

# How Germany became an economically powerful nation



**The *Gründerzeit***  
[Die Gründerzeit]  
How industrialisation changed Germany

Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt  
224 pages  
20 b/w illustrations  
Format 13,5 x 21,5 cm  
March 2019

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Industrialisation had a late start in Germany – but then it moved forward all the faster. From the middle of the 19th century onwards manufactories of insignificant size are turning into huge factories; and global brands like AEG, BASF, Bosch, Krupp and Siemens are getting established. This way, entrepreneurs are as important as politicians, labour leaders are now powerful men. The population is growing, and so is the standard of living, and there are now more wealthy people – but also an army of millions of poor; and in the middle classes a bourgeois culture is finding its feet, with its own literature and architecture.

*Spiegel* writers and historians show here how radically Germany changed in the Gründerzeit – and how in the process we became one of the most economically successful nations in the world.