



A History of German – Scandinavian Relations

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Table of contents

1. The Rise and Fall of the Hanseatic League	5
2. The Thirty Years' War	11
3. Prussia en route to becoming a Great Power	15
4. After the Napoleonic Wars	18
5. The German Empire	23
6. The Interwar Period	29
7. The Aftermath of War	33

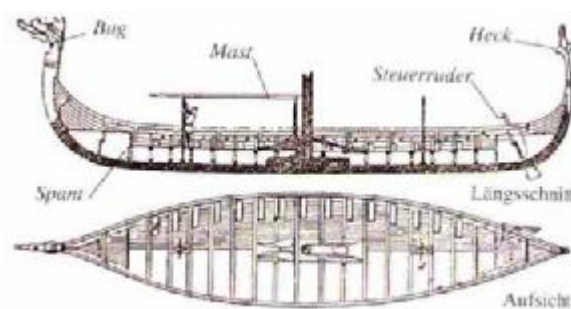
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This essay contemplates the history of German-Scandinavian relations from the Hanseatic period through to the present day, focussing upon the Berlin-Brandenburg region and the northeastern part of Germany that lies to the south of the Baltic Sea. A geographic area whose topography has been shaped by the great Scandinavian glacier of the Vistula ice age from 20000 BC to 13 000 BC will thus be reflected upon. According to the linguistic usage of the term 'Scandinavian', only the three countries of Denmark, Norway and Sweden are included, hence the following essay pays little consideration to Germany's relationship with Finland and Iceland.

As may be expected, the history of German-Scandinavian relations features a great many fluctuations and ruptures. The history has not been one of peaceful co-existence for extensive periods of time. Not only the horrors of the Thirty Years' War in which the Margraviate of Brandenburg lost half of its population and the Prussian-Danish War of the mid-19th century, but also the fact that several thousand Scandinavian prisoners were held in the concentration camps of Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück between 1940 and 1945 – amongst them also the later Norwegian Prime Minister, Einar Gerhardsen, prove this emphatically. The Hanseatic period was also no time of harmony. As late as 1249, Stralsund was besieged and partly destroyed by Lübeck after it forced the mighty city on the River Trave from the herring trade off the coast of Rügen. In 1284, Hanse Norway completely blocked external travel through the imposition of a trade ban and brought the country to the verge of famine. It also waged war against its "Schicksalsmacht" ('destiny holder'), Denmark, that had assumed a vast political role due to the blockade capability of the Jütland between the Baltic Sea and the North Sea. The Hanseatic League suffered severe losses in the battle against the Danish army in the year 1363, being first able to prove its supremacy in Baltic Sea trade with the signing of the Treaty of Stralsund in the year 1370. It enjoyed absolute power in the herring trade off Skåne, the consequence being that the Baltic Sea became almost a kind of German inland sea. However, latest during the Danish-Cēsis War from 1426 until 1435, the Danish fleet showed itself to once more be a worthy opponent of the Hanseatic armada.

Prior to the strengthening of the German Hanse, the Nordic economy enjoyed great influence over trade in the Baltic Sea and North Sea regions. The basis for this was the Viking ships, which were ideal for Northern Europe

517 - 1066
Viking period

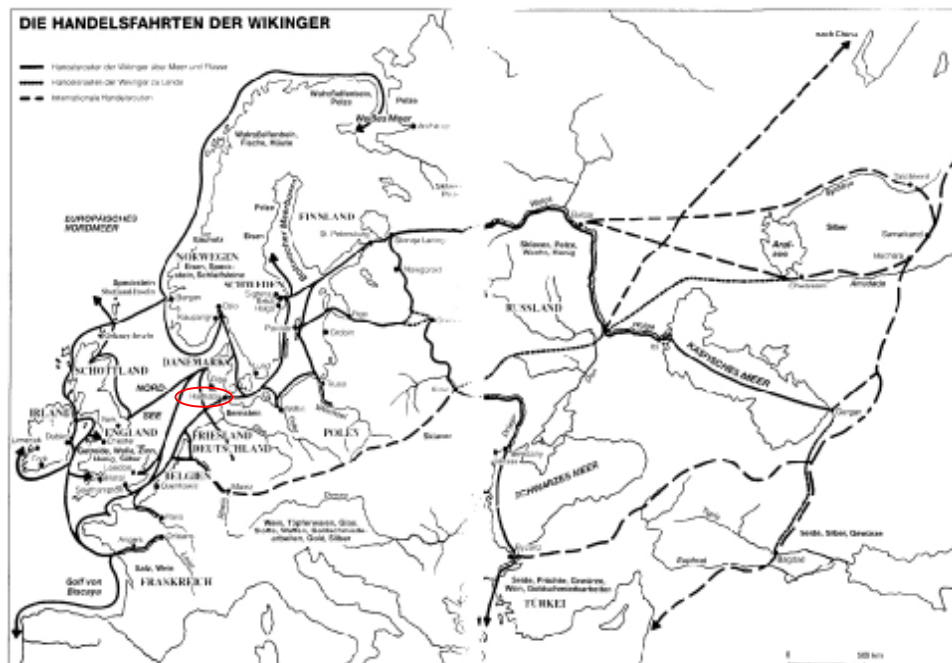


where there were but few natural harbours. The vessels were extremely versatile and suitable for the high seas, not only allowing the Vikings to arrive in foreign countries and states unannounced, but also to trade in their most coveted wares, which included slaves,

pelts and walrus tusk ivory, and to transport these far into bays and up river estuaries.

This is one of several reasons for the oldest known Swedish settlement to the south of the Baltic Sea being located near Menzlin close to Anklam. The oldest stone road in Germany, which leads from the former Viking town to the River Peene, is also to be found here. During the Vikings' heyday, the settlement of Haithabu near Schleswig (which at the time still lay within Danish territories) was the most important trade and production centre between the east and west in the Northern Europe. It was from here that the Frankish monk, Ansgar, went in 829 to Swedish Birka beside Lake Mälaren to urge the Christianisation of Northern Europe. He was later named archbishop of the entire north by Rome with a residence in Bremen. The German monks who followed Ansgar's lead soon began acting as "development aides" in the north. They were not only skilled in architecture, horticulture and medicine, but were also able to read and write.

Haithabu: trade and production centre of the Vikings in north Europe



1. The Rise and Fall of the Hanseatic League

In the 12th century, Henry the Lion of Saxony set about colonising the lands to the north and east of Germany. Under his protection, a merchant settlement that had burned down shortly before was rebuilt on the present-day town hill of Lübeck in 1159, immediately outflanking Danish Haithabu, mainly because it enjoyed a position that was much more conveniently reachable. For merchants from German lands, the route to the Baltic Sea was shorter via present-day Lübeck than via Haithabu. Thus the settlement became a junction in east-west trade that was dependent upon the transfer of sea goods to land-based transport and vice versa. The most important goods traded in were cereals and herring, with the latter taking on a unique role. Due to the continual population growth and the Christian period of fasting that lasted around 140 days during Medieval times, herring was a particularly valuable export product. With Lübeck at the helm, the newly-established towns were soon competing with all of the other long-distance merchants in the Baltic Sea area, building up their position of power in the North German and Baltic areas over several centuries and uniting to secure help and support for one another with their fleets and armies. Over the course of 50 years from the mid-12th century onwards, they were highly successful in conducting the most profitable trade.

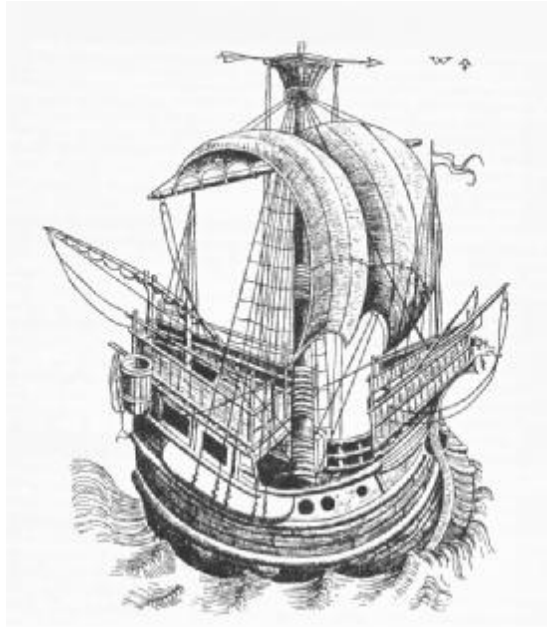
1159 - 1618
Period of the Hanseatic League

Nowadays, the Hanseatic period is reflected upon as positive in almost every respect, particularly in the German-speaking realm. It is considered a time of prosperous trade and of the successful transfer of Western and Central European culture and ways of life to Northern and Eastern Europe. The former Hanse towns haven't only put this fact to a tourism purpose: proof of this is the countless companies and businesses, particularly in the north of Germany, who adorn their names with the epithets "*Hanse*", "*hansisch*" or "*hanseatisch*" (Hanse, Hanseatic). An exception to this chorus of praise are perhaps children's books in which a rather socio-critical image dominates: pirates, and above all Klaus Störtebecker, act as noble avengers of the oppressed who teach exploitative *Pfeffersäcke*¹ the meaning of fear. One of the highlights of this tradition was the staging of *Gewitter über Gotland* ('Storm over Gotland'), a theatre production about Jürgen Wullenwever directed by Erwin Piscator at the Berlin *Volksbühne* in the year 1927. The play was penned by the Uckermark poet, Ehm Welk, who later won the National Prize of East Germany and was born in Biesenbrow, a small village to the north of Angermünde.

The geographical region within which the Hanse towns lay extended from the Dutch Zuiderzee in the west as far as the Baltic Sea in the east and from Stockholm in the north to the Cologne-Wroclaw-Krakow axis in the south. However, not all of the towns in this region were Hanse towns. Schwerin is just one example of a town that was never a member of the Hanseatic League; all of the present-day towns of Schleswig-Holstein aside from Kiel were also not part.

¹ Lit. 'pepper bags', a nickname for the rich merchants who traded in herbs and spices.

The foundation for the economic, political and cultural power of the trade community was the new type of ships, which were superior to the Viking vessels. With their cogs, which had a greater storage capacity than the boats



used in Scandinavia, the Low German merchants could also embark on long-distance journeys at times of adverse winds, which signified a period of waiting for better weather conditions on dry ground for the Vikings. The basis of Hanseatic trade was the exchange of raw materials and commodities including cereals, hemp, wood, tar, furs, stockfish and salt from the east and north for finished products from the west and the south, so mainly Flemish cloth and hardware, but also spices and silk from the Far East.

The sea trade conducted by the Hanseatic merchants of the 12th and 13th centuries was later organised into convoys due to the continual threat of pirates. Later, and particularly after the establishment of peace along the transport routes, the hustle and bustle was increasingly dominated by individual merchants. The “summer” and “winter” residents became settled merchants, thus in the year 1259, for example, German merchants began to stay in Norwegian Bergen during the winter. In 1260, the Wendish (Slavic) towns of Lübeck, Wismar and Rostock signed a treaty for the safeguarding of their shipping trade. Stralsund and Greifswald later joined this trio in 1283. Beginning with Rostock in 1218, these settlements were governed by the *Lübisches Stadtrecht* (Lübeck Law), and soon took on the central role for all trade in the Baltic Sea area. Given that this trade mainly took place in an era of illiteracy, present-day knowledge of the latter is of a somewhat general nature and cannot be fully illustrated through the few existing individual accounts.

1259:
Treaty for the safe-guarding of shipping trade.

Lübeck cannot have counted a population of more than 20,000 inhabitants during the Middle Ages. The Hanse town controlled herring fishing off the southern tip of present-day Sweden and dominated the “triangular trade” with Norwegian Bergen. Cereals, flour and malt were brought from Lübeck to Bergen from whence stockfish was transported to England and Flanders. From here, cloth was then brought back to Lübeck. With the opening of the 94 km long Stecknitz Canal between the River Elbe near Lauenburg and the River Trave in 1398, which was the first artificial waterway in Europe at the time, merchants were no longer forced to pass along the feared Skagen Passage, the so-called *Ummelandfahrt*, and the dominant position in east-west trade could thus be preserved. Wismar, which was obviously inhabited by settlers from Lübeck, brought mainly its beer to Hanseatic trade. Important for this was the supply of hops from Thuringia via Stendal. Particularly the trading of fish from Scandinavia was significant for the town. Together with Rostock, Wismar dominated trade in the Norwegian Wik (Oslo and Tønsberg).

Lübeck

Merchants from Rostock brought their cereals, flour, malt and beer to the north from the near and far surrounds of their hometown, distributing cloth, salt and ironmongery obtained from Flanders, Westphalia and England. In the 14th century, the total number of inhabitants in Rostock lay between 10,000 and 14,000. From a contemporary point of view, this is not a great deal, however Rostock enjoyed its heyday during the Hanseatic period, being the third most significant town in the Wendish region at the side of Lübeck after Stralsund and Hamburg. An indication of this is also the fact that Rostock was the venue for the first university in Northern Europe that was established in 1419. The university's influence on the town was considerable, particularly before the Reformation. It eclipsed the gradually declining economic powerhouse of the town both politically and culturally, with the Dane, Tycho Brahe, studying here in 1560, for example, before becoming an astronomer at the court of King Rudolf II of Prague and recruiting the aid of the German, Johannes Kepler, to be his knowledgeable assistant. The first Danish translation of the Bible was also printed in Rostock after the German reformer, Johannes Bugenhagen, had crowned the Danish King Christian II in Copenhagen.

Rostock

For Stralsund, now a partner town of Malmö and Svendborg amongst others, links to Danish royalty existed as early as the year 1250; links to Sweden and Norway can also be traced back to as early as the 13th century. Furs, wax and honey from the east and cloth and ironmongery from the west were traded in. Unlike Wismar and Rostock, Stralsund was a typical seaside town with the distinctive character of an intermediary trade town. The export of produce from the near surrounds and local handicraft production played only a secondary role. As late as 1249, the town came into conflict with Lübeck, but then remained constantly close at its side until into the 17th century. Stralsund's trade interests were, to a great extent, also those of Lübeck. Amongst the Wendish towns, it was the economically strongest and the most active in Hanse trade. Economically and technically speaking, Stralsund was a leading force in these times. Proof exists that the first German compass was also made here in 1394.

Stralsund

Greifswald, which was established on "grüner Wiese" (green meadows) along the old long-distance trade route that ran from Lübeck through Wismar, Rostock and Stralsund to Szczecin, Gdansk and Königsberg as far as Livland, brought to Hanseatic trade agrarian produce from its surrounds, as well as salt harvested in the town. Greifswald traded in pelts, furs, herring, stockfish, hemp, wax, cloth and Rhenish wine. In 1278, the inhabitants of Greifswald attained the right to set up their own herring trade centre on Skanör close to Malmö. At the beginning of the 14th century, they were able to set up a further settlement on Bornholm, which soon became the main centre for the town's Danish-Swedish-Scanian trade. Thus the *Greifswalder Schonenfahrercompagnie* (schooner company) was the owner of its own house as well as its own St. Maria chapel on Bornheim between 1378 and 1525. It was the establishment of Greifswald University in 1456 that finally began to gradually bring change to the economic and political face of the town, which is today twinned with Lund. As is the case in Rostock, Jena and Wittenberg, countless Scandinavian students also studied at the University of Greifswald over the following centuries. A particularly lively exchange was maintained with the universities in Lund, where the German jurist Samuel von Pufendorf taught, and Uppsala. At a later date, the Swedish winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, Selma Lagerlöf, was also made an honorary doctor in Greifswald.

Greifswald

The double town of Berlin-Cölln, which was established in the mid-13th century, rapidly grew into a leading economy at the heart of the Margraviate of Brandenburg. Size-wise, it was also the largest town in the Margraviate to the east of the River Elbe in the Late Middle Ages and, with its around 6,000 inhabitants, counted amongst the largest of Germany's medium-sized towns. The traffic on the most important east-west route, which led from Lower Rhine and Westphalia to Poland via Magdeburg and Frankfurt/Oder, and the north-south route, which ran from the Saale region, Thuringia and Leipzig to the mouth of the River Oder and Szczecin, intersected here. The clearing of forests and the rapid spread of cereal farming in the centre of the Margraviate formed the economic basis for the town's development. Wood and cereals from Berlin-Cölln were mainly exported downstream via the Spree, Havel and Elbe rivers as far as Hamburg. In the other direction, top quality cloth from Flanders was transported via Hamburg and Berlin-Cölln to the Margraviate. However, Berlin was also a type of "fish market central" within the Margraviate. Salt herring and other conserved saltwater fish were acquired from Szczecin and Oderberg. Thus the double town beside the River Spree and with it the heart of the Margraviate was focussed on the seaports on the North Sea and Baltic Sea, primarily Hamburg and Szczecin. The Hanse activities of Berlin-Cölln were minimal however. It was only in 1430 that the double town began to focus more on the activities of the Hanseatic League and took part in an armed contingent against the royal arbitrariness. Like many other towns in the Margraviate of Brandenburg such as Salzwedel, Stendal, Brandenburg/Havel, Frankfurt/Oder, Havelberg, Kyritz and Perleberg, Berlin-Cölln became a member of the Hanseatic League as early as 1358.

Berlin – Cölln

For Scandinavia, the Hanseatic period meant almost a kind of colonisation. Trade conducted in the north was so-called passive trade, as export as well as import was carried out on foreign ships. Increasing numbers of German merchants, manufacturers and miners migrated to Sweden, which was experiencing an economic boom due to the copper extraction in Falun, establishing themselves predominantly in Kalmar and Stockholm in whose establishment they played a major role in 1251. Through the powerful position of the Hanse, Stockholm was at times a half German town. Over time, the German merchants and manufacturers who had migrated here became the most prosperous inhabitants of the town, providing more than half of the municipal tax revenue and, in the 14th century, for example, every other mayor was also always a German. However, the Central Swedish place names such as Saxhyttan ("Sachsenhütte"), Garpenberg and Garphyttan ("Garp" was once a popular denotation for a German in the north, which meant as much as "show-off") again reflect how the German influence spread throughout the entire mining district of Central Sweden. The basis for the German dominance here was the German-run water wheel. A similar number of Germans also settled in Norwegian Bergen and in Copenhagen; these cities' present-day phone books still testify to the vast number of Germans who once settled here. Throughout Scandinavia, names such as Stoltenberg, Broch, Bahr, Schröder and Kempe remain as reminders of these German-speaking immigrants.

Sweden

Even modern Scandinavian speech still features some indications of the significance that the Low German merchants once had in the north. Countless words were borrowed from German in the Middle Ages and many Nordic words became obsolete. This affected almost all areas of public and private life. The linguistic influence was facilitated by the fact that Low German is more closely related to the Scandinavian languages than High German, with the consonant shifts in the letters p, t and k not having been adopted. Moreover, there are also no diphthongs in cases such as *mein* and *Haus* (*min* and *hus* in both Middle Low German and Scandinavian). Spoken examples for the influence of Low German on the Scandinavian language are substantives such as *borger*, *rådhus*, *handel*, *kjøpmann*, *frakt*, *håndverker*, *herre*, *fru*, *gaffel*, *glas*, *lampe*, *klokke*, *kiste*, *støvel*, *list* and *makt*, as well as various adjectives including *billig*, *falsk*, *from*, *herlig*, *klok* and *tapper* in addition to verbs like *male*, *prøve*, *redde* and *spille*. All examples originate from Norwegian, although equivalents may also be found in the Danish and Swedish languages. In addition, word formation is also worth a mention: many Scandinavian verbal suffixes such as *an-*, *be-* and *for-* as well as *för-* (e.g.: *angripe*, *betale*, *forstå*) also originate from Low German.

*German impact to the
Scandinavian language*

Over time, the might of the Hanseatic League naturally also led to increased bitterness amongst the original inhabitants of the north. All of Sweden's major government agencies such as the mint and customs were in German hands and word had it that the native Swedes would soon be left with nothing but the task of grave digging. From 1471 onwards, only Swedish nationals were allowed to govern Swedish towns; from this point forth, no foreigner was permitted to run for the position of mayor or to be on the town council.

Political Impact

Despite the constant tensions between the Hanse and Denmark, German merchants also came to Copenhagen from Wismar, Stralsund and Szczecin, establishing their own working men's club there in 1382, *Det tyske Kompagni*. Manufacturers followed in the footsteps of merchants and, aside from blacksmiths, brewers and shoemakers, all Medieval German trades are thought to have been represented in Denmark and thus practised throughout the entire north. It was only at the beginning of the 20th century with the profession of electrician that this development came to an end. Low German also became the second language in Copenhagen, but was never spoken by the majority of the population, as the German migrants mostly assimilated within a short period of time. However the language could still be understood in parts of Copenhagen as late as 1750, some 200 years after the Reformation and associated dying out of Low German.

After the town became the residence of the Danish-Norwegian royal family in the mid-15th century and thus the capital of a kingdom that extended from the River Elbe to North Cape and from Greenland as far as the present-day Estonian island of Saaremaa, it grew constantly and developed a great need for foreign experts, a workforce, which comprised almost exclusively Germans for over 300 years. Add to this the fact that during the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Times, the Danish kings selected their wives from amongst foreign noble families. This led to all Danish queens being of German descent after the Reformation when the theological centre for the entire north of Europe shifted from Rome to Wittenberg and the monarch became a Lutheran protestant. Every one of these princesses brought teachers, artists, manufacturers, servants and clergymen as well as their own relatives with them. The same situation arose in Sweden and Stockholm. Over the past 500 years, the Swedish monarchy has been graced with twelve queens of German descent, the most famous of which being perhaps Queen Silvia, née Sommerlath, of contemporary times, as well as the wife of Gustav Adolf II, Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg and the sister of Frederick the Great, Louisa Ulrika of Prussia.

The fall of the Hanseatic League can be attributed to several factors, namely the Medieval agrarian crisis that shattered Continental Europe following the plague epidemic of the 14th century, and the gradual decline in herring stocks off the coast of Skåne. The Kalmar Union of 1389 established between the three northern kingdoms of Denmark, Norway and Sweden by the Danish Queen Margaret was also not in the best interests of the Hanseatic League. Margaret's successor to the throne, King Eric of Pomerania, then also grated the Dutch and English competitors to the Hanseatic League the right to trade in Denmark, Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The Swedish Royal Council also later permitted the Dutch to use the country's ports for trade, thus strengthening their position of power. This is made apparent, for example, by Gothenburg – today the second largest city in Sweden, with the most significant port in the country – that was established by Gustav Adolf II in 1619 as a settlement for the Dutch. The Dutch soon became the new dominant power in Baltic Sea trade. To the great disadvantage of Lübeck and other Wendish Hanse towns, Gdańsk and the Livonians began to strengthen their trade relations to West Europe in 1466 by bypassing the Lübeck-Hamburg transit route, thus saving themselves the trade margin that would otherwise have gone to the inhabitants of Lübeck and Hamburg.

*The fall of the
Hanseatic League*

Following old Hanseatic traditions, yearly Hanse Days still take place to this very day. Under the general theme of "The Town as a Way of Life", representatives of the old Hanse towns discuss contemporary issues and exchange experiences. In the foreground are themes such as monument protection, the encouragement of economic relations and the significance of the European Single Market, as well as environmental protection issues, particularly the prevention of pollution in the Baltic Sea. In the year 1987, the Swedish town of Kalmar donated a Hanse environmental award to this cause, which is awarded each year at the Hanse Days. Past recipients of the award include the youth organisation of the BUND in Schleswig-Holstein and the Kiel environment agency, Hohe Tied e.V., as well as several schools in Poland, Estonia and Russia. The first former GDR town to host the Hanse Days was Frankfurt/Oder who organised the event in 2003 in co-operation with their Polish partner town of Ślubice. In 2008, the Hanse Days will take place in Salzwedel; Rostock, Stralsund and Wismar will follow as host towns in 2018, 2028 and 2029 respectively. Over 100 towns throughout Europe now participate in the Hanse Days. An exception in the north remains Denmark from whence there are currently no member towns.

Tradition till today

2. The Thirty Years' War

1618-1649

During the Middle Ages, Denmark was one of the most densely populated countries in Northern Europe. In around 1250, approximately 1 million people are thought to have lived here; in contrast, vast expanses of Norway, Sweden and Finland remained uninhabited. This is one of the main reasons for Denmark's former dominance in the north. Norway, which enjoyed a personal union with Denmark from 1380 to 1814, increasingly became an auxiliary country. However, the Dutch-Hanseatic influence here should also not be underestimated here. In the Late Middle Ages, it led to the economic development of Northern Norway to the north of Trondheim for example. Latest at the beginning of the 17th century, the balances of power in Northern Europe had shifted in the favour of Sweden. It became the most powerful, expansion-friendly realm in the north, despite the fact that the population totalled a mere 750,000 inhabitants and it remained an agricultural nation. It was conveniently located however as far as raw materials such as copper, iron and wood were concerned, although the country was short of experts for the extraction of these precious raw materials. With its comprehensive array of estates, which ranged from Norway in the north and west, to Skåne in the south and Saaremaa and Gotland in the east, Denmark had formed a circle around the Swedish homeland, which let to Sweden under Gustav Adolf II attempting in return to encircle Denmark with the intervention into the Thirty Years' War.



In early 1630, Gustav Adolf marched with all his troops into Usedom, conquering Szczecin as soon as July of the same year. In the following years, no part of the Margraviate and hardly a town in present-day Brandenburg was spared the atrocities of war. Due to the fact that Brandenburg had no powerful army, it rapidly found itself at the mercy of the warring parties, lying between Swedish Western Pomerania and Catholic Saxony. In 1631, Gustav Adolf II occupied Frankfurt/Oder and Spandau, thus forcing his brother-in-law, the Elector Georg Wilhelm, to form an alliance after the latter

had attempted to keep Brandenburg out of the European battles through a strict policy of neutrality. For a short period of time, Swedish troops occupied Berlin-Cölln and demanded free retinue as well as accommodation for the Swedish troops. When Gustav Adolf II fell at the battle of Lützen near Leipzig on 16th November 1632, his imperial troops invaded the country and blackmailed Berlin-Cölln. Barely had Georg Wilhelm signed the Prague Peace Treaty in 1635 allying with the Catholic side, and the Swedes were back and demanding hefty protection monies. Thus it went on, year after year, throughout the entire country. Countless chronicles of the Margraviate report of the poverty and horrors suffered by the population: plunder, arson, murder, violation, famine and protection rackets by the seldom disciplined soldiers of the most varied of nations were commonplace.

The incomplete statistics reveal a gruesome image of the human and material losses. Of the 8,000 villages in the Margraviate, only around half were still inhabited by the end of the war in 1648, whilst the others were in “rack and ruin”. The situation was hardly any different in the towns, with many nothing more than rubble and ash. As a consequence of war and drought, only 272 homesteads remained of the around 1,029 in Frankfurt/Oder and just 527 of the 1,144 houses in the town of Brandenburg/Havel still stood. In Angermünde, only 40 of the once 1,700 inhabitants survived both famine and plague. The Altmark lost almost 50 percent of its entire population and in the rest of Brandenburg, the population is thought to have been reduced by up to 75 percent. The development of the double town of Berlin-Cölln also suffered severe setbacks. When the young Elector Friedrich Wilhelm who came to power in 1640 first arrived in Berlin-Cölln in March 1643, the town was largely deserted, the population reduced by more than a third, trade and industry devastated. It was under these conditions that Friedrich Wilhelm built up his first standing army, which later formed the basis for the Prussian army. He also enlisted the aid of former Swedish soldiers as trainers for this army, as they were renowned for their “*fürtrefflichen Drill*” (‘excellent drill’). They were named “*alter Schwede*” (Old Swedes) without further ado – it is perhaps from here that the common German expression still employed in everyday speech originates. In contrast, the turn of phrases “*hinter schwedischen Gardinen sitzen*” (‘to sit behind Swedish bars’) and “*Schwedentrunk*” (‘Swedish drink’) originate directly from the gruesome events of the Thirty Years’ War. The “*Schwedentrunk*” refers to a putrid cocktail of liquid manure that the Swedish soldiers made insubordinate farmers drink to force them to reveal the hiding places of their valuables. Also from this period of time is the children’s song “*Maikäfer, fliegt*” (‘Fly away ladybird’).

On 24th September 1636, the Swedish troops defeated the imperial forces at Scharfenberg near Wittstock/Dosse, thus securing dominance in Northern Germany up until the end of the Thirty Years’ War. An armistice was signed between Brandenburg and Sweden in 1641 in which the latter received Drezdenko, Landsberg, Krossen, Frankfurt/Oder and Gardelegen.



Trial “Rathausaal
Münster”

In 1648, the Westphalian Treaty of Osnabrück strengthened the territorial gains of Sweden to the south of the Baltic Sea: the country received Western Pomerania in its entirety, including Rügen, parts of the Farther Pomerania with Szczecin, Wismar and its hinterlands and the secularised dukedoms of Bremen and Verden. The North German provinces thus became a bridgehead for Sweden on the continent.

All consequently played essential roles as providers of agricultural produce, although the German areas were never annexed to Sweden. Due to the fact that the Swedish government did not wish to enter these areas as invaders, they retained a unique legal position: the German areas remained a part of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, but were ruled by the Swedish crown. In the provinces themselves, German remained the official language of administration; only in the world of finance and the military did Swedish dominate.

In the following years, Friedrich Wilhelm also succeeded in enlarging the state of Brandenburg, but the population suffered from hefty taxes that the Elector levied for the building up of his army as well as for the establishment of new branches of trade and industry. The state only recovered economically very gradually, with a renewed shock arriving in the year 1675 when the Swedes again occupied the country. Particularly the towns of the Havelland region as well as many places in the Neumark and Uckermark suffered from plunder and taxes. The Swedes were decisively defeated on 28th June 1675 close to the small town of Fehrbellin in the Rhinluch by the troops of the Elector Friedrich Wilhelm, known since as the “Great Elector”, with the consequence that the Swedes abandoned the whole of Brandenburg immediately. Heinrich von Kleist who was born in Frankfurt/Oder later penned a literary tribute to the war between the Brandenburg troops and the Swedish army with his play, *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*.

To this very day, the most impressive remains left by the Swedes in Germany are those from the time of the Thirty Years’ War. Countless Swedish entrenchments throughout the German states testify to this.



Swedish contemporary witnesses in Germany



Noteworthy amongst these are those in Schwedt, Waldsieversdorf and Stoperhaken on Rügen, as well as the Swedish tower in Wagenitz.

The final route taken by Gustav Adolf II up until his death at Lützen, as well as the stopovers made during the return of his corpse to its Swedish homeland is still marketed by Swedish and German tourism companies, as it always has been.

Near Peenemünde on Usedom, for example, a memorial stone from the year 1930 testifies to the landing of Gustav Adolf II. In Park Heinrichs Lust stands a memorial to Gustav Adolf II commemorating the Swedish king’s winter stay in the Kuhheide near Schwedt in 1631.



Every other year, the play *Die Schweden kommen* (The Swedes are coming) is performed in Wittstock and a monument erected in 1997 near the so-called *Schwedenpappel* commemorates the battle of 1636. The Wittstock Museum of the History of the Thirty Years' War, which was opened in 1998, is one of a kind.



A chapel of remembrance in memory of Gustav Adolf II, which was built according to designs by the Neuruppin-born architect, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, was erected near Lützen in 1907. Beside this lies a row of Swedish wooden houses in which an exhibition provides information about the Battle of Lützen.

Countless remains are also to be found in Western Pomerania, which was, after all, Swedish from 1630 until 1815, with only short interruptions. In 1653, the Royal Swedish Tribunal was set up in Wismar as the supreme court for all

German provinces of the kingdom of Sweden. It was here that many contemporaries came behind "*schwedische Gardinen*" (lit. 'Swedish barred windows', jail). From 1720 onwards, Stralsund was also the seat of the Swedish governor-general and the Swedish *Kommandantenhaus* (command headquarters) still stand on the Alter Markt square to this very day; in Badenstraße is the *Schwedenhaus* (Sweden house) that dates back to the year 1726. The town archive features a room painted in blue and yellow in honour of the town's Swedish past, whilst in the town hall is a bust of Gustav Adolf II.

On Rügen, the castles of Ralswiek and Spycker, both of which were inhabited by the Swedish governor-general Carl Gustav Wrangel, enjoy a special Swedish connection. Close to Ralswiek stands the so-called *Schwedenkirche* (Swedish church), and in Neuenkirchen to the north of Greifswald, the grave of the Swedish *Sturm und Drang* poet, Thomas Thorild, is still a pilgrimage destination for Swedish tourists. Thorild was once a professor and librarian at the University of Greifswald, which was occasionally considered the oldest Swedish university through the sporadic occupation of Western Pomerania. In contrast, the Renaissance-style moated castle of Mellenthin on Usedom pays tribute to the commander, Axel Oxenstierna, who led the Swedish troops after the death of Gustav Adolf II. Less heroic (as the Prussian view reflects the war between Sweden and Brandenburg) is the equestrian statue of the *Großen Kurfürsten* (Great Elector) before Charlottenburg Palace whose inauguration was celebrated in 1703 on the birthday of Prussian King Friedrich I: the four slaves at the foot of the Great Elector not only represent the four elements, but also the four defeated enemies of Prussia, amongst them the Swedes. Even a model of the statue aroused protest from the wife of the Swedish envoy in Berlin-Cölln at the time, as she recognised her oppressed people in one of the figures.

3. Prussia en route to becoming a Great Power

After Berlin became the capital the Kingdom of Prussia in 1701, a Swede launched his career in the Prussian court. In 1706, the Stralsund-born son of a Swedish fort engineer, Johan Fredrik Eosander, received orders to build Charlottenburg Palace and to lay out the surrounding town of Charlottenburg. He had previously worked on Swedish projects in Szczecin. In 1709, he became First Prussian Building Director, overseeing the construction of some 25 castles and palaces in this position. He supervised the construction of Oranienburg Castle, although his most significant work must be the extension of the Berlin City Palace, which unfortunately no longer stands. He thus enjoyed a position similar in prominence to that of Nicodemus Tessin the Younger who, together with his father, Nicodemus Tessin the Elder and the Frenchman, Simon de la Vallée, defined architecture in 17th century Stockholm. The Evangelical *Gnadenkirche* (Church of Salvation) was built in Silesian Hirschberg (Jelenia Góra), based on the model of Stockholm's St. Catherine's Church that was constructed by Vallée between 1709 and 1718. Tessin's architectural masterpiece is the new Stockholm Palace in which the royal family took up residence in 1754. Nicodemus Tessin the Elder immigrated to Stralsund from Sweden. Meanwhile, Eosander's fate demonstrated how difficult it was to bridge the gap between Prussia and Sweden. The backdrop for this was the policy of the "Soldier King", Friedrich Wilhelm I, who first attempted to take on an intermediary role between the powers of the Northern Wars, Saxony, Russia and Sweden. Following the Swedish occupation of Wolgast, he became an opponent of Sweden however and later participated in the besiegement of Stralsund. In 1713, Eosander came under suspicion of having peculated building plans, maps and other military plans and received a dishonourable discharge. He then joined Swedish forces, was captured by the Prussian army during the siege of Stralsund in 1715 and moved to Frankfurt/Main following his release.

1701 - 1814

Berlin became Royal Capital

A Swede was made the first Prussian construction director

Prussia finally became a Great Power during the rule of Friedrich II, who inherited a strictly organised country from his father whose administration was perhaps the best organised in the western world. Like his father, Friedrich Wilhelm I provided financial support for an array of towns that had not yet recovered from the effects of the Thirty Years' War and "populated" them with new inhabitants. He built up his favourite town of Potsdam from a village with 1,500 inhabitants to a settlement comprising a population of 12,000. New agricultural areas were created through the draining of marshland, with 50 new villages alone in the Oderbruch.

Prussia became a Great Power

The conquering of new provinces, led to the focus of his policy shifting eastwards. After Szczecin, the islands of Usedom and Wollin and all of former Swedish Western Pomerania to the east of the River Peene became part of Prussia in 1720. Silesia later became a Prussian province meaning that the entire navigable length of the River Oder belonged to the kingdom. Thus the aim of the trade policy became to make Szczecin into an efficient seaport and to strengthen trade relations between Berlin and the Baltic Sea town. The Finow Canal was rebuilt between 1744 and 1746 after having fallen into disrepair and obscurity during the Thirty Years' War. Meanwhile, the Plaue Canal was constructed between the Havel and Elbe rivers, thus greatly shortening the route between the Elbe and Oder and eliminating the arduous overland route.

Szczecin became a seaport

The total number of inhabitants in Berlin increased from 1,800 to approximately 172,000. Not only the palaces and parks that Friedrich had built in Potsdam and Rheinsberg testify to the prevailing enthusiasm for all things French in Prussia. Voltaire was one of many French artists and scholars invited to Sanssouci by Friedrich II with whom he enjoyed intellectual associations. Prussia came into conflict with Sweden once again during the Seven Years' War from 1756 until 1763, although they were able to defeat their opponent at the Battle of Fehrbellin in September 1758.

In contrast, Denmark-Norway was fully focussed on the German-speaking area at this time. The former German noble family of Oldenburg had been on the throne for over three centuries. Frederick II founded the German community in Copenhagen as early as 1575 and the German cell in Denmark was strengthened as a result of the influx of countless German Protestant refugees fleeing the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. Thus Frederick II already mainly only participated in German masses and had a German court chaplain. Theatre guest performances were staged in German. The former Dresden conductor and most significant musician before Bach, Heinrich Schütz, was also active at the court of Frederick II's son, Christian IV. The German influence was particularly powerful during the reign of Christian VI who was married to Princess Sophia Magdalene of Brandenburg-Kulmbach, grew up mainly speaking German and spoke German with his wife. He was a great patron of the arts and architecture, and his son, Frederik V, continued on his father's tradition in every respect. His closest colleague, teacher and court marshal, Adam Gottlob Moltke of Mecklenburg, was also German speaking.

1756
*Denmark and Norway
under German-speaking
influence*

The reign of King Frederik V was a golden age for Danish-German cultural relations. Countless German artists, scholars, labourers and tradesmen were summoned to Denmark. In 1749, for example, the Lauenburg-born printer, Ernst Henrich Berling, founded the *Berlingske Tidende*, the oldest paper in Denmark, which exists to this very day. In 1751, the famous German poet, F.G. Klopstock, came to Copenhagen and stayed almost 20 years. The former court chaplain, Johann Andreas Cramer from Quedlinburg, was also of great significance for Danish spirituality. Between the years 1700 and 1772, every tenth inhabitant of Copenhagen must have been an immigrant from the German states and Holstein, at least a quarter of all inhabitants have had German ancestors and almost the entire upper class in the Danish capital been of German birth.

Meanwhile, this also led to frustration amongst the Danish population who felt at a disadvantage. The arrival of Johann Friedrich Struensee, a doctor from Halle, brought the period of 'Germanism' in Denmark to an abrupt end. He was engaged as the travelling doctor of the mentally ill Danish King Christian VII in 1768. As the personal physician of the king in Copenhagen, he later became the lover of the young, insecure queen. In 1770, he used his position of favouritism to gain exclusive control through a palatial revolution and enforced his reformist ideas of enlightened absolutism according to the model by Friederich II of Prussia. Thus Copenhagen gained street lighting, torture was abolished and a foundling hospital was established for the care of unwanted children. Around 1,800 ordinances were linked to the name Struensee. However, the reforms met with bitter opposition and, in 1772, Struensee was toppled by the court nobility, convicted of high treason and executed. The majority of his reforms were then reversed and from this point forth, a strengthened antipathy grew for the German influence in Denmark.

The end of the period of
'Germanism'

The church of Kongsberg was built in Norway in the 18th century and is today the largest and best preserved Baroque church in the country. It was designed in 1730 by the German, J.A. Stuckenbrock, with the construction of organ, which was completed in 1760, carried out by his fellow countryman, Gottfried Heinrich Gloger. In Sweden, the situation was barely any different for German artists, scholars and tradesmen. At this time, the country had lost its status as a Great Power and found itself occupying a new small state role. However, Germany continued to place a key role for Sweden. Three quarters of foreign travel amongst Swedish scholars was to Germany, with immigration from Germany also leaving behind evident traces. The Swedish chemist, Karl Wilhelm Scheele, who went down in chemistry history as the discoverer of oxygen, was born in Stralsund. Even the forefathers of the Swedish “*Nationalskalde*” (‘courtly poet’) Carl Michael Bellman were immigrants from Northern Germany, and, in 1782, the young German musician, Joseph Martin Kraus, also came to Stockholm. A fellow Swedish student at the University of Göttingen convinced him to try his luck at the court of Gustav III and to apply there for a position in the court orchestra. (Incidentally, Gustav III was the son of Louisa Ulrika of Prussia and thus the nephew of Friedrich II.) At this time, many musicians from throughout Europe came to Sweden, hence it took three bitter years for the king to hear of Kraus. He accepted the order of the royal music academy to compose the opera, *Proserpin*, and the private performance before the king and the royal household in June 1781 led to his longed-for breakthrough. Nowadays Kraus is considered one of the most significant composers in Swedish music history. When Kraus’ six string quartets, Opus 1, appeared in print from the Berlin publisher Hummel in 1783, the works’ title as well as the dedication were in the Swedish language.

4. After the Napoleonic Wars

The Napoleonic Wars brought radical change to the entire European state system. In the north, the 1814 Treaty of Kiel led to Denmark losing a large portion of its estates, with the country having to cede the whole of Norway to Sweden. In return, Denmark received Swedish Pomerania with Rügen and Hiddensee, although these districts had to be exchanged for Lauenburg with Prussia just one year later. Up until 1905, the Scandinavian peninsula of Norway and Sweden constituted a political entity under the rule of a union of five Swedish kings.

1814
Treaty of Kiel

Sweden had given the town of Wismar to the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin in 1803 as a hundred-year pledge for a credit of 1.2 million *Reichsthaler*. In 1903, Sweden forwent redeeming the town, and thus it fell definitively into German hands. No war is to take place on the soils of the Margraviate of Brandenburg after 1814 until the country once more became the scene of military action in 1945. In the German-speaking realm, enthusiasm for the north was still widespread during the first half of the 19th century, finding expression in the myths and legends of Old Norse literature. One of the most distinctive representatives of this enthusiasm was Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué who was born in Brandenburg/Havel. In 1810, his dramatisation of the epic poem, *Das Nibelungenlied*², *Der Held des Nordens*, (The Hero of the North) was published and immediately enjoyed great success. De la Motte Fouqué was drawn “*nordwärts wie magnetisch Eisen*” (‘northwards like magnetic iron’) both spiritually and culturally, despite having never set foot on Scandinavian soils. The Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV and Richard Wagner were later inspired to pen their own renditions of the Norse literature.

For Denmark, the years after 1815 were a time of political stagnation; culturally and spiritually, they were boom years like never before. The same could be said for Berlin, which developed into a European metropolis during this period. The founding of the University of Berlin in 1810 played more than a minor role in this. Prominent artists such as the poets, Clemens Brentano and E.T.A. Hoffmann, as well as the state philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel, gathered in Prussian lands. Peter Joseph Lenné lent his services to Prussia in 1816, first remodelling the park complex in Potsdam, and Karl Friedrich Schinkel became director of the Berlin Building Commission in 1830. The Danish sculptor, Bertel Thorvaldsen, first came to Berlin in 1820 and visited the sculpture workshops of his colleague and friend, Christian Daniel Rauch; later, he was also a guest of the royal family at Schönhausen Palace and crafted the *Spes* grave stele for the Humboldt brothers in Berlin Tegel for example.

Thorvaldsen was also one of the biggest paragons of the German landscapist, Caspar David Friedrich, who studied at the Copenhagen Academy of Art from 1794 until 1798 before moving to Dresden and taking up a professorship at the Academy of Fine Arts there. Friedrich, who was born into a family of many children from the small university town of Greifswald, later referred to himself as a “half Swede”. He named his only son in veneration for the former Swedish king, Gustav Adolf. He came to Copenhagen as there was no academy in the north of Germany at the time, and repudiated the “tyrannical regulations” at the Copenhagen academy. He was far more drawn to open-air studies in the town’s surrounds.

² An epic poem in Middle High German recounting the story of the dragon slayer, Siegfried, at the court of the Burgundians.

At this time, Philipp Otto Runge from the maritime trade and shipbuilding town of Wolgast was also studying in Copenhagen; later the German painter and poet, Christian Morgenstern, also came here to study. Friedrich was labelled a “*Nordländer*” (Scandinavian) from early on and a “Nordic character” was ascribed to his landscapes, as they were devoid of people and characterised by seclusion. The artist owes one of his most famous motifs to Sweden: the cloister of Eldena near Greifswald, Friedrich’s artistic leitmotiv, was plundered by Swedish troops in 1637 and later fell into disrepair.

In 1825, the young Norwegian mathematician, Niels Henrik Abel, came to Berlin where he met the privy council, August Leopold Crelle, the engineer and later constructor of the first Prussian railway between Berlin and Potsdam. Abel published his first groundbreaking discourse in the latter’s magazine, the *Journal für die reine und angewandte Mathematik*, (Crelle’s Journal, The Journal for Pure and Applied Mathematics). Meanwhile, he stayed with the Danish gardener, Rudolph Rothe, in Potsdam where he worked in the grounds of Sanssouci. Rothe is later to be one of the pioneers of the Danish garden and park architecture and the first royal garden inspector.

From 1829 until 1841, the Swedish musician, Franz Berwald, resided in Berlin so as to fully devoted himself to composing after an appointment lasting several years as violinist in the Royal Swedish Court Orchestra in Stockholm. The founder of elementary analysis, the chemist Johan Jakob Berzelius, travelled to Germany on several occasions during this period and was even offered a professorship in Berlin. Other famous artists and scholars from Scandinavia who resided in Berlin for varying periods of time over the following years include the Danish fairytale poet, Hans Christian Andersen, his fellow countryman, the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, the Norwegian philosopher of nature, Henrik Steffens, and the Swedish singer, Jenny Lind, who enjoyed great success on the Berlin opera scene after 1844 as the “Swedish nightingale”. Andersen visited Berlin seven times between 1831 and 1860, mainly when en route for southern Europe, or on the return journey to Denmark. The visits to the Prussian capital held great significance for him: it was here that he first won recognition outside of Denmark, and he that he encountered many famous contemporaries, such as the Grimm Brothers, Alexander von Humboldt and Bettine von Arnim. Moreover, he also experienced the highest esteem of King Friedrich Wilhelm. Kierkegaard came to Berlin for the first time in 1841 and in the ensuing four months spent in the Prussian capital not only studied at the University of Berlin, but also developed his works, which were to make him the “Father of Existentialism” just two years later, *Either/Or*. Henrik Steffens came to Germany as early as 1798, wishing to live “where ghosts were in movement”. His friendships with Schelling, Goethe, Novalis and August Wilhelm von Schlegel led to him becoming a pioneer of German Romanticism in Scandinavia. In Berlin, he became Professor for Applied Sciences in 1832 and, two years later, rector at the university.

The enthusiasm for Nordic elements in Prussia reached a very special climax under the rule of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, the “Romanticist on the throne”. With the aid of the Norwegian artist, Johan Christian Dahl, who had held a professorship at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden since 1824 and was friends with Caspar David Friedrich, and Henrik Steffens, Friedrich Wilhelm IV purchased a small church of art historical significance in Norwegian Vang, which was threatened with demolition, as it was too small for its congregation.

The idea was to set up the church on the Pfaueninsel between Berlin and Potsdam, hence the young German architect, Franz Wilhelm Schiertz, was sent to Norway in spring 1841 so as to take thorough measurements of the church and document all details, thereupon, all parts of the little church, which could still be used, were packed into cases and brought on an



adventurous journey via Bergen, Świnoujście and Szczecin to Berlin. In the meantime, Friedrich Wilhelm IV learned that the inhabitants of the small village of Brückenberg (Karpacz Górny) on the northern face of Snow Mountain did not have their own house of worship thereupon he readily presented the building to his Silesian subjects. The church was taken up the Oder on rafts and then transported by horse and wagon. Its ceremonial inauguration by the king was held on 28th July

The church Vang

1844. Today, it is with its 855 m N.N. not only the highest church in Silesia, but also the only original Norwegian stave church to be found outside of Norway.

It was not yet possible to use the railway for the transportation of the Vang church as, following the construction of the track in the direction of Potsdam and Dessau, Berlin only gained its third and fourth rail links to Angermünde and Frankfurt/Oder in 1842.

Railroad connection at 1843



The north-south track was extended as far as Szczecin in 1843, thus reaching the most important Baltic Sea port of the time; from 1846, the track eastwards was as far as Silesian Wrocław. In the same year, the Hamburg railway was built, whereby Berlin definitively became the most important northern traffic junction in the existing railway network. The influence of the railway on the development of industry and trade as well as on the development of Berlin itself shouldn't be underestimated. The Danish poet, Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger, later wrote with fascination in his memoirs of a trip aboard the Szczecin railway: "We arrived in Szczecin at 12 o' clock to the most beautiful weather on the

morning after our departure from Copenhagen. Here we saw the miracle, as this is the only possible description for one's first voyage by railway. I felt like Aladdin when he was conveyed through the air by the genie, except it was more comfortable and went up and down such a great deal."

At the time, relations between Prussia and Norway were particularly amicable, with the latter clearly being the Scandinavian country enjoying the most intimate relations with Germany up until 1914. Thus not only the Norwegian runner, Mensen Ernst, was in the service of Prince Hermann Pückler-Muskau, but also the Norwegian composer Rikard Nordraak gained inspiration for the melody of the Norwegian national anthem whilst in Berlin. In 1840, Friedrich August Reissiger from Belzig in the Margraviate of Brandenburg became choirmaster in Oslo. Many of the songs composed by Reissiger in Norway already featured in the national song repertoire of his new homeland during his lifetime. In 1853, the construction of the first Norwegian university was completed in Oslo according to designs by designer Karl Friedrich Schinkel. The Norwegians were increasingly fetching architects from Germany to the country. Oslo, which counted a mere 9,000 inhabitants in around 1800, grew rapidly and, in 1855, already comprised some 40,000. The university, public administration, Swedish-Norwegian royal household and the parliament not only required representative buildings, but also housing. Thus Oslo developed into a substantial medium-sized town according to a German model and today remains “the best preserved German town in Europe” following the tremendous devastation of the Second World War.

Meanwhile, relations to the Germans worsened in Denmark. Following the distressing loss of Norway in 1814, German-speaking inhabitants of Holstein and Southern Schleswig comprised 40 percent of the kingdom’s population as oppose to 25 percent in the past. Their influence gradually began to be seen as a cultural threat to the Danish nation. Around 1840, the word “German” was considered a taboo in Copenhagen. The situation worsened following the war with the German Confederation (1848-1850) and with the beginning of the Second German-Danish War in 1863, the situation deteriorated still further. The kingdom suffered the biggest defeat in its history when Austro-Prussian troops stormed the Dybbøl Redoubts and the Danes were forced to abandon the Dannevirke. It lost a third of its territories, which were already greatly reduced since 1814, and the population slumped from 2.5 million to 1.7 million. Even Hans Christian Andersen noted in his diary that he, as a Dane, had to break “altogether” from the Germans.

On the opposition’s side, things didn’t look any rosier. Even the Margravian poet, Theodor Fontane, who spent the years from 1826 to 1832 in Świnoujście, did not exactly consider the Danes with sympathy. As a staunch Prussian, he certified the Danish people as lazy and apathetic following a trip to Copenhagen and during the theatre of war of 1864. “Generally, there is everywhere a certain sense of *decline*”, wrote Fontane. “You can see that all our homes, as unhappy as they are, are progressing and that 50, 100 or 150 years ago they were worse. Life is missing here, nowhere is there a thriving town; - the fanatic Danes wallow in the *past*, ‘spoil Denmark’ in all possible ways, [...] one looks back and marvels at the past, but doesn’t think to lay building blocks for the future.” Not only in Fontane’s eyes did the future belong to the Prussians and no longer the Danes.

In the meantime, from 1866 onwards, Berlin set about building a representative residential area between Potsdamer Platz, the Reichstag and the present-day main train station in which the bankers, manufacturers, large landowners, military and nouveau riche immediately settled. This district was named after the Danish island of Als that was passed to Prussia following its capture in 1864 when the Danes were defeated in battle. In the course of Hitler's Great Power plans to make Berlin into the "*Welthauptstadt Germania*" ('World Capital Germania'), extensive areas of the Alsen district was demolished in 1938. The bombing raids during the Second World War also played their part, meaning that hardly any of the original buildings still stand today.



Meanwhile, a monument in another part of Berlin commemorates the 19th century war between Prussia and Denmark: the Isted Lion in Wannsee. The Berlin monument is actually only a replica – the original that was taken to Berlin via Schwerin in 1868 as war spoils was "returned" to the Danish king in 1945 as a personal gift from the United States Army. Since this time, the original Isted Lion has stood in the gardens of the Copenhagen Royal Danish Arsenal Museum (*Søren Kierkegaards Plads*).

The Isted Lion in Wannsee

5. The German Empire

On 18th January 1871, the Prussian King Wilhelm I was proclaimed German emperor in the Hall of Mirrors in the Château de Versailles, an event that followed the decisive victory of Prussia over France in the Battle of Sedan.

1871
King Wilhelm I

This battle had been led by Field Marshal Helmuth Graf von Moltke who was born in Parchim in Mecklenburg and had already gone down in the annals as the victor at Königgrätz. Up until the outbreak of the First World War, his victory over France was celebrated throughout the German Empire as a national holiday, as without von Moltke's belligerence, Bismarck would hardly have been able to unite Germany under the leadership of the Prussian state. Like many other German military men before him, the later General Field Marshall also studied at the Danish military academy in Copenhagen. He left the Danish army as early as 1822 subsequently becoming a lieutenant in the Kingdom of Prussia. He was actually buried close to his Silesian Kreisau Estate that he bought from an endowment and that served as a country home as well as retirement residence from 1867 onwards. Members of the German resistance movement against the National Socialist dictatorship gathered here during the Second World War and in 1989, the former German Federal Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the first freely elected Polish president, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, met here for a reconciliation mass.

Graf von Moltke



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The estate is now an international youth meeting point and is used by the Krzyzowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe.

The naming of Berlin as the German imperial capital in 1871 led to an enormous population increase. In 1816, the town had 191,500 inhabitants; at the turn of the 20th century, this figure had swollen to two million. Berlin developed economically in leaps and bounds. From 1871, the city gained a modern canalisation system, which was developed according to plans by the Szczecin town planner, James Hobrecht, and in which countless cities in Europe and Asia soon showed interest. In 1881, a local telephone network was set up in Berlin and the first regular electric trams came into service. In 1883, Emil Rathenau founded the "Deutsche Edison-Gesellschaft", later known as the AEG and the brothers, Max and Emil Skladanowsky, shot the first film at the Wintergarten Variété Berlin in 1895. In 1902 came the electric elevated and underground railways by Siemens and in 1907, the KaDeWe opened its doors in Charlottenburg, which remains independent to this very day. At the beginning of the 20th century, Berlin lay before the Ruhr region as the largest economic centre of the German Empire, with the city also experiencing a vast cultural and scientific revival.

1871 – 1907
Berlin is developing itself

Evidence of this is the fact that between 1901 and 1918, the Nobel Prize awarded in Stockholm went to Berlin all 7 times. That so many Nobel Prizes went to Germans at the beginning of the 20th century (almost a third of the award winners were German) not only testifies to the leading position of German culture and science, but also to the pro-German disposition of the Swedish Nobel Prize committee. German science and culture became the guiding principle for the whole of Scandinavia after 1871, although the German Empire under the leadership of Bismarck was regarded with a certain level of mistrust. The German contemporaries were a particularly "great inspiration" for the Scandinavian labour movement and the Scandinavian social democrats.

Thus the later Swedish Premier and 1921 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, Hjalmar Branting, wrote as late as 1910: “My socialist education is almost entirely a German one”.

The German imperial capital of Berlin rapidly gained an immense attractiveness and fascination for foreign visitors. Thus in the 1870's, not only the Norwegian artists Christian Krohg and Signe Scheel worked in Berlin, but also their fellow countryman Hans Gude who was named a professor at the Prussian Academy of Art and thus holder of one of the most honourable positions that an artist in Europe of the time could actually attain. Meanwhile, many Scandinavian artists soon moved from the nouveau riche Berlin to sophisticated Paris and it was now mainly *littérateurs* who came to Berlin. One of the first world-class literary pioneers was the Dane, Georg Brandes, who enjoyed three extended stays in Berlin between 1868 and 1883. In the mid-1870's, he sought intellectual asylum here, as the reactions to his works, *Main Currents in the Literature of the 19th Century*, were overly severe in Denmark. Thomas Mann later spoke of this works as the “Bible of young intellectuals in Europe”. Shortly after Brandes, his fellow countryman, Herman Bang came to the “liveliest city in Europe” so as to devote himself to the Scandinavian theatre art of Henrik Ibsen and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. Bang lived in Berlin once again between 1907 and 1909, also to escape the suffocating relations in his homeland. Bang mainly gained fame during his lifetime for his sensitive novels and short stories, and today is one of the most important classical writers in Danish literature alongside Hans Christian Andersen. His works had an immense influence on Thomas Mann amongst others. Thomas Mann said on a visit to Copenhagen in 1924 that he had read everything by Bang and learned a great deal.

*Berlin:
Metropolis of culture for
many Scandinavians*

The enthusiasm for Berlin amongst Scandinavian artists reached a climax under the rule of Emperor Wilhelm II, who was dubbed the “Travel Emperor” in German comics, as between 1889 and 1914, he spent several weeks of



each summer in Scandinavia aboard his yacht, Hohenzollern, supposedly in Norwegian waters. From 1892, the Danish artist, Jens Birkholm, spend a whole ten years in Berlin. During this period, he came down with tuberculosis however and, following a long stay in a sanatorium in Belzig, headed homewards once more in 1902. In 1892, a Scandinavian artists' bohemia was established in the area around the bar “*Zum schwarzen Ferkel*” (‘The Black Piglet’) in Berlin's Neuen Wilhelmstraße, which was primarily led by the Swedish writer and dramatist, August Strindberg, and the Norwegian artist, Edvard Munch. The Norwegian sculptor, Gustav Vigeland, his fellow countryman, the dramatist Gunnar Heiberg, the Danish

1889
*Emperor Wilhelm II –
the “Travel Emperor”*

writer, Holger Drachmann, and the Norwegian musician and writer, Dagny Juel as well as her husband, the Polish writer Stanisław Przybyszewski in addition to countless others also moved in this circle. They had a decisive influence on artistic and social opinion in the previously conservative German imperial capital, bringing about significant change. In 1898 followed the controversy over Edvard Munch's “scandalous exhibition”, the *Berlin Secession* with Max Liebermann and Walter Leistikow.

*Poets
And
artists*

Strindberg came to Berlin in autumn 1892 after several law suits for blasphemy and immorality had made life difficult for him in Sweden. For Strindberg, the departure from his homeland was an escape from misery. Two years prior to this, the Swede, Ola Hansson, had already come to the German Empire, and settled “beyond the metropolis” in Friedrichshagen. At this time, the Berlin suburb was a “Prussian Acadia”, a kind of Mecca for poets and artists from home and abroad, amongst them also Gerhart Hauptmann, Frank Wedekind, Swiss Eduard Rod and Norwegian Arne Garborg. Similar to most of these artists, Garborg stood in opposition to the ruling imperial social order in the German Empire, and when the social democrat, August Bebel, acted against the capitalism and militarism in Germany and for the emancipation of women, his heart was filled with joy. Garborg spent most of his life away from Norway in Germany where he found recognition for his artwork and enjoyed German beer and German comforts, with the language of his hosts also posing him no great problems.

One reason for this was of course the prevalent position of the German language at Scandinavian schools. In Norway, for example, German was named the most important modern foreign language in middle schools from 1869; in 1896, the language was further upgraded to become the most important modern foreign language at Norwegian secondary schools. In Sweden, the traditionally strong position of German in school lessons, which had been the first foreign language at Swedish secondary schools since 1859, had already been strengthened through the education decree of 1878. In higher education institutes, if not in Swedish, the course literature was primarily printed in German. As a consequence, Swedish academics tended to travel to Germany; England played a comparatively insignificant role.

*Norway and the
German language*



Most prominent amongst the large, lively circle of Scandinavian exiles to Berlin in the 1890's was the Norwegian artist and avant-gardist, Edvard Munch. On the recommendation of his fellow countryman, Adelsteen Normann, he was invited to Berlin to exhibit his pictures. Munch's exhibition in autumn 1892 was immediately considered a “scandal exhibition” however, as this brought about his international breakthrough in art history. Tumultuous scenes played out, with words such as “disgrace” and “brutal smearings” being spoken, from the instant the exhibition opened. In the German press, it was later possible to read of an

*Edvard Munch,
1863 - 1944*

obviously mentally ill Norwegian artist who had been invited to hold an exhibition in the city without his paintings having first been appraised.

The exhibition was closed after just two weeks, but Munch was happy: “That is actually the best things that could happen; I could hardly receive any better advertising”, he wrote. And he was right – soon he was “the most famous man in the German Empire” and his influence on 20th century art is not to be underestimated. He developed his own style and motifs in the international milieu in which he moved in Berlin. It is here that he created world-famous pieces such as *The Scream*, *Vampire* and *Madonna*, and that he found wealthy friends as well as his most important patron.



Munch himself lived in Berlin several times intermittently between the years 1892 and 1916; his paintings were exhibited in 56 exhibitions in Germany up until 1927 when the National Socialists removed all of his paintings from public collections proclaiming it “degenerate art”.

Alongside Berlin, Warnemünde was also of vast significance in Munch’ life. When the Danish state railway, DSB, built the route between Gedser and Warnemünde in collaboration with the Mecklenburg railway authorities, the Baltic Sea resort close to Rostock enjoyed a powerful boom. Restless wandering Munch repeatedly sought refuge here from the spring of 1907, a fact commemorated by the Munch-Haus Warnemünde that was opened in 1998 by a development association formed four years previously. The Danish Express also undertook its maiden journey in 1907, the year in which Munch first came to Warnemünde. It linked the German and Danish capitals and was one of the oldest railway links between Copenhagen and a Continental metropolis. Providing a direct train link between Copenhagen and Berlin up until 1995, it was possible to easily reach each of the capitals by night train.

*Railroad traffic
at 1907*

In the final quarter of the 19th century, the new Szczecin railway station in Berlin became the most popular “holiday station” in the city. Built between

*Szczecin railway station
in Berlin*



1874 and 1876, the railway led from here to the Baltic Sea, the so-called “Bathtub of Berlin”. Long-distance transport to the north mushroomed primarily in July when the long holidays dawned. Trains travelled via Eberswalde and Angermünde to Szczecin, via Pasewalk and Greifswald to

Stralsund on Rügen, and via Oranienburg and Neustrelitz to Rostock and Warnemünde.

The Berlin daily papers were continually sending their reporters off to capture the special atmosphere and hectic excitement at the station, which didn’t exactly lie in a reputable area. In 1939, the international Swedish train, D13, travelled the 294 km from Berlin to the ferry terminal of Sassnitz in a time of 4 hours 26 minutes.

The famous “Theatre Train” also ran from Szczecin railway station during the inter-war period, supposedly to allow the inhabitants of Szczecin to attend theatre and opera performances in the capital. During the summer months, the line was also extended from Berlin via Szczecin as far as Swinemünde as the so-called “Badezug” (‘bathing train’).

At the time of Strindberg and Munch, Scandinavian literature was known of in the German Empire. It was held in high esteem as it was generally considered more innovative than the German literature. Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Henrik Ibsen, even August Strindberg and Jens Peter Jacobsen count amongst the most enthralling names in the literary world. It was even occasionally the case that German-speaking authors adopted a Nordic-sounding pseudonym so as to win attention as a modern author.

*Scandinavian literature in
Berlin*

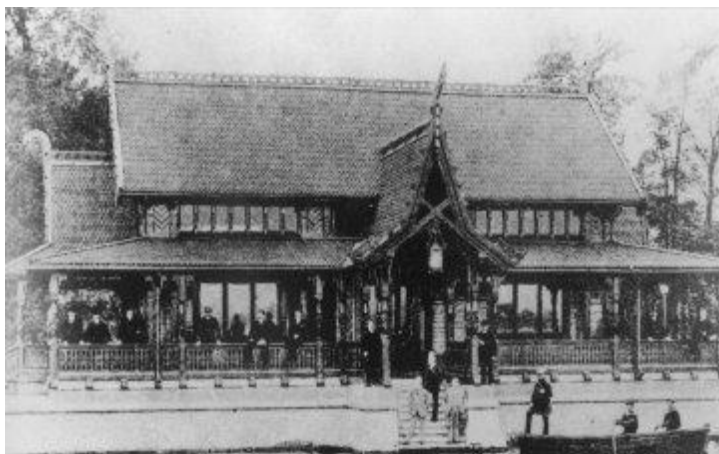
For Scandinavian writers of the time, Berlin and the German language were synonymous with a ticket to the world market. Moreover, up until the outbreak of the First World War, the power of fascination that the German imperial capital exerted on Scandinavian literature hardly abated. At the beginning of the 20th century, such famous authors as the Swede, Vilhelm Ekelund, and the Norwegian, Kristofer Uppdal, enjoyed extended stays in Berlin, as did the artist, Gösta Adrian-Nilsson, and film directors such as Stellan Rye, Asta Nielsen and Aud Egede-Nissen. Meanwhile, the most famous Scandinavia enthusiast of the time, Emperor Wilhelm II returned every year to Scandinavia, with many of his subjects following suit. One of the most famous amongst these was the Bydgoszcz-born artist Walter Leistikow who was critical of the emperor. In the mid-1880's he was a student of the Norwegian, Hans Gude, in Berlin and, in 1893, came across the works of van Gogh for the first time in Danish Copenhagen. The works of this Dutch artist were first shown in Germany at the exhibition of the *Berlin Secession* in 1901, and this probably on the initiative of Leistikow. Also noteworthy is the artist, publisher and illustrator, Hugo Höppener, who is better known under the pseudonym of Fidus. This adherent to naturism, vegetarianism and theosophical theories visited Scandinavia several times from 1894. From the year 1908 onwards, he resided in a workshop in Woltersdorf, which was meant to be developed into a research institute and the "*Museum der deutschen Lebensreform*" ('Museum for the German Reform') after 1999, although this has not happened to the present day.

Wilhelm II was particularly drawn to the natural beauty of Western and Central Norway; he visited many cities such as Bergen, Molde and Trondheim and donated large sums of money for the Medieval cathedral of the old Norwegian royal city on several occasions, also providing humanitarian aid to the seaport of Ålesund, which burned down in 1904. After a whole 850 of the houses in Ålesund burned to the ground within 16 hours, Wilhelm II redirected four ships, which were actually meant to be travelling to German colonies in Africa, with relief supplies and building materials to Norway. A monument in Ålesund's town park today still commemorates the solidarity of the people of Ålesund with the German emperor.

Wilhelm II enthusiastic for the natural beauty of Western and Central Norway

However, Wilhelm II expressed his enthusiasm for Scandinavia even before this time. In 1890 he authorised the building of a naval base in a Norwegian dragon style beside Potsdam's Jungfernsee. The collection of buildings, *Kongsnaes*, was constructed by the Norwegian architect Holm Hansen Munthe between 1892 and 1896. Nowadays little remains of the Norwegian naval base however, as the central reception hall and the boat house burned down in 1945 following Russian bombardments and only the outbuildings now stand. During the Cold War, the complex lay within the border area

between the GDR and West Berlin and was not accessible from either the east or the west.



Since 1989, the remaining parts of the *Kongsnaes* have lain under monument protection and are today a part of Potsdam's unique cultural scenery, which is protected by the UNESCO.

Since 1996, a relief organisation has even been campaigning for the reconstruction of the complex and the Viking ship, *Kari*, which has been built according to the original in Norway, has been sailing the Jungfernsee between the former naval base and the Church of the Redeemer, Sacrow, for two years now.

Nowadays may buildings still exist that testify to the "enthusiasm for the north" that infected so many Germans, amongst them Emperor Wilhelm II. In the community of Hahnenklee in the Harz, a stave church was built according to Norwegian designs between the years 1907 and 1908; in 1909 the factory owner, Eugen Füllner, had a park laid in Silesian Bad Warmbrunn (now Cieplice) with a Norwegian pavilion built according to Norwegian wood-frame construction. This pavilion today serves as the natural history museum for the town of Jelenia Góra (formerly Hirschberg). When the Stahnsdorf Southwestern Cemetery to the south of Berlin gained its own Swedish plot in which 80 Swedish nationals who had come to Berlin during its founding years were buried. A Norwegian-style wooden church was also built here, which was completed by the architect, Gustav Werner, in the year 1911. Several years later, the building for the later Maxim Gorki memorial in Bad Saarow is also thought to have been fetched from Scandinavia. The building, which imitates the Scandinavian method of log house building, is said to be composed of building elements prefabricated in Norway. Berlin itself gained countless new streets with Scandinavian names over the course of the city expansion after 1906. In Prenzlauer Berg, there was even a *Nordisches Viertel* ('Nordic District'). Less well known is the fact that even Berlin's elevated railway on Schönhauser Allee and such prominent underground stations as Wittenbergplatz, Krumme Lanke and Klosterstraße have a Scandinavian history. Their architect was the Swede, Alfred Grenander, who, in his day, was a type of "all-round designer" for the BVG (*Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe*, Berlin Transportation Company). Grenander set an example in Berlin with his countless industrial buildings and transport constructions, many of which still stand today; he also designed the Loewe machine factory in Moabit, the *Metropol* theatre and the transformer works on Hermannstraße in Neukölln. With these and many other buildings, Grenander has succeeded in leaving an impression on Berlin's cityscape lasting more to this very day than even Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Villa Herpich in Neu-Babelsberg in which Stalin resided during the Potsdam War Conference in 1945 was also by Grenander.

6. The Interwar Period

Denmark, Norway and Sweden proclaimed a collective statement of neutrality at the end of 1914. As a consequence, the First World War brought about an initial caesura in German-Scandinavian relations. The parties leading the war imposed trade blockades, which threatened the provision of the Scandinavian countries with raw materials and foodstuffs, leading to the countries helping each other out as much as possible through the expanding of inter-Scandinavian trade. This increased during the war years from around 12 percent to 30 percent of all foreign trade. Denmark mainly delivered butter, eggs and fish, Sweden metals, wood and paper, and Norway fish and fertilizer as well as chemicals. The co-operation was to have a fundamental significance for the Scandinavian identity in the following decades. Moreover, the First World War also led to Scandinavia strengthening ties with Great Britain. The war also had a direct impact on the Scandinavians residing in Berlin however. Asta Nielsen, for example, who settled here in spring 1911 received permission to leave Germany during the war, as her daughter lay ill in Copenhagen, but only obtained a re-entry permit at the end of the war. In the years 1914 to 1918, the German film industry lay idle, whereby American films were soon triumphant.

1914: skandinavian statement of neutrality

When Asta Nielsen was summoned to Berlin, the German film industry was still in its infancy. The company Bioscop built its first film studio in Babelsberg that same year and it was here that the world-famous Ufa-Gelände soon developed. The first big art film created here in 1913 was *The Student of Prague* on which the Dane, Stellan Rye, also worked. Following the film's success, Rye shot a further twelve films; the outbreak of war brought great change to his life however. He enlisted as a simple soldier in the German army, was wounded in the battle of Ypres and became a prisoner of war. He later died in a French field hospital in 1914. Asta Nielsen was able to resume her pre-1914 success following the First World War. In 1919, she acted alongside a young Ernst Lubitsch in the film *Rausch*, which was based on a play by August Strindberg. The film was not only a great success but also the first German film sold in America after the war. In the following years, countless films featuring Asta Nielsen who soon became known simply as "*die Asta*" ('the Asta') were made and she was worshipped in a similar style to Marlene Dietrich and Marilyn Monroe were a few years later. She was the first film diva, but her career in Germany came to an abrupt end at the beginning of Nazi rule. As a consequential opponent to the fascist regime, she returned to Denmark, despite having been offered the chance to establish her own film company by Goebbels. In Denmark, she was not given a very rapturous welcome, as she had done what many other Danish celebrities before her such as Hans Christian Andersen, Bertel Thorvaldsen, Georg Brandes and Herman Bang had: fled her homeland that she found oppressive and restrictive. This was something that could not be forgiven so easily. Asta Nielsen spent the years up until 1936 at her home in Vitte on Hiddensee that had been her holiday home since the mid-twenties. Her nearest neighbour here was the dramatist, Gerhart Hauptmann; she associated here with famous artists such as the poet, Joachim Ringelnatz, and the actor, Heinrich George.

Movie industry

Berlin in the twenties stronghold of the artists and musicians from Scandinavia :

Following the collapse of the empire beneath the military pressure of its opponents and resistance of its own people who were mainly workers and soldiers, Berlin became the capital of a democratic Germany for the very first time. As a consequence, the city experienced a tremendously lively time during the "Golden Twenties". Berlin was considered the fastest city in the world and embodied growth, open mindedness and cultural charisma. By 1920, it had grown immensely in size; around 3.8 million people now resided in "Greater Berlin".

However, the social and political currents of the time collided and brought about stormy tensions. In 1920, this already led to the Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch. Mutinying officers under the command of General von Lüttwitz marched with their troops to Berlin to topple the government upon which the latter fled to Dresden, and Wolfgang Kapp was then appointed Chancellor of the Reich by his troops. The result was a general strike that brought public life to a standstill; the putsch failed and Wolfgang Kapp fled to Sweden. Hermann Göring, who had been celebrated as a daredevil aerobat the previous year at the Scandinavian air show in Copenhagen, came to Sweden in 1920 where he met his later wife, Dame Carin von Kantzow. It is during his stay at Rockelstad Castle that Göring is first thought to have seen the swastika sign, which was affixed to a cast iron fireguard here as an ancient mystical symbol.

In the early twenties, it wasn't only film directors who came to Berlin from Scandinavia such as Carl Theodor Dreyer and Mauritz Stiller, but also the actors Gösta Ekman and Greta Garbo. Norwegian Aud Egede-Nissen founded her film company; meanwhile, the record company of Swedish Carl Lindström attained a leading position in Germany. The composer Harald Sæverud came from Norway and rejoiced: "I got into the Berlin *Staatliche Hochschule für Musik* (without a single certificate). It is the best in the world." For the Swedish writer, Hjalmar Bergman, the city of Berlin was, from the mid-twenties onwards, a refuge from an unhappy marriage and the setting for his long "suicide" through alcohol and drug abuse. Meanwhile, the Dane, Max Hansen, celebrated phenomenal success in the city as a cabarettist, pop singer and operetta tenor. In Berlin, it also came to decisive encounters in the field of science between Scandinavians and Germans.

In 1920, the Danish nuclear physicist, Niels Bohr, met Albert Einstein here through Max Planck. Einstein who was a professor at the university of Berlin from 1914 until 1933 and director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics received the Nobel Prize in the year 1921; Bohr in 1922. The pair met on several occasions in Copenhagen in the following years and although they became intellectual opponents, this did not stop their mutual esteem and liking for one another.

Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein

The year 1933 and the Hitler's seizure of power brought no immediate caesura to German-Scandinavian relations, despite the fact that the first refugees arrived in the north that very same year. In vast areas of Scandinavia, one was blinded in the most varied of places by Hitler's achievements; refugees' accounts of the true situation in Third Reich were not always believed. "Officially Norway was not so obliging to refugees as was later alleged", remarked Willy Brandt on one occasion. He was the most famous German-speaking exile to make his second home in Norway from 1933 onwards, at least temporarily. Alongside Brandt the artists Rolf Nesch and Kurt Schwitters and the sexologist, Wilhelm Reich, also came here. Norway was of comparatively minor importance for German-speaking emigration after 1933 however; no more than 2,000 refugees sought and found asylum here. This was probably due to the little knowledge that was then had by most in Germany about the land of fjords and midnight suns. Hardly a soul consciously opted for Norway as their emigration destination and only a few refugees settled here for a longer period of time. The sparsely-populated country offered but few of the job opportunities that most people had hoped for.

*1933
Emigration of Germans
to Scandinavia*

Denmark, which was stricken by the economic crises of the twenties and thirties, also mainly played the role of transit country, being a direct neighbour to the German Empire. The Danish refugee policy that could be described as liberal up until as late as 1933 was gradually harshened up until the year 1939. As a result, only around 2,200 political and racial refugees were residing in Denmark at the time of the German occupation. The emigrants who had assimilated into the country despite this, often had to live in dismal conditions in social and emotional isolation. The little support received by the emigrants to Denmark was less due to the unwillingness of the people, than the ignorance of what was actually going on the south of the border. Moreover, similar to in Norway during the Thirty Years' War, it was hardly possible to find work in Denmark if one wasn't a sought-after specialist. Famous examples of German emigrants to Denmark are the writers Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin and Hans Henny Jahn. The first Chancellor of the Weimar Republic, Philipp Scheidemann, also lived in Danish exile from 1933 until his death in 1939.

Around 5,500 refugees came to Sweden, which was able to retain neutrality after the outbreak of the Second World War, amongst them Willy Brandt, Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Tucholsky, the later Nobel Prize winner, Nelly Sachs, and Peter Weiss of Potsdam-Babelsberg. The daughter of Carl von Ossietzky also found a new residence in Sweden in the mid-thirties. Not to be forgotten alongside these renowned names however are all the anonymous men, women and children who secured their survival in Norway and Denmark after 1933 and who earned their daily bread through honest labour. All too often they were prevented from doing so by the bureaucratic correctness of the Swedish refugee policy. In 1933, only few in Sweden recognised that Germany had become a "country of judges and executors" and a black mark also remains on this country to this very day for the role it played in the introduction of the life-threatening J stamp distinguishing the "Jews" from the "Arians", which was actually a result of the Swedish refugee policy of the time of Hitler's atrocities.

For Scandinavians, little changed in Berlin after 1933. Whilst Göring conveyed the mortal remains of his prematurely deceased Swedish wife Carin to Germany in 1933 and had a vast mausoleum erected in her memory in the Schorfheide, and the first National Socialist concentration camp was being set up in Oranienburg in March 1933, countless students from the north continued to study in Berlin and to follow their dreams of a great career. At the end of the thirties, for example, the city's Norwegian Club comprised some 250 members, all of whom resided permanently in Germany, amongst them students at the Technical University, artists and members of almost all civil professions. That 80 works by Edvard Munch were removed from a public collection as "degenerate art" made no difference to them. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Carl von Ossietzky by the Norwegian Nobel Committee in December 1936 also had little effect on the "ordinary mortals". The presentation of the prize was seen by the National Socialist leadership as "offensive defiance to Germany" and, in a decree, Hitler forbade Germans from ever accepting the Nobel Prize. When the Norwegian Gerd Høst came to Berlin in 1937 for dubbing work and received an engagement at the *Deutsches Theater* a short time later, no one amongst his circle of friends or family at any rate was opposed to her trying her luck in the Third Reich.

1933
Scandinavians in Berlin

Other famous Scandinavians who came to Berlin after 1933 for the sake of their careers were the actresses Kirsten Heiberg, Ingrid Bergmann and Kristina Söderbaum. The most prominent in the Third Reich was the Swedish actress and singer, Zarah Leander, who was discovered by Max Reinhardt as early as 1931, but whose first film contract was actually signed with the Ufa in 1936. Up until 1942, she shot ten films in Babelsberg – with sweeping success. Her films are today reviled as “pertinacious films”, but her songs have outlived the times and developed into evergreens that are re-interpreted by artists such as Udo Lindenberg, Nina Hagen, Milva, Tim Fischer and Romy Haag again and again. Zarah Leander was bound to the Ufa until 1943, after which, she felt ready to continue her career in her homeland of Sweden. She did not succeed in doing so however, as an anti-German attitude had become increasingly widespread. Due to the fact that she had filmed for the Nazis, she was considered a traitor by her fellow countrymen.

In Berlin, the Scandinavians’ attitude changed with the invasion of Denmark and Norway by German troops after 9th April 1940. Many Danes and Norwegians then travelled home to their families and friends and particularly the acts of terror conducted in the name of Germany in the occupied countries led to German-Scandinavian relations reached their absolute nadir. Both here and over there, the resistance movements conducted acts of sabotage against the enemy occupiers, operated illegal radio stations and an underground newspaper. The most successful independent action of the Scandinavian resistance fighters must have been the blowing up of the heavy water plant in Norwegian Rjukan, as well as the collective rescue of the Danish Jews to Sweden via the Øresund.

According to the Scandinavian perception, there was hardly such as thing as a “good German” in 1945. However, on the insistence of the vice president of the Swedish Red Cross, Folke Bernadotte, not only the so-called “white buses” were mobilised at the end of the war to transport the prisoners freed from concentration camps such as Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen to Scandinavia. Shortly after this, the north launched wide-scale humanitarian operations and aid campaigns for Germany, which lay in ruins, and especially for Berlin in the form of the “*Schwedenspeisung*” (‘Swedish meals’) comprising pea soup and chocolate pudding, and later with the “*Kinderverschickung*” (‘sending of the children’) to the Nordic countries. At the end of the war, a five digit number of German refugees from the Baltic countries, Eastern Prussia and Pomerania resided in Copenhagen alone, many of whom only left the country many years later.

9.4.1940
*Invasion of the German
troops into Denmark and
Norway*

1945
*First aid from
Scandinavia*

7. The Aftermath of War

The atrocity of Hitler's Germany between 1933 and 1945 not only cost millions of people their lives and immense material damages, but also left behind deep emotional scars. It will probably never be possible to return to the good German-Scandinavian relations that were destroyed by the Third Reich, although there was contact between Scandinavia and German in the fields of culture and politics in the early post-war period. The writers Stig Dagerman and Jens Bjørneboe travelled to Germany soon after the war for example; Danish Ruth Berlau, colleague and lover of Bertolt Brecht, lived in Berlin from the late forties until her death in 1974, the Danish journalist Henrik Bonde-Hendriksen played a key role in the first major political scandal to rock the young German Federal Republic. In 1954, the head of the Federal Intelligence Service, Otto John, surfaced in East Berlin under mysterious circumstances. In Scandinavia itself however, the mistrust ran deep. The leading role models and the most powerful source of cultural inspiration now came from the Anglo-American countries. As late as 1954, a visit by Konrad Adenauer to Norway was not desired. Even three years later when Adenauer travelled to Sweden on one single occasion, the marriage of his son to a Swedish woman, the Swedes did not see it as a cause to make contact with him. The GDR was only officially acknowledged by the Danes, Norwegians and Swedes in the early seventies when Germany signed treaties with Poland and the USSR. The leadership of the GDR could hardly expect any sympathy of their existence in the first few years and decades from either here or there, despite the slogan propagated by the SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, Socialist Unity Party of Germany) referring to the Baltic Sea as a "Sea of Peace". The GDR even held a "Baltic Sea Week" each year from 1958 onwards so as to win the sympathy of the Scandinavian countries. There were also contacts however, but even Olof Palme still refused to visit Erich Honecker in East Berlin, instead favouring a meet on old Swedish soil in Stralsund.

1945
*between suspiciousness
and dialog*

The psychological normalisation of German-Scandinavian relations first began at the end of the sixties and is closely linked to the person of Willy Brandt and his term in office as German foreign minister after 1966 and as Federal Chancellor from 1969. Particularly confidence-building with the Scandinavians was not only Brandt's new *Ostpolitik*, which led to him being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971, but also the personal past of the German Federal Chancellor. Brandt spent most of his years in exile after 1933 in Norway, fleeing to Sweden in 1940 due to the denaturalisation of the National Socialists in 1938 and was even awarded Norwegian citizenship, which he retained up until 1948. In 1955, Brandt became President of the Berlin House of Representatives and, in 1957, the ruling mayor of Berlin. At this time, he was in his second marriage to the Norwegian journalist, Rut Hansen, who followed her husband to bombed out Berlin in 1947 with certain amount of reservations. On the one hand, she had been active in the Norwegian resistance and beheld the Germans with a great deal of scepticism, but on the other hand, they were so short of everything in Berlin required to survive – food, fuel and housing, particularly during the wintertime blockage in 1948. Of the 245,000 buildings that stood in Berlin before the war, 48,000 had been destroyed and whilst Berlin still had a population of 4.3 million in 1939, only 2.8 million people now lived in the city. Nevertheless, Rut Brandt also succeeded in overcoming her initial sense of distance, as she testified so impressively in her 1992 memoirs.

1970
*Willy Brandt provides
confidence*

Willy Brandt later said that he had learned something decisive about modern, civilised development of a democratic society during his period in exile in Scandinavia. His political thought was greatly influenced by the experiences he had had in Norway and Sweden. For him, as for many other Germans, Swedish social democracy was a role model after the bitter experiences with National Socialism and it became an attractive social alternative for Adenauer during this bleak time.

Significant key concepts included modernisation, transparency and the ability to compromise. The Swedish model was not only suitable in terms of the democratisation of German society, but also the transport, health, social and education policies. Thus it is particularly in these areas that Scandinavians in Germany are still considered leaders to this very day; social affluence characterises the Germans' view of Scandinavians to a great extent.

Does it come as a surprise, for example, that the Berlin "Behandlungszentrum für Folteropfer" was established in 1992 according to the Copenhagen model or that the original Berlin Charlotte von Mahlsdorf museum sought Swedish "exile" in 1994 following an attack on the *Gründerzeitmuseum* by skinheads? The former student leader, Rudi Dutschke, who was born in Schönefeld in the Margraviate of Brandenburg, also headed northwards as early as 1971. He took up a lectureship at the university in Danish Aarhus. The SPD politician, Herbert Wehner, moved back to his country house on the island of Öland after giving up his political appointments in 1983, and the Rathenow-born theologian, Rosemarie Köhn, was ordained the first female bishop in Scandinavia in 1993.

The high level of prestige that particularly Sweden enjoys in the public perception is not only emphasised by the yearly awarding of the Nobel Prize, but also through its "little brother", the alternative Nobel Prize – the Right Livelihood Award – which was initiated in 1980 by the German-Swedish journalist, Jakob von Uexküll.

Latest at the end of the sixties, there was once more an economic rapprochement between Germany and Scandinavia. Thus the import of goods from the Federal Republic to the north increased greatly during this period, (West) Germany again became the most important trade partner of Denmark and Sweden for both imports and exports.

Only in the case of Norway did things play out somewhat differently. In foreign trade, Germany remained in 1989 as in 1976 only the second largest import country after Sweden and the third largest export nation after Sweden and Great Britain. In contrast to this stands the subordinate significance of the German language and culture in the Scandinavian countries at this time and to this very day. Following the traumatic experiences of the Second World War, all schools in Scandinavia took English as the first foreign language from 1946 onwards; the number of hours set aside for German was greatly reduced in all countries. German became a choice subject alongside French on offer from the 7th grade. Scandinavian academics primarily migrated to the USA and other English-speaking countries. For most Scandinavian tourists, (West) German was, up until the fall of the Berlin Wall, nothing more than a motorway providing access to the south. Until late into the eighties, Heinrich Böll, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in Stockholm in 1972, Erich Kästner, Siegfried Lenz and Hans Magnus Enzensberger were pretty much the only famous German-speaking novelists with a readership in Scandinavia.

Despite the paradigm shift that the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent German reunification signified in many respects for the Scandinavian countries, many of the abovementioned aspects still apply to

Paradigm Scandinavia

Democracy
modernisation,
transparency and the
ability to compromise

Take-up of economic relations

German-Scandinavian relations. The Scandinavian nations were only indirectly affected by the upheaval in Eastern and Central Europe, but it has become clear that the relocation of the German capital from Bonn to Berlin has brought and will continue to bring about increased rapprochement between Scandinavia and reunified Germany.

After 1989, Germany became a leading state bordering on the Baltic Sea, something that is not only of economic significance. The German Reunification has meant that interest in Germany, the German language and culture has increased in leaps and bounds throughout the whole of Scandinavia. Nowadays, relations between the Scandinavian nations and Germany are consistently described as good. This finds expression not only in the increasing tourism and in international student and work exchanges. Scandinavian language courses for adults have also been particularly popular in the Berlin-Brandenburg region for several years now. One reason for this is a strong idealistic perception amongst many Germans of Scandinavia, which is rather tantamount to a sense of longing. At the *Volkshochschule* (colleges of further education) and private establishments in and around Berlin at any rate, countless Germans learn Norwegian, Swedish and Danish for their holidays as well as for their work. Hence there were in 1998 for example alone 343 Berlin doctors, nurses and dentists who trained in Norwegian after they had applied for work positions in Norwegian companies – and as guarantors of “German thoroughness, efficiency and reliability”, they will be highly respected in their new homeland.

The founding of the Henrik Steffens guest professorship for German-Norwegian cultural exchange at Berlin’s Humboldt University, forms more than a symbolic indication for the good relations between the two countries. In addition, the Munch-Haus in Warnemünde and the scholarship programme for Norwegian and German artists to enable them to work in Germany, are further proof of the Norwegian engagement in Germany. Sweden, which not only found an active partner in reunified Germany through the EU entry of the country in 1995, engages itself significantly in the north-eastern areas of Germany, which fell under Swedish administration after the Thirty Years’ War.

Following the move of the Nordic embassies from Bonn to Berlin in 1999, the country seized the initiative and brought to life a cultural-historical route, the so-called Swedish Route that leads from Wismar through Stralsund, Greifswald and Prenzlau to Wittstock, which has in turn led to a network of communities and intensive co-operation between Sweden and the German federal states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Brandenburg.

1999 – Moving of the Nordic embassies to Berlin



From both the Danish and German sides, it has been repeatedly regretted that the direct rail link between Berlin and Copenhagen was discontinued in September 1995, but in the age of low-budget airlines, increased density of flights and growing independent travel, the railway has long stopped playing the role that it did around the turn of the century, at least in the conveyance of passengers.

Objects of prestige related to Scandinavia in the region of Brandenburg today embody a rather “soft” value and are of a tourist nature. Noteworthy amongst these are the long-distance Berlin-Copenhagen cycle route and the Scandinavian-inspired wooden house town of Marina Wolfsbruch in

Kleinzerlang Rheinsberg as well as the neighbouring harbour town of Rheinsberg. Whilst the populations in other towns in the area around Berlin dwindled after 1989, Rheinsberg has been able to retain its population of around 5,000 since 1990 through investment in culture and tourism so as to secure jobs. It comes as no surprise that the small community of Himmelpfort with its Christmas post centre aspires to a co-operation with other Nordic “Christmas communities”.

At the end of the nineties, around 4,000 Scandinavians were residing in Berlin, amongst them such famous artists as the Norwegian painter, Olav Christopher Jensen, the Swedish author, Carl-Johan Vallgren, and the Danish music director, Michael Schönwandt. Nowadays, the figures must lie a little higher, as especially Berlin enjoys great popularity amongst Scandinavians. Thus the German capital is also the only European city to the south of the Baltic Sea in which a Norwegian as well as a Swedish restaurant is to be found. The church of the Danish congregation, the *Christianskirke*, is to be found here, and for Norwegians and Swedes, there is the Swedish *Victoriagemeinde* with its affiliated school. German-Scandinavian orchestra weeks are held in Berlin every year and events such as the cultural-historical exhibition, “*Wahlverwandtschaft – Deutschland und Skandinavien 1800-1914*” (‘Elective Affinity – Germany and Scandinavia, 1800 to 1914’), which was opened by the German-born Swedish Queen Silvia in the Berlin *Deutschen Historischen Museum* (German History Museum) in 1997, and also the Danish Dogma films by Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg as well as the plays by the Norwegian dramatist, Jon Fosse, and his Swedish colleague Lars Norén enjoy an enthusiastic reception in the city.

Danish film producers have always enjoyed their greatest success in the Berlin-Brandenburg region – as well as found their most competent adepts. From the early seventies, the comedies about Copenhagen’s Olsen Gang



enjoyed cult status in the GDR, whilst in West Germany, they never really caught on. With the filming of films such as *Halbe Treppe* (Grill Point) and *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* (The Edukators) by Andreas Dresen and Hans Weingärtner, remaining traces of the Danish dogma

attitude have been left in German film. There are still several German-Scandinavian friendship clubs in Berlin. The Scandinavians are barely conspicuous in today’s cityscape, apart from the Scandinavian products and trade names such as Ikea, Volvo, Hennes & Mauritz, Stokke, Dänisches Bettenlager and Bang-Olufsen. Recently, the energy company, Vattenfall, has also been added to this list. The little visibility of the Scandinavians in Berlin is not a reflection of insignificance however. On the contrary, it is a matter of course that Norwegians, Swedes and Danes today negotiate the city, whether that be as an artist, a diplomat, a student, employee or employer. The Scandinavians in contemporary Berlin have been fully assimilated into their new homeland of choice, something that bodes well for the long, varied past and future of German-Scandinavian relations.