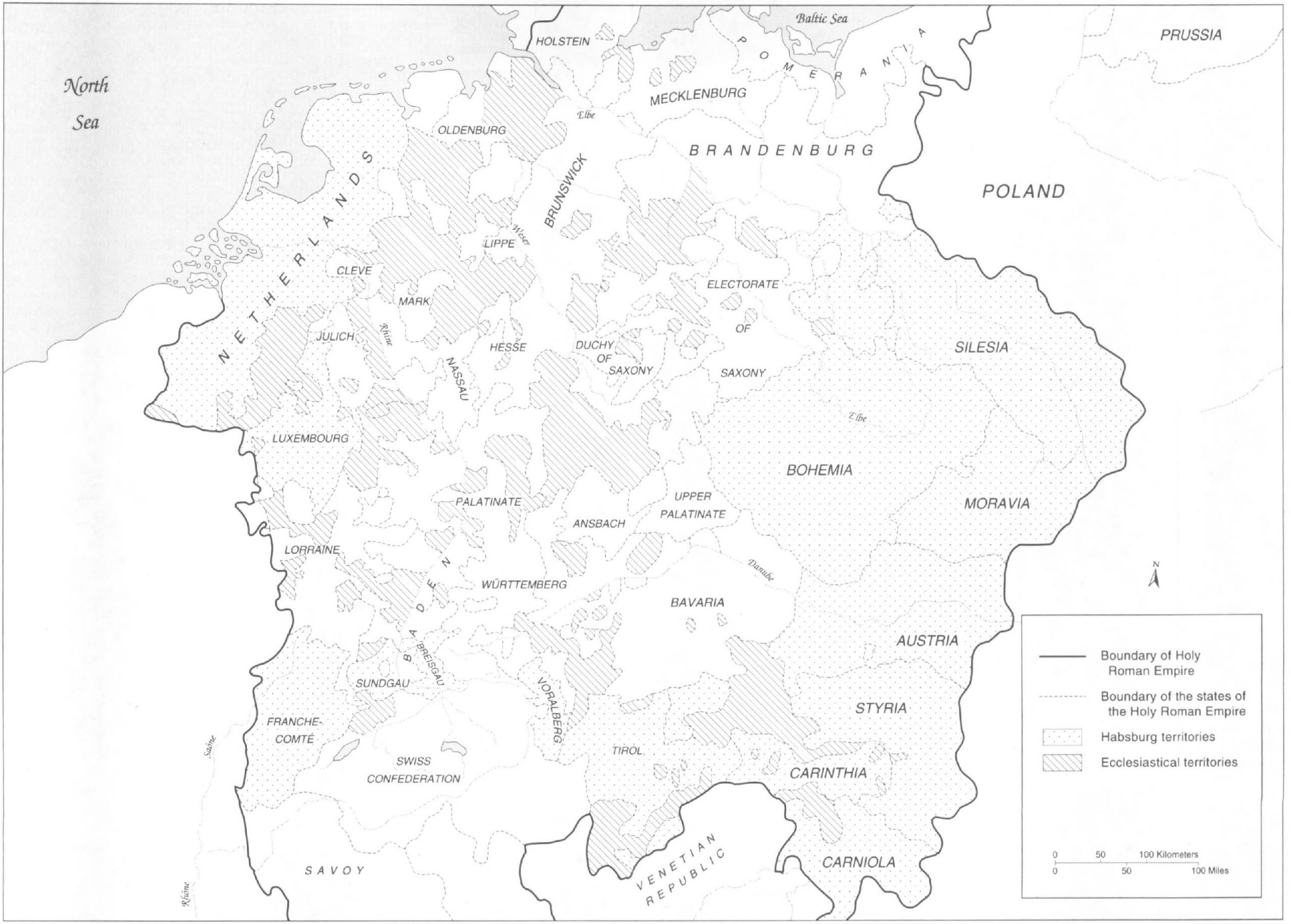
Intellectual growth accompanied German expansion. Several universities were founded, and Germany came into increased contact with the humanists active elsewhere in Europe. The invention of movable type in the middle of the fifteenth century in Germany also contributed to a more lively intellectual climate. Religious ferment was common, most notably the heretical movement engendered by the teachings of Jan Hus (ca. 1372–1415) in Bohemia. Hus eventually was executed, but the dissatisfaction he felt toward the established church was shared by many others throughout German-speaking lands, as could be seen in the frequent occurrences of popular, mystical religious revivalism after his death.

The Protestant Reformation

On the eve of the Protestant Reformation, the institutions of the Holy Roman Empire were widely thought to be in need of improvement. The Habsburg emperors Frederick III (r. 1440–93) and his son Maximilian I (r. 1493–1519) both cooperated with individual local rulers to enact changes. However, the imperial and local parties had different aims, the former wishing to strengthen the empire, the latter aiming to secure greater independence by formalizing their rights and ensuring regular procedures for the conduct of public business. In 1489 the procedures of the imperial diet, the Reichstag, in which representatives of all states within the empire met, were reorganized. One of the reforms allowed participation in the diet by representatives of the towns. In 1495 Maximilian declared an empirewide peace and made arrangements to reduce the lawlessness and violence that often marked relations among local rulers.

Maximilian's reforms were not enough to cure the ills of the empire, and relations between it and the princes and ecclesiastical states often were tense. Disputes frequently involved complicated constellations of powers with occasional interference from abroad, most notably France. Charles V (r. 1519–56) was elected emperor in 1519 only after he paid large bribes to the seven electors and agreed to many restrictions on his powers, restrictions he often later ignored (see fig. 3).

A changing economy also made for discontent among those unable to profit from new conditions. Some of the empire's inhabitants had become quite rich, most notably the Fugger family of Augsburg, whose members had replaced the bankers of northern Italy as Europe's leading financiers. The Fuggers



Source: Based on information from Geoffrey Barraclough, *The Origins of Modern Germany*, Oxford, 1949, opposite p. 358.

Figure 3. Germany at the Time of the Protestant Reformation in the Sixteenth Century

had come to manage the financial affairs of the Habsburg Dynasty, which, in combination with increased trade between south and north, made Germany Europe's financial center for a few decades. However, other groups in Germany were experiencing hardship. A burgeoning rural population found it difficult to get enough to eat, and many peasants went to the towns to seek a living. Municipal officials responded by seeking to bar rural newcomers. Within towns that were not prospering, relations between the classes became more tense as social mobility was reduced by a declining economy.

Martin Luther

On the eve of All Saints' Day in 1517, Martin Luther, a professor of theology at Wittenberg University in Saxony, posted ninety-five theses on a church door. Luther's primary concern was the sale of indulgences—papal grants of reduced punishment in the afterlife, including releases from purgatory. First written in Latin, the theses were soon translated into German and widely distributed. Summoned by church authorities to explain his writings, Luther became embroiled in further controversy and in 1520 wrote his three most famous tracts, in which he attacked the papacy and exposed church corruption, acknowledged the validity of only two of the seven sacraments, and argued for the supremacy of faith over good works. In 1521 Luther was summoned to appear before Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms. Refusing to recant his writings, he was banned under the Edict of Worms. Secreted away by the ruler of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, Luther retreated to the castle of Wartburg, where he worked on a translation of the New Testament and wrote numerous religious tracts.

Luther's disagreements with the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church set off a chain of events that within a few decades destroyed Germany's religious unity. Although one of the most influential figures in German history, Luther was only one of many who were critical of the Roman Catholic Church. However, because of the power of his ideas and the enormous influence of his writings, it is he who is regarded as the initiator of the Protestant Reformation. Luther quickly acquired a large following among those disgusted by rampant church corruption and unfulfilled by mechanistic religious services. Many warmed to his contention that religion must be simplified into a close relationship of human beings with God without the

extensive mediation of the Roman Catholic Church and its accretion of tradition.

Luther magnified the inherent potency of his ideas by articulating them in a language that was without rival in clarity and force. He strove to make the Scriptures accessible to ordinary worshipers by translating them into vernacular German. This he did with such genius that the German dialect he used became the written language of all of Germany. Without Luther's translation of the Bible, Germany might have come to use a number of mutually incomprehensible languages, as was the case in the northwestern part of the Holy Roman Empire, where local dialects evolved into what is now modern Dutch. Luther also wrote hymns that are still sung in Christian religious services all over the world.

A less exalted reason for the wide distribution of Luther's doctrines was the development of printing with movable type. The Reformation created a demand for all kinds of religious writings. The readership was so great that the number of books printed in Germany increased from about 150 in 1518 to nearly 1,000 six years later.

Luther's ideas soon coalesced into a body of doctrines called Lutheranism. Powerful supporters such as princes and free cities accepted Lutheranism for many reasons, some because they sincerely supported reform, others out of narrow self-interest. In some areas, a jurisdiction would adopt Lutheranism because a large neighboring state had done so. In other areas, rulers accepted it because they sought to retain control over their subjects who had embraced it earlier. Nearly all the imperial cities became Lutheran, despite the fact that the emperor, to whom they were subordinate, was hostile to the movement. Historians have found no single convincing explanation of why one area became Lutheran and another did not, because so many social, economic, and religious factors were involved.

Given the revolutionary nature of Lutheranism and the economic and political tensions of the period, it is not surprising that the Reformation soon became marked by violence and extremism. The Knights' War of 1522–23, in which members of the lower nobility rebelled against the authorities in southwestern Germany, was quickly crushed. Some of the rampaging knights were ardent supporters of Luther. The Peasants' War of 1524–25 was more serious, involving as many as 300,000 peasants in southwestern and central Germany. Influenced somewhat by the new religious ideas but responding mostly to

changing economic conditions, the peasants' rebellion spread quickly, but without coordination. It also received support from some dissatisfied city dwellers and from some noblemen of arms who led its ragged armies. Although the peasants' rebellion was the largest uprising in German history, it was quickly suppressed, with about 100,000 casualties. In the 1530s, the Anabaptists, a radical Christian sect, seized several towns, their objective being to construct a just society. They were likewise brutally suppressed by the authorities.

Luther opposed the peasants' cause and wrote an impassioned tract demanding their quick suppression. However radical his religious views, Luther was a social and political conservative. He believed that the end of the world was imminent and regarded practical affairs as having little importance compared with the effort to win eternal salvation. Therefore, he counseled obedience to worldly authorities if they allowed freedom of worship. Lutheranism thus became a means of upholding the worldly status quo and the leaders who adopted the new faith. In contrast to England, where Protestantism retained a significant radical social element, German Protestantism became an integral part of the state. Some historians maintain that this integration of state and church has deprived Germany of a deeply rooted tradition of political dissent as found in Britain and the United States.

Resistance to Lutheranism

Although Lutheranism had powerful supporters, its survival was by no means certain. Its main opponent was the Habsburg emperor Charles V, who had inherited Spain, the Netherlands, southern Italy, Sicily, and the Austrian lands as patrimony and who hoped to restore the unity of the German Empire by keeping it Roman Catholic. Charles had been out of Germany between 1521 and 1530, and when he returned he found that the new religion had won too many adherents to be easily uprooted. In addition, he could not devote himself single-mindedly to combating it but also had to struggle with powerful external enemies. One was Francis I (r. 1515–47) of France, who attacked the empire from the west, having resolved to destroy the power of the Habsburgs. Another threat was posed by the Turks, who were attacking the empire from the east. Even the papacy at times conspired against its coreligionist because it feared Charles was becoming too powerful.

Within Germany, forces were also arrayed against Charles. In 1531 Protestant leaders created the League of Schmalkalden to oppose him. By 1545 northeastern and northwestern Germany and large parts of southern Germany had become Protestant. Despite the significant victory over the Protestants at the Battle of Mühlberg in 1547, Charles still was not powerful enough to impose his will on the German princes.

The Peace of Augsburg

By the early 1550s, it was apparent that a negotiated settlement was necessary. In 1555 the Peace of Augsburg was signed.The settlement, which represented a victory for the princes, granted recognition to both Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism in Germany, and each ruler gained the right to decide the religion to be practiced within his state. Subjects not of this faith could move to another state with their property, and disputes between the religions were to be settled in court.

The Protestant Reformation strengthened the long-standing trend toward particularism in Germany. German leaders, whether Protestant or Catholic, became yet more powerful at the expense of the central governing institution, the empire. Protestant leaders gained by receiving lands that formerly belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, although not to as great an extent as, for example, would occur in England. Each prince also became the head of the established church within his territory. Catholic leaders benefited because the Roman Catholic Church, in order to help them withstand Protestantism, gave them greater access to church resources within their territories. Germany was also less united than before because Germans were no longer of one faith, a situation officially recognized by the Peace of Augsburg. The agreement did not bring sectarian peace, however, because the religious question in Germany had not yet been settled fully.

The Thirty Years' War, 1618–48

Germany enjoyed a time of relative quiet between the Peace of Augsburg, signed in 1555, and the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618. The empire functioned in a more regular way than previously, and its federal nature was more evident than in the past. The Reichstag met frequently to deal with public matters, and the emperors Ferdinand I (r. 1556–64) and Maximilian II (r. 1564–76) were cautious rulers concerned

mostly with strengthening their family's hold on Austria and adjacent areas. Rudolf II (r. 1576–1612) was an indolent and capricious ruler who generally followed his advisers' counsel. As a result, some German states were able to expand their territories by annexing smaller neighbors in the absence of an engaged and attentive emperor. Local rivalries engendered tensions that often were based on religious affiliation.

The Counter-Reformation and Religious Tensions

The Peace of Augsburg brought peace but did not settle the religious disagreements in Germany. For one thing, its signatories did not recognize Calvinism, a relatively stringent form of Protestantism that was gaining prominence around the time the Augsburg treaty was signed, in what has been called the Second Reformation. Adherents to both Calvinism and Lutheranism worked to spread their influence and gain converts in the face of the Counter-Reformation, the attempt of the Roman Catholic Church to regroup and reverse the spread of Protestantism. Followers of all three religions were at times successful, but only at the expense of the others.

Fear of religious subversion caused rulers to monitor the conduct of their subjects more closely. Attempting to help the modern reader understand the intensity and pervasiveness of this fear, Mary Fulbrook, a noted British historian of Germany, has likened it to the anxiety prevailing in the first years of the Cold War. An example of the social paranoia engendered by the religious tensions of the period is Protestant Germany's refusal until 1700 to accept the Gregorian calendar introduced by the papacy in 1582 because the reform entailed a one-time loss of the days between October 5 and 14. Many Protestants suspected that Roman Catholics were attempting somehow to steal this time for themselves.

By the first decades of the seventeenth century, religious controversy had become so obstructive that at times the Reichstag could not conduct business. In 1608, for example, Calvinists walked out of the body, preventing the levying of a tax to fight a war against the Turks. In the same year, the Evangelical Union was established by a few states and cities of the empire to defend the Protestant cause. In 1609 a number of Roman Catholic states countered by forming the Catholic League. Although both bodies were less concerned with a sectarian war than with the specific aims of their member states, their forma-

tion was an indication of how easily disputes could acquire a religious aspect.

Military Campaigns

The Thirty Years' War resulted from a local rebellion, but the admixture of religion transformed it into a European conflict that lasted for more than a generation and devastated Germany. In 1618 Bohemian nobles opposed the decision of Emperor Matthias (r. 1608–19) to designate his Catholic cousin Ferdinand king of Bohemia. Instead, the nobles elected Frederick of the Palatinate, a German Calvinist, to be their king. In 1620, in an attempt to wrest control from the nobles, imperial armies and the Catholic League under General Johann von Tilly defeated the Protestant Bohemians at the Battle of White Mountain near Prague. The Protestant princes, alarmed by the strength of the Catholic League and the possibility of Roman Catholic supremacy in Europe, decided to renew their struggle against Emperor Matthias. They were aided by France, which, although Roman Catholic, was opposed to the increasing power of the Habsburgs, the dynastic family to which Matthias and Ferdinand belonged. Despite French aid, by the late 1620s imperial armies of Emperor Ferdinand II (r. 1619–37) and the Catholic League, under the supreme command of General Albrecht von Wallenstein, had defeated the Protestants and secured a foothold in northern Germany.

In his time of triumph, Ferdinand overreached himself by publishing in 1629 the Edict of Restitution, which required that all properties of the Roman Catholic Church taken since 1552 be returned to their original owners. The edict renewed Protestant resistance. Catholic powers also began to oppose Ferdinand because they feared he was becoming too powerful. Invading armies from Sweden, secretly supported by Catholic France, marched deep into Germany, winning numerous victories. The Catholic general Tilly and Sweden's Protestant king, Gustavus Adolphus, were killed in separate battles. Wallenstein was assassinated on Emperor Ferdinand's orders because he feared his general was becoming too powerful. After the triumph of the Spanish army over Swedish forces at the Battle of Nördlingen in 1634, a truce was arranged between the emperor and some of the German princes under the Treaty of Prague. France then invaded Germany, not for religious reasons but because the House of Bourbon, the dynastic family of several French and Spanish monarchs, wished to ensure that

the House of Habsburg did not become too powerful. This invasion is illustrative of the French axiom that Germany must always remain divided into small, easily manipulated states. (Indeed, preventing a united Germany remained an objective of French foreign policy even late in the twentieth century.) Because of French participation, the war continued until the Peace of Westphalia was signed in 1648.

The Peace of Westphalia

The Peace of Westphalia largely settled German affairs for the next century and a half. It ended religious conflicts between the states and included official recognition of Calvinism. Its signatories altered the boundaries of the empire by recognizing that Switzerland and the Netherlands had become sovereign states outside the empire. Portions of Alsace and Lorraine went to France. Sweden received some territory in northern Germany, which in the long run it could not retain. Brandenburg became stronger, as did Saxony and Bavaria. In addition, states within the empire acquired greater independence with the right to have their own foreign policies and form alliances, even with states outside the empire. As a result of these changes, the Holy Roman Empire lost much of what remained of its power and would never again be a significant actor on the international stage. The Habsburgs would continue to be crowned emperors, but their strength would derive from their own holdings, not from leadership of the empire. Germany was less united in 1648 than in 1618, and German particularism had been strengthened once again.

The Thirty Years' War had a devastating effect on the German people. Historians have usually estimated that between one-fourth and one-third of the population perished from direct military causes or from illness and starvation related to the war. Some regions were affected much more than others. For example, an estimated three-quarters of Württemberg's population died between 1634 and 1639. Overall losses were serious enough that historians believe that it took a century after the Thirty Years' War for Germany's population to reach the level of 1618.

Germany's economy was also severely disrupted by the ravages of the Thirty Years' War. The war exacerbated the economic decline that had begun in the second half of the sixteenth century as the European economy shifted westward to the Atlantic states—Spain, France, England, and the Low

Countries. The shift in trade meant that Germany was no longer located at the center of European commerce but on its fringes. The thriving economies of many German towns in the late Middle Ages and first half of the sixteenth century gradually dried up, and Germany as a whole entered a long period of economic stagnation that ended only in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The Age of Enlightened Absolutism, 1648–1789

Although the Holy Roman Empire no longer had a significant role in European politics after the Thirty Years' War, it remained important in Germany, providing a framework for the many German states' and cities' conduct of their public affairs. The Reichstag, which remained in session at Regensburg from 1663 until the empire's dissolution in 1806, provided a forum for the settlement of disputes. On occasion, votes were taken to remove incompetent or tyrannical rulers of member states. The empire's most important service was that it provided a measure of security to Germany's many small states and free cities, without which some would have been swallowed up by larger neighbors. Because of its weakened condition, the empire could no longer dominate Germany, even when headed by ambitious and capable men such as Charles VI (r. 1711–40). During the 1720s, he attempted unsuccessfully to breathe new life into the empire. Later emperors returned to the traditional Habsburg practice of using the imperial throne to benefit their own dynastic holdings.

For nearly a century after the Peace of Westphalia, the main danger to German states came from abroad. France was the chief threat, seizing parts of southwestern Germany in the late 1600s, among them the city of Strasbourg in 1681. French troops also fought on German soil during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14). In addition to these military actions, France formed alliances with some German states, most significantly with Bavaria, which sought support against neighboring Austria. The Ottoman Empire also posed a threat. In 1683 its forces besieged Vienna. The Germans ultimately were successful against the Ottoman Empire, and after the Treaty of Passarowitz of 1718, the Turks were no longer a danger.

Austria and Prussia

The most important German power after the Peace of West-

phalia was Austria, followed by a few other states with much smaller populations, most notably Brandenburg, Saxony, and Bavaria. Austria retained its preeminence until the second half of the nineteenth century, but in the eighteenth century Brandenburg had become a serious rival, annexing valuable Austrian territory. The rivalry came to form the so-called dualism of the empire, that is, the presence in it of two powerful states, neither of which was strong enough to dominate the empire and for that reason sought the support of smaller states. The smaller states worked to derive their own advantages from German dualism, none being willing to cede sovereignty to either Austria or Prussia.

In 1648 Brandenburg was a small state in northern Germany. It had been ruled by the Hohenzollern Dynasty since the late fifteenth century and consisted of the core region and its capital, Berlin; eastern Pomerania; an area around Magdeburg; the former holdings of the Knights of the Teutonic Order in eastern Prussia; and some smaller holdings in western Germany. Brandenburg became known as Prussia in 1701 when its ruler crowned himself King Frederick I of Prussia. Prussia acquired the rest of Pomerania after defeating Sweden in the Great Northern War (1700–21). Prussia's increase in size and influence may be attributed to a succession of capable leaders, all of whom enjoyed long reigns. The first was Frederick William (r. 1640–88), known as the Great Elector. He increased his family's power by granting favors to the nobility, weakening the independence of the towns, and maintaining a professional standing army. His son Frederick I (r. 1688–1713) established Prussia as a kingdom. Frederick further strengthened the army, but not nearly as much as his son Frederick William I (r. 1713–40), who also modernized the kingdom's bureaucracy. Frederick II (r. 1740–86), known to posterity as Frederick the Great, continued along the same lines as his father but showed much greater imagination and ruthlessness, transforming his small kingdom into one of the great powers of Europe.

In 1740 Frederick seized Silesia, a wealthy province that belonged to the Habsburgs and had a population of about 1 million inhabitants. Maria Theresa (r. 1740–80), the new Habsburg empress, was unable to regain possession of Silesia, which remained under Prussian control at the end of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–48). Frederick retained Silesia even after facing a coalition of France, Austria, and Russia during the Seven Years' War (1756–63). Frederick expanded Prussian

territory still further in 1772, when, with his erstwhile enemies Russia and Austria, he took part in the First Partition of Poland. This last seizure was highly beneficial to Frederick because it linked eastern Prussia with much of his kingdom's western holdings.

Although Prussia and Austria were rivals, they had some important characteristics in common. Neither state was populated by a single people, but by numerous peoples speaking different languages and belonging to different religions. Neither state was located entirely within the empire. Both had sizable territories to the east of the empire, and it was there that they hoped mainly to expand. Both states were governed by enlightened monarchs, who, having only to cajole the nobility with occasional concessions, saw government as for the people but not by the people. Hence, both states were governed by the most efficient methods known to the eighteenth century, and both were fairly tolerant according to the standards of the time. Prussia accepted many Protestants expelled from other states, most notably the Huguenots who fled France after the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Austria became one of the first states to allow Jews to settle where they liked within its boundaries and to practice the professions of their choice.

The Smaller States

By the eighteenth century, none of the other states of the empire were strong enough to have territorial ambitions to match those of Prussia and Austria. Some of the larger states, such as Saxony, Bavaria, and Württemberg, also maintained standing armies, but their smaller size compelled them to seek allies, some from outside the empire. With the exception of the free cities and ecclesiastical states, smaller states, like Austria and Prussia, were governed by a hereditary monarch who ruled either with the consent or help of the nobility and with the help of an increasingly well-trained bureaucracy. Only a few states, such as Württemberg, could boast of an active democracy of the kind evolving in Britain and France. Except in a few free cities, such as Frankfurt am Main and Hamburg, which were active in international trade, Germany's commercial class was neither strong nor self-confident. Farmers in western Germany were largely free; those in the east were often serfs. However, whether in the east or the west, most who worked the land lived at the subsistence level.

Frederick the Great, king of Prussia, 1740–86
Courtesy German Information Center, New York

Despite its lack of popular democracy, Germany was generally well governed. The state bureaucracies gained in power and expertise, and efficiency and probity were esteemed. During the eighteenth century, the principles of the Enlightenment came to be widely disseminated and applied. Although there were no political challenges to enlightened absolutism, as was the case in France, all phenomena, including religion, were subject to critical, reasoned examination to determine their rationality. In this more tolerant environment, differing religious views could still create social friction, but ways were found for the empire's three main religions—Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism—to coexist in most states. The expulsion of about 20,000 Protestants from the ecclesiastical state of Salzburg during 1731–32 was viewed by the educated public at the time as a harking back to less enlightened days.

Several new universities were founded, some soon considered among Europe's best. An increasingly literate public made possible a jump in the number of journals and newspapers. At the end of the seventeenth century, most books printed in Germany were in Latin. By the end of the next century, all but 5 percent were in German. The eighteenth century also saw a refinement of the German language and a flowering of German literature with the appearance of such figures as Gotthold

Lessing, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Friedrich Schiller. German music also reached great heights with the Bach family, George Frederick Handel, Joseph Haydn, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

The French Revolution and Germany

The French Revolution, which erupted in 1789 with the storming of the Bastille in Paris, at first gained the enthusiastic approval of some German intellectuals, who welcomed the proclamation of a constitution and a bill of rights. Within a few years, most of this support had dissipated, replaced by fear of a newly aggressive French nationalism and horror at the execution of the revolution's opponents. In 1792 French troops invaded Germany and were at first pushed back by imperial forces. But at the Battle of Valmy in late 1792, the French army, a revolutionary citizens' army fighting on its own soil, defeated the professional imperial army. By 1794 France had secured control of the Rhineland, which it was to occupy for twenty years.

During the Rhineland occupation, France followed its traditional policy of keeping Austria and Prussia apart and manipulating the smaller German states. In observance of the Treaty of Basel of 1795, Prussian and German forces north of the Main River ceased efforts against the French. Austria endured repeated defeats at the hands of the French, most notably at the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805. At this battle, Russians fought alongside Austrians against the French, who were aided by forces from several south German states, including Bavaria, Baden, and Württemberg.

Prussia reentered the war against France in 1806, but its forces were badly beaten at the Battle of Jena that same year. Prussia was abandoned by its ally Russia and lost territory as a result of the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807. These national humiliations motivated the Prussians to undertake a serious program of social and military reform. The most noted of the reformers—Karl vom Stein, Karl August von Hardenberg, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Gerhard von Scharnhorst, along with many others—improved the country's laws, education, administration, and military organization. Scharnhorst, responsible for military reforms, emphasized the importance to the army of moral incentives, personal courage, and individual responsibility. He also introduced the principle of competition and abandoned the privileges accorded to nobility within the offi-

cer corps. A revitalized Prussia joined with Austria and Russia to defeat Napoleon at the Battle of Leipzig in late 1813 and drove him out of Germany. Prussian forces under General Gebhard von Blücher were essential to the final victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

Despite Napoleon's defeat, some of the changes he had brought to Germany during the French occupation were retained. Public administration was improved, feudalism was weakened, the power of the trade guilds was reduced, and the Napoleonic Code replaced traditional legal codes in many areas. The new legal code was popular and remained in effect in the Rhineland until 1900. As a result of these reforms, some areas of Germany were better prepared for the coming of industrialization in the nineteenth century.

French occupation authorities also allowed many smaller states, ecclesiastical entities, and free cities to be incorporated into their larger neighbors. Approximately 300 states had existed within the Holy Roman Empire in 1789; only about forty remained by 1814. The empire ceased to exist in 1806 when Francis II of Austria gave up his imperial title. In its place, Napoleon had created the Confederation of the Rhine, made up of the states of western and southern Germany, under French direction. Austria and Prussia were not members. The confederation was to provide Napoleon with troops for his military campaigns. After his defeat, the confederation was dissolved.

The German Confederation, 1815–66

The Congress of Vienna (1814–15), convened after Napoleon's defeat, sought to restore order to a Europe disrupted by revolutionary and imperial France. Its members' objective was a constellation of states and a balance of power that would ensure peace and stability after a quarter-century of revolution and war. In addition to the delegates of many small states, the congress included representatives of five large European states: Austria, Prussia, Russia, Britain, and France. After months of deliberations, the congress established an international political order that was to endure for nearly 100 years and that brought Europe a measure of peace.

The congress made no effort to restore the Holy Roman Empire and its 300-odd states. Instead, it accepted the disappearance of many small states that had occurred since 1789 and created the German Confederation. The confederation

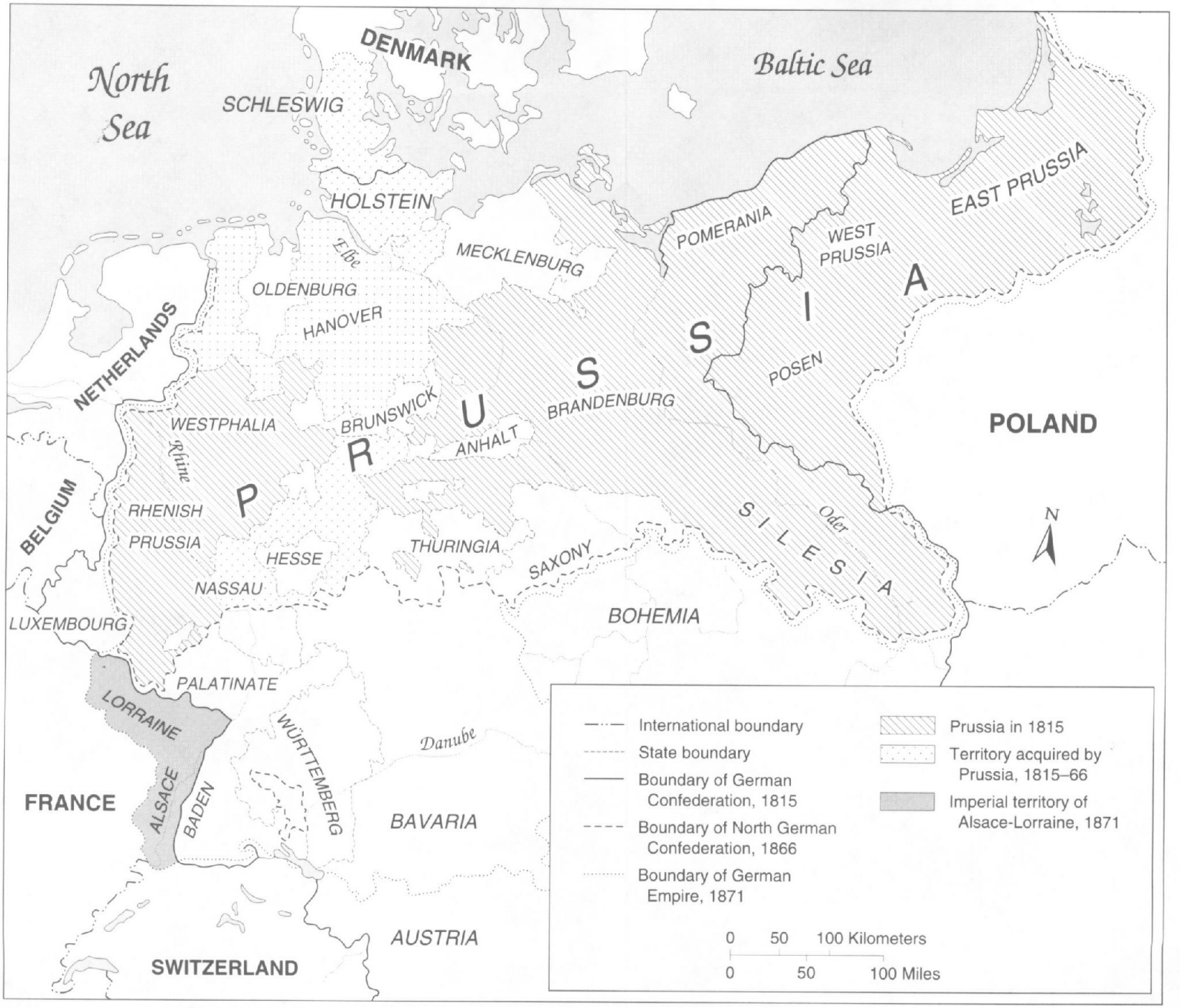
consisted of thirty-eight sovereign states and four free cities and included the five large kingdoms of Austria, Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, and Württemberg (see fig. 4). The confederation met at a diet in Frankfurt, with an Austrian always serving as president.

Prince Clemens von Metternich, who directed Austria's foreign policy from 1809 until 1848, was the dominant political figure within the confederation. He waged a decades-long campaign to prevent the spread of revolution in Europe by seeking to restore much of the political and social order that had existed before the French Revolution. Metternich's Carlsbad Decrees of 1819 established a pervasive system of press censorship and regulation of the universities that dampened German intellectual life and hindered the publication of writings advocating the principles of liberalism. In the 1820s, he engineered the formation of the Holy Alliance of the monarchs of Austria, Prussia, and Russia to quash political, social, and economic developments within Central and Eastern Europe thought to threaten political stability.

Economic and Political Trends Toward Unification

It was not possible for Metternich and his allies to suppress completely the desire for liberal reforms, including the establishment of constitutional parliamentary government, economic freedom, and civil liberties. Some of these reforms had already been under discussion during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and awareness of their desirability had spread during the Napoleonic era. In addition, the economic reforms introduced into the Rhineland by France had taken hold. The business class that formed after 1815 pressed for abolition of restrictive trade practices favored by traditional handicraft guilds. Businessmen also sought a common currency and system of measurements for Germany, as well as a reduction of the numerous tolls that made road and river travel expensive and slow.

During the 1820s, significant progress was made in reducing customs duties among German states. At Prussian instigation, the Zollverein (Customs Union) began to form, and by the mid-1830s it included all the most important German states except Austria. Prussia saw to it that its chief rival within Germany was excluded from the union. Vienna, for its part, did not realize at this early point the political and economic significance of intra-German trade.



Source: Based on information from Geoffrey Barraclough, ed., *The Times Atlas of World History*, London, 1978, 216.

Figure 4. The German Struggle for Unification, 1815–71

Many of Germany's liberal intelligentsia—lower government officials, men of letters, professors, and lawyers—who pushed for representative government and greater political freedom were also interested in some form of German unity. They argued that liberal political reforms could only be enacted in a larger political entity. Germany's small, traditional states offered little scope for political reform.

Among those groups desiring reform, there was, ironically, little unity. Many businessmen were interested only in reforms that would facilitate commerce, and they gave little thought to politics. Political liberals were split into a number of camps. Some wished for a greater degree of political representation, but, given a widespread fear of what the masses might do if they had access to power, these liberals were content to have aristocrats as leaders. Others desired a democratic constitution, but with a hereditary king as ruler. A minority of liberals were ardent democrats who desired to establish a republic with parliamentary democracy and universal suffrage.

The ideal of a united Germany had been awakened within liberal groups by the writings of scholars and literary figures such as Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and by the achievements of French nationalism after the revolution. France's easy victories over Germany's small states made the union of a people with a common language and historical memory desirable for practical reasons alone. Others were impressed by the political and commercial accomplishments of Britain, which made those of the small German states seem insignificant. Some writers warmed to romantic evocations of Germany's glory during the Middle Ages.

Many members of Germany's aristocratic ruling class were opposed to national unity because they feared it would mean the disappearance of their small states into a large Germany. Metternich opposed a united Germany because the Habsburg Empire did not embrace a single people speaking one language, but many peoples speaking different languages. The empire would not easily fit into a united Germany. He desired instead the continued existence of the loosely organized German Confederation with its forty-odd members, none equal to Austria in strength. Prussia's kings and its conservative elite sometimes objected to Austria's primacy in the confederation, but they had little desire for German unification, which they regarded as a potential threat to Prussia's existence.

Germany's lower classes—farmers, artisans, and factory workers—were not included in the discussions about political and economic reform. Germany's farmers had been freed to some degree from many obligations and dues owed to the landowning aristocracy, but they were often desperately poor, earning barely enough to survive. Farmers west of the Elbe River usually had properties too small to yield any kind of prosperity. Farmers east of the Elbe often were landless laborers hired to work on large estates. Artisans, that is, skilled workers in handicrafts and trades belonging to the traditional guilds, saw their economic position worsen as a result of the industrialization that had begun to appear in Germany after 1815. The guilds attempted to stop factory construction and unrestricted commerce, but strong economic trends ran counter to their wishes. Factory workers, in contrast, were doing well compared with these other groups and were generally content with their lot when the economy as a whole prospered.

The Revolutions of 1848

Europe endured hard times during much of the 1840s. A series of bad harvests culminating in the potato blight of 1845–46 brought widespread misery and some starvation. An economic depression added to the hardship, spreading discontent among the poor and the middle class alike. A popular uprising in Paris in February 1848 turned into a revolution, forcing the French king Louis Philippe to flee to Britain.

The success of the revolution sparked revolts elsewhere in Europe. Numerous German cities were shaken by uprisings in which crowds consisting mainly of the urban poor, but also of students and members of the liberal middle class, stormed their rulers' palaces and demanded fundamental reform. Berlin and Vienna were especially hard hit by what came to be called the revolutions of 1848. The rulers of both cities, like rulers elsewhere, quickly acceded to the demands of their rebellious subjects and promised constitutions and representative government. Conservative governments fell, and Metternich fled to Britain. Liberals called for a national convention to draft a constitution for all of Germany. The National Assembly, consisting of about 800 delegates from throughout Germany, met in a church in Frankfurt, the Paulskirche, from May 1848 to March 1849 for this purpose.

The Restoration

Within just a few months, liberal hopes for a reformed Germany were disappointed. Conservative forces saw that the liberal movement was divided into a number of camps having sharply different aims. Furthermore, the liberals had little support left among the lower classes, who had supported them in the first weeks of the revolution by constructing barricades and massing before their rulers' palaces. Few liberals desired popular democracy or were willing to enact radical economic reforms that would help farmers and artisans. As a result of this timidity, the masses deserted the liberals. Thus, conservatives were able to win sizable elements of these groups to their side by promising to address their concerns. Factory workers had largely withheld support from the liberal cause because they earned relatively good wages compared with farmers and artisans.

Once the conservatives regrouped and launched their successful counterattack across Germany, many of the reforms promised in March 1848 were forgotten. The National Assembly published the constitution it had drafted during months of hard debate. It proposed the unification of Germany as a federation with a hereditary emperor and a parliament with delegates elected directly. The constitution resolved the dispute between supporters of "Little Germany," that is, a united Germany that would exclude Austria and the Habsburg Empire, and those supporting "Large Germany," which would include both. The constitution advocated the latter.

The Prussian king, Friedrich Wilhelm IV (r. 1840–58), was elected united Germany's first emperor. He refused the crown, stating that he could be elected only by other kings. At that point, the assembly disbanded. A few subsequent rebellions by democratic liberals drew some popular support in 1849, but they were easily crushed and their leaders executed or imprisoned. Some of these ardent democrats fled to the United States. Among them was Carl Schurz, who later fought at the Battle of Gettysburg as a Union officer, served one term as a United States senator from Missouri, and was appointed secretary of the interior by United States president Rutherford B. Hayes.

The German Confederation was reestablished, and conservatives held the reins of power even more tightly than before. The failure of the 1848 revolutions also meant that Germany was not united as many had hoped. However, some of the liber-

als' more practical proposals came to fruition later in the 1850s and 1860s when it was realized that they were essential to economic efficiency. Many commercial restrictions were abolished. The guilds, with their desire to turn back the clock and restore preindustrial conditions, were defeated, and impediments to the free use of capital were reduced. The "hungry forties" gave way to the prosperity of the 1850s as the German economy modernized and laid the foundations for spectacular growth later in the century.

Bismarck and Unification

Liberal hopes for German unification were not met during the politically turbulent 1848–49 period. A Prussian plan for a smaller union was dropped in late 1850 after Austria threatened Prussia with war. Despite this setback, desire for some kind of German unity, either with or without Austria, grew during the 1850s and 1860s. It was no longer a notion cherished by a few, but had proponents in all social classes. An indication of this wider range of support was the change of mind about German nationalism experienced by an obscure Prussian diplomat, Otto von Bismarck. He had been an adamant opponent of German nationalism in the late 1840s. During the 1850s, however, Bismarck had concluded that Prussia would have to harness German nationalism for its own purposes if it were to thrive. He believed too that Prussia's well-being depended on wresting primacy in Germany from its traditional enemy, Austria.

In 1862 King Wilhelm I of Prussia (r. 1858–88) chose Bismarck to serve as his minister president. Descended from the Junker, Prussia's aristocratic landowning class, Bismarck hated parliamentary democracy and championed the dominance of the monarchy and aristocracy. However, gifted at judging political forces and sizing up a situation, Bismarck contended that conservatives would have to come to terms with other social groups if they were to continue to direct Prussian affairs. The king had summoned Bismarck to direct Prussia's government in the face of the Prussian parliament's refusal to pass a budget because it disagreed with army reforms desired by the king and his military advisers. Although he could not secure parliament's consent to the government's budget, Bismarck was a tactician skilled and ruthless enough to govern without parliament's consent from 1862 to 1866.

Otto von Bismarck, 1815–98, united Germany under a Prussian emperor. Courtesy German Information Center, New York

As an ardent and aggressive Prussian nationalist, Bismarck had long been an opponent of Austria because both states sought primacy within the same area—Germany. Austria had been weakened by reverses abroad, including the loss of territory in Italy, and by the 1860s, because of clumsy diplomacy, had no foreign allies outside Germany. Bismarck used a diplomatic dispute to provoke Austria to declare war on Prussia in 1866. Against expectations, Prussia quickly won the Seven Weeks' War (also known as the Austro-Prussian War) against Austria and its south German allies. Bismarck imposed a lenient peace on Austria because he recognized that Prussia might later need the Austrians as allies. But he dealt harshly with the other German states that had resisted Prussia and expanded Prussian territory by annexing Hanover, Schleswig-Holstein, some smaller states, and the city of Frankfurt. The German Confederation was replaced by the North German Confederation and was furnished with both a constitution and a parliament. Austria was excluded from Germany. South German states outside the confederation—Baden, Württemberg, and Bavaria—were tied to Prussia by military alliances.

Bismarck's military and political successes were remarkable, but the first had been achieved at considerable risk, and the second were by no means complete. Luck had played a part in the decisive victory at the Battle of Königgrätz (Hradec Králóve

in the present-day Czech Republic); otherwise, the war might have lasted much longer than it did. None of the larger German states had supported either Prussia's war or the formation of the North German Confederation led by Prussia. The states that formed what is often called the Third Germany, that is, Germany exclusive of Austria and Prussia, did not desire to come under the control of either of those states. None of them wished to be pulled into a war that showed little likelihood of benefiting any of them. In the Seven Weeks' War, the support they gave Austria had been lukewarm.

In 1870 Bismarck engineered another war, this time against France. The conflict would become known to history as the Franco-Prussian War. Nationalistic fervor was ignited by the promised annexation of Lorraine and Alsace, which had belonged to the Holy Roman Empire and had been seized by France in the seventeenth century. With this goal in sight, the south German states eagerly joined in the war against the country that had come to be seen as Germany's traditional enemy. Bismarck's major war aim—the voluntary entry of the south German states into a constitutional German nation-state—occurred during the patriotic frenzy generated by stunning military victories against French forces in the fall of 1870. Months before a peace treaty was signed with France in May 1871, a united Germany was established as the German Empire, and the Prussian king, Wilhelm I, was crowned its emperor in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.

Imperial Germany

The German Empire—often called the Second Reich to distinguish it from the First Reich, established by Charlemagne in 800—was based on two compromises. The first was between the king of Prussia and the rulers of the other German states, who agreed to accept him as the kaiser (emperor) of a united Germany, provided they could continue to rule their states largely as they had in the past. The second was the agreement among many segments of German society to accept a unified Germany based on a constitution that combined a powerful authoritarian monarchy with a weak representative body, the Reichstag, elected by universal male suffrage. No one was completely satisfied with the bargain. The kaiser had to contend with a parliament elected by the people in a secret vote. The people were represented in a parliament having limited control over the kaiser.

As had been the tradition in Prussia, the kaiser controlled foreign policy and the army through his handpicked ministers, who formed the government and prepared legislation. The government was headed by a chancellor, also selected by the kaiser, who served in this post at the kaiser's pleasure and could be dismissed by him at any time. The Bundesrat (Federal Council) represented Germany's princes. About one-third of its seats were held by Prussians. Conceived as an upper house to the Reichstag, the Bundesrat, like the Reichstag, was required to vote on legislation drawn up by the government before it became law. The Reichstag had no power to draft legislation. In addition, the government's actions were not subject to the Reichstag's approval, and the government was not drawn from the Reichstag, as is ordinarily the case in parliamentary democracies.

The government needed the approval of the Bundesrat and the Reichstag to enact legislative proposals, and the kaiser and his chancellor had many means of securing this approval. Conservative in nature, the Bundesrat was usually docile and needed little wooing. Compliant in the early years of the empire, the Reichstag, by contrast, became less so with time. The easiest means of controlling the Reichstag was to threaten it with new elections in the hope of getting a legislative body more attuned to the intentions of the government. During elections the government campaigned for the parties it favored, sometimes cynically conjuring up fears of national catastrophe if particular parties won many seats. The government also bargained with parties, granting them what they sought in exchange for votes. A last means of taming the Reichstag was to spread rumors of a possible coup d'état by the army and the repeal of the constitution and universal suffrage. This technique was used repeatedly in imperial Germany and could even frighten the conservative Bundesrat. However little many of the Reichstag members might like the empire's political order, the prospect of naked despotism pleased them even less.

Although the Reichstag did not wield real power, elections to it were hotly contested, and Bismarck and later chancellors and governments were concerned with their outcome. As more-democratic parties came to dominate in the Reichstag, governing became more difficult for the kaiser and his officials. During the later decades of the reign of Wilhelm II (r. 1888–1918), the empire's governing system experienced such difficulties that some conservatives advocated scrapping it, and democrats

argued for a new, truly parliamentary system. A fear of these drastic choices and their possible effects caused Germany to muddle through with the existing system until the disaster of World War I culminated in that system's abolition.

Political Parties

Six major political parties were active in imperial Germany: the Conservative Party, the Free Conservative Party, the National Liberal Party, the Progressive Party, the Center Party, and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands—SPD). Only the SPD survived both the empire and the Weimar Republic (1918–33) and came to play a vital role in the Federal Republic. Even though the German Empire lacked a genuinely democratic system, the six main parties accurately reflected the interests and hopes of most of its people.

The most right-wing of the six parties was the Conservative Party, which represented Prussian nationalism, aristocracy, and landed property. Many of its members remained opposed to German unification because they feared Prussia's gradual absorption by the empire. The Conservatives also detested the Reichstag because it was elected by universal suffrage. The Free Conservative Party represented industrialists and large commercial interests. The views of this party most closely matched those of Bismarck. Its members supported unification because they saw it as unavoidable. The National Liberal Party was composed of liberals who had accepted Germany's lack of full democracy because they valued national unity more. They continued to favor a laissez-faire economic policy and secularization. In time, National Liberals became some of the strongest supporters of the acquisition of colonies and a substantial naval buildup, both key issues in the 1880s and 1890s.

Unlike the members of the National Liberal Party, members of the Progressive Party remained faithful to all the principles of European liberalism and championed the extension of parliament's powers. This party was in the forefront of those opposed to the authoritarian rule of Bismarck and his successors. The Center Party was Germany's Roman Catholic party and had strong support in southern Germany, the Rhineland, and in parts of Prussia with significant Polish populations. It was conservative regarding monarchical authority but progressive in matters of social reform. Bismarck's brutal campaign against the Roman Catholic Church in the 1870s—the Kul-

turkampf (cultural struggle), an attempt to reduce the church's power over education and its role in many other areas of German society—turned the Center Party against him. By the late 1870s, Bismarck had to concede victory to the party, which had become stronger through its resistance to the government's persecution. The party remained important during the Weimar Republic and was the forerunner of the Federal Republic's moderate conservative parties, the Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union—CDU) and the Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union—CSU).

The Marxist SPD was founded in Gotha in 1875, a fusion of Ferdinand Lassalle's General German Workers' Association (formed in 1863), which advocated state socialism, and the Social Democratic Labor Party (formed in 1869), headed by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, which aspired to establish a classless communist society. The SPD advocated a mixture of revolution and quiet work within the parliamentary system. The clearest statement of this impossible combination was the Erfurt Program of 1891. The former method frightened nearly all Germans to the party's right, while the latter would build the SPD into the largest party in the Reichstag after the elections of 1912.

Once Bismarck gave up his campaign against Germany's Roman Catholics, whom he had seen for a time as a Vatican-controlled threat to the stability of the empire, he attacked the SPD with a series of antisocialist laws beginning in 1878. A positive aspect of Bismarck's campaign to contain the SPD was a number of laws passed in the 1880s establishing national health insurance and old-age pensions. Bismarck's hope was that if workers were protected by the government, they would come to support it and see no need for revolution. Bismarck's antisocialist campaign, which continued until his dismissal in 1890 by Wilhelm II, severely restricted the activities of the SPD. Ironically, the laws may have inadvertently benefited the SPD by forcing it to work within legal channels. As a result of its sustained activity within the political system, the SPD became a cautious, pragmatic party, which, despite its fiery Marxist rhetoric, won increasing numbers of seats in the Reichstag and achieved some improvements in working and living conditions for Germany's working class.

The Economy and Population Growth

Germany experienced an economic boom immediately after

unification. For the first time, the country was a single economic entity, and old impediments to internal trade were lifted. The federal chancellery published a new commercial code and established a uniform currency. The indemnity that France had to pay Germany after losing the 1870–71 war provided capital for railroad construction and building projects. A speculative boom resulted, characterized by large-scale formation of joint-stock companies and unscrupulous investment practices. This period of intense financial speculation and construction, called by Germans the Gründerzeit (founders' time), ended with the stock market crash of 1873.

Despite the crash and several subsequent periods of economic depression, Germany's economy grew rapidly. By 1900 it rivaled the more-established British economy as the world's largest. German coal production, about one-third of Britain's in 1880, increased sixfold by 1913, almost equaling British yields that year. German steel production increased more than tenfold in the same period, surpassing British production by far.

Industrialization began later in Germany than in Britain, and the German economy was not a significant part of the world economy until late in the nineteenth century. Germany's industrialization started with the building of railroads in the 1840s and 1850s and the subsequent development of coal mining and iron and steel production, activities that made up what is called the First Industrial Revolution. In Germany, the Second Industrial Revolution, that is, the growth of chemical and electrical industries, followed the enormous expansion of coal and steel production so closely that the country can be said to have experienced the two revolutions almost simultaneously. Germany took an early lead in the chemical and electrical industries. Its chemists became renowned for their discoveries, and by 1914 the country was producing half the world's electrical equipment. As a result of these developments, Germany became the continent's industrial giant.

Germany's population also expanded rapidly, growing from 41.0 million in 1871 to 49.7 million in 1891 and 65.3 million in 1911. The expanding and industrializing economy changed the way this rapidly expanding population earned its livelihood. In 1871 about 49 percent of the workforce was engaged in agriculture; by 1907 only 35 percent was. In the same period, industry's share of the rapidly growing workforce rose from 31 percent to 40 percent. Urban birth rates were often the coun-

try's highest, but there was much migration from rural areas to urban areas, where most industry was located. Berlin, by far the country's largest city and a major industrial center, grew from almost 1 million inhabitants in 1875 to 2 million in 1910. Many smaller cities, especially those in areas with much industry—such as the Ruhr region, the upper Rhine Valley, the Neckar Valley, and Saxony—tripled or quadrupled in size during this period.

The Tariff Agreement of 1879 and Its Social Consequences

The crash of 1873 and the subsequent depression began the gradual dissolution of Bismarck's alliance with the National Liberals that had begun after his triumphs of 1866. In the late 1870s, Bismarck began negotiations with the economically protectionist Conservative Party and Center Party toward the formation of a new government coalition. Conservative electoral gains and National Liberal losses in 1879 brought a conservative coalition to power. Bismarck then abandoned his former allies in the National Liberal Party and put in place a system of tariffs that benefited the landed gentry of eastern Prussia—threatened by imports of cheaper grains from Russia and the United States—and industrialists who were afraid to compete with cheaper foreign manufactured goods and who believed they needed more time to establish themselves.

Bismarck's alliance with the Prussian landowning class and powerful industrialists and the parties representing their interests had profound social effects. From that point on, conservative groups had the upper hand in German society. The German middle class began to imitate its conservative social superiors rather than attempt to impose its own liberal, middle-class values on Germany. The prestige of the military became so great that many middle-class males sought to enhance their social standing by becoming officers in the reserves. The middle classes also became more susceptible to the nationalistic clamor for colonies and "a place in the sun" that was to become ever more virulent in the next few decades.

Bismarck's Foreign Policy

Bismarck sincerely regarded the new German Empire as "satiated," that is, having no desire to expand further and hence posing no threat to its neighbors. The chancellor held that the country had to adjust to its new circumstances and that this would take decades. For this reason, he sought to convince

the other European states of Germany's desire to live in peace, hoping thereby to secure Germany against attack. He aimed to arrange this security through a system of alliances. Believing that France would remain Germany's enemy because of the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, an action he had opposed because of the enmity it would cause, he turned to other states.

Bismarck arranged an alliance with Austria-Hungary in 1879 and one with Italy in 1882. His triumph, however, was a secret alliance he formed by means of the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia in 1887, although its terms violated the spirit of the treaty with Austria-Hungary. However much these agreements contributed to German security, Bismarck's plunge into the European scramble for overseas colonies ultimately weakened it by awakening British fears about Germany's long-term geopolitical aims. Subsequent feelers he put out with a view to establishing an understanding with Britain were rebuffed. In 1890 Bismarck was dismissed by young Kaiser Wilhelm over a dispute about antisocialist legislation.

Foreign Policy in the Wilhelmine Era

Foreign policy in the Wilhelmine Era (1890–1914) turned away from Bismarck's cautious diplomacy of the 1871–90 period. It was also marked by a shrill aggressiveness. Brusque, clumsy diplomacy was backed by increased armaments production, most notably the creation of a large fleet of battleships capable of challenging the British navy. This new bellicosity alarmed the rest of Europe, and by about 1907 German policy makers had succeeded in creating Bismarck's nightmare: a Germany "encircled" by an alliance of hostile neighbors—in this case Russia, France, and Britain—in an alliance called the Triple Entente.

The first brick to fall out of Bismarck's carefully crafted edifice was Germany's Reinsurance Treaty with Russia. Harmed by Prussian trade policies, Russia did not renew the treaty and instead turned to France for economic assistance and military security. The two countries formally allied in early 1893. Britain joined them in 1907, even though France and Britain had nearly gone to war over a colonial dispute in 1898. Britain's main reason for abandoning its usual posture as an aloof observer of developments on the continent was Germany's plan to build a fleet of sixty battleships of the formidable Dreadnought class.

The German naval expansion program had many domestic supporters. The kaiser deeply admired the navy of his grandmother, Queen Victoria of Britain, and wanted one as large for himself. Powerful lobbying groups in Germany desired a large navy to give Germany a worldwide role and to protect a growing German colonial empire in Africa and the Pacific. Industry wanted large government contracts. Some political parties promoted naval expansion and an aggressive foreign policy to win votes from a nervous electorate they kept worked up with jingoistic rhetoric.

The chief figure in promoting the naval buildup was Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, who is considered the founder of the modern German navy. Tirpitz was an effective spokesman for the program and had the ear of the kaiser and his advisers. In 1898, after the Reichstag passed the first Naval Bill, Anglo-German relations deteriorated. The Supplementary Naval Act of 1900 further strained relations with Britain, as did a proposed Berlin-Baghdad railroad through the Ottoman Empire, a project that threatened British as well as Russian interests in the Balkans. Two crises over Morocco, in 1905 and 1911, drove France and Britain closer together and made for a tense international atmosphere. The great powers remained neutral during the Balkan Wars (1912–13), a nationalist rebellion against Ottoman rule, but European tensions were increased still further, and the expectation that there would eventually be war on the continent became more certain.

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, set off a series of diplomatic and military decisions that would end peace in Europe. The kaiser gave a so-called blank check to his ally, Austria-Hungary, saying that Germany would support any Habsburg measure taken against Serbia, which had backed the assassination. Austria-Hungary's ultimatum to Serbia in late July was so harsh that war became inevitable. Within days, a set of interlocking alliances had Europe's great powers embroiled in what would become World War I.

World War I

Germany's leadership had hoped for a limited war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. But because Russian forces had been mobilized in support of Serbia, the German leadership made the decision to support its ally. The Schlieffen Plan, based on the assumption that Germany would face a two-front

war because of a French-Russian alliance, required a rapid invasion through neutral Belgium to ensure the quick defeat of France. Once the western front was secure, the bulk of German forces could attack and defeat Russia, which would not yet be completely ready for war because it would mobilize its gigantic forces slowly.

Despite initial successes, Germany's strategy failed, and its troops became tied down in trench warfare in France. For the next four years, there would be little progress in the west, where advances were usually measured in meters rather than in kilometers. Under the command of Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff, the army scored a number of significant victories against Russia. But it was only in early 1918 that Russia was defeated. Even after this victory in the east, however, Germany remained mired in a long war for which it had not prepared.

Germany's war aims were annexationist in nature and foresaw an enlarged Germany, with Belgium and Poland as vassal states and with colonies in Africa. In its first years, there was widespread support for the war. Even the SPD supported it, considering it a defensive effort and voting in favor of war credits. By 1916, however, opposition to the war had mounted within the general population, which had to endure many hardships, including food shortages. A growing number of Reichstag deputies came to demand a peace without annexations. Frustrated in its quest for peace, in April 1917 a segment of the SPD broke with the party and formed the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany. In July the Reichstag passed a resolution calling for a peace without annexations. In its wake, Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg was forced to resign, and Hindenburg and Ludendorff came to exercise a control over Germany until late 1918 that amounted to a virtual military dictatorship.

Military leaders refused a moderate peace because they were convinced until very late in the war that victory ultimately would be theirs. Another reason for their insistence on a settlement that fulfilled expansionist aims was that the government had not financed the war with higher taxes but with bonds. Taxes had been seen as unnecessary because it was expected that the government would redeem these bonds after the war with payments from Germany's vanquished enemies. Thus, only an expansionist victory would keep the state solvent and save millions of German bondholders from financial ruin.

After the Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917, Russia and Germany began peace negotiations. In March 1918, the two countries signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The defeat of Russia enabled Germany to transfer troops from the eastern to the western front. Two large offensives in the west were met by an Allied counteroffensive that began in July. German troops were pressed back, and it became evident to many officers that Germany could not win the war. In September Ludendorff recommended that Germany sue for peace. In October extensive reforms democratized the Reichstag and gave Germany a constitutional monarchy. A coalition of progressive forces was formed, headed by SPD politician Friedrich Ebert. The military allowed the birth of a democratic parliament because it did not want to be held responsible for the inevitable armistice that would end the war on terms highly unfavorable to Germany. Instead, the civilian government that signed the truce was to take the blame for the nation's defeat.

The political reforms of October were overshadowed by a popular uprising that began on November 3 when sailors in Kiel mutinied. They refused to go out on what they considered a suicide mission against British naval forces. The revolt grew quickly and within a week appeared to be burgeoning into a revolution that could well overthrow the established social order. On November 9, the kaiser was forced to abdicate, and the SPD proclaimed a republic. A provisional government headed by Ebert promised elections for a national assembly to draft a new constitution. In an attempt to control the popular uprising, Ebert agreed to back the army if it would suppress the revolt. On November 11, the government signed the armistice that ended the war. Germany's loses included about 1.6 million dead and more than 4 million wounded.

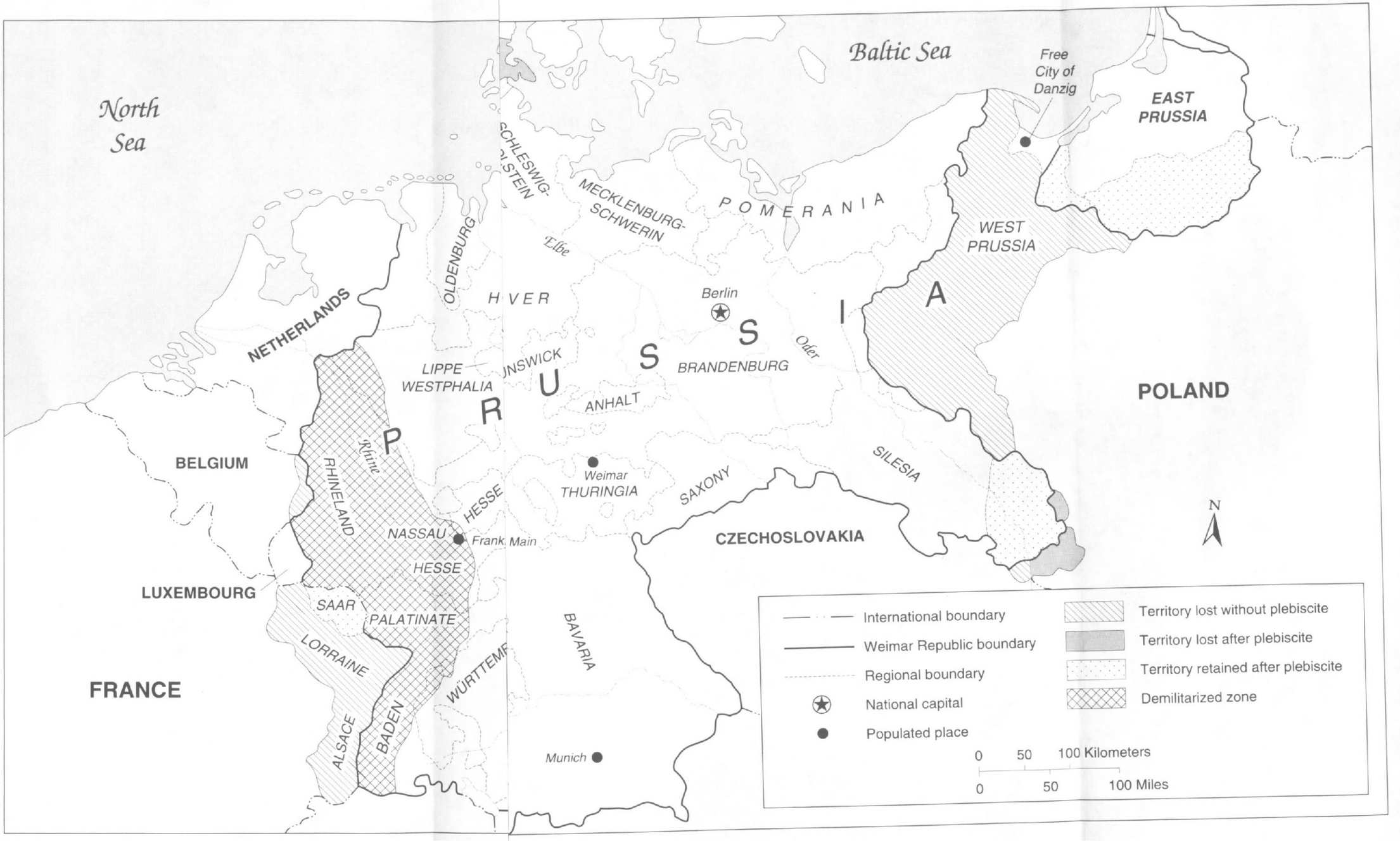
Signed in June 1919, the Treaty of Versailles limited Germany to an army of 100,000 soldiers. The treaty also stipulated that the Rhineland be demilitarized and occupied by the western Allies for fifteen years and that Germany surrender Alsace-Lorraine, northern Schleswig-Holstein, a portion of western Prussia that became known as the Polish Corridor because it gave Poland access to the Baltic, and all overseas colonies. Also, an Allied Reparations Commission was established and charged with setting the amount of war-damage payments that would be demanded of Germany. The treaty also included the "war guilt clause," ascribing responsibility for World War I to Germany and Austria-Hungary.

The Weimar Republic, 1918–33

The Weimar Constitution

The Weimar Republic, proclaimed on November 9, 1918, was born in the throes of military defeat and social revolution. In January 1919, a National Assembly was elected to draft a constitution. The government, composed of members from the assembly, came to be called the Weimar coalition and included the SPD; the German Democratic Party (Deutsche Demokratische Partei—DDP), a descendant of the Progressive Party of the prewar period; and the Center Party. The percentage of the vote gained by this coalition of parties in favor of the republic (76.2 percent, with 38 percent for the SPD alone) suggested broad popular support for the republic. The antirepublican, conservative German National People's Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei—DNVP) and the German People's Party (Deutsche Volkspartei—DVP) received a combined total of 10.3 percent of the vote. The Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany, which had split from the SPD during the war, won 8 percent of the vote. In February the assembly elected Friedrich Ebert as the republic's first president.

In mid-1919 the assembly ratified the constitution of the new Weimar Republic, so named because its constitution was drafted in the small city where the poets Goethe and Schiller had lived. The constitution established a federal republic consisting of nineteen states (*Länder*; sing., *Land*) (see fig. 5). The republic's government was a mixed strong president and parliamentary system, with the president seen by many as a sort of substitute kaiser. The president was elected by popular direct ballot to a seven-year term and could be reelected. He appointed the chancellor and, pursuant to the chancellor's nominations, also appointed the cabinet ministers. However, the cabinet had to reflect the party composition of the Reichstag and was also responsible to this body. Election to the Reichstag was by secret ballot and popular vote. Suffrage was universal. Thus, Germany had a truly democratic parliamentary system. However, the president had the right to dismiss the cabinet, dissolve the Reichstag, and veto legislation. The legislative powers of the Reichstag were further weakened by the provision for presidential recourse to popular plebiscite. Article 48, the so-called emergency clause, accorded the president the right to allow the cabinet to govern without the consent of



Source: Based on information from Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany, 1840–1945* York, 1969, 535.

Figure 5. The Weimar Republic, 1918–33

parliament whenever it was deemed essential to maintaining public order.

Problems of Parliamentary Politics

The Weimar Republic was beset with serious problems from the outset that led many Germans either to withhold support from the new parliamentary democracy or to seek actively to destroy it. The extreme left and much of the right provided the republic's most vitriolic opponents. Its supporters included the bulk of the left, represented by the SPD, and the moderate right, made up of the Center Party and the DDP. However, at key times these supporters failed to behave responsibly because of political inexperience, narrow self-interest, or unrealistic party programs.

The most serious obstacle the new republic faced was the refusal of many Germans to accept its legitimacy. The extreme left regarded it as an instrument of the propertied to prevent revolution, recalling Ebert's agreement with the military in November 1918 that resulted in the army's bloody suppression of the left-wing revolts of late 1918 and early 1919. In the face of this SPD-military alliance, elements of the left considered the SPD as great a barrier to their goals as the conservatives. Represented by the Communist Party of Germany (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands—KPD), the extreme left felt such an enduring hostility to the Weimar Republic that at times it cooperated with the extreme right in efforts to destroy the republic.

The right posed a graver threat to the Weimar Republic than did the extreme left because it enjoyed the support of most of Germany's establishment: the military, the financial elites, the state bureaucracy, the educational system, and much of the press. Unlike political parties in well-established democracies, the right-wing parties in the Reichstag could not be considered a loyal opposition because their ultimate aim was to abolish the new system of government. The right opposed democracy and desired to establish a conservative authoritarian regime. The right styled those who were party to the armistice and to the Treaty of Versailles as "November criminals" because of Germany's loss of territory and sovereignty and the burden of enormous war reparations. The increasing acceptance by many of the "stab in the back" legend, which attributed Germany's defeat in World War I to the treachery of the SPD and others on the left rather than to the military might of the Allies, inten-

sified the hatred many rightists felt toward the republic. Like some on the extreme left, many on the right used violence, either petty and random or large-scale and concerted, to attain their ends. Throughout the short life of the Weimar Republic, various political groups maintained gangs of youths organized into paramilitary forces.

In addition to venomous political opposition, the republic had to contend with a weak economy plagued by high rates of inflation and unemployment. Inflation was fueled partly by the enormous wartime debts the imperial government had contracted rather than raise taxes to finance the war. Even more inflationary were the enormous war reparations demanded by the Allies, which made economic recovery seem impossible to many objective expert observers. Inflation ruined many middle-class Germans, who saw their savings and pensions wiped out. Unemployment also remained epidemic throughout the 1920s, hurting millions of wage earners and their families. Their economic misery made these groups susceptible to the claims of extremist political parties.

The pervasive social and political discontent growing out of Germans' grievances, justified or not, soon had consequences. A right-wing coup d'état in March 1920, the Kapp Putsch—named for its leader, Wolfgang Kapp—failed only because of a general strike.The military had refused to intervene, although it did brutally suppress some Communist-inspired uprisings shortly thereafter. The establishment's tacit support of unlawful right-wing actions such as the Kapp Putsch and violent repression of the left endured to the end of the Weimar Republic. This support could also be seen in the sentences meted out by the courts to perpetrators of political violence. Right-wing terrorists usually received mild or negligible sentences, while those on the left were dealt with severely, even though left-wing violence was but a fraction of that committed by the right.

Dissatisfaction with the republic was also evident in the June 1920 elections, in which the Weimar coalition lost its majority. A combined total vote of 28.9 percent for the DNVP, a descendant of the prewar Conservatives, and the DVP, composed mainly of National Liberals, reflected German middle-class disillusionment with democracy. Both parties wished to abolish the Weimar constitution. SPD strength fell to 21.7 percent, as some workers defected to the extreme left. The Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany, formed during the war, effectively ceased to exist as some members joined the KPD,

formed in December 1918, and the remainder reunited with the SPD.

The Weimar coalition never regained its majority. Because no party ever gained as much as 50 percent of the vote, unstable coalition governments became the rule in the 1920s, and by the end of the decade more than a dozen governments had been formed, none capable of unified action on major problems. The SPD and the Center Party often could agree on questions of foreign policy, such as compliance with the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, but split on domestic issues. Conversely, the Center Party agreed with parties to its right on domestic issues but split with them on foreign policy. Thus, minority governments were formed that often showed little internal coherence during their brief lives.

The year 1923 was one of crisis for the republic. In January French and Belgian troops occupied the highly industrialized Ruhr area because of German defaults on reparations payments. The Weimar government responded by calling upon the Ruhr population to stop all industrial activity. The government also began printing money at such a rate that it soon became virtually worthless; by the fall of 1923, wheelbarrows were needed to carry enough currency for simple purchases as inflation reached rates beyond comprehension. In 1914 US$1 had equaled 4 marks. By mid-1920, US$1 was worth 40 marks, by early 1922 about 200 marks, a year later 18,000 marks, and by November 1923 4.2 trillion marks. In addition, the country was racked by strikes, paramilitary street violence, and rumors of planned uprisings by both the left and the right. In August, in the midst of this chaos, President Ebert asked Gustav Stresemann, head of the DVP, to form a new government to resolve the crisis.

The Stresemann Era

Stresemann was a *Vernunftrepublikaner*, that is, someone who supported the Weimar Republic because it seemed the best course of action rather than from a firm commitment to parliamentary democracy. During the war, Stresemann had supported imperial aims and desired extensive annexation of foreign territory. After the war, he remained a monarchist and founded the DVP to oppose the republic. In early 1920, he wished for the success of the Kapp Putsch. However, shocked by the assassinations of several prominent politicians, he had gradually come to believe that the effective functioning of the

Weimar Republic was the best safeguard against violent regimes of either the left or the right. He also became convinced that Germany's economic problems and differences with other countries could best be resolved through negotiated agreements.

Chancellor only from August to November 1923, Stresemann headed the "great coalition," an alliance that included the SPD, the Center Party, the DDP, and the DVP. In this brief period, he ended passive resistance in the Ruhr area and introduced measures to bring the currency situation under control. Because of the failure of several coup attempts—including one by Adolf Hitler in Munich—and a general quieting of the atmosphere after these problems had been solved, the Weimar Republic was granted a period of relative tranquillity that lasted until the end of the decade. Overriding issues were by no means settled, but, for a few years, the republic functioned more like an established democracy.

After his resignation from the chancellorship because of opposition from the right and left, Stresemann served as German foreign minister until his death in 1929. A brilliant negotiator and a shrewd diplomat, Stresemann arranged a rapprochement with the Allies. Reparations payments were made easier by the Reichstag's acceptance in mid-1924 of the Dawes Plan, which had been devised by an American banker, Charles G. Dawes, to effect significant reductions in payments until 1929. That year, only months before his death, Stresemann negotiated a further reduction as part of the Young Plan, also named for an American banker, Owen D. Young. The Dawes Plan had also provided for the withdrawal of French and Belgian troops from the Ruhr district, which was completed in 1925. In addition, beginning in the mid-1920s, loans from the United States stimulated the German economy, instigating a period of growth that lasted until 1930.

The Locarno treaties, signed in 1925 by Germany and the Allies, were the centerpiece of Stresemann's attempt at rapprochement with the West. A prerequisite to Germany's admission to the League of Nations in 1926, the treaties formalized German acceptance of the demilitarization of the Rhineland and guaranteed the western frontier as defined by the Treaty of Versailles. Both Britain and Germany preferred to leave the question of the eastern frontier open. In 1926 the German and Soviet governments signed the Treaty of Berlin, which pledged

Germany and the Soviet Union to neutrality in the event of an attack on either country by foreign powers.

The Locarno treaties, the Treaty of Berlin, and Germany's membership in the League of Nations were successes that earned Stresemann world renown. Within Germany, however, these achievements were condemned by many on the right who charged that these agreements implied German recognition of the validity of the Treaty of Versailles. To them, Stresemann's diplomacy, as able as Bismarck's in the opinion of some historians, was tantamount to treachery because Germany was honor bound to take by force that which the rightists felt was owed it. Because of these opinions and continued dissatisfaction on the right with the political system established by the Weimar Constitution, the Center Party and the parties to its right became more right-wing during the latter 1920s, as did even Stresemann's own party, the DVP.

Hitler and the Rise of National Socialism

Adolf Hitler was born in the Austrian border town of Braunau am Inn in 1889. When he was seventeen, he was refused admission to the Vienna Art Academy, having been found insufficiently talented. He remained in Vienna, however, where he led a bohemian existence, acquiring an ideology based on belief in a German master race that was threatened by an international Jewish conspiracy responsible for many of the world's problems. Hitler remained in Vienna until 1913, when he moved to Munich. After serving with bravery in the German army during World War I, he joined the right-wing Bavarian German Workers' Party in 1919. The following year, the party changed its name to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (National-Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei—NSDAP). Its members were known as Nazis, a term derived from the German pronunciation of "National." In 1921 Hitler assumed leadership of the NSDAP.

As leader of the NSDAP, Hitler reorganized the party and encouraged the assimilation of other radical right-wing groups. Gangs of unemployed demobilized soldiers were gathered under the command of a former army officer, Ernst Röhm, to form the Storm Troops (Sturmabteilung—SA), Hitler's private army. Under Hitler's leadership, the NSDAP joined with others on the right in denouncing the Weimar Republic and the "November criminals" who had signed the Treaty of Versailles. The postwar economic slump won the party a following among

unemployed ex-soldiers, the lower middle class, and small farmers; in 1923 membership totaled about 55,000. General Ludendorff supported the former corporal in the Beer Hall Putsch of November 1923 in Munich, an attempt to overthrow the Bavarian government. The putsch failed, and Hitler received a light sentence of five years, of which he served less than one. Incarcerated in relative comfort, he wrote *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), in which he set out his long-term political aims.

After the failure of the putsch, Hitler turned to "legal revolution" as the means to power and chose two parallel paths to take the Nazis to that goal. First, the NSDAP would employ propaganda to create a national mass party capable of coming to power through electoral successes. Second, the party would develop a bureaucratic structure and prepare itself to assume roles in government. Beginning in the mid-1920s, Nazi groups sprang up in other parts of Germany. In 1927 the NSDAP organized the first Nuremberg party congress, a mass political rally. By 1928 party membership exceeded 100,000; the Nazis, however, polled only 2.6 percent of the vote in the Reichstag elections in May.

A mere splinter party in 1928, the NSDAP became better known the following year when it formed an alliance with the DNVP to launch a plebiscite against the Young Plan on the issue of reparations. The DNVP's leader, Alfred Hugenberg, owner of a large newspaper chain, considered Hitler's spellbinding oratory a useful means of attracting votes. The DNVP-NSDAP union brought the NSDAP within the framework of a socially influential coalition of the antirepublican right. As a result, Hitler's party acquired respectability and access to wealthy contributors.

Had it not been for the economic collapse that began with the Wall Street stock market crash of October 1929, Hitler probably would not have come to power. The Great Depression hit Germany hard because the German economy's well-being depended on short-term loans from the United States. Once these loans were recalled, Germany was devastated. Unemployment went from 8.5 percent in 1929 to 14 percent in 1930, to 21.9 percent in 1931, and, at its peak, to 29.9 percent in 1932. Compounding the effects of the Depression were the drastic economic measures taken by Center Party politician Heinrich Brüning, who served as chancellor from March 1930 until the end of May 1932. Brüning's budget cuts were designed to cause

so much misery that the Allies would excuse Germany from making any further reparations payments. In this at least, Brüning succeeded. United States president Herbert Hoover declared a "reparations moratorium" in 1932. In the meantime, the Depression deepened, and social discontent intensified to the point that Germany seemed on the verge of civil war.

In times of desperation, voters are ready for extreme solutions, and the NSDAP exploited the situation. Skilled Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels launched an intensive media campaign that ceaselessly expounded a few simple notions until even the dullest voter knew Hitler's basic program. The party's program was broad and general enough to appeal to many unemployed people, farmers, white-collar workers, members of the middle class who had been hurt by the Depression or had lost status since the end of World War I, and young people eager to dedicate themselves to nationalist ideals. If voters were not drawn to some aspects of the party platform, they might agree with others. Like other right-wing groups, the party blamed the Treaty of Versailles and reparations for the developing crisis. Nazi propaganda attacked the Weimar political system, the "November criminals," Marxists, internationalists, and Jews. Besides promising a solution to the economic crisis, the NSDAP offered the German people a sense of national pride and the promise of restored order.

Three elections—in September 1930, in July 1932, and in November 1932—were held between the onset of the Depression and Hitler's appointment as chancellor in January 1933. The vote shares of the SPD and the Center Party fluctuated somewhat yet remained much as they had been in 1928, when the SPD held a large plurality of 153 seats in the Reichstag and the Center Party held sixty-one, third after the DNVP's seventy-three seats. The shares of the parties of the extreme left and extreme right, the KPD and the NSDAP, respectively, increased dramatically in this period, KPD holdings almost doubling from fifty-four in 1928 to 100 in November 1932. The NSDAP's success was even greater. Beginning with twelve seats in 1928, the Nazis increased their delegation seats nearly tenfold, to 107 seats in 1930. They doubled their holdings to 230 in the summer of 1932. This made the NSDAP the largest party in the Reichstag, far surpassing the SPD with its 133 seats. The gains of the NSDAP came at the expense of the other right-wing parties.

Chancellor Brüning was unable to secure parliamentary majorities for his austerity policy, so he ruled by decree, a right given him by President Hindenburg. Head of the German army during World War I, Hindenburg had been elected president in 1925. Ruling without parliament was a major step in moving away from parliamentary democracy and had the approval of many on the right. Many historians see this development as part of a strategic plan formulated at the time by elements of the conservative establishment to abolish the republic and replace it with an authoritarian regime.

By late May 1932, Hindenburg had found Brüning insufficiently pliable and named a more conservative politician, Franz von Papen, as his successor. After the mid-1932 elections that made the NSDAP Germany's largest party, Papen sought to harness Hitler for the purposes of traditional conservatives by offering him the post of vice chancellor in a new cabinet. Hitler refused this offer, demanding the chancellorship instead.

General Kurt von Schleicher, a master intriguer and a leader of the conservative campaign to abolish the republic, convinced Hindenburg to dismiss Papen. Schleicher formed a new government in December but lost Hindenburg's support within a month. On January 30, 1933, Papen again put together a cabinet, this time with Hitler as chancellor. Papen and other conservatives thought they could tame Hitler by tying him down with the responsibilities of government and transferring to themselves his tremendous popularity with a large portion of the electorate. But they proved no match for his ruthlessness and his genius at knowing how—and when—to seize power. Within two months, Hitler had dictatorial control over Germany.

The Third Reich, 1933–45

The Consolidation of Power

Hitler rapidly transformed the Weimar Republic into a dictatorship. The National Socialists accomplished their "revolution" within months, using a combination of legal procedure, persuasion, and terror. Because the parties forming the cabinet did not have a parliamentary majority, Hindenburg called for the dissolution of the Reichstag and set March 5, 1933, as the date for new elections. A week before election day, the Reichstag building was destroyed by fire. The Nazis blamed the fire on the Communists, and on February 28 the president, invok-

ing Article 48 of the constitution, signed a decree that granted the Nazis the right to quash the political opposition. Authorized by the decree, the SA arrested or intimidated Socialists and Communists.

The election of March 5 was the last held in Germany until after World War II. Although opposition parties were severely harassed, the NSDAP won only 43.9 percent of the vote. Nonetheless, with the help of political allies, Hitler presented the Reichstag with the proposal for an Enabling Act that, if passed by a two-thirds majority, would allow him to govern without parliament for four years. On March 23, the proposal was passed with the support of the Center Party and others. All Communists and some Social Democrats were prevented from voting.

Hitler used the Enabling Act to implement *Gleichschaltung* (synchronization), that is, the policy of subordinating all institutions and organizations to Nazi control. First, left-wing political parties were banned; then, in July 1933, Germany was declared a one-party state. The civil service and judiciary were purged of "non-Aryans" (Jews) and leftists. Local and state governments were reorganized and staffed with Nazis. Trade unions were dissolved and replaced with Nazi organizations. Even the NSDAP was purged of its social-revolutionary wing, the SA. The enormous and unruly SA was brought under control by a massacre of its leadership at the end of June 1934 in the "night of the long knives." Other opponents were also killed during this purge, among them Schleicher. After Hindenburg's death in early August 1934, Hitler combined the offices of the president and the chancellor. With the SA tamed, Hitler assured the army that he regarded it as Germany's military force, and the soldiers swore an oath of personal allegiance to Hitler, pledging unconditional obedience. Heinrich Himmler's Guard Detachment (Schutz-Staffel—SS) replaced the SA as Hitler's private army.

Once the regime was established, terror was the principal means used to maintain its control of Germany. Police arrests, which had focused originally on Communists and Socialists, were extended to other groups, most particularly to Jews. This systematic use of terror was highly effective in silencing resistance. Some enemies of the regime fled abroad. However, all but a tiny minority of those opposed to Hitler resigned themselves to suppressing their opinions in public and hoping for the regime's eventual demise.

Like its secular institutions, Germany's churches were subjected to Nazi pressure. They resisted incorporation into the regime and retained a substantial degree of independence. This situation was tolerated by the regime, provided that the churches did not interfere with its efforts to control public life. When the churches were outraged by such Nazi practices as euthanasia, they protested. The regime responded by more carefully concealing such medical procedures. Otherwise, with the exception of a few brave isolated clergymen, the churches rarely spoke out against the regime. The regime's chief victims—Jews, Communists, Socialists, labor leaders, and writers—generally had not been close to the churches, and their persecution was witnessed in silence.

Joseph Goebbels, the minister of propaganda, contributed to the regime's consolidation with the establishment of the Reich Cultural Chamber, which extended *Gleichschaltung* to the educational system, the radio, and the cultural institutions. However, an elaborate system of censorship was not considered necessary to control the press. Non-Nazi party newspapers had already been suppressed. The editors of the remaining newspapers soon were able to figure out what was deemed suitable for public consumption. Goebbels also took an interest in Germany's substantial film industry, pressuring it to make pleasant, amusing films that would distract the German public in its leisure hours.

The regime soon achieved its desired consolidation. Many Germans supported it, some out of opportunism, some because they liked certain aspects of it such as full employment, which was quickly achieved. The regime also brought social order, something many Germans welcomed after fifteen years of political and economic chaos. Many were won over by Hitler's diplomatic successes, which began soon after he came to power and continued through the 1930s and which seemed to restore Germany to what they saw as its rightful place in the international community.

Foreign Policy

Once his regime was consolidated, Hitler took little interest in domestic policy, his sole concern being that Germany become sufficiently strong to realize his long-term geopolitical goal of creating a German empire that would dominate western Europe and extend deep into Russia. In a first step toward this goal, he made a de facto revision to the Treaty of Versailles

by ceasing to heed its restrictions on German rearmament. Soon after becoming chancellor, Hitler ordered that rearmament, secretly under way since the early 1920s, be stepped up. Later in 1933, he withdrew Germany from the League of Nations to reduce possible foreign control over Germany. In 1935 he announced that Germany had begun rearmament, would greatly increase the size of its army, and had established an air force. Italy, France, and Britain protested these actions but did nothing further, and Hitler soon signed an agreement with Britain permitting Germany to maintain a navy one-third the size of the British fleet. In 1936 Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland, in violation of various treaties. There was no foreign opposition.

In 1936 Germany began closer relations with fascist Italy, a pariah state because of its invasion of Ethiopia the year before. The two antidemocratic states joined together to assist General Francisco Franco in overthrowing Spain's republican government during the Spanish Civil War (1936–39). In November 1936, Germany and Italy formed the Berlin-Rome Axis. That same year, Germany, Italy, and Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, the three signatories pledging to defend each other against the Soviet Union and international communism.

It was also in 1936 that Hitler informed the regime's top officials that Germany must be ready for war by 1940. In response, the Four-Year Plan was established. Developed under the direction of Hermann Goering, it set forth production quotas and market guidelines. Efforts to regiment the economy were not without conflict. Some of the economic elite desired that Germany be integrated into the world's economy. Others advocated autarchy, that is, firmly basing the German economy in Central Europe and securing its raw materials through barter agreements.

In the end, no clear decision on the management of the German economy was made. Large weapons contracts with industrial firms soon had the economy running at top speed, and full employment was reached by 1937. Wages did not increase much for ordinary workers, but job security after years of economic depression was much appreciated. The rearmament program was not placed on a sound financial footing, however. Taxes were not increased to pay for it because the regime feared that this would dissatisfy workers. Instead, the regime tapped the country's foreign reserves, which were largely exhausted by 1939. The regime also shunned a rigorous orga-

nization of rearmament because it feared the social tensions this might engender. The production of consumer goods was not curtailed either, again based on the belief that the morale of the population had to remain high if Germany were to become strong. In addition, because Hitler expected that the wars waged in pursuit of his foreign policy goals would be short, he judged great supplies of weapons to be unnecessary. Thus, when war began in September 1939 with the invasion of Poland, Germany had a broad and impressive range of weapons, but not much in the way of replacements. As in World War I, the regime expected that the defeated would pay for Germany's expansion.

Through 1937 Hitler's foreign policy had the approval of traditional conservatives. However, because many of them were skeptical about his long-range goals, Hitler replaced a number of high military officers and diplomats with more pliable subordinates. In March 1938, the German army was permitted to occupy Austria by that country's browbeaten political leadership. The annexation (Anschluss) of Austria was welcomed by most Austrians, who wished to become part of a greater Germany, something forbidden by the Treaty of Versailles. In September 1938, British prime minister Neville Chamberlain consented to Hitler's desire to take possession of the Sudetenland, an area in Czechoslovakia bordering Germany that was inhabited by about 3 million Germans. In March 1939, Germany occupied the Czech-populated western provinces of Bohemia and Moravia, and Slovakia was made a German puppet state.

Immediately after the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, Britain and France finally became convinced of Hitler's expansionist objectives and announced their intention to defend the sovereignty of Poland. Because Hitler had concluded that he could not hope for British neutrality in the coming war, he formed a formal military alliance with Italy—the Pact of Steel. In August he signed a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union, thus apparently freeing Germany from repeating the two-front war it had fought in World War I.

The Outbreak of World War II

On September 1, 1939, German troops invaded Poland. Britain and France declared war on Germany two days later. By the end of the month, Hitler's armies had overrun western Poland. Soviet armies occupied eastern Poland, and the two

countries subsequently formally divided Poland between them. In April 1940, German forces conquered Denmark and Norway, and in May they struck at the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. French and British troops offered ineffective resistance against the lightning-like strikes, or blitzkrieg, of German tanks and airplanes. A large part of the French army surrendered, and some 300,000 British and French soldiers were trapped at Dunkirk on the coast of northern France. However, because Hitler, for a combination of political and military reasons, had halted the advance of his armored divisions, the British were able to rescue the men at Dunkirk. France, however, surrendered in June.

For Hitler the war in the west was a sideshow, a prelude to the building of an empire in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Hitler had hoped that Britain would stay out of the war. In his vision of the near future, he foresaw the two countries sharing the world between them—Britain would keep its overseas empire, and Germany would construct a new one to its east. When approached with the suggestion of a separate peace, British prime minister Winston Churchill rejected the offer and rallied his people to fight on.The Third Reich experienced its first military defeat in the Battle of Britain, in which the Royal Air Force, during the summer and fall of 1940, prevented the German air force from gaining the air superiority necessary for an invasion of Britain. Consequently, Hitler postponed the invasion.

Hitler concluded by June 1941 that Britain's continuing resistance was not a serious impediment to his main geopolitical goal of creating an empire extending east from Germany deep into the Soviet Union. On June 22, 1941, negating their 1939 nonaggression pact, Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Eagerness to realize his long-held dream caused Hitler to gamble everything on a quick military campaign. He had anticipated victory within three months, but effective Soviet resistance and the early onset of winter stopped German advances. A counteroffensive, launched in early 1942, drove the Germans back from Moscow. In the summer of 1942, Hitler shifted the attack to the south of the Soviet Union and began a large offensive to secure the Caucasian oil fields. By September 1942, the Axis controlled an area extending from northern Norway to North Africa and from France to Stalingrad.

Japan's attack on the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, brought the United States into the

war. In support of Germany's fellow Axis power, Hitler immediately declared war on the United States. But with the United States involvement, a coalition now existed that, with its vast human and material resources, was almost certain to defeat the Third Reich. To ensure that the alliance not break apart as had happened in 1918 when Russia signed a truce with Germany, the Allies swore to fight Germany until an unconditional surrender was secured. Another reason the Allies wanted the complete military defeat of Germany was that they wished to preclude any possibility of German politicians claiming that "a stab in the back" had caused Germany's undoing, as they had done after World War I.

The military turning point of the war in Europe came with the Soviet victory at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942–43; some 300,000 of Germany's finest troops were either killed or captured. By May 1943, Allied armies had driven the Axis forces out of Africa and had landed in Italy. Also of great importance, by 1943 the United States and British navies had succeeded in substantially reducing the German submarine threat to shipping. This cleared the way for the movement of arms and troops to Britain in preparation for a cross-channel invasion of France.

Total Mobilization, Resistance, and the Holocaust

Once it became clear that the war would not be a short one, Germany's industry was reorganized for a total mobilization. Between February 1942 and July 1944, armaments production increased threefold despite intense Allied bombing raids. Much of the labor for this increase came from the employment of some 7 million foreigners, taken from their homelands and forced to work under terrible conditions. Also contributing to the Nazi war effort was the systematic requisitioning of raw materials and food from occupied territories. As a result, Germans remained fairly well fed for most of the war, in contrast to the hunger endured during World War I.

Despite their comparative physical well-being until late in the war, it gradually became clear to many Germans that the regime's series of military triumphs had come to an end. Even the most intense, mendacious propaganda could not conceal that Germany's forces were being beaten back. Sharing this growing awareness that defeat was likely, a group of military officers decided to assassinate Hitler. Although elements of the military had long opposed him, no one had acted to this point.

View of Berlin, 1945
Courtesy German Information Center, New York

During 1943 and 1944, the conspirators, who included many high-ranking officers and numerous prominent civilians, worked out elaborate plans for seizing power after the dictator's death. On June 20, 1944, the conspirators ignited a bomb that would probably have killed Hitler except for a stroke of bad luck—the misplacement of the device under a conference room table. The regime struck back and after months of reprisals had killed several thousand people, among them one field marshal and twenty-two generals. Several earlier attempts on Hitler's life had also failed. Because of these failures, it would be up to the Allies to remove Hitler and his regime from power.

Anti-Semitism was one of the Third Reich's most faithfully executed policies. Hitler saw the Jews' existence as inimical to the well-being of the German race. In his youth in Vienna, he had come to believe in a social Darwinist, life-or-death struggle of the races, with that between the German race and the Jews

being the most savage. Because of his adherence to these racist notions, he dreamed of creating a German empire completely free of Jews, believing that if the Jewish "bacillus" were permitted to remain within the Teutonic empire, the empire would become corrupted and fail.

Upon taking power, the Nazis began immediately to rid Germany of its Jewish citizens. In the Aryan Paragraph of 1933, the regime decreed that Jews could not hold civil service positions. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 deprived Jews of the right to citizenship and restricted relationships between "Aryans" (racially pure Germans) and Jews. After the Kristallnacht (Crystal Night) of November 9, 1938, an organized act of violence perpetrated by Nazis against Jews in all parts of Germany, the persecution of Jews entered a new phase. Random acts of violence, by then commonplace, were replaced by the systematic isolation of the Jewish population in Germany, which had numbered about 600,000 in the early 1930s.

Until 1941 there had been plans to "cleanse" Germany of Jews by gathering them together and expelling them from the Reich. One plan had as its goal the transfer of Germany's Jews to Madagascar. A contingent of Jews had even been moved to southern France in preparation. However, wartime conditions and the presence of millions of Jews in Poland, the Soviet Union, and other occupied areas in Eastern Europe gradually led to the adoption of another plan: the systematic extermination of all Jews who came under German control. Techniques that had been developed for the regime's euthanasia program came to be used against Jews. Discussions in January 1942 at the Wannsee Conference on the outskirts of Berlin led to the improved organization and coordination of the program of genocide.

Killing came to be done in an efficient, factorylike fashion in large extermination camps run by Himmler's Special Duty Section (Sonderdienst—SD). The tempo of the mass murder of Jewish men, women, and children was accelerated toward the end of the war. Hitler's preoccupation with the "final solution" was so great that the transport of Jews was at times given preference over the transport of war matériel. Authorities generally agree that about 6 million European Jews died in the Holocaust. A large number (about 4.5 million) of those killed came from Poland and the Soviet Union; about 125,000 German Jews were murdered.

Defeat

In June 1944, American, British, and Canadian forces invaded France, driving the Germans back and liberating Paris by August. A German counteroffensive in the Ardennes began in late December was beaten back after heavy fighting in what became known as the Battle of the Bulge. Soviet troops, meanwhile, advanced from the east. Western forces reached the Rhine River in March 1945; simultaneously, Soviet armies overran most of Czechoslovakia and pressed on toward Berlin. Although faced with certain defeat, Hitler insisted that every German city, every village, and "every square meter" be defended or left behind as "scorched earth." The Western Allies and the Soviet forces made their first contact, in Saxony, on April 27. Three days later, Hitler committed suicide in a Berlin bunker. Berlin fell to the Soviet forces on May 2; on May 7, the Third Reich surrendered unconditionally. It is estimated that about 55 million people died in the European theater during World War II. About 8 million of these dead were German.

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A good introduction to German history is Mary Fulbrook's *A Concise History of Germany,* which not only presents the most important events but also examines various interpretations of them. The book closes with a bibliography of recent scholarship. Geoffrey Barraclough's *The Origins of Modern Germany* is a classic study of the German Middle Ages. *Early Modern Germany, 1477–1806* by Michael Hughes is a good introduction to this period. C.V. Wedgwood's classic, *The Thirty Years' War,* is engrossing reading and is widely available. A more recent treatment of the war is found in *The Thirty Years' War,* a well-integrated collection of articles about the conflict by noted specialists edited by Geoffrey Parker.

James J. Sheehan's subtle and learned *German History, 1770–1866* is the standard work in English on the period. Theodore S. Hamerow's *Restoration, Revolution, Reaction,* concise and beautifully written, deals with the main political, economic, and social trends between 1815 and 1871. Gordon A. Craig's *Germany, 1866–1945,* a survey of these years by the English-speaking world's dean of German studies, can be found in many libraries. Volker Rolf Berghahn's *Imperial Germany, 1871–1914* provides a sophisticated analysis of Germany between unifica-

tion and the outbreak of World War I. James Joll's brief *The Origins of the First World War* examines interpretations of why this war occurred. *The German Dictatorship* by Karl Dietrich Bracher is an excellent treatment of the ideological sources of national socialism and provides an analytical history of Hitler's regime. Donald Cameron Watt's magisterial *How War Came* examines the diplomatic maneuvering leading up to World War II. Gerhard L. Weinberg's *A World at Arms* is an authoritative and comprehensive survey of the war. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)