

## Emergence of a Modern City 1866 - 1945

Political life in Frankfurt was reorganized in the Local Administration Act of March 25 and through the introduction of the Prussian Constitution on October 1, 1867. The former sovereign city state became a firm part of Prussia. The city was headed by two mayors who each had to be elected by the city council and confirmed by the king. The city was represented to the outside world by the city council and the delegates' assembly. All rules and regulations issued by the city had to be in agreement with state law. The police became subject to a chief constable and his department.

Frankfurt, however, had its own electoral law. Instead of Prussia's three-class franchise, the city was given a system based on property qualifications, similar to its previous system as a free city. This meant that only Frankfurt citizens were eligible to vote. And to be a citizen, a person had to be a Prussian national, as well as being of age, having legal capacity, being a householder and having a residential house or running a permanent trade or business with at least two qualified assistants. Alternatively, it was sufficient to have an annual income of at least 700 guilders or 1,200 marks. These regulations meant that the majority of the population had no share in political decisions until the end of the German empire.

The Peace of Frankfurt, concluded between Bismarck and the French foreign minister Jules Favre at Zum Schwan (The Swan) on May 10, 1871, marked the end of the Franco-Prussian War. On this occasion Bismarck expressed his hope that the Peace of Frankfurt would also be peace with Frankfurt. The mayor of the city, Johann Heinrich Daniel Mumm, launched a generous modernization program with a large number of prestigious buildings.

As before, many Frankfurt citizens continued to show a public spirit during the time of the German empire. In 1874 Dr. Joseph Hoch bequeathed a million marks to the city to set up a conservatoire for the "promotion of music". After the death of Robert Schumann his widow, Clara, accepted a lectureship at the Hoch Conservatoire. She continued to live and work in Frankfurt until her death in 1891. In 1887 Hannah Louise von Rothschild founded a public library in memory of and named after her father, Mayer Carl von Rothschild.

In 1880 Johann Miquel became mayor of Frankfurt. On October 20, in the presence of Emperor William I, the Frankfurt Opera House was opened with Mozart's Don Giovanni. A number of important major projects were completed during Miquel's term of office. 1886 saw the official opening of the new Frankfurt harbour, the Westhafen. This was accompanied by the construction of the Main canals, with the completion of five locks between Mainz and Frankfurt. Frankfurt's central railway station (Hauptbahnhof) was opened in 1888, consisting of 18 platforms in three halls. The old railway stations at Taunusanlage were demolished.

In 1890 Miquel was appointed Prussian Minister of Finance. The new mayor, Franz Adickes, turned Frankfurt into an elegant metropolis with an international reputation. Frankfurt itself began to expand through the incorporation of many surrounding towns and villages. Residential and industrial estates were created, as well as parks, a green belt and a number of spacious ring roads and radial roads. In the east of the city a further harbour, called Osthafen, was officially opened in 1912. Within a few decades the population of Frankfurt grew more than fivefold. In 1867 it was about 78,000, and by the beginning of the First World War it had increased to about 437,000.

The general economic boom during Germany's industrialization enabled Frankfurt to flourish. During this time there were numerous exhibitions and mass events, such as the International Cookery Exhibition of 1894, the Second and Third Singers' Contests of 1903 and 1909, the 11th German Gymnastics Festival of 1908 and the 17th German Shooting Competition of 1912. (Frankfurt's major technical exhibitions during this period are mentioned elsewhere on this site.)

The introduction of economic freedom in 1864 added increasing momentum to industrialization. The Adler Company, founded by Heinrich Kleyer in 1880, rapidly developed into a leading manufacturer of bicycles, typewriters and cars. In 1914 every fifth car on German roads was an Adler. In 1881 the private company Philipp Abraham Cohen, under the management of Wilhelm Merton, became a shareholding company called Metallgesellschaft (The Metal Company). In 1894, Leopold Cassella & Comp. and Frankfurter Anilinfarbenfabrik (Aminobenzene Dye Company) merged to form Farbwerke (Dye Manufacturers) Cassella Mainkur, which achieved global fame under Leo Gans and Arthur and Carl von Weinberg.

Frankfurt also achieved considerable successes in the areas of culture and science. An Academy of Social and Commercial Studies was opened in 1901, founded by the City of Frankfurt and the Institut für Gemeinwohl (Institute for the Common Good), with the participation of the Chamber of Commerce and the Polytechnic Society. In 1907 Paul Ehrlich, head of the newly created Institute for Serum Research and Experimental Therapy discovered a chemotherapy compound called Salvarsan, for which he received the Nobel Prize. The medicine was first produced in 1910. Finally, on October 18, 1914, the University of Frankfurt was opened on the initiative of the mayor, Franz Adickes, as a combination of old and new foundations and institutions. It was the climax of Frankfurt's great tradition of endowments, and it was indeed the first endowment university in Germany. It has been called Johann Wolfgang Goethe University since 1932.

During the First World War, in 1917, Frankfurt became the target of eleven air raids with 109 bombs. 21 people died and 49 were injured. During the last two years of the war, in particular, Frankfurt's population suffered from a shortage of food and fuel.

During the civil unrest in November 1918 a Workers' and Soldiers' Council was formed which significantly influenced the political arena for over a year. However, its privileges were confined to the appointment of observers at city council meetings, so that it functioned as some kind of contingency administration. After the unrest, which even caused several deaths in March 1919, the Workers' Council was stripped of its military and political power by government troops in September 1919.

From April 6 to May 17, 1920, during a revolt on the Ruhr, Frankfurt was occupied by French troops in order to gain a military advantage. The insecure political and economic situation as well as the rapid acceleration of inflation gave rise to increasing political radicalism. As a counter movement against left-wing extremism, Frankfurt, too, saw the formation of far-right and nationalist groups. Whereas, in 1919, the Social Democrat Party (SPD) together with the Independent Social Democrats (USPD) still had about 50% of the votes, this contingent gradually dwindled from one election to the next. In the 1920s there was no longer any majority to the left of the conservative parties in Frankfurt.

The introduction of a temporary currency, the Rentenmark, and the end of inflation in early 1924, led to a phase of economic stabilization. The election of Louis Landmann as mayor of Frankfurt on October 2, 1924, heralded a new, albeit short, era. In 1925 Ernst May, a Frankfurt native, was appointed to the position of city architect. He set up a general development plan and initiated a wide-ranging housing construction program. This was also when the stadium was built. Situated in the woods, it was called Waldstadion (Woods Stadium) and was Germany's biggest sports compound at the time. The first Workers' Olympics took place here from July 24 to 28. Germany's first large-scale housing estate, Römerstadt, was built from 1927 to 1929 and entered the history of architecture as the "Frankfurt Model". From 1926 a magazine was published, called Das Neue Frankfurt (The New Frankfurt).

Radio Frankfurt, owned by the Südwestdeutscher Rundfunkdienst AG (South-West German Broadcasting Service) started its programmes as early as 1924. In the same year an Institute for Social Research was founded by Carl Grünberg and Max Horkheimer. The Institute was also joined by Friedrich Pollock and Theodor W. Adorno, members of the Frankfurt School of social critics.

In 1926, under the chairmanship of Louis Landmann, a society was founded to promote the construction of a motorway from Hamburg via Frankfurt to Basle. In 1927 Frankfurt became a centre of democratic culture and organized the Summer of Music with an international exhibition entitled Music in the Life of the Nations. For the first time the city awarded the Goethe Prize, intended for personalities whose creative activities are worthy of being associated with Goethe. Max Beckmann was professor at the Städelschule from 1925 to 1933.

In 1928, with the incorporation of Höchst and its suburbs as well as other small towns and villages, Frankfurt became Germany's largest city in terms of square mileage. At the same time it was expanding its position as a centre of the chemical industry. Following a merger of various German chemical companies in 1925, the management of the new company, IG Farbenindustrie, moved into its new administrative building in 1930.

From 1929 onwards the world economic crisis began to make itself felt in Frankfurt as well, starting with the collapse of the renowned insurance company Frankfurter Allgemeine Versicherungs AG. Further companies soon followed. In early 1933 unemployment in Frankfurt reached 70,179, out of a population of 556,000 that year.

The disastrous economic situation largely benefited political parties on the far right. Within a matter of years the Nazis (NSDAP, National Socialist German Workers' Party) emerged as the strongest party in Frankfurt. Their share of the votes in local and national elections rose from just under 5% in 1929 to 47.9% in 1933.

After local elections on March 12, 1933, the city council was dominated by the Nazis. On April 1, Hitler's SA troops began to enforce the boycotting of Jewish shops. Frankfurt University and its departments were occupied by Nazi students and members of the SA. Threatened by Fascist mob violence, Frankfurt's Jewish mayor, Landmann, fled to Berlin and then to Holland, where he died in March 1945. The new mayor of Frankfurt was Dr. Friedrich Krebs, Associate Judge of the Regional Court, an "old hand" in Germany's nationalist movement and a member of the NSDAP since 1929. During the next few months numerous members of the civil service were given notice, including all Jewish employees. One of the people who were made redundant was Georg Swarzenski, Director of the Städel since 1905. In 1938 the Contemporary Division of the Städtische Galerie (the City Gallery) in the Städel was closed. All works of supposedly "degenerate" artists were confiscated and auctioned abroad.

In September 1933 Frankfurt was visited by Hitler, who dug the first turf for the motorway between Hamburg, Frankfurt and Basle. The project had been planned for many years. In 1935 Frankfurt was declared the "City of German Trade". The original Frankfurt airport at Rebstock no longer had any potential for expansion and was therefore replaced by the Rhine Main Airport in 1936. Despite the frantic large-scale economic activities of the Nazis, the Frankfurt area was rather slow to recover from the damage of the world economic crisis.

The persecution of Jews entered a new stage in 1938. During the Night of the Pogrom Frankfurt's synagogues, too, were set on fire. At the beginning of the war repressive measures against Jews increased even further. On October 19, 1941, the first 1,200 Jews were deported to the ghetto in Łódź. Further deportations soon followed. By 1944, nearly 10,000 persons had been deported and murdered in concentration camps. More than 700 Frankfurt Jews avoided deportation through suicide.

Frankfurt survived the first few years of the Second World War largely unscathed, and the city did not become a target of major attacks until October 1943. The worst air raids took place in early 1944. On March 18, 22 and 24 the historic Altstadt (Old Town) with its half-timbered houses and the centre of Frankfurt were reduced to rubble. 90,000 homes were destroyed, 1,870 people died and 180,000 were made homeless.

The entry of American troops in Frankfurt on March 26, 1945 marked the end of both Nazi dictatorship and the Second World War.

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