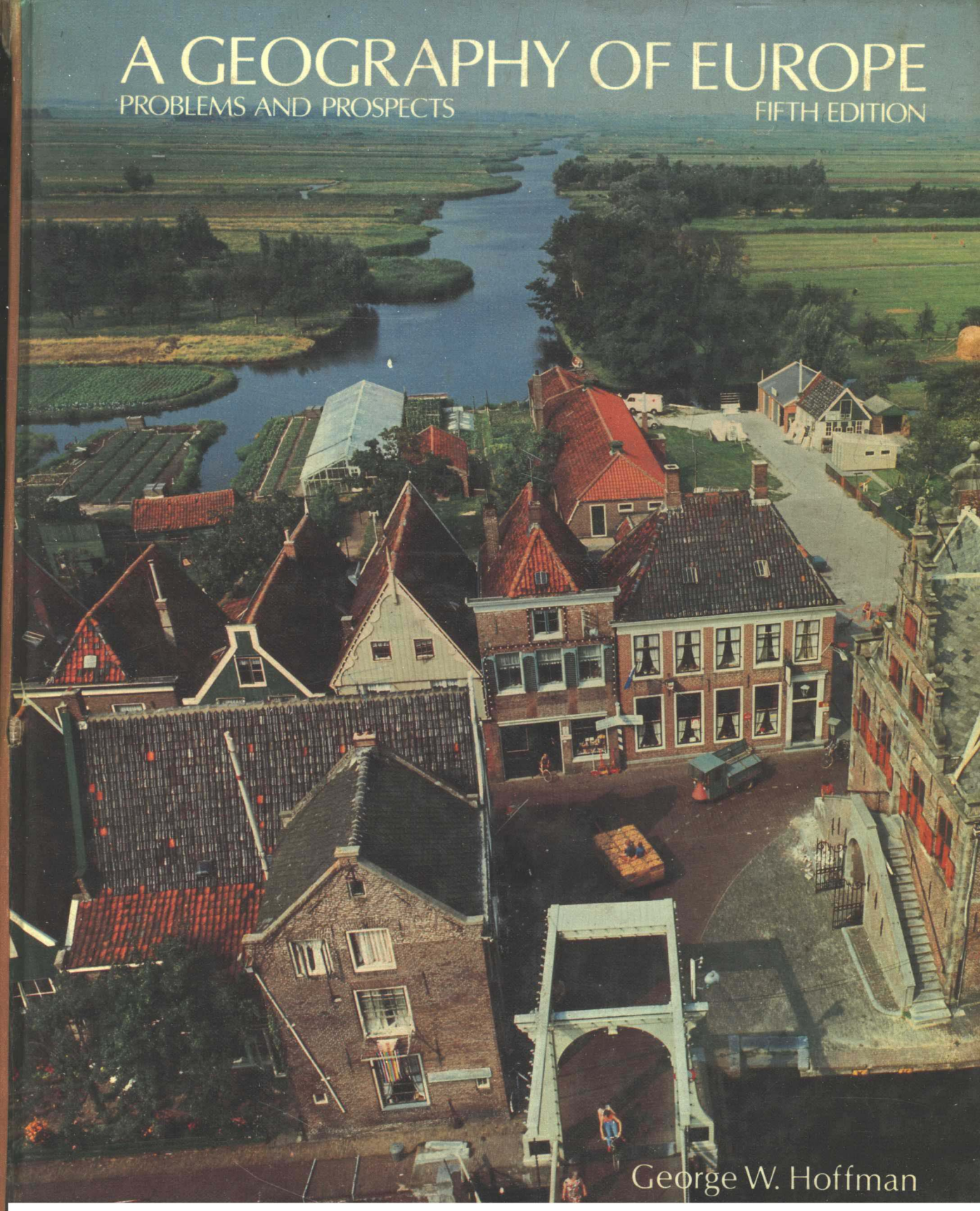


A GEOGRAPHY OF EUROPE

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

FIFTH EDITION



George W. Hoffman

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edited by

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John Wiley & Sons

New York Chichester Brisbane Toronto Singapore

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data:

Main entry under title:

A geography of Europe.

Includes bibliographies and indexes

1. Europe — Description and travel — 1971 –

I. Hoffman, George Walter, 1914 – II. Davies
Christopher S. (Christopher Shane)

D923.G46 1983 914 83 6964

ISBN 0-471-89708-6

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6

PREFACE

For the fifth time since World War II this collaborative interpretation of the human geography of Europe is offered to students and other interested readers. As in its 1953 first edition, this edition again presents studies of major regions, emphasizing their social, economic, and political geography within their physical and historical context. In focusing on the contemporary scene, we discuss in detail the specific European problems and themes illuminated by geographical analysis.

Preparing this edition has enabled us to account for trends and changes that have become more and more evident since 1976. At that time the destruction and impoverishment of World War II had given way to remarkable industrial and commercial expansion which provided full employment everywhere and supported rising living standards—in some Western European countries among the highest in the world. Policies pursued since the early 1970s brought about closer cooperation between nations: for example, the European Economic Community expanded with the entry of Britain, Denmark, Ireland, and recently Greece. Spain and Portugal are discussing the possibility of joining the

European Community. Since the late 1970s Europe's face to the world has been marked by features less confident, less resolute, and less harmonized than in the prospering 1960s and the first part of the 1970s. The traditional force of nationalism, hallmark of separatist policies, persists alike in the West and the East, and many basic questions, some clearly rooted in their long and tumultuous history and in their variegated geographical environment, continue to challenge solution.

Both economically and politically Europe has suffered major changes in quite recent years. On one hand, the U.S.S.R. relentlessly applies its economic plans designed to maximize its economic and military strength, but suffers failures of grain harvests and of production goals of certain fuels and raw materials and manufactured goods. On the other hand, Western Europe faces a drastic slowdown of its economic progress and some decline from high living standards. Certainly among the causes of these changes are (1) the failure of the Western world to narrow the chasm that separates it from the so-called Third World, (2) the decision of Arab and other oil producers, by raising oil prices

drastically twice during the 1970s, and (3) with the price decline of oil since early 1983. Since the mid-1970s, lowering employment has become a serious affliction in Western Europe. To the social and economic waste of unemployment has been added the many troubles brought about by rising inflation and the social difficulties and conflicts of interest that this generates. We should recognize that the East European socialist Communist countries are also much affected by the economic stagnation in the Western countries and their difficulties, including the high foreign debts, but have the advantage at present of a dependable, though reduced, supply of oil and natural gas and a variety of minerals from the Soviet Union.

Following the economic difficulties since the mid-1970s, both Western and Eastern Europe's future appears somewhat uncertain and unpredictable, more so in the light of its political difficulties and problems. Many sobering factors exist that again emphasize the need for high statesmanship: the weakened economies of most Western European countries and the resultant political instability (e.g., the future of democracy in Spain); the impact of the Polish crisis on both the Eastern and Western European countries and even on the Soviet Union; the increasing fuel and raw material dependence on Third World countries and the Soviet Union; questions of economic relations with the United States over subsidized imports (e.g., steel and food); the long-term impact of a U.S. embargo on trade with the Soviet Union as a result of the Polish upheavals and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan; and the impact of the Falklands crisis showing Britain's determination to uphold the right of self-determination by sending the British fleet to the other end of the world and receiving strong support for its policies from all members of the EC and NATO. While Europe's record is one of continuing challenges to be faced and overcome, it is also one of resilience, compromise, and successful survival and gives every promise of meeting these challenges.

The fourth edition differed in one major aspect from earlier editions, because of our reassessing the traditional approach to regional geography. It became important to make some basic organizational alterations expressed in new background chapters of the historical and physical geography, as well as chapters that systematically analyze the social and economic changes of postwar Europe with a view toward possible developments and their problems during the latter part of this century. This fifth edition has updated these discussions further, taking into account Europe's present reality. In addition, increased attention has been given to relations between the Soviet Union and the rest of Europe. We cannot emphasize enough that discussing Europe without the Soviet Union is unthinkable, inasmuch as many of the problems of Eastern Europe are influenced by Moscow and its policy directives, and Western Europe is often directly affected. At a time when trade and financial relations between the U.S.S.R. and its Eastern European allies and most Western European countries have been greatly expanded, it is especially important that the readers acquaint themselves with the Soviet Union and its special strengths and problems as geographers see them.

The depth of regional economic, social, and political problems; the solution of problems relating to agrarian and industrial change; regional backwardness; increased urbanization and its effects; environmental dereliction; and the question of energy availability on which Europe's prosperity so much depends are so important that the various authors have carefully updated their analyses on these topics. Because of the varied nature of Europe's regional differences, with their divergent problems and possible future developments, the authors have used their own approaches to their chapters. Hence by design the regional discussions in this edition do not follow a uniform pattern, nor do they all address the same problems, though many problems occur in more than one region. Each regional chapter contains case studies of prob-

lem topics to which students and teachers can add their examples. An up-to-date bibliography at the end of each chapter should be of assistance.

Finally, our last chapter, "Prospects for Europe," depicts a Europe as divided as ever despite its communality of purpose. Although Europe remains without parallel a politically comparted continent, there are at least signs of closer linkages and cooperation between some countries of Western Europe united within the European Communities and cooperation be-

tween western and eastern countries, notably in trade, exchanges of technology, and tourism.

Each chapter's text is closely integrated with its maps (most of them originals) and numerous photographs. Place-names in the text and on maps generally conform to the accepted usage found in English-language atlases and National Geographic Society maps.

George W. Hoffman

Austin, Texas
1983

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editor's appreciation is expressed to each of his associates for their scholarly contributions and for patience and cooperation during the intensive work of preparing the revisions for the fifth edition. Professor Emeritus W. Gordon East and Professor Vincent H. Malmström have been authors since the first edition, and their continued contributions and cooperation are much appreciated. Dean Guido G. Weigend regretfully could not participate in this edition, but his permission to use material prepared for earlier editions is gratefully acknowledged. The assistance received from various government agencies in Europe and in the United States, the Economic Commission of Europe of the United Nations, the European Communities both from

their Washington and Brussels office, research centers in both Western and Eastern Europe, and many colleagues for their assistance, which was essential to the completion of this book. The contribution by my research assistant, Walter Boettcher, in compiling statistical data is especially acknowledged.

Last, but certainly not least, I gratefully acknowledge the invaluable help from my wife, Viola, during the many months of manuscript preparation. She spent untold hours serving as typist, research assistant, and editor and, in no small way, *A Geography of Europe* in all five editions has become as much her book as mine.

G.W.H.

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HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

A glance at the many sharply distinguishable cultural landscapes of Europe and their many elements emphasizes how clearly the handwriting of history appears on its map. Wooded and pastoral plateaus have become populous regions of coal mining and of heavy industry. Wide areas of steppe, linking Siberia and central Asia with southern Russia and the Danube Basin, have passed from the control of the nomad horseman to that of the settled agriculturist and the town-dwelling industrialist. The geographical values of different parts of the continent show continual change throughout history: the Mediterranean lands, for example, no longer dominate in population, in political energy, and in civilization generally. Sixteen percent of the world's population resides in Europe, distributed in widely varying density — here concentrated in a specialized industrial or intensively developed agricultural area, there thinly spread over a rural landscape of mountain valleys, widespread forests, heath, moor, or marsh.

The countryside of Europe reveals many varieties of rural settlement and urban forms — metropolitan giants mask with their buildings and transport lines the nature and form of the

underlying rock, which they yet dare not wholly ignore. The landscape of *conurbation*, where continuous urban areas formed by the coalescence of two or more towns, must also engage attention. And scattered villages, hamlets, and single farms pose intricate distribution problems to the solution of which agrarian history, related to the variety of physical environments, can contribute much.

Many other features of human geography are rooted in the past — the ports and resorts of the coastlands, and the patterns of inland transport by rail, road, and water; the inhabitants of Europe themselves are still separable into ethnic, linguistic, national, and state groups, the locations of which were first sketched long ago.

The concern of the student of human geography is with the study of people and their settlements, their forms of economy, and their modes of travel and transport. Under these headings — settlement, economy, and circulation — are groups of problems that warrant separate discussion. Consideration of the peoples of Europe will refer to the population growth and distribution, to *rural and urban settlement*, and to the nations, languages, and ethnic types as distributed over the continent. Similarly, the

variant patterns of agriculture, industry, and commerce, the patterns of transport on which they depend—all these will be related to their physical background and their development through time.

THE PEOPLES OF EUROPE

Prehistoric Settlement

Geography need concern itself little with the *Paleolithic period*,¹ which despite its 500,000 years has left virtually no mark on the landscape of the continent. Paleolithic man inhabited areas of the continent not covered by the Fennoscandian glaciers,² in conditions probably tundra-like or, at best, humid oceanic, as in the Mediterranean peninsulas. An archaeologist estimated that the total energy at man's disposal in Europe in the Lower Paleolithic period—and all of it was human—did not exceed that of a four-engined plane; as an agent of geographical change, therefore, Paleolithic man can be discounted.

Mesolithic culture, the transitional phase between the Upper Paleolithic and the Neolithic deserves notice. When the glaciers had receded from the North German Lowland and the Baltic area, and forests were moving in, immigrants from the south settled along seacoasts and along the banks of numerous lakes and rivers. From 8000 B.C. until 3000 B.C. these prehistoric tribes lived by hunting, fishing, and foraging, presumably ignorant of cultivation and of metals, and with no domesticated animals except the dog; tools and weapons were fashioned of rough stone, flint and bone—they had not yet learned to polish stone but only to flake and chip it—nor, with few exceptions, were they familiar with pot making. This way of life lingered on, especially in northwestern Europe, long after the Neolithic culture—based on cultivation and pastoral husbandry—had become

established in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and northwestern India.

The climatic and vegetational background of the Mesolithic and succeeding cultures of postglacial Europe is now being revealed in clear outline, thanks to the microscopic study of pollen grains preserved in datable layers of peat and other organic or semiorganic sediments. It is now possible to envisage in the relationship of time not only the main fluctuations of climate since the final retreat of the Fennoscandian and Alpine glaciers but also the various stages in the spread of forest-forming trees and the corresponding culture periods of the archaeologist. Four successive climatic phases have been distinguished: *Boreal*, *Atlantic*, *sub-Boreal*, and *sub-Atlantic*; although the third of these is less clear. Compared with the cold pre-Boreal period, the Boreal period was dry and increasingly warm; the Atlantic was wet and warm; the sub-Boreal was cool but perhaps not so dry as formerly believed, while the sub-Atlantic, which lasted into the historical period of the Roman Empire, was marked by cold and moist conditions. Precise calendar dates for these periods are as yet difficult to determine. Nor is it clear that the specified climates apply farther afield than northern, western, and central Europe. But the succession of climatic changes is by now broadly established, along with corresponding changes of the vegetation cover.

There were relatively few indigenous tree species in Europe, in contrast with North America, during the Tertiary period, and even fewer today. This is not the result of its present climate nor of the adverse conditions of the Great Ice Age; it is due to two barriers aligned east-west. The middle mountain ranges and the Mediterranean Sea checked the retreat of tree species as climate worsened with the onset of the Great Ice Age; and hence there were fewer species to immigrate back over the continent from the southwest and southeast as the climate improved in the postglacial period. In the Boreal phase, spruce, fir, pine, birch, and hazel established themselves as far north as central Sweden and Finland. In the succeeding Atlantic phase,

¹ *Paleolithic*, *Mesolithic*, and *Neolithic* are terms for prehistoric settlement periods, periods before written records were established.

² For geological terms, see Chapter 2 and the Glossary.

these gave pride of place to mixed forests of oak, elm, linden, and common alder. The beech, especially sensitive to temperature and traveling fastest by way of river valleys, spread into western and central Europe from the Danube Basin during the sub-Boreal and sub-Atlantic periods. Both Mesolithic Europe, which may be dated to the late Boreal and the Atlantic phases, and Neolithic Europe, falling within the late Atlantic and the sub-Boreal phases, must be thought of as thickly clad with trees and undergrowth, excepting only in areas where tree growth was precluded by high altitude, bad drainage, or exposure to persistent gales. Thanks to pollen analysis, even the considerable areas stretching from southern Russia across the continent to the English Channel, where layer upon layer of loess had been deposited by wind during the Great Ice Age, are now known to have been covered, not with a steppe-heath flora, but with beech, hawthorn, juniper, yew, box, and ash. Also, the Mediterranean peninsulas had then an abundance of forest and scrub, rooted in an ample soil which subsequently as a result of forest destruction has been largely lost.

Attention can be paid here to only three particular aspects of the Neolithic and Bronze ages: the terrain of travelways (i.e., natural routes), the areas occupied, and the mineral sources exploited—these being directly connected with the development of Europe as a home of man. Recent refinements in the dating of prehistoric remains challenge the widely held view of the diffusion of techniques and cultures from certain primary centers of progressive culture in Egypt and southwestern Asia. Whereas it once seemed clear that cultural innovations in Europe came successively later with increasing distance from these centers, it now appears likely that the innovations occurred sporadically and that this simple generalization is no more than doubtfully valid. It is clear, however, that the new techniques of the Bronze and Neolithic ways of life in turn were slowly adapted to the different environments Europe presented.

The Neolithic culture, as it developed between 6000 and 3000 B.C. in its original locales, saw a major revolutionary change in the use by humankind of its environs. Its economic base was in food production by cultivation and stock raising, and its social expression was at first the village, and later the town. It brought technical inventions and new crafts; wheel-turned pottery and kiln-fired bricks, spinning and weaving, building, writing, trade, social organization, and the fashioning of works of art.

All these new triumphs of human ingenuity, to which the beginnings of metallurgy were later added, characterized the Neolithic culture or civilization. Given the original locations of Neolithic culture, it is not surprising to find that the new culture was first to appear within the European realm in Crete and other islands and coastlands by the Aegean Sea, whence it spread by sea and by overland routes. But it is not wholly clear that northwestern Europe was the last to receive it.

The land and water routes by which men and ideas seem to have spread into and throughout the continent have been projected on the basis of the distribution of known prehistoric sites and artifacts (Fig. 1-1). Prehistoric peoples were outlining the main areas of human settlement and linking them by sea and land channels of communication that have remained in continual use. *The areas occupied* by European peoples in the various stages of the Neolithic and Bronze cultures can be generalized about only at great risk, for several millennia are involved and the evidence is incomplete. There is, however, a striking correspondence between some areas settled in Neolithic times and certain areas of porous or pervious rocks. This applies particularly to the loess lands, but also to areas of sand, gravel, loam, limestone and sandstone, all of which were not only well drained, but developed light-textured soils, easy to work with simple stone or wooden hoes.

The relative facility of cultivating such soils would seem to have been the main attraction for human occupation of these areas; the absence of forest cover and its replacement by