

*Cdr. Guggenberger
Essay*

THE UNITED STATES NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
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FOR
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THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

BY

COMMANDER F. K. GUGGENBERGER

FEDERAL GERMAN NAVY

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Commander Friedrich K. Guggenberger
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to further an understanding of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In order to bring this topic home in a short outline, efforts had to be made not to repeat well known facts but rather to spotlight typical features. To facilitate this, typical features are compared, whenever feasible, with corresponding ones of the United States of America.

Only the Federal Republic of Germany is discussed here. But while doing so, the situation of the entire nation is covered. It has to be kept in mind that the German people in the west has created the Federal Republic of Germany only ". . . to give a new order to political life for a transient period. . ." and ". . . that it (the German people in the west) has also acted on behalf of those Germans to whom participation was denied."¹

¹ "Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany", p. 5

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THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHY

Germany within its boundaries of 1937 lies approximately in the same latitude as the state of Quebec, Canada, but has only about two thirds of its size.

The Potsdam Declaration of 1945 placed - pending the conclusion of a peace treaty - the eastern provinces of Germany under Polish and/or Soviet administration.¹ The Polish State is trying since then to justify a claim to these provinces by citing the prehistoric settlement of these areas by Slavonic tribes and by creating facts. In the latter respect at least, it has succeeded - only ten per cent of the original inhabitants are left in this area.² The Soviets never cared about justifying a claim - they have created facts too - almost none of the original inhabitants is left.

The remaining part of Germany is divided into three regions:³

The Federal Republic of Germany in the west,

The Soviet Zone of Occupation of Germany (the so-called German Democratic Republic) in the east, and

Berlin which is again divided into an eastern and a western zone.

The Federal Republic of Germany has roughly the size of that part of the U.S.A. which is north and east

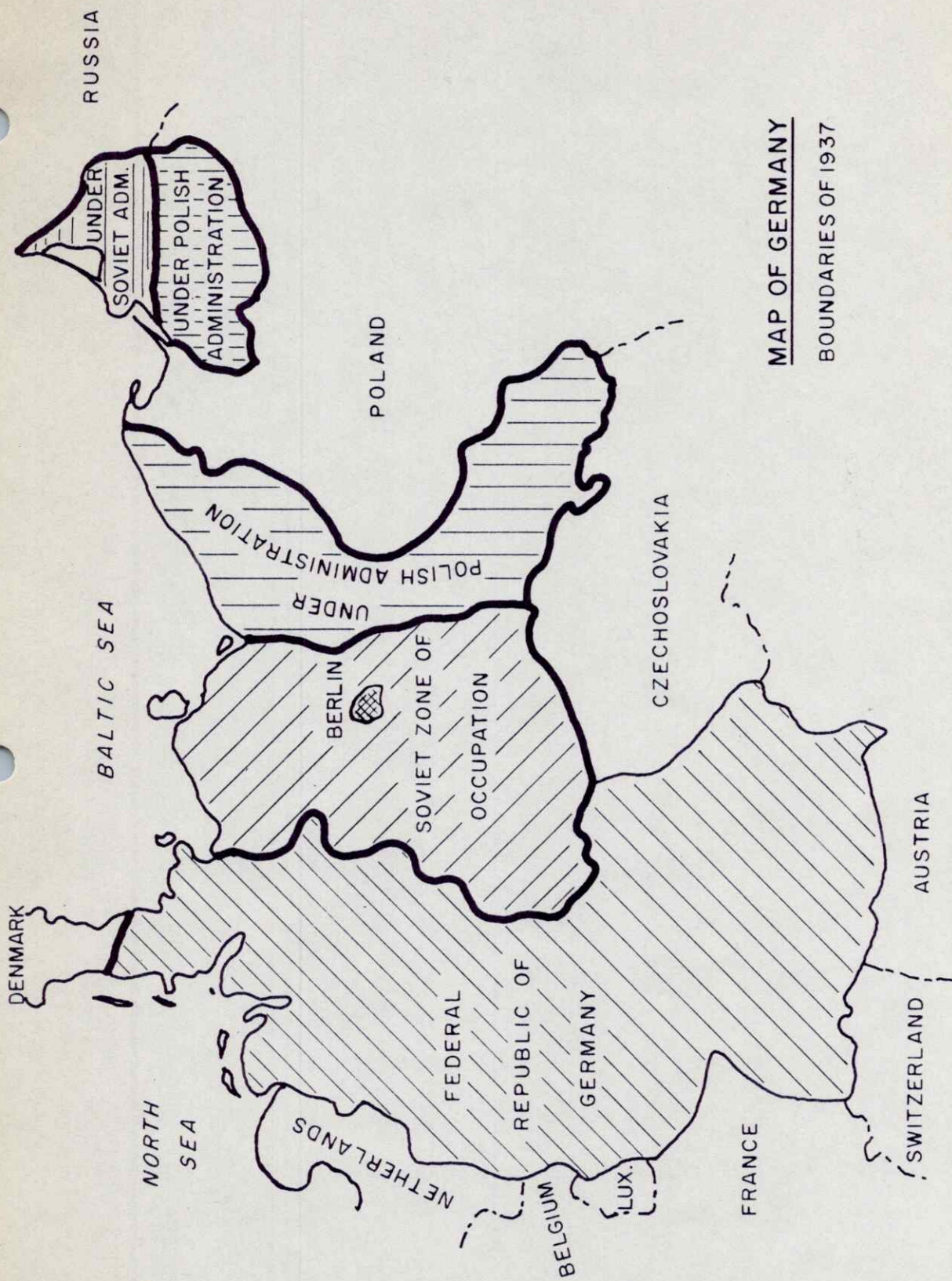
¹Silesia, part of East Prussia, and parts of Pomerania and Brandenburg are under Polish administration, the rest of East Prussia under Soviet administration.

²German population in 1939: 10 million, German population in 1957: 1.2 million.

³See Figure #1, Map of Germany.

of a line drawn from Buffalo to Philadelphia. The distance between its northern and southern tip equals the distance between Boston and Norfolk, the distance between its western and eastern tip, that from Buffalo and New York.

In spite of its northern latitude, the climate in Germany is mild. It is hard to say whether spring with its blooming freshness, or summer with its warm days, or fall with its rich harvests, or winter with its snowy chill is the best of the seasons. Most of the people do not fight about it. They feel that the season in which they are just living in is the best, except those most beautiful springs, summers, falls, and winters they had had when they were still young.



MAP OF GERMANY
BOUNDARIES OF 1937

FIGURE 1

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE

51.6 million of determined people are living in the Federal Republic of Germany, 16.7 million of unhappy people in the Soviet Zone, and 3.3 million of people who never lose their sense of humor in Berlin.

All of them are hard at work trying to make a living for ten out of an area from which only one has to live in the U.S.A.⁴ and to make good for what they have lost in the past. And a lot of them have lost a lot. 23 per cent of the population of the Federal Republic are expellees or refugees from eastern parts of Germany. Another 25 per cent have lost their homes by air raids during the war. All of them have lost all their savings in 1948 when the former Reichsmark was declared void.

From the viewpoint of a foreigner, all Germans are very much alike. The Germans, however, think they differ very much from each other. True, they are similar. Just think of it, that none of them likes Sauerkraut very much and that all of them drink beer. But note, the Bavarians drink it out of big steins, and the Cognians out of tiny glasses. Furthermore, while nobody wants to be bossed, everybody wants to be boss. But people are really different. While laws are being made in Bonn, they are laughed at in Munich and observed in Stuttgart.

And laws in Germany are manifold and specified. Parliament and Government do their best to make sure that nothing be left uncovered. But when the government

⁴See Figure #2, Density of Population.

proposed a law, 456 pages thick and dealing with nothing but the sale of the Common German Fresh Egg, the Parliament refused to pass it.⁵

As said before, one German is not like the other. The ones from the north take themselves very serious and the best thing to do is to take them serious too and to laugh later on. The Bavarians enjoy life and the best to do is to laugh with them and not to tell them that one is from the north. And the Schwabians like to refer to themselves as the steady workers and dreamers and the best thing to do is to stay out of their way.

Training, knowledge, and education seems to be the purpose in Germany. You are learning not because you need your knowledge later on, but your degree. It will not last very long until nobody gets a job without at least a Bachelor's Degree preferable in law. Professors are tops in social life, and all doctors are profiting from the fact that in every small community the medical man has now outranked the clergyman.

⁵This matter remains still unsettled, and a lot of people feel uneasy about it.

DENSITY OF POPULATION 1957
INHABITANTS PER 1 SQ. MILE

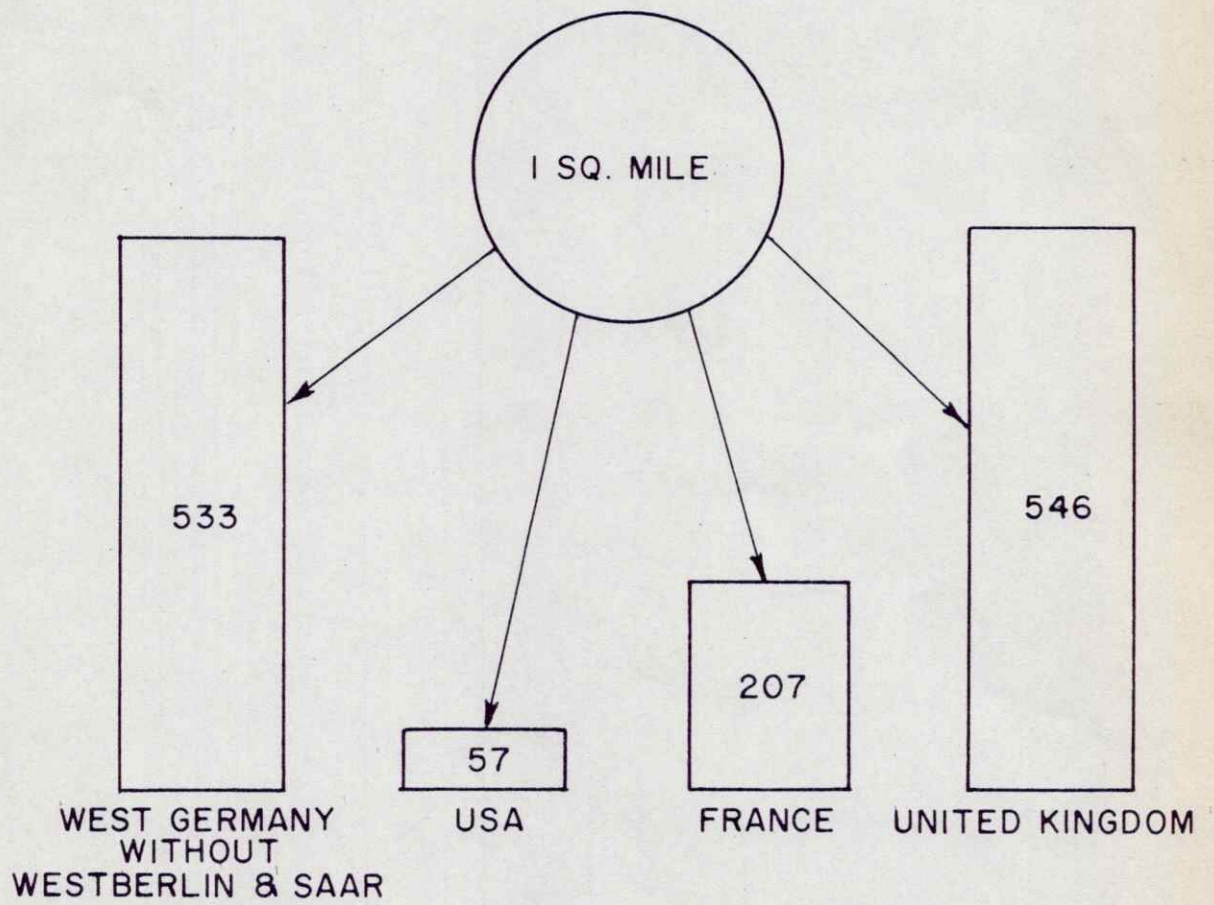


FIGURE 2

58-75g

CHAPTER III

HISTORY

There is always a kind of an uneasy feeling as soon as talks about history deal with Germany. Well, the Germans feel that for centuries before Europe had settled down to be an annex of the Atlantic Ocean - as they hope it is - or - as they fear might happen - of the Soviet continent, Germany had had the bad luck to be the center or at least in the center of the trouble.

Let us summarize. The German tribes which at first did not like at all the Roman Empire with its nice civilization, fell for the south and its culture as soon as they had succeeded to rip the Roman Empire in pieces. The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation got the dream of the centuries to come, and the great emperors travelled south towards the sun and forgot about the more practical purposes, for instance the colonizing of the cold and misty forests of the east. At the same time, they created the romanesque age, the vision of order and dignity, of which the great cathedrals stand as an everlasting sign.

The same Germanic tribes which opposed Christianization desperately became later on the stronghold of Christianity and fought bitter wars against everybody, including themselves, about the true faith. And with this went the new vision of clarity and universality of which beautiful cities, pictures, and sculptures are eloquent evidence.

From this date on, the USA developed its own historical background. This is most probably the reason why the USA cannot understand the devotion to the

State, a vision which was created in the Baroque age.

In 1648, after 30 years of war, Germany was exhausted. The three million inhabitants who were lucky enough to survive, looked around and went to work. The recovery was slow and centered around castles and cities. These regional powers grew and 100 years later, absolutism was flourishing in Germany as it did in France with the exception that the kings did not consider themselves to be the State, but the first servants of the State. The new dream was born - the vision of the central power which dominates all.

This new dream of the State and the old dream of the Holy Empire of the German Nation were now combined in the unconsciousness of the people and became the idol until it was completely worn out.

CHAPTER IV

RESOURCES

There is a German song telling how some centuries ago the Dukes of the Empire praised the richness of their countries and laid it on very strongly until the Duke of Schwaben confessed that his country was poor indeed and that he had nothing but the love of his countrymen. He won the prize - his people won it.

So must it be today. The number, the determination, and the skill of the German people are the richness of the country.

The government knows that. In 1957, 31.7 per cent of the gross national product were collected in form of taxes and social security contributions.⁶ The Germans are not exactly keen to lead the show and would gladly stand behind.

To get a gross national product of 45.8 billions of dollars, 48.1 per cent of the entire population are working: 40.9 per cent as workmen, 16 per cent as employees, 14.7 per cent as independent businessmen, etc., 14.4 per cent as employees of their own family, and 4 per cent as civil servants. Or in other terms; 31.8% get their income from industry and handicraft, 14.7% from agriculture and forestry, 8% from trade, banking and insurance, 7.8% from building construction, 6.1% from transport, and 13.5% from other commercial sources.

It is true, Germany has only a moderate amount of

⁶See Figure #3: International Comparison of Taxes and Contributions To Social Security Insurance

natural wealth: 70% of the domestic demand for crude oil, 7% of that for hard coal, 60% of that of iron ore, 30% of that of grain, and 55% of that of nutritive fats have to be imported.

Foreign trade interrelations are not deliberately pressed by Germany. Export is a vital necessity. In order to pay for the imports, 17.5% of the gross national product had to be exported in 1957 - exported mainly to western countries as the former business relations with eastern countries are now almost completely interrupted.⁷

⁷15.7% of the values of the exports went to the East in 1936, in 1956 only 4.7%

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF TAXES AND CONTRIBUTIONS
TO SOCIAL SECURITY INSURANCES

(IN PERCENTAGE OF GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT 1956)

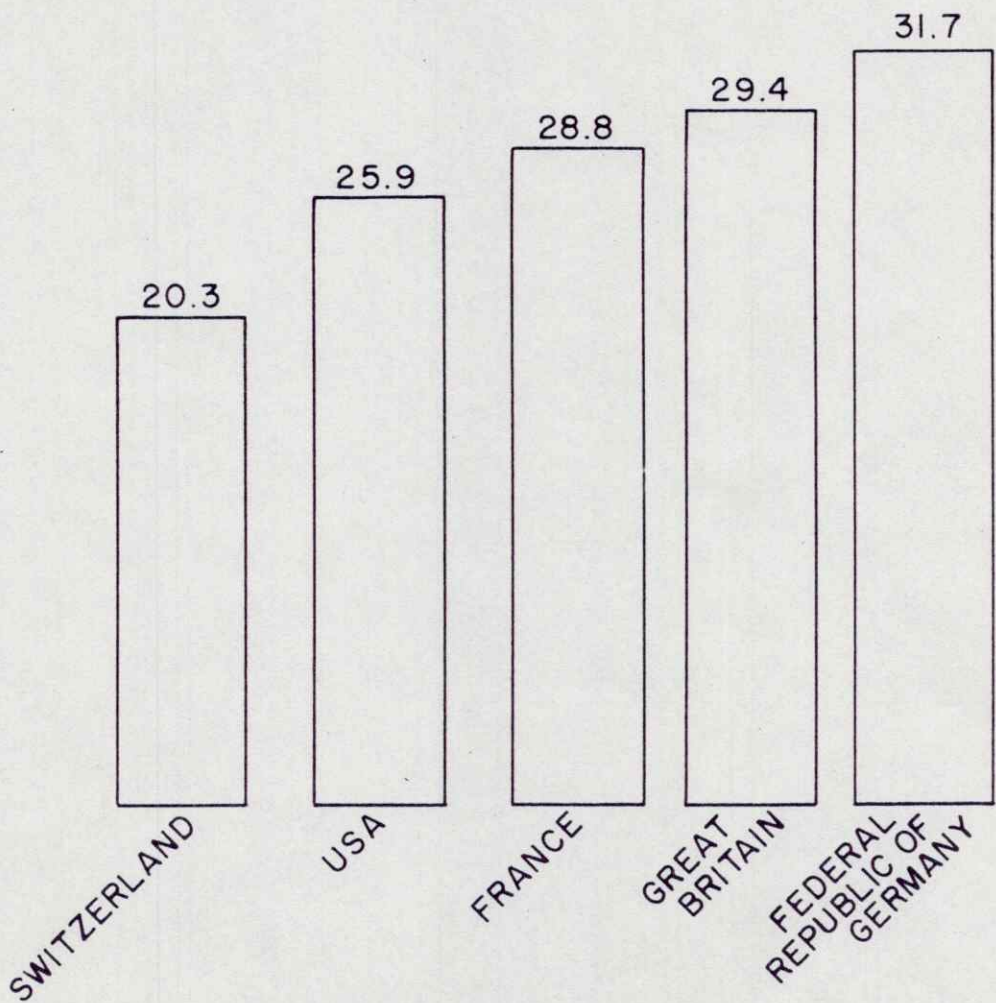


FIGURE 3

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CHAPTER V

POLITICAL SYSTEM

The 65 delegates of the Parliamentary Council (Parlamentarischer Rat) who were charged in 1948 to draft a provisional constitution for the German states of the west had good reasons to be very careful. During the past decades, Germany had not been exactly pursued by good luck with its political systems. The Imperial Empire (Kaiserreich) had cracked. The Weimar Republic, which after all had not had a bad start, had resulted by its multitude of large and small political groups struggling with each other for a share in power in a political atomization and a complete economical breakdown. And Hitler's third empire brought disaster not only to its own inhabitants but to millions of completely innocent people throughout the world.

The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany (Grundgesetz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland)⁸ makes every effort to guarantee the dignity, the right, and the freedom of man, to place the human being above institutions, and to prevent misuse of power.

The Federal Republic of Germany is like the United States of America - a federacy. Its system of government equals that of the U.S.A. The following exceptions are the most important ones:

The powers of the Federal Republic are not rigidly divided into powers belonging to the federal government and those belonging to the states. In principle, execu-

⁸ Adopted in 1949 by the west German people.

tion and administration are the responsibility of the States, legislation and financial income are divided between the federal government and the government of the states.

The legislative body⁹ of the federal government consists of the Federal Parliament (Bundestag) and the Federal Council (Bundesrat). The members of the Federal Parliament are elected for a four-year term in general, free, direct, equal and secret elections, whereas the members of the Federal Council are delegates of the states and are appointed by the governments of the states.

The executive body¹⁰ operates under the cabinet system. The most important member of this body is the Federal Chancellor (Bundeskanzler) who is elected by the Federal Parliament and who cannot be removed from his office unless the majority of the members of the Federal Parliament expresses its lack of confidence by electing a successor. The Federal President (Bundespraesident) represents the state. His executive powers are very limited. He is elected for a five year term by the Federal Assembly (Bundesversammlung) which consists of members of the Federal Parliament and of members of the State Parliaments (Landtage) of the various states.

The Federal Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht) is, as in the U.S.A., a completely independent judicial body capable to annul legislation created by the legislative body and actions of the executive body pro-

⁹See Figure #4: The Federal Parliament and the Federal Council.

¹⁰See Figure #5: The Federal Government.

vided that such laws and/or actions violate the Basic Law.

Federal legislation may be introduced by the Federal Government or the Federal Council or members of the Federal Parliament.

It is worthwhile to look into the pattern of the cabinet system. Whereas the presidential system clearly separates the power of legislation and execution, the cabinet system tends to create unification of these two branches. The members of the cabinet are members of the Federal Parliament and take part in political discussions. The Federal Chancellor is not only the head of the Federal government and determines its general policy but is almost in every case the leader of the coalition that means of the majority of the members of the Federal Parliament who support the government. Thus the Federal government can easily assume the initiative in all interior and exterior affairs.

It should be noted furthermore that the political parties are of more importance in Germany than in the U.S.A. The American political parties have no clearly defined ideological distinctions. In Germany, however, the ideological differences are much more visible. The supporters of different sociological systems and philosophies confront each other, influence and form the opinion of the population and do not deny their ideological background when in power.

At the time of the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany, it was doubtful whether this new start would show off good results. There were many reasons for serious doubts. But the absolute failure of anti-democratic

forces and the stability of the political life show already now that this time, the democratic experiment stands under a more favorable star as it ever did before.

What is the reason for it?

First of all, the German people experienced the enormous dangers of totalitarian systems - not only in their own country. Everybody had seen the development of Hitler's government from a legally constituted government into a complete tyranny run by lunacy. Everybody has realized that the old slogans Reich and Staat (Empire and State) are completely worn out. In 1945 there was no doubt left, the false dieties were scattered.

The German people were realistic enough to see and to be willing to make a new start.

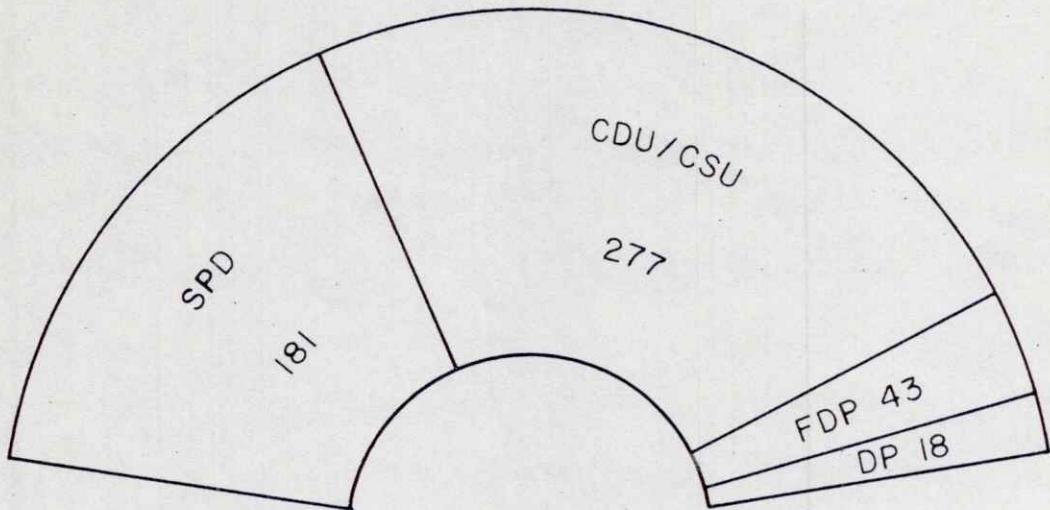
Furthermore, the German people knew communism from first-hand experience in their own country (1918-1933) and in Russia (1941-now). There was also no doubt - the new start would never be Communism.

The new democratic government preferred work to phrases - a fact which found wide response. The government had success.¹¹ For the first time, this generation of Germans saw that economic energy and resources can also be released by other than a conservative, semi-authoritarian system like that of the Imperial era or by a totalitarian dictatorship.

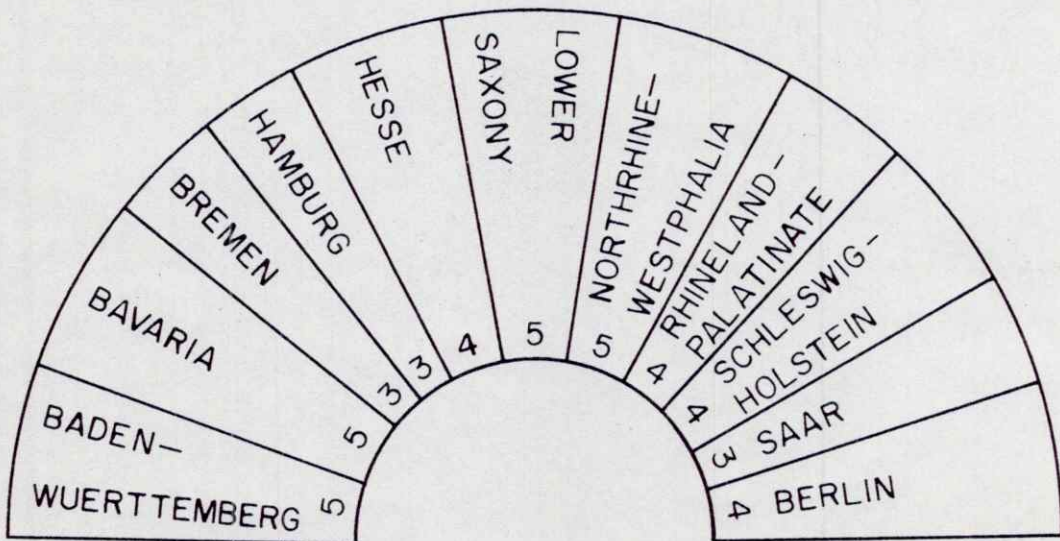
Finally, this democracy was able to establish stable governments. Adenauer's political success in overcoming the consequences of the collapse contributed much to the consolidation of the system.

¹¹See Figure #6: Cost of Living Index and Gross National Product.

THE FEDERAL PARLIAMENT AND THE FEDERAL COUNCIL



THE FEDERAL PARLIAMENT
1957



THE FEDERAL COUNCIL
1957

FIGURE 4

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

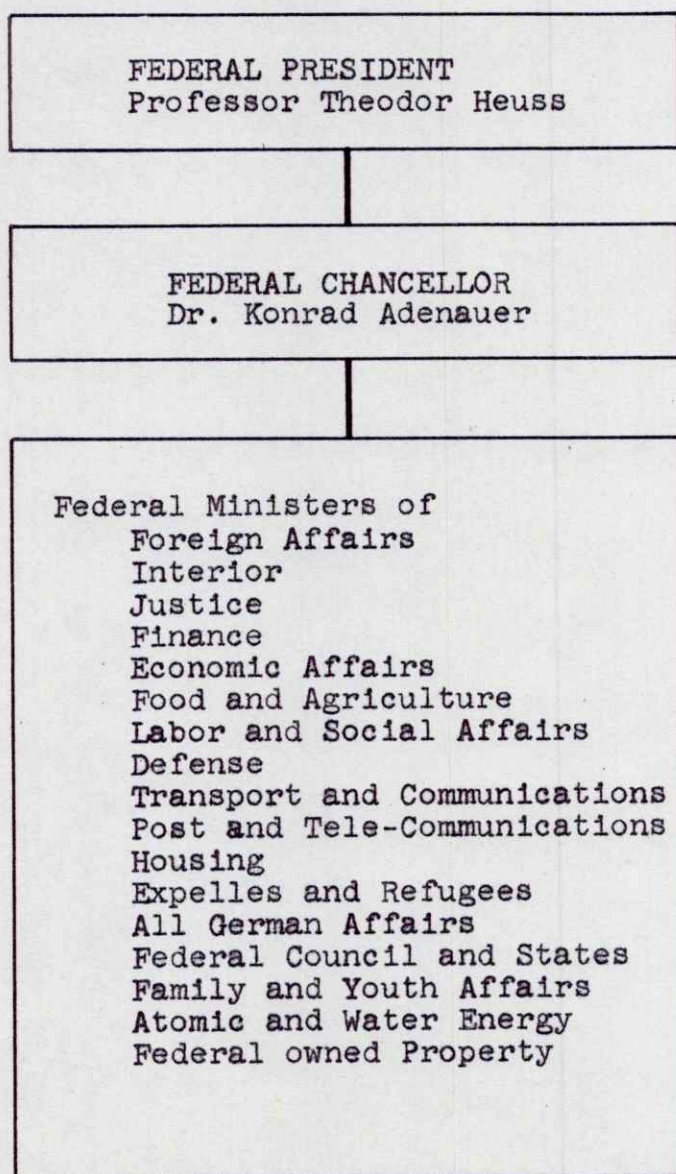


Figure # 5

COST OF LIVING INDEX AND GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT

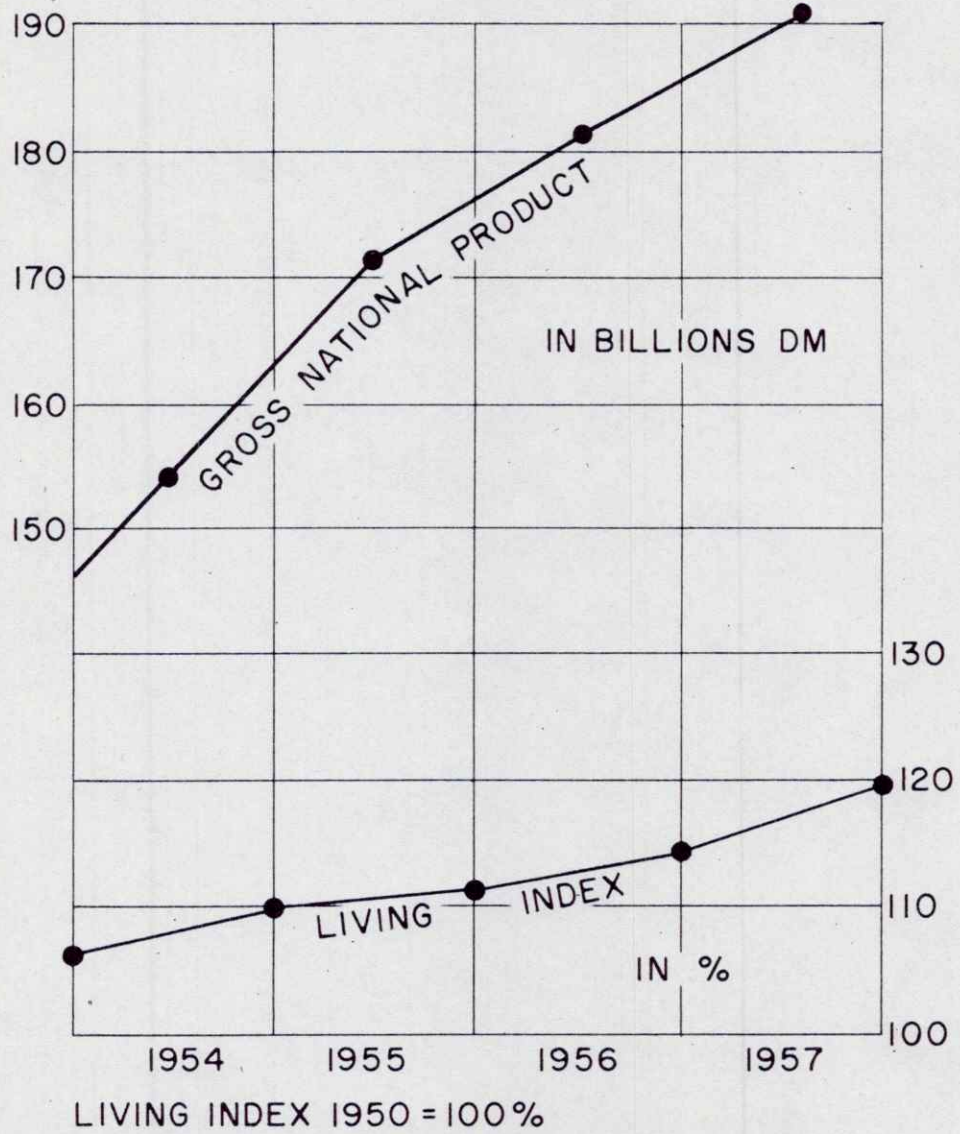


FIGURE 6

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CHAPTER VI

THE MILITARY SYSTEM

The rearmament of Germany met from the very beginning bitter resistance from almost everybody inside of Germany. Some people were against it, as they considered it of no use at all compared with the overwhelming military power of Russia, others opposed it as they were convinced that a recreation of an army would endanger the development of the young democracy, others opposed it as they thought that the existence of an army would render even more difficult the strongly desired unification of Germany, and the majority of the people was against it as they had just enough of army life and of hero's death.

While in the meantime, almost everybody is convinced that self-defense is necessary and that defense means rearmament, the method of rearmament is still violently discussed. The Social Democratic Party¹² claims that a closer integration of the Federal Republic into the NATO alliance would completely obstruct the Soviet's agreement to reunification and that especially an armament of the armed forces with tactical atomic weapons would be directly opposite to vital interests of the nation.

So, the build-up of the German defense forces started from below zero. Every applicant had to be carefully checked in order to prevent severe mistakes in selecting military leaders. The professional soldiers of

¹²Second strongest party in the Federal Parliament (approximately 34%) and especially strong in the State Parliaments.

the former Wehrmacht were completely integrated in civilian life and could not terminate their business relations at will. The Basic Law which did not provide for armed forces had to be amended by a two thirds majority. Additional laws had to be passed, personnel trained, installations built, and equipment purchased. All this required time. The targets set were never met.

The slow pace of the build-up has met much criticism and disappointment, especially among Germany's allies who had hoped to get reinforcement soon. But it has to be kept in mind, that public opinion and rules of political life cannot be put aside. It must be mentioned, that the western allies' announcement of a new strategic concept developed growing doubt about the military policies pursued up to a certain date.¹³ The process of discussions and arguments is still going on and is not apt to speed-up the build-up of the armed forces.

Great care is being taken to prevent that the armed forces as an organization acquire a special or rather a political uncontrollable position of power within the state and that the individual soldier remains as far as possible within the social and political life of the nation.

Civil control of the armed forces is undisputed, and the concept of the "citizen in uniform" is brought to life. All efforts are made to base the discipline of the armed forces upon the recognition of responsibility by the individual and to build-up in every soldier the con-

¹³The concept of small armies of professionals equipped with fantastic fire power is a tempting solution.

viction that even in a future war there are only a few things worth to be defended: the dignity, the right, and the freedom of man.

The organization of the armed forces places all command in the Minister of Defense.¹⁴ He is the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Air Force, Navy, and the Territorial Defense Organization.

The staff of the Minister of Defense is in principle divided into an administrative, a technical, and a military branch.¹⁵ The Inspector General of the Armed Forces and the Inspectors of the Army, the Air Force and the Navy advise the Minister of Defense in matters pertaining their services and issue orders to their services only by order of the Minister of Defense. The Inspector General and the Inspectors of the three services are assisted by staffs of military personnel, the Inspector General's staff consisting of personnel of all services.

The navy's highest commands are direct subordinates of the Ministry of Defense.¹⁶ The Fleet Command (Flottenkommando) is responsible for the training and combat readiness of the combat fleet. The Naval Bases Command (Flottenbasiskommando) is charged with the logistical support of all naval forces. The Naval Training Command (Kommando der Marine-Ausbildung) has to train and educate all naval personnel and administers all naval enlisted personnel. The Ship Testing Command (Schiffserprobungskommando) tests every newly commissioned ship in regard to its technical efficiency.

¹⁴This is true only in peace time. In war, the Federal Chancellor will be the Commander-in-Chief.

¹⁵See Figure #7

¹⁶See Figure #8

ORGANIZATION OF THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

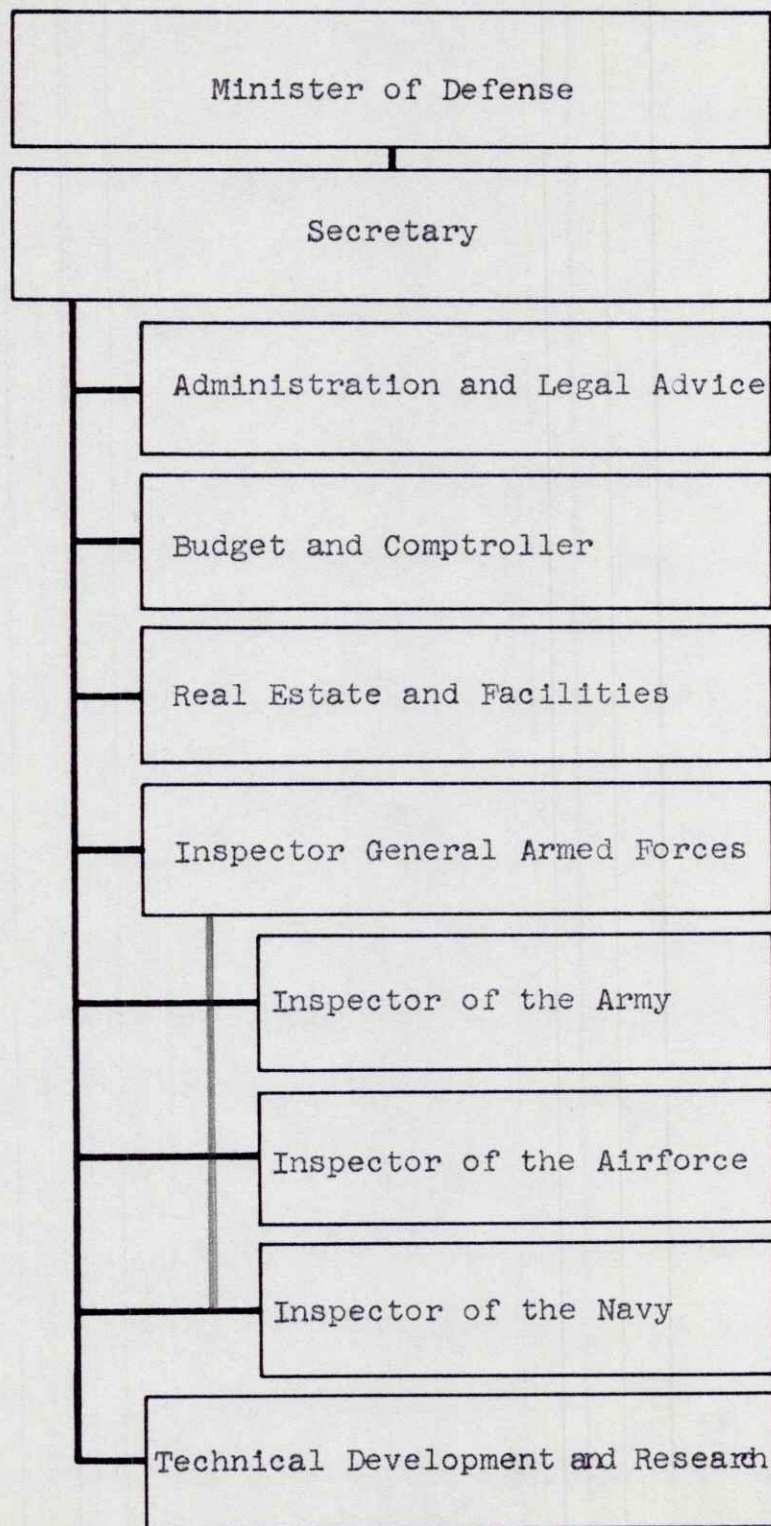


Figure # 7

ORGANIZATION OF THE FEDERAL NAVY

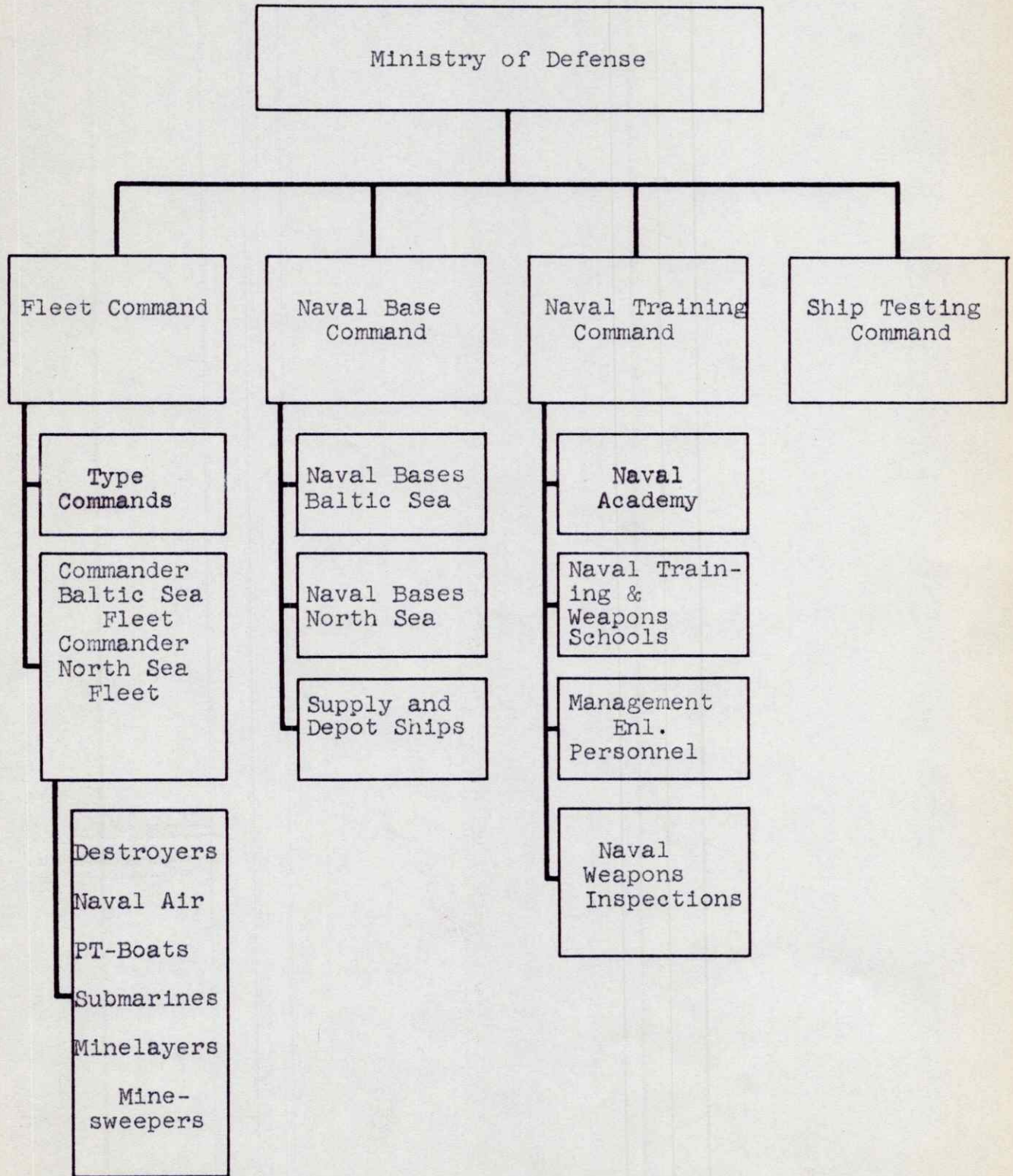


Figure # 8

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

The political and economical development of the Federal Republic of Germany during the last years has been amazing. Due to its geographical situation, the determination of its people, its increasing economy, its immunity against communism, its stable government, and its proven good will for cooperation, the Federal Republic of Germany with its problems has become part of the Western World. There is no doubt that the German people have recognized their obligations towards the free world and that they stick to it. It can be expected that the Germans fulfill their assigned duty as they used to do things up to now - without reservations, with their whole heart.

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