
Hitchens quotes the late child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim: "There is a widespread refusal to let children know that the source of much that goes wrong in life is due to our very own natures—the propensity of all men for acting aggressively, asocially, selfishly, out of anger and anxiety. Instead, we want our children to believe that, inherently, all men are good. But children know that *they* are not always good; and often, even when they are, they would prefer not to be."

As for the politically correct critics who wring their hands over the author's repellent private attitudes and vices—now on display in Jeremy Treglown's *Roald Dahl: A Life* (1994)—Hitchens says they miss the point. There is little doubt that Dahl was a pretty awful human being. Only some cauldron of vileness bubbling away within him could have enabled him, in his books, to keep "children enthralled and agreeably disgusted and pleasurably afraid."

OTHER NATIONS

Germany's Painful Transition

A Survey of Recent Articles

The collapse of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 suddenly made German unification a live issue, and West German chancellor Helmut Kohl embraced it as his own. With firm and crucial support from the United States, Kohl skillfully brought about the *Vereinigung* (unification) the next October. But in that election year of 1990, he "did not say that the path to unity would be expensive, arduous, and long," Heinrich August Winkler, a historian at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, notes in an exceptionally rich issue of *Daedalus* (Winter 1994) devoted to Germany. Instead, Kohl assured East Germans that the new *Länder* (states) would be transformed within a few years into "flourishing landscapes." That has not happened. With Germany now in the middle of a serious recession, it is apparent not only that real unity is going to require many years of sacrifice and patience but also that Germans are having to rethink what it means to be German.

Although the Berlin Wall is no more, it continues, in a sense, to exist, Columbia University historian Fritz Stern writes in *Foreign Affairs* (Sept.–Oct. 1993): "On some deep psychological level the unified Germany is more divided than before; the physical wall has been internalized. Where once had been the untroubled hope that at some future date the division of the country, unnaturally maintained, would be healed, there are now painful inequalities of power, wealth,

experience, and assertiveness." Three-fourths of the nearly 80 million people of Germany live in the old *Länder* in the West, and an even larger proportion of the gross national product is created there.

The East German economy—supposedly the strongest in Eastern Europe—turned out to be in disastrous shape, historian Gordon A. Craig, author of *The Germans* (1982), observes in the *New York Review of Books* (Jan. 13, 1994). "Because of neglect and unrealistic planning, all major East German industries—steel, machine tools, chemicals, and synthetics, manufacture of cars and trucks, housing construction, and textiles—were far below Western standards and hence difficult to make competitive." Within three years after unification, three million jobs were lost in eastern Germany. Mass poverty was avoided only by vast infusions of aid from the West—160 billion deutsche marks, or \$27 billion, from the Fund of German Unity, up to this year. In March 1993, the *Bundestag* (parliament) approved a *Solidarpakt* (solidarity pact) providing for new taxes to underwrite more aid for the new *Länder*; about one trillion deutsche marks will be transferred over the next decade.

No matter how impressive such amounts may look, Ludger Kühnhardt, a political scientist at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, points out in *Daedalus*, "Germans are psychologically and culturally not brought together" by

them. "The climate has become rougher, in the West no less than in the East." Many westerners blame eastern Germany for their problems. They have long since forgotten, Ludger Kühnhardt maintains, that "their economy has enjoyed a net profit from the opening of the East. Few are prepared to accept that the economic recession and the unavoidable crisis of adjustment of the social state that existed before 1989 were in fact slowed down by unification."

Germany's attractiveness to industry was declining long before unification, explain Thomas Kielinger, editor in chief of the German weekly *Rheinischer Merkur*, and Max Otte, director, U.S. Eastern Region, of Kienbaum & Partners, a German management consulting firm, in *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1993): "A combination of high taxes, heavy regulation, and high labor costs has prompted more and more German companies to look for production facilities abroad. . . . In the past, large German corporations had countered economic crises with capital investment and increased productivity. Now, more and more of the largest corporations are beginning to export jobs."

In the *American Enterprise* (Jan.-Feb. 1994), Jef-



frey Gedmin makes much the same point about Germany's decline, noting that Germans have "the longest vacations and the shortest work weeks, the earliest retirement age, and the oldest students" in the industrialized world. Even Kohl has said that Germany can no longer afford to be a "collective amusement park."

Ludger Kühnhardt believes that after Germany regains its economic footing, North-South divisions may overshadow the East-West schism. For centuries, the North-east and East were Protestant, Slavic-oriented, and dominated by large landowners, while the westward-looking Catholic Northwest and West enjoyed more prosperity. Already, Kühnhardt reports, the southern *Länder* of the former East Germany, Thuringia and Saxony, are enjoying a speedier economic and technological renewal than northern Germany.

As if the economy and unification were not sufficient, there are other weighty problems confronting the country. In the past, German prosperity made the country "a magnet for immigrants," notes Stephan Eisel, director of the Political Academy of Germany's Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation, in *Daedalus*. The opening of Germany's eastern borders also played an important role. In 1990, 193,000 people from Eastern Europe and elsewhere sought political asylum; in 1991, 256,000; in 1992, 400,000. In addition, ethnic Germans from Poland, Romania, and the former Soviet Union were arriving at the rate of 200,000-300,000 a year. While some of the immigrants were genuine refugees—Germany has taken in eight times as many people fleeing from the war in the former Yugoslavia as all other countries combined—most were seeking economic betterment. To reduce their number, Germany's political parties last spring agreed on a constitutional amendment to limit abuse of the asylum laws. The legislators hoped to quell rising xenophobia. A wave of violence against Turks and other foreigners began in 1990. Only about one-quarter of the suspected perpetrators belong to extreme right-wing groups, Eisel notes; nearly

three-quarters are youths under 20. Jane Kramer, in a vivid and incisive *New Yorker* (June 14, 1993) report on the violence, writes that there are about 6,000 "right extremist" skinheads in Germany, of whom about 3,500 live in what used to be East Germany. The government holds them responsible for 3,000 brutal attacks—lately, about five a day. Forty percent of the attacks have taken place in the new *Länder*, whose people, before the fall of the Wall, had never really known any foreigners.

Chancellor Kohl's response to the new violence has been very low-key. His associates say that that is deliberate, Stephen Kinzer, chief of the *New York Times* bureau in Berlin, reports in the *Atlantic Monthly* (Feb. 1994). "He is acutely aware of the growing potential of far-right political parties, they say, and he wants to make sure that conservative voters do not abandon his Christian Democratic Union in favor of those parties." Nineteen separate elections are taking place this year for local offices, the *Länder* parliaments, the *Bundestag*, and the European Parliament. (The chancellor is elected by the *Bundestag*.) To hold conservative voters, Kohl "is taking a strong law-and-order stance and refusing to identify himself with

unpopular groups such as Turks and gypsies, who are the terrorists' chief victims."

The German government repeatedly insists that "the Federal Republic is not a country of immigration." In reality, however, between 1945 and 1990 nearly 15 million East Germans, ethnic Germans, and political refugees immigrated to West Germany and became citizens, according to University of Osnabrück professor Klaus J. Bade, writing in *Daedalus*. These new citizens, together with 4.8 million Turks and other resident foreigners, amounted to one-third of West Germany's inhabitants in 1990.

The traditional German idea of nation, based on descent, is enshrined in the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law, or constitution) and is used to deny naturalization to foreigners who have lived in Germany for decades and to their children who were born there. This must change, observers such as Heinrich Winkler believe. "The new formation of the German nation can only succeed," he writes, "if it coincides with a Westernization of the German understanding of nation. In the future, the term 'German' will have to be defined not only by descent, but also by the will to belong to the German nation."

Revisiting the Korean War

"New Findings on the Korean War" by Kathryn Weathersby, in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* (Fall 1993), Woodrow Wilson Center, 1000 Jefferson Dr. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20560.

On June 25, 1950, North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel and invaded South Korea, starting the Korean War. While most scholars have said that it was absurd to think that North Korea leader Kim Il Sung could have gone ahead without Stalin's approval and aid, some revisionists, such as Bruce Cumings, author of *The Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. II (1990), have argued otherwise. Indeed, Cumings contends that the invasion may have been provoked by South Korea, just as North Korea and the Soviet Union always main-

tained. Weathersby, a historian at Florida State University, contends that a document recently unearthed in the Soviet archives shows what really happened.

The document, "On the Korean War, 1950-53, and the Armistice Negotiations," was prepared in 1966 by Soviet Foreign Ministry staff, apparently to provide background information to Soviet officials who were then considering Soviet aid to the Viet Cong in their war with South Vietnam and the United States. The report, which cites diplomatic telegrams in the Soviet Foreign Ministry archive, proves that the June invasion was not a defensive response to provocation by the South, writes Weathersby. Moreover, "Stalin approved the North Korean [invasion] plan, provided sufficient arms and equipment . . . and sent Soviet military advisers to North Korea to assist in planning the campaign."