

RUDOLF KJELLÉN AND GEOPOLITICS



- Rudolf Kjellén (1864 – 1922) was a Swedish professor of political science, geographer and politician and the student of Friedrich Ratzel
- Kjellén coined the term 'geopolitics' in 1899, meaning "the science of the state as a realm in space"
- He was a Swedish nationalist and a Conservative member of Swedish parliament

1

STATE AS A LIVING FORM



- In *The State as a Living Form* (1917), Kjellén articulated a number of concepts explaining and justifying German expansionism
- One was the combination of Raum/Lebensraum or "living room" and "space" (combined into Reich – Realm)
- German state needed the geographical space at the expense of other countries and thus it needs a strong military and centralized governmental body

2

THE SURVIVAL OF STATES



- States are living organisms and they compete for space, in order "to become organically united with the soil"
- "Small states seem to have the same fate in store for them in the world of politics as primitive peoples have in the world of culture. They are pushed to the periphery, maintained in marginal areas and border zones, or they disappear"

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KJELLÉN'S INFLUENCE



- Kjellén reinforced the ideas of Ratzel, but he also made an even stronger case for German expansionism
- Kjellén's ideas were a perfect fit for Nazi Germany because they emphasised the role of strong states and the irrelevance of weak ones.
- "The more the world became organized, the more the vast spaces, as large states, made their influence felt, and the more the development of the large state, the less the importance of the small state"