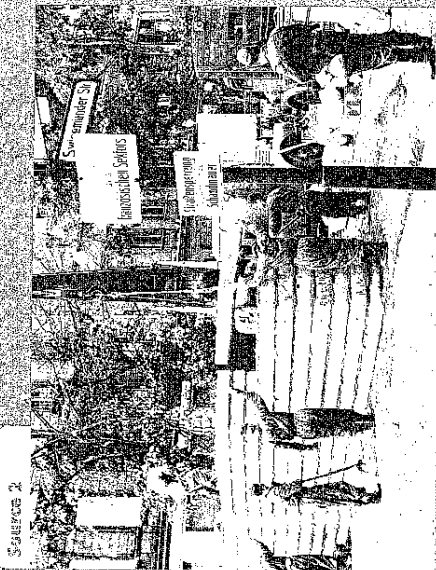


Chapter

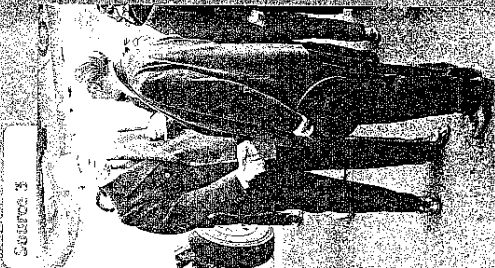
The division of Germany 1945-1969



Source 1



Source 2



Source 3

Think about

- 1-3 demonstrate two things about the amount of change and division that Germany continued to experience after 1945
- 2 The way in which Germany - or at least a part of Germany - became central to European unity after the war.

Do these images support your own ideas of what happened to Germany after the war?

During the final days of the war Hitler sheltered with staff and some key Nazi members in an air-raid bunker under the Chancellery, known as the 'Führerbunker'. Eva Braun, Hitler's mistress, had also insisted on coming to Berlin and remaining with the Führer.

It is untrue that I, or anyone in Germany, wanted the war in 1939. It was desired and instigated solely by those international statesmen who were either of Jewish descent or who worked for Jewish interests... I die with a happy heart, aware of the immeasurable deeds of our soldiers at the front...

Extract from Hitler's last will and testament

Introduction

This chapter examines what happened to Germany at the end of the Second World War and how its fortunes changed between 1945 and 1969. When compared to the years following 1918, the aftermath of the Second World War was very different. To what extent this was a case of learning from past mistakes is up to you to judge. Certainly there were more concerted efforts made to rebuild Germany and integrate her into European affairs. However, post-war reconstruction was soon eclipsed by a new world problem, the Cold War, which led, amongst other things, to the division of Germany into two separate states between 1949 and 1990. The other significant influence on Germany's future in 1945 was the legacy of Nazism. What would happen to those who had supported the Nazi Party? How would Germany cleanse itself of such a heavy burden of responsibility? Some of these latter issues are picked up in Chapter 14, which examines the different interpretations of Nazism to emerge in East and West Germany after the war.

Key questions

- What happened to Germany at the end of the Second World War?
- Why was Germany divided in 1949?
- What were the consequences of this division?
- What were the essential differences between East and West Germany? How was each state ruled?
- How did the economies of each state recover?
- Why was the Berlin Wall built and with what consequences?

A defeated Germany

Hitler's last days

On 20 April 1945, as Russian and American troops were closing in around him, Hitler abandoned previous plans to flee to the south of Germany, and decided - against the advice of other high ranking Nazis - to remain in Berlin. Despite holding daily conferences, when Hitler was given reports indicating that Germany was heading for a complete defeat at the hands of the Allies, he refused to believe that his war was lost. When two of Hitler's most trusted Nazi leaders took action that undermined his leadership and implied defeat, Hitler was outraged. Goebbels issued a decree to Hitler stating that he intended to assume leadership of the state, as he believed that Hitler was not in a position to continue, whilst surrounded by the Russians in Berlin. Hitler learnt a few days later that Himmler had attempted to strike a peace deal with the Allies. Hitler considered both these men to be traitors and defectors. Their actions prompted the Führer to marry Eva Braun in the early hours of 29 April, and to write his will and last political statement to the German people, indicating that he considered his career, and therefore his life, to be over. The documents stated that Admiral Dönitz should become Hitler's successor as President of the Reich, Minister of War and Supreme Commander of the armed forces. Goebbels was to become Chancellor.

The next day, 30 April, Hitler learnt that the Russians had advanced further into the city. He ate lunch with his cook and secretaries at 2pm. He ordered 200 litres of petrol to be brought into the Chancellery garden. Then, with Eva by his side, he spoke for the last time with Goebbels and Bormann and bid goodbye to his staff. Eva and Hitler went into the Führer's suite of rooms and closed the door. Witnesses heard a single shot. The staff entered the bedroom and found Eva dead, having swallowed poison, and Hitler beside her, also dead, from a



Beyond the immediate (and supposedly temporary) division of Germany into zones and the settling of the land issue, the Allies had no clear plans. The issue of reparations, for example, provoked disputes between the USSR - who wanted \$20 billion - and the other Allies who feared a repeat of the Treaty of Versailles, the demands of which had effectively crippled Germany and prevented a lasting peace. There were also conflicting views about the best way to rebuild Germany and ensure that a Nazi-style dictatorship would never again have the opportunity to flourish there. The USSR wanted to destroy the capitalist economic system which it held as responsible for the Third Reich. The Western Allies, however, wanted gradually to introduce free democracy - firstly at a local level - which would ensure that Germany would become part of the democratic western world.

The Allied occupation

Immediately after the German surrender, the Allies had more pressing matters to deal with than the long-term future of Germany. Supplies had to be brought in to avoid a famine and shelter had to be found for the homeless. One-fifth of Germany's population of 50 million were refugees. In the midst of such chaos, the Allies were forced to entrust much of the administrative work of the country to former Nazis. They were, however, determined to address this issue as soon as possible. At Potsdam, in July-August 1945, the major powers again met to discuss Germany's future. Relatively little of substance was decided, with only general agreements being made. These included confirmation that Germany would one day be a united country again, that Germany would pay reparations of \$20 billion (half of which would go to Russia) and that the four allied commanders-in-chief would co-ordinate the 'four Ds' (see margin).

Denazification began in earnest with the Nuremberg trials which began in November 1945. The trials of 22 senior Nazis lasted for 11 months, ending with 12 executions, 7 imprisonments and 3 acquittals. Cleansing Germany of less senior Nazis proved more problematic, particularly as there were potentially 9 million of them. Both the Russians and the Americans vigorously pursued and imprisoned former Nazis until they realized the enormity of the task and also the practical difficulty of imprisoning people who performed valuable functions in the day-to-day running of the country. After 1946, denazification petered out, although prosecution of Nazi criminals has continued intermittently ever since.

Democratization was more contentious, as it was interpreted rather differently in the different zones. In the three western zones, run by America, Britain and France, democracy was established and encouraged at a local level very quickly. At the end of 1947 the local provinces (Länder) had their own local parliaments. Free political parties were also allowed to develop. In the Soviet zone it was rather different. Here, local democracy was distrusted and indeed the Länder were dissolved in 1952 and the political parties were not allowed total freedom. A group of German communists, trained in Moscow and led by Walter Ulbricht, were sent into the Soviet zone and the KPD was encouraged to infiltrate and dominate key administrative posts. It was unable, however, to win enough votes to control the zone completely and consequently the socialists were forced to merge with the KPD to form the Socialist Unity Party (SED). Soviet intentions - to erase all traces of capitalism and instead implement communism - were becoming clear.

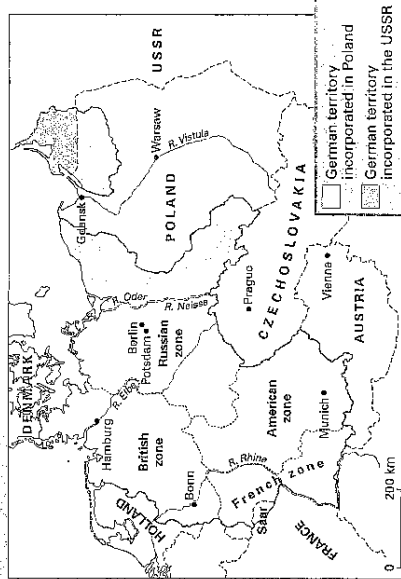
self-inflicted gunshot in the head. Hitler's final instructions were carried out to the letter; the couple were burnt in the garden of the Chancellery.

Surrender

Two hundred yards from where Hitler died stood Russian soldiers. Stalin's Red Army advanced from the east into Berlin, forcing German troops to surrender in May 1945. Germany was in ruins. Her cities were a mass of rubble after intensive Allied bombing, and there was a chronic shortage of supplies. The German people focused all their efforts on physical survival, with no government to represent their interests, their fate lay in the hands of the victors. They accepted this with a sense of inevitability. They were, in any case, uninterested in politics, one of the many legacies of the Nazi era.

The question of quite what to do with the defeated Germany was not one to which the Allies had ready answers. Discussion had already taken place between the Allies before the war had ended. The most important of these conferences was held at Yalta in February 1945, where Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin all met to discuss plans for Germany following imminent victory. It had already been decided to split Germany into occupation zones following her defeat. At Yalta it was decided that Germany should be divided into four zones which would be occupied and run by the United States, the USSR, Great Britain and France. Berlin would itself be divided into four zones, despite lying within the Soviet zone. There were also decisions about territory, for which the participants of the conference have since been fiercely criticized. Stalin was determined to retain much of the territory he had gained during the war, and believed that in any case land east of Germany was his affair and really no one else's. Poland was effectively 'moved' to the west. The USSR annexed Polish land in the east. It was then agreed that the Oder and Neisse rivers would now form Poland's western border and that Poland would gain German territory to the east of these rivers as compensation for the land lost to the USSR in the east. German East Prussia was also divided between Poland and the USSR. One historian describes the actions of the Western powers at Yalta as handing Poland to Stalin on a plate' (Davies, 1997). Certainly, they appeared to have accepted that Poland's fate was in the hands of the USSR.

Source 4



Think about

The Four Ds that were agreed at Potsdam set out the Allies' most immediate objectives in Germany. They were:

- 1 Demazification
- 2 Democratization
- 3 Demilitarization
- 4 Decentralization (note: cartels were groups of businesses which joined together to protect their own interests)

- Take each 'D' in turn. What do you think it would have involved?
- Why do you think the Allies decided to implement it?

Political parties in East Germany:

- KPD (communists)
- SPD (socialists)
- SED (Socialist Unity Party: a combination of KPD and SPD in 1946)
- CDU (Christian Democratic Union)
- LDPD (Liberals)

Political parties in West Germany:

- CDU (Christian Democratic Union, which broadened the membership of the old Centre Party to include Protestants. Held conservative views)
- CSU (Christian Social Union which was basically the CDU in Bavaria and always supported the CDU)
- FPD (Free Democratic Party - the liberals)

Think about

- How did Germany's loss of territory compare to the Treaty of Versailles?
- Why do you think the Allies decided to occupy Germany following the end of the Second World War?
- Berlin was itself divided into four zones. What problems might this have led to?
- The fate of Germany after the Second World War.

A divided nation

The Cold War

Post-war Germany became the first arena within which a new conflict was fought. The boundaries of this conflict stretched beyond Europe. It was a conflict that was essentially ideological. It was a conflict which posed greater physical (nuclear) threats to the globe than any other – and yet it was also a conflict which saw relatively little actual fighting. That conflict was the Cold War.

As we have already seen, the Soviet zone of Germany was immediately run in a different way to the Western zones. Communism, the economic and political system established in Russia in 1917, was soon established as the dominant influence and capitalism eradicated. This seemed to confirm the West's belief that Stalin intended to spread communism as far as possible. To understand much of the history of post-war Europe, it is important to appreciate the fear of communism held by the Western states. It represented an economic and political system at odds with the one that was flourishing in America and Britain and being re-established in much of Western Europe, that of a broadly capitalist economic system and free democracy. America was emerging as the most influential power in post-war Western Europe. She was also the most determined and best-equipped nation to challenge the mighty power of the USSR. The Cold War was therefore also a conflict of the superpowers.

In March 1946 Churchill made the following speech in America:

Speech 5

From Stettin on the Baltic to Trieste on the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line, lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and eastern Europe – Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Sofia... This is certainly not the liberated Europe which we fought to build up.

The term 'iron curtain' became well known to describe the way in which Europe was being divided into communist and non-communist spheres of influence. Two months after Churchill's speech, civil war broke out in Greece and the threat of a communist take-over there loomed large. Britain's finances were close to bankruptcy after the strains of war and she appealed to America for assistance. It was really at this point that the USA assumed responsibility for checking the spread of communism in Europe, a principle that was soon extended to the world as a whole. In part, the reason for America's high profile role was economic. America was almost unique in having *gained* economically from the Second World War.

In March 1947 the US President, Truman, outlined what became known as his policy of containment. Any attempt to spread communism further was to be resisted. It was therefore important that Western Europe was in a position to act as one to support the USA. This would involve ensuring that the Western European states were economically stable and therefore less vulnerable to the spread of communism themselves. Shortly after Truman's containment speech the Marshall Plan was approved, which released more than \$13 billion from the USA into 16 European states, including the Western zones of Germany. Stalin, however, refused to allow any of the money to be used east of the Iron Curtain. This led to an even greater economic division of Europe.

The division of Germany

Source 5

The economy was the key area for the transformation of Germany into a divided state and diverging societies. Differences in economic policy between the occupying powers both precipitated and symbolized their wider political dissimilarities, and differences in economic policy in the different zones set the pattern for long-term contrasts in the social and political structures of the two Germanys.

M. Fulbrook, *The Fontana History of Germany 1918-1990: The Divided Nation*, 1991

The growing distrust between the USSR and the West did little to help German unity. Economically, the Soviet and the Western zones were becoming more deeply divided as time went on. The Marshall Plan gave an enormous boost to the economy of the Western zones. In the Soviet zone, however, the Soviet policy of dismantling (moving parts of the industrial infrastructure to the USSR) at the start of occupation had reduced the productive capacity of the zone by 26 per cent. In addition, the absence of financial aid meant that economic growth lagged behind the Western zones by some way.

In the Soviet zone, capitalism was eliminated by, for example, dissolving the Junker class and transferring private banks and industries into State ownership. In the Western zones, German industry and enterprise were encouraged. In January 1947 the British and American zones combined to form 'Bizonia'. This was a key step towards a more independent – but divided – Germany. The Bizone was created to enable more effective economic administration to take place, although the Economic Council which was created in fact acted as a kind of government with the power to tax. By February 1948, Bizonia had a central bank and in June, currency reform was introduced into the Western zones creating a much more stable economy. This followed an announcement by the USA, Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg that their intention was to create a separate West German state.

By now, relations with the USSR were reaching their lowest point. Stalin was totally opposed to the creation of a West German state which would be heavily influenced by and economically dependent on the USA. He would have preferred a neutral, non-communist Germany to this division, and accused the other powers of breaking the Potsdam Agreement. A neutral German state was not, however, acceptable to the West. It would still be vulnerable to communist influences and, if forced to choose, they would rather split Germany in two than settle for this. In desperation, the Russians launched the Berlin Blockade. All access to the Western zones of Berlin were blocked by closing all roads and rail links from the West German zones. The policy failed, however, as supplies were airlifted into West Berlin for eleven months, at which point the blockade was called off. It was by now clear that wartime alliances had changed: the USSR was no longer an ally in the eyes of the West and, what was more, former enemies in the West German zones could provide important assistance against the communists.

Berlin became an anomaly – a state within a state. Despite its location, 120 miles inside the Soviet zone, it was itself divided into four zones. When Germany formally divided into East and West, Berlin also divided along the same lines. Berlin was the scene for some of the most significant and memorable events of 1945-1990 in Germany. The Berlin Blockade in 1948-1949 demonstrated how isolated West Berlin was. Later, in 1961, the Berlin Wall gave new meaning to Churchill's 'iron curtain'. When the Wall came down in 1989, it signified the end of an era, not just in Germany, but in the world.

1945-1948

Feb-Yalta Conference
May-Germany surrenders
July-Aug. Potsdam Conference
Nov. Nuremberg Trials begin

1946

Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' speech
April SHD formed in the Soviet zone

1947

June British and American zones combined to form 'Bizonia'.
Truman's policy of containment announced

1948

Jan-Mar Marshall Aid announced
June Decision by the three Western Allies to approve an independent West Germany which would be federal

1949

Jan-Mar Currency reform in the Western zones
June (the GDR) Berlin Blockade

1949

Aug First elections in West Germany followed by formal declaration of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)

1952

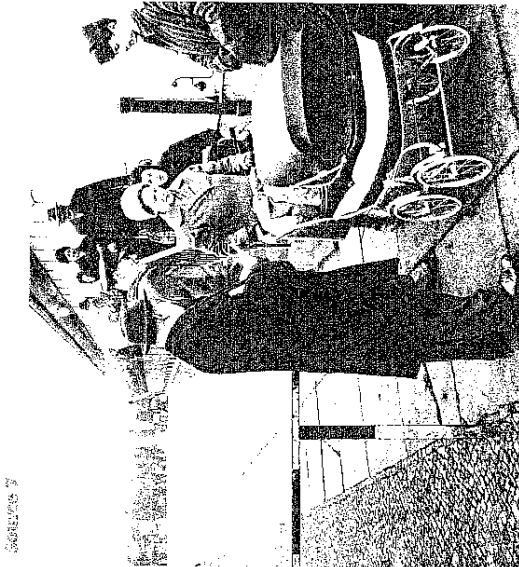
The GDR (German Democratic Republic) formally announced. Germany now divided

Although Marshall Aid was extremely significant in the post-war rebuilding of Western Europe, Germany did not do as well from it as might have been expected. Germany received \$32.9 billion, whilst Britain received \$919.8 billion and France received \$673.1 billion.

The creation of East and West Germany

Following the agreement amongst the Western Allies in June 1948 to establish an independent West German state, a constitution was drawn up by a parliamentary council (made up of representatives nominated by the Länder). It aimed to establish a parliamentary government which could never fall victim to the manipulations of the President or a political party set on destroying the political system. The first elections took place in August 1949 and the CDU/CSU won 139 seats, eight more than the SPD. With the backing of the FDP, which had 52 seats, the leader of the CDU, Konrad Adenauer, was elected Chancellor. Theodor Heuss, leader of the FDP, was appointed President, a position that brought little power in the new constitution. In September 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) formally came into existence.

The creation of East Germany was slightly delayed, largely because the Soviets were reluctant to commit themselves to an official recognition that Germany was to be split in two, with one half dominated by their Cold War enemies. In October 1949, however, the GDR (German Democratic Republic) was formally announced with a constitution drawn up by the leaders of the SED. Wilhelm Pieck was elected President and Otto Grotewohl became Prime Minister. Real power, however, lay in the hands of Walter Ulbricht, leader of the SED.



The Federal Republic, 1949-1966

Adenauer as Chancellor

When Adenauer, leader of the CDU, became Chancellor of the FRG in 1949 he faced a number of problems. Firstly, his party had no electoral majority (the CDU/CSU coalition won 31 per cent of the votes) and he was dependent on the support of the liberals to remain in power. The spectre of Weimar-like coalition governments leading to frequent changes in government and policy

The Occupation Statute ensured that the Western Allies (America, France and Britain) would retain control over West German affairs, even after the creation of the FRG. Foreign policy and trade were two of the areas which the Western Allies controlled, for example. The Statute was only abandoned in 1955 when the FRG gained true independence.

Key Activity
 Write was most responsible for the division of Germany?

Using all the evidence, discuss the role of the following groups in creating a divided Germany.

- o The Russians
- o The Americans
- o All of the Western Allies

Who or what do YOU think was most responsible for the division of Germany?

West Berliners queue at a GDR checkpoint to visit East Berlin.

The Independent of West Germany into Europe
 1949: FRG becomes a member of Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OECE)
 1953: FRG enters the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSG); forerunner of the EEC.
 1955: FRG recognized as an independent state and becomes member of NATO
 1958: FRG becomes a founding member of the EEC in the Treaty of Rome

was raised. Fortunately, the liberals were steadfast in their support of Adenauer until around 1961 and, in any case, the CDU/CSU won a majority in the 1957 election. The second problem facing Adenauer was the economy. Over 2 million West Germans were unemployed and prices were rising. A flow of refugees from Eastern Europe added to the pressure and, of course, there was still a good deal of post-war rebuilding to do. The third problem was foreign policy. In 1949 the FRG was not an independent state and there had still not been an official peace treaty to end the Second World War. The Cold War had shifted allegiances, but West Germany's exact position and status within Europe remained unclear.

This last problem was tackled effectively by Adenauer. As the timeline demonstrates, the FRG quickly achieved not only acceptance within Europe but active participation. 1955 was a particularly important year, for it was then that the FRG was recognized as an independent state (through West Berlin was still protected by Allied troops) and the Occupation Statute was abandoned. The key reason for this development was military. Britain was pushing hard for Germany to become a member of NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization designed to provide defence against the Soviet Bloc) and Germany was, therefore, allowed once again to have an army of its own. It made little sense in this context for the FRG to be under the direct political control of the West. From the West's point of view, it was essential to secure the military strength of West Germany - including stationing American bases there - given its close proximity to the Iron Curtain. But not everyone in the FRG was pleased by the decision to remilitarize: it brought back uncomfortable memories.

Economically, West Germany experienced what some have described as a 'miracle'. As we have seen, the economic problems facing Adenauer in 1949 were very real and in 1950, unemployment stood at 8.1 per cent. By the mid-1960s that figure had declined to 0.5 per cent. Economic growth averaged 8 per cent a year, living conditions improved dramatically and disposable income of the average household increased by 400 per cent between 1950 and 1970. So what were the factors behind this success story?

- Ludwig Erhard, the Economics Minister under Adenauer, played an important role in the overall direction of policy. He introduced what became known as the 'social market economy', which combined elements of a free market economy with elements of State intervention to ensure that the weaker sections of the population were protected.
- Much of the industrial infrastructure, such as machinery, somehow survived the bombing raids, providing the FRG with a good base on which to build.
- Raw materials were provided either from the Ruhr or from outside Germany at cheap rates due to the undervalued Deutschemark.
- The Marshall Plan.
- Good labour relations, with a low number of strikes and disruption.
- The Korean War, which broke out in 1950, boosted West German industry.
- Refugees from East Germany and elsewhere provided cheap and flexible labour.

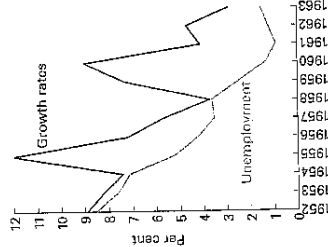
All these factors played important roles in the development of the West German economy. Economic success was crucial to the popularity of the Adenauer regime and provided a welcome reassurance that democracy did not inevitably lead to economic crisis as in the Weimar era.

Key Activity

Erhard Adenauer

One of the oldest leaders in modern Europe, Adenauer was born in January 1876 and was therefore 62 when he became Chancellor of West Germany. Prior to that he had been an active member of the Centre Party and mayor of Cologne. During the Third Reich he was sacked for refusing to fly the swastika from the town hall. He retired and was arrested from time to time by the Nazis between 1934 and 1944. In 1945 he was one of the founders of the CDU.

Unemployment and growth rates in West Germany



Year	DM millions
1955	131,400
1961	331,400
1965	458,200
1970	679,000
1975	1,034,900
1980	1,486,700
1985	1,844,300
1989	2,280,400

Politically, Adenauer was fortunate that for most of his time in office, the SPD was not functioning very effectively. It was struggling to come to terms both with internal divisions and with a society that was becoming more prosperous and middle class. In 1959 it effectively abandoned its radical stance and aim to dismantle capitalism and this enabled it to emerge as a more viable party of government in the 1960s. At the other end of the scale, denazification was all but abandoned. One estimate puts the number of ex-Nazis in the West German civil service at that time somewhere between 40 and 80 per cent. Adenauer himself included ex-Nazis in his Cabinet, including Hans Globke who was the author of the official commentary which accompanied the Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935. The emphasis of this period was on reconstruction rather than re-education.

Adenauer's resignation

Despite his successes, Adenauer was forced to resign in 1963. The FDP had split in 1956 and the majority was critical of Adenauer's uncompromising policy towards the GDR. When, in the election of 1961, the FDP's support was crucial for Adenauer's government again, they were able to insist that he eventually be replaced by Erhard. This process was speeded up by the *Spiegel* Affair in 1962, when Adenauer supported the raid on the offices of the magazine *Spiegel* following the publication of an article criticizing the Minister of Defence. The editors of the magazine were subsequently arrested. Outcries followed about the disregard for a free press and methods more reminiscent of the Third Reich than a free democracy. The FDP demanded that Adenauer should step down and he was left with little option but to retire from politics in 1963.

Adenauer's successor as Chancellor was the Economics Minister, Ludwig Erhard, who proved to be less successful in his new role. The main source of his problems was a downturn in the economy. Erhard overreacted to signs of inflation - not surprising in the light of Germany's previous problems with inflation - and proposed to raise taxation and cut government spending. This promoted the resignation of his coalition partners and he was himself forced to resign in 1966.

The GDR 1949-1961

The dominant influence of Walter Ulbricht

The GDR was clearly regarded as part of the Soviet Bloc and the influence of the USSR was everywhere. The SED (Socialist Unity Party) was the USSR's main way of controlling what went on in the GDR and ensuring that communism was established as a political and economic system. The main aim of the SED - and therefore of the USSR - was to achieve a communist state with the level of economic equality that that entailed. This equality was not always achieved in ways that were regarded as fair, however, and Ulbricht, the leader of the SED, never gained the popularity that his West German counterparts enjoyed.

The SED was modelled on the Soviet Communist Party both in the way it organized itself and in the way it set out to control the life of the country. Decisions were taken by a small inner circle but always under the dominant influence of Ulbricht, who became General Secretary of the SED in 1952. Any members suspected of harbouring social-democratic or Western inclinations were not allowed to remain in the Party. In the 1950 election, every candidate on the list had views which the SED found acceptable and those who were not members of the SED were members of parties under its influence. Hence the SED could claim that 99.72 per cent of the votes were cast in favour of its

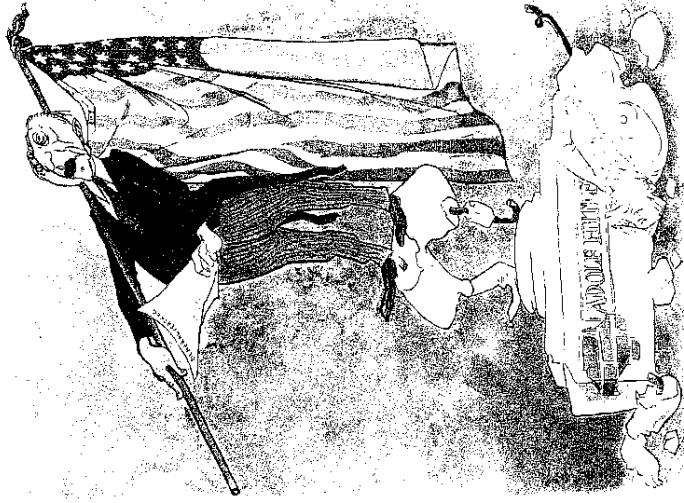
West Germany by 1969

During the 1960s there was a shift towards the left in politics. Erhard's successor, Kurt-Georg Kiesinger of the CDU, formed a surprising coalition with the SPD, known as the Great Coalition. There was also a move towards more State intervention in the economy. By the end of the decade, the SPD was poised to assume control of the government in coalition with the FDP which had itself shifted towards the left. In the election of 1969, the SPD and FDP polled 48.5% of the vote and Willy Brandt of the SPD became the first socialist Chancellor in Germany since 1930.

Many of the leaders of the SED had spent the war in exile in the USSR. The East German government was really a puppet government which took its orders from Moscow.

policies. The SED also used intimidation tactics and propaganda to establish control. It assumed control of the police and judicial system and used education to reinforce its messages. The West was ridiculed in propaganda and teachers who were not prepared to tow the party line were sacked. It all seemed strangely familiar to those who had lived through the Nazi regime. Yet this was, ironically, the very political system that Hitler had set out to destroy.

Source 3



This East German cartoon entitled 'The Restoration' shows Adenauer standing in Hitler's place, carrying an American flag and delivering a speech. What is its message?

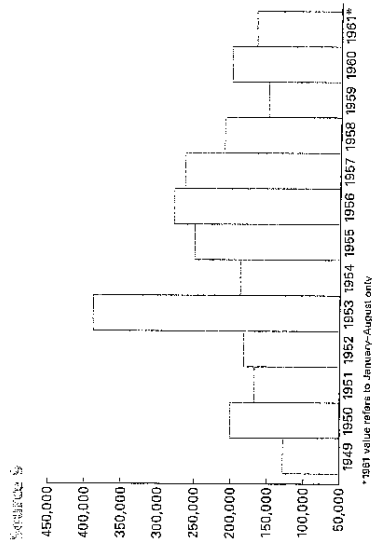
The unpopularity of the regime came to a head in 1953. Ulbricht was proposing to raise the working hours of the industrial workers whilst also allowing food prices to increase amidst already high taxation. Building workers decided, spontaneously, to protest and a general strike followed on 17 June which brought Berlin to a standstill. Soviet troops were brought in and 21 Germans were killed before the unrest was brought to an end. During the aftermath, thousands of officials and members of the SED were removed and only hardliners within the government were allowed to remain. The unrest did, however, lead to some concessions: working hours were not increased, for example, and food prices were reduced. Ulbricht clung on to power for a further eight years without gaining any more popularity. People continued to resent the repressive policies and the fact that their standard of living did not equal that of West Germany.

The economy of the GDR

The economic situation in East Germany was not initially promising. As we have already seen, during the years of occupation the USSR stripped its zone of much of its economic infrastructure and even by 1950, 25 per cent of industrial goods went directly to the USSR. East Germany's geographical position within Europe was also a disadvantage as it had to trade with more economically backward countries within the Soviet Bloc and was unable to exploit the industrial heartland of the Ruhr which of course lay in West Germany.

As with the political system, the economic system in the GDR was modelled on that of the USSR. Plans were frequently drawn up setting quotas for production which either underestimated possible output (enabling quotas to be met) or forced industries to overproduce and ignore capital investment (for example, the purchasing of new machinery) and increase working hours. Industries and banking sectors were largely brought under State control and there was an initial concentration on heavy industry rather than consumer goods, although this balance was redressed to some extent during the 1950s. There was also an attempt to collectivize agriculture during this decade which was extremely unpopular amongst farmers and had disastrous effects on food supplies and, therefore, on prices. The second wave of collectivization in 1959-1960 was largely responsible for the increase in emigration from the GDR to the West as food shortages and rising prices forced people to make difficult decisions.

Despite years of relative success, for example in the latter half of the 1950s when real wages exceeded the 1939 levels and living standards improved, overall the GDR did not really come close to equalling the economic achievement of the FRG. It did not matter to the East Germans that their living standards were the highest in the Soviet Bloc. What mattered to them was that these standards fell behind those of their former countrymen in the West. By 1961 it was estimated that over 1,600,000 had escaped to the West through West Berlin, presenting an incredible drain on the human resources available to the East, especially as many of those who left had valuable skills. Ulbricht persuaded Khrushchev (now the President of the USSR) to allow him to close the border between East and West Berlin. Barbed wire was put in place almost immediately and was eventually replaced by something much more permanent: the Berlin Wall. It was not a question of keeping unwanted visitors out but of keeping unhappy East Germans in.



The populations of East and West Germany in millions

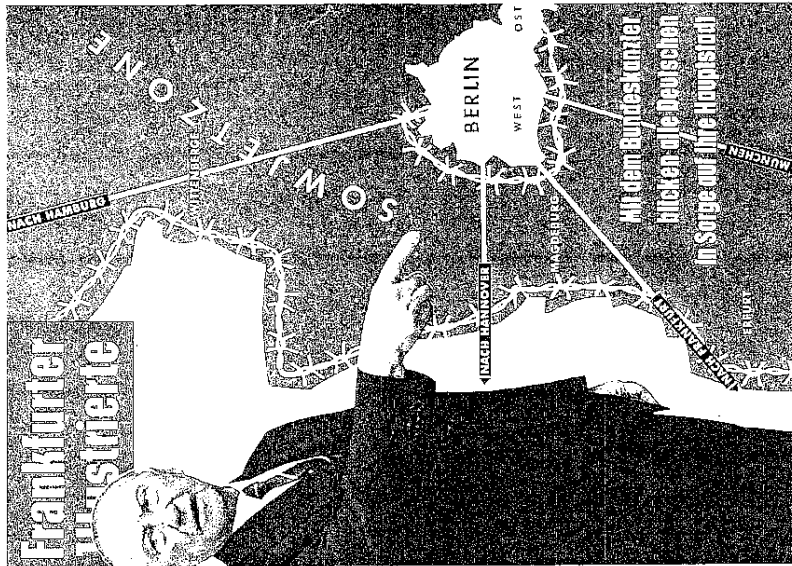
Year	West Germany	East Germany
1946	46,190	18,388
1961	56,175	17,125
1970	60,661	12,058
1987	61,077	16,641

Although large numbers of East Germans crossed into West Berlin, it was not a straightforward thing to do. After 1952, 200 streets linking East and West Berlin were barricaded and 81 police controls were set up at access points which remained open. The penalty of crossing the border could be between 16 months to 4 years in prison.

Out of the 2,700,000 East Germans who escaped to the West between 1949 and 1961, 3,400 were doctors, 17,000 were teachers and 17,900 were engineers.

The numbers of East Germans leaving the GDR 1949-1961.

Source 10



The cover of a West German magazine published on 23 July 1961, less than three weeks before the East Germans began building the Berlin Wall. It shows Chancellor Adenauer and says 'Together with the Chancellor all Germans are anxiously watching their capital city'.

What does Source 10 tell you about relations between East and West Germans by 1961?

Conclusion

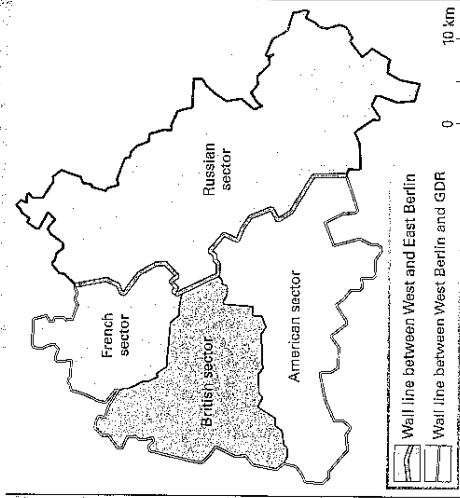
In 1945 Germany was divided into four occupation zones. There was also an attempt to rebuild Germany, eliminate traces of the Nazi past and reset her boundaries. In 1949, Germany split in two, largely because the West did not trust a neutral Germany to withstand the lure of communism and therefore turned down Stalin's offers for a united but neutral Germany. Stalin, in turn, did not want a united Germany under the control of the West. East and West were run on very different lines, one a communist one-party state and the other a capitalist democracy. The remarkable economic success of West Germany, however, destabilized East Germany. Thousands left in search of the high living standards and consumer delights of the Federal Republic. This was only stepped with the construction of the Berlin Wall.

The Berlin Wall

Key dates

- 1949 Creation of West and East Germany
- 1952 Telephone communications between West and East Berlin cut off
- 1961 13 August: Building of Berlin Wall begins
- 19 August: First victim of the Wall
- 24 August: First attempted escapee shot
- 1962 Death of Peter Fechter
- 1962 Kennedy's 'Ich bin ein Berliner' speech
- 1964 57 East Berliners escape through a tunnel dug under the Wall
- 1971 Telephone communications restored between East and West Berlin
- 1989 February: The last escapee is shot
- November: The border between East and West is reopened

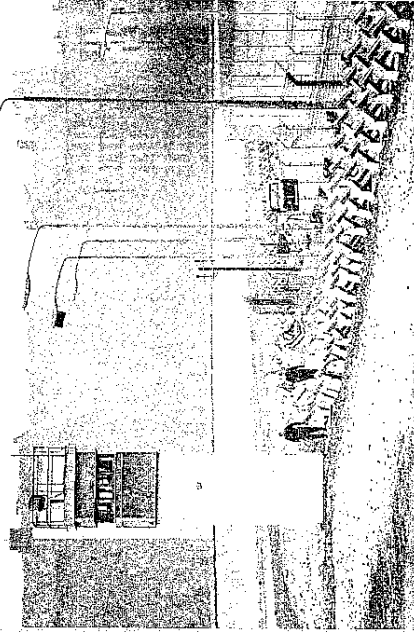
Source 11



Source 12

Facts and figures

- Overall length: 155 km (103 miles)
- Length in Berlin: 43.1 km (26.8 miles)
- Watch towers: 302
- Tracks with sliding cables for dogs: 259
- Number of dogs: 600
- Concrete shelters: 22
- Border guards: 14,000
- Number of shots fired by border guards: 1693
- Successful attempts to scale the Wall: 5043, 574 of whom were border guards
- Number of attempted escapes killed: 239
- Soldiers and police killed: 27
- Number of people wounded: 260



Position of automatic firing system: on Eastern side

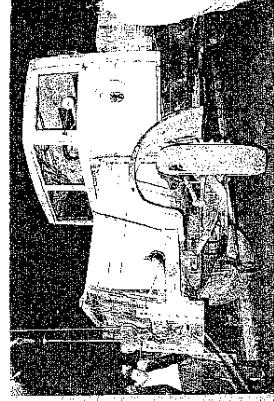
Number of streets the Wall cut through: 192

Number of railway lines the Wall cut through: 32

Source 13



Source 14



Escapes and tragedies

239 people were killed trying to escape under or over the Wall. They were shot, drowned or killed jumping out of buildings. One of the deaths which caused most outrage was that of Peter Fechter, who lay dying for nearly an hour at the foot of the Wall after being badly injured by a border guard. Nobody came to help him.

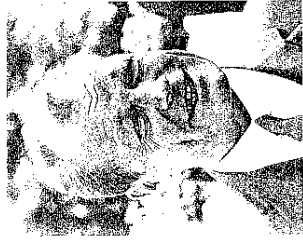
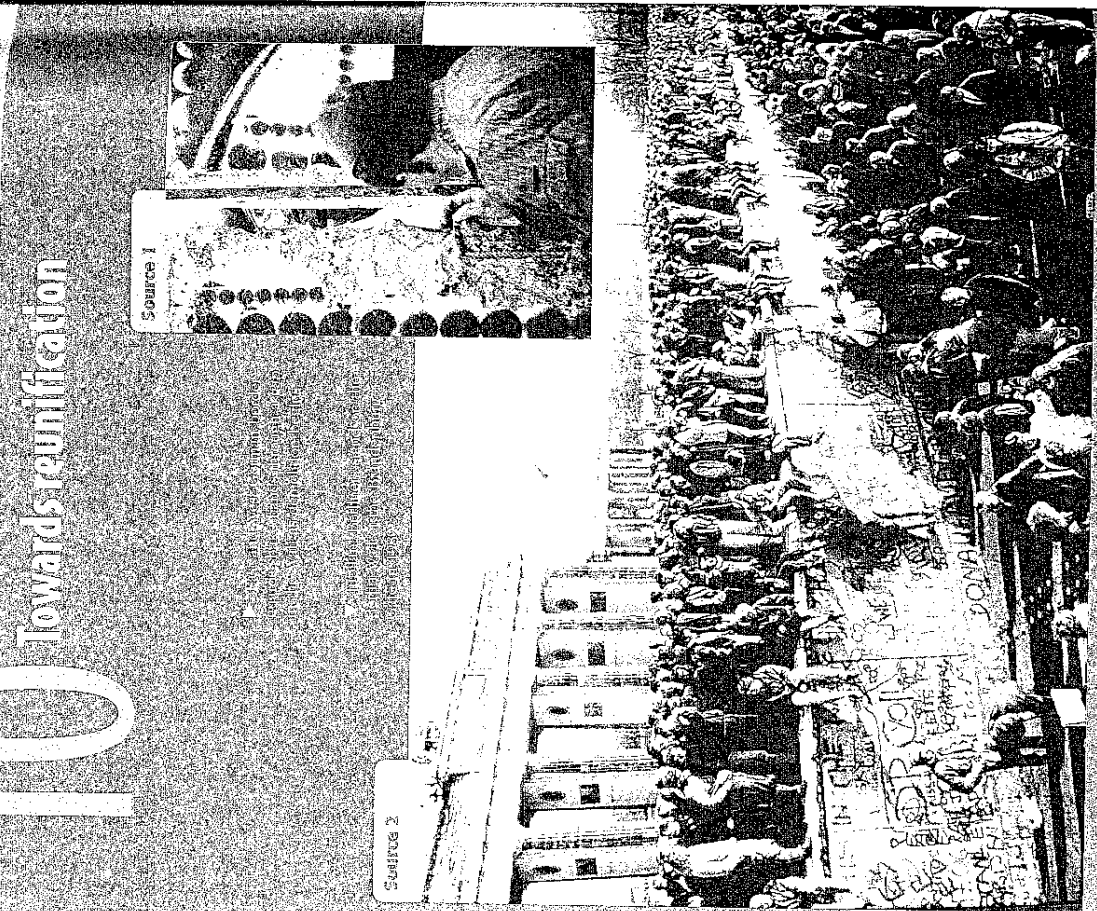
Many methods were used to somehow cross the Wall. In the year after it was built, 14 lorries smashed through it. In 1962 the captain of a boat was tied up and 14 East Berliners escaped across the River Spree. In 1965 a whole family used a rope slung from a building in the East and held firm by relatives in the West to pass over the Wall. Nine people managed to hide in a tiny Isotta car by removing the battery and heater. Four men escaped by wearing Soviet uniforms made for them by their girlfriends.

Questions

- 1 Why was the Wall built? Think about the long, medium and short-term reasons.
- 2 What impact do you think the Wall must have had on the West and East Berliners?
- 3 The Wall became a powerful symbol for the Western world and featured in songs by, for example, David Bowie and Pink Floyd. Why do you think this was?

Chapter

Towards reunification



Biography
Willy Brandt

Born in 1913, Brandt became a socialist at the age of 16. He fled Germany in 1933 to escape the Nazis, only returning home after the war. In 1949 he was elected to the Bundestag as a Social Democrat and in 1957, became Mayor of West Berlin, a post he held until 1966. In 1969 he became Chancellor of the FRG, a post he held until 1974. In 1971, Brandt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his success in building more positive relations with East Germany. He was widely admired.

The key word "recognition" had been the subject of fierce debate in West Germany in the late 1960s and early 1970s... Willy Brandt quoted a remark of the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, to illustrate the difference between the two kinds of recognition. 'If I go into a zoo and see an elephant', he said, 'I recognize him as an elephant. But that does not mean that I recognize him in the sense that, say, a scientist, writer or athlete receives "recognition" for their achievement.'

Garon Ash,
In Europe's Name, 1993

▶ What point do you think Brandt was trying to make here?

Introduction

1990 was an extraordinary year for Germany. Towards the end of the previous year the Berlin Wall was opened, an event which captured the imagination of all who witnessed it, either in Berlin itself or on television throughout the world. Source 2 demonstrates some of the excitement which accompanied this dramatic event. But even then, no one could have foreseen that East and West Germany would be united once more within one year. One hundred and nineteen years after Germany had first united, it united for a second time.

In 1969, Willy Brandt became Chancellor of West Germany – the first socialist to do so for a long time. He ushered in a new era of co-operation with the GDR which was to ease practical agreements between the two states but made reunification seem even more distant. This was in part a response to the permanence of physical divisions such as the Berlin Wall. It took the collapse of the GDR, triggered by the reforms of the USSR, to bring reunification closer.

Key questions

- What happened to relations between East and West Germany 1969–1990?
- What were the respective fortunes of East and West Germany 1969–1990?
- Why was the Berlin Wall opened in 1989?
- Why was Germany reunited in 1990?

West Germany 1969–1987

Willy Brandt and Ostpolitik

As Mayor of Berlin between 1963 and 1969, Brandt had already demonstrated his readiness to negotiate with East Germany in return for practical benefits. During the Christmas of 1963, West Germans were able to visit relatives across the border over a period of 18 days. When he became Chancellor in 1969, Brandt was able to operate this more open policy at a much higher level and he embarked on a policy known as *Ostpolitik* ('Eastern Policy'). Rather than refusing even to acknowledge the existence of the GDR as Adenauer had done, Brandt was prepared to move forward and accept some of the realities Germany now faced. The building of the Berlin Wall had given the division of Germany an air of permanence and both the USA and the USSR were keen to ease the tensions in Eastern Europe as they became more preoccupied with events further afield.

The Moscow Treaty in 1970 was the first of a series of agreements which made *Ostpolitik* a reality. West Germany renounced its claim to represent all German people, a move which anticipated the Basic Treaty of 1972 in which the FRG officially recognized the GDR as a state in its own right. *Ostpolitik* also involved other powers: in 1971 the former wartime Allies and occupiers of Germany concluded the Berlin Agreement in which the USSR promised to respect the right of West Berliners to travel freely to the GDR. In effect, this made another Berlin Blockade unthinkable and was a step towards accepting the status quo. There was, however, considerable opposition to Brandt's policy from right-wing circles in West Germany. They argued that by recognizing the GDR as a separate, independent state, Brandt was not only validating the existence of a repressive, communist regime, but was also making future unification more unlikely (see quotation in margin for Brandt's response). Some members of the FDP (the liberals who were in a coalition with Brandt's party, the SPD) began to vote with the CDU/CSU in protest. Brandt took a gamble by engineering a general election earlier than was required. It was fought almost exclusively on the issue of *Ostpolitik* and it was an impressive victory for Brandt and the SPD



which polled a majority of the votes after an exceptionally high turnout of 91 per cent.

Although *Ospolitz* was Brandt's most lasting contribution to the future of Germany, his period as Chancellor also saw an expansion of the welfare state and a move towards greater social and sexual equality. By 1973, however, Brandt was dogged by several problems, including signs of inflation in the economy, the beginning of the world oil crisis (see margin) and his own ill health. The final straw was the discovery that his personal assistant, Gunther Guillaume, was an East German spy. Brandt resigned in 1974.

Helmut Schmidt

Brandt was replaced by Schmidt, a member of the SPD who stood on the right wing of the Party. The coalition with the FDP continued, although this was increasingly based solely on *Ospolitz* which the FDP supported. In other respects the FDP, under the new leadership of the more conservative Genscher, was increasingly attracted by the more right wing CDU/CSU under the leadership of Helmut Kohl. The fragile support of the FDP was not Schmidt's only problem. He was also under attack from the left wing of his own party for moving further towards nuclear power in the wake of the world oil crisis. Not only that, but the decision of the USA to station nuclear missiles in Europe in 1979, including West Germany, led to further protests from the Left.

Schmidt, therefore, faced opposition from both Left and Right, and economic problems arising from a general recession and a rise in unemployment did not help. In 1982, the FDP deserted the SPD and instead entered into a coalition with the CDU. Together they formed a majority and the leader of the CDU, Helmut Kohl, became Chancellor.

Helmut Kohl

Helmut Kohl was to become Germany's longest-serving Chancellor of the twentieth century. Although he was sometimes characterized as rather provincial and capable of public relations blunders, he was to become famous for his enthusiastic support for European co-operation and his role in the unification of Germany in 1990.

One of Kohl's first actions as Chancellor was to call an election so that the West German public would have an opportunity, democratically, to approve the new government. This approval was duly given. Initially, Kohl pursued policies similar to Schmidt. *Ospolitz* continued and in 1984 there were new financial and travel agreements between East and West Germany. In 1987, the East German President, Erich Honecker, became the first East German leader to visit the FRG. Another example of continuity was Kohl's commitment to allow NATO to site nuclear missiles in West Germany.

Economically, Kohl lightened the government's purse strings as a means of controlling inflation. He earned the opposition of the Left by limiting welfare benefits and funding for social programmes. However, the budget deficit was reduced and despite growth rates which were low compared to earlier years, Germany nevertheless performed better economically than many of her European counterparts, including Britain. The microelectronic industries did well as emphasis moved away from the more traditional heavy industries in the Ruhr. One problem Kohl did not solve, however, was unemployment which remained steady at around 8-10 per cent.

The Bitburg Affair was an example of Kohl's occasional public relations blunders which did not help his popularity in the 1980s. A 10th anniversary celebration of the end of the Second World War was planned at a military cemetery at Bitburg and President Reagan of the United States was invited to attend. When it was revealed that 55 troops were buried there, pressure was put on Kohl to cancel the ceremony. Defiantly, Kohl insisted it should continue.

Biography

Erich Honecker

Born in 1912, Honecker was a committed communist from a very early age. He joined communist youth organizations at the age of ten and in 1930 went to Moscow to attend the Lenin School for Young Communists. He spent most of the period of the Third Reich in concentration camps, his punishment for being a communist. After the division of Germany in 1949, Honecker worked his way up the ranks of the SED, becoming Party Secretary in 1958. In 1971, he succeeded Ulbricht as Secretary General of the SED, making him the most powerful figure in the GDR. He remained an old-fashioned, hard-line communist and tried to resist Gorbachev's reforms in the 1980s. He was subsequently forced out of office in 1989 and was later arrested, although soon released. Initially, he moved to the USSR but as it collapsed around him he finally sought refuge in Chile after the case against him for manslaughter (for the killings at the Berlin Wall) was dropped. He died in exile in 1994.

Biography

Helmut Kohl

Born in 1930, Kohl lived through the devastation brought by war. It left him determined to do all he could to avoid such a thing ever happening again. He became involved in politics whilst still young, although trained as a lawyer. He joined the CDU in 1946. He became the youngest leader of any West German state in 1949 and in the same year became Vice-Chairman of the CDU. In 1982, Kohl became the youngest Chancellor West Germany had ever had. Since then, he has championed the European Union and overseen dramatic developments in Germany, including the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany. He was replaced as Chancellor of Germany in 1998 by Gerhard Schröder.

Kohl was fortunate that his main political opponents, the SPD, were in disarray for some of the 1980s, not least because of the success of the Green Party which particularly attracted the younger voters. In 1987, Kohl managed to cling on to power, but he was clearly in difficulties. Unemployment stubbornly refused to go down, the CSU (sister party of the CDU) divided, and the CDU was accused of accepting illegal donations from industry. The result in 1987 was not surprisingly the CDU's worst election result since 1949. In this respect, it could be argued that the unification of Germany in 1990 provided Kohl with a lifeline. Without it, it is unlikely that he would have remained in power until 1998.

The GDR 1971-1989

Honecker

In 1971, Ulbricht was succeeded as Secretary General of the SED by Erich Honecker, who became the GDR's leader at quite a promising time. The GDR was now internationally recognized, largely thanks to Brandt's policy of *Ospolitz*. Although the economy continued to be under State control, more attention was finally being paid to living standards and material consumer demands. There were also generous loans coming from the FRG and, indeed, in the 1980s, the GDR was becoming dependent on such assistance.

By the mid-1970s, however, it was clear that the GDR was having economic difficulties. The oil crisis had an impact on the foreign trade which was so significant in the GDR's economy. Between 1972 and 1975, the price of imports increased by 34 per cent compared to an increase of only 17 per cent in the price of exports. In addition, the cost of welfare spending outstripped the national income. East Germany's budget simply was not balancing.

Politically, Honecker was hard-line and his policies were heavily influenced by the USSR. In 1961, when the Berlin Wall was built, Honecker was head of East German security forces and many East Germans were shot under his orders while trying to cross the Wall. Even when Mikhail Gorbachev, the new Soviet President in 1985, was implementing reform in the USSR, Honecker resisted and instead began to distance himself from the Russians. Early indications that politically at least, nothing was likely to change under Honecker came in the 1970s when a musician who had been touring the West was refused entry back into the GDR. Several cultural figures in East Germany subsequently left for the West. There were some signs of less repression, however, when in 1978, Christians were allowed greater freedom and toleration. By the 1980s, Christian groups were debating issues of human rights and being publicly critical of the regime. This would not have been tolerated previously.

In its relations with West Germany, the GDR combined a suspicion of closer relations with a growing dependence on financial assistance. *Ospolitz* was initially greeted with suspicion, although in practical terms the GDR stood to gain international recognition and loans out of it. For nearly 30 years after the beginning of *Ospolitz*, the GDR allied itself firmly with the USSR in its foreign policy whilst becoming increasingly dependent on the FRG's loans. It is hard to see how these contradictory policies could have lasted indefinitely.

The reformist era swept in by Gorbachev in 1985 was not well received by Honecker. In fact, repression increased in the GDR and the library of the environmental movement was raided and the printing press destroyed. It was Gorbachev, however, who speeded up a sequence of events which was to make German reunification irresistible. The GDR could not ignore what was going on elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

The road to reunification

The reunification of Germany in October 1990 was not the result of years spent planning and negotiating. Its speed took everyone by surprise, not least the man who was to become the Chancellor of a united Germany, Helmut Kohl. What prompted it was the collapse of the GDR. But why did this happen so quickly? The answer lies in three main factors, all of which were superimposed on the existing problems of East Germany, particularly economic, which have been outlined already. These factors were:

- The reform of the USSR under Gorbachev and an end to the Cold War
- The mobilization of reform pressure groups within the GDR which became increasingly insistent that change had to come
- The collapse of authority amongst those who governed the GDR

The impact of Gorbachev

In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became the President of the USSR. It was already clear that the USSR was in desperate need of reform and Gorbachev's main contribution was to speed this process up dramatically. He wanted to end the Cold War and seek financial help from the West to avoid economic collapse. He also intended to reform the economy and introduce an era of openness – or *glasnost* as it became officially known. As we have already seen, Honecker, leader of the GDR, did not respond well to this era of reform. In November 1988, East Germany banned *Sputnik*, a Soviet magazine, on the grounds that it distorted history. In the same month, five Soviet films were banned from a Soviet film festival in East Berlin. Clearly, the GDR was diverging from the reformist intentions of the USSR's new leader. Gorbachev made it plain that he wanted Honecker to adopt a reformist programme. During a visit to East Berlin in October 1989 for the GDR's 40th anniversary celebrations, he made it clear that the GDR could not rely on Soviet troops as they had done before in time of crisis (for example, in 1953). He stressed that 'matters affecting East Germany are decided not in Moscow but in Berlin'.

Meanwhile, Gorbachev was implementing a similar policy in other East European communist states. After his announcement that the USSR would no longer interfere in the matters of other states, Hungary opened its border with Austria, breaching the Iron Curtain and enabling thousands of East Germans to travel to the West via Hungary with Austria's approval. Hundreds of East German tourists camped out in West German embassies in Prague and Warsaw. Honecker had no choice but to grant the tourists in Prague exit visas to the West. His government appeared paralysed in the face of such events and its lack of firm action added significantly to the feeling in East Germany that change was imminent.

Popular protests

During the summer and autumn of 1989, opposition groups were emerging to demand reform of the GDR from within. The most important of these groups, the New Forum, was founded in September 1989 as a means of promoting free debate which until then only existed in the Church. It was refused legal recognition from the government, however, and this helped to turn it into a more overt pressure group seeking reform within East Germany. It was joined by other groups such as Democratic Awakening and Democracy Now. These

groups presented a kind of challenge hitherto unknown to the GDR. They wanted official recognition and they wanted a say in how the country was run. Gorbachev's visit to East Berlin in October was preceded by a protest march of around 12,000 protesters in Leipzig. On the day of his visit, between 500 and 700 marchers were arrested in East Berlin. A day later, 30,000 protesters marched in Dresden.

These peaceful protests were met with repression. Protesters were often arrested and at Leipzig, water cannons, batons and dogs were used to disperse demonstrators. However, without the backing of the USSR, the power of the GDR was seriously reduced and there were suspicions that the police forces were reluctant to quash the demonstrations. The turning point came on 9 October, the point at which the will of the people appeared to triumph. A demonstration of around 50,000 protesters in Leipzig was allowed to go ahead peacefully with no intervention. Fulbrook writes that 'from then on, the momentum of growing mass mobilization and the overcoming of fear was to snowball, accompanied by the ever more speedy collapse of authority above.' (1995)

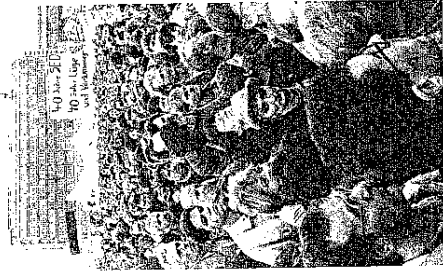
Collapse from above

It was becoming clear, by October 1989, that there was a division amongst the GDR's political leaders. Some wanted to continue Honecker's hard-line approach; others were convinced that reform was the only solution. Honecker finally resigned on 18 October, to be replaced by Egon Krenz who wasted no time in implementing reforms. The New Forum was legalized, for example, and the right to travel in the West for up to 30 days was granted to all East Germans. Meanwhile, Honecker's supporters were ousted. One of the immediate consequences of these events was the escalation of protest marches, including one at Leipzig with as many as 120,000 people. It was clear that the protesters would continue to demand more reform.

© Cambridge



Meanwhile, there was a steady stream of East Germans leaving for the West. Egon Krenz suggested that over 100,000 East Germans had recently left. The fact that this information was given out on a television interview was itself a demonstration of how far things had changed. It was clear that the Berlin Wall



An East German protest march in East Berlin in November 1989.

© Cambridge

► The East Germans had spent years keeping their grudges to themselves and rarely challenging the political regime. Why do you think this all changed in 1989?

► Many of the protesters did not want a united Germany. Instead they wanted East Germany to be run differently. Why do you think this was the case?

East Germans flee their country via Czechoslovakia in October 1989.

The Soviet Union effectively renounced the GDR. This was the crucial precondition for its eventual demise.

Fulbrook
Anatomy of a Dictatorship, 1985

was no longer serving its purpose and instead had simply become a focus of protest. On 4 November, nearly 1 million people demonstrated in East Berlin, demanding basic freedoms. Four days later, the leaders of the SED all resigned. They did, however, set in motion the right for East Germans to move freely wherever they wanted by announcing that the Berlin Wall was to be taken down. The announcement was made on 9 November. Over the next two days, 2 million East Germans visited West Berlin, although Germany was officially celebrating were to eclipse those of a year later when Germany was officially reunited. East Germans were greeted with tents and embraces. Champagne flowed, candles were lit. East Germans flocked to the big department stores on Kurfürstendamm, dazzled by the array of consumer goods and luxuries. Meanwhile, pieces of the wall were hacked off as souvenirs. On television screens the world over, the fall of the Berlin Wall seemed to signal a new era of peace, friendship and unity. Without a doubt, it was one of the defining moments of the twentieth century. The photograph on page 284 shows the drama of these events.

By the beginning of 1990, there were up to 2000 East Germans leaving every day, heading for West Germany and particularly West Berlin. This put an enormous strain on the East German government and on its economy. It also had a big impact on West Germany, which had to cope with this sudden influx of new residents.

Reunification

The new East German Prime Minister, Hans Modrow, brought in further reforms and also moved away from the dominant control of the communist SED. His new government included other party representatives, although the SED remained the biggest presence. This government approved investigations into alleged corruption charges against East German officials and in December, Erich Honecker was put under house arrest, although he was soon released due to his poor health. Modrow also signalled his intention to speed up what was becoming an inevitable process towards unification. In January 1990 he left for Moscow and returned with a four-stage plan for unification.

It was at this stage that the West German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, became more actively involved in the whole process. In the previous November he had issued a Ten Point Plan for unification which would have taken years to complete. On a visit to East Germany in December 1989, however, he was taken aback by the enthusiasm with which he was received. It convinced him that the moment for reunification had arrived much sooner than expected. East Germans were themselves ready to unite. Rather than allowing the GDR to determine the nature of the reunification, Kohl started to take the initiative. He rejected the plan put forward by Modrow which insisted that the new united Germany should be militarily neutral. This would have involved severing ties with NATO which Kohl refused to do. By February 1990, Kohl had demonstrated his support for the pro-unification parties in East Germany, including the East German branch of the CDU which had now removed its communist leaders. He had also secured the support of the four Allied powers who had occupied Germany after the war. This became known as the Two-plus-Four agreement - East and West Germany plus America, Britain, France and the USSR. Talks began in May and ended, in favour of unification, in September. This included an acceptance by the USSR that Germany could continue as a member of NATO with the proviso that NATO troops or weapons would not be stationed on what was currently East German soil. The USSR was also softened by pledges of money from West Germany.

The Berlin Wall had stood for 10,315 days. Within hours, thousands were streaming through the checkpoints to be greeted by ecstatic West Berliners on the other side. The physical dismantling of the Wall took longer to complete. Official demolition of the Wall began in June 1990, when cranes and 175 lorries were required to complete the task. Most of the Wall was dismantled by November, although certain sections still stand today as a reminder of Germany's past. Many of the concrete blocks were reused to build roads.

The results of a survey which asked 'Do you personally take a positive or negative view of German reunification?' The figures given are in percentages.

	Very Positive	Rather positive	Rather negative	Very negative	Don't know
FRG	31	49	15	2	3
Spain	48	25	4	2	21
France	17	51	17	6	9
UK	21	40	15	12	12
Italy	41	37	8	5	9
Hungary	23	45	16	6	10
Poland	9	17	26	38	10
USSR	17	34	17	13	19

Glaesner, *The Unification Process in Germany*, 1992

- 1969: Willy Brandt becomes Chancellor of Germany and begins his policy of *Ostpolitik*
- 1970: The Moscow Treaty. West Germany renounces its claim to represent all the German people
- 1971: Honecker replaces Ulbricht as General Secretary of the SED and therefore becomes leader of the GDR
- 1972: The Basic Treaty. West Germany recognizes the GDR as a state in its own right
- 1974: Brandt resigns and is replaced by Schmidt
- 1982: Helmut Kohl becomes Chancellor of West Germany
- 1983: Gorbachev becomes President of the USSR
- 1987: First visit of an East German leader to the FRG
- 1989: Gorbachev makes it clear that the USSR will no longer interfere in the affairs of East European states. This includes withdrawing unconditional support of the GDR
- 1989: Protes punches in East Germany
- 1989: Honecker resigns
- 1989: The Berlin Wall is opened
- 1989: Kohl visits East Germany and is stunned by the warmth with which he is received
- 1990: Modrow, the new East German Prime Minister, draws up a plan for reunification with the USSR
- 1990: Two-plus-Four Agreement
- 1990: Currency union between East and West Germany
- 1990: Reunification of Germany

Activity

Was the reunification of Germany inevitable? Do you personally take a positive or negative view of German reunification? To help you answer this question you may find some of the following helpful:

- Laver, Rowe and Williamson, *Years of Division*, 1999
 - Fulbrook, *The Fontana History of Germany 1918-1990*, 1991
 - Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993
 - Jarusch, *The Rush to German Unity*, 1994
- It is also worth looking on the Internet, especially for primary material.

In March, free elections were held in East Germany and were a victory for the CDU, doubtless in part because of the massive support lent to it by its West German equivalent. In July, a currency union between East and West Germany was implemented. After the Two-plus-Four talks concluded in September, the way for unification was clear. On 3 October 1990, East and West Germany were officially reunited and Germany was once again a single state. Helmut Kohl became Chancellor of a united Germany. This time, however, the celebrations were less spontaneous than almost a year previously when the Berlin Wall came down. The realities of a united Germany were beginning to hit home, especially in West Berlin which had experienced the most acute influx of new residents. Reunification was, nevertheless, a momentous occasion and one for which many Germans had waited a long time. For many, the celebrations were real enough.

Source 5



Germans celebrate the reunification of East and West Germany in 1990.

Conclusion

Was the reunification of Germany inevitable? Or to put it a different way, was the GDR doomed to fail? Certainly, the GDR did not experience the economic success enjoyed by the FRG, although its citizens had much higher living standards than elsewhere in the Soviet Bloc. It is also true that the Berlin Wall helped it to survive because it stopped the relentless flow of East Germans into West Germany. The GDR depended on the USSR for military support and the FRG for economic assistance. All these factors hardly encourage historians to claim for certain that the GDR could have lasted indefinitely. However, can we be sure that its collapse was inevitable? In the final analysis, it was the events elsewhere that determined the timing of the GDR's collapse. Like the Weimar Republic before it, one could argue that the GDR was not strong enough to withstand these external factors which crucially undermined it. But whether this in itself means the GDR was doomed to fail is for you to decide.