



BRONSON LONG

**NO
EASY
OCCUPATION**

**FRENCH CONTROL OF
THE GERMAN SAAR,
1944-1957**

No Easy Occupation

German History in Context

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French Control of the
German Saar, 1944–1957

Bronson Long



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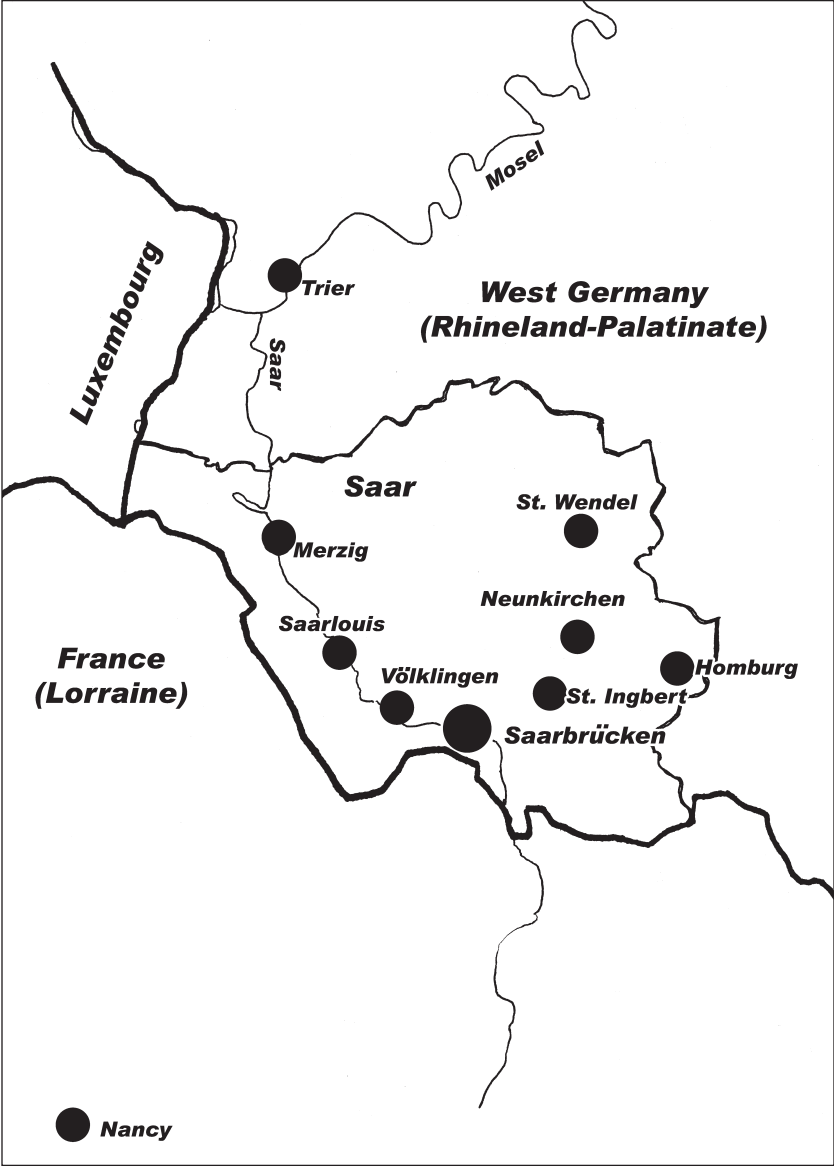
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Abbreviations

ACDP	Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, Sankt Augustin, Germany
AFS	Association Française de la Sarre: private group of French citizens interested in the Saar
AGA	Allgemeine Studentengemeinschaft für internationalen Austausch: organization for students at the University of the Saarland who had studied in France
AHC	Archives d'Histoire Contemporaine, Paris, France
AN	Archives Nationales, Paris, France
AOFAA	Archives de l'Occupation Française en Allemagne et en Autriche, Colmar, France
APMF	Archives Pierre-Mendès France, Paris, France
BA	Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, Germany
BHE	Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten: West German political party that represented refugees and expellees from the East
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands: West Germany's principal Christian Democratic party
CDU-Saar	Christlich Demokratische Union des Saarlandes: pro-German Saar Christian Democratic Party
CVP	Christliche Volkspartei: pro-Europeanization Saar Christian Democratic Party
DPS	Demokratische Partei Saar: pro-German Saar Liberal Party
DSP	Deutsche Sozialdemokratische Partei: pro-German Saar Socialist Party
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community: coal and steel pool established in Western Europe in 1952

EDC	European Defense Community: organization for pooling troops and military resources in Europe, never realized (early 1950s)
EKD	Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland: Germany's main postwar federation of Protestant churches
Europa-Union	pro-European Socialist-leaning organization
FC Saarbrücken	Football Club Saarbrücken: the Saar's most important soccer team
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei: West Germany's liberal party
FFF	Fédération française de football: France's main soccer federation
FJM	Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, Lausanne, Switzerland
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States, Washington, DC
HIUS	Historisches Institut der Universität des Saarlandes, Saarbrücken, Germany
KPS	Kommunistische Partei des Saarlandes: Saar Communist Party
LA Saarbücken	Landesarchiv Saarbrücken, Saarbrücken, Germany
MAE	Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris, France
MLS	Mouvement pour la Liberation de la Sarre: organization of Saarlanders in exile in Paris at the end of the Second World War
MRS	Mouvement pour la Rattachement de la Sarre: successor of the MLS, organization of Saarlanders that espoused French annexation of the Saar after 1945
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEI	Nouvelles Equipes Internationales: pro-European Christian Democratic-leaning organization
SBAH	Stiftung Bundeskanzler-Adenauer Haus, Rhöndorf, Germany
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands: West Germany's socialist party

SPS	Sozialdemokratische Partei Saar: pro-Europeanization Saar Socialist Party
WEU	Western European Union: mutual-defense organization in Western Europe



The Saar, 1949. Map by Brian Barr.

Introduction

The Turbulent History of a Small Territory

ON AUGUST 17, 1955, VIOLENCE ROCKED the small town of Neunkirchen. The French and West German governments had recently finalized an agreement to make the town part of a European territory, commonly called, “Europe’s District of Columbia,” which was to serve as the capital of new European institutions such as the Council of Europe and the European Coal and Steel Community. Passions ran high as nearly two thousand people gathered in the local Protestant community center to hear speeches in favor of creating a European territory. Neunkirchen’s pro-Europe rally, however, also attracted intense opposition. As speakers inside the community center praised European unity as a path to peace and prosperity, crowds of German nationalists with a very different view of the matter turned out in force in the streets near the community center. The police, who had anticipated trouble, kept the crowds at bay. Demonstrators then began throwing stones at police, who responded with tear gas and water cannons. When the smoke cleared, the police had arrested scores of youthful protesters, and twenty people had been injured, two seriously. Similar scenes of tense political rallies and disorder played themselves out in the streets of nearby towns such as Saarbrücken, Völklingen, and St. Ingbert during the late summer and early fall of 1955.¹

All these incidents occurred in the Saar, a small German territory barely three times the size of Berlin. Today the Saar, whose name derives from the Saar River, which begins in the Vosges Mountains and is a tributary of the Moselle, is one of Germany’s smallest federal states. Like France’s Alsace and Lorraine, the latter of which directly borders the Saar, the region was strategically important border territory for Germany and France during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Furthermore, its vibrant coal and steel industries were not only its largest employers but also key for the armaments industry in this era. Despite its small size, the Saar’s production of coal and steel was significant, representing between one-fifth and one-third of France’s production during the early 1950s.² Consequently, control of the Saar figured prominently in France’s quest to weaken Germany and enhance its own security after each world war.

Many are familiar with the history of France and Germany's bitter disputes over Alsace and Lorraine between 1870 and 1945, when the two nations fought each other in three different wars.³ Yet outside Germany and, to some degree, France, the struggle between the two nations over the Saar has largely been forgotten. Indeed, many otherwise commendable works published in English on postwar Europe and postwar Germany barely address the Saar.⁴ Although territorial disputes over the territory were especially contentious in the twentieth century, it has long been a contested borderland between France and Germany. France first became involved in this region in 1680 when Louis XIV had the town of Saarlouis built along the Saar River as a fortified city on France's eastern frontier. During the French revolution and under Napoleon, the Saar fell entirely under French rule and was one of France's four *départements* on the eastern bank of the Rhine. The Congress of Vienna awarded the Saar to Prussia in 1815. After 1815 French influence there waned significantly. By 1870 the Saar's population was almost exclusively composed of German speakers, the vast majority of whom were practicing Catholics. When Germany was unified in 1871, the Saar region mainly fell within the borders of the state of Prussia, with a small portion in the Bavarian Palatinate.

At the end of the First World War the French government pressed for control of the Saar, because it had close ties to Lorraine's coal and steel industries. Although American president Woodrow Wilson believed that the Saar belonged with Germany and that French rule violated the principal of the self-determination of nations, French economic considerations ultimately prevailed. The Treaty of Versailles established the Saar as a separate administrative unit and gave it to France in 1920 under a League of Nations mandate. The French state took ownership of the Saar's valuable coal mines and ruled the new territory through a Governing Commission. Although most French officials were simply interested in exploiting the Saar's coal mines and maintaining French troops in the strategically located territory, some aspired to permanently separate it from Germany and transform it into an autonomous nation closely associated with France. As a result, the Governing Commission took measures to foster a new national identity, such as giving the territory its own flag and coat of arms. It also attempted to sever the religious ties that Saarlanders had with German churches and to teach French in schools to the children of Saar miners. Finally, in 1923 France replaced the German mark with the French franc.⁵

By all accounts most Saarlanders were hostile to French policies and viewed them as the actions of meddling foreign occupiers. The League of Nations mandate, however, gave the Saar to France for only fifteen years: it stated that a plebiscite should be held in 1935 to decide the territory's ultimate fate. After taking power in 1933, the Nazis pushed for

the Saar's reincorporation into Germany. As careful observers of Leni Riefenstahl's famous film *Triumph of the Will* may have noticed, the 1934 Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg featured several references to the region. For example, during the Hitler Youth rally, which was held in the Nuremberg stadium, youths in the stands were seated in such a way that the colors of their clothing spelled out the word "Saar." The Nazis saw regaining the Saar as one of the first steps to reassembling all the territories Germany had lost in 1919 and ultimately incorporating all German-speaking lands into the Third Reich.

The Saar's plebiscite campaign in late 1934 and early 1935 was very heated. The Nazis held rallies just outside the territory's border with Germany and used propaganda and intimidation in an attempt to influence the outcome. On January 13, 1935, Saarlanders voted overwhelmingly in favor of rejoining Germany. The League of Nations administered the plebiscite in which more than 90 percent of Saarlanders voted in support of uniting the Saar with Germany, which at the time meant Nazi Germany. As the plebiscite took place nearly two years after Hitler's seizure of power, Saarlanders arguably had a better idea of exactly what Nazi rule would mean than did Germans when Hitler first came to power in 1933. Despite the appeals of an anti-fascist coalition of Social Democratic, Communist, and Catholic political activists, Saarlanders chose Nazi Germany over union with France or a benevolent international rule under the League of Nations.⁶ Propaganda, disgust with France, and a desire for reunification with Germany trumped the concerns of the Saar's anti-fascist coalition in the plebiscite, and the Saar became Nazi Germany's first territorial acquisition.

Nazi control of the Saar meant the rule of a totalitarian police state, as it did in the rest of Germany. Those who had opposed the Nazis prior to the referendum, as well as the territory's small Jewish community, faced persecution, and many of them fled the Saar. Finally, in 1939 the Nazis plunged Europe into another war. Saarlanders fought in the *Wehrmacht* during the war. They also participated in the harsh occupation of neighboring French Lorraine. With many men off to war, foreign workers, many of whom were from Eastern Europe, were forced to work in the Saar's coal mines and steel mills. These workers labored long hours in poor conditions and endured cruel treatment, including executions, at the hands of their overseers. The Saar's coal production soared during the war, reaching its highest point ever of sixteen million tons a year in 1943. And while Saar coal helped fuel the Third Reich, the Saar's steel industry was active in the construction of tanks and submarines.⁷

The final year of the Second World War was particularly difficult for the Saar. In October 1944 Allied bombs rocked Saarbrücken, the territory's capital and its largest city. Allied bombing heavily damaged many other neighboring cities before American troops pushed their way into

the region in March 1945.⁸ Although Germany had defeated France in 1940, Churchill convinced the Soviets and Americans in 1944 to give France a zone of occupation in Germany. In the summer of 1945, however, France was excluded from the Potsdam Conference. In the years that followed, the Americans and British often found the French a troublesome partner on the Allied Control Council of Germany.⁹ Thus unlike the Soviets, British, or Americans, the French entered Germany almost entirely because of the victories of others and with the dubious distinction of having been recently defeated by Germany.

After a brief period of American control, the Saar was incorporated by the French into their zone of occupation in July 1945. The French government's plans for the Saar were vague in the summer of 1945 and in the years immediately following the war, although the French made it clear to the Allies that they desired to again obtain control of the Saar's mines. In the meantime, the French government appointed Gilbert Grandval as the territory's military governor in September 1945. Grandval was by far the most important French official in the shaping and implementation of France's Saar policy between 1945 and 1955. He served as France's highest-ranking official in the territory, first as military governor, then as high commissioner, and finally as ambassador to the Saar between 1945 and 1955. Grandval, who only left the Saar in the summer of 1955 for his next post as the top official in France's protectorate of Morocco, was a talented and determined official. His nearly ten-year tenure in Saarbrücken stood in great contrast to France's governments under the Fourth Republic, which in that period changed with great frequency and whose leaders, unlike Grandval, had many other concerns than the Saar. Because Grandval was France's direct representative in one capacity or the other for such a long period, he was the face of the French government for many Saarlanders.

Between 1945 and 1947 the French military government sought to revive the Saar's economic, political, and cultural life. Material conditions were difficult. Yet trade with France caused the coal and steel industries to prosper again. The French military government removed Nazis from positions of power and expelled those considered too "Prussian." It also allowed new political parties to form. The four parties that emerged in the Saar in 1945 and 1946, namely the *Christliche Volkspartei des Saarlandes* (CVP: Christian People's Party of the Saar), the *Sozialdemokratische Partei des Saarlandes* (SPS: Social Democratic Party of the Saar), the *Kommunistische Partei des Saarlandes* (KPS: Communist Party of the Saar), and the *Demokratische Vereinigung des Saarlandes*, whose name was changed in 1947 to the *Demokratische Partei des Saarlandes* (DPS: Democratic Party of the Saar), all had political antecedents of some sort before the Nazis rose to power.¹⁰ Many men who had opposed the Nazis in 1935 and who had fled the Saar after it was incorporated into Nazi

Germany had gone into exile in France. They emerged from the war as Francophiles and rapidly took over the leadership of the Saar's new parties in 1945, especially of the territory's two most important parties, the SPS and the CVP. Saarlanders overwhelmingly supported these two parties' pro-French approach. On October 5, 1947, they elected a fifty-seat Saar Constitutional Assembly. The CVP won 51.2 percent of the vote, while the SPS received 32.8 percent. This assembly voted in favor of the constitution and then became the territory's legislative body, the *Landtag*. On December 20, 1947, CVP leader Johannes Hoffmann formed a coalition government with the SPS and became the Saar's first prime minister. Internationally, the Saar's legal status was unresolved in 1947. However, the preamble to the Saar constitution proclaimed the territory's independence from Germany and its economic union with France.

The official end of French occupation in 1947 did not significantly reduce France's control. In effect, the Saar simply became a French protectorate. Gilbert Grandval stayed on as French High Commissioner in the Saar, a position with veto power over the Saar government. Moreover, the Saar was economically joined to France in a customs and monetary union. This allowed for free trade between France and the Saar and meant the Saar used the French franc. The French also owned the territory's most valuable economic asset and its leading employer, namely its coal mines. In addition, Johannes Hoffmann and the many members of his government had lived in exile in France during the 1930s and were close allies of France. Grandval and Hoffmann worked together in the late 1940s and early 1950s in a bid to transform the Saar from a protectorate into new state with a new national identity. This included sophisticated cultural policies that were intended to bind the Saar to France and separate it from Germany. Hoffmann, who intensely disliked extreme nationalism, was also an early supporter of European institutions.

While Hoffmann's government was initially popular in the Saar, by the early 1950s a pro-German opposition emerged that aspired to reunite the territory with West Germany. The question of the Saar's fate also caused tensions between the governments of France and West Germany and complicated the movement for European unity in the early 1950s. After years of lengthy and at times contentious negotiations, in October 1954 the French and West German governments agreed to make the Saar a European territory, which would place it under the authority of European institutions and make it the capital of the nascent European community. Both governments, however, decided to put this matter before Saarlanders in the form of a referendum before moving forward.

As the violence in Neunkirchen illustrated, the pro-European forces of Hoffmann and the pro-German opposition fought a heated campaign in the months leading up to the Saar's referendum on October 23, 1955. In some respects this campaign resembled the plebiscite twenty

years before. Indeed, as in 1934 and 1935, pro-German forces in 1955 argued that Saarlanders were German and that the Saar should thus rejoin Germany. They called their opponents separatists who were disloyal to the Fatherland. Many campaign leaders on both sides, such as Hoffmann and pro-German leader Heinrich Schneider, had even been involved in the campaign of 1934 and 1935. Nonetheless, some issues were different. The pro-German opposition attacked France as the Saar's colonial master and called "Europeanization" a smokescreen to maintain French control. They blasted Hoffmann as a French lackey and lambasted the prime minister's rotund figure with the slogan "the fat one must go," which appeared on pro-German posters, stickers, and graffiti. Pro-German forces further alleged that Hoffmann had turned the Saar into a police state. This accusation was exaggerated, although the Saar was not a fully functioning democracy. Prior to the 1955 referendum, Hoffmann's government, which in view of what had transpired in the 1930s understandably feared a revival of extreme German nationalism, had outlawed political parties that called for the Saar's incorporation into West Germany as "anti-constitutional." Hoffmann's Minister of the Interior, Edgar Hector, commanded a secret police force that spied on such parties. To make matters worse, the Saar's police, who clashed with demonstrators in the late summer of 1955, wore uniforms that bore a striking resemblance to those worn by French police.

Hoffmann's supporters responded with strong accusations of their own. They pointed out that some leaders of the pro-German forces, such as the DPS's Heinrich Schneider, had been members of the Nazi party, even publishing photos of Schneider in uniform giving the Nazi salute. Furthermore, Hoffmann and his associates took pains to show how the pro-German side employed nationalistic rhetoric and imagery that were similar to that used by the Nazis. They reminded Saarlanders of the folly of Nazism and of the destruction of the Second World War. Finally, Hoffmann and his supporters implored Saarlanders to make their territory the capital of a united Europe, which they portrayed as the only hope for a peaceful and prosperous future. To the surprise of many, Saarlanders voted overwhelmingly against a European statute. Hoffmann immediately resigned as prime minister, and new elections were held shortly afterward. In the aftermath of the 1955 referendum, the French and West German governments agreed that the Saar should become part of West Germany. The Saar was politically joined to West Germany in 1957 as its tenth *Bundesland*, or federal state. Finally, in 1959 the Saar joined the West German economy, most notably by adopting the Deutsche Mark and dropping the customs barriers between itself and the rest of West Germany. The Saar's incorporation into West Germany has been dubbed the *kleine Wiedervereinigung*, as it was the precursor to the full German reunification that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Coming to Grips with the Saar Dispute

How have historians accounted for the course that the Saar took between 1945 and 1957? Although Anglo-American scholars have generally ignored the Saar, and very little has been published in English on the topic, it has generated considerable literature from French and, even more so, German historians. Earlier works focus on the international implications of the struggle over the Saar, especially the policies of French and Saar leaders. For example, historian Jacques Freymond portrays France's position as weak from the beginning, as it "was based on the rights of the victorious victim to reparations and security." In Freymond's view, such a position was transitory and fragile. Moreover, France's national interests in the Saar contradicted its push for European integration, for instance with French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman's 1950 proposal for a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). In the end, the new Saar state simply could not withstand the strain that the various internal and external problems placed upon it in the early 1950s.¹¹ Per Fischer argues that France's Saar policies after the Second World War were primarily aimed at weakening Germany and thus strengthening its own position.¹² Other historians, such as Jean-Paul Cahn and Robert H. Schmidt, suggest that the 1955 referendum was primarily an expression of Saarlanders' German identity and that French policies failed above all because Saarlanders saw themselves as Germans. Schmidt's works are especially favorable toward pro-German forces and critical of figures such as Hoffmann and Grandval.¹³ For his part, Martin Nathusius traces the development of the Saar's economy between 1918 and 1969, highlighting how its steel industry was a strategic resource for both the French and the Germans.¹⁴ Most early research deals with political and economic matters; a focus on culture began later with Heinrich Küppers's study on how education policies were closely intertwined with the Saar's fate.¹⁵

Beginning in the late 1980s, French and German archives granted access to government sources on the Saar from the 1940s and 1950s, with the most extensive archival sources found in France's Foreign Ministry archives.¹⁶ The opening of the archives sparked a new wave of research. Several important collected volumes, all of which had historian Rainer Hudemann as editor, have come out since the late 1980s, with chapters on a wide range of political, economic, social, and cultural questions related to the Saar.¹⁷ Together with other historians Hudemann also published a collected volume of important primary documents from French and German archives.¹⁸ Finally, a number of monographs have come out dealing with issues such as education, sports, nation-building, economics, social policies, and the role of memory.¹⁹

The most crucial questions that historians have grappled with over the years have concerned the outcome of the 1955 referendum and the

ultimate failure of French officials and Saar politicians to transform the Saar into a territory, European or otherwise, that was separate from West Germany. Historians, particularly in collected volumes that have appeared in recent decades, have offered a number of explanations. For instance, Jürgen Hannig identifies four factors: the dominance of those returning from exile in 1945 in the founding and governing of an autonomous Saar; the formation of an illegal opposition; the emotional nature of propaganda in the 1955 referendum campaign; and the lingering trauma of the 1935 plebiscite.²⁰ Gerhard Paul characterizes the Saar between 1945 and 1955 as an “emigrant state” controlled by a political elite, who, like the leaders of the Communist party in East Germany, had spent the war in exile. While the Saar’s political elite were able to use their anti-fascist credentials to gain power after the war, ultimately Saarlanders came to resent their rule, with terms such as “emigrant” and “separatist” playing a key role in the 1955 referendum campaign.²¹ For her part, Judith Hüser contends that France’s European policies, especially its rejection of the European Defense Community (EDC) in 1954, doomed the Saar’s Europeanization. Marlis Steinart concurs that the collapse of the EDC, which many at the time saw as a necessary first step to create a European political community, had a dramatic impact on how Saarlanders voted in 1955.²²

One of the most important monographs published since the opening of the archives on the Saar question is Armin Heinen’s *Saarjahre: Politik und Wirtschaft im Saarland, 1945–1955*. In his work, Heinen weaves politics and economics together to offer a more comprehensive account of the Saar question. For Heinen, the Saar’s postwar political leaders such as Hoffmann, whom he describes as an authoritarian democrat, did not fully trust their own people. Consequently, they sought to build a new political order that would teach Saarlanders democracy. Nonetheless, Saarlanders never related to this new political order and the symbols of the Saar state. Culturally, they continued to feel German. Moreover, mistrust of the French grew over time, especially after the French parliament’s vote against the establishment of the EDC. Heinen argues that while the economic union with France made sense for the Saar in 1948, by 1955 the situation had changed considerably. Between 1953 and 1955 West Germany’s growing economy and stable democracy made it more attractive for Saarlanders than economic union with France. In the end, although a number of factors influenced how Saarlanders voted in 1955, Heinen sees economics as playing a particularly important role.²³

The findings of historians such as Heinen, Hannig, Paul, Hüser, and Steinart give nuanced and varied perspectives on the Saar’s political course. However, two recent monographs give conflicting assessments of Johannes Hoffmann’s government in general and the Saar question specifically. Heinrich Küppers’s impressive biography of Hoffmann

asserts that Hoffmann was a German patriot and not a “separatist,” as his opponents labeled him. According to Küppers, Hoffmann’s deep Catholic faith motivated him to oppose the Nazis in the 1930s and later to pursue social justice, peace, and European unity as the Saar’s prime minister. Hoffmann’s experiences left him concerned that German nationalism might revive after 1945 and again endanger the peace. As such, Hoffmann favored the Saar’s independence from Germany. He genuinely hoped that the territory would serve as a “bridge” between France and West Germany and thereby facilitate Franco-German reconciliation and European integration.²⁴ In contrast to Küppers, Johannes Schäfer sees the question of the Saar’s political system as fundamental, but one that historians have largely neglected. Schäfer applies the ideas of scholars such as Wolfgang Merkel on democracy. In the end, he offers a negative assessment of the Saar’s democracy as a defective and illiberal democracy, and by extension, a negative assessment of Hoffmann and his government.²⁵

The Saar dispute was a crucial, albeit often underappreciated, chapter in postwar French, German, and European history. Caught between France, West Germany, and the campaign to establish European institutions, the Saar offers an important window into a profound realignment of German national identity. Scholars have produced a considerable literature on a wide range of issues related to this small territory. Nonetheless, the Saar’s fate after 1945 was first and foremost a political matter. Consequently, this book chiefly offers a political account of the Saar dispute. As cultural policies were integral to politics in this era, they also are featured prominently.²⁶ Finally, as postwar European integration, Franco-German relations, and French imperialism were all linked to the Saar dispute, they are all subthemes of this book. While the course the Saar took after 1945 raises many questions, a few central and interconnected political questions loom over all of the rest. Why did French and Saar officials seek to transform the Saar into a territory separate from the rest of Germany? And why did the majority of Saarlanders, who in the years immediately after the war saw the French in a positive light and supported men such as Hoffmann, vote against a European statute in 1955 and in effect reject this idea? Put another way, how did France and its allies in the Saar’s political elite ultimately lose the Saar?

Much of the existing literature, particularly Freymond’s older work and the more recent research of historians such as Heinen and Küppers, makes valid observations about these key questions. In contrast, however, in this book I argue that France’s Saar project failed because it was based on faulty, hidebound ideas about the status of Germany in general and the Saar specifically at the end of the war. More specifically, in spite of the fact that the war had destroyed Prussia as a political entity and greatly diminished the appetite of Germans for war as well as their ability to wage another one, men such Gilbert Grandval and his primary partner

in the Saar, Johannes Hoffmann, still feared that Prussia's militaristic and authoritarian ways were deeply ingrained in the Saar. They therefore sought to de-Prussianize the Saar and remove it from the orbit of Germany. In this fashion, they remained fixated on the dangers of Prussia and extreme German nationalism well after these dangers had passed and while more pressing issues were at hand. By way of comparison, politicians such as Robert Schuman and Konrad Adenauer were more forward-thinking. They tended to privilege Cold-War concerns, Franco-German reconciliation, and European integration in ways that were less overtly rooted in a fear of resurgent German nationalism. This suggests that the differing conclusions that leading politicians in France, the Saar, and West Germany came to about the Nazi past largely determined how they saw the future and thus how they approached the Saar question.

The efforts of men such as Grandval and Hoffmann to de-Prussianize the Saar and transform it into a new nation separate from Germany were unrealistic and overly ambitious. Grandval's views about what constituted France's national interests in the Saar also diverged considerably from those of other important French figures, such as André François-Poncet and Robert Schuman. As a result, Grandval's ideas were not fully implemented. Furthermore, clashes between top French officials led to numerous contradictions in France's Saar policies. Most glaringly, despite Grandval's ambitions and all the French government's rhetoric about the Saar as an independent state, French control of the Saar, particularly its economy and politics, remained so pervasive between 1945 and 1955 that in some ways the occupation never fully ended. Indeed, while French officials did not use the term protectorate, it is not inaccurate to label the Saar as such in this period. Making matters worse for France's image, events in France's Empire, especially in Indochina and Algeria in 1954 and 1955, with the former linked to the dramatic failure of the EDC, underscored the fact that France was an imperial power, and a declining one at that. This led to an increased perception among Saarlanders that French imperialism extended to their territory and that France was more interested in narrow national interests than European unity. In the final analysis, I contend that France lost the Saar because between 1945 and 1955 its image in the eyes of Saarlanders went from that of a partner to that of an oppressor.

The results of the 1955 referendum were not inevitable. Their basis lay in the faulty assumptions of the French and their Saar allies and to a lesser degree in a series of mistakes they made in those years, especially mistakes originating from infighting between French officials such as Grandval and Schuman. What transpired in October 1955 was akin to the collapse of a house because quarreling architects had built it on a bad foundation. Men such as Grandval and Hoffmann were very energetic and intelligent leaders. Their efforts at changing the Saar's politics,

culture, and economy were often sophisticated. Nonetheless, their flawed assessment of the situation in the years immediately following the war hampered their plans from the very beginning. Perhaps more importantly, while many of their mistaken conclusions about Germany and the Saar were understandable at first, given their recent experiences in the war, they refused to seriously reevaluate these early assumptions, even up until the 1955 referendum. In many ways, figures such as Grandval and Hoffmann never got beyond their experiences in the war, although as I hope to show in this book, the resolution of the Saar dispute certainly helped France and West Germany to move forward.

Notes

¹ Eric de Carbonnel to the French Foreign Ministry, August 18, 1955, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (hereafter MAE), series EU Europe, 1949–1955, Saar 191.

² The Saar government to Gilbert Grandval, November 8, 1950, 2–4, MAE, EU Europe, 1949–1955, Saar 282.

³ The literature on Alsace and Lorraine is fairly extensive. For a few examples of recent works on Alsace and Lorraine in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Chistopher J. Fischer, *Alsace to Alsations? Visions and Divisions of Alsatian Regionalism, 1870–1939* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014); François Igersheim, *L'Alsace et ses historiens, 1680–1914* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2006); Samuel Goodfellow, *Between the Swastika and Cross of Lorraine: Fascisms in Interwar Alsace* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998); and Stephen Harp, *Learning to Be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine, 1850–1940* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998).

⁴ For a few examples see Mary Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation: A History of Germany, 1918–1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Henry Ashby Turner, Jr. *Germany from Partition to Reunification* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1992); Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005); and Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945–1995* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁵ For more information on the Saar's history prior to the 1930s see Frank M. Russell, *The Saar: Battleground and Pawn* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1951). For a brief account of the debate on the Saar at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 see Arthur Walworth, "The Establishment of the German Frontiers," in *The Legacy of the Great War: Peacemaking 1919*, ed. William R. Keylor (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 28–30.

⁶ Ludwig Linsmayer, "Bewahrend oder bewegend? Zum Verhältnis von Gedächtnis und Geschichte in den Auseinandersetzungen um den 13. Januar 1935," in *Der 13. Januar: Die Saar im Brennpunkt der Geschichte*, ed. Ludwig Linsmayer (Merzig, Germany: Merziger Druckerei & Verlag, 2005), 45–47; and Heinrich Küppers, "Zwischen Vaterland und Hitler: Johannes Hoffmann bis zum Jahre

1945,” in *Johannes Hoffmann: Eine erste Bilanz*, ed. Markus Geister (Saarbrücken: Gollenstein Verlag, 2004), 28–29.

⁷ See also *Renaissance de la Sarre* (Saarbrücken: Saarländische Verlagsanstalt und Druckerei, 1947), 7.

⁸ Much of the Saar experienced an earlier evacuation in September 1939, at the beginning of the Second World War. This evacuation, however, was temporary, and by the end of 1940 the Saar’s factories and mines were again fully functional. Martin Nathusius, *L’acier sarrois et l’Europe* (Lausanne: Centre de Recherches Européennes, 1970), 44.

⁹ Tony Judt, *Postwar*, 113. For an extensive account of France’s relationship with the United States see Irwin M. Wall, *The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945–1954* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹⁰ Winfried Becker, “Die Entwicklung der politischen Parteien im Saarland 1945 bis 1955 nach französischen Quellen,” in *Die Saar, 1945–1955: Ein Problem der europäischen Geschichte/La Sarre, 1945–1955; Un problème de l’histoire européenne*, ed. Rainer Hudemann, Raymond Poidevin, and Annette Maas (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992), 253.

¹¹ Jacques Freymond, *The Saar Conflict, 1945–1955* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), 317.

¹² Per Fischer, *Die Saar zwischen Deutschland und Frankreich: Politische Entwicklung von 1945–1959* (Berlin: Alfred Metzner Verlag, 1959).

¹³ Jean-Paul Cahn, *Le second retour: Le rattachement de la Sarre à l’Allemagne, 1955–1957* (New York: Peter Lang, 1985); and Robert H. Schmidt’s three-volume work entitled *Saarpolitik, 1945–1957*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1960).

¹⁴ Nathusius, *L’acier sarrois*.

¹⁵ Heinrich Küppers, *Bildungspolitik im Saarland, 1945–1955* (Saarbrücken: Kommissionsverlag, Minerva-Verlag Thinner & Nolte, 1984).

¹⁶ The French foreign ministry archives have around four hundred cartons of papers on the Saar. As Armin Heinen correctly notes, French archives have hundreds and hundreds of dossiers in total. Armin Heinen, *Saarjahre: Politik und Wirtschaft im Saarland, 1945–1955* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996), 17–18.

¹⁷ The most notable of these collected volumes are Armin Heinen and Rainer Hudemann, eds., *Universität des Saarlandes, 1948–1988*, 2nd ed. (Saarbrücken: O/D Buch- und Kunstverlag, 1989); *Von der “Stunde 0” zum “Tag X”: Das Saarland, 1945–1959; Katalog zur Ausstellung des Regionalgeschichtlichen Museums im Saarbrücker Schloß, Saarbrücken, 1990* (Merzig, Germany: Merziger Druckerei und Verlag, 1990); Hudemann, Poidevin, and Maas, *Die Saar, 1945–1955*; Rainer Hudemann et al., eds., *Grenz-Fall: Das Saarland zwischen Frankreich und Deutschland, 1945–1960* (St. Ingbert, Germany: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 1997); and Rainer Hudemann, Clemens Zimmermann, and Michael Kuderna, eds., *Medienlandschaft Saar: Von 1945 bis in die Gegenwart* (Munich: Wissenschaftsverlag, 2010).

¹⁸ Rainer Hudemann and Armin Heinen, eds., *Das Saarland zwischen Frankreich, Deutschland und Europa, 1945–1957: Ein Quellen- und Arbeitsbuch* (Saarbrücken: Veröffentlichung der Kommission für Saarländische Landesgeschichte und Volksforschung, 2007).

¹⁹ Heinen, *Saarjahre*; Hans-Christian Herrmann, *Sozialer Besitzstand und gescheiterte Sozialpartnerschaft: Sozialpolitik und Gewerkschaften im Saarland von 1945–1955* (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1996); Wolfgang Harres, *Sportpolitik an der Saar, 1945–1957* (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücken Druckerei und Verlag, 1997); and Armin Flender, *Öffentliche Erinnerungskultur im Saarland nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg: Untersuchungen über den Zusammenhang von Geschichte und Identität* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998).

²⁰ Jürgen Hannig, “Grenzen der Politik: Saarfrage und Abstimmungskampf 1955,” in *Von der “Stunde 0” zum “Tag X,”* 351–76.

²¹ Gerhard Paul, “Die Saarländer fühlten sich durch solche Leute an Frankreich verkauft: Die saarländischen Remigranten und ihr gescheiterter Staat,” in Hudemann et al., *Grenz-Fall*, 135–49.

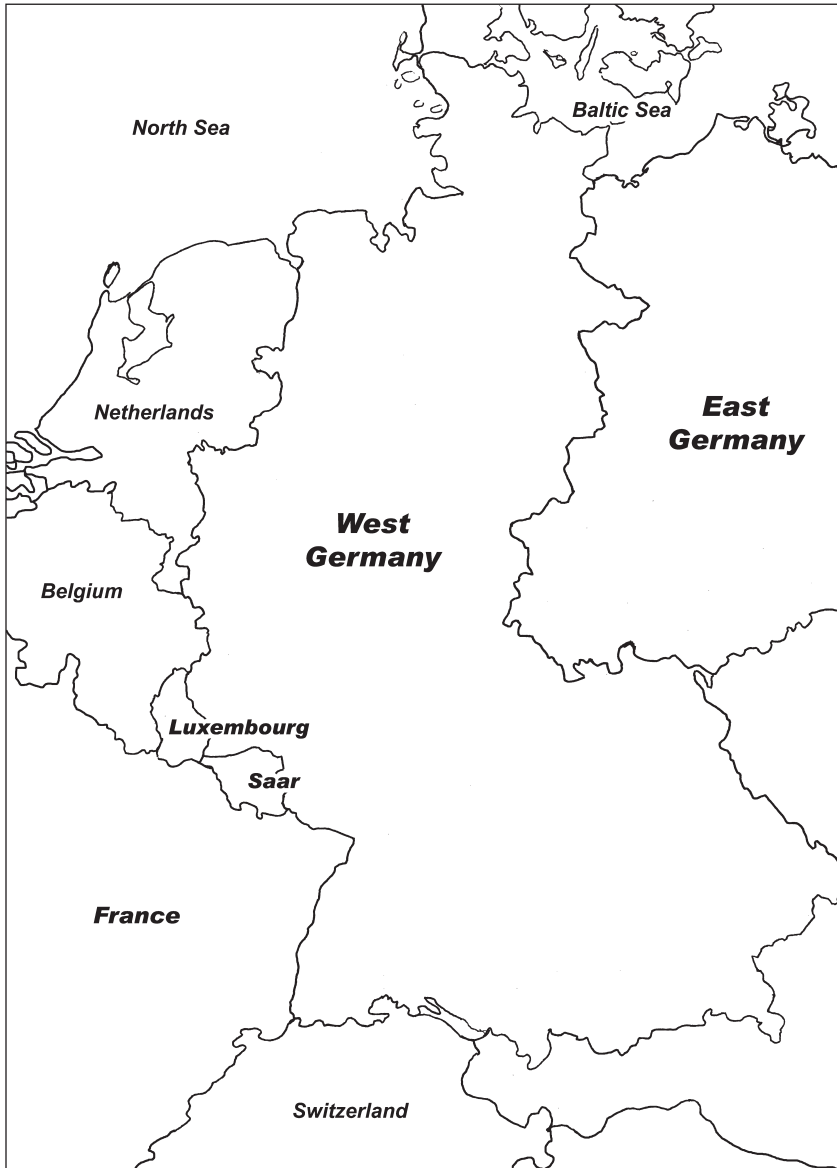
²² Judith Hüser, “‘Dieser Weihnachtsmann eines Saarstatut’: Frankreichs Politik im Abstimmungskampf 1955,” in *Von der “Stunde 0” zum “Tag X,”* 143–52; and Marlis Steinert, “Die Europäisierung der Saar: Eine echte Alternative?,” in Hudemann et al., *Grenz-Fall*, 78.

²³ Heinen, *Saarjahre*, 17.

²⁴ Heinrich Küppers, *Johannes Hoffmann (1890–1967): Biographie eines Deutschen* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2008).

²⁵ Johannes Schäfer, *Das autonome Saarland: Demokratie im Saarstaat, 1945–1957* (St. Ingbert, Germany: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2012).

²⁶ Economics were also important, although they are largely beyond the scope of this book. For a full treatment of economic issues see Heinen, *Saarjahre*.



The Saar in relation to France, West Germany, and Western Europe, 1949. Map by Brian Barr.