

7 Germany divided and reunited, 1945-1991

Key Issues

- Why, and with what consequences, was Germany divided following the Second World War?
 - 7.1 How and why was Germany divided into two states in the period 1945-1949?
 - 7.2 The founder of modern Germany, Konrad Adenauer?
 - 7.3 Historical interpretation: The West German economic miracle - myth or reality?
 - 7.4 How and why did East Germany develop differently from West Germany in the years 1949-1989?
 - 7.5 What were the main issues in foreign policy affecting East and West Germany in the years 1949-1989?
 - 7.6 How significant was Helmut Kohl in bringing about German reunification in the years 1989-1991?
- How far did East and West Germany become completely different states in the period 1949-1989?
- Why was Germany reunited in the years 1989-1991?

Framework of Events

- 1945 May: Germany surrenders. End of Second World War
July/Aug: Potsdam Conference on future of Germany
- 1946 Apr: SED formed in Soviet Zone
- 1947 Jan: Bizonia created in US and British zones
Jun: Marshall Plan announced in US
Jun: Berlin Blockade crisis begins. Lasts until May 1949
- 1948 May: Basic Law creates West German State
Jun: First Bundestag elections give victory to Adenauer and CDU/CSU
Oct: Creation of German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in Soviet zone
- 1952 May: West Germany allowed its own armed forces; GDR closes border with West Germany except in Berlin
- 1953 Mar: Death of Soviet leader Stalin
Jun: Riots in East Berlin (GDR)
- 1955 May: West Germany joins NATO; GDR joins newly formed Warsaw Pact
- 1957 Jan: Saarland joins West Germany
- 1958 Mar: Beginning of crisis over future of Berlin between USSR and the West
- 1961 Aug: Berlin Wall crisis
- 1963 Oct: Adenauer retires as West German Chancellor
- 1969 Oct: First Socialist Chancellor of West German, Willy Brandt, forms coalition government
- 1970 Mar: Beginning of *Ospolitic*
- 1971 May: Erich Honecker becomes leader of GDR
- 1980 Jan: National Green Party formed
- 1982 Sept: Kohl becomes West German Chancellor
- 1985 Mar: Gorbachev becomes Soviet leader.

1989

Aug: Thousands of East Germans attempt to leave for the West, via Hungary
Oct: Large demonstrations in Leipzig (GDR) against GDR government

1990

Nov: GDR opens Berlin Wall
Mar: First free elections in GDR
July: West German currency (Deutschmark) introduced in GDR
Dec: First all-Germany election returns Kohl as Chancellor

1991

Mar: Reunification of Germany
June: Berlin replaces Bonn as new capital of united Germany.

The leaders 1949-1991

West Germany's Chancellors

- 1949-1953: Konrad Adenauer (Christian Democrat)
- 1953-1966: Ludwig Erhard (Christian Democrat)
- 1966-1969: Kurt Kiesinger (Christian Democrat)
- 1969-1974: Willy Brandt (Social Democrat)
- 1974-1982: Helmut Schmidt (Social Democrat)
- 1982-1998: Helmut Kohl (Christian Democrat)

East Germany's leaders

- 1949-1950: Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl (SED and PDS)
- 1950-1971: Walter Ulbricht (Socialist Unity Party (SED))
- 1971-1989: Erich Honecker (SED)
- 1989-1990: Egon Krenz (SED)
- 1989-1990: Hans Modrow (SED)
- 1990-1991: Lothar de Maizière (Christian Democrat)

Elections to the West German national parliament (Bundestag) 1949-1990

Germany operated a 'proportional representation' electoral system, where the number of seats won reflected, proportionately, the number of votes cast.

- CDU - Christian Democratic Union
- CSU - Christian Social Union
- SDP - Social Democrat Party
- FDP - Free Democrat Party

Year	CDU/CSU		SDP		FDP		Greens	
	% of vote	Seats	% of vote	Seats	% of vote	Seats	% of vote	Seats
1949	31	139	29.2	131	11.9	52		
1953	45.2	243	28.8	151	9.5	48		
1957	50.2	270	31.8	169	7.7	41		
1961	45.4	242	36.2	190	12.3	67		
1965	47.8	245	39.3	202	9.5	49		
1969	46.1	242	47.7	224	5.8	30		
1972	44.9	165	45.8	230	8.4	41		
1976	48.6	243	42.6	211	7.9	39		
1980	44.5	237	42.9	228	10.6	54	1.5	0
1983	48.8	255	38.2	202	7.0	35	5.6	26
1987	44.3	234	37.0	193	9.1	44	8.3	44
1990	43.8	319	33.5	239	11.0	79	5.1	8

Overview

Federal: A form of government where political power is shared between a central government and state governments. In Germany, state (*Länder*) governments had responsibility for internal law and order, education and welfare.

NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, founded by a military treaty signed in 1949, and still in existence. It was created to protect western Europe from Soviet military aggression. Its most important member was the USA.

THE history of Germany between 1945 and 1991 is linked directly to the history of the Cold War in Europe. The division of Germany in the years 1945 to 1949, was the result of growing tension between the USA and its Western allies and the USSR. None of the Allied powers, in 1945, had planned to divide Germany into two states. However, from 1949 the division of Germany between the Federal German Republic (FRG), also known as 'West Germany', and the German Democratic Republic (GDR), also known as 'East Germany', was a symbol for the division of Europe into non-communist and communist areas. By the 1960s the border between the FRG and the GDR was the most heavily defended in the world.

The creation of the FRG may have been the product of the Cold War but it owes its early development to one man, Konrad Adenauer. He can justly be regarded as the father of the West German state. Under his leadership, from 1949 to 1963, West Germany became a major state in non-communist Europe. It became an independent state and was admitted to NATO in 1953.

If Adenauer was the father of West Germany, Walter Ulbricht can be regarded as the key figure in the development of East Germany. As political leader from 1949 to 1971 Ulbricht brought about a political and economic revolution in the GDR. He established a communist dictatorship, dominated by the Socialist Unity Party (SED), the East German communist party.

Although Adenauer and Ulbricht were important in the domestic history of Germany, it was the USA and the USSR that ultimately determined their political and international positions. As long as the USSR was willing to defend communism with armed force the GDR would remain a communist state. When this guarantee was removed, in 1989, the GDR quickly collapsed.

However, this does not mean that German politicians were unable to influence events. It was mainly under East German pressure that the USSR accepted the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. It was also on the initiative of the West German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, that relations between the FRG and the GDR improved in the early 1970s through his policy of *Ostpolitik* (eastern policy).

The reunification of Germany in 1991 was a product of the Cold War. The rapid decline of the USSR in the 1980s led to the weakening of Soviet control over eastern Europe. In 1989 communist governments fell all across eastern Europe, and the GDR was no exception. On the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the

Willy Brandt (1913-1992) West Germany's foremost Social politician. He was mayor of West Berlin during the Berlin Wall crisis of 1961. He became head of the SPD from 1964 to 1967. He was Chancellor of the FRG from 1969 to 1974. He was born Herbert Frahm. However, he changed his name during	the Nazi period when he fled Germany to avoid persecution. He settled in Norway and became a Norwegian citizen. He joined the SPD in 1948 following his return. His major contribution to post-war Germany was his policy of <i>Ostpolitik</i> (Eastern policy) which greatly improved FRG-relations with	the GDR, Poland and the USSR. For his efforts he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971. At home he introduced major social reforms. In 1974 he was forced to resign when it was announced that one of his close advisers was a member of the GDR secret police (Stasi).
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GDR, demonstrations against the GDR government paved the way for rapid political change. The USSR's failure to support the GDR government resulted, first, in the fall of its leader, Erich Honecker, then the communist government itself. One of the most symbolic photographs of the end of the Cold War was the sight of ordinary Germans pulling down parts of the Berlin Wall on the night of 9/10 November.

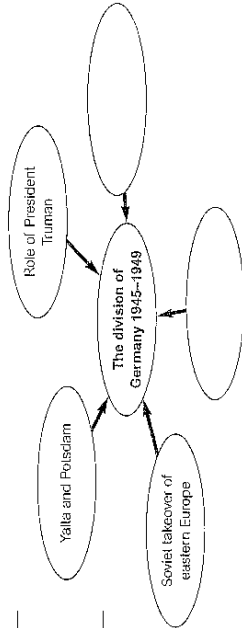
Although communism collapsed in the GDR, by early 1990 it took the actions of FRG Chancellor Helmut Kohl to bring rapid reunification in 1990. He was able to win support for reunification in his own state, and he also was able to persuade his NATO allies and the USSR that a reunited Germany would not destabilise Europe. By early 1991, Germany was reunited. It wasn't an equal merger of two states. Instead, the former GDR was 'merged' into the FRG.

1. In what ways did German politicians influence the development of Germany between 1945 and 1991?

2. Assess the view that the history of Germany in the years 1945 to 1991 was a history of the Cold War in Europe.

7.1 How and why was Germany divided into two states in the period 1945-1949?

Which additional reasons can you add to this mind map to explain why Germany was divided by 1949?



'Point Zero', May 1945

In May 1945 Germany had reached 'point zero' (*Nulipunkt*). Hitler had committed suicide on 30 April. Most other senior Nazi leaders had been captured. On 8 May Germany had unconditionally surrendered to the Allied powers. Following the surrender, all Germany was under military occupation. Virtually every city in Germany had suffered extensive devastation as a result of Allied aerial bombing. Over 4 million Germans had died in the war. Between 6 and 7 million Germans were prisoners of war. By the end of 1945 a further 10 million ethnic Germans had been expelled from their homes in eastern Europe and forced to live in the military occupation zones of the Allied powers.

The German state had ceased to exist. What would take its place?

Allied plans for post-war Germany

During the war, the Allies had developed a variety of plans about what to do with Germany after the war. At the Tehran Conference of November/December 1943 the USSR, the USA and Britain had decided to divide Germany into five areas. The Ruhr and Saar industrial regions were to be placed under international control and the Kiel Canal and the city of Hamburg would be controlled by a new organization, the United Nations.

In 1944, following a conference in Quebec (Canada), Britain and the USA supported the Morgenthau Plan, named after the US Treasury

Secretary. It planned to destroy German industry and turn Germany into an agricultural country. This idea was dropped in the spring of 1945. The main meetings which decided Germany's future were held in Yalta (on the Crimean Peninsula), in February 1945 and at Potsdam (in Germany) in July/August 1945. On both occasions the main decision makers were the USSR, the USA and Britain.

What was agreed at the Yalta Conference, 4-11 February 1945?

At Yalta it was agreed to divide Germany into four military zones - one each for the USSR, Britain, the USA and France. France was included because the USA was committed to withdrawing its troops from Germany by 1947. This would have left Britain alone facing the USSR. The Occupation Zones would be administered by each Allied power but were overseen by an Allied Control Council representing all four Powers. A similar situation was planned for Austria.

A source of potential tension was the future eastern border of the German occupation zones. Stalin, the Soviet leader, insisted that Poland be given large areas of former eastern Germany - up to the Oder and western Neisse rivers. This would compensate Poland for the loss of large areas of eastern Poland which Stalin wanted incorporated in the USSR.

Tension at Potsdam, July/August 1945

The second Allied Power meeting was on the outskirts of Berlin. At this conference US President Harry S. Truman had replaced Roosevelt (who had died in April). In August 1945 the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, had been replaced by the Labour leader, Clement Attlee, following a general election. Stalin remained Soviet leader until his death in 1953.

It was agreed to set up the Allied Control Council. This would oversee the four military zones of occupation. It would have representatives of the USSR, Britain, USA and France. It was also agreed to enforce four policies: denazification, demilitarisation, decartelisation and democratisation.

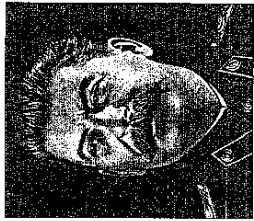
The first part of this policy began with the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials of leading Nazis in 1945-1946. However a full denazification process was not implemented in the Western zones. The US commander, Lucius Clay, decided by 1947 that to encourage rapid German economic recovery, former Nazi administrators and civil servants had to be employed.

The most successful policy was demilitarisation, where the entire armed forces of Germany were dismantled. It was only after 1955 that East and West Germany were allowed armed forces.

Decartelisation aimed to destroy the large companies of Germany which had provided the economic base for the Nazi regime. This was only temporarily introduced in the West but completed in the Soviet zone with the state takeover of all industry. Finally, democratisation eventually was introduced in the Western zones in 1949. In the Soviet zone a strict communist regime was created.

It was also decided that Germany should pay large amounts of reparations to the Allies. However, there was some disagreement about how this would take place. As the USSR had lost 25 million dead and had been devastated economically, Stalin wanted a large amount of reparations (\$20 billion). In the end it was agreed that each Allied power take reparations from their own zones. However, Britain and the USA would give the USSR 10% of the industrial machinery from their zones and a further 15% in exchange for food and raw materials from the Soviet zone. However, no overall agreement was reached over reparations.

A large area of disagreement was over the future borders of the Soviet



Joseph Stalin (1879-1953)
Soviet leader from 1924 to 1953.

Reparations: Payments made by a defeated state to compensate the victorious state(s) for damage or expenses caused by the war.

Zone and Poland. Britain and the USA wanted the border to be the eastern Neisse river. However, by the time of the conference the Poles were expelling ethnic Germans from east of the Oder and western Neisse river area.

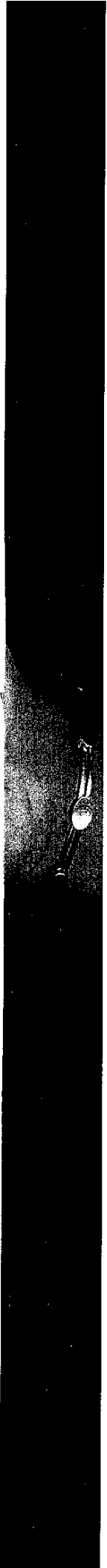
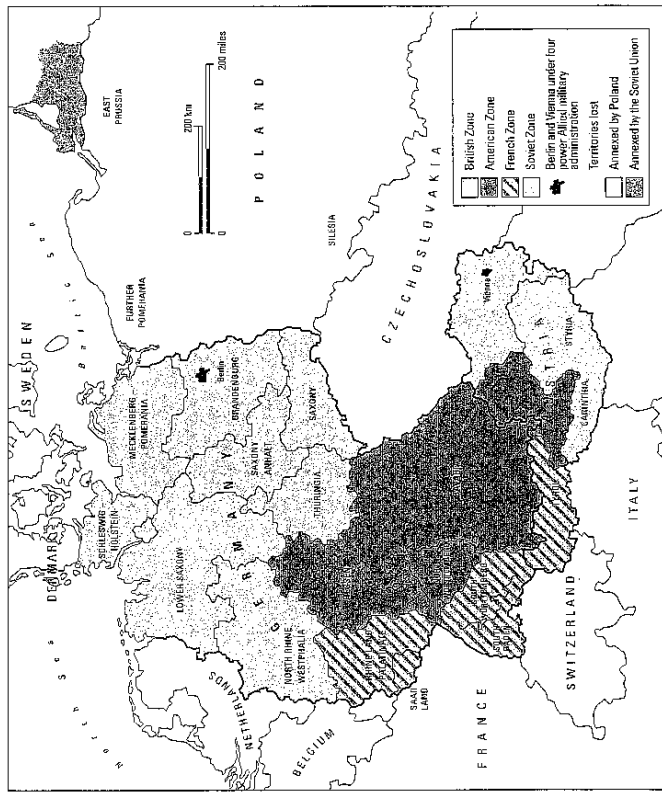
Despite all the tension between the USSR on one side and Britain, USA and France on the other, there was no attempt at this stage to divide Germany. This was shown by the Soviet agreement to have four-power control of Berlin and Vienna. Both these capital cities (of former Germany and Austria) were deep within the Soviet military zones. Stalin hoped to see a neutral, demilitarised Germany and Austria. (Austria, in fact, became a neutral state in 1955.) The situation in Germany, however, was to change with the development of the Cold War in Europe.

The Cold War and the division of Germany

Between 1945 and 1949 Germany was divided in two. On one side was the Soviet zone, which became the German Democratic Republic - 'East Germany'. On the other side would emerge the German Federal Republic - 'West Germany'.

This development cannot be understood without reference to the Cold War. In the years following Germany's defeat the former Allies, the USSR, USA and Britain began to fall out. So much so, that by 1949, Europe had been firmly divided into a Western area and a pro-Soviet area. As British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill had stated in 1946, an 'Iron Curtain'

Occupied Germany and Austria
1945-48



had descended on Europe, dividing it in two. Caught in the middle of this divided Europe were Germany and Austria.

There are a variety of differing historical interpretations about why the Cold War began. The traditional differences between communism and non-communist states, which dated back to the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917, is mentioned as the root cause. However, following Germany's defeat, Stalin began establishing Soviet-style communist governments in areas occupied by the Soviet (Red) army. These included Poland, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and eastern Germany. By 1947 the USA became so alarmed that they issued the Truman Doctrine (March 1947) which offered support to all governments facing communist subversion. Later in the same year the USA offered Marshall Aid to all countries in Europe. This was economic aid to help recover from the war. However, Stalin saw it as an attempt to undermine communist control in eastern Europe. Eventually, one key event in Germany led to a complete breakdown in Western-Soviet relations - the 1948 Berlin Blockade crisis.

The Berlin Blockade crisis and the creation of two German states

The immediate cause of this crisis was the creation of 'Bizonia'. In order to encourage German economic recovery, Britain and the USA had decided to merge their two zones of occupation into one economic unit. It took effect on 1 January 1947. Stalin saw this as an attempt to create a united, anti-Soviet German political entity in the western zones. This fear was confirmed when the French zone decided to join Bizonia, and then an administrative headquarters was established in Frankfurt-am-Main to administer the enlarged zone.

All the signs of crisis emerged at a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the occupying powers, which took place in London in November and December 1947. The conference ended in a deep division between the USSR and the West. The USSR had claimed that Bizonia had broken the Potsdam Agreement of 1945. The USA and Britain refused to accept a Soviet proposal for a central German government, which they thought might become communist.

The immediate cause of the crisis was the Western decision to introduce a new currency - the Deutschmark - into their three zones. This would take effect on 20 June 1948. The Soviet reaction was to block off road, rail and waterway links between the Western zones and their occupation areas in Berlin.

Lasting almost a year, the Berlin Blockade crisis was the most serious crisis between the USSR and the West since the end of the Second World War. Stalin believed the blockade would force the Western Allies to abandon their areas of Berlin. This was a serious miscalculation. The blockade forced the West, under American leadership, to stand up to Soviet threats. When it was proved that the West could provision their areas of Berlin by air, Stalin abandoned the blockade - on 11 May 1949.

The impact of the crisis was enormous. It divided Germany in two. In the West the immediate response was to create NATO (The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation). This was a defensive military alliance aimed against the USSR.

The blockade also speeded up the economic and administrative reorganisation of the Western occupation zones into one unit.

The biggest impact of the crisis was to divide Germany into two political units. In the west, the British, French and American zones would be formed into the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) - 'West Germany'. In the Soviet zone, an alternative German government would be formed, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) - 'East Germany'.

The creation of an independent West German state

- 1949 Basic Law creates West Germany
- 1951 West Germany gains control over its foreign policy
- West Germany joins European Parliament
- 1954 West Germany joins the European Coal and Steel Community
- 1955 High Commission abolished
- West Germany becomes an independent state. It joins NATO and is allowed its own armed forces, as long as they are commanded by NATO
- 1957 Creation of EEC - the 'Common Market'. West Germany is one of six original members, along with France, Italy, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg
- 1972 West Germany is admitted to the United Nations.

1. List the major events which led to the division of Germany in the years 1945 to 1949. What do you regard as the most important reason for this division? Explain your answer.

2. To what extent was the USSR responsible for the division of Germany in the years 1945 to 1949?

The Basic Law (Grundgesetz) May 1949

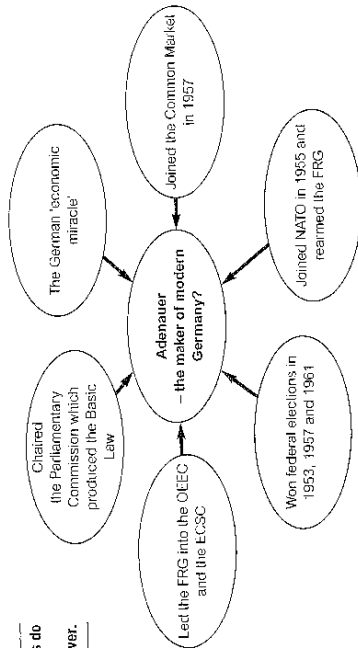
This law established the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) in 1949.

- West Germany was to be a federal state.
- Political power was split between a central (federal) government based in Bonn and the governments of each individual state (Land, plural Länder)
- The Head of State was a president.
- Real political power was in the hands of the Chancellor, who controlled the majority of seats in the Bundestag.
- The National Parliament would have two chambers: the Bundestag (Lower House) was directly elected by the German people.
- The Bundesrat (Upper House) represented the governments of the individual German states (Länder)
- Unlike the Weimar Republic (1919-33) the Bundestag could not remove a Chancellor or individual minister.

- They only had power to remove the entire government and then only if a replacement Chancellor had already been nominated.
- The president was a figurehead position with no political power. The president was chosen by members of the Bundestag and the Bundesrat, not directly elected by the people.
- Small extremist parties were prevented from entering the Bundestag because of the rule that parties had to receive 5% of the vote to win any seats.
- A Federal Constitutional Court was created to ensure that the Federal and Land governments followed the Basic Law.
- A High Commission replaced the commanders-in-chief of the four Allied Powers. This had considerable power. It could veto laws passed by the Bundestag and change the Basic Law. It lasted until 23 October 1954 when it was abolished.
- West Germany had no army and no foreign minister (until 1951).

7.2 The founder of modern Germany: Konrad Adenauer?

Which of these achievements do you regard as the most important? Explain your answer.





Konrad Adenauer
(1876–1967)

The first Chancellor of the Federal German Republic. Founder of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in 1946. Chancellor from 1949 to 1963.

Born on 5 January 1876 to a middle-class family in the Rhineland. Attended the universities of Munich, Bonn and Freiburg where he studied law and economics. In the First World War became a member of Catholic Centre Party, and in 1917, was elected mayor of Cologne. In 1926 was asked to stand for position of Chancellor but declined. From 1932 to 1945 he opposed Hitler. He was forced out of position of mayor of Cologne and arrested twice during Nazi period.

On second occasion he was imprisoned for a short time in a concentration camp. From 1945 to 1949 Adenauer returned to politics and became chair of the parliamentary commission which drafted the constitution for the FRG. In 1949 he became Chancellor. During his time as Chancellor the CDU dominated West German politics. Under his leadership, the FRG joined the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, the European Coal and Steel

Community and the Common Market. In 1955 the FRG became an independent state and was admitted to NATO. Also in the period 1949 to 1963 the FRG achieved a spectacular economic recovery, becoming one of Europe's major economies. However, Adenauer was accused of being dictatorial in the way he ran the government. His fall was associated with the *Dra Speigel* affair where attempts were made to censor the press.

'The greatest German'?

In 2003 the German Television station, ZDF, held a poll on who was the greatest German ever, and three million people took part. Konrad Adenauer came top of the poll, ahead of religious reformer Martin Luther and philosopher Karl Marx. What made Adenauer such an important figure in modern German history?

Born in 1876, in the Rhineland, Adenauer was already an experienced and elderly politician by the end of the Second World War. He had become Lord Mayor of Cologne (Köln) in 1917. He was an opponent of Hitler and the Nazis. In 1934 he was arrested by the Gestapo and imprisoned for two days. Later, in September 1934, he was arrested again and placed in a detention camp at Bauweiler. He was accused of taking part in the July Bomb Plot which attempted to assassinate Hitler.

Therefore, by the end of the war Adenauer had excellent anti-Nazi credentials and was one of the most experienced and senior politicians in western Germany.

Adenauer's rise to power, 1945–1949

As Germany had reached 'zero point' Adenauer helped create a new political party out of the ruins of defeat. Before the rise of Hitler he had been a member of the Centre Party (the German Catholic Party). In 1945 he was one of the key founder members of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) a party for both Protestants and Catholics. It supported a capitalist-style economy with a strong welfare state – the 'social market economy'. Adenauer was the chairman of the CDU in the British zone.

The CDU joined with its Bavarian equivalent, the Christian Social Union, to form the CDU/CSU. This party dominated West German national politics from 1949 to 1969, and again in the 1980s.

Adenauer's administrative and political experience was also used by the Allied powers. In 1945 he again, briefly, was appointed Mayor of Cologne, by the British. However, of greater significance was his role as head of the Rhineland Land. This was the local government unit recreated by the Western Allies after the war. With the Allied powers in control of any

central administration, minister-president of a Land was the highest post a German could hold.

Adenauer was one of the first German politicians to grasp the significance of the growing tensions between the Western Allies and the USSR. His main political opponent was Karl Schumacher, head of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). The SDP supported state control of the economy. This stood in marked contrast to the views of the Western Allies, especially the USA.

Schumacher also opposed Allied plans such as Bizouan.

At the beginning of the Berlin Blockade crisis, in July 1948, the minister-presidents of the Länder were asked, by the Western Allies, to form a 'Parliamentary Council'. Its purpose was to draw up a constitution for a west German state. Adenauer chaired the council. It drew up the Basic Law which created a federal, democratic state. In May 1949 this political entity became the Federal German Republic (FRG) – 'West Germany'. The capital of this new state was the small Rhineland town of Bonn, instead of the city of Frankfurt am Main. Bonn was where the Parliamentary Council had met. It was also close to Adenauer's hometown of Röttendorf.

In August 1949 democratic elections were held in the British, French and American zones. The CDU/CSU won 139 seats compared to 131 for the SDP and 52 for the Liberals (FDP). Adenauer was elected Chancellor by one vote, and took office on 21 September – at the age of 73.

No one expected a politician of his age to dominate West German politics for the next 14 years: Adenauer had risen to the position of Chancellor because of his anti-Nazi past. He was also seen as a strong anti-communist. He was also clever enough to understand the impact of the growing Cold War on East–West relations. His support for the ideas of the Western Allies meant that he out-thought his major political opponent, Karl Schumacher of the SDP.

The achievement of West German independence

In October 1945, Adenauer, in an interview with Western journalists, had stated that the Western Allies should create a Federal Republic from their three zones. In 1949 West Germany was created out of the three western military zones. However, it was far from a truly independent state. The Allied High Commission, under the Basic Law, had ultimate political power, with the power to veto legislation. The FRG had no control over its foreign policy: it had no armed forces and it was not recognised as a separate state by most of the world. But by 1955, Adenauer – more than any other person – had created an independent West Germany integrated into Western Europe and the Western world.

A turning point in this development was the Petersberger Agreement of November 1949. Under the agreement, the FRG could create diplomatic relations with other countries. In return, Adenauer said he would support international control of the Ruhr industrial region. This agreement caused fierce debate in the Bundestag. However, using the agreement, Adenauer was able to get West Germany membership of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) in 1951. It also enabled the FRG to take a seat on the International Ruhr Authority. Later in 1951 West Germany was a founder member of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the forerunner of what eventually became the European Union (EU). The formation of the ECSC enabled the FRG to bring an end to the International Ruhr Authority.

Adenauer's greatest triumphs came in 1954. The Allied High Commission was abolished and, through the Paris and Bonn treaties, the

FRG became a fully independent state. It was allowed to have full diplomatic relations with other countries, and to join NATO. It could now have its own armed forces but they could only operate under NATO command. Following the achievement of independence, the FRG signed the Treaty of Rome in 1957. This created the European Economic Community (EEC), the 'Common Market'. In the same year, the Saarland voted to rejoin Germany and became a new *Land* of the FRG.

However, although Adenauer had won West German independence, it did come at a price. This development consolidated the split between the FRG and the GDR. In 1955, in response to the FRG admission to NATO the GDR joined its communist equivalent, the Warsaw Pact. The split was further reinforced by the 'Hallstein Doctrine'. In 1951 Professor Hallstein, the State-Secretary of the West German Foreign Office, had negotiated the end of the Allied High Commission, which took effect in 1954. However, the Hallstein Doctrine declared that the FRG would not have diplomatic relations with any country which recognised the GDR. This policy helped to poison relations between East Germany and West Germany until the beginning of *Ospolitik* in the early 1970s.

The master of domestic politics

In August 1949 Adenauer was elected Chancellor by just one vote. However, he went on to win the September 1953 election by an increased majority. The scale of the victory, with the CDU/CSU gaining 45 per cent of the vote, confirmed Adenauer as the dominant force in West German politics.

Part of Adenauer's success was the recovery of the West German economy. Marshall Aid, from 1948, had begun the economic recovery. This was also aided by the outbreak of the Korean war (1950-53) which led to an increased demand for German goods. It was also aided by Adenauer's handling of foreign affairs, joining the ECSC and signing the European Defence Community treaty with France, both in May 1952.

In addition, Adenauer cleverly won support from the right wing of German politics by allowing approximately 150,000 officials to return to their posts after their initial dismissal by the Allied 'denazification programme'. He was also responsible for the Equalisation of Burden Law of 1952. This redistributed wealth, in the form of a tax on the rich, to help those Germans who were casualties of the war and the 9.5 million ethnic Germans who had been expelled from eastern Europe. In the subsequent twenty years 90 million Deutschmarks were redistributed.

However, Adenauer's dominance was also aided by the actions of the main opposition leader, Karl Schumacher of the SPD. Schumacher believed that the social market economy would collapse. He was also fearful that the extreme right in German politics would exploit its support for German nationalism. As a result, Schumacher opposed improved economic links with other western European states - especially France. He also vehemently opposed West German rearmament. When Schumacher died, in August 1952, the SPD had failed to make an impact on the German electorate.

Adenauer exploited the situation very effectively. He made a state visit to the USA in April 1953. In June, an uprising took place in East Berlin against communist rule. Both events helped to increase anti-communist feeling in the FRG and reinforced the need to rely more heavily on the USA and NATO. During the 1953 election campaign, Erich Ollenhauer, Schumacher's successor as head of the SPD, was no political match for Adenauer.

Warsaw Pact: A military treaty between the USSR and its European Allies. Created in 1955 as a response to the FRG entry into NATO.

Franz Josef Strauss (1915-1988) Leading member of the Christian Social Union, the Bavarian equivalent of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Born in Munich, the son of a butcher. He studied history and economics at Munich University in the Second World War. He served in the German army. He was hospitalised on the	Eastern Front through fronble. He became an MP in the first FRG parliament in 1949. In 1953 he was made Minister for Special Affairs and then Minister of Nuclear Energy in 1955. He most important post in the Adenauer government was as Minister of Defence from 1956 to 1962. He was forced to resign because	of the Der Spiegel scandal. He returned to national politics from 1966 to 1969 as Treasury Minister. From 1976 until his retirement from politics Strauss was a great rival to Kohl for leadership of the CDU/CSU. From 1978 to his death in 1988 Strauss was Minister-President of Bavaria.
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From zenith to nadir

From 1953 to 1957 Adenauer consolidated his position as the 'strong man' of German politics. In 1955 the FRG had become a sovereign state. The West German armed forces had been created. In 1957 West Germany joined the Common Market and the Saarland was returned to the FRG.

In the build-up to the 1957 election Adenauer showed his authority over the CDU/CSU by promoting Franz Josef Strauss of the CSU to the post of Defence Minister and sacking several economic ministers who had supported an interest rate rise. To thwart the SPD opposition he introduced index-linked state pensions, in January 1957, which included a one-off rise of approx 70%. This could be seen as a massive bribe for the electorate. However, it did consolidate Adenauer's view of a social market economy.

With the opposition in disarray, Adenauer won 50.2% of the vote, the biggest electoral win in post-war German history.

In his final term as Chancellor, foreign policy predominated. Khrushchev, the Soviet leader, began a major diplomatic offensive to change the status of Berlin, which was still under four-power military control. Beginning in November 1958 the crisis soured East-West relations. It came to a head with the building of the Berlin Wall, in August 1961. The Berlin Wall crisis increased the national and international profile of the SPD mayor of West Berlin, Willy Brandt.

In the same period, Adenauer faced defeat in his attempt to introduce commercial television to the FRG. It was a *Ladaker* responsibility to provide unbiased public broadcasting. In trying to introduce commercial television Adenauer was disregarding the Basic Law. He was defeated on the proposal in the Federal Constitutional Court in February 1961. He was also defeated in the Bundesstag in an attempt to reform the health system.

Finally, in 1959, Adenauer tried to block the rise of his main rival for CDU/CSU leadership, Ludwig Erhard. Erhard had been seen as the architect of Germany's rapid economic recovery. Adenauer tried to get himself chosen as the next West German president, with control over foreign affairs. This was unconstitutional under the Basic Law. As a result, Adenauer withdrew his proposal and Heinrich Lübke became president in his place.

Adenauer's fall: the Der Spiegel affair, 1962-63

Der Spiegel is a widely respected magazine. On 10 October 1962 it published an article which claimed that, in the recent NATO manoeuvres,

Ludwig Erhard (1897-1977)

Born in Furtli, Bavaria. He joined the German Army in 1916 during the First World War. He was seriously wounded in 1918. After the war he studied economics, receiving a doctorate in 1925. During the Second World War he wrote extensively on economics. In 1945 he became economics consultant to the US occupation forces. He then became Economics Minister in Bavaria. In 1947 he became a central figure in the creation of Bizonia, the currency union of the British and US zones. In 1949 he was elected to the Land parliament of Baden-Württemberg, in SW Germany. At this stage he joined the CDU, in the same year he became Adenauer's economics Minister. He is widely credited with organising the economic conditions which led to the FRG's 'economic miracle' in the 1950s. In 1963 he succeeded Adenauer as Chancellor. Although re-elected in 1965, he resigned in 1966 when the CDU-FDP coalition collapsed.

the German forces had performed poorly. It was clear that the information had been leaked from classified NATO documents. Not only was this a serious breach of security it occurred at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, one of the most serious crises of the Cold War.

The affair reached national prominence because the Defence Minister, Franz Josef Strauss – an Adenauer appointee – ordered the arrest of the journalist responsible for the article, along with several editors of the magazine. This was done on the grounds of treason against West Germany.

The action of the government caused a furor. It was another example of how the Adenauer government had tried to bend constitutional rules. The affair led directly to Adenauer's downfall. His government held power only because of the support of the Liberals (FDP). As a result of the affair they threatened to withdraw from the coalition with the CDU/CSU if Adenauer did not resign in 1963. At the age of 87, in October 1963, Adenauer resigned in favour of his rival, Ludwig Erhard.

Adenauer: the verdict

The 73-year-old Konrad Adenauer secured an unlikely founder of modern Germany when he became Chancellor by only one vote, in 1949. However, by the time of his fall from power West Germany had become the most powerful economic state in Europe. West Germany had been readmitted to the international community and was a leading figure in the EEC (Common Market).

During his period of power, political stability had been maintained through the dominance of the CDU/CSU. During his Chancellorship, West Germany experienced an economic miracle. By 1963 the vast majority of West Germans had accepted his idea of a social market economy. Following their third successive defeat in the 1957 election, Adenauer's leading opponents, the SPD, abandoned their support for a state-controlled economy. In the Bad Godesberg Declaration of 1959 the SPD accepted Adenauer's version of German economic development.

Adenauer was also extremely shrewd in interpreting the views and intentions of the Western Allies. As a known anti-Nazi he was able to climb rapidly within the political structure of the British zone. As a noted anti-communist his views fitted nicely into the Cold War climate of post-war Europe. In the early 1950s he was called the 'Chancellor of the Allies' by his political opponents.

However, he developed a reputation for getting things done – although he also developed a reputation for trying to force his own views on the government and the Bundesrat. His attempts to subvert the Basic Law led to accusations of authoritarian behaviour. In the end, it was a high-handed act by his Defence Secretary that led to his downfall. His desire to stay in politics meant that following his resignation as Chancellor he stayed on as Chairman of the CDU until 1966 – one year before his death.

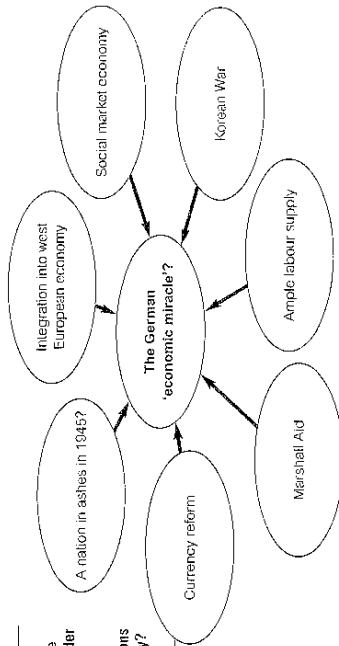
1. From the information contained above, identify four ways in which Adenauer was able to make the FRG an important European state in the years 1949 to 1963.

2. How far does Adenauer deserve the title 'the creator of post-war Germany'?

7.3 The West German 'economic miracle' – myth or reality?

A CASE STUDY IN HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

Which of the reasons in the mind map can be linked to the work of Ludwig Erhard? In order of priority, list the reasons which led to an 'economic miracle'. Are any of the reasons you mention linked in any way? If so, which ones?



In 1945 Germany had reached 'zero point'. The whole country had been occupied by foreign troops, and most German cities had been devastated by Allied bombing. However, by the 1960s it had experienced rapid economic recovery. In 1970 West Germany was the world's third largest economy, after the USA and the USSR.

Real economic growth from 1951 to 1960 averaged 8% per year. Inflation was kept low at an average of 1.1%. Unemployment fell from 11% in 1950 to just 1.2% in 1960. As a result, West Germany outperformed all its rivals in western Europe.

Was this an 'economic miracle'?

Germany in 1945: a nation in ashes?

It seemed that Germany had risen in a spectacular way from the ashes of military defeat in a remarkably short period of time. However, although many German cities were devastated, this was not the case with much of German industry. It was only in 1944 that damage from aerial bombardment had surpassed industrial production. In fact, in May 1945 Germany had industrial plant which was 20% above 1936 levels. According to the US Strategic Bombing Survey, by David Melsaac, published in 1976, Germany's machine tool industry had increased by 75% since 1938. This was an important sector of the post-war West German economy.

An ample labour supply

Although most of its cities suffered extensive damage, Germany still possessed an educated, skilled work force – what economists call 'human capital'. Even though Germany lost millions killed and captured during the war, they were replaced by millions of German refugees who had been expelled from eastern Europe in 1944–46. Approximately 9.5 million of them settled in West Germany. Also between 1949 and the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, 3.8 million Eastern Germans fled the GDR for West Germany – most of them young, skilled workers.

Finally, from the late 1950s, West Germany introduced the 'guest-worker' (*Gastarbeiter*) scheme. In 1959, foreign workers numbered just 150,000. By 1966 this had expanded to 1.2 million. The FRG actively

recruited specific types of worker, mainly from Turkey and Greece. These workers made up for labour shortages in industries such as mechanical and electrical engineering. They also provided cheap labour in declining industries such as textiles and shipbuilding. This helped maintain German economic competitiveness against its international rivals.

As a result of these developments West Germany had both an ample and relatively cheap labour force on which to base its economic recovery and growth.

The social market economy

Considerable weight is placed on the West German idea of a 'social market economy' – a middle way between unregulated private enterprise and a state-controlled economy. The aim was to allow private enterprise but also to allow the government the power to 'police' the market. This would involve preventing monopolies forming, allowing fair competition and ensuring that Germany had a strong currency. This idea dated back to the 1930s, when the Freiburg School of economists, known as 'Ordoliberal economists', such as Franz Böhm and Walter Eucken, had a major impact on the economic thinking of leading members of the CDU, especially Ludwig Erhard.

In 1947 the CDU produced the anti-private enterprise Ahlen Programme. However, by 1949, under Erhard's influence the party had adopted the Dusseldorf Principles. These principles, which evolved into the 'social market economy', were the basis for CDU/CSU economic policy from 1949 to the 1970s. This policy allowed the German economy to develop rapidly without causing major conflicts between trade unions and industrialists.

Currency reform

A major factor behind economic recovery was the introduction of the Deutschmark (DM) to replace the Reichsmark (RM). The currency reform was introduced into the three Western zones of occupation on 20 June 1948. As well as the replacement of one currency by another, it also involved giving the banks large deposits of the new DM to give to industry to invest in economic recovery. This stimulated the development of industry.

Of greater significance was the creation of an independent central bank, the German Central Bank – the Bundesbank. This bank had the responsibility to manage the currency – including the power to raise and lower interest rates – without direct political interference. In 1992 David Marsh produced a book entitled *The Bundesbank: The Bank that Rules Europe*. This reflected the bank's importance in both the West German and European economies.

The immediate impact of the currency reform was to cause deflation. However, it also removed most of the commercial debt of German industry, in doing so it gave Germany the vital benefit of currency stability through the 1950s and 1960s.

Marshall Aid

In 1947 the US Secretary of State, George Marshall, announced the European Recovery Plan, which became known as the 'Marshall Plan'. Between 1947 and 1952 it provided western European states with \$13 billion of aid – 'Marshall Aid' – for economic reconstruction. In December 1948 alone the western area of Germany received \$99 million. In 1950 Marshall Aid accounted for 37% of western German imports. Clearly, this Aid helped stimulate the growth of the economy. Much of

the Aid money was used to improve railways and the electrical and steel industries.

However, its importance has been overstated. Although western Germany received \$1.6 billion between 1948 and 1952, this was equivalent to the Government and Relief in Occupied Areas' money provided by the Germans themselves to aid German refugees moving to western Germany (\$1.6 billion between 1946 and 1952). Also, West Germany's rivals received more from Marshall Aid. Britain received \$3.4 billion and France \$2.8 billion.

The Korean War, 1950-1953

At the time when Marshall Aid was beginning to cease, the West German economy received another boost, because of the Korean War. The rapid rearmament of the USA and Britain meant that German exports, such as machine tools and motor vehicles, were in demand, giving another impetus to economic growth. Also, unlike the USA, Britain and France, West Germany did not have to expend any money on armaments until the mid-1950s.

Ludwig Erhard: the father of the economic miracle?

Erhard had made his name as Economic Director of the Bizone Council in March 1948. He was responsible for the economic merger of the British and American zones of occupation.

In 1948 Bizonia was controlled by the military governors appointed by Britain and the USA. The economy was strictly regulated, with price controls and rationing. This led to a large black market and the hoarding of goods and materials. On 20 June, when the new DM currency was introduced, Erhard announced the end of price controls. This was made without the knowledge of the military governors and, overnight, it brought the black market to an end.

The combined effect of currency reform and deregulation led to a big increase in industrial production, up 30% between March and August 1948. The fact that the French and Soviet zones did not experience such spectacular economic growth helped to strengthen the case for Erhard's reforms. But the increase in consumer demand led to an increase in inflation, and on 12 November 1948 a general strike was organized against price increases. The German Central Bank (Bundesbank), however, increased interest rates which led to a fall in inflation by the end of the year.

Having weathered the storm of deregulation the West German economy was now in a perfect position to exploit the upturn in demand for its exports during the Korean War. In December 1951 Erhard acted economic development further through the Investment Aid Law. This involved a Federal Government subsidy to manufacturing industry of 3.2 billion DM. As a result, the investment level of the West German economy rose from 19% in 1950 to 24% by 1960, far ahead of Britain and France.

As Adenauer's Economics Minister, Ludwig Erhard provided the foundations of economic prosperity which underpinned the CDU/CSU dominance of German politics in the years 1949 to 1969. Following Adenauer's resignation in 1963, Erhard became Chancellor from 1963 to 1966.

As the historian D.G. Williamson (2001) noted in *Germany from Defeat to Partition, 1945-1963*, 'Erhard had engineered a brilliant capitalist restoration. He had encouraged free enterprise and nearly halved the FRG's protective tariffs.'

However, Erhard's period as Economics Minister was not one of unlimited success. His economic policies of the late 1940s led to a steep rise in

unemployment, reaching 3 million in 1950. He was fortunate that the Korean War helped stimulate the West German economy – in the second half of 1950 German industrial production rose by one third.

Also Erhard failed to limit the power of big business. In 1957 his Anti-trust Law (Law on Restraints on Competition) proved ineffective at curbing its economic power. As a result, firms such as Krupp and Thyssen in steel production and Bayer (chemicals) epitomised the economic miracle (*Wirtschaftswunder*). Also, while Erhard freed industry to more open competition, farming remained heavily subsidised, a fact sustained by West German entry into the Common Market in 1957. Finally, the 1957 Pension Act and the development of a welfare state increased state expenditure, storing up problems for future FRG governments in the 1980s and 1990s.

Erhard eventually replaced Adenauer as Chancellor in October 1963. Although he won the 1965 Federal Election, the economic condition of the FRG was changing. The economic growth fell from 6.2% per year in 1954 to 4.5% in 1965. Unemployment rose from 100,000 to 200,000 and inflation rose by 4%. Erhard hoped to raise taxes to meet a budget deficit, but the four FDP (Liberal) ministers in his government resigned. As a result, a new coalition government of CDU/CSU and the SPD under Kurt Kiesinger was created in October 1966. Having been Economics Minister for fourteen years, Erhard lasted a mere three years as Chancellor.

Germany's integration into the western European and world economies

While Erhard may have been seen as the father of the so-called economic miracle, his work was greatly helped by Adenauer's policy of integrating West Germany back into Europe. West Germany joined the Organisation of European Economic Co-operation and the European Payment Union in 1950. In the following year it joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Also in 1951 it joined the European Coal and Steel Community. In 1952 it joined the International Monetary Fund, and in 1957 it was a founder member of the Common Market (EEC).

Membership of these organisations allowed West Germany to take full advantage of the liberalised global economy. This was aided by an undervalued *Deutsche Mark* which made West German exports very price-competitive. For instance, in the early 1950s West German coal sold for \$10.50 per tonne against the world price of \$30 per tonne.

Summary

In 1939 Germany was the world's second largest economy, after the USA. By the 1960s West Germany had become the third largest economy after the USA and USSR. It could be argued that following the devastation and destruction caused by the Second World War West Germany had merely re-established itself as a leading economic power. It would fall to fourth largest economy by 1980, following the rise of Japan.

So, was the economic miracle just a myth? Certainly, parts of the myth were overstated – the 'zero point' of 1945, the idea that the currency reform of 1948 and Marshall Aid were the turning point in West German economic development and the undying wisdom of Erhard's policies.

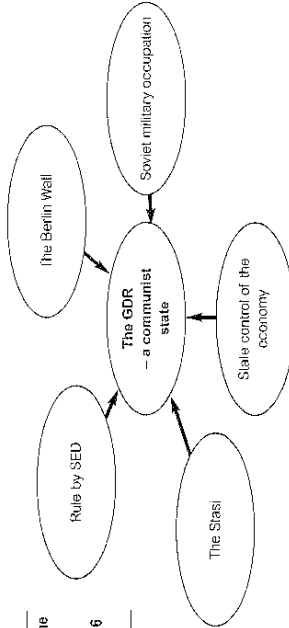
However, by any economic measure, West German economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s was spectacular. Was this due more to changing world economic conditions – or was it due more to German ingenuity?

1. Identify three reasons why the FRG experienced rapid economic development in the 1950s. What do you regard as the most important reason? Explain your answer.

2. What evidence is there for and against the view that the FRG experienced an 'economic miracle'?

7.4 How and why did East Germany develop differently from West Germany in the years 1949–1989?

Which of these reasons was the most important in making the GDR a communist state? (You may wish to look at Section 7.6 on the collapse of the GDR.)



There is strong evidence to suggest that the USSR was against the division of Germany into two states. This will explain why Stalin, the Soviet leader, was willing to allow three western occupation zones in west Berlin. These were deep within the Soviet occupation zone (see map on page 201).

Throughout the period from 1945 until his death in 1953 Stalin hoped to create a united but neutral German state. This would offer a buffer between the communist controlled eastern Europe and the West.

It also explains why, throughout the process of division, the USSR reacted to developments initiated by the West. The creation of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) followed the creation of West Germany, in 1949. The USSR only recognized the GDR as a separate state, in 1955, after West Germany joined NATO.

The creation of the GDR in 1949

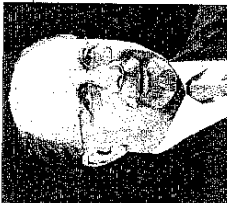
The creation of a communist state in Germany came from two interlinked sources. The first was the tradition of German communism which existed before the rise of Hitler. In 1932 the KPD (German Communist Party) had won 100 seats in the Reichstag. In 1945, those German communists who had suffered imprisonment under the Nazis were released, and many of those who had fled to the USSR returned. The other source came from the USSR. Like the rest of Soviet-occupied Europe, East Germany had a Soviet-style administration established from 1945.

In the Soviet zone a communist party was created from this background. It was the Socialist Unity Party (SED). As early as November 1946 the SED drew up plans for a German Democratic Republic. However, it wasn't until after the creation of the FRG that the GDR was formed. This took place on 30 May 1949.

In 1949 the constitution of the GDR was not unlike the Basic Law of the FRG. In contrast to the situation in Nazi Germany, more than one political party was allowed to exist in the GDR. On 10 June 1945 an anti-Nazi group of parties was created under the Soviet Administration of Germany (SMAD). This group included the CDU and Liberals (LDPD). In 1948 two further parties were created. These were the German Democratic Farmers' Party (DBD) and the National Democratic Party of Germany (NDPD).

In Stalin's Unwanted Child: The Founding of the GDR, historian W. Loth regarded the events of 1949 to 1952 in the GDR as a *coup d'état*. The creation of a communist dictatorship in the GDR was not unlike developments in other Eastern Bloc Soviet satellite states.

Eastern Bloc: The area of eastern Europe with communist governments which were allied to the USSR. They were Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the GDR.



Walter Ulbricht
(1893-1973)
Born in Leipzig, Ulbricht can be regarded as the founder of the GDR. He was leader of the GDR from its creation until 1971. Before the First World War he was a tailor

and member of the SDP. He fought in the First World War from 1915 to 1917 but then deserted because he opposed the war. He was caught and imprisoned until the end of the war.
In 1917 he joined the far-left group, the Independent SPD, and in 1920 joined the German Communist Party (KDP). He was elected to the national parliament (Reichstag) from 1928 to 1933. After the Nazi takeover in 1933 he lived in exile in France and Czechoslovakia until 1937. From 1937 to 1945 he

lived in the USSR. On the day of Hitler's suicide, Ulbricht and other German communists arrived in Eastern Germany with the aim of creating a communist regime. He became the leader of the GDR following its creation. He narrowly survived overthrow in the June 1953 uprising. Ulbricht from 1950 onwards rapidly established a communist state in the GDR, virtually all businesses became state owned and the SED (communists) dominated all aspects of political life.

The Berlin Wall was built in 1961 to stop the mass emigration of people from the GDR to the FRG. Ulbricht developed a reputation for being a hard-line anti-reform communist. He supported the suppression of liberal communists in Czechoslovakia in 1968. His approach made him increasingly unpopular in the SED. On 3 May 1971 he was forced to resign for 'reasons of poor health'. In fact he had been ousted by his successor Honecker, who had the support of the USSR.

The SED dominated the GDR. In the 1949 elections to the parliament (*Volkskammer*) the SED list of candidates won 99% of the votes! Voters were asked: 'Do you support German unity and peace? If so, they had to vote for the SED list. Within the party, the policy of democratic centralism was introduced. Decisions made by the SED ruling committee, the Politbüro, had to be followed by all elements of the SED. During the first half of 1951 the SED purged its own membership. Those seen as unreliable—150,000 people—were expelled.

In December 1949 the Supreme Court and the Department of Public Prosecutions were established under strict SED control. By April 1950 over half the judges and 86% of public prosecutors were SED members. In 1950 the Ministry of State Security was created. Its members, the Stasi, eventually dominated GDR life. By the 1980s about a quarter of the GDR population were informants for the Stasi.

As in other communist states, significant emphasis was placed on educating youth. The school curriculum was changed radically to reflect Marxist-Leninist principles. A youth movement, the FDJ (Free German Youth Movement), was formed which was effectively controlled by the SED.

In 1952, at the Third Congress of the SED, local government was reorganised. The five *Länder* were abolished and replaced by 14 Districts (*Bezirke*). Unlike the FRG, the GDR became a centralised police state under the strict control of the SED.

In July 1952, the first ruler of the GDR, Walter Ulbricht, unveiled his plans to 'build socialism' in the GDR. This would involve a programme of rapid industrialisation and the 'collectivisation' of agriculture. These were to be achieved through Soviet-style central economic planning. These were followed through a Two-Year Plan, followed by a Five-Year Plan and then, following Soviet procedures, a Seven-Year Plan.

By introducing a Soviet-style dictatorship, Ulbricht must take as much blame for the division of Germany as any other German politician. By 1952, the FRG and GDR were clearly on radically divergent paths of development.

How different were the FRG and GDR?

By the 1960s the citizens of the FRG regarded themselves as superior to their fellow Germans in the GDR. The FRG had experienced spectacular economic growth during the 1950s. It was a democracy with very strong local government in the form of the *Länder*. The GDR was a centralised communist dictatorship where the government controlled the courts, police and press. Standards of living and quality of life were clearly better in the West. Why did this occur?

Part of the answer is in the industrial base of both states. The FRG inherited the main German industrial region, the Ruhr. From 1957 it also contained the important industrial area of Saarland. The FRG had abundant coalfields to fuel industrial growth. It also had a large and expanding population—40 million in 1949, rising to 51 million by 1961.

In contrast, the GDR was mainly agricultural. The great eastern industrial area, Upper Silesia, had been seized by Poland in 1945. Also, the USSR took much of whatever industrial plant it had possessed as part of wartime reparations in 1945. It also had a smaller—and declining—population. With only 19 million in 1949, the GDR had lost 3.8 million of its best workers to the FRG by 1961.

Although the GDR experienced annual growth rates of 8% in the 1950s this slowed down to 2.3% between 1960 and 1962. Also collectivisation of agriculture proved to be both extremely unpopular and economically disastrous.

However, these differences are not the whole story. The FRG became integrated into the Western and global economies. As an export-led economy the FRG benefited greatly from membership of GATT, the European Coal and Steel Community and then the Common Market.

In contrast, the GDR suffered from central planning and membership of the Soviet Bloc. In fact, it was the most prosperous of the Eastern Bloc countries that comprised COMECON, but its growth rate was no match for the FRG. In motor vehicle manufacture, for example, by 1970 the FRG had a worldwide reputation for its Volkswagens, BMW and Mercedes Benz cars. The GDR, in contrast, produced the fibreglass-bodied Trabant!

These contrasts do not mean that the development of the FRG was without tensions and crises. In 1968, student riots and demonstrations occurred across western Europe. Initially these were linked to opposition to US involvement in the Vietnam War, but they soon became general demonstrations against West German society. In the 1970s more radical opposition occurred. A group of extreme left-wing students formed the Baader-Meinhof Group. This group took part in terrorist attacks across West Germany. Their attacks coincided with the problems caused by the 1973 oil crisis which had led to a fourfold increase in oil prices and a rise in inflation and unemployment.

The GDR developed into a 'niche' society. This was a term used by the FRG's first representative to the GDR, Günter Gaus. He suggested that most East Germans had come to accept communism and they managed to live life as best they could. In the GDR citizens had a high standard of welfare provision and near full employment. They also prided themselves on having the highest living standards in the Soviet Bloc. As a result, they began to dissociate themselves from the worst aspects of communist rule, such as lack of press freedom and political repression. However, as the events of 1988-1989 showed, the idea of a 'niche' society came apart very rapidly when the prospect of moving to the FRG became a possibility.

The June 1953 uprising: revolution or Western plot?

The most important event in the history of the GDR before 1989 was the uprising on 17-18 June 1953. It began in East Berlin. In all, 500,000 East Germans demonstrated against the GDR government in 350 places. It was suppressed by the Soviet (Red) Army, and 50 demonstrators were killed in the process.

The immediate cause of the uprising was the government's decision to increase workloads by 10%, whilst keeping the same wage rate. This had to be done to help pay for the first Two-Year Plan. But before this proposal came into effect, Stalin died, in March 1953. The new Soviet leadership wanted a less harsh approach in the GDR in order to gain popularity. This 'New Course' was reluctantly accepted by Walter Ulbricht. However, the 10% workload increase remained. This led to the demonstrations in East Berlin. At 2.00 p.m. on 17 June the GDR government gave way on the 10% workload issue. However, demonstrators now changed their demands to free elections, free trade unions and price reductions.

In the GDR the uprising was portrayed as a Western attempt to undermine communism. In *Contemporary Germany* (2000), the historian Mark Allinson claimed the importance of June 1953 had been overstated – 'the rebellion was not general, but concentrated in a number of districts. The vast majority of the GDR population went about its business normally, and many defended the SED cause'. However, in 1993 two East German historians, Armin Mitte and Stefan Wölle claimed that the uprising was a virtual revolution. They based their views on evidence uncovered in the former GDR archives. They concluded that 'without the intervention of Soviet troops the GDR would have collapsed in June 1953 within a few days'.

The GDR did survive for another thirty-five years, but it was always dependent upon Soviet military support. When this was withdrawn it did collapse, in 1989.

1. Identify four ways in which the GDR was made a communist dictatorship in the years from 1949.
2. 'Compared to the FRG, the GDR was a failed state.' How far do you agree?



Berlin Wall, 7 September 1962

The building of the Berlin Wall, 1961

The GDR may have survived the 1953 uprising, but it was a state in crisis. Forced collectivisation and the creation of a Soviet-style regime forced hundreds of thousands to flee to the West. Before the uprising, 447,000 people had fled between January 1951 and April 1953. To stem the flow, the GDR sealed off the border with the FRG, except for Berlin, in early 1952. In 1957 westward migration was denounced and was punishable by up to three years in prison for those caught. But migration continued at an ever-increasing rate, primarily through Berlin. In 1960, 190,000 fled. In the first six months of 1961 a further 103,000 left. The GDR was on the verge of economic collapse. It was losing its young, skilled workforce.

The GDR problems coincided with a slowdown between the USSR and the West. The Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, demanded a renegotiation of Allied control of Berlin in November 1958. US-USSR relations deteriorated rapidly following 'the U2 incident' of 1959. In August 1961 Khrushchev was willing to accept GDR demands to close the last border between the GDR and the West. Ulbricht's Security Minister, Erich Honecker, planned the operation. On 13 August, East Germans began building the Berlin Wall.

Known in the GDR as the 'Anti-Fascist Defence Wall' it completely sealed off East from West Germany. From 1961 to 1989 the border between the two Germanies was the most heavily defended in the world.

Although the construction of the Wall provoked a major international crisis, it saved the GDR from collapse.

The stable years, 1961-1989

In 1963 the GDR launched the 'New Economic System'. Its aim was to decentralise economic decision-making, instead of concentrating only on output, making profits and improving quality now became legitimate targets.

Although the GDR had living standards below the FRG, it did experience the best standard of living in the eastern Bloc. Between 1965 and 1970 the percentage of GDR workers owning fridges, for example, rose from 26% to 36% and those who owned TV sets rose from 28% to 54%.

In 1971 Ulbricht stepped down to be replaced by Honecker as leader of the GDR. Honecker reversed the policy of economic decentralisation, but he did embark on a major housing programme to tackle the acute housing shortage. Under his leadership, relations improved with the FRG during the period of détente and *Ostpolitik*, and the GDR was admitted to the UN. The GDR also began to develop as a major Olympic sporting nation, excelling in athletics and swimming. It was only after the fall of the GDR, in 1989, that the widespread use of illegal drugs to enhance their performance was admitted. In the interim, the GDR had performed well at the 1976, 1980 and 1988 Olympics. In the 1974 Football World Cup they even beat the holding nation, West Germany, 1-0, in the only competitive match between the two Germanies.

In 1978 Honecker even allowed a degree of religious toleration, making an agreement with the Protestant church leadership. The Stasi still watched over every aspect of GDR life. Now, however, most of the GDR could pick up West German television and many GDR citizens could witness the huge difference in life between East and West Germany.

However, in a totalitarian dictatorship, like the GDR, it was difficult to assess the degree of support for the regime. The USA and the West claimed that the GDR was a mere puppet of the USSR and only existed because of Soviet military force. The GDR claimed it was building a socialist society which had support from most of the population.

In 1985, when the new Soviet leader, Gorbachev, announced a radical new liberal course for the USSR and the eastern Bloc it was possible to test which of these views was closer to the truth.

Erich Honecker (1912-1994) Leader of the GDR from 1971 to October 1989. Born in the Saarland, in western Germany. Saarland was separated from Germany from 1920 to 1935 and became a separate area outside Germany from 1945 to 1955. The son of a coal miner, he joined the young Communist League in 1926 and the German	Communist Party (KPD) in 1929. He worked as a roofer but was then sent to Moscow for training as a full-time organiser for the KPD. He was arrested by the Nazis in 1935 and was imprisoned until the end of the Second World War. In 1946 he joined the SED (new German communist party). In 1958 he became a member of the Central Committee of the SED. He rose to fame as the person who was in charge of	building the Berlin Wall in 1961. He was able to oust Ulbricht in 1971, and with Soviet support he became leader. Under his leadership he made sure that the GDR had the highest standard of living amongst the communist countries of Europe. In 1978 he made an agreement with the Protestant churches granting them more freedom. However, he	would not tolerate any political opposition and the Secret Police (Stasi) maintained a tight surveillance of GDR society. He opposed Gorbachev's reforms from 1985. His downfall was linked to the collapse of Soviet power across eastern Europe in 1989. Without Soviet support, he was ousted by Egon Krenz.
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1. Produce a timeline of the Cold War in Europe, as it applied to Germany.
Identify two periods of crisis. Identify a period of improving relations.
Who, or what, do you think was most responsible for the periods of crisis?
2. Assess the view that Erich Honecker was mainly responsible for the improvement of relations between the FRG and GDR in the years from 1969.

7.5 What were the main issues in foreign policy affecting East and West Germany in the years 1949–1989?

The impact of the Cold War

The foreign policy of the two Germanies was linked directly to the Cold War which developed from 1945. Germany became the battleground in the increasing tension between the USSR and the USA and its Western allies.

The two Potsdam conferences of 1945 decided the future of Germany immediately after the Nazi surrender. Germany was divided into four military zones of occupation. The USSR, USA, Britain and France each controlled one zone. In addition, a large part of pre-war Germany was handed over to Poland. This area contained approximately half of East Prussia and the whole of Silesia, which was a major industrial area. Half of East Prussia was given to the USSR. Also, Berlin, deep inside the Soviet zone, was divided into four occupation zones.

With the increase in tension between the West and the USSR, Germany became the centre of the first major post-war crisis – the Berlin Blockade of 1948–1949. In an attempt to prevent the Western Allies creating a pro-Western German state in their zones the USSR attempted to force the Western Allies out of their occupation zones in Berlin. The resultant crisis led directly to the creation of two German states. The three western zones comprised the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). The German Democratic Republic (GDR) was created from the Soviet Zone.

West German rearmament in the early 1950s

During the first half of the 1950s West German rearmament became the central issue in the Cold War in Europe. By 1953 the US armed forces were stretched across the world and, in particular, in Korea. The US president, Eisenhower, planned to reduce US forces in Europe. To replace them it was suggested that West Germany be rearmament. This suggestion was treated with suspicion by both the USSR and France. The French, under the Plevren Plan of 1951, wanted any German armed force to be part of a western European army. But by 1954 the Plevren plan was dead. In the following year the US persuaded France and the rest of NATO to accept West German rearmament, and West Germany was admitted to NATO. In retaliation, the USSR recognised the GDR as a sovereign state and also created the 'Warsaw Pact' – the Soviet equivalent of NATO – admitting the GDR as a member.

The Berlin Wall crisis of 1961

The most serious Cold War crisis involving Germany since 1949, came in 1961 when the GDR and USSR built the Berlin Wall. To the GDR this development was a success. It stopped large-scale migration from the GDR to the FRG. However, it confirmed the idea that the FRG and GDR were completely separate states. At the height of the Cold War in 1961 the idea of German reunification was further away than at any time since 1945.

Willy Brandt and Ostpolitik

From 1963 the USSR and USA decided to lessen the tension in the Cold War. This led to a policy of détente by 1969. This coincided with the election of Social Democrat Willy Brandt as Chancellor. Brandt brought about a revolution in relations between the FRG and GDR. Until 1969 the main policy of the FRG towards the GDR was contained in the Hallstein Doctrine. This declared that the FRG would not have

diplomatic relations with any country which had similar relations with the GDR. As many countries wished to trade with the FRG, this meant that the GDR was isolated internationally, except for support from communist states.

Brandt's policy was termed *Ostpolitik* (eastern policy). It took place at the same time as détente but was a distinct process. The high point of *Ostpolitik* was the Basic Treaty of December 1972, which accepted the division of Germany into two states but allowed for closer economic links. The FRG and GDR now recognised each other as independent states. The Basic Treaty had been preceded by other agreements with eastern European states:

- The Moscow Treaty (August 1970, with USSR) in which the FRG recognised the western borders of Poland. The treaty also supported the entry of the FRG and GDR to the United Nations.
- The Warsaw Treaty (December 1970, with Poland) which recognized the Oder–Neisse line as the western border of Poland. It also allowed Germans remaining in Poland to emigrate to the FRG.
- The Berlin Agreement (September 1971, with the USSR). The USSR recognised West Berlin's links with the FRG and agreed to better communication links between them.

The impact internationally was significant. In 1973 both the FRG and GDR became members of the United Nations. In 1975 the FRG and GDR signed the Helsinki Accords, which guaranteed human rights across Europe. It was the high water mark of détente.

Why did Germany become the centre of the 'Second Cold War', 1979–1985?

In 1979 détente came to an abrupt end with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In 1980 the US boycotted the Moscow Olympics. In 1980 a free trade union movement, called 'Solidarity', developed in Poland. In 1981 martial law was introduced in Poland, and Solidarity was suppressed. A Second Cold War had begun.

Germany became the centre of the Second Cold War in 1983 when the USA placed Pershing II and Cruise missiles in western Europe. In the same year, NATO launched operation Able Archer, a major exercise. Historian John Lewis Gaddis regards this event as the most serious crisis in the whole Cold War, more serious than the Cuban Missile Crisis. If war had developed, Germany would have been the initial battleground.

However, in 1985 the USSR chose a new leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. Not only did Gorbachev lessen Cold War tensions, he created the climate for the eventual reunification of Germany in 1989–1991.

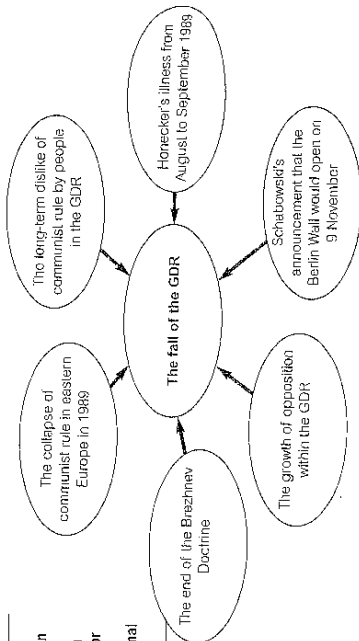
Summary

Between 1945 and 1989 the two German states were products of the Cold War. The two states were the centre of periodic crises: 1948/49, 1961 and 1983. The border between the FRG and the GDR became the symbol of the division of Europe between East and West. However, even in the tense atmosphere of the Cold War, relations between the FRG and GDR did improve. The main contributor to this change had been West German Chancellor Willy Brandt. In 1983/84 the FRG loaned the GDR 1.95 billion Deutschmarks. This caused many commentators to suggest that the GDR was now financially dependent on its German neighbour. Yet in 1985 the division between FRG and GDR seemed to be as great as at any time since 1945. Everything had changed by 1989. In November of that year the Berlin Wall fell, and the rapid process for reunification had begun.

Mikhail Gorbachev (1931–) Soviet leader from 1985 to 1991. Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1990.

7.6 How significant was Helmut Kohl in bringing about German reunification in the years 1989-1991?

Can you link together the different factors mentioned in the mind map? Draw lines between them. Which do you think were more important for the fall of the GDR - the external reasons or the internal reasons?



The period 1989 to 1990 is known as *Die Wende*. This literally means 'the change', and it refers to the reunification process. The process consisted of two separate but linked developments: the collapse of communist rule in the GDR in 1989 and the rapid process of reunification in 1990.

Why did communist rule collapse in the GDR in 1989?

1989 began as a year of promise for the GDR. It marked the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the state. It would be the crowning glory for East German leader Erich Honecker. In 1987 he had made an historic visit to the FRG and his home in Saarland. However, by the end of 1989 Erich Honecker had been removed from power and the GDR was on the point of collapse. How did such a revolutionary change take place?

The decline in Soviet power in eastern Europe

The SED government prided itself that the GDR was the most economically advanced country in the eastern Bloc. It also had the highest standard of living. In the world of sport the GDR had an international reputation in athletics and swimming. Honecker announced in January 1989 that the Berlin Wall would last for fifty - perhaps a hundred - years.

Yet the signs of its downfall were already apparent. In 1985, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev had overseen major reforms in the USSR. The policies of perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness) aimed to reverse the increasing economic decline of the USSR. These moves towards major political and economic reform were met with suspicion by Erich Honecker.

He feared the whole process of reform would undermine, not strengthen, communist rule in the GDR. The memoirs of Gunther Mittag, head of the GDR's economy, reveals how desperate things had become by 1983/84.

As the German historian Lothar Kettenacker noted in 1997, once Gorbachev's reforms were introduced the GDR began to crumble.

Therefore, the collapse of the GDR cannot be separated from the collapse of Soviet power across eastern Europe. By the end of 1989, communist rule had collapsed in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria as well.

The Revolution of 1989

The beginning of the end began in Hungary. In April 1989 Mikhail Gorbachev visited Hungary. He made the momentous decision to abandon the Brezhnev Doctrine. First put forward in 1968 by Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, it claimed that the USSR had the right to intervene militarily across eastern Europe in order to defend communism. Without Soviet military power to support them, all communist regimes in the eastern Bloc were now vulnerable.

Within the GDR, opposition groups had already begun to form in 1986-1989. The two most important groups were the Protestant Church and New Forum.

In *The Unification of Germany 1989-1990*, historian Richard Leiby (1999) stated that the Protestant clergy were 'the real revolutionaries'. On 13 February 1986, Church leaders called a meeting for Justice, Peace and the Preservation of Creation. Although suppressed by the Stasi, this meeting was the start of growing Church opposition to the SED. From 1986 to 1989 the Church provided leadership for the disillusioned - and their churches provided a base for opposition. New Forum was organised as a group with the GDR authorities on 19 September 1989. Organised by Barbel Bohley and Julia Siedel, it claimed that communication between the SED government and GDR population had broken down. Its aim was to open up dialogue between government and people.

The beginning of open protest came following local elections in the GDR on 7 May 1989. The election results showed widespread support for the SED, but many believed that the elections had been manipulated by the government. The Church and New Forum led protests. Beginning with evening prayers, protestors took to the streets, most notably in Leipzig.

The turning point: 9 October

October was the month for the celebration of the creation of the GDR, and the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, was the main guest. However, signs of the future collapse were already in place. In June, Politburo member and future GDR leader, Egon Krenz, congratulated the Communist Chinese leadership for suppressing the Tiananmen Square protestors. This showed that the GDR was unwilling to reform. On 10 September Hungary allowed GDR holidaymakers to leave the Eastern Bloc via Hungary to Austria, and thousands took the opportunity to leave.

At this critical point, Erich Honecker was ill - from 21 August to the end of September - with gall bladder problems.

On 9 October, Soviet leader Gorbachev arrived in the GDR. He informed the GDR leadership that 'he punishes those who come too late', suggesting that the GDR must reform itself. This lack of Soviet support was central to the collapse of the GDR.

A demonstration of 70,000 took place in Leipzig. The demonstrators demanded political change and supported non-violence. Another demonstration the same night occurred in Dresden. And this time the State Police did not disperse the demonstrators. This was the beginning of the end.

On the same day, FRG Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, warned the GDR leader that 'internal peace and stability cannot be guaranteed by force and by denying the people a voice'.

On 18 October Honecker was forced to resign, and he was replaced by

Leonid Brezhnev (1906-1982)
Soviet leader from 1964 to 1982. Responsible for the Brezhnev Doctrine of 1968 which declared that the USSR had the right to intervene militarily in Eastern Europe.

Politburo: The committee of ministers who ruled the GDR.

Tiananmen Square: Site of demonstrations in Beijing in June 1989 which demanded greater political freedom. Brutally suppressed by the Chinese army.



Helmut Kohl (1930-)
Pictured here right, with
Erich Honecker (see profile
page 217) during a
meeting in Bonn, West
Germany, September
1978. Kohl was born in
Ludwigshafen in SW

He joined the CDU in 1946. He studied at the universities of Frankfurt and Heidelberg, where he studied history and politics. He entered politics as a local councillor in Ludwigshafen in 1960. In 1963 he was elected to the state parliament of Rhineland-Palatinate. In 1969 he was elected Minister-President for the Rhineland-Palatinate. He rose to national prominence in 1973 when he became Federal Chairman of the CDU. In 1976 he was the CDU/CSU's choice as candidate for Chancellor. However, the SPD won the election. From 1976 to 1982 Kohl became leader of the CDU/CSU opposition in the federal parliament (Bundestag). In

1982 the coalition of the SPD and FDP collapsed and Kohl became Chancellor of a CDU/FDP coalition. In the 1983 federal elections Kohl won a major victory. For much of the 1980s he worked closely with French President Mitterrand to strengthen the European Union. He also worked closely with the USA. He allowed the USA to place Cruise missiles on FRG soil in 1983. In 1987 he won another federal election. His greatest hour came in 1989 to 1990 when he helped organise the peaceful reunification of Germany. He retired as Chancellor in 1998 and then retired from the federal parliament in 2002.

Krenz. Demonstrations across the GDR grew - 300,000 demonstrated in Leipzig on 23 October. On 1 November Krenz asked Gorbachev for support. But he received none - the USSR had abandoned the GDR to its fate. On 8 November, apart from Krenz, the entire Politburo was forced to resign by the senior SED membership. On 9 November, the new GDR leadership decided to open the Berlin Wall the following day. However, a gaffe by Günter Schabowski, first Secretary of the SED, at a press conference implied that the Wall would open that evening. Crowds from both East Berlin and West Berlin then met at the Wall and forced the opening up of the border crossings.

On 6 December Krenz was forced to resign, along with most of the SED leadership. Hans Modrow - a reformer - became prime minister. On 5

Egon Krenz (1937-)
Leader of the GDR for the last two months of 1989. Born in Kolberg, which is now in Poland but was in Germany then. His family were expelled by the Poles at the end of the Second World War. He joined the SED in 1955, becoming a member of the Politburo in 1963. He replaced Honecker on 18 October 1989, following extensive demonstrations across the GDR demanding reform and freedom. In a desperate attempt to prevent the collapse of SED rule he fired the Prime Minister, Willi Stoph and two thirds of the Politburo on 7 November. On 9 November the Berlin Wall was opened and on 18 November Krenz formed a coalition government with other parties. This led to the resignation of the entire SED leadership. Krenz was forced to resign on 7 December 1989.

Hans Modrow (1928-)
The last Communist leader of the GDR. Took over from Egon Krenz on 7 December 1989. Born in Jasenitz, now in Poland. He served in the Volksturm (German Home Guard) at the end of the Second World War. Held as a POW by the USSR until 1949. Became senior SED official in Dresden in 1953 and became a member of the GDR parliament (Volkskammer). Rose to national

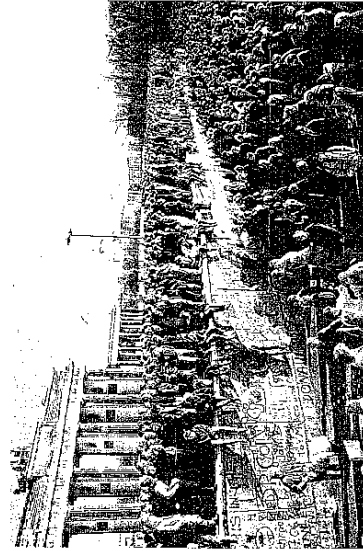
prominence on 13 November 1989 when he replaced Willi Stoph as prime minister. On 7 December he replaced Krenz as leader. He lost power in the first democratic elections to be held in the GDR in March 1990. Following reunification, he became an MP in the Federal parliament and an MEP.

February he formed a government including opposition representatives, and declared himself in favour of German reunification.

1989's political revolution

- 11 January Hungary legalises independent political parties.
- 11 April Soviet troops leave Hungary.
- 24 August Communist rule ends in Poland.
- 10 September Hungary allows thousands of GDR holidaymakers to cross the border into Austria.
- 1 October Thousands of GDR citizens allowed to leave for FRG from FRG embassies in Poland and Czechoslovakia.
- 9 October Leipzig demonstrations. These were not suppressed by the State Police.
- 18 October GDR leader Honecker resigns.
- 9 November Berlin Wall opened.

Celebrations at the Berlin Wall after unification, 1989



1. What message does this photograph give of the Berlin Wall?
2. What message does the photograph on page 215 give?

Summary

In the end, the GDR collapsed for a variety of reasons:

- Gorbachev's decision to abandon the Brezhnev Doctrine removed Soviet military support for the GDR.
- The rapid political change in the rest of the Eastern Bloc, in 1989, undermined the GDR leadership. The decision by Hungary to allow GDR citizens to leave for the West was the beginning of a major migration.
- Honecker refused to support political and economic change.
- His absence from power from 21 August to the end of September left the government leaderless.
- The growth of opposition within the GDR through the Protestant churches and groups such as New Forum.
- Krenz's decision not to use force to confront demonstrators from 9 October.
- The opening of the Berlin Wall on 9 November.

Even though communism collapsed in the GDR, by the end of 1989 there was no evidence to suggest this development would lead quickly to the reunification of Germany. It took the actions of the FRG Chancellor to achieve this change.

Helmut Kohl: the man who reunited Germany?

There were a number of obstacles in the way of German reunification at the start of 1990:

- First, the FRG and GDR were completely different societies. The FRG was a capitalist democracy with a strong economy. The GDR had been a communist dictatorship with a centrally planned economy. Even though the GDR had been the most prosperous Eastern Bloc state its economy was on the verge of collapse by 1989. There was no precedent in modern European history of uniting two states which were so different.
- Secondly, Germany had been the centre of the Cold War in Europe. Any attempt to unite Germany would have to get agreement between the USA and NATO on the one hand, and the USSR on the other.
- Thirdly, the leader of the main opposition party in the FRG, Oskar Lafontaine of the SPD, was against any rapid move to reunification.

Kohl's bombshell

The first significant act by Kohl came on 28 November 1989. He announced his '10 Point' plan to reunify Germany. He had done so without first notifying his NATO allies. The most significant point was Point 5:

We are ready to take a decisive step, that is, to develop confederal structures between both states of Germany with the aim of creating a federal state.

Mrs Thatcher (1925–)
British prime minister from 1979 to 1990. Known as the 'Iron Lady'. She was a staunch anti-communist and a strong supporter of US Presidents Reagan (1981–1989) and Bush.

François Mitterrand (1916–1996)
French president from 1981 to 1995.

George Herbert Bush (1924–)
US president from 1989 to 1993.

Kohl immediately appeared as 'the Chancellor of unity'. With a general election in 1990, this move gave Kohl considerable support in the FRG. In the FRG the dominant party was the CDU. In the GDR, the CDU was an important opposition party. However, Mrs Thatcher, British Prime Minister, and President Mitterrand of France both expressed concerns about Kohl's plan. It was also rejected by Krenz, the GDR leader.

The roles of the USA and the USSR

President George Herbert Bush was a key figure in supporting Kohl. The FRG was seen as the US's most dependable European ally. On 29 November the US gave cautious support to the idea of reunification, as long as it met four points:

- The form of unification should not be decided beforehand.
- Unity had to take place within NATO.
- Unity should be the result of a peaceful gradual process.
- The boundaries of the 'new' Germany should be the FRG and GDR.

The turning point for the rapid reunification of Germany came from Gorbachev. Having met Bush on 2/3 December 1989, Gorbachev announced that the USSR would not interfere with the wishes of the German people. This position was confirmed following a visit by Kohl to Moscow on 10 February 1990.

The key international support required for reunification came from the

'Two plus Four Talks'. These involved the two German states (FRG and GDR) and the four Powers (USA, USSR, Britain and France). They began on 5 May and ended on 12 September. On 2 October the former wartime allies renounced all their former rights over Germany.

President Bush of the US was able to persuade the USSR, Britain and France to leave German reunification to the German people. They agreed that:

- The new Germany would be part of NATO.
- No foreign troops would be stationed in the former GDR.
- The USSR agreed to remove its troops by 1994.
- Germany renounced the right to make or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.
- The new German army would be 370 000 – far less than the old FRG armed forces.

The Cold War in Europe had begun in Germany and, in 1990, it ended there.

Kohl unites Germany

As a result of the actions of the USA and the USSR, it now all hinged on the first democratic election in the GDR, which was held on 18 March 1990. From December to March Kohl made several promises which speeded up the unification process. He promised a currency union where the GDR Ostmark would be equal to the FRG Deutschmark. He also promised that if the CDU-led Alliance for Germany won the election, the GDR would be admitted to the FRG as five new *Länder*. As a result, the CDU-led alliance won a landslide victory with 48% of the votes. The first democratically elected leader of the GDR was de Mezière of the CDU.

The reunification process took place in two major parts. First, on 1 July 1990 a currency union was created with parity between the FRG and GDR currencies. The old GDR became part of the Deutschmark zone.

Then the FRG parliament, the Bundestag, admitted the GDR as five new *Länder* to the FRG, using Article 23 of the Basic Law, the FRG Constitution. On 31 August 1990 German unity was formally declared and came into effect on 3 October 1990.

Summary

The reunification (*Die Wende*) occurred at exceptional speed. No one could foresee how quickly communist rule in Eastern Europe would collapse in the second half of 1989. When it did, FRG Chancellor Kohl acted quickly to create a united Germany. In the end, the FRG absorbed the former GDR. It was not a merger of equals. Also, *Die Wende* occurred at a unique time when the USSR was very weak internationally. By August 1991 Gorbachev was gone. In November 1992 Bush was defeated in the US presidential elections. Both these leaders had paved the way for Kohl to reunite Germany.

1. Give three reasons why you think the GDR collapsed by the end of 1989.

What do you regard as the most important reason? Give reasons for your answer.

2. Does Helmut Kohl deserve to be regarded as the creator of German reunification in the years 1989 to 1990?

Source-based questions: The reunification of Germany 1989–1990

SOURCE A

(From a speech by FRG Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Dresden, in the GDR, 19 December 1989)

The first thing I want to pass on to you is a warm greeting from all your fellow citizens in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The second thing I would like to communicate to you is my recognition and admiration for this peaceful revolution in the GDR. We are experiencing for the first time in German history a non-violent revolution that is taking place with such seriousness and in a spirit of solidarity. I thank you all very much for that. It is a demonstration for democracy, for peace, for freedom, and for the self-determination for our nation. And self-determination means for us in the FRG that we respect your opinion.

In my first discussion with the GDR leader, Hans Modrow, we agreed to work intensely in the next few weeks so that as early as spring we will be able to agree a treaty about cooperation between the FRG and GDR. We seek close cooperation in all areas: in economics, transportation, environmental protection and in culture. Above all, we seek in economics the closest possible cooperation, with the clear aim of improving living conditions in the GDR as quickly as possible. It is decisive for the future that the people of Germany be able to come together.

SOURCE B

(From an article by East German novelist, Günther Grass, published in 1990. He was a holder of the Nobel Prize for Literature.)

I fear a Germany simplified from two states into one. I reject this move and would be relieved if it didn't come about. I fear I am already a traitor to the fatherland. Any fatherland of mine must be more diverse. It must be a fatherland that has grown through suffering to be more open to Europe. It comes down to a choice between a nightmare and a dream. Why can't we help the GDR to achieve enough stability to allow its citizens not to migrate to the FRG? Why do we not support German confederation rather than reunification? Do we want a super-Federal Republic? Economic power would be concentrated in the old FRG. Isn't this more than we had ever dared hope for? Isn't closer links between the two German states what we should pursue?

SOURCE C

(From *Germany in 1989* written by German historian Klaus Larres, published in 2001)

While the first German revolution for over a century was brought to a successful end in October 1990, most of the revolutionary events occurred in 1989. The mass demonstrations on the streets of East German cities, the flight of thousands of people to the West via Hungary, and most importantly, the opening of the Berlin Wall and the downfall of Honecker all happened in 1989. In particular, the last two events meant there was no way back. It would however be wrong to claim that these changes would lead to eventual reunification. In early 1990 there was still serious talk within the GDR and the FRG of a democratic 'third way' for East Germany, maintaining it as an alternative and independent state to the FRG.

However, the successes of 1989 gave the vast majority of the East German people the motivation to continue their own agenda. They wanted better living conditions and democratic freedoms. These could be best achieved by unification with West Germany. The first serious calls for unification could be heard on the streets of Leipzig as early as 19 November 1989.

SOURCE D

(From *The Fall of the GDR* by British historian David Childs, published in 2001)

Hans Modrow, the GDR leader, kept in close contact with Moscow, but he found his influence was in steep decline with the Soviet leadership. It was Gorbachev who met him on 30 January 1990. He told Modrow, the majority of people in the GDR no longer support the idea of two German states and it seems impossible to preserve the GDR. According to a West German magazine, *New Germany*, on 31 January 1990, Modrow was told by Gorbachev that there was an agreement between Germans in the East and in the West and the Four Powers that the unity of Germany was not in doubt.

This sealed the fate of the GDR. Two days later Modrow released his idea for 'Germany united Fatherland'. This looked like a surrender, even reason, to some GDR leaders. There were more resignations from the government.

In February Modrow made a last ditch attempt to save his proposal for 'Germany, united

Source-based questions: The reunification of Germany 1989–1990

Fatherland'. This would involve confederation of the two German states, not reunification as such. This was rejected by Kohl, who insisted that he would wait until the outcome of the GDR March elections before going into talks on unity. The French newspaper *Le Monde*, on 3 February 1990, rightly described the sudden conversion of Modrow to German unity as a reaction to the rising demands for unification from the masses and the continuing exodus of thousands of East Germans to the West.

SOURCE E

(From *Dividing and Uniting Germany* by two British historians, J.K. Thomsett and Bill Niven, published in 2001)

The leaders of the four countries which had been allies in World War II were equally overtaken by events in the GDR. By the time they came together for the first time on 5 May 1990 for talks with GDR and FRG leaders, they were aware that unification was totally unavoidable and that the timetable was now a matter of months. However, it was outside the Two Plus Four negotiations that the stumbling blocks to unification were removed. These were the question of a united Germany's membership of NATO and the removal of Soviet troops from the GDR. These questions were resolved at a historic meeting between Gorbachev and Kohl on 16 July

1990. Gorbachev conceded the membership of NATO and agreed to the removal of Soviet troops. On 12 September, the Two Plus Four negotiations were concluded in Moscow. This concluded in the end of the post-war period.

1. Study the sources and, using information contained in this chapter, explain the meaning of the following words and phrases (which have been highlighted):

(a) Federal Republic of Germany (Source A)

(b) The Berlin Wall (Source C)

(c) The Four Powers (Source D)

(d) NATO (Source E)

2. Study Sources A, C and D, and information from the chapter. How does Helmut Kohl, by his use of language and style, try to persuade East Germans to support reunification?

3. Study Sources B and E. In what ways do these sources agree and disagree on the future of the GDR? 4. Study Sources A, C and D, and information from the chapter. How far did the move to German reunification come from the people of the GDR?

5. Study sources A–E and information from this chapter. To what extent was the reunification of Germany due to Helmut Kohl's ability to exploit the desire for unity from the people of the GDR?

Further Reading

Texts designed for AS and A2 Level students

Germany from Defeat to Partition by D.G. Williamson in *Seminar Studies in History* series, Longman, 2001, covers the 1945 to 1963 period in both FRG and GDR. Contains sources in the final quarter of the book.

Dividing and Uniting Germany by J.K. Thomsett and Bill Niven, in *Making of the Contemporary World* series, Routledge, 2001.

More advanced reading

The End of the GDR by David Childs, Longman, 2001.

The Unification of Germany 1989–1990 by Richard A. Leiby, Greenwood Press, 1999.

A History of Germany 1815–1990 by William Carr, Arnold, 1991. Final two chapters cover the period 1945 to 1991.

Germany since 1945 by Pol O'Dochartaigh, in *The Studies in Contemporary History* series, Palgrave, 2003.