

Free city is an independent or nearly independent city-state with its own government. Many such city-states developed in Germany in the Middle Ages. In the 1200's, the first German free cities received independence from all authority except the Holy Roman emperor as a reward for helping him against the nobles. In 1871, the free cities Bremen, Hamburg, and Lubeck became states of the German Empire. Danzig (now Gdansk, Poland) and Fiume (now Rijeka, Croatia) were free cities for a time under the League of Nations. Today, Vatican City may be considered a free city. See also CITY-STATE; GDANSK; VATICAN CITY.

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