



AREA II

 LAND, PEOPLE AND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN
 WEST GERMANY

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One hundred years ago Germany was still being described as the nation of poets, philosophers and musicians - a nation whose century-old tradition of humanism produced men like Dürer and Bach, Beethoven and Goethe, Luther and Schopenhauer, Karl Marx and Max Mueller. Today Germany is one of the most advanced industrial countries of our globe, second in international trade, third in terms of Gross National Product. Yet this does not mean that people are happier today than in the times of Goethe; nor does it mean that the Germany of the poets and philosophers is dead.

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 CHAPTER I
 INTRODUCTION

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Germany is a land of great people. It is a land of Goethe, Schiller, Hegel, Bismarck, Martin Luther, Karl Marx and other outstanding personalities. Germans have made many outstanding contributions to philosophy, literature, medicine, art, music and scientific research. At one time the German Universities were thronged with foreign students anxious to share in the benefits of German learning.

Germany at the End of the Second World War

But as in the lives of some individuals, the nations too have their ups and downs. Germany is no exception to this. It is a country situated in the very heart of Europe without any natural frontiers. This has affected her outward form and political decisions. Within the space of one generation, she has lost two World Wars and in them almost eight and half million people. At the end of the Second World War, the whole apparatus of the German State was

destroyed, together with all the machinery of Government. Buildings and factories lay in ruins. All communications were cut, bridges were blown, and the entire mercantile marine was lost. The entire economic structure of the country fell to pieces and the German territory was divided up into four zones of occupations. Education was in a chaotic state. Thousands of schools had been destroyed or badly damaged by monstrous bombing and in the evacuation many of the children had been dispersed throughout districts far from their homes. All their riches accumulated by half a century of hard work were reduced to heaps of rubble and ashes. Housing conditions were appalling and the general difficulties were increased by thousands of refugees pouring in from the East. The half-starved people lived amid ruins. All that was left was the courage of the German people and their arms and brains--trained for collective and creative work. With these assets, they started reconstruction.

Germany To-day

Today, Germany is partitioned. As a result of the Second World War, two German States have come into being. But the Federal Republic of Germany has become a great economic power--greater than before the war. It has attained her honorable place in World Trade. The present living standard of Germans has far surpassed what it was before the war. Unemployment is

practically wiped out. The worst housing problems have been successfully solved. Tremendous progress has been made in the development of industries. The German people and their Government enjoy the confident partnership of the free world. Today West Germany is among the many nations which contribute liberally in the development of economically underdeveloped countries of the world, both financially and technically. Today, Germany is interested in peace, international harmony and in the free exchange of goals and ideas. Today this nation is lively, vigorous, youthfully fresh and extremely open-minded.

Germany has regained its prestige and prosperity because of courage, industriousness, patience and firm determination of the Germans.

In the decades that followed 1945, they had to concentrate on political and economic reconstruction which they did with considerable success. Undoubtedly the Germans are extremely capable people, with great capacity for thoroughness and attention to details. Germany is also a nation disciplined, highly organised and with a dream of national grandeur. Its people - including its labour force - are the key to this surprising success and their sound system of vocational education is undoubtedly one of the major factors responsible for high efficiency of their labour force. Throughout its development, the German vocational education is characterized by sincerity, efficiency and thoroughness.
