West Germany

The Federal Republic of Germany was born in 1949 from the rubble of Hamburg and Frankfurt and other parts of what was once the *Deutsches Reich.* Among scholars, West Germany's "economic miracle" has become a cliché. We focus here less on the country's industrial resurgence than on the society that produced it—and the new society that it made possible. Success creates its own problems. Below, historian Konrad Jarausch recalls the West's long love-hate relationship with the German people; journalist David Binder looks at the legacy of World War II and the evolution of the modern Federal Republic; and historian David Schoenbaum analyzes West Germany's peculiar international position. For the first time in the country's history, he writes, its people have a stake in the status quo.

PERCEPTIONS

by Konrad H. Jarausch

In 1944, historian A. J. P. Taylor was commissioned by British officials to write a chapter for a book about Germany that would "explain to the conquerors the sort of country they were conquering." When Taylor's essay was rejected as "too depressing," he penned an even more impassioned statement.

"The history of the Germans," Taylor began, "is a history of extremes. It contains everything except moderation, and in the course of a thousand years the Germans have experienced everything except normality. . . . They have produced the most transcendental philosophers, the most spiritual musicians, and the most ruthless and unscrupulous politicians. . . . Only the normal person, not particularly good, not particularly bad, healthy, sane . . . has never set his stamp on German history."

One need not subscribe to this tendentious assessment to recognize that perceptions of Germany, among Anglo-Saxon peo-

ples generally (and particularly among the British, who for 150 years have claimed a special insight into the German soul) have likewise embraced incompatible extremes. An opinion survey taken in 1942, as the Battle of the Atlantic raged, found that Americans regarded the Germans as "warlike" (68 percent) but also "hard-working" (62 percent), "treacherous" (43) but "intelligent" (41), "conceited" (33) yet "progressive" (31).

Ever since Coleridge and the romantics (and, later, Arnold) "discovered" German *Kultur*—the world of Goethe and Schiller, Mozart and Beethoven—and introduced it into polite drawing rooms, the pendulum of Anglo-American opinion on Germany has swung from worship through apologia to condemnation and back.

In the United States, another factor variously tempered or reinforced both popular and scholarly opinion. Unlike Britain, where the influx of Germanic peoples had largely ceased after the barbarian invasions, America opened its doors to millions of German immigrants during the 19th and 20th centuries. Between 1820 and 1950, some seven million Germans came to the United States—more than any other group. While Thomas Carlyle in England could assert that his countrymen and the Germans still shared "the same old Saxon spirit," only in the New World did anything like real affinity develop. There was also a certain ambivalence, associated less with personal impressions of the Germans as a people than with their behavior as a nation.

Germany did not become an integrated sovereign state until 1871, and it is difficult to say just when "German history" began. Various Germanic tribes had settled in central Europe before the time of Christ, and most of them lived free of the Roman yoke. It took some time for Christianity to penetrate the Teutonic hinterland, becoming, thanks to Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation, something else for the numerous German duchies, kingdoms, and principalities to fight about. For a thousand years, what is now Germany was under the transnational umbrella of the Holy Roman Empire, whose extent, composition, and cohesion varied over time. Only the rise of the kingdom of Prussia during the 17th and 18th centuries provided

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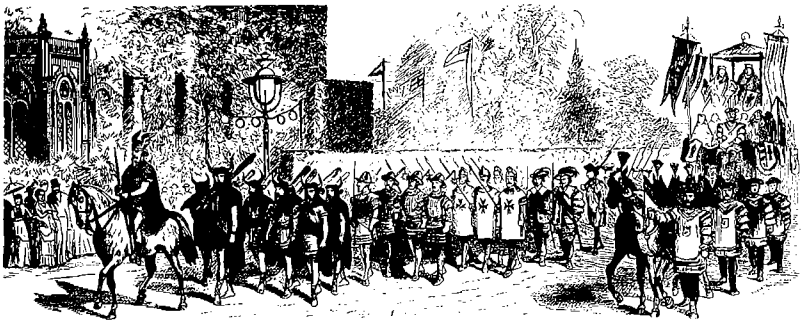


Courtesy of Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

Nineteenth-century German immigrants parading in New Jersey. One out of six newcomers to America between 1820 and 1980 was a German.

a stable nucleus around which the German state could eventually form.

From Queen Victoria to Napoleon III, through diplomacy or war, the rulers of neighboring lands were heavily involved in Germany's evolution. But in the minds of most Americans, Germany remained half a world away. Three great waves of German immigrants, not concern for the balance of power, shaped initial public impressions of the German character.

The 13 Mennonite families who arrived on the *Concord* at Philadelphia in 1683 heralded a migration of Southwest German peasants to the New World seeking land and religious freedom. These were the "Pennsylvania Dutch" (for *Deutsch*), whose descendants still farm the Middle Atlantic states, from southern Maryland to New York. The newcomers seemed quiet and sturdy, if strongly sectarian and somewhat aloof. Among others, Benjamin Franklin admired them for their "habitual industry and thrift."

In contrast to these drab "grays," as they were called, came thousands of "greens," political refugees of Germany's failed 1848 revolution. Led by the dynamic Carl Schurz, later a U.S. Senator and Secretary of the Interior, the "greens" established German churches, colleges, and newspapers (in 1884, there were 84 German-language daily newspapers in the United States) and campaigned for the new Republican Party, congenial to their own liberalism.

The final wave, coming after the Civil War, was the biggest. Driven by poverty and industrialization, millions of rural and urban poor from northwest Germany streamed across the Atlantic and settled in the great Midwestern cities: Cincinnati, Cleve-

land, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis. They were hard-working and mechanically adept—think of Weyerhauser, Westinghouse, Chrysler, Steinway. This group also prospered, much to the resentment of the less-affluent Irish and the Italians. Their more puritanical neighbors may occasionally have been upset by brass bands parading down the street, yet according to a study by journalist Norbert Muhlen, the most frequent adjectives used in the English-speaking press to describe the German émigrés were "calm, moderate, hardy, staid, brave, kindly, quiet, domestic."

Among educated Anglo-Americans, Germany had a more lofty connotation, at once romantic and scholarly. In 1815, Harvard theologian Edward Everett, Germanicist George Ticknor, and philologist George Bancroft all went to study at Göttingen, the first of a growing stream of American researchers (a total of 10,000 by 1900) attracted by the academic freedom, scientific achievement, and unfettered student life of German universities. "I think the Germans have an integrity of mind which sets their science above all others," Ralph Waldo Emerson observed. The Americans were quick to bring German innovations back to the United States: The notion of graduate education, for example, was transplanted to Johns Hopkins in 1876.

From Bismarck to "Kaiser Bill"

Through much of the 19th century, most Americans tended to flavor their opinion of faraway Germany with their impressions of the Germans they knew. Diplomatic contacts—or contretemps—between the United States and the German Confederation were few. During the war against Denmark in 1864 and the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, American sympathies, insofar as anyone could tell, were with Prussia, which held out the promise, according to the *New York Tribune*, of "progress and the possibility of freedom and national growth." Similarly, during the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71), Americans generally sided with Bismarck against Napoleon III, whose attempt to install his protégé, Maximilian I, as Emperor of Mexico in 1864–67 roused politicians' ire north of the Rio Grande.

There was a palpable decline in admiration for the Germans after the Prussian victory over France at Sedan in 1870, the final unification of Germany, and the proclamation of a Kaiser (Wilhelm I). The new French Third Republic drew a groundswell of American support. In official Washington, there was concern as Germany moved, like the United States, to become a colonial latecomer in the Far East, daring to covet many of the same

prizes sought by American expansionists—Samoa and the Philippines, for example. Kaiser Wilhelm II, cursed by an erratic personality, embittered by the paralysis of his left arm, and utterly lacking in the diplomatic finesse of Bismarck (whom he dismissed as Chancellor in 1890), was ripe for caricature.

Rehabilitating the Underdog

Yet American academics still admired German scholarship (despite a slow turning of the intellectual tide against Germany in England), and ordinary folk in the United States continued to esteem their German-American compatriots.* Not until the last prewar years did cautionary works such as Roland G. Usher's *Pan-Germanism* (1913) begin to appear in the United States. As the European war began, Americans regarded their German-American neighbors with sympathy rather than suspicion. There are few today who remember to what extraordinary lengths President Woodrow Wilson had to go to turn American sentiment against Germany. British propaganda was helpful. So were the blunders of the Central Powers (Germany, Austria, and Turkey): their violation of Belgian neutrality; their clumsy espionage in the Western Hemisphere; and their dramatic sinkings of transatlantic liners such as the *Lusitania,* with many Americans lost at sea.

America's entry into World I temporarily shattered the century-old friendly stereotype of the German in the United States. Sauerkraut became "Victory cabbage," and Germantown, New Jersey, was renamed Oldwick. Germans became "Huns"—an epithet ironically coined by Wilhelm II himself in 1900 when he exhorted a German expeditionary corps en route to China to be "as terrible as Attila the Hun." American intellectuals, even including such iconoclasts as Thorstein Veblen, volunteered for the propaganda effort; they produced earnest screeds whose scathing assessments of the German national character were buttressed by selective quotations from the works of such men as Prussian historian Heinrich von Treitschke and philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. "It was popularly believed," historian J. G. Gazely later wrote, "that every Frenchman was naturally and inherently a hero, and every German instinctively and unalterably a baby killer."

What is surprising is not that Germany got a bad press from

*The English, of course, were far more sensitive than the Americans to the implications of a united Germany for peace on the continent. Yet, even as war approached, British scholars retained their fascination with German history and their admiration for German scholarship. Both are evident, for example, in the 1910 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.*

its Anglo-American adversaries during World War I but that its image was later so quickly rehabilitated, in both scholarly and popular circles. On both sides of the Atlantic, the Weimar Republic (1918–33) appeared as a promising new experiment in democracy. "In innocence," historian Henry Cord Meyer later recalled, "we evidently presumed that with militarism defeated and the Kaiser gone the Germans would build a good middle-class republic not unlike our own." The diffusion throughout the West of Weimar cultural modernism—Bauhaus architecture, for example, and the plays of Bertolt Brecht—restored Germany to the affections of America's intellectuals.

The Muses Flee

A wave of revisionist scholarship during the 1920s (e.g., *The Origins of the World War* by S. B. Fay) also prompted second thoughts on where the blame lay for starting the Great War. Russian mobilization and French revanchism, as well as sheer British antagonism, now took their place alongside German bellicosity as the war's "causes." French President Henri Poincaré's sudden military occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 made Germany now appear as the victimized underdog. An Anglo-American sympathy for "our German cousins" began to reassert itself.

Even as the worldwide Great Depression threw millions of Germans out of work, few observers anticipated the imminent disintegration of the Weimar Republic or the growing popular resentment against industrial barons (such as Hugo Stinnes) and Germany's rigid class structure. Despite the growing conflict between Left and Right, the increasing virulence of German anti-Semitism, and the country's acute economic distress, Americans were unprepared for the triumph of Adolf Hitler and National Socialism in 1933.

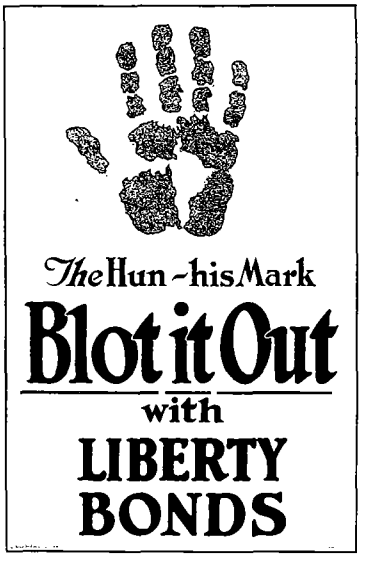
The Third Reich (1933–45) initially aroused more curiosity than condemnation in the United States. Impressed by the discipline and dynamism of the New Order as manifested in the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, many Americans (and Britons) believed that one could at least "do business" with Hitler, whatever his faults. Lloyd George and Charles Lindbergh positively admired the man. Though appalled by the enthusiasm for the Führer shown by the brown-shirted German-American Bund, U.S. newspapers were divided on the wisdom of "interfering" in Europe once again in the event of another war.

American attitudes were fundamentally confused. Isolationism was widespread on the American Right, while the Left loudly denounced both German fascism and any effort at U.S.

rearmament. The communists opposed nazism—until Stalin's 1939 pact with Hitler. American Jews watched with growing alarm as the 1935 Nürnberg racial laws were followed by the chilling *Kristallnacht* pogrom in 1938. The Northeastern "establishment," typified by President Franklin Roosevelt, was strongly Anglophile and imbued with a congenital distrust of "Prussian militarism."

Yet, throughout the 1930s, U.S. opinion of the German *people* remained remarkably steady. A December 1939 Office of Public Opinion Research poll found that some 66 percent of the respondents regarded the Germans as "essentially peace-loving and kindly" while only 19 percent believed the Germans to have "an irrepressible fondness for brute force and conquest." Even the "Flight of the Muses" from Hitler's storm troopers—the exodus of thousands of Germany's most creative scientists, artists, and intellectuals to the New World—seemed, ironically, to have had largely a *positive* impact on American opinion of Germans generally: It was a tragedy that they had to flee in the face of anti-Semitism and totalitarianism, yet the very struggle of such men as Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann against the depredations of nazism testified to the existence of another, more civilized Germany. What animosity later developed toward the Germans was superimposed upon earlier, happier views.

Hitler's declaration of war against the United States in De-



The Allied propaganda effort during World War I proved to be a boon for the poster industry. U.S. public opinion swung sharply against Germany, then, after the Armistice, became less hostile.

cember 1941 marked the beginning of a strange golden age for students of Germany of every stripe. For a time, it seemed, the public appetite for books and pamphlets on the subject, ranging from the most obvious propaganda to solid scholarship, was insatiable.

While journalists poured out a stream of invective to strengthen American morale, numerous scholars explored the German character *From Luther to Hitler* (William M. McGovern), examined *The Rise of Metapolitics from the Romantics to Hitler* (Peter Viereck), and sought *The Roots of National Socialism* (Rohan Butler) in the legacies of Frederick the Great and Bismarck. The chief flaw in such books was a shared assumption that the "German problem" could be explained only if one conceded that the Germans, as a people, had somehow been abnormal from the start. Not all historians or political scientists agreed; the war years also saw more sophisticated (and less faddish) reflections on the origins of nazism by such scholars as Konrad Heiden, Franz Neumann, William Langer, and Raymond Sonntag.

Germans as Americans

It was not until after V-E Day, with the revelations—and sickening pictures—of the nazi death camps, that a reflexive wave of revulsion passed over the United States and the rest of the world that would forever darken the German image. Allied leaders, including U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, seriously considered carving Germany into a handful of small states and, at the very least, "deindustrializing" the country—forcibly converting it into an agrarian nation.

Yet, in the immediate postwar period, Germany—more properly, West Germany—was gradually transformed from conquered enemy to valued ally. Prompted by Russian belligerence and the emergence of a Cold War, Washington shifted its emphasis from "collective guilt" to the economic and industrial reconstruction of Germany via the Marshall Plan (in which Moscow would not allow East Germany to participate). For the West, the psychological turning point came in 1948 when the "brave, freedom-loving Berliners," with the help of a massive U.S. airlift, successfully resisted the Soviet blockade of the former capital.

In the three decades since the creation of the Federal Republic in 1949, American perceptions of West Germany have drifted toward a neutrality flavored by ambivalence. Germany is no longer a media favorite, even if many scholars would agree

with V. S. Pritchett that its destiny remains an enigma.

Superficially, the country is more familiar to more Americans than ever before. Millions of U.S. tourists have taken a Rhine cruise, hundreds of thousands of GIs have lived in military enclaves throughout West Germany, and tens of thousands of students and scholars, supported by the Fulbright Program and the German Academic Exchange Service, have studied at West German universities. Not a few Americans work for U.S. subsidiaries of such German firms as Siemens and Volkswagen. Americans are becoming aware of West Germany as a prosperous economic competitor and a strong, sometimes truculent ally.

All of this is new. Yet older fears and suspicions linger beneath official cheerfulness and cooperation. Stereotypes of the German abound, many of them once quite serviceable but most of them dating back to the Second World War or before. There is little appreciation in the United States of the extent to which German society is fundamentally different from what it was in 1925; of the degree to which the West Germans, uprooted by war, their political and cultural fabric utterly destroyed, set out to build something completely new; of the ironic tendency of this new society nevertheless to cherish the old traditions of "Germanness" for want of anything better, of postwar vintage, to put in their place.

Why is this so? To some extent, the passing of the émigré generation, marked symbolically by the death of Hannah Arendt in 1975, cut the living bond between America and Germany. West German prosperity has dried up the last trickle of transatlantic migration, notably the brief 1960s "brain drain." In a sense, too, Americans have come to see the prosperous Germans as Europe's "Americans"—and Americans are not terribly curious about Americans.

Whatever the cause, West Germany today summons up a kaleidoscope of vague images in American minds, some folksy, some still worrisome, but few of them bearing much relation to the reality of the Federal Republic in 1981—its diplomatic aims, its social tensions, its peculiar view of the world. In many ways, misperceptions are more dangerous than honest disagreements. And the consequences of a misunderstanding are always worst among friends.

A NEW NATION

by David Binder

Societies, like individuals, carry their birthmarks and their birth defects along with them as they grow. West Germany, conceived in 1949 out of the ashes and rubble of the last great war, bore the defect of being only part of the German whole, even though it claimed to represent the entire German nation.

True, the Federal Republic of Germany became a homeland for most of the 9 million Germans—East Prussians, Silesians, Pomeranians, Sudetenlanders—driven westward after their expulsion from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere in the wake of World War II. Similarly, until the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the new nation absorbed some 3 million Saxons, Thuringians, Mecklenburgers, and Brandenburgers from what had begun as the Soviet occupation zone. During the 1970s, West Germany took in hundreds of thousands of *Volksdeutsche* who had been kept behind, or had lingered, in the Soviet Union and Poland. To a considerable degree, then, West Germany's birth defect has been healed. The Federal Republic, with its 61 million people, is the acknowledged bourn of most that is German.

The chief effect of the great postwar treks and population shifts, especially in urban centers, was the broader Germanization of places that had previously been not un-German but primarily Hessian or Swabian or Bavarian in character.

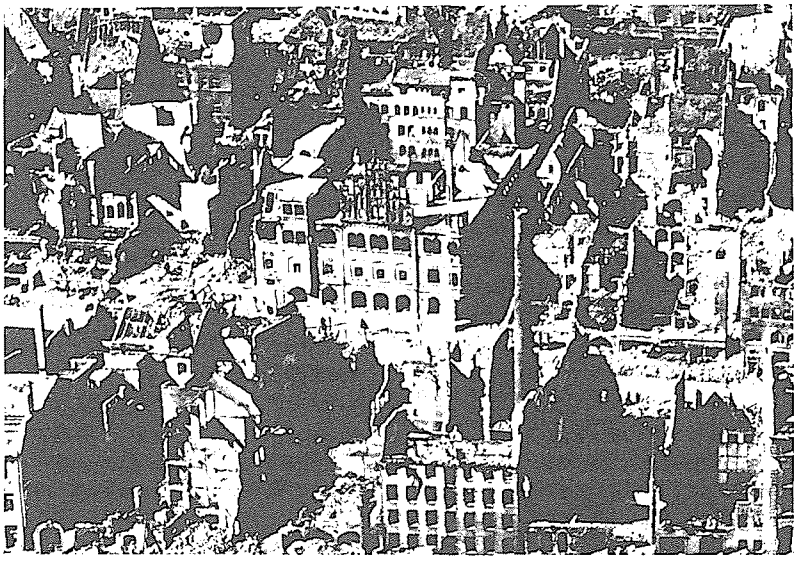
A medium-sized provincial town like Giessen (pop. 75,500) may serve as an example. Located in Upper Hesse just beyond the old Roman *limes*, Giessen before the war had been the home of some heavy industry, a reputable little university, some socialists, some anti-Semites, and an overwhelming majority of Lutheran Protestants. After the war, it became a German melting pot, thanks mainly to a large refugee camp raised on its southern outskirts. Many of the new settlers were Roman Catholics from Silesia, far to the east; by the mid-1950s, Giessen was one-fifth Catholic. Its reputation as the heart of "Red Hesse" rapidly disappeared.

The newcomers, unfamiliar with local customs and values, did not mix well. First generation expellees were frequently made to feel unwelcome. In the early postwar years, there was an oft-told anecdote about a boastful German refugee from the east, in this case a dachshund. "I'm small now," the little dog said, "but back home in the east I was a German shepherd."

The story is long since obsolete. The majority of the new settlers, having lost even more in the war than those West German natives who had been bombed out of their homes, set to work with redoubled energy to build their lives anew. Former expellees and refugees, including the writer Günter Grass, the politician Willy Brandt, and the businessman Otto Friedrich, have climbed to the heights of West Germany society.

Still, the truncation of what had once been Germany has left a kind of residual trauma in many Germans, compounded by the split between West Germany and East Germany (the German Democratic Republic). While it would be extremely difficult to find a German willing to take up arms to recover the lands lost to the Russians, Poles, or Czechs, it would also be difficult to find a middle-aged German who would deny the historic "Germanness" of Breslau or Danzig or Königsberg.

This may explain the agony many West Germans underwent in 1972 when a package of treaties—to ratify the loss of the eastern territories and acknowledge the sovereignty of East Germany—came before West Germany's parliament, the Bundestag. "Stop this gruesome game!" was the headline in one newspaper. Opposition was so strong that a no-confidence vote



Margaret Bourke-White, Life Magazine © *Time Inc.*

Nürnberg, 1945. Germans who remember World War II are today a minority. Two-thirds of West Germany's population was born after V-E Day.

in the Bundestag nearly toppled the government of Chancellor Willy Brandt. Yet a thin parliamentary majority ultimately accepted the "normalization" treaties with Warsaw and Moscow and, in the next (1972) popular election, Brandt received a resounding endorsement. In a larger sense, the West Germans sought thus to *redefine* what belonged to Germany.

The narrowness of this geographic definition is almost breathtaking when compared to the reach of German claims in recent and not so recent times—encompassing chunks of Alsace and Lorraine, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, and Italy, not to mention the vast lands to the east. Today, Germans are content to vacation in these regions, not to invade them.

Too Big and Too Small

Nor does there seem to be even a hint of the *revanche* syndrome, so widespread in the Weimar era, on which Hitler flourished—even though Germany suffered much greater territorial losses in the Second World War than in the First and paid a blood tribute of 6.5 million lives, three times the German toll in the first global conflict. This can probably be attributed to the postwar East-West division of the surviving nation, which continues to be the main focus of German national interest.

In any event, the West Germans seem to have a better sense of proportion and perspective about their relative size and weight on the international scene than they did between 1900 and 1945, despite the fact that West Germany, during the early 1960s, became the dominant economic power in Europe. That sense of proportion was concisely defined in 1967 by Herbert Wehner, the great strategist of the Social Democratic Party. "Germany has a critical size," Wehner observed. "It is too big to play no role in the balance of powers and too small to keep the powers around it in balance."

Admittedly, the current Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, banking on West Germany's stability and strength, has been inclined to test the Wehner premise on occasion, notably by pursuing special bilateral relationships with France and Poland on the one hand and with the Soviet Union on the other. Yet few West Germans today seem willing or even able to consider Germany's situation in isolation from that of her neighbors, a tendency that

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is reinforced by the nation's senior membership in the Common Market and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

This willingness to view the present and future from an essentially European perspective is something new in German life. It has been nurtured by West Germans' proclivity for foreign travel and by the country's absorption of huge numbers of foreigners, some 4 million since the war, mostly from other European countries. Having begun life as a refuge for other Germans, the Federal Republic now finds itself becoming a haven for thousands of persecuted people from around the world: Turks, Pakistanis, Afghans, and, recently, Soviet Jews. In 1979, 51,000 people applied for political asylum in West Germany; in 1980, the figure was expected to be double that.

In addition to permanent residents, millions of others, mostly from the impoverished southern reaches of Europe, have spent time in West Germany as temporary workers, or *Gastarbeiter*, collecting garbage, cleaning streets, manning assembly lines, and generally performing tasks shunned by the Germans themselves. There are currently 1.7 million *Gastarbeiter* in West Germany, most of them Turks, Yugoslavs, Italians, and Greeks. (Their numbers declined from the 1973 peak of 2.4 million as a result of the economic belt-tightening occasioned by the rise of oil prices.) The *Gastarbeiter* also account for a share of West Germany's "current accounts" deficit by sending billions of dollars out of the country to their families ($11 billion in 1979).

Contending with Garlic

German society has never been much of a melting pot—not, at least, since the barbarian invasions of the third through the fifth centuries. The recent influx of foreigners has, to some degree, helped to deepen understanding of alien cultures among a people that had been inculcated with radical xenophobia. But a certain backlash was inevitable in a crowded country where newcomers tend to congregate in ghetto-like isolation. Turks now make up one-third of the population of West Berlin's Kreuzberg borough, clustered in the old working-class district's southern section with its dark and crowded *fin de siècle* inner courtyards. There are 18 mosques in West Berlin.

As in England, and increasingly in the United States, the growing number of foreign workers has prompted demands for curbs on immigration. "It isn't easy," Chancellor Schmidt told a crowd in Ludwigshafen during last October's election campaign, "for Germans who live in an apartment house and who don't like the smell of garlic to have to put up with it and even to

have a lamb slaughtered in the hallway." Such remarks are tempered by a recognition that *Gastarbeiter*, if not "here to stay," are to some degree an economic necessity. Their presence, if only in a negative sense, may at least contribute to a clearer definition of what is "German."

While it is customary to refer to East Germany as the country that put up the Wall, West Germany is a country of private walls, high fences, and double locks. The average West German carries as many keys as an American does credit cards. He keeps his fences mended, his hedges trimmed back from the sidewalk, lest a passer-by sue for a rip in his clothing, and his doorstep free of clutter, lest the postman trip and break a leg. An automobile (and 67 percent of West Germany's households own one) is considered a mobile castle, and fie on the other motorist who even grazes its bumper.

West Germans cherish the security of their walled castles above most other qualities of their lives. This would seem to contradict the promise of an open society inherent in West Germany's democratic 1949 constitution, but it undoubtedly represents a reaction to the chaos of the war and the uncertainty of the early postwar years, when black marketing, inflation, and political kidnaping were rife.

In the late 1960s and early '70s, the younger generation rebelled violently against this tradition of security-consciousness, forming thousands of communes (some of which still exist) in such places as Berlin, Hamburg, and Frankfurt. The *Studentenrevolte* was a harbinger of social and political change, including a shift away from the conservative rule of the long-dominant Christian Union Party coalition (led by Konrad Adenauer, Ludwig Erhard, and Franz Josef Strauss) and toward the more innovative coalition of Social and Free Democrats (led by Willy Brandt and Walter Scheel). The Social Democrats even capitalized on the shift for a time with a slogan calling on Germans to "dare more democracy."

However, the truly revolutionary urge remained confined to a small number of radicalized bourgeois youths, some of whom formed outright terrorist groups, such as the Red Army Faction led by Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader. Between 1970 and 1980, terrorists killed 56 people (including 14 policemen) and injured 161. Altogether, 25 terrorists were killed and 16 injured in confrontations involving 425 cases of arson or bombings and 60 robberies.*

*Terrorism is not confined to the Left. A neo-nazi group was apparently responsible for an explosion in a crowded Munich beer hall during the 1980 Oktoberfest. Twelve people were killed; 213 injured.

CAN PROSPERITY LAST?

Total industrial production in the truncated Federal Republic of Germany today is 50 percent greater than it was in *all* of Germany before World War II. The country's GNP per capita is considerably higher than America's. Fueled by the Korean War boom, West Germany ran up its first trade surplus in 1952; since then, writes economist Wolfgang Hager, "against all textbook wisdom, there has not been a single year with a trade deficit."

The West Germans achieved their *Wirtschaftswunder* thanks in part to good luck and U.S. aid (some $2 billion under the Marshall Plan alone). They also made a virtue of necessity and threw themselves into the export business. From Bismarck through Hitler, Germany's economic growth had been spurred primarily by domestic demand. But after the war, with domestic markets halved by territorial losses, and with millions of refugees seeking work, West Germany had no choice but to harness its reviving industrial potential to a world economy that was growing faster than its own.

A rough postwar consensus emerged after 1949 among business, labor, and Konrad Adenauer's new government. Bonn fostered a "structured" free-market environment (with tax incentives to promote reinvestment and exports). Labor and business leaders warily groped toward an uneasy concordat, eventually embodied in law, that guaranteed a role for unions in corporate decision-making ("codetermination") and thereby bought three decades of labor peace. The blue-collar rank-and-file worked harder than they "had to." Indeed, as historian Hans Gatzke has noted, "the most important element in Germany's economic recovery was the industry and self-discipline of its people, eager to slave and save in order to pull themselves out of the economic abyss."

All of this, combined with the chronic undervaluation of the mark (which made German goods especially attractive abroad), established the Federal Republic as a worldwide merchant.

West Germany, however, faces a new set of circumstances in the 1980s. Its economy, in a sense, has "matured." The mark has been steadily revalued upward, and there is greater competition from Japan, the United States, and Western Europe in foreign trade. Labor unions increasingly deplore the presence of foreign *Gastarbeiter* at a time of high unemployment, while some business executives now seek imaginative ways to by-pass the "codetermination" statutes. Bonn sees a need for "export substitution"—finding new *domestic* markets for German goods. The transition from heavy manufacturing to an American-style "service economy" still lies ahead. Energy costs, here as elsewhere, keep rising.

In short, the next thirty years of prosperity may not come as easily as the last thirty.

— *Land* (state) boundary

★ Allied military headquarters

△ Nuclear power plants in operation or under construction

Source: British Embassy; Aubrey Diem, *Western Europe: A Geographical Analysis*, New York: Wiley, 1979; French Embassy; U.S. Central Intelligence Agency; U.S. Department of Defense; West German Embassy.

These repeated terrorist incidents revived fundamentally conservative instincts among the majority of West Germans, instincts reinforced by stiff legislation aimed at curbing "radicals." As with other national issues, such as reliance on nuclear energy, the West Germans were quick to cast the debate over terrorism in ideological terms of Left versus Right.

Vying for "Germanness"

Conceivably, Germany is the most ideological of all nations. It is no coincidence that the principal thinkers of 19th-century socialism—Marx, Lassalle, Engels, Bebel—were Germans. However, the roots of ideological contest, so alien to Anglo-Saxon tradition, go further back in German history—to the 16th-century Peasant Wars, Reformation, and Counter Reformation. The conflicts between German Catholics and German Protestants were so devastating that, in retrospect, one must ask whether it was bad luck that the Germans were ever converted to Christianity.

Even today, confessional lines are sharper in Germany than they are in any other country. This has led, for instance, to such grotesque excesses as the selection of television anchormen and commentators not by any criterion of merit but by their allegiance to Christian or socialist parties. Similarly, the schools of the ten *Länder*, or federal states, have curricula determined often by the party that controls the state government. A child schooled in Bayern (Bavaria) might thus find strangely different conditions upon moving to a school in Bremen.

The ideological contest is replayed on another scale in the rivalry between West and East Germany, each of which seeks to portray itself as the home of the free—the one under the banner of welfare-state market capitalism, the other under the banner of communism. (Here the Federal Republic has a distinct advantage, since some 75 percent of East Germany's population of 17 million regularly watches West German television, posing problems for the communist leadership.) On a more mundane level, East and West Germany vie to outdo each other in preserving "Germanness," whether by erecting museums or by emphasizing traditional styles. There was a time not long ago when West Germans fancied going to dine in East Berlin, to get away from the *Gastarbeiter* waiters of the West. "If you want a real German meal served by a real German waiter in a dress coat, you have to go to East Berlin," a West German told me.

That urge to revive dormant German tradition has been especially strong in recent years among the middle-aged bourgeoi-

sie: in the refurbishing of old family portraits; the display of tin soldier collections; the acquisition of Biedermeier furniture; the popularity of folk festivals; the (abortive) attempt to restore the 18th-century Great Tattoo *(Grosse Zapfenstreich)* of military drum and fife in the West German Army.

It has also been reflected very widely in careful restoration and preservation of architectural treasures (and even of whole towns, such as Nördlingen and Rothenburg) dating as far back as the Middle Ages. Modern commercial concerns have begun designing their new establishments in a style that accommodates itself to Neoclassical or Renaissance buildings in their vicinity. Much of this has occurred in the context of regional pride, which tends to underscore the intensely provincial character of much West German life.

It was the express intention of the American, British, and French occupation powers to foster decentralization in postwar Germany. Thus, police administration and education were made the responsibility of the 10 *Länder* plus West Berlin. But it was the establishment of the federal capital in the small university city of Bonn (population then: about 100,000) and the denial of seat-of-government status to Berlin that effectively provincialized all of West Germany.

Henceforth, Frankfurt (an imperial German capital in medieval times), Munich, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Cologne, and Hannover would vie for national attention, but none had the strength to command allegiance as a successor capital. By the same token, the larger cities developed supraregional newspapers, such as *Frankfurter Allgemeine, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Welt,* and *Zeit*, yet none has acquired a commanding lead as the main national daily or weekly. (West Germany does, however, have several national news magazines of wide circulation, such as *Stern* and *Der Spiegel*.)

The Seventeenth Drop

During the 1970s, provincialism was also evident in "voter initiatives" on both township and state ballots to address controversial local issues. Often local lobbying groups focused on environmental problems: a hazardous waste dump; a building developer's bid for park or forest land; a proposed nuclear power station. The enthusiasm and commitment of some of these regional groups spawned an ecological movement on a national scale in the latter part of the decade. The Green Party, founded in 1980 as a coalition of environmentalists, opponents of nuclear energy, and people disturbed generally about the

The radicalism of the 1960s lingers on among West Germany's young. In this 1980 cartoon, middle-aged burghers are discussing imaginative ways of dealing with the "youth problem."

By Hans Sigg for Nebelspalter, Schweiz.

encroachments of a highly industrialized society, polled 1.5 percent of the vote in the October 5, 1980, federal elections. (This was well below the 5 percent minimum required for entry into the Bundestag.)

The willingness of individual Germans to take matters into their own hands, to challenge authority, to stand up for rights that they feel are threatened represents a new phenomenon in German society. It reflects the penetration of the democratic spirit to the grassroots. To be sure, the impulse to preserve one's rights often takes the form of going to court. There is an especially strong litigious streak in the West Germans.

Frequently, West Germans file suits over the pettiest imagined infractions of the law: an insult muttered in a tavern; a gesture by a motorist such as tapping the brow to impute empty-headedness in another driver; a householder's failure to remove winter ice from his sidewalk. A certain righteousness accompanies this litigious spirit, rooted perhaps in the ideological contests that have long played a prominent role in the German consciousness. The urge to be right and to be proven right is still very strong.

Once, in a youth hostel, I sat opposite a German boy who was consuming a liter of Beaujolais by himself. When he had finished, I told him with a touch of malice that according to legend

there were still 16 drops left in the bottle. The boy proceeded to upend the bottle and to count. The first dozen drops came fairly swiftly and the sixteenth only after some minutes, but then he shook and twirled the bottle until a seventeenth drop fell from the rim. "You were wrong!" he exulted.

The great leveling effect of the last world war, literally and figuratively, has made itself felt throughout the social structure of West Germany. True, a remnant of the old class stratification lingers on, as does a remnant of the old wealth in industrial and banking circles. People named Flick and Thyssen and the heirs of Hohenzollerns and Bismarcks continue to enjoy a certain social prominence. Workers continue to drink beer, raise rabbits or pigeons, and go bowling. The bourgeoisie continues to drink wine, attend concerts, and take walks on Sunday. Students at the smaller universities have revived the customs of dueling (some 2,500 students out of a university population of 1 million belong to dueling fraternities) and drinking in unison.

Banking on the Future

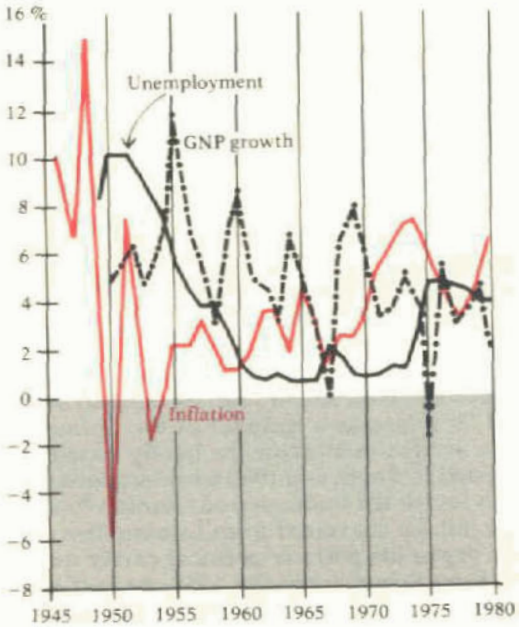
Yet it would be impossible to characterize West Germany as a class-ridden society. The great majority of the citizenry shows no signs of cultivating a class consciousness. Rather, the sharpest social distinctions have tended to be between Germans with a higher education and Germans who completed their schooling at the secondary level. A German with only 10 or 12 years of schooling is likely to have his career in an enterprise or in the civil service strictly curtailed.

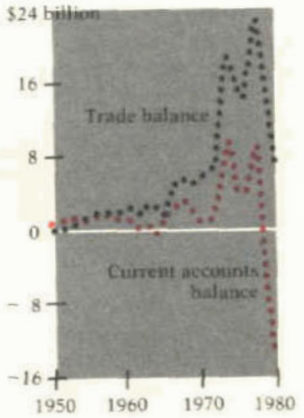
Still, the values of the lower-income groups remain fundamentally the same as those of the more affluent: security, property ownership, and a sense of personal prosperity. Elaborate programs of welfare benefits, unemployment compensation, health insurance, and pensions have all added to the sense of well-being and stability. At the same time, these social security programs, which in the main have enjoyed the support of all political parties, created a considerable hedge against inordinate German fears of inflation (which now runs at 5.5 percent a year, the highest since 1965).*

The memory of the economic and political ruin brought on by Germany's inflation during the 1920s is still strong. It helps explain why West Germans are willing to contribute, on the av-

*Unemployment compensation, for instance, amounts to 68 percent of one's pay; social security payments range from $300 to $1,000 a month, depending on longevity in a job and wage rates. Health insurance usually covers 80 percent of treatment costs, hospital costs are almost fully covered, and a worker may receive up to 6 weeks pay while on sick leave.

AFTER THE ECONOMIC "MIRACLE," SOME PROBLEMS





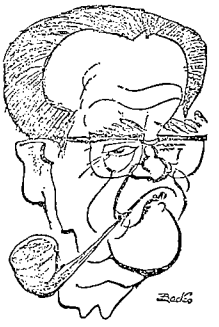
Source: Deutsche Bundesbank; International Monetary Fund; B. R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics 1750–1970*, New York: Columbia, 1975; United Nations.

THE GERMANS AS CONSUMERS: A 1977 COMPARISON

	WEST GERMANY	FRANCE	GREAT BRITAIN	ITALY	NETHER-LANDS	SPAIN	SWEDEN	SWITZER-LAND
GNP per capita (in thousands of dollars)	$10.9	6.3	5.1	3.7	9.6	2.8	8.8	14.8
Health-care costs (% of all consumer expenditures)	1.3%	11.0	1.4	10.0	12.0	5.0	4.0	9.3
Balance of tourism (receipts minus expenditures in billions of dollars)	$−7.00	+0.46	+1.88	+3.87	−1.34	+3.47	−0.80	+0.83
Alcohol consumption (qts./day per capita)	0.52 qts.	0.44	0.37	0.32	0.28	0.34	0.21	0.34
Men's toiletries (annual spending per adult male)	$17.71	10.26	6.46	7.35	14.57	4.01	12.55	17.32
Pocket calculators (% of households owning)	49%	33	45	15	20	12	35	26
Toys and games (annual growth in expenditures per household)	6.6%	24.7	24.7	21.2	12.0	39.7	22.1	16.8

Source: *Consumer Europe 1979–80* and *European Marketing Data and Statistics*, 16th ed., both published by London: Euromonitor Publications, 1979.

THE MASTER STRATEGIST



© by Backes; Rothco Cartoons.

In his native land, he has been praised and damned like few men in this century: as a "renegade" by communists; an "old Bolshevik" by right-wingers; a "primordial rock" by admirers. But, unlike Konrad Adenauer or Willy Brandt, Herbert Wehner, the 75-year-old parliamentary whip of West Germany's dominant Social Democratic Party (SPD), is virtually unknown in the English-speaking world. Yet Wehner has had an extraordinary impact on the evolution of German politics and society since 1945.

His career spans—and reflects—50 turbulent years of German history. During the 1920s and '30s, he was a member of the German Communist Party. Called to service in Moscow, he barely escaped Stalin's purges. He was arrested in Sweden in 1942 while organizing a secret mission to Berlin to revive the underground German Communist apparatus; while in jail, he converted from communism to socialism. In 1946, Wehner began his postwar political career as a protégé of socialist leader Kurt Schumacher. By 1957, he had attained the deputy chairmanship of the Social Democratic Party, a post he held until 1973.

A superb organizer and brilliant political strategist, Wehner is generally credited in Germany with three achievements. First, he provided the impetus for the Social Democratic Party's 1959 swing away from Marxist doctrine and toward acceptance of the Federal Republic as it was—allied to the West and committed to NATO. Second, he prepared the SPD for a short-lived coalition with its archrival, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), paving the way for the various coalition governments that have ruled West Germany since 1966.

Finally, Wehner, the godfather of West Germany's *Ostpolitik*, has kept up the pressure, publicly and privately, to keep alive the issue of Germany's continuing East-West partition—and to find ways to ameliorate the plight of separated families.

"For the Germans and probably for Europe too," he has said, "it would be best if the Germans lived in a united democratic state, and could organize their relations to the rest of world. But that does not depend solely on our will, for the day when this unity comes will be determined by the [Great] Powers. *Whether* it comes and if it comes at all is something we alone can determine."

—D.B.

erage, more than 50 percent of their earnings to the payment of (progressive) income taxes and the maintenance of the various social security and medical insurance programs, as well as to set aside regular amounts for savings. Despite a growing indulgence in luxury goods and services, from expensive soaps to vacations in Thailand, the German tradition of thrift is still very powerful. Savings are encouraged by high interest rates for such basic investments as housing. West Germans have accumulated savings worth $4,000 per capita, almost 10 times the rate of Americans. (However, balance-of-payments deficits of nearly $15 billion began to chew up investment capital in 1980.)

While there are people who live poorly in West Germany (*Gastarbeiter*, for the most part), it would be difficult to find a German who is poorly housed. The barracks life of the early postwar years has practically vanished, but there is a shortage of *new* housing, created in part by real estate speculation in crowded metropolitan areas, in part by laggard public housing construction. Rents for small apartments in the big cities have risen to $600 a month and more. Young people have taken to "squatting" in vacant dwellings designated for destruction (and, eventually, replacement), causing violent clashes with the authorities in Berlin, Frankfurt, and Hamburg.

Can Comity Last?

Still, it would appear that their general, new-found comfort makes the Germans easier to live with, less marked by the envy, fear, and hatred so prevalent in the interwar years. The sense of comity, or perhaps the desire for comity, has meant that blue-collar workers have frequently, though not always, heeded union calls *not* to strike; it has meant that entrepreneurs and bankers feel comfortable with the leadership of the Social Democratic Party. The idea of cooperation between social sectors was actually institutionalized in 1951 in the coal and steel industries in the practice of "codetermination"—appointing worker representatives to sit on the governing boards of the coal and steel industries—and, in the late 1960s, in the practice of concerted action, devised by Economics Minister Karl Schiller, which brought industry, trade union, and government economic leaders together periodically to create an acceptable range for nonbinding wage and price guidelines.

In Germany, the effect of such developments has been to eliminate, or at least modify, potential sources of acute social tension and, conversely, to create a sense of common social purpose. What is not entirely clear is the extent to which a "com-

mon purpose" depends on the *Wirtschaftswunder*, the economic miracle, West Germany's three decades of steady economic growth. How firmly will this social consensus hold up during the 1980s if production continues to decline and unemployment and inflation continue to creep upward?

A Fatherland without Fathers

That could be a problem, but in my view, the real tensions in West German society lie elsewhere, in the realm of the psyche. To begin with, there was the failure in the early years of the Federal Republic to come fully to grips with the immediate nazi past, a failure that was practically ordained by the Western Allied occupation powers. The cause was the Cold War, commencing with brutal force in Germany less than three years after the end of World War II in the form of a Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948. The Western powers swiftly abandoned their plans and programs for "reeducation" of the Germans and virtually terminated their "de-nazification" efforts in favor of integrating West Germany into the common effort against the communists.

Annemarie Renger, a Social Democrat who later became President of the Bundestag, recalled those early postwar years: "Suddenly with the blockade, we saw we didn't have to change and could stay the way we were. We pursued our own personal interests, with a bad conscience that we had gotten off so easily." In effect, the national memory was short-circuited.

From this act of mental amputation, West German novelists such as Heinrich Böll and film-makers, including Rainer Fassbinder, Volker Schlöndorff, and Alexander Kluge, derived much of their material. They sought to fill in the gaps opened by the sudden transformation of their countrymen from occupied enemies to prized allies. One should keep in mind, of course, that the nazi experience has not been totally sublimated, or buried, as the militarist era has been in Japan. Rather, there have been sporadic revivals of interest and attention—centered around a new French film about concentration camps, Joachim Fest's biography of Hitler, or an American TV serial *(Holocaust)*.

While writers and film-makers have attempted to recreate a kind of continuity in German life, and are often richly subsidized and rewarded by the federal government or private foundations, most of their work seems to have a remote or provincial quality. For instance, little of the political life of West Germany is reflected in literature except as caricature. This has not been a matter of deficient craftsmanship or lack of originality, but

rather an incapacity to create a major work on the order, say, of a Thomas Mann or a Gotthold Ephraim Lessing.

A second and related source of alienation and tension has been the diminution not only of a hierarchical social order but also of customs of authority and obedience. The concept of hierarchy was removed in a formal sense by the adoption of the Federal Basic Law in 1949, the third article of which declared all human beings to be equal before the law. But authority, principally in the form of rule by fathers and (male) teachers, had already been greatly undermined during six years of war when most of the fathers, and teachers, were at the front—many never to return, many to languish another five years in prison or in forced labor camps. In some respects, Germany in those years was a matriarchy, and the strength of the nation lay in its women rather than in its men. (In 1978, well over half of the

LANDS LOST BY GERMANY IN TWO WORLD WARS

Source: Hans-Adolf Jacobsen and Hans Dollinger, eds., *Deutschland: Hundert Jahre Deutsche Geschichte*, Munich: Verlag Kurt Desch, 1973; Hubertus Prinz zu Löwenstein, *Deutsche Geschichte*, Munich-Berlin: Herbig, 1976; William R. Shepherd, *Shepherd's Historical Atlas*, 9th ed., New York: Barnes & Noble, 1973.

Federal Republic's 469,741 teachers were women.) It was, well into the 1950s, a fatherland without fathers, also because the German men in those years were preoccupied with rebuilding their economic lives.

The effort by the men to reassert traditional concepts of order and authority during the 1950s and '60s, the period the West Germans called the Restoration, contributed to the Student Revolt that began in 1967. That was, above all, a rebellion against outworn and potentially repressive concepts of conformity, against a sense of being watched or reprimanded for signs of disorderliness, and against a feeling of confinement in a country where the population density is 639 persons per square mile, 10 times the density in the United States.

Hothouse Democracy

Presumably, the same instincts lie behind the almost hectic urge to travel abroad by the millions (contributing to West Germany's balance-of-payments problem), and to emigrate at a rate of 50,000 a year, as if to offset the arrival of foreigners seeking political asylum in West Germany. In this respect alone, West Germany has become a very mobile society. Even its young drug addicts in outpatient rehabilitation programs can afford to visit the United States on their welfare funds.

One senses that the spirit of adventure remains strong among the Germans despite all the constraints, pleasures, and comforts West German society has created. Now and then, it bursts out: a mountain climber, Reinhold Messner, conquering hitherto unattainable peaks in the Himalayas; a wingwalker, Jaromis Wagner, crossing the Atlantic; a daring rescue of hostages in Somalia in 1977.

For the more sedentary burghers, there are thousands of "cliques," the groups of friends from the workplace, the vacation spot, or the profession, who meet with alarming regularity to celebrate their togetherness with wine or beer or schnapps. It is probably a replication of the old guild traditions or the almost moribund custom of the *Stammtisch* (regular table) in old taverns where fraternity brothers used to meet.

It is an axiom that the Germans have demonstrated the ability to make all political systems function, from feudalism to constitutional monarchy, from fascism to communism to the democracy of the Federal Republic. The German problem has been to flesh out these walking skeletons of theory and infuse them with the human spirit. The democracy of West Germany has tested and proven the fundamental strength of the 1949 consti-

tution. An official tendency merely to inform the public or to lecture it from on high has been replaced by the notion of democratic discussion. Even the West German press, though given to preaching on the one hand or denunciation on the other (following a habit of nihilism that goes back to the 1920s), has become more tolerant of opposing views. The idea of promoting discussion without declaring a winner or crushing a loser was introduced in 1952 by Werner Höfer, a radio-television journalist whose program, *Internationaler Frühschoppen,* is the longest running and most popular TV show in the country.

In a few years (1993), the Federal Republic will have surpassed the Germany of the Hohenzollern Kaisers in maintaining a German state and system of government in peace at home and abroad. The West Germans have made democracy work, and work well. One of the quaint experiences of recent times is for Americans or Britons to be lectured to by Germans on the theory and practice of democracy. Germans have always been eager students and even more eager schoolmasters.

Still—and here I take a deep breath—the lingering impression of West Germany is that of a hothouse, with a connection to the west, a connection to the east, and a dependency on a modicum of economic sunshine. There are NATO and the European Community on the one hand, Ostpolitik commitments and benefits on the other, and the pendulum effect of political and cultural trends between East and West Germany. Would this plant called democracy survive if it were dug up and replanted in the soil of a reunited Germany? Or will the West Germans, intensely preoccupied with themselves, and cross-pollinated socially and economically, subtly alter the breed before that time comes, if it ever does? I continue to hold my breath.

A PLACE IN THE SUN

by David Schoenbaum

Three decades after the contentious postwar reorganization of Central Europe, the largest fragment of a once-devastated nation—the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)—is now a power in world affairs.

Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's debut at a Western summit meeting on Guadeloupe in early 1979 only confirmed the obvious. As the world's third-largest industrial economy, and a global trader second only to the United States, West Germany exports 23 percent of its GNP (versus 8 percent for the Americans). Its generous foreign-aid program, designed in part to keep its Third World customers happy, is the West's third biggest.

As suppliers (and consumers) of goods and services, the West Germans are ubiquitous. They build Volkswagens in Pennsylvania, airports in the Soviet Union, nuclear power complexes in Brazil, solar installations in Kuwait, medical research laboratories in Egypt, desalinization facilities in Libya, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. The Federal Republic's works adorn the planet and extend beyond it, with a sophisticated European Spacelab, mostly German-built, scheduled for launching aboard the U.S. Space Shuttle in 1983.

No German city today matches the "world city" standards of Imperial or Weimar Berlin. But the Deutsche Mark (DM), created by the American military government in 1948, has edged out the pound sterling as the old Reichsmark never did to become a world reserve currency second only to the dollar. Despite the rising price of OPEC oil, Bonn has managed to hold both inflation and unemployment below six percent.

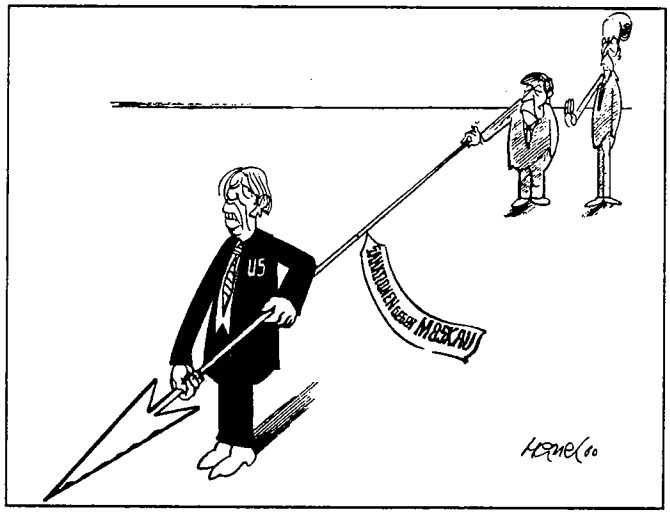
Actually, the Federal Republic has been an economic giant since the late 1950s although, in Willy Brandt's phrase, it long remained a "political dwarf" in world affairs—partly by choice. But, during the past decade, West Germany has grown in international stature. Its representatives receive respectful attention in Moscow and Riyadh, in Tokyo, Tripoli, Beijing, and, lately, even in Washington, once accustomed to taking Bonn's compliance for granted.

Be it democracy's survival in postrevolutionary Portugal,

the financial bail-out of Turkey, the economic health of Israel or Poland, the effectiveness of last year's Olympic boycott, or the periodic support of the dollar, the success of a growing number of Western (and Eastern) initiatives now depends heavily on quiet decisions made in Bonn. "We have to live up to our growing responsibility," Chancellor Schmidt observed last November. "But we don't want our German role in the world to be written too large, . . . awakening expectations that can't be fulfilled."

On the face of it, West Germans enjoy the best of at least three worlds. The Federal Republic is the keystone of the NATO alliance and the European Economic Community; it is the bridge-builder, via *Ostpolitik,* to Eastern Europe; and it is the beneficiary-participant in numerous bilateral pacts with the United States, France, and the Soviet Union.

Bonn has managed, despite the recent Polish troubles, to maintain a tolerable relationship with its powerful East German sibling on the other side of the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall. East-West German trade totaled nearly $5 billion in 1980,



By Walter Hanel for Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt.

West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and then French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing endorsed many of President Jimmy Carter's foreign policy initiatives with reluctance—particularly those unfriendly to Moscow. The caption of this 1980 West German cartoon is "Hello, partner."

up 34 percent over 1979. While Erich Honecker's Communist regime last October doubled the amount of "hard" currency Western visitors must exchange daily after they enter its territory—from about $7 to $14—West Berliners and West Germans continue to visit their colleagues, friends, and relatives in the "other Germany" by the hundreds of thousands. Some 50,000 phone calls are made every day between the two nations.

West Germany's postwar achievement is all the more remarkable for a nation whose earlier leaders asserted the primacy of an aggressive foreign policy and pursued that policy around the world. From Waterloo through World War II, successive generations of Germans lived and died with the same obsessions: Germany as the country in the middle, Germany with its nightmares over hostile European coalitions (and its capacity for bringing such coalitions into being), Germany in pursuit of markets and a place in the sun from Samoa to Togo to Baghdad.

Looking East

The traumatic outcome of World War II (and the subsequent partition of Germany) made these traditional concerns irrelevant. For a time, West Germany, like Japan, had neither the need nor the capacity for any foreign policy at all. Its territory dismembered, its economy in ruins, its cultural and social structures in disarray, its politics in suspension, post-Potsdam Germany became a passive object of international politics. Its leaders' choices were effectively defined by the occupying powers: France, Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. Defeated and demoralized, demobilized and displaced, millions of Germans wanted nothing more than to restore the freedom and security of their private lives.

Konrad Adenauer, the venerable Christian Democrat and the Federal Republic's founding Chancellor (1949–63), was convinced that only cooperation with the Western allies, and especially with Washington, would ensure the Federal Republic's future prosperity and safety. He led his nation, seriatim, into the European Coal and Steel Community, into rearmament, and into NATO, and he accepted the deployment of U.S. nuclear missiles on German soil. As for the question of national reunifica-

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David Schoenbaum, 46, is professor of history at the University of Iowa. Born in Milwaukee, he received a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin in 1955 and a D.Phil. from Oxford in 1965. He is the author of Hitler's Social Revolution *(1966),* The Spiegel Affair *(1968), and* Zabern 1913, *which will appear later this year.*

tion—the nation's major preoccupation—Adenauer counted on Western strength and cohesion. There would be no flirtations with the Soviet bloc in general and certainly no dalliances with the new communist regime to the east, the German Democratic Republic, which Adenauer, to the end of his life, continued to call the "Soviet Zone."

The West Germans enjoyed the fruits of Adenauer's *Westpolitik.* With hard work and Marshall Plan aid, protected by the U.S. security umbrella, the West German economy recovered rapidly. Exports flourished, and the new DM acquired the luster Germans once associated with the nation's military might.

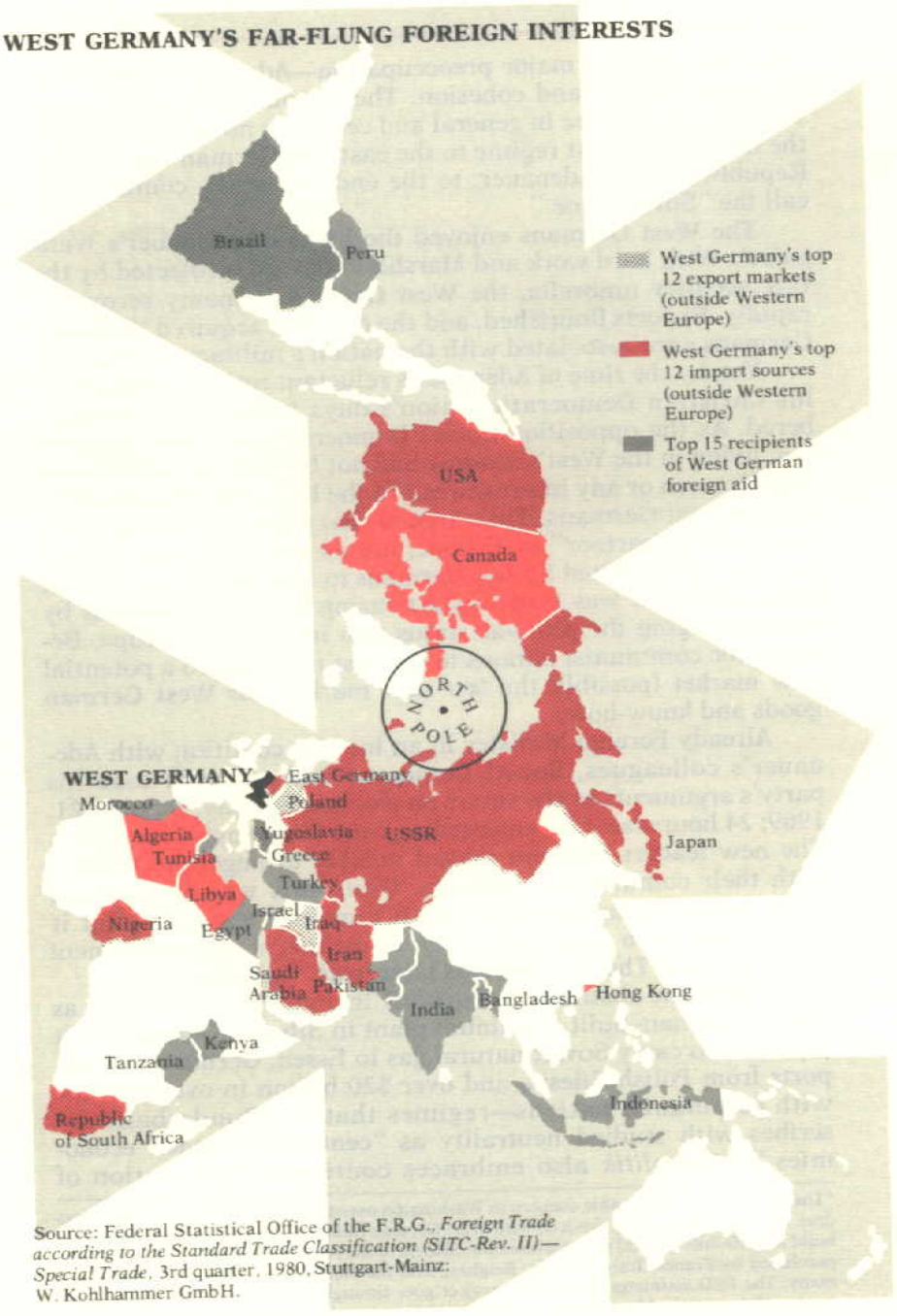
Yet, by the time of Adenauer's reluctant retirement in 1963, his Christian Democratic Union's days in power were numbered. As the opposition Social Democrats untiringly pointed out, living in the West's shadow had not brought about German reunification or any improvement in the lives and liberties of 17 million East Germans. They argued that Germany's future was as a "senior partner" in Europe, not as the everlasting junior partner of the United States. Germans in and out of government believed that it was time to start easing Cold War tensions by acknowledging the postwar status quo in Eastern Europe. Besides, the communist nations to the east represented a potential new market (possibly the *last* new market) for West German goods and know-how.

Already Foreign Minister in an interim coalition with Adenauer's colleagues, Social Democrat Willy Brandt took his party's arguments to the voters on election Sunday, October 21, 1969; 24 hours later, he emerged as West Germany's Chancellor. The new leaders in Bonn moved quickly to negotiate treaties with their communist neighbors. *Westpolitik* was not scuttled —economically and strategically it remained essential—but it was joined by a complementary *Ostpolitik,* a rapprochement with the East. The goal, then as later, was "balance."

Today, the abstraction *Ostpolitik* includes such tangibles as a West German–built aluminum plant in Siberia, German-built pipelines to carry Soviet natural gas to Essen, German coal imports from Polish Silesia, and over $20 billion in overall trade with communist nations—regimes that the Bundesbank describes with studied neutrality as "centrally planned economies."* *Ostpolitik* also embraces continued repatriation of

*There has been considerable concern in Washington over the European-Soviet natural gas deal. As it now stands, the Soviets, with West German financing and technology, intend to build a 3,600-mile natural gas pipeline from Siberia to the Federal Republic. The gas will be purchased by France, Italy, Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands, as well as West Germany. The FRG estimates that, if the project goes through, 30 percent of its natural gas needs will be supplied by the Soviet Union in 1990 (versus five percent in 1980).

WEST GERMANY'S FAR-FLUNG FOREIGN INTERESTS



Source: Federal Statistical Office of the F.R.G., *Foreign Trade according to the Standard Trade Classification (SITC-Rev. II)—Special Trade*, 3rd quarter, 1980, Stuttgart-Mainz: W. Kohlhammer GmbH.

ethnic Germans—50,000 in 1980, half of them from Poland, another quarter from East Germany—as well as East-West German family reunions on Black Sea beaches, and some 20 million trips a year between West Berlin and West Germany on *autobahns* where the sudden tightening of Soviet restrictions on travel once served as a warning of impending Cold War crises.

Scrapping an Arms Deal

What neither *Ostpolitik* nor other successes have provided is an abiding sense of self-assurance in a people long more disposed than most to find the cloud in every silver lining. The Federal Republic survives thanks to a close relationship with both NATO and the Soviet Union and a formidable industrial machine that for 30 years has sustained social tranquility and political civility. Having come to appreciate the status quo, the Germans now must take pains to maintain it. It is not always easy.

The recent debate on arms sales is symptomatic of the fragility of Bonn's political equilibrium. The Germans decided after World War II that arms sales only meant trouble and resolved to restrict their business primarily to NATO countries and to sell no weapons to nations that might actually use them. West German leaders violated this prudent policy at their peril. The revelation in 1965 that the Federal Republic had for eight years secretly been shipping arms to Israel led to a diplomatic breach with Arab states and a triumphant reception in Cairo for East Germany's Walter Ulbricht.

But now there is a domestic angle. Arms sales mean export revenue at a time when West Germany's current-accounts balance is $15 billion in the red. They mean jobs at a time when unemployment in the Federal Republic is at a record high (some 230,000 West Germans are employed in the weapons industry) and the economy is in a slump.

Last year, Bonn tentatively agreed to sell 300 Leopard

More than most nations, West Germany lives by trade. Its exports last year topped $187 billion, not far behind total U.S. exports. Automobiles and heavy industrial equipment account for about one-quarter of the total. The biggest import item is oil. Often overlooked in the American press is West Germany's sizable foreign aid program. In 1979, the Federal Republic disbursed grants and loans of some $3 billion to about 100 nations, most of them in the Third World. (This compares with U.S. economic aid of $7.1 billion to 112 countries that same year.) Bonn plans to increase its foreign aid by 12.5 percent annually during the next three years.

tanks, various armored vehicles, an unspecified number of Cheetah anti-aircraft missiles, and other weapons systems to Saudi Arabia. In return, West German businessmen hoped to secure some $9.2 billion annually in Saudi contracts. That would help pay West Germany's mounting oil bill. But many in Chancellor Schmidt's own party opposed the scheme, arguing that, whatever the short-term advantages of the weapons transfer, the Federal Republic's long-term interest was to keep its distance from international trouble spots. Last April, Bonn quietly called off the deal.

The Japanese Challenge

Many of those who oppose West Germany's weapons sales also oppose Bonn's decision to press forward with nuclear energy—the only way, the government contends, to reduce reliance on expensive OPEC oil in a country where the sun shines fitfully and coal is increasingly costly (and dangerous) to mine. Some 70,000 persons demonstrated last March against construction of a new nuclear power plant in Brokdorf, near Hamburg.

The issue goes beyond keeping German homes warm in the winter and illuminated at night. West Germany's economy, like those of other industrialized nations, depends on high-technology exports and on energy-intensive manufacturing. Excluded by design from postwar avionics and unable to keep up with the Japanese and Americans in microelectronics, the Germans fatefully invested a great deal of money and ingenuity in nuclear technology. One object was to supply 45 percent of West Germany's electricity needs by 1985—a goal that will not be met. (In 1980, nuclear energy accounted for less than 14 percent of the nation's electricity.)

Another aim was to generate income from sales of reactors abroad. Here Bonn ran into trouble in 1977 when the Carter administration sought to block West Germany's proposed sales of nuclear reactors and uranium enrichment plants to Brazil and Argentina. The White House called the German plans another step toward worldwide nuclear proliferation. West Germany went ahead with the sales anyway. In a nation where one out of four jobs depends on exports, the issue was as much an economic matter as a question of diplomacy. The deals with Brazil and Argentina are together worth $6 billion—as much as West Germany spent to import iron and steel in 1980.

Economists in Bonn shudder at the deficit in the Federal Republic's current account (which measures the value of trade,

WER INTELLIGENT FÄHRT, SOLLTE AUCH INTELLIGENTE ENTSCHEIDUNGEN TREFFEN.

"Whoever drives intelligently should also make intelligent decisions" reads this Toyota advertisement in Der Spiegel. *West Germans spend more than $1 billion a year on Japanese cars.*

services, and other international transactions). Oil is not the only culprit here, although it is West Germany's biggest single import, and its price more than doubled between 1978 and 1980, to $36.16 per barrel. One out of every five dollars of export income flows out of West Germany to such countries as Saudi Arabia, Libya, Nigeria, and Algeria. (Much of this money, however, is in turn recaptured by the German businessmen who quadrupled the Federal Republic's exports to OPEC countries between 1973 and 1977.)

Other factors behind the current-accounts deficit include the millions of foreign workers in West Germany who send money out of the country. And German tourists spend twice as much overseas, all told, as tourists from any other country. (In 1979, foreign tourists brought $6.5 billion into the country, while German travelers took $20 billion out.) Only recently have the Germans noticed that they are also importing 28 percent of their cars, one-third of them (250,000) from Japan. Only the Federal Republic's oil bill tops its imported auto bill, and German automakers, like their American counterparts, have suddenly discovered an interest in "protection."

West Germany's general economic health has been good for the Germans and good for the world. But the Federal Republic's "locomotive" economy is but one reason for the nation's impor-

tance on the international scene. The Germans remain where they have always been, at the center of a fractious and productive continent. Their country is crucial simply as a piece of real estate, facing 46 Warsaw Pact divisions across the Elbe. For the Federal Republic, the Cold War remains a fact of life.

Since World War II, the Germans have lived with two fears. One is that America won't defend them. The other is that it will.* A chill in Soviet-American relations, be it the result of trouble in Afghanistan, Poland, El Salvador, or anywhere else, inevitably makes West Germans feel a cold coming on. Frenchmen, confident that NATO forces stand between Paris and Moscow, sometimes kid themselves that they can always stay aloof, if they choose. Most West Germans, particularly those of the ruling generation, have no such delusions.

Like other NATO countries (except the United States, Britain, and Canada), West Germany continues to draft its youth —for 15-month tours. The country maintains a well-equipped, well-motivated Army of 500,000 with a mobilization potential of one million; a modern Air Force comprising 561 combat aircraft; and a serviceable little North Sea Navy. Defense spending ($20 billion in 1980) has regularly constituted about three percent of a growing GNP.

Guns or Butter?

With the largest armed force among the European NATO allies, the West Germans are willing to do their share. It is no secret, however, that Bonn was uneasy with the Reagan administration's postinaugural focus on El Salvador and its chilly fundamentalism on the subject of East-West relations. German leaders prefer quiet on their eastern front. They favor continued strategic arms talks between Washington and Moscow.

But the West Germans are also realists when it comes to the USSR. In 1977, Chancellor Schmidt was among the first to warn publicly of the threat of the Soviets' new SS-20 medium-range missiles aimed at Western Europe. His Social Democratic Party in 1979, despite its "dovish" nature, overwhelmingly endorsed the government's decision to allow the deployment of 108 countervailing U.S. Pershing II missiles on German soil.

And, stung by recent complaints from Washington, Bonn has grudgingly agreed to raise its defense budget. West German

*In a 1980 poll conducted by the Hamburg weekly *Stern*, 77 percent of West German respondents agreed that the United States would go to war with the Soviet Union in the event of a Warsaw Pact move against the Federal Republic. Only 58 percent of Americans surveyed concurred.

leaders recognize the need to be prepared should many of the American troops in Central Europe be abruptly airlifted to the Middle East. They also want to pre-empt a new "Mansfield Amendment" mandating withdrawal of some or all of the 230,000 U.S. troops from German soil on the grounds that "rich Europeans" refuse to "pay their share" of the NATO burden. (Senator Mike Mansfield, D.-Mont., now U.S. Ambassador to Japan, proposed in 1971 that the United States unilaterally cut its troop levels in Western Europe by one-half. The Senate defeated the proposal, 61 to 36.)

The unanswered question is: How much more can West Germany actually afford to spend on defense? The country's military budget is penned in on three sides—by the rising rate of inflation (now 5.3 percent), the rising price of imported oil, and the rising price of American weapons and training programs. Defense Minister Hans Apel reported last year that he was running as fast as he could to stay in the same place. Soon he was falling behind. In March 1981, Apel announced that production or acquisition of several new weapons systems, including a new main battle tank and new combat aircraft, would be delayed or abandoned owing to the cost squeeze.

If Bonn is to spend more on defense, the money will have to come, as it does in other countries, from domestic civilian programs. As in the United States, that is a looming question for the legislature. The Bundestag deputies are loath to slash the social welfare portion of the budget—especially at a time of economic dislocations.

So all is not roses for the Federal Republic, as its citizens are generally the first to emphasize. But today, most nations of the world would regard themselves as fortunate to have West Germany's problems, instead of their own.

BACKGROUND BOOKS

WEST GERMANY

"Germany is Hamlet!" exclaimed the German poet Ferdinand Freiligrath in 1844.

Historian Gordon Craig, in **Germany, 1866–1945** (Oxford, 1978, cloth; 1980, paper), chose Freiligrath's remark as an epigraph to his survey of the "tragic story" of German history from Prince Otto von Bismarck's triumph over Austria to the fall of the Third Reich.

As Craig suggests, the same "pale cast of thought" that prevented Hamlet from avenging his father's death—the indecisiveness and confusion, the incapacity for self-criticism, the paralysis of will—dogged Germany as well. It hindered the pursuit of political freedom, and eventually it destroyed the country's unity and political culture.

In the view of many historians, Germany suffered because, unlike France, Britain, and the United States, her people dallied with but refused to embrace Western liberalism—the political legacy of the Enlightenment. In his densely written **The German Idea of Freedom: History of a Political Tradition** (Univ. of Chicago, 1957, cloth; 1973, paper), Leonard Krieger probes the traditional German concept of the state. He finds that from the inception of the Holy Roman Empire, the loose confederation that made up "Germany" from the Middle Ages to 1806, the Germans considered political freedom a mere privilege that could be granted, or revoked, by the "prince."

Krieger notes that even as Englishman John Locke in the 17th century was defending individual rights against the usurpations of government, German political theorist Samuel von Pufendorf (1632–94) was insisting that "the supreme sovereign can rightfully force citizens to all things which he judges to be of any advantage to the public good."

Hajo Holborn, in **A History of Modern Germany** (Knopf, 1964), agrees with Krieger. The notion of the absolute authority of the state, he argues, came to full bloom in Prussia under Frederick the Great (1712–86), who built his kingdom into a formidable European power. Frederick's absolutism—he methodically subordinated the rights of his subjects to the needs of the Army, bureaucracy, and nobility—carried over into Bismarck's Empire (1871–1918) and became its major flaw.

Historians have found other flaws in Bismarck's Germany. In **The Social Foundations of German Unification, 1858–1871,** 2 vols. (Princeton, 1969, cloth & paper), Theodore Hamerow describes the class divisions of the Second Reich, where wealth and nobility remained the monopoly of a privileged caste. In Prussia, Bismarck retained the old constitution of 1849 with its system of "three-class suffrage" that gave more parliamentary representation to the moneyed minority than to the lower-class majority.

George O. Kent considers Bismarck himself, in **Bismarck and His Times** (Southern Ill. Univ., 1978, cloth & paper). The Chancellor's bold personality, his diplomatic genius, and even his ruthlessness — he warned his compatriots that only "iron and blood" would unify Ger-

many—served him well as he took on foreign and domestic foes and forged a German empire.

But, as Kent reminds us, the conservative Prince had "some noticeable blind spots." He never recognized the necessity of coming to terms with socialism, for example, whose adherents he oppressed, and whose cause he thereby furthered.

According to sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf, in **Society and Democracy in Germany** (Doubleday, 1967, cloth; Norton, 1979, paper), Western-style liberalism remained out of Germany's reach until the "social basis of authoritarian government" was destroyed. This occurred, ironically, as a result of Adolf Hitler's revolution during the 1930s, which jarred the bulwarks of Bismarck's order—the Junkers entrenched in the Army, bureaucracy, and judiciary—and swept away many of the social vestiges of the old German Empire.

The problem in Germany had always been, as Fritz Stern comments in **The Failure of Illiberalism** (Knopf, 1971, cloth; Univ. of Chicago, 1976, paper), that "revolution came from above," as when, for example, Bismarck introduced unemployment insurance to forestall social unrest. Yet the stern munificence of Bismarck's "State Socialism," like political freedom, was subject to the ruler's caprice.

"Reform" came from above in Nazi Germany as well, except that the changes brought on by mass mobilization and, eventually, total war were so devastating that most of the last class distinctions were virtually wiped out. In the end, Hitler unintentionally did more than any other German leader to break down the old authoritarianism—and so make post-war democracy possible.

What of the "other" Germany—the peace-loving and cosmopolitan Germany of poets and thinkers? Ironically, Ronald Gray, in **The German Tradition in Literature, 1871–1945** (Cambridge, 1965), ascribes at least partial responsibility for the rise of nazism to German writers and philosophers.

Gray condemns the German intellectuals' obsessive idealism—and their aversion to everyday politics. He sees prototypes of the totalitarian mind-set in the poetry of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), and the will to power philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), who once said that "a master race is either on top or it is destroyed."

Erich Heller disagrees. As he remarks in **The Disinherited Mind** (Harcourt, 1975, paper only), the works of many German poets, writers, and thinkers, from Goethe to Kafka, embody "distinctive symptoms of all modern literature," particularly "the consciousness of life's depreciation" amid the social dislocations of the Industrial Revolution.

The German expressionist painters at the beginning of the century, as Peter Selz notes in his engaging **German Expressionist Painting** (Univ. of Calif., 1957, cloth; 1974, paper), are a case in point. From Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's desolate landscapes of the modern industrial city to Franz Marc's pantheistic, wildly colorful portraits of foxes, horses, and cows, these artists evoked what they saw as the perceived spiritual emptiness of their time.

The continuation of this "modernist revolt" during the Weimar Republic (1919–33) is the subject of Peter Gay's **Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider** (Harper, 1968, cloth; 1970, paper). As a result of the chaotic Revolution of 1918, the Weimar Republic succeeded the German

Empire. It was, Gay writes, a "creature of reason," a "creation of outsiders, propelled by history into the inside, for a short, dizzying, fragile moment."

Weimar culture accommodated a whirlwind of artistic achievement.

In film, there was that bizarre expressionist creation, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), with its distorted stage effects. The 1920s also saw Bertolt Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) and the heyday of the Berlin political cabaret, with its mimes and raucous skits.

Gay's work is a good introduction to the history of Weimar culture, but there are faults. The underlying inspiration was not, as Gay believes, the Western Enlightenment but German romanticism. Even the Bauhaus—the most famous avant-garde school of "functional" architecture and "rational" design—cannot be understood outside the framework of a peculiar utopianism left over from the days of German expressionism.

Architects in the new German republic, like painters, playwrights, and filmmakers, tried to evoke a messianic sense of social renewal. Walter Gropius, the director of the Bauhaus, thought architecture should be a "crystal symbol of a new faith."

But when he and other artists thought of social change, they did not envision a bourgeois order of the kind found in England or the United States. Rather, as John Willet argues in **Art and Politics in the Weimar Period: The New Sobriety, 1917–1933** (Pantheon, 1979, cloth; 1980, paper), many creations of the Weimar period were "founded on a broadly socialist, and, in many cases, communist ideology and a generally sympathetic alertness to what was going on in Soviet Russia."

Karl Dietrich Bracher describes the dissolution of the Weimar Republic—and the suppression of its culture as well—in **The German Dictatorship** (Praeger, 1970, cloth; 1972, paper), the most thorough and balanced treatment of the rise and consolidation of nazism to date. Bracher, like fellow historians Holborn and Krieger, traces the origins of National Socialism back to Germany's rejection of the Enlightenment. The ultimate cause of nazism, he writes, "was the deep schism between German and Western political thought, and the emergence of a special German sense of destiny with anti-Western overtones."

Norman Rich's **Hitler's War Aims,** 2 vols. (Norton, vol. 1, 1973, cloth; 1976, paper; vol. 2, 1974, cloth), is one of the most provocative studies of Hitler's foreign policy. Rich discusses the interaction between nazi ideology and military planning and concludes that Hitler was not a mere political opportunist, but a "fanatical ideologue" who consistently followed the racist-national principles laid down in *Mein Kampf* (1925).

One key to Hitler's foreign policy was the drive for *Lebensraum* (living space) in the East—an expansionist policy to subjugate "inferior" races and to make more room for German settlements in Eastern Europe and Russia. Rich contends that Hitler never deviated from the policies of *Lebensraum* and the Final Solution. Indeed, his determination to smite the Soviets and to pursue racist extermination policies, without regard to political or military consequences, may have been the "decisive factor in his defeat."

Alan Bullock examines Hitler's character in **Hitler: A Study in Tyranny** (Bantam, 1958; Harper, rev. ed., 1964, cloth & paper; Harper, abr.

ed., 1971, paper), still one of the most comprehensive and perceptive biographies of the Führer. Bullock portrays Hitler as a "political genius"—a master of oratory and a ruthless demagogue determined to destroy his enemies. On the day before his suicide on April 30, 1945, as exploding Russian artillery shells tore away at the protective masonry above the Führer's bunker, Hitler issued his last will and testament: "Above all I charge the leaders of the nation . . . to merciless opposition to the universal poison of all peoples, international Jewry."

In **German Foreign Policies, West and East** (ABC-Clio, 1974, cloth & paper), Peter H. Merkl deals with the legacy of Hitler's destruction—the aftermath of World War II and the division of Germany. Merkl is above all concerned with West Germany's *Ostpolitik* (the policy of reconciliation with the East), détente, and the relationship of both East and West Germany to the rest of Europe. West Germany's future, Merkl believes, depends on its ability to "merge" politically with the West and diplomatically with the East.

If West Germany's diplomatic horizons have broadened considerably during the past decade, so have its contributions to the arts. John Sandford asserts, in **The New German Cinema** (Barnes & Noble, 1980), that German film reached a "historical turning point" in the 1970s, as directors such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, and Volker Schlöndorff discovered that they could combine aesthetic integrity and box-office success. In 1980, Schlöndorff's *The Tin Drum* won an Oscar for Best Foreign Film.

It is no accident that Günter Grass's novel, **The Tin Drum** (Vintage, 1962, paper; Random, 1971, paper) became the basis for such a popular movie. This novel is the epic tale of Oskar Matzerath, an incorrigible and destructive child who, with piercing screams and fiery tantrums, defies the absurdity of life in the interwar period by refusing, physically, to grow up. It is a mythic commentary on what Grass calls the "Epoch of Infantilism" (the period between the First and Second World Wars), and the surrealist pageantry, moral decay, and senseless destruction it encompassed.

The unfathomable disasters in the years 1914–45 left German writers such as Grass with the conviction that irrationality—represented by Oskar's infantilism—was not merely one of life's unhappy elements but its basic character.

Today, with West Germany's economy and prestige on the rise, the old tragic flaws of German history—national chauvinism, militarism, and authoritarian rule—seem at once vitiated and irrelevant. Whatever problems West Germany has today, they do not stem from the historical tradition that drove Germany into two world wars. That was laid to rest, along with the ghost of Hamlet, in the rubble of Berlin in 1945.

—Kim R. Holmes

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Mr. Holmes is a doctoral candidate in history at Georgetown University.*