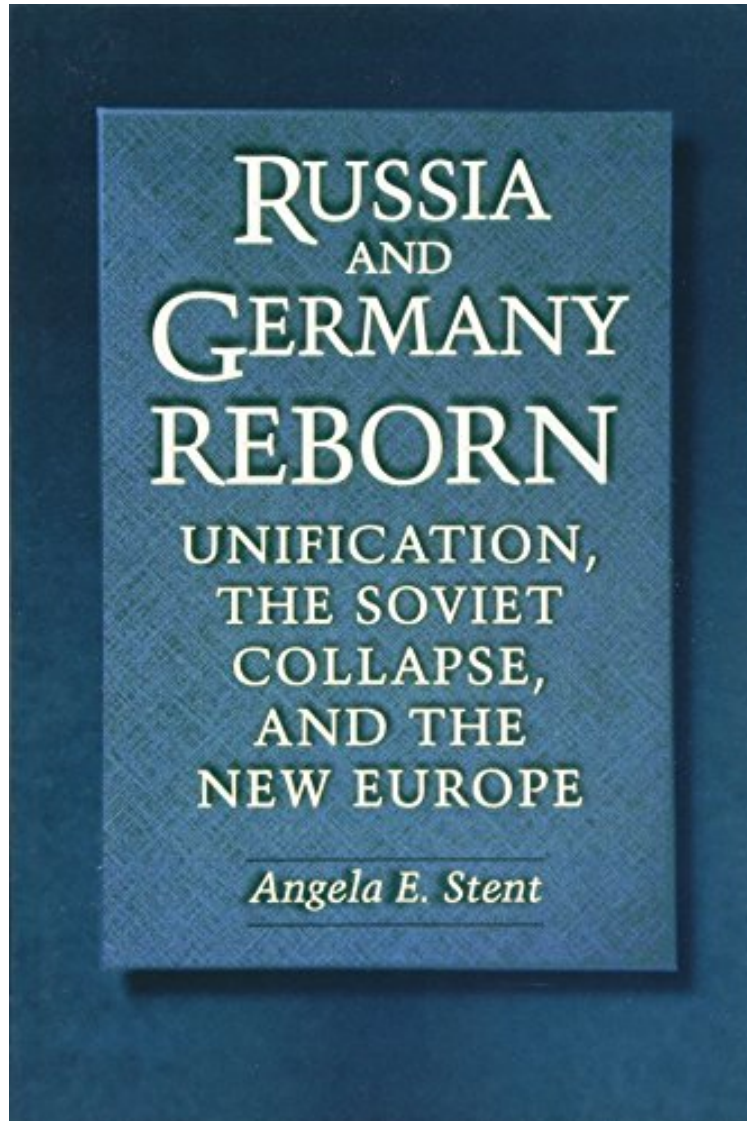


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## Russia and Germany Reborn

*Angela E. Stent*

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**Angela E. Stent : Russia and Germany Reborn** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Russia and Germany Reborn:

1 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Covers one of the great events of the 20th centuryBy Bruce P. BartenThe nations of the world are capable of undergoing great changes, while still being subject to the kind of scholarly considerations that Angela E. Stent observes in *RUSSIA AND GERMANY REBORN / UNIFICATION, THE SOVIET COLLAPSE, AND THE NEW EUROPE* (Yale University Press, 1999). Those who would accuse the

Bush administration of adopting a policy proclaiming the need for an American victory in Iraq solely to boost the popularity of an endeavor which involved military personnel writing \*we\*Iraqis\* editorials to be planted in Iraqi newspapers to tell Iraqis what they ought to be thinking might be interested in how actual domestic considerations in the Soviet Union prevented Gorbachev and Shevardnadze from following the advice of those in Russia who had spent a lifetime opposing German reunification. As "the Baltic states became increasingly assertive about their right to become independent" (p. 123), the hardline critics of Gorbachev "came from institutions such as the Communist Party, the KGB, and the military, which had coercive resources not available to the reformers, and were thus more threatening to Gorbachev." (p. 123). Politics in the Soviet Union was heading for an open split: "Indeed, the key to understanding the lack of a coherent negotiating strategy on the Soviet side during the first seven months of 1990 is the growing domestic crisis within the Soviet Union. By this time, Gorbachev had alienated many of the reformers who had initially supported his programs. They felt that he had betrayed his promises and remained too wedded to the domination of the Communist Party and to 'old' thinking. Many of Gorbachev's leading reformist critics had opted for political careers within the Russian Federation, whose newly elected legislature had in March chosen Boris Yeltsin, former colleague and now Gorbachev nemesis, as their president. Gorbachev's reformist critics focused on the national question--the desire of the constituent republics of the USSR, Russian and non-Russian, for independence--to argue their case against the Soviet leader. Eventually, at the Twenty-eighth Party Congress in July, Yeltsin and his allies left the Communist Party, declaring open warfare on Gorbachev." (pp. 122-123). There will soon be elections in Iraq, perhaps determining who will call the shots there for the next four years, but possibly setting up a situation in which everyone elected will find themselves caught in a spiral more like the Soviet collapse than like Germany reborn. America's interest in maintaining Iraq as a state in opposition to Iran is likely to be an early casualty, as the new rulers of Iraq are far more likely to find kinship with Iran and millions of pilgrims than with America and thousands of soldiers, mercenaries, and embassy officials, some of whom might work undercover for the CIA, due to the lack of other Americans in the area. RUSSIA AND GERMANY REBORN mentions the Treaty of "Rapallo in 1922, when the Soviet commissar of foreign affairs, Georgi Chicherin, managed to persuade the reluctant German Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau to sign a separate German-Soviet treaty instead of an agreement with the Western powers who were negotiating in nearby Locarno." (p. 6). "It provided merely for the resumption of full diplomatic relations, the cancellation of mutual claims, and the granting of most-favored-nation status, and it was separate from the secret military collaboration. Yet it symbolized for the Western powers the ultimate act of perfidy--the Soviet state, in its first diplomatic triumph, making a separate deal with Germany, persuading Germany to reject its western and eastern neighbors and collaborate with Russia to the detriment of European security." (p. 7). American policy in the Middle East has placed a lot of emphasis on getting Israel accepted as a state, first by Egypt, then I'm a little fuzzy on how well Jordan is in this mix. A hundred years ago there were more Jews in Baghdad than in Jerusalem, but Iraqis spreading rumors that Jews will return to Baghdad as soon as things settle down are more likely to raise eyebrows than positive expectations. Freedom means that unofficial politics might well determine whether there is open warfare or just a series of votes in parliament about nothing going nowhere. Will it be possible for a budget to be adopted without making some key decisions about security, the kind of safety which America has been far too dedicated to political solipsism to provide to Iraqis? Scholars ought to be raising questions when governmental decisions are pushed in political directions like flat tax, propagandizing the world, and the complaint that independent prosecutors criminalize politics. Actually, this book is about "380,000 Soviet troops and their dependents on GDR soil; four-power rights over Berlin and Germany; and the possibility of stalling arms control talks, both nuclear and conventional, that the West was anxious to conclude." (p. 123). It just strikes me that we were so much more intelligent then, than now.

The relationship between Russia and Germany has been pivotal in some of the most fateful events of the twentieth century: the two World Wars, the Cold War, and the emergence of a new Europe from the ashes of communism. This is the first book to examine the recent evolution of that tense and often violent relationship from both the Russian and German perspectives. Angela Stent combines interviews with key international figures--including Mikhail Gorbachev--with insights gleaned from newly declassified archives in East Germany and her own profound understanding of Russian-German relations. She presents a remarkable review of the events and trends of the past three decades: the onset of détente, the unification of Germany, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the rise of an uncertain new European order. Stent reveals the chaos and ambivalence behind the Soviet negotiating strategy that led--against Gorbachev's wishes--to that old Soviet nightmare, a united Germany in NATO. She shows how German strength and Russian weakness have governed the delicate dance of power between recently unified Germany and newly democratized Russia. Finally, she lays out several scenarios for the future of Russian-German relations--some optimistic and others darkened by the threat of a new authoritarianism. *Russia and Germany Reborn* is crucial reading for anyone interested in a relationship that changed the course of the twentieth century and that will have a powerful impact on the next.

From Publishers Weekly After two chapters that recapitulate WWI, WWII, the division of Germany, the Cold War and

the era of detente, Stent (From Embargo to Ostpolitik), a professor of government at Georgetown, turns her attention to the course of Russian-German relations since Gorbachev ascended to power in Moscow. She emphasizes both the continuity and the unexpectedness in relations between Russia and Germany once Gorbachev's domestic program of perestroika began to bleed into the realm of foreign affairs. Gorbachev and the Communist Party, she writes, had no intention of facilitating the reunification of Germany, but history outran their capacity to manage events. Meanwhile, Germany, under Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, was determined to see unification, whatever the economic cost. Because Russia was beset with conflicts between Gorbachev's redefined foreign policy and increasing domestic turmoil, Gorbachev and his foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, were forced to make uncomfortable geopolitical concessions in return for German aid. Following events up to the present, with particular focus on the expansion of NATO?over the strenuous but impotent objections of Boris Yeltsin?into the former Soviet bloc, Stent provides a concise history of Russian-German relations after the Cold War and persuasively argues that, whatever transpires, the relationship between the two countries will be as decisive in shaping the European future as it was in shaping the past. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Stent combines a detailed account of Soviet politics and decision-making up to German unification with thoughtful reflection on why this thoroughly unimagined outcome came about. The prose and tale are highly readable, not least because the gap between the scale of the stakes involved and the drift and lameness of Soviet foreign policy is so stunning. But Stent does not stop here. She traces the Russian-German relationship since unification and ponders the place of both countries in a very different Europe."--Robert Legvold, Foreign Affairs"[A] concise, well-written, and illuminating study.... Professor Stent is one of the few American scholars who combine expertise on Russia and on East and West Germany.... She has made the most of all these strengths to produce a fine, readable, concise yet comprehensive history.... A well-rounded and well-researched account of the crucial Soviet-German side of the story."--Stephen F. Szabo, Survival"Excellent.... Understanding the historic transformation of the German-Russian relationship is reason enough to read Ms. Stent's intelligent and perceptive book..... Yet the more compelling reason to read it is for its history."--Frederick Kempe, Wall Street Journal"This is a book that helps to unravel the puzzle of how the Cold War's unlikely end came about, and suggests directions for future archival research of how a unified Germany and a post-communist Russia emerged, without anybody paying for these astounding transformations with their lives."--Jeffrey Herf, The New Republic"A highly accessible and valuable account of the German-Russian relationship. Well researched and enhanced by interviews with leading participants, this book's ability to bring order to the complexities of a history marked by so much tragedy and so much potential will be appreciated by students and scholars alike."--James M. Goldgeier, Slavic "Angela E. Stent deftly takes the reader through the complex events that led to the German reunification. It was never as inevitable as it seemed in retrospect. . . . Much delicate diplomatic work was necessary, and Stent expertly chronicles the twists and turns and the interplay of interests."--Ralph Amelan, The Jerusalem PostFrom the Back Cover"Stent's book is a significant contribution to the field of Soviet-German relations. Her knowledge of Russian and German is a major asset that allows her to use a wide variety of materials that add much to our knowledge of German and Russian policies. The book is indispensable reading for those interested in Soviet policy toward German unification."--F. Stephen Larrabee, International Policy Department, RAND