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## The Federal Republic of Germany

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## THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

A lecture delivered  
at the Naval War College  
on 21 October 1958 by  
*Professor John Brown Mason*

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure to come back to these halls and buildings. Of course, since I left these shores, as it were, I have been thinking a great deal of the work that we did here last year. Then I looked over the schedule for the present year, and I found out that the students and staff of this year are exposed to as many lectures as last year. I could not but help thinking of the high school girl who wrote an English theme in which she said: "In the United States, people are killed by elocution."

I have a number of friends here from last year, but most of you do not know me. Perhaps I may, therefore, answer two questions right now which you already have on your mind: Why does that man have an English name and a German accent?

Perhaps I might tell you of an experience which I had a number of years ago, when I was teaching at Fresno State College in Fresno, California. I was at the house of one of my colleagues, a philosophy professor.

I noticed how his old mother, a lady up in her seventies, watched me very carefully all evening. She finally said to me: "I was not born in this country, either." (It developed that she had been born in England).

I told her that I had been born in Germany but, as it happened, my parents were native-born Americans; and that, as it again happened, they were English, Scotch and French by descent, rather than German.

She looked at me, and it was obvious that the whole thing puzzled her. Then, suddenly, a flash of enlightenment came over her face, and she said: "Oh, your birth was an accident!"

Gentlemen, there is a story abroad that there are a good many Americans, including military officers, who have less of a liking for some of our wartime allies than for the Germans, whom they fought twice. Of course we talk about it — and there is some truth in it: We have a feeling that the plumbing is better in Germany; that the beer is colder and that there is more of it there than in some other places in Europe. After all, if anything, we were weaned on beer rather than on ale or wine.

Of course this story about the way a number of Americans feel when they are over there is matched in some respects by the story of how some of those people feel about us. After our men had been in Great Britain, France, Germany, and so on, year after year, a good many people in those countries seemed to feel like the Englishman, who said, "There are three things wrong with Americans in Europe: one is that Americans are overpaid; another is that Americans are oversexed; and the third is that Americans are over here."

There are, therefore, difficulties of adjustment on both sides, and the reasonable thing for intelligent adults is to try to figure out calmly what our relationships are to the various nations involved. It is my job this morning to specialize on the subject of *The Federal Republic of Germany*: to see what Germany looks like in American eyes; and to try to understand Germans, and our relationship with them, which is not always simple.

When we talk about Germany, we can talk about two Germanys — East and West — and in many ways they are quite different from each other nowadays. However, what I would like to do this morning is to talk about *four* different Germanys, of which the last one is a composite, for it seems to me that as the world and the people of the world look at Germany, they see it in four different perspectives.

First, there is the Germany that is feared, from a military point of view. It is feared, believe it or not, by Soviet Russia even with all of her power today; it is definitely feared by the Czechs

and by the Poles. Let us remember that it is also feared by many people in the Netherlands, in Norway, and in France, as well as elsewhere. That is *one* Germany.

Then there is a second Germany: the Germany which is despised, the Germany of National Socialism — because of its atrocities against the Jews, against foreign people under occupation, and against those of her own people who did not agree with the Nazis. We should remember that the Nazis murdered not only Communists, and Jews, but also Protestants and Catholics (including some 4,000 priests in Poland). They not only killed Czech university students, but German university students and professors. They also hanged some of their own outstanding admirals and generals for opposition to the regime. People (Germans and others) who loved one kind of Germany were the ones who felt strongest about and against this Hitler Germany.

There is a third Germany: the Germany which is beloved, respected, admired, and often imitated. There is the Germany of music and poetry; there is the Germany of universities. Our American graduate school is copied from the German university, and the seminars in which you are engaged during so much of your time were taken over from the German professors and students. The one innovation along that line seems to be that Americans are sending officers to school to work in seminars, and that (at least as of half a year ago) the Germans had not gotten around to doing the same thing. The Germany, of course, that is respected and admired, is also leading in the field of science. It has also been a leader in the field of public administration for the last 150 years — and in some ways for 200 years. Germany was the first country to institute a civil service — and, regardless of all the jokes we make about the civil service, we admit that its concepts and principles are very fine. The Germans have long had a very efficient administration. They have had very, very few scandals of corruption and, except under the Nazis, they *always* have had honest elections.

You remember the struggle which took place during the early days of the "New Deal," when an American system of Social

Security was introduced. Well, the Germans led the world in Social Security, when they started it back in the 1880's. They also had a marvelous system of health insurance, one which is still unequaled here.

When I was a youngster of eighteen or nineteen, in Berlin in 1923, I worked as a stenographer. It was a time of extreme inflation. I made the equivalent of two American dollars per week, and paid a ten per cent income tax on that tiny salary (the government took it out of my pay before I ever saw it) so there was not much left to live on. Another ten percent went to various forms of social insurance and health insurance. When I was sick, however, I did not have to worry about medical care (operations and hospitals), for it was all taken care of, just as though I had been in the American Navy. And that gives you a wonderful feeling at those times when sickness hits you.

The fourth Germany, on which I would like to concentrate, is a composite of the other three (the Germany that is feared, the Germany that is despised, and the Germany that is beloved and admired). It is the Germany which often confuses us; it baffles us because we do not quite know what to expect; and the reason why we do not quite know what to expect is that Germany's history has been something of a checkerboard.

If we go back only a few years — we remember the Germany of 1945. Defeated, she had surrendered unconditionally. She was destroyed for the most part; most cities and many villages were in ruins; people were hungry, even starving, and were out of work. But within some ten years, people were in jobs, and were producing at least 50 per cent more than they did in 1938 (which had been the best previous year in their economic life). They improved their standard of living until at the present time it is at least equal to that of any country in Europe, and better in several ways.

We have become accustomed to talking of this as the "German economic miracle." It is due to two factors: one was the currency reform which we imposed, and the American eco-

conomic aid through the Marshall Plan; the second was the German habit of hard work. (I had a fellow student years ago who was very anti-German; he claimed that it was the Germans who had invented work).

Aside from the "German economic miracle," I think there is something of an "Allied miracle" which has taken place in our relationship with the Germans. When I was working in Germany for the State Department, back in 1950, we were interested not only in de-Nazification, but also in demilitarization. But our policy changed soon. Today our complaint is not that the Germans are militaristic, or that the Germany Army is too large. On the contrary, it is that it is not large enough and that we would like to see it expanded. A few years ago, we were sorry when German youths were not particularly happy to serve in the Army. Apparently there has been a change for the better, from our point of view, in the last few years, and we are glad.

Today, when American officers go to Germany, they salute German officers of higher rank. They stand at attention when the German national anthem is played and when the German flag is shown on official occasions. General Field Marshal Montgomery, who accepted the surrender of a large part of the German Army in 1945, was paraded by the German Army in honor of his departure from NATO. In turn, the English Army of Occupation removed a 15-ton monument from Luneburg which had been erected in memory of the surrender of the German Army. They shipped it to Sandhurst, England, in the correct belief that there were fewer Germans in Sandhurst than in Luneburg.

So our relations with the former enemy have changed a great deal — so much so, in fact, that they are hardly believable if one sits down and reflects on them. The only thing that makes them believable is this: so many things have been happening in recent years that could not have happened in the past, that nowadays nothing seems impossible.

The future is interesting to speculate upon, but difficult to anticipate. I would like to invite you for a moment to try to figure

out with me "why the Germans are that way," in an attempt to understand them.

A good many people in this country (and elsewhere) speak of Germans as "typical Germans." Of course, there is no such thing as "typical Germans" — certainly there is not *one* type of German to the exclusion of other types. There may be half a dozen or a dozen different typical Germans who are all recognizable as Germans, but who are different from each other, just as there may be a dozen typical Americans who are different from each other, but who are all very American in some way.

The Germans used to be militaristic; in fact, there was more militarism in Germany than in any other country in Europe. But that has changed to such an extent that, as I mentioned a moment ago, we had difficulty some years ago to induce them to reestablish their army.

Why did the Germans change? I do not have the answer. I only know, from history, that the Swedes, the Swiss, and the Danes were at one time as war-minded as any nation in Europe, until they were decisively beaten. Then they changed, and have been different ever since. Whether that analogy fits the German situation, I simply do not know.

There has been a great deal of political instability in German history, and there are a number of reasons for that. The Germans were not united as a nation until 1871, while the English were united some 900 years ago and the French some 400 or 500 years ago. Both the Italians and the Germans were late. Only about 150 years ago there was no "Germany", and there were 300 different political entities — kingdoms, duchies, principalities, free cities, and so forth — in the territory which is now called Germany. For a long time it seemed impossible to the Germans ever to get to a point where they would be united — where they would be one nation.

Part of the reason for this disunity was geographic. In the north, there are the plains; there, the situation is simple. In the

center and south of Germany, however, there are mountains. So, long ago, means of communications in large parts of Germany were very difficult between one principality or Kingdom and another. For that reason most of these 300 entities grew up by themselves, in great cultural diversity (which was something very beautiful), and in political disunity. They had a very difficult time getting together.

As outsiders, we should remember that the German national anthem, *Deutschland Uber Alles* ("Germany Above All"), in its original meaning did not mean Germany above the rest of the world (later on, it was abused); it rather meant (and the words are very clear) a unified Germany above all those principalities and kingdoms which made German unity impossible. It was the song of liberals and of German revolutionary students who wanted to unite the country over the opposition, the independent princes, kings, and so on. For reasons of their own, the only way in which the Germans succeeded in doing this was by Bismarck whipping up the nationalist sentiment of the disunited Germans in the various independent states against a foreign nation (an old trick) — against the French. His policy of "blood and iron" was not a policy of conquest; it was a blood and iron policy for bringing about German unity.

In the case of Great Britain, unity was also brought about by war. It was, however, war waged by Norman the Conqueror against the English — a case of subduing them and imposing national unity from above and from the outside.

In the case of Germany, national unity was imposed by the head of the Prussian Government by means of a war against a foreign power. Those historical developments left a mark on the German character. You will notice, when talking with Germans, that they hold national unity very dear. They worry much more about it than do the English or the French (who, as a matter of fact, do not worry about it at all — and do not have to).

Another worthwhile thing to remember about the Germans is that Germany is located in the center of Europe. One reason



they became militaristic in the course of history was that they had practically no natural defense against outsiders.

The British had no reason to have a large standing army, since a foreign enemy had to cross the Channel before he could hope to conquer England, and no one ever succeeded in this after 1066. Not having a need for a standing army, they had no occasion or temptation to develop militarism. If they developed anything, it was at times a very strong feeling of what one might call "navalism." Not having a strong army, the Kings of England were not able to use military force to suppress their own people when they demanded greater political freedom. Therefore, the English people found it much easier to gain democratic government at an early date than did the Germans.

The Prussian Kings found it easy to play around with their army, which they said they needed to protect the country against foreign invasions. They used it not only for invasions of other countries, but also for holding down their own people. That was one reason for German militarism.

Being located in the center of Europe, Germany has always been the subject of two major influences: one coming from the West, and the other from the East. From the West, there were the influences of Roman law and of Christianity; later on, there came the warm winds of Constitutionalism from France, Great Britain, and the United States. From the East, the influence was all along the lines of autocracy and absolutism. The German areas in the East originally (some 1,500 years ago) were Slavic, but some 800 or 900 years ago the Germans pushed out most of the Slavs, and the whole area became something like a colonial settlement. Life in these areas furthered autocracy and the absolutism of local rulers. In the West, however — especially in the southwest, and in northern port cities like Hamburg and Bremen which faced the ocean and had contacts with the West — there were very early democratic developments.

The tragedy of democracy in Germany was that its growth was so uneven: it became highly developed in what is now Wurt-

temberg, in Hamburg, Bremen, and a city like Frankfurt; it remained far behind in the central and eastern parts of Germany. Therefore, the whole domestic political situation was rather mixed up.

This development was in part a struggle for the German mind and the German soul. As Goethe expressed it (not necessarily speaking of the political situation): "Alas, there are two souls in my breast." You can well say that about the Germans, for there was a struggle between the democratic and autocratic souls, minds, and ways of thinking. For that reason, Germany, politically, became a mixed civilization: half East and half West. There are remnants, of course, of the older autocratic thinking even today.

The important question, however, is this: Which one of these ways of life is going to prevail? That question is very important because we should realize that Germany is second in Europe in size of population (Soviet Russia being first); second in area; and second in economic production. It is also strategically located and it is one of the leaders of the world in the fields of science, industry, and management. It makes a great deal of difference to the United States and to the Free World in general whether Germany is on one side of the Iron Curtain or the other.

What is the present outlook? This outlook, of course, is dominated by the personality of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer.

German domestic politics have developed in the direction of a two-party system, which is a very wholesome contrast to the days of the Weimar Republic, when there were as many as twelve, twenty, or even twenty-four different parties, representing all kinds of interest groups. There were not only the Conservative, Liberal, Socialist and Communist Parties, but parties for the middle class, for landlords, for people who were not landlords but who rented houses, and two which were based on a religious foundation.

I recall that in The Free City of Danzig (which, of course, was very German) there was a party for the herringfishers who had come to the conclusion that none of the other parties was

taking care of their economic interests. Then, of course, being Germans, they split their political party; then there were two parties for herringfishers, one on the left and one on the right. Under Germany's system of proportional representation it was easy to start and maintain a new party. It encouraged a multiplicity of parties and, with it, there was unstable government. Sometimes the parties would support the government, at other times they would not.

At present, the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) is so strong that it has an absolute majority in parliament. It is wise enough to take some smaller parties into the coalition in order to widen its base, and certainly the government has been stable since it was established in 1949. This is partly because of a constitutional provision (which the people who do not like it call a "constitutional trick"). Under the new German Constitution, the Bonn Constitution, Parliament cannot overthrow the government by a vote of lack of confidence unless it agrees on a successor to the Chancellor. It is much easier to vote against Adenauer than to agree on whom to put in after he is defeated (which has never been possible). Therefore, even when the CDU did not have a majority, Adenauer was safe.

Under the Weimar Republic, in the later years, it was possible for the Nazis and the Communists to vote against the government and to throw it out by a combined effort. But, of course, it was not possible for them to agree on a successor government. Therefore, there was instability, turmoil, sometimes a near political chaos, and certainly a lot of public dissatisfaction with the regime.

The domestic, political situation in Germany today also looks more promising in other ways. Under the Weimar Republic, the feuding between the parties was much worse than it is today, and there was much more bitterness. In those days, Germans were fighting over the national flag: whether it should be black, white and red, or black, red and gold. There is no trouble about that now. Then, Germany had a very large Communist Party. Around

1930 there were 6 million votes cast for the Communists and 100 Communists elected to Parliament (about one-fourth of its membership total. Today, the Communist Party in Germany is illegal. But that is not why it is weak. It is weak because the Germans of today just do not take to Communism (and I will come back to that in a moment).

Another great difference between the Bonn Republic and the Weimar Republic is that now there are not 6 or 7 million Nazi voters, as there were in those days. In the beginning of the Adenauer regime, a pro-Nazi Party was declared illegal by the German Constitutional Court. It would have been possible for the surviving Hitlerites to start some other party without a program that was too openly Nazi, but they have not succeeded in doing that. You might say that they infiltrated one of the smaller parties, but not very much. It is really amazing that when people are absolutely free and can choose their own parties, they do not vote the Communist ticket, as they did to such a large extent in France and also in Italy. Neither do the Germans vote for any Nazi or pro-Nazi ticket, and this is a very encouraging situation.

Another encouraging situation is the fact that Germany has been able to absorb some 10 million refugees: Germans who were expelled by Poland, Czechoslovakia, Roumania, Hungary, and so on, and dumped into Germany at the end of the war. Most of them (except the old people and sick people) now have jobs, and their assimilation into Germany (where most of them had never lived before) has succeeded to such an extent that the Refugee Party, which at one time was quite prominent and rather threatening, has dwindled to minor size. As the people settled down to jobs, intermarried with the local people, and became satisfied and happy, they were not attracted to the Refugee Party. They went back to their old political convictions along Socialist or CDU lines, or whatever. That is a very, very good situation.

The trade union situation in Germany is, on the whole, very favorable to the government. There have been few strikes, only some for higher wages. Labor has been disciplined — disciplined

in the sense of not having any corrupt practices such as the Teamsters' Union, let us say, in this country. They have some good labor leaders there who have been very cooperative in putting Germany back on her economic feet.

What of the relations between Germany and the United States? Well, they have changed a great deal. Perhaps the first major change came with the Berlin Airlift. The Russians threatened to starve Berlin — they not only threatened, but tried to. We put on an enormous airlift, carrying food, medicines, and even coal for the hospitals — everything that was needed to support a population of 2 million people. These supplies were carried to Berlin by air for almost a year. The Germans appreciated it very much that we stood by them. This means, in effect, that they also have faith in what we are going to do in the future. We have said in so many words (and Dulles repeated it the other day) that if the Russians acted against West Berlin it would mean war between the United States and Soviet Russia.

There was also the currency reform, which was American-imposed and very beneficial to Germany. There was the exchange program, the *Amerikahauser* (Information Centers) in Germany. There was a very strong and growing German interest in American authors. The number of translations of works by O'Neill, Thornton Wilder, and a dozen other American playwrights and novelists is simply amazing. There are many German critics who claim that there is much more good writing done in the United States than in Germany.

We still wonder whether, in spite of these favorable relations between Germany and the United States, there are not possibilities of a change.

What about the neutralist sentiment in Germany about which we hear so much? Well, there has been a neutralist sentiment. In some years it has been greater than in others. There are some Germans who think that the Western Powers are really putting Soviet Russia on the defensive; that Russia sees herself surrounded; that she is afraid of her national security — and

justifiably so. Then there are Germans who want to be bridgebuilders: they want to bridge the gap between the East and the West; they think Germany should form a link. There are also a few foolish people who would like to see Germany as a balancer. In these days, when the Soviet Union is so enormously powerful, no matter how strong Germany is, she simply is not strong enough to serve as a balancer between the Soviet Union, on one side, and the United States on the other. It would take more than one country the size of Germany to serve as a balancer.

I am now going to offer my personal interpretation as to Germany's future in regard to neutralism. Even if the Socialists would come into power, I think that the Germans will stay in NATO. The Socialists talk about getting out of NATO; they talk about getting out of NATO in order that (as they believe) reunification between the two parts of Germany might become easier (I am going to come back to that in a moment).

I think this will not happen. If Germany were to leave NATO, she would be without friends — and she now has friends in many places for the first time in almost a generation. She has friends in Europe, and friends overseas. If she left NATO, she would be dependent upon her own small army, and nobody to fall back upon to help her. Outside of NATO, I think she would have no future as a power.

Why cannot the East and West of Germany manage to get together? Well the eastern part of Germany — with a population of some 17 million as against 52 million in the West, is Soviet-dominated and Soviet-controlled. It is governed by the Socialist Unity Party, which is Communist and Moscow-controlled. The East German Government has no desire to merge with Western Germany on democratic terms, for if it did the 17 million people in the East would be swallowed up by the 52 million in the West — especially, since the 17 million in the East are by no means all Communists (perhaps no more than 20 per cent). For that reason the East Germans in control do not want to unite with the West Germans on democratic terms.

They do, however, want to unite with them on their own terms, and therefore they say there should be a Confederation (that is, a loose union); that Eastern Germany, with one-third of the population, should have equal say with Western Germany. This equal say, they argue, should mean that the so-called "Socialist accomplishments" (which we call "Communist accomplishments") should be preserved. In effect, this means: "We will unite with the West, provided we can go on keeping a communist house, as we see fit, and with no interference from you. In addition, having a half say in the government of the loosely united Germany, you in the West cannot stay in NATO; you cannot be friends with the Americans; you cannot make decisions along democratic lines. One-half of this German Confederation is ours — and certainly we will not budge!"

Being strictly disciplined, and knowing exactly what they want, if the East Germans had one-half of the say, the West Germans would have less than one-half. This is because, being democratic, they are not strictly disciplined; they are not told by one party or by one man what to do; they are free to disagree among themselves and to disunite. Therefore, in some ways they are more weak in making immediate decisions. For that reason, I do not think there will be a unification of Germany for a long, long time.

Now a few other things.

I think we can depend upon Western Germany to continue being anti-Communist. They are anti-Communist not only by conviction in the sense of being anti-Marxist, but they are anti-Communist in the sense of being anti-Russian because of what they suffered under the Soviet occupation and what the German prisoners-of-war went through in Russia. All of their election results indicate that when they are free they vote not for the Communist or Nazi Parties, but for the democratic parties.

I think there will be no war in the near future over the question of reunification, which the French used to be afraid of, and there are two reasons for this. First, the Germans, in my

conviction, do not care that much about reunification, and they do not want to risk war. They talk and act very differently from the way they did in 1919 and 1920. Then, they had lost territories in the West and in the East, and they talked constantly about "Germany's bleeding borders." They talk about this very little today. As a matter of fact, the East Germans often complain (and I think correctly) that the West Germans are not as interested in the East Germans as they should be.

Certainly I think there will not be reunification of Germany in our time — this is only a personal opinion, but I do not see any basis of compromise for the two Germanys on which they could get together. I do not see why Russia should agree to a unification, unless it be on Russia's terms. If it is on Russia's terms, then West Germany will not agree. If it is on West German terms, then there is no reason in the world why the Russians should agree because it would merely weaken their security rather than keep it at the present strength.

I think that, on the whole, the Germans will continue a very strong pro-American policy. They will also be more and more interested in a stronger Europe which does not have to depend altogether on the United States. Personally, I can see nothing wrong with that. The stronger Western Europe is, the better for us.

In the United States it is sometimes said that the future actions of Germany — whether she will join the East or remain with the West — is the \$64,000 question. In this connection, I think we should remember that the future, and Germany's actions in the future, do not depend entirely on her.

There is another \$64,000 question, and that is in the minds of the Germans. Their big question is this: What is the United States going to do? Is the United States going to continue its interest not only on a military basis, but also on a political basis — and, especially, on an economic basis? Is American foreign policy going to be wise enough to avoid unnecessary conflicts in other parts of the world outside of Europe?



I think that the Germans, as well as other Europeans, want to stay on our side, for reasons of their own national safety, just as we would like to have them on our side. But they do not seem to be anxious (quite naturally) to risk being blown up for reasons of mistakes in our foreign policy. Therefore, they are watching us at least as anxiously as we are observing them. It will be up to us to pursue a policy which is good not only for the United States, but good for the rest of the Free World. This is not always simple. I think, however, that by the end of your year in delightful Newport you will have even more appreciation of the possibilities and the difficulties than you now have. And a deeper appreciation of the complexities of a situation — or a country and people — leads to better judgment and calmer reasoning.

## BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

### Professor John Brown Mason

Professor Mason was born in Germany in 1904. He received his A.B. degree from Butler University in 1926, his A.M. degree from the University of Wisconsin (where he was a Scholar in History and Carnegie Fellow in International Law) in 1927, and his Ph.D. degree from there in 1929.

He remained at the University of Wisconsin as an instructor in political science for one year, following which he served as an assistant professor of political science and history at the University of Arkansas from 1930 to 1931. During the period from 1934 to 1936, Professor Mason was Head of the Department of Social Science and Chairman of the Faculty at the Colorado Women's College in addition to lecturing at the University of Denver. The following year he was Forum Leader of the United States Public Forums in Orange County, California, and in Seattle, Washington.

During the war years, Professor Mason was with the Special War Problems Division of the United States Department of State (1944) and Chief of the Training Division in the Foreign Economic Administration (1944-1946). He was also a member of the Patterson Historical Mission to Germany from the United States War Department (G-2) during the summer of 1945 and a member of the Hoover Food Mission to Europe the following Spring.

He has been associated with various educational institutions, including the University of Illinois, Stanford University, and Oberlin College where he was a Professor of Political Science from 1946 to 1950.

Professor Mason took leave from his position as Professor of Government at Georgetown University to occupy the Chester W. Nimitz Chair of Social and Political Philosophy at the Naval War College during the 1957-1958 academic year.

He is the author of *Hitler's First Foes; A Study in Religion and Politics*, *The Danzig Dilemma, A Study in Peacemaking by Compromise*, and co-author of *Foreign Governments and Constitutions and Constitutional Developments Since World War II*.