



## Germany, 1920–1969: British Foreign Office Confidential Print

---

The twentieth century was a time of great change and turmoil for Germany. **Emerging from the First World War amid a revolution and the collapse of its monarchy and empire, Germany embarked on a radical experiment in liberal democracy—one which was highly progressive in principle, but which was beset by economic, political, and diplomatic challenges which ultimately proved insurmountable.** The state's collapse in 1933 came at the hands of the Nazi Party, who established a fascist dictatorship, unprecedented in scale and brutality, known as the Third Reich. This authoritarian and militarist state plunged Europe and the world into another global conflict, during which time it also carried out a programme of mass discrimination, deportation, and extermination, of Jews and other minority groups across the continent.

The Second World War ended in defeat for Germany and it faced military and civil occupation by the Allied nations—Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States. **Four years later, it emerged from that occupation, not as one state, but as two—in the west, the Federal Republic of Germany, and in the east, the German Democratic Republic.** These two states coexisted uneasily within the broader geopolitical context of the Cold War until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the reunification of Germany a year later.

Throughout this period, Britain's fate was closely entwined with Germany's. **The two countries shared a number of important similarities and, as two of the most powerful states in Europe, their relations could have serious implications for the continent and beyond.** During the two world wars, they were bitter adversaries, but at other times, they enjoyed periods of peaceful and friendly co-operation.

**Sourced from The National Archives (UK), this collection comprises over 55,000 images of Foreign Office documents relating to Germany and its nearest neighbours.** The files reveal how well-informed British officials and diplomats perceived, interpreted, and responded to Germany throughout much of this critical period, offering an unrivalled English-language insight into the frequent and significant changes which Germany experienced during that time. **There is detailed coverage of the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, the Second World War, the post-war Allied occupation, and the first twenty years of German partition.** The collection also contains correspondence and policy documents which explore Anglo-German relations in the period, illuminating a key dimension of wider British foreign policy, as well as European and world affairs.

## Germany, 1920–1969: British Foreign Office Confidential Print

---

Sources Include:

THE  
NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES



