

Topic Page: [Berlin \(Germany\)](#)

Summary Article: **Berlin**

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Industrial city, administrative region (German *Land*) and capital of Germany, lying on the River Spree; population (2003 est) 3,274,500, urban agglomeration 3,933,300. Products include machine tools, electronics, textiles and garments, engineering goods (including cars), electrical goods, paper, food and drink, and printed works. After the division of Germany in 1949, East Berlin became the capital of East Germany and Bonn was made the provisional capital of West Germany. The Berlin Wall divided the city from 1961 until it was opened in November 1989. Following the reunification of Germany on 3 October 1990, East and West Berlin were once more reunited as the 16th *Land* (administrative region) of the Federal Republic, and Berlin became once again the national capital.

Features Unter den Linden, the tree-lined avenue that was once the whole city's focal point, has been restored in what was formerly East Berlin. The fashionable Kurfürstendamm and the residential Hansa quarter (1957) form part of the former West Berlin. Prominent landmarks include Schloss Charlottenburg (1695–99; the home of several museums); the Brandenburg Gate (1791); the gutted tower of Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church (1891–95), left unrestored as a reminder of war; the Reichstag or parliament building (built 1884–94), which was burnt down in 1933 and was further damaged at the end of World War II, was rebuilt under the direction of English architect Norman Foster and reopened in April 1999; Congress Hall (1957; 'the pregnant oyster'); the restored 18th-century State Opera; Schloss Bellevue (Berlin residence of the president); and the National Gallery (1968), designed by Mies van der Rohe. It is also the home of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (established in 1867).

Potsdamer Platz, which was the centre of the city in the 1920s and 1930s, came under commercial and residential renewal in the 1990s, when it became the largest construction site in Europe.

Friedrichstrasse, the Alexanderplatz, and No Man's Land are being redeveloped. The Tiergarten (250 ha/618 acres) park includes a zoo. The environs of Berlin include the Grönewald forest and the Wannsee and Havel lakes. In the Grönewald is the Trümmerberg, a hill 130 m/427 ft high, formed out of 18 million cu m/70 million cu ft of war debris and now used as an artificial ski slope.

The city contains several research institutes including the Hahn-Meitner Institute for Nuclear Research, the Max Planck Institute, and the Research Institute for Marine Engineering and Shipbuilding. Berlin, with three universities and other institutions, is also a major centre of higher education.

History First mentioned in about 1230, the city grew out of two Wendish villages, Berlin and Kölln, which were chartered later in the 13th century and merged in 1307. The town joined the Hanseatic League in 1359, and became the seat of the electors of Brandenburg (after 1701, the kings of Prussia) in 1486. Berlin's growth and importance was closely tied to the rise of the Hohenzollern family, and it became their capital in the 16th century. From the middle of the 18th century Berlin developed into a commercial and cultural centre. After the Napoleonic Wars, Friedrich Wilhelm III was responsible for the squares, avenues, and neoclassical buildings, many designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel, including the Altes Museum and the Schauspielhaus.

19th–20th centuries During the 19th century, Berlin emerged as a centre of national feeling and increasingly a serious rival of Vienna. Following the construction of railway links and of a canal system

that linked the city to the Oder, Elbe, and Rhine rivers and to the North Sea, the importance of Berlin as an industrial and commercial centre was greatly increased. In 1866 it became the seat of the North German Confederation, and was made the capital of the German Empire in 1871; it prospered and expanded rapidly, becoming one of the great cities of the world. The German military defeat of 1918 brought on a period of social and political unrest; the city suffered severe economic crises during the 1920s, but continued to flourish as a cultural centre. It remained the second-largest European city, and a notable economic, political, commercial, and educational centre throughout the Nazi period.

In World War II air raids and conquest by the Soviet army (23 April–2 May 1945) destroyed much of the city. After the war, Berlin was divided into four sectors – British, US, French, and Soviet – and until 1948 was under quadripartite government by the Allies. Following the Berlin blockade the city was divided, with the USSR maintaining a separate municipal government in its sector. The other three sectors (West Berlin) were made a *Land* of the Federal Republic in May 1949 and Bonn became the provisional capital; in October 1949 East Berlin was proclaimed capital of East Germany. On 13 August 1961 the Soviet zone was sealed off by the Russians, and the Berlin Wall was built along the zonal boundary. Access to East Berlin was severely restricted, although restrictions were lifted occasionally, and a pass system was introduced in 1964. The division of the city into sectors resulted in severe tension between the USSR and the Western powers.

In June 1991 the Bundestag (the lower chamber of government) voted to restore Berlin as the capital of a unified Germany (by 337 votes to 320 votes). The move of the Bundestag offices went ahead despite a campaign by some politicians to delay it until 2010 or stop it altogether. The Bundesrat (upper house or federal council) voted in 1991 to retain its seat in Bonn along with eight of 18 ministries.

Growth of the city The original nuclei were the palaces of Kölln and Berlin on the Spree; the latter became the court of the Electors of Brandenburg. Berlin rose to capital status within Prussia but it was not an important capital within Europe until the formation of the German empire in 1871. This new status at the head of a growing trading nation brought an increase of population from 826,000 in 1871 to 3 million in 1910. In 1920 a new municipality of Berlin was created. It was not at the heart of the state despite efforts by the Nazi regime to make it the physical and cultural centre of the Third Reich. By 1939 it was the fourth-largest city in the world with 4.3 million inhabitants.

Division Berlin was among the most heavily bombed cities during World War II and was in ruins when it came under four-power occupation in 1945. The British sector, in the west, included the districts of Tiergarten, Wilmersdorf, Charlottenburg, and Spandau; the US sector, in the south, the districts of Kreuzberg, Neukölln, Schöneberg, Tempelhof, Zehlendorf, and Steglitz; the French sector, in the northwest, the districts of Wedding and Reinickendorf; and the Russian sector in the east. On 30 November 1948 the Russian representatives withdrew from the Kommandatura and a separate municipal government was established in the Russian sector (403 sq km/156 sq mi). The other sectors formed an administrative unit called West Berlin (480 sq km/185 sq mi).

Due partly to aid from the USA and other Allied powers, West Berlin's post-war recovery was rapid and substantial. East Berlin, on the other hand, experienced a period of relative economic decline. The latter nonetheless became the unrivalled focal point of development within the German Democratic Republic and an important city in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. Disparities between East and West Berlin have continued in the early 21st century.

The 1972 Treaty According to the constitution of the German Federal Republic, Berlin, in addition to

being a city, was also a *Land* of the republic, although it was never formally incorporated as such, and it had no emergency powers or conscription. In 1971 a quadripartite agreement was signed and this was followed by the East–West German Treaty of 1972. In this treaty it was recognized that the Western Sectors continue ‘not to be a constituent part of the Federal Republic and not to be governed by it.’ The West German constitution and basic legal references that contradicted this were suspended.

Political change A number of famous politicians held the post of Mayor of West Berlin, including Willy Brandt (1957–66) and Richard Von Weizsäcker (1981–4), later federal president. When Willy Brandt became German chancellor he sought to normalize relations between West Germany and the Eastern Bloc countries (a policy called *Ostpolitik*). For this he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1971. By the late 1980s discussions between the USA, Soviet president Gorbachev, and German chancellor Kohl led to a dramatic thawing of relations between East and West, culminating in the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and German Unification in October 1990. Unification of the city has not only involved the removal of physical obstacles, such as the Berlin Wall, minefields, and barbed-wire entanglements, but also political and economic integration of two different systems.

Economic integration An important task in the integration process involves the transformation from a centrally-planned to a market economy. To handle this the Treuhandanstalt (1990–94), an agency for the privatization of industry, was set up, with headquarters in Berlin and 15 regional branches. Over 14,000 enterprises were privatized, ranging from massive chemical and steel plants to corner shops. Productivity levels in the former East Berlin proved to be less than 30% of those in the West, and many of the outdated industries were drastically run-down, or even closed completely.

After 1990 major corporations such as Siemens and AEG further boosted their presence in Berlin, and foreign investment in new markets in the east increased. The former GDR Academy of Sciences at Adlershof (East Berlin) which had supplied the Soviet space industry, was refashioned as a technology park and business centre. Such expertise also encourages expansion in high-tech activities such as telecommunications. The production of consumer goods, food products, clothing, and fashion items is becoming important, and the city provides opportunities for service activities in cultural, financial, business, education, health, and political areas.

Berlin is also becoming a major transport hub with two major airports, four international railway stations, and six major highways radiating from the city.

City layout A barren area (*Zentrale Bereich*) lay between the eastern and western sectors along the line of the Wall, where formerly the Potsdamer Platz, Leipziger Platz, and Wilhelmstrasse had been areas of great activity. This area is being redeveloped to accommodate Berlin's political, commercial, and cultural revival. Central Berlin's new layout is emerging: on the western side of the Tiergarten are the zoo, the university, and other educational institutions; to the east, the old centre (*Mitte*) contains museums, art galleries, theatres, opera houses, the Academy of Sciences, and Humboldt University; to the south, the diplomatic quarter is re-emerging; and to the north–northeast are clusters of federal government buildings and also provincial-level organizations.

Culture In the early 20th century Berlin's rich cultural life involved the Russian-born painter Vasily Kandinsky, film and theatre directors including Bertolt Brecht, and numerous actors and cabaret artists. The period of National Socialism and Communism and the city's relative isolation after 1945 led to a decline in Berlin's cultural prominence. However, the Berlin Philharmonic has maintained an international reputation under the conductors Wilhelm Furtwängler (1924–54), Von Kajan (1954–89), Claudio Abbado

(1989–2002), and Simon Rattle (2002–). The city now has renewed cultural vigour, with 3 opera houses, 17 orchestras, 53 theatres, and numerous 'alternative' venues. Since 1950 Berlin has held an annual month-long music festival (September). There are also now two classical music festivals (July and November), a jazz festival (October), and a dance festival (August). In 1998 the Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin, a museum of modern art, opened, located on the ground floor of the Deutsche Bank premises. The Jewish Museum opened in 2001.

Famous people Berlin was the birthplace of the geographer and explorer Alexander von Humboldt, and the politician and Nobel prizewinner Gustav Stresemann.

documents

Defence Committee: Berlin Airlift

British government: Soviet blockade of Berlin

weblinks

Berlin

images

Balkans after the Congress of Berlin 1878–1913

Berlin 1945–89

Berlin Wall

Berlin Wall

Brandenburg Gate

Brandenburg Gate

Charlottenburg Castle

Charlottenburg Palace

Checkpoint Charlie, Berlin

food riots

Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church

Olympic Stadium

Reichstag

Reichstag Dome, Berlin

Spree River

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