

The First Unification of Germany

Introduction

For the Spring Term 2018 of Lewes U3A, a group of about 30 members contributed either individually or in groups to a course on the first unification of Germany, covering the period 1750 to 1890.

This was the third consecutive yearly course held on German history.

The following is a collection of the texts that were available in digital format. These were either designed for spoken presentation together with a PowerPoint Presentation, which was not possible to reproduce here, or as handouts. They run consecutively in order to form a booklet for individual, private, educational use for U3A members only.

Considerable gratitude is expressed to members for the many hours of work represented here and the enjoyment hereby given.

Michael Austin
Convener

Course Outline

Lewes U3A Spring Term 2018:

At the beginning of the 19th century there were more than 300 hundred individual German-speaking political entities. By the end of the 19th century a single united German state was the most powerful country in mainland Europe. How did this happen? Why did this happen? Why did it happen when it did? Why was this important?

In a 5 session course beginning on January 17 and biweekly thereafter these questions will be tackled, with contributions from course members and with group discussion. A suggested list of sources will be circulated before the course starts. U3A members

interested in contributing to the course or suggesting topics not covered below should contact the Convener, Michael Austin.

Suggested Course Outline (Flexible)

Session 1: Introduction. The contextual background; The Holy Roman Empire, The Hapsburgs, Why 'Germany' did not exist as a single entity. The problem with languages. (MWA) *Division of course members into groups.*

Session 2: The French Revolution and the German Enlightenment. (PH). The Rise of Prussia and first attempts at unification (MWA)

Session 3: Social, political and technological change before and after the 1848 revolution. The customs union. The significance of the coming of the railway. Military matters. Climate and famine. (CB and others)

Session 4: The role of Otto von Bismarck(ID). Wars with Denmark, Austria and France. The Rise of Nationalism. Proclamation of the German Empire. Central Government and the Civil Service.

Session 5: Forming a nation. The *Kulturkampf*. The legacy of unification. Different ways at looking at German history. Concluding discussion.

Some Suggested Sources

'The Unification of Germany' Michael Gorman. Cambridge Topics in History (All you need to know)

'History of Germany 1780-1918' David Blackbourn. (Three editions available – very detailed)

'The Holy Roman Empire' Peter Wilson. Penguin (recommended by Ian Douglas)

From Vienna to Versailles' LCB Seaman. Routledge

'The Protestant Reformation in Europe' Andrew Johnson. Seminar Studies in History

'The Course of German History' AJP Taylor. (AJP Taylor had strong views on history)

'The History of Germany since 1789' Golo Mann. Penguin

'The Thirty Years War' CV Wedgwood

'Bismarck, a life' Jonathan Steinberg. OUP

'Bismarck, the man and statesman' AJP Taylor. Penguin

'German Essays on History: Hegel, Ranke, Spengler etc' No 49 The German Library (You would need to be very keen!)

'The Hapsburg Monarchy' AJP Taylor. Penguin

'Vanished Kingdoms' Norman Davies. Penguin (Good on Borussia)

'Iron Kingdom' Christopher Clark. (The definitive book on Prussia?)

'The Rise and Fall of Prussia' Sebastian Haffner. (Has a good chronology at the back)

Prussia, Art and Architecture. Published by Könemann. (The ultimate coffee table book)

Wikipedia – 'Unification of Germany' plus the many hyperlinks

'The European subsistence crisis of 1845-1850: a comparative perspective' Vanhaute. (Available on line – just google)

'Nationalism, Power and Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Germany' John Breuilly. German Historical Institute. (2006 Annual Lecture)

'Germany: Memories of a Nation. Neil MacGregor. Penguin

‘Forgotten Land’ Max Egremont. (Prussia as it is today by Lord Egremont of Petworth)

‘Microcosm, Portrait of a Central European City’ Norman Davies and Roger Moorhouse (gives a very good understanding of a part of Central Europe that was Germany).

Session 1: The German Lands 1750 to 1800

Setting the Scene

At the end of the 18th century and the beginning of our story there were no separate countries called Germany or Austria. There was only something called the Holy Roman Empire. It is possible as we tell its story that you may wish to mentally compare it with a latter day organisation the European Union with its similarities and differences. But as the French enlightenment writer Voltaire said: ‘This agglomeration which was called...the Holy Roman Empire was in no way Holy, nor Roman nor an Empire’.

To which we could add that neither was it the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, as no such nation existed at this time. The ‘German Nation’ bit in the recent opinion of a German academic was purely spin to bolster the prestige of the Habsburgs and that in the 18th century the name Holy Roman Empire of the German nation never had official status, as documents of that period were thirty times likely to omit the national suffix as include it. So what then was the Holy Roman Empire?

It was as our map shows a disparate mixture of dynastic states such as the Kingdom of Prussia (in blue) itself, not neatly parcelled in a discrete area but mainly in the east but also in the west. Separated by another independent state the Electorate of Hanover. A majority of

the land area was occupied by the Hapsburg Monarch in orange, not called the Austrian Empire until 1804, and Austria-Hungary 1867. Then we have the Kingdoms of Saxony, Bavaria and Wuerttemberg all independent, wealthy and important and rivals. We then have a graduation of smaller principalities, ecclesiastical territories that were important such as Mainz and Cologne to smaller entities of only a few hundred people. There were also 51 imperial cities, some powerful such as Hamburg and Frankfurt and some past their best by date such as Nuremberg. There were lots of independent towns and finally a thousand knights and counts in this feudal time and whose estates were theoretically sovereign territories. That gives us a total of about 350 separate entities. Even the exact number is variable according to what criteria one uses.

What did they have in common? Apart from living next to each other in central Europe: very little. If one looks at a misleading Wikipedia German language map from the 19th Century one would say they all spoke German so they had a lot in common so unification would seem a logical end point and we could finish our course today. Not so. Until about 1800 standard German was almost solely a written language. People in urban northern Germany spoke dialects very different from Standard German and they learnt it almost as a foreign language. The actual pronunciation of Standard German varied from region to region. The most extreme case can today be seen between modern Germany and Switzerland. Both using the exactly the same Hochdeutsch for written work but the pronunciation of the spoken word is very different in each country. For our purposes in understanding the difficulties involved in any sort of coming together a list of languages spoken in the area we are looking at gives us 30 different languages and gives us a better understanding of languages spoken. Most had the German language but the boundary of the HRE included Czechs, Poles, Slovenes, Italians, Walloons and Flemings and

Yiddish speakers Also as we can see in this subsequent slide many German speaking areas were excluded from the German Confederation. A particular example of this and covered in Norman Davies and Roger Moorhouse's book 'Microcosm', is the capital of Silesia, part of the HRE, once Austrian, then German and now Polish which had Polish, Czech, Austrian, German, Jewish inhabitants who each in their own language called the city Wrotizla, Vretslav, Presslaw, Bresslau, and until finally today Wroclaw. Lastly another indication of the fragmentation of the states we are talking about that eventually became known as Germany was at the time we are speaking was that they kept no common time. This as we shall hear was one of the major benefits of the coming of the railways.

The only thing that linked these 350 entities was nominal loyalty to the Holy Roman Emperor, who was always a Hapsburg and therefore a Catholic, but even then these allegiances were divided as some of the German Princes ruled in Denmark, Sweden, Poland and Britain. Thus a British monarch from 1714 was also Duke of Hanover and so was an elector of the Holy Roman Emperor.

Why were there so many political units? Firstly, as we have seen because of the fragmentation caused by different dialects and languages but mainly because historically sovereignty did not go together with a nicely parcelled up block of territory as we expect to see today. To take one example: the Palatinate; the name itself tells you it is going to be complicated. A palatinate means territory under the jurisdiction of a count palatine. A palatine was a high level official attached to imperial or royal courts in Europe since Roman times. This particular palatinate contained 37 different jurisdictions in 127 different parcels of land. The lords included the Archduke of Austria and the King of France plus local princes, church foundations and imperial knights. One village of only 50 Families had 4 different lords. Each separate political entity owned land here, a wood in the next

valley, rental property in a separate town. Even big territorial areas were divided for example Prussia as we have seen was into separate eastern and western areas.

The functioning of the Empire itself was as complex and to modern eyes disconcerting as the component parts. The emperor was feudal overlord of the empire and was the executive authority. But he had conflicting interests as he was also ruler of the Austrian Habsburg lands. The empire was divided into 10 circles for administrative purposes. This compounded problems as these artificial circles cut across the already fragmented territorial boundaries. Each circle was required to recruit and provision troops for the imperial army on request. This produced a strong theoretical force, but in reality the more powerful rulers either provided or not, soldiers according to their own interests. Even if an army could be assembled in theory, in practice it was disjointed as officers were chosen by quota from the imperial estates rather than need or merit.

The legislature was equally dysfunctional. The Reichstag (parliament) met in Regensburg. Not all the ambassadors turned up, some were delegated to speak for several different interests. Sometimes there were no more than two dozen representatives. There were three houses, each separately representing in turn imperial electors (of which there were 9, including the King of England from 1714), princes and cities. The Reichstag was in permanent session from 1663 to 1806 but achieved little. It achieved little because the composition of the Reichstag mirrored the divisions in the empire: between Protestant and Catholic rulers, and between different princes' territorial ambitions.

There were also two separate upper courts. The Aulic (aula meaning court in Latin, and in Greek times a grand residence) Council which functioned well in Vienna, and the Imperial Cameral Tribunal in

Wetzlar, which did not. By the 1770's there were 60,000 cases unheard. Its inefficiency was partly due to nepotism. This was common in the eighteenth century as jobs went to a small circle of cameral families rather than on merit. The word cameral is worth explaining. It comes from the Latin *camera* meaning vault or arched chamber and then room or chamber and then from that we have camera obscura and then we get photographic camera. But the meaning we want is the one meaning the German science and technology of administration in the 18th and early 19th centuries. In its most narrow definition it concerned the management of the state's finances and was divided into three: public finance, Oeconomie and Polizeii. Here Oeconomie does not exactly mean economics nor polizei -public policy . Here Oeconomie means stewardship of the state, both morally and materially. Polizei comes from the greek politeia meaning citizenship, government and civil polity.

I don't think this is an entirely irrelevant digression as cameralism leads on to bureaucracy, and the civil service which was a very important factor in the Prussian organisation both in its own importance and in its ability to unite and govern a large area that became Germany.

Of course the other use of the word gives us bicameralism and tricameralism and to end this digression that was what the Holy Roman Empire had. That is its parliament had three houses.

It is very easy to criticize or even poke fun at the HRE and many of its contemporaries did. Many looked for its collapse. But there were real achievements. Firstly, the empire was not a centralised state but a loose conglomeration of member states who kept their sovereignty with the emperor acting as a broker and arbitrator particularly on behalf of the weaker states which without the emperor would and as

we shall see did lose this independence. An example of this good brokerage is the resettlement in Prussia of 20,000 Protestants expelled from the Catholic Archbishopric of Salzburg in 1731.

The Aulic court was used by weak members for protection against stronger and more aggressive neighbours. Thereby Anhalt was protected from absorption into Prussia and Isenburg and Solms had their independence maintained by the court against Hesse-Darmstadt. Many Knights and free cities were thus protected. After the Seven Years War the election of and lavish coronation of emperor Joseph II was thought to signal a 'German renewal'.

But, in final analysis the virtues of the empire were largely negative - procrastination, obstructionism and doing whatever was the lesser evil. It could be said that support for the empire was in inverse proportion to the size and strength of a constituent member. It protected the particular in the name of the universal. It protected the guilds, the then equivalent to our unions. It maintained the conservative status quo. It was an incubator which kept alive what otherwise may have died. But in the end it failed, as it could no longer hold the balance between weak and strong or hold back the changes and dynamism of the bigger and stronger states.

Firstly, states increased in size peacefully or non-peacefully. Overnight through inheritance the size of a state could double. Through war, treaty and diplomacy Prussia increased in size from just Brandenburg in blue to every colour on the map except orange and white.

Secondly, individual rulers attempted to construct more centralised, more rationalised states within their borders. Europe wide, they became more absolute, increasing central bureaucracy to minimise the power of intermediaries such as the nobility, churches, guilds, parliaments that stood between ruler and subject. Authority was

increased in areas of material production to religious beliefs, but mainly in taxation, policing, justice and conscription. All areas that affect the modern state. The greatest threat to the Empire was conscription as individual state standing armies threatened the status quo as the Thirty Years War and the 'potato war' showed.

The 'potato war' 1778-79 was the war a Saxon-Prussian alliance fought against the Habsburg monarchy to stop it from acquiring Bavaria. Very few were killed in battle, 10,000 Austrians and 10,000 Prussians were casualties from disease brought on from starvation. It was the last war in the style of the Ancien Regime when diplomats travelled between capitals to resolve their monarch's complaints whilst troops manoeuvred. And was known as a Cabinet War. In this war Prussia gained mineral rich Silesia from Austria.

The third thing that was happening was burgeoning development of mini-Versailles in Mannheim, Berlin, Dresden, Munich, Hannover which flaunted the wealth and prestige of the local ruler against the emperor.

Not only were the regional courts flourishing but also new universities in particular Halle, Goettingen, Erlangen, Muenster and Bonn were training lawyers, cameralists, philosophers and scientists.

It was not just secular rulers who tried to tax and regulate their subjects more effectively. Ecclesiastical rulers such as in Mainz pursued administrative, economic, educational and religious reforms which acted against the interests of cathedral canons, monasteries and imperial knights.

Finally, the seminal event in stimulating political reform was the Seven Years War 1756 to 1763 which as it took place in 5 continents should really be known as the First World War. It was basically Great Britain allied with Prussia fighting France, the Holy Roman Empire,

Austria, Saxony and Spain. Here Prussia blocked Austria's German ambitions and became the leading classic example of the new type of state based on cameralism and military might. We will hear a lot more about Prussia in our next session.

The Holy Roman Empire was dissolved on August 6 1806 when the last Holy Roman Emperor, Francis II, abdicated following defeat by the French led by Napoleon at the Battle of Austerlitz.

MA

Social and Cultural Change before the French Revolution

We have looked at the upper levels of 'German' society from the Emperor to the Electors who elected him, the other Kings, Princes, Dukes, Bishops and Knights. What about the people?

A great change was happening here even before the French Revolution. The most important was the rise in population that began from about 1750. Population rose rapidly and unlike the period of the Thirty Years War 1618-1648 when the population fell by 33% in urban areas and by 40% in rural areas.

Within the boundaries of the area that was later to become Germany this increased in 50 years from 16-18 million to 24 million by 1800. The German speaking Austrian provinces added another 8 million. There was of course regional variation. For example: eastern Prussia Pomerania reflected aggressive colonisation of what was a Polish speaking area.

But overall why did the population increase between a third and a half in 50 years?

If one was looking for a single cause, one word, what would one say?

Small improvements in diet and hygiene and a relatively lower incidence of epidemics reduced the mortality rate. Improved diet lowered the mortality rate and led to a growing population which in turn increased demands on agriculture. This was a period of agrarian revolution based on English and Dutch models. There were better crop rotations and new crops: fruit, peas, beans, maize, lentils but above all the potato.

The potato was introduced into Germany in 1601. A research paper titled 'The potato's contribution population and urbanisation: evidence from a historical experiment' concludes 'According to our estimates, the introduction of the potato explains 25-26 percent of the increase in Old World population between 1700 and 1900 and 27-34 percent of the increase in urbanisation. '(This) provides evidence that nutrition matters. Furthermore, because urbanisation rates and adult heights provide reasonable proxies for economic development and overall standards of living results suggest that the availability of potatoes played an important role in spurring economic growth in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'. Print off map, graph and conclusion for slides.

The other improvements in agriculture were greater use of manure, 50% increase in cattle stock in Prussia from 1750, stall feeding and improvement of breeds. As agricultural produce went up in price so agriculture became more commercialised. Despite the potato, grain was the majority crop.

Who were the main beneficiaries of increased demand for food stuff?

The best example is the Junker landlords of eastern Prussia who used their feudal position to exploit peasants and became major exporters of grain particularly to Britain who was experiencing its own population explosion.

Not only did the large land owners benefit but also peasant farmers. It was now worthwhile for both small and large land users to cultivate previously unproductive heath, scrub, marsh and fen. And we will mention that again.

Despite increased yield and new crops, harsh labour was required to produce even small amounts of food and this was endangered by family illness, crop failure or fire. Climate was a major factor and as we shall see this was one of causes of revolution in the 1840's. 20% of farmers did well from cattle or corn and became local notables but of the other 80% who were more exposed to disaster the loss of common land and increase in price of land meant that many became day labourers in reclamation schemes, migrated, or became itinerants or beggars.

For the small peasants and rural underclass there was one fairly new option. This was the beginning of industrialisation or protoindustrialization and was known the putting –out system. The German word for this is *Verlag* and the putter out is a *Verlager*. Merchants provided raw materials through their agents or factors which poor rural households worked up into finished goods. Although started in the late middle ages it became more common in the second half of the eighteenth century probably as a result of a greater market in the towns and a greater potential rural workforce as more people survived longer and had bigger families. This is of course exactly the same system that existed and still exists in the Western Isles of Scotland. Though perhaps slightly different as they originally supplied their own wool.

Many branches of production used this system including working up metals, but it was used particularly in the spinning and weaving of textiles. Factories in the 19th century sense were virtually unknown. There were obvious advantages to the merchant: minimal fixed costs,

flexibility cheap near captive labour. Those that worked in the putting-out system, in the Rhineland, Silesia or Bohemia were completely dependent on it as there was exceptional pressure on land as population increased and the small parcels of land were divided even smaller through inheritance. The putting-out system, in times of economic stability, help anchor the rural population and reduced the need for migration. Just as there was a link between commercialised agriculture and rising population so rural industrialisation was both was a cause and an effect of population increase. It encouraged landless peasants to increase family size as both women and children could work. It also enabled these children, in turn to marry without waiting for an inheritance. In the short term this was sensible but in the long term insecurity and family exploitation caused the rural over population to lead to major problems in the 19th century.

The putting-out system threatened the guild system more than state or other big enterprises. For a start throughout the German lands there was probably no more than a 1000 concerns employing more than 10 men. The putting-out system employed six times as many people than early 'manufactories'. A massive Augsburg manufactory of cotton prints in 1770 employed 350 people. There were in contrast 3,500 out workers.

State run concerns were largely interested in weapons and uniforms and high end luxury goods such as porcelain. Although salt mining was important in Bavaria, especially in a mountain area called Berchtesgarden.

Despite this small increase in industrial production localised limited production was still predominately in the hands of the guilds as it had been since the middle ages.

But there was a sense of change. From 1800 rural industry was growing. Large scale glassworks, breweries and mines developed run by more enterprising members of the nobility. Silesia, recently captured from the Habsburg monarchy could have been called a gold mine, if indeed gold had been found there, but they did have silver. They also had hard coal, iron ore, zinc and lead, limestone and dolomite. All were important in the industrial revolution. In 1785 there were 243 mines of which 191 were owned by nobles and 20 by the King of Prussia. There were tobacco factories in Frankfurt, Cotton in Augsburg and silk in Krefeld.

Apart from the nobles many entrepreneurs were 'outsiders' from religious minorities or foreigners: Huguenots, Jews and the English. Many German cities have areas named after England. I can think of two *Englischer Gartens* in Munich and in Dresden. Many migrant entrepreneurs could be found in Königsberg, the capital of Ducal Prussia now known as Kaliningrad, a Russian enclave.

The increasing population fuelled demand. There were debates about luxury goods and there were debates about sumptuary codes – what people could and should wear in different stations of life. This indicated that the pattern of consumption was changing. Another indication of change was the growth in German foreign trade. Long distance trade links had always existed with the Baltic countries, France and eastern Europe. Trade in the Mediterranean had resulted in Italian style architecture in Augsburg and 'German' inns in Venice.

Trade fairs in Frankfurt and Leipzig were important in East West trade though of medieval origin. By the end of the 18th Century German states were exporting linens, silks, woollens, metal goods internationally. Importing timber, fish, iron from Scandinavia, coal and luxury goods from Britain, furs from Russia, luxury goods from France, oil, fruit and wine from the Iberian peninsula and cotton from

America. Foreign trade increased by 75% between 1780 and 1800. Imports more than exports and Britain and France having a much greater share in the Atlantic trade. By the end of the 18th century the Baltic ports such as Rostock and Luebeck were declining and the North Sea ports such as Emden, Bremen and predominantly Hamburg were becoming more important.

What I haven't talked about were the changes in the towns and cities and the rise of the middle class. In conclusion, before the effects of the French Revolution in the period 1750-1800, in Germany things were a changing.

MA

Session 2: Prussia and Enlightenment

The Rise of Prussia

When we were considering a third German history course for this term, I had originally thought of doing the rise and fall of Prussia. Although this would have been interesting for its own sake particularly because of the bad press that Prussia always had in the UK, but what ultimately what was more important and interesting is Prussia's role in the unification of Germany.

In Christopher Clarke's excellent book the first sentence is 'In the beginning there was only Brandenburg.' But in fact I would like to begin much further East.

In 1219 and 1222 (42 years before the Battle of Lewes) the Christian Duke of Masovia, Konrad 1 unsuccessfully attempted to conquer by crusades the pagan state of Prūsa. (Pagan Baltic tribes). In 1226 he invited the Teutonic Knights of the Holy Roman Empire, a German military order of crusading knights based in the Kingdom of Jerusalem at Acre to conquer these tribes.

After sixty years of fighting the Teutonic knights created an independent state that controlled Prūsa. Eventually the Teutonic Order also controlled Livonia (now Latvia and Estonia). The Teutonic Order also tried to invade Novgorod in Russia but they were defeated by Alexander Nevsky in 1242. What did these knights look like? Some idea could be gained from this video extract ('Battle on the Ice') from Sergei Eisenstein's 1938 film 'Alexander Nevsky'.

The Teutonic Order encouraged the settlement of German speakers east of the Elbe, this was known as the *Ostsiedlung*. This was not the first nor the last of mass German migration east, German history having some common themes. The settlers spoke Low German.

A rival to the Teutonic Order was the Hanseatic League formed in Northern Europe in 1356 by trading cities mainly coastal that came to hold a monopoly of Baltic trade. These cities eventually rebelled against the sectarianism of Teutonic Knights asking for help from the Polish king. As a result of the Thirteen Years War, the Knights were forced to acknowledge the sovereignty of King Casimir IV of Poland at the Second Peace of Thorn losing western Prussia (Royal Prussia) to Poland. Thus there became two Prussian states.

In 1525 Albert of Brandenburg-Ansbach, a junior branch of the House of Hohenzollern, electors to the HRE became Lutheran Protestant and secularised the Teutonic Orders remaining Prussian Territories into the Duchy of Prussia, east of the mouth of the Vistula river, later known as Prussia proper. The significance of this is that for the first time these lands came into the hands of the Hohenzollern family. Albert heirs could now legitimately inherit the Duchy.

The Hohenzollerns had ruled the Margraviate of Brandenburg for over a hundred years. This agriculturally poor, marshy boggy region

was originally occupied by the Slavic Wends and was known as a Mark or march as it was a border country of the HRE.

Two generations later Brandenburg and Prussia were united. Anna, granddaughter of Albert I and daughter of Duke Albert Frederick married her cousin Elector John Sigismund of Brandenburg. Albert Frederick died in 1618 without male heirs. So John Sigismund was granted the right of succession to the Duchy of Prussia, still a Polish fief. From now on the Duchy of Prussia was in personal union with the Margraviate of Brandenburg. This state became known as Brandenburg-Prussia and had three distinct separated areas: Prussia, Brandenburg and the Rhineland lands of Cleves and Mark.

The Thirty Years War was devastating for the disconnected Hohenzollen lands. The King, George William was weak, his army weaker. He had to flee from Berlin to Koenigsberg. His successor Frederick William 1 was a stronger character, he reformed the army, and was able to negotiate with the king of Poland freedom of Prussia from any feudal obligations which later enabled the Hohenzollerns to call themselves Kings.

Frederick William 1 achieved the following:

- An absolute monarchy, which does not have the same connotations as a dictatorship and is a small step in the direction of a parliamentary democracy.
- He established a powerful military to protect his lands.
- He established a bureaucracy to carry out state business more efficiently see cameralism .
- With the Edict of Potsdam he opened Brandenburg –Prussia for immigration of Protestant refugees.

For these achievements in the electorate he became known as the Great Elector.

His son, Elector Frederick III upgraded the Duchy to a Kingdom by crowning himself King Frederick I in the capital Koenisburg in a very lavish ceremony in 1701 what date do you think this was on - January 18. However the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold 1 would only allow Frederick to call himself King in Prussia not King of Prussia in order to show respect to the sovereignty of the Empire.

In many ways the name Prussia is a misnomer as most of the territory was in Brandenburg, Pomerania and western Germany. This misnomer was further emphasized by the move of the capital from Koenigburg to Berlin in the same year as the Great Electors coronation.

Frederick I 's son Frederick William I was known as the Soldier King as he furthered a standing army and the bureaucracy. A French man, Mirabeau said 'Prussia is not a state with an army but an army with as state'. As we have already previously heard Frederick William also settled 20,000 Protestant refugees from Salzburg facilitated by the Emperor in sparsely populated eastern Prussia. Prussia extended east to the west bank of the Memel and gained half of Pomerania from Sweden. Throughout its history Prussia overall increased its size by gaining territory by treaty, marriage or war.

Frederick 1's son named – Frederick II became known as the 'Great' and one could devote a whole session to him alone. But focussing on the point of our story German Unification or rather the separation of Germany from Austria during the three Silesian Wars Prussia gained Silesia from Austria, finally defeating a coalition of Saxony, Austria, France and Russia. Voltaire the French philosopher and friend of

Frederick the Great said 'it was Sparta in the morning, Athens in the afternoon'.

Silesia was a great boost to Prussia. Silesia had rich soils, mineral resources and prosperous manufacturing towns, particularly in the north. Silesia therefore increased Prussia's area, population and wealth.

Frederick II preferred language was French, This was the European language of diplomacy. A quote attributed to him or Voltaire but the original version possibly coming from Charles V HRE 1500-1558 is ' I speak English to my accountants, French to my ambassadors, Italian to my mistress, Latin to my God, and German to my horse'. Two things can be deduced about this quote: the European hierarchy were multilingual (well they would need to be if they wanted to talk to God, diplomats, mistresses and horses with equal eloquence) and the reference about German only being suitable for talking to one's horse should not be taken as derogatory as it seems. It could be interpreted that German was the language of empire of which the horse represented strength and conquest.

The military defeat of Austria and its allies promoted Prussia into the top league of great powers. It also led to a century of rivalry and conflict between Prussia and Austria both competing as the two most powerful states in the HRE. And despite both having extensive territory outside of the HRE.

Frederick the Great was King of Prussia as opposed to King in Prussia from 1740 to 1786. The longest reign of any Hohenzollern. He devoted the last 23 years of his life as 'first servant of the state' as an

enlightened absolute monarch, a step further in the development of the state.

His achievements for Prussia were:

- Promoting development of Prussian areas such draining the marshy Oderbruch which promoted agriculture and settlement
- Building up Prussia's military power
- Gaining territory in the First Partition of Poland (Poland being probably the most tragic country in Europe, this was the first of many partitions of Poland) by Prussia, Austria and Russia
- Prussia became at that time, the 19th century equivalent of the USA welcoming immigrants fleeing from religious persecution such as the Huguenots. And for the same reasons as the USA welcomed immigrants both had land, reclaimed land and developing industries.
- Frederick the Great abolished torture, set up a general civil code, established the principle that the crown would not interfere in matters of justice.
- He advanced the German education system, setting up grammar schools (Gymnasium) preparing the brightest pupils for university education.

So with this modern monarch, philosopher, musician and enlightened ruler we end this stage of our story at about the end of the 18th century with Frederick the Great playing his own composition on the flute.

MA

ENLIGHTENMENT, REVOLUTION AND REPRESSION : GERMAN NATIONAL POLITICS TAKES SHAPE,1780-1832

The 'public sphere' : a growing cultural space for the burgeoning middle classes across Germany

The German Enlightenment: enlightened values, citizens and rulers
Against Enlightenment reason: romanticising the 'Volk'

The French Revolution (1789 -) : 'state ', 'nation' and 'people' redefined to create a new participatory politics

French invasion and dominance over Germany culminates in the end of the Holy Roman Empire

Responses of German peoples and rulers ; resistance , cooperation, reform ; Austria and Prussia

The 'Wars of Liberation': a national uprising?

Restoration (1815) : remodelled dynastic states and confederation dominated by Austria and Prussia

Coming to terms with the French Revolution : conservatism, liberalism, rationalism, religious revivals , loyalties to dynasty/state and nation – all in contention

Some governments liberalise but all fear upsurge of popular politics : Austria and Prussia coordinate repression (1819-)

Some states continue non political reform to build up legitimacy, but political frustrations and social grievances mount up

Overthrow of the reactionary French monarchy inspires localised revolts in Germany (1830)

Armed force deployed , political concessions withdrawn , repression renewed (1832-)

Discontents continue to grow and connect across Germany; the next revolution when it comes will be on a national stage.

Peter Hammond

Session 3 Germany before and after the 1848 revolutions

Carolyn Blayney's Pre-session Handout

Factors leading up to the 1848 revolutions

Outline of the structure of government 1815 – 1866

- One of the major outcomes of the Congress of Vienna was the creation of the German Confederation, a loose association of 39 states designed to coordinate the economies of separate German-speaking countries.
- It acted as a buffer between the powerful states of Austria and Prussia to preserve the Concert of Europe.
- Most historians have judged the Confederation as weak and ineffective, as well as an obstacle to German nationalist aspirations.
- Further efforts to improve the Confederation began in 1834 with the establishment of a customs union, the *Zollverein*, to manage tariffs and economic policies. Prussia was the primary driver behind the creation of the customs union. Austria was excluded from the *Zollverein* because of its highly protected industry and also because Prince von Metternich was against the idea.
- It collapsed due to the rivalry between Prussia and Austria, warfare, the 1848 revolution, and the inability of the multiple members to compromise.
- It was replaced by the North German Confederation in 1866.

Factors leading to the 1848 revolutions in Germany

The 1848 revolutions were social revolutions of discontent that can be put down to three main factors. The first is the overall **discontent**

in Europe at the time. The second is the large tide of liberalism in Europe, and the third is the large sense of nationalism created by foreign rule and hopes of unification

Bad harvests and economic depression in the years leading up to 1848 created massive discontent throughout all of Europe, and food riots were common. Unemployment was also created due to the economic crisis. These large-scale problems were obviously a precursor to large-scale revolutions, with building discontent coming with each bad harvest. However, it was not just a lack of food that caused discontent in Europe at the time. Poor governance was also a factor that caused unhappiness for many.

The large tide of liberalism in Europe leading up to the revolutions of 1848 was a major contributing factor to the unrest. Liberalism was present in all places that experienced revolutions during 1848.

In Austria, the repressive system of Metternich, which can be seen with the exceptionally rigid Carlsbad Decrees of 1819, was despised by the masses, and after the Paris Revolution, the people took the chance to revolt. This forced the resignation of Metternich. As David Thomson writes, 'In the first week of March 1848, the opposition to the long rule of Prince Metternich reached its climax. It was drawn from all social classes; who had come to detest his rule;' A week before this uprising, the Vienna Legal/Political Reading Club decided on constitutional proposals, which included religious toleration, the right to petition, and the abolition of censorship. These proposals show that the people of Vienna wanted liberal change. In the Germanic states, similar proposals were made in petitions. On

February 27th, the people of Mannheim made out a petition demanding, amongst other things, trial by jury and freedom of the press. Similar petitions in Cologne and Mainz over the next week also demanded these liberal measures, as well as a more extended franchise, religious toleration, free speech, free elections for officers in a citizen's militia, and the swearing of an oath to the constitution by the armed forces. These petitions also show what the people wanted. Of course, when the people didn't get these changes, they resorted to revolution.

The last major contributing factor to the Revolutions of 1848 was the large sense of nationalism created by foreign rule and by hopes of unification.

The aforementioned petitions of Mannheim, Mainz and Cologne not only demanded liberal reforms, but also called for a general German parliament. David Thomson writes, 'the central revolutionary impulse was one of nationalism- for the overthrow of Austrian domination and of the princely sovereignties which served that domination, and for the unification of German territories into one state'; As with the liberal demands, when the people did not get these changes, they revolted. This very strong nationalist feeling was summed up in the successful Heidelberg Declaration made on March 5th, which, similarly to the petitions of the previous days (Mannheim and Mainz), demanded a national German parliament. This nationalist sentiment was such a force behind the revolutions that German leaders were forced to give in to the declaration's demands.

GU CAROLYN'S INTRODUCTION to session 3

Changes before and after the 1848 revolutions and their effect on German unification

At the end of the last session, Peter Hammond asked me if I thought the cycle of **REPRESSION – DISSENT – REVOLUTION** was repeated between 1832 and the 1860's? My answer is 'Yes' but progress was made through each cycle towards liberalisation, nationalism and unification, leading ultimately to the unification of Germany.

REPRESSION & DISSENT

'Within the German Confederation the events of 1830 and the succeeding years were used by Austria and Prussia to strengthen the machinery of repression. In 1832 Prussia and Austria drew up the Six Articles which greatly enlarged the control of the Federal Diet over the internal affairs of the German States and pledged their leaders to make no concessions to liberalism. In addition, other repressive measures were enacted which forbade public meetings and revolutionary badges, placed suspicious characters under surveillance, renewed the edicts controlling the universities and the press and assured help to sovereigns threatened with revolutionary movements.

The revolutions in 1832 did not stifle political life, they just pushed it underground and brought the liberals closer to the radical model.

The centres of revolt were in the most reactionary regimes. The southern states remained peaceful and leaders made concessions. Customs cooperation and military matters. When dissent came it would be on the national stage.

Bad harvests and economic depression in the years leading up to 1848 created massive discontent throughout all of Europe, and food riots were common.

Crop failures doubled the price of basic foodstuffs like rye and potatoes, causing widespread distress among those living on the edge of subsistence. Parts of the population were now reduced to eating grass, clover and potato peelings. Peasants couldn't pay their rents, mortgages & other debts, which led to increased levels of foreclosures & hurt rural crafts that depended on agricultural prosperity. This reduced the purchasing power available for other products, driving many businesses to bankruptcy.

In urban Germany and in areas where out-working in rural industry was extensive, this old-style crisis of dearth coincided with a downturn of the business cycle, imported from England, which hit the textile and engineering branches especially hard. Small businesses failed as the markets collapsed and creditors called in their loans. Bankruptcies caused severe pressure on the banks, some of which suspended activities in 1848, placing hundreds of firms and tens and thousands of workers at risk. There was chronic unemployment in towns.

Social grievances

Peasants were angry about feudal privileges and their exclusion from former common woodlands. Craftsmen were chaffing over their loss of security. The urban underclass was barely subsisting at the best of times.

The Revolutions of 1848 and their Aftermath

The Year of Revolutions

Revolutions occurred in most European countries during 1848. In March, demonstrations took place in Berlin and other German cities. They broke out as a result of economic hardships which in turn led to demands for political reform and an end to censorship. (See revision booklet for causes)

Liberal demonstrators wanted:

- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of the press
- Political rights.

Nationalist demonstrators wanted the same but they also wanted the creation of a united country ruled by an elected national parliament and a written constitution.

The 1848 Revolution in Prussia

In March 1848, giant demonstrations rocked Berlin, the capital of Prussia. At first, its King, Frederick William IV, tried to stop the demonstrators by force. Eventually he decided to grant the demonstrators what they wanted. Frederick agreed that a new German parliament called the **National Assembly** would meet in Frankfurt in May 1848. He agreed to a constitution and abolished censorship. He also declared, *'Today I have taken the old German colours...Prussia henceforth merges into Germany.'* The National Assembly was not to last long and was effectively ended in 1849.

The 1848 Revolutions – success or failure?

In the summer of 1848 it seemed as if the revolutions had succeeded:

- In many German states the old rulers had fallen from power;

- The German Confederation had crumbled;
- In Austria, Metternich had fled and Austria was distracted by revolutions within its own empire.

By 1850 it was all different:

- The National Parliament in Frankfurt had collapse;
- Germany was not united;
- King Frederick had refused to lead a united Germany; Austria was back in control.

-

Why did the Revolutions of 1848 Fail?

- **Shortcomings within the Frankfurt parliament (the National Assembly)**

Middle class were happy to get rid of the old order but were less happy about rioters attacking property. Working class people did not think that much change would occur when the middle classes were in charge. When the old authority reasserted its power, the different social classes could not unite.

Another disagreement that could not be resolved was the *grossdeutsch* or *kleindeutsch* argument.

The assembly also did not have the support of the army.

The assembly could announce reform but could not make the German state rulers adopt them.

- **Austria and her allies in the German states had recovered**

By 1849, the Austrian army was ready to crush opposition, bring back the old rulers and restore the Austrian –controlled German Confederation. Russia was also prepared to support Austria. In contrast, the Frankfurt Parliament was not strong enough, either politically or militarily, to resist Austria.

- **There was a lack of strong leadership**

In March 1849, King Frederick of Prussia refused to accept the offer of the crown of Germany, disappointing the Nationalists. Frederick

saw the offer of the crown, coming from mere politicians as a 'crown from the gutter'. This refusal seriously weakened the Frankfurt Parliament. He was unsympathetic and distrusted liberalism.

- **Strong right wing opposition**

The German rulers were hostile and once they overcame the revolutionaries, they began to regain control and confidence. They opposed the new Assembly. The Austrian Emperor refused to accept a Germany which excluded parts of his empire.

The Erfurt Union and the Humiliation of Olmutz (1850)

By the end of 1849, the Frankfurt Parliament had crumbled, the revolution over and the hopes of nationalists and liberals fading. However, Frederick William liked the idea of **leading** a united Germany, as long as the parliament did not control his actions. He proposed union of north German states under Prussian leadership. It was called the **Erfurt Union**. Prussia, the most powerful state, ordered the German princes to join the union. The princes felt they were being 'bullied' into the Erfurt Union and now supported Austria as a balance against the Prussian King's ambition.

The Austrian Chancellor refused to give up Austrian domination of the German states. Tensions increased between Prussia and Austria but when Russia supported Austria, Prussia had to back down at a meeting in Olmutz and abolish the Erfurt Union. This climb down became known as the **Humiliation of Olmutz**.

Had the Revolutions achieved anything?

- It would be wrong to see Olmutz as a crushing blow to Prussia. Prussia's political ambitions were put on hold. Her real power – its economy and the Zollverein – was left untouched and it continued to grow rapidly into the 1850's.
- Prussians became more anti-Austrian and pushed for a united Germany which excluded Austria.

- The impetus for national unity switched from economic and cultural nationalism to political nationalism and the growing middle-classes were at the forefront.
- German people gained valuable political experience.

CB

Session 4: From 1862 to 1871 – Bismarck's decade

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A - Introduction

In 1862 Bismarck was appointed Minister President and Foreign Minister in an era of Austrian dominance. In 1871 he proclaimed Wilhelm 1 Kaiser of a united Germany. How was this dramatic turn-around achieved? Did he plan to achieve his objective of a united Germany under Prussian hegemony, or was he reacting opportunistically to events?

B - External factors

War as the continuation of politics by other means (Clausewitz);
Bismarck created a pretext to fight three wars in order to further his objective:

1. Denmark; the War of Schleswig-Holstein 1864
2. Austria; The Seven Weeks War 1866
3. France; the Franco-Prussian War 1870-71

C - Internal factors

4. The rise of German Nationalism (a running theme throughout the nineteenth century).
5. Prussia's growing economic power (Customs Union, evolving into the Zollverein, etc.).
6. The influence of Conservatism, Modernism and Liberalism, and their interplay.
7. Political reform.

D - Conclusions

8. Whether Bismarck was a planner or opportunist: an evaluation.
9. The decade left Prussia the dominant German power, and Austria much weaker, with consequences.

SETTING THE SCENE FOR BISMARCK'S DECADE: AUSTRIA UNDER PRESSURE, 1851 – 1862

By the end of 1851 Austria was once more the dominant power in Germany, having faced down Prussia's attempt at its own Union

of German States . It was secure internationally and again in full control of its Empire (Russia had helped subdue the Magyar uprising and backed Austria against Prussia . Piedmont , coming to support uprisings in Austria's Italian territories , had been crushed).

But during the 1850s Austria came under increasing pressure in three areas.

In Europe :

Austria lost its key ally , Russia. At the start of the Crimean War, in 1854, Russian invaded the Turkish provinces along the Danube. Austria acted to protect this vital commercial/strategic artery and enforced a Russian withdrawal. Russia never forgave this and from then on stood aside when Austria came under threat .

In 1859 Austria was confronted in Italy by its historic enemy, France, allied with Piedmont. The French Emperor Napoleon III intended , like his uncle, the first Napoleon, to expel Austria and become the protector of the Italian nation. Austria was defeated , had to give up most of its territory in Italy and suffered a major economic and financial loss .

In the Austrian Empire:

For a time neo-absolutism and centralised bureaucracy ruled, but the tensions of the multi-national empire intensified after the Italian disaster. The situation was eased by restoring constitutional government and beginning a fraught process of devolution which made Austria more vulnerable.

In Germany:

The dysfunctional Austria/Prussia duality had been restored since neither could prevail , but the liberal-national aspirations central to the political debate in 1848 continued in the press and among political and professional groups. Increasingly Prussia was seen as the

best hope for achieving a national solution . The shift of opinion reflected Prussia's outstanding economic success as well as Austria's problems as an overstretched empire which took its attention away from Germany.

In 1858 , under its new ruler William I, Prussia restored parliamentary politics , resulting in a liberal majority and enhancing Prussia's credibility as national leader.

But then king and parliament deadlocked over army reform. Prussia was paralysed and Austria tried to take back the initiative. It worked on the fear of predatory Protestant Prussia among the other rulers and their Catholic subjects.

This was the situation facing Bismarck when he took office in September 1862. No one could have predicted how quickly and brutally he would resolve it.

Peter Hammond 01/03/2018

1862-71 Internal factors

Introduction

A “**Times**” leader article in 1860 declared that

“Prussia was always leaning on someone, always getting someone to help her, never willing to help herself (.....) present in Congresses, but absent in battles (.....) ready to supply any amount of ideals or sentiments, but shy of anything that savours of the actual. She has a large army, but notoriously one in no condition for fighting. (.....) No one counts on her as a friend; no one dreads her as an enemy. How she became a Great Power, history tells us; why she remains so nobody can tell.”

This withering critique of Prussia was turned on its head during the period under review. After the crushing Prussian victory over France in the Franco Prussian War in 1871-2, Bismarck’s reputation both

within Prussia and internationally was on the crest of a wave, the “Bismarck cult” was born and the Prussian army was feared throughout Europe. How did all this happen in the space of just one short decade? It is a remarkable story.

The Age of Reaction and the New Era

The decade preceding the period under review was characterised as the Age of Reaction (to the revolutions of 1848) involving a return to the repression of *the Vormartz* period (shorthand for the two decades immediately preceding March 1848). This was followed by the New Era (a thaw in the political situation) in the late 1850s.

The imbalance of the three-class franchise put in place in 1849 as part of the Age of Reaction was ameliorated during the New Era by measures such as setting up rural land banks, cheap credit to craftsmen, and more enlightened factory legislation.

In his introduction to the decade, as well as the growing economic power of Prussia and the gap that opened between her and Austria, Peter Hammond referred to three events that charted the changing political balance between Prussia and Austria during the 1850s:

1) The Erfurt Union 1849, a Prussian plan to set up an association of states in Northern and Central Germany which threatened the authority of the Confederation. A German civil war over Hesse-Cassel was only narrowly averted.

2) Central European Customs Union 1850, an Austrian proposal to replace the Zollverein; this was successfully resisted by Prussia. The effect of the exclusion of Austria from the Zollverein has been likened to an economic Koniggratz.

3) *Nationalverein* 1859, a liberal nationalist movement prompted by the recent Italian War of that year drawing parallels between Piedmont's position in Italy, and Prussia's position in Germany.

Bismarck's early diplomatic career

He was elected to the Prussian Chamber of Deputies (the lower chamber of the Diet) in 1849. At this stage he was not a nationalist; he told a fellow conservative "We are Prussians, and Prussians we shall remain...We do not wish to see the Kingdom of Prussia obliterated in the putrid brew of cosy South German sentimentality".

He was appointed by Frederick William IV as the Prussian representative to the Federal Diet in Frankfurt in 1851 as reward for his loyalty to the Monarchy.

For the next eight years he lived in Frankfurt where he reassessed his view of German nationalism. He realised that the status quo meant accepting Austria's hegemony, consigning Prussia to the role of a second-rate European power. Henceforth he set the goals of Prussian foreign policy as scrapping Dualism (by removing Austria as joint German power) and the Bund. He began to look for opportunities to unshackle Prussia from Austria.

The Crimean War (1854-6) fundamentally disturbed the "balance of power" settlement of the Congress of Vienna of 1815 (an example being Austria's loss of Russia as an ally), and created diplomatic opportunities that Bismarck was able to exploit.

Constitutional crisis over military reform budget

A Bill to bring about reform of the Army introduced by the new Minister for War von Roon in 1860 had stalled. The proposal to reduce the size and importance of the militia provoked anger in the

liberal opposition and led to the creation of a more extreme liberal “Progressive Party”.

The resultant Parliamentary deadlock caused William 1 to appoint a reactionary Ministry, and he dissolved Parliament in March 1862. However, in the elections of May 1862 the liberals increased their share of the vote to 75%, becoming by far the largest Party. The king, fearful that he had lost the support of his people, considered abdication. Aware of Bismarck’s loyalty to the Crown and his effective performance in the Diet the King turned to him, to the surprise of many who thought him a “wild man”.

Appointment of Bismarck as Minister-President 1862

Bismarck was therefore appointed Minister-President in 1862 at an inauspicious time domestically. A strong defender of royal prerogative, he made his appointment into one of personal fealty to the king, creating a sense of obligation in the latter which he used to his advantage in the future.

Bismarck solved the “budget” question by parliamentary sleight-of-hand. Often cited as an example of his use of *Realpolitik*, the art of realistic politics, he withdrew the pending budget and collected the revenue to pay for the military reforms from the previous year’s (approved) budget. He justified this expedient by arguing that as the Constitution made no provision for the conduct of Government where relations between Crown and Parliament had broken down, by the principle that the political life of a state must continue no matter what crisis he was obliged to take alternative measures. The liberals were wrong-footed by this argument; Bismarck (and the King) got their way and monies for military reform were found between 1863-6 without the sanction of Parliament.

Blood and iron” speech

In his celebrated speech to the Budget Commission of the Landtag on 25 September 1862, Bismarck referred to the “too many subversive elements who have an interest in revolutionary change” and said that:

“Germany doesn’t look to Prussian liberalism, but to its power: Bavaria, Wurttemberg, Baden can indulge in liberalism, but no one will expect them to undertake Prussia’s role; Prussia must gather and consolidate her strength in readiness for the favourable moment, which has already been missed several times; Prussia’s boundaries ...are not favourable to a healthy political life; not by means of speeches and majority verdicts will the great decisions of the time be made – that was the great mistake of 1848 and 1849 – but by iron and blood.”

The speech has been endlessly dissected. Although superficially it appears that Bismarck is exhibiting the stereotypical Prussian appetite for blood lust, in fact he could either be commenting (as the British economist Maynard Keynes thought) on the large reserves of iron that Prussia enjoyed, or that Germany had the will to use its military power in the last resort should diplomatic means fail.

Bismarck’s management of William 1

Bismarck knew that he would need to rule through William in defiance of Parliament. An example of Bismarck’s manipulation of the King came in 1863. The Austrians called a conference of German princes at Frankfurt to reform the German Confederation. Bismarck correctly surmised that their real intention was to confirm Austrian leadership of the organisation, and he spent three days arguing the King out of his intention to attend. Bismarck records that both he and the King were ill with nervous tension at the end of this episode.

This was not the only time that Bismarck claimed ill-health following a testing time politically or socially. He was a noted hypochondriac who nonetheless enjoyed rude good health and whose appetite never failed.

An opportunity presents itself

Due to the parliamentary deadlock Bismarck was unable to influence the “German question” in the early years of the decade despite his anxiety to implement the unification of Germany under Prussian leadership. Instead, by astute fiscal and parliamentary management he nursed the country along, biding his time until an opportunity arose in the form of the Schleswig-Holstein crisis of 1863-4 (the subject of the presentation on external factors). This event proved the moment that the process of German unification began.

It is often said that Bismarck would have made (perhaps was?) a good chess player in that he was able to think several moves ahead. Indeed, he once said that he preferred to use all the squares on the board, that is he advanced his strategic aims by any means available to him. Before winning the Danish War he already foreseen how to provoke the Austrians into declaring war on Prussia which duly occurred, providing Prussia with the chance of inflicting a damaging defeat on Austria in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866.

After this war Bismarck was convinced that there was an inevitability to the convergence of cultural and political developments in Prussia and the other German States which would eventually lead to unification under Prussian leadership. However, it took war with a foreign power to coalesce German nationalism and produce the conditions for unification.

Bismarck's ruthlessness and moderation

The subsequent Peace of Nikolsburg was lenient to Austria for the good reason that he wanted their support in the future, and he dissuaded the King, von Roon and Moltke from organising a victory parade in Vienna as the King (particularly) wanted to do.

In contrast he annexed the States who had fought against Prussia (namely Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Nassau and Frankfurt), and removed the King of Hannover from power as well as the ruling House in Hesse, to the shock of conservatives.

Political repercussions of the Austro-Prussian War

Bismarck enjoyed an upsurge of support from liberals to whom nationalism was the obverse side of that coin. Elections for the Landtag were held in 1866 resulting in a decisive defeat for the liberal opposition. Instead of settling the Constitution in favour of the Monarchy he brought the Indemnity Bill before Parliament offering the Landtag a return to constitutional rule in exchange for it not seeking retribution for its treatment since 1862. By this conciliatory action he brought liberals back into mainstream politics and created a middle-ground for moderate liberals and progressive conservatives to co-exist. The result of these political realignments was that a bloc of moderate liberals and Bismarckian conservatives emerged to occupy the middle-ground, marking a return to the political settlement of the post-revolutionary 1850s

The events leading to the Franco-Prussian War and its outcome are the subject of the presentation on external factors. The subsequent Prussian triumph cemented Bismarck's reputation as a political and diplomatic genius.

Ian Douglas, 28.02.18

Bismarck's Decade 1862-71 - External Factors Handout Summary

Bismarck's modus operandi for achieving his objective of German Unification under Prussian hegemony, as exemplified by 3 wars against:

Denmark: Schleswig-Holstein 1864

Austria: the 7-week war 1866

France: the Franco-Prussian war 1870-71

Background

- **Dualism.** Lead powers: Austria and Prussia (Pr. economically and politically stronger.)
- Prussia failed to set up the **Erfurt Union 1849**, in which it would have dominated the Confed.
- The **punctation of Olmutz 1850**: abandonment of Erfurt and revival of Austrian domination.
- Post-1850: growth of Prussia economically; Austria disadvantaged by not being in **Zollverein**.
- **Bismarck's conversation with Disraeli in London 1862** before he came to power, in which he said that once the Prussian army was strong enough, he would seize the "first best pretext to declare war against Austria ... and give national unity to Germany under Prussian leadership."

The Schleswig-Holstein war with Denmark 1864

- An earlier war (1848-9) between the Germans of S-H and Denmark in which Prussia intervened; resolved by the **London Protocol, 1852**, agreeing that S-H should remain united (i.e. would not be separated) in a "personal union" with Denmark, and that this treaty would be protected by Britain, France and Russia.
- The Crimean War of 1854-6 and colonial disputes involving France and Britain made 3-nation intervention in 1864 difficult.

Lead-up to war in 1864

- annexation of S-H one of the aims of German nationalism.
- Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenberg (a small duchy to the south of Holstein) were duchies united with Denmark, and the Danish King was also Duke of the duchies.
- Holstein also a member of the German Confederation and german-speaking.
- Schleswig largely Danish speaking in the north, but german speakers dominated in the landed gentry where lay significant power.
- A new democratic constitution in Denmark jarred with constitutional prominence given to landowners in S-H
- Different laws of succession - duchies were through the male line; so when King Frederick VII of Denmark died in November 1863 without a male heir, Denmark chose Prince Christian of Glücksberg as King Christian IX, but the germans of S-H supported the House of Augustenberg, whose Prince had inheritance rights he had renounced in 1852 but which he now reclaimed.
- It was anticipated that, once Duke, Augustenberg would want to bring both Schleswig and Holstein-Lauenberg into the German Confederation.
- **November 1863** Denmark proposed a constitution which would allow Denmark to govern the affairs of Schleswig but both having independent parliaments. Frederic VII died before signing it and Christian IX signed it and merged Schleswig with Denmark.

The German Confederation demanded abolition of the **November Constitution**, which was rejected by Denmark. In **December 1863** the Confederation sent troops to Holstein as a pledge for observation of the 1852 treaty. Austrian and Prussian troops subsequently marched through Holstein, to the indignation of Confederation troops there, and crossed into Schleswig. A short war with the danes began 1 February 1864, including some incursion by Prussia into Denmark proper. Denmark defeated.

Denmark renounced all rights to the duchies. By the **Vienna treaty of October 1864** it was agreed that inhabitants would have 6 years in which to opt for danish nationality.

3 different aims:

The Confederation demanded recognition of the Augustenberg inheritance.

Austria wanted a settlement in accordance with the 1852 London Protocol.

Prussia wanted acquisition of the duchies and unrestricted hegemony in northern Germany.

After the war Austria occupied Holstein and Prussia Schleswig. No benefit to Austria because isolated from her territories. The Prussians prevaricated in negotiations with Austria re. next steps (Schonbrunn 1864, Gastein 1865 and Vienna 1866.)

Prussian- Austrian war 1866 (the 7-week war)

In 1866, Prussia formed an alliance with Italy which wanted to take Veneto from Austria.

Austria sent 100,000 troops to defend Veneto, which largely equalised the Prussian and Austrian armies in their conflict (254,000 Prussians vs 175,000 Austrians and 32,000 Saxons). Larger number of troops in one battle than any in napoleonic wars.

Prussia marched into Holstein which triggered war in July 1866.

Battle of Koniggratz (fought at the nearby village of Sadowa)

- Planning (von Moltke), mobilisation of army by trains to the Bohemian border from 3 directions.
- Austria had better artillery and horse, but used muzzle-loading rifles and trained for close-combat. Prussians used breech-loading guns (the needle gun) which fired 4/5 shots from crouching/lying position - a kill ratio of 4 to 1.
- Prussian conscript army (2 years) better educated and trained in eg reading manuals; Austrians had standing armies, as a matter of policy based distant from homes.

Aftermath of Prussian Victory

Napoleon proclaimed armed peace mediation. Bismarck realised if he rejected this it might lead to war on two fronts; if he accepted, France might demand territorial concessions on the Rhine.

Bismarck therefore:

- made peace with Austria, no territorial concessions or reparations [40 million thalers for war damage? according to Steinberg]
- made peace treaties with south German states, who had supported Austria.
- undertook radical annexations to Prussia in northern Germany (Schleswig-Holstein, Hannover, Hesse-Nassau, Frankfurt ...). Prussia now comprised most of the north.

Haffner says expansion in the north was Bismarck's real war aim and that convincing the King of the need for "such an ignominious peace" was the finest hour of his career.

North German Confederation

Bismarck invented the North German Confederation: 24 million Prussians and 6 million others in 22 nominally equal states ("co-existence of a dog with its fleas"). It had a reichstag (parliament freely elected by universal suffrage) which could be augmented by southern states in the future.

- Bismarck became Prussian Minister-President and Federal Chancellor of the North German Confederation - the latter becoming the more important post. 4 years later (after the Franco-Prussian war) the Federal Chancellor became the Reich Chancellor of the German Empire, thus subordinating Prussia.

Franco-Prussian war 1870-1

To be dealt with by another Group.

Session 5: Unification and After

Introduction

At our first session we began with this painting by Anton Werner of the proclamation of the empire January 18 1871.

Both the date and the venue were highly symbolic.

The date was the 170th anniversary of the magnificent feudal coronation of the Elector of Brandenburg-Prussia Frederick I in its capital Koenigsberg where he became King in Prussia.

The venue in 1871 was, of course, chosen to deliberately humiliate the French for their victories under Louis XIV and particularly under Napoleon Bonaparte for his occupation of German lands.

MA

The Fall of Bismarck

Between 1879 - 90 Bismarck created a system of foreign politics that gave his country both security and dominant influence in European affairs and he proved capable of maintaining it in times of crisis, although not to be sure without employing diplomatic means that were so complex as to invite the charge of duplicity.

At times his tactics recalled the story of Field Marshall Boucher, s complaint that no one would play cards with him 'but my dear Bloucher' the King replied 'they say that you always cheat ' "Yes " majesty Bloucher replied shamefaced "It always goes better if you cheat a little ".

During the Bulgarian crisis of 1887 Bismarck appears to

have operated on the same principle and although he swept the board in the end, he left at least one of his partners distrustful.

Even so he succeeded in preserving the elaborate structure of alliances that he had taken such pains to erect. This was an achievement that was in marked contrast to his performance in internal affairs in these same years. For there his political virtuosity was not enough to maintain his system of domestic politics and as problems multiplied, he felt compelled to resort to increasingly desperate means until he finally jettisoned the principles that had guided him during his early career in office and was actually advocating the destruction of the edifice he had built between 1866 -71.

By 1890 he seemed to be going a metamorphosis in reverse and to be on the point of emerging as "the red reactionary smells of blood of the 1850,s" When this became too painfully apparent his Monarch hasten to get rid of him.

There can be no doubt that the circumstances of Bismarck,s fall in 1890 were profoundly influenced by his own personal failings,a capriciousness that seemed to grow in inverse proportions to his dwindling physical powers,a brutality in personal and official relations that became increasingly palpable.

As the Chancellor grew older he became increasingly self centred " It was always Me Me Me". Fountain wrote after his dismal " And when that does not work complaints of ingratitude and tears of North German sentimentality and more and more convinced that everyone beyond the limits of his own family circle was considering against him. He reacted savagely and the Wilhelmstrasse was littered

with corpses of his real or fancied rivals.

This did not strengthen his position on the contrary the shrewd observer Fontaine noted in 1881:

Gradually a storm is brewing in the people against Bismarck.

Bismarck's achievement with William 1 , was in guiding him when he had the choice of abdicating or accepting the Victory of Parliament. Bismarck contained the parliamentary threat to the Crown. The prerogatives of the Crown lay beyond their competence.

He ranted and raved to get his way with parliament resorting to going over parliaments head and appealing to the German folk.

Nobling's attempt to kill the Emperor caused the country into a state of hysteria.

Scores of people were reported to the police and harsh sentences were handed out.

Socialists were dismissed from their employment as the deed it was felt inspired by Socialists. All this contributed to Bismarck's electoral success when 3 months later to a Socialist Law which forbade all Socialist and Communist activities.

Reichtags approval came in 1878.

With devastating effects of Newspapers being closedown. Trade Unions and workers clubs were closed by the police. From London a paper was published called "Freiheit" advocating by peaceful means to stand up against the Law. Bismarck was determined to stamp out organisations and Personnel.

Bismarck did feel that the State had a responsibility to the

handicapped and the more deprived. In his memoirs “Erinnerungen und Gedenken” he does not mention his Insurance Bill for accident and sickness, and old age 1880. He believed deeply that the State had more to offer than Socialism. He expected the beneficiaries to abandon their false friends.

The Socialists wanted to oppose the Bill so having amended it by making the rich capitalist Employers pay the bill.

In 1883 Sickness Insurance Law

1884 Accident Insurance Law

1889 Old age and Disability Insurance Law

Socialists amended it in the interest of the working class. Leibnecht said on one occasion “Prince Bismarck may further us towards our goals, on this course we march together and we do not hang on his coat tail”.

Marx and Engels from London wrote “That state Socialism had more to offer than Marxism. This might weaken the militancy of the party.

Anna Appleton

The Gründerjahre, and Gründerstil architecture (1870-90)

This was a Golden Age for Germany, when the disasters of the Thirty Years' War and the Napoleonic Wars were remedied, and the country competed internationally on a world-class level in the domains of science, technology, industry and commerce. The ongoing influence of the fragmented Holy Roman Empire meant there were a considerable number of cities with prestigious buildings as they had been the capital cities of Grand Dukes, Electors, etc. (e.g. Hanover, Dresden, Leipzig, Munich, Stuttgart, Bayreuth, Hamburg, Cologne).

However, it was important for the purpose of prestige to make Berlin look like a major capital city on a par with Paris or London.

German architecture in this period

Historicism, sometimes known as eclecticism, emerged in the middle of the 19th century, in particular in architecture and history painting. Different types of buildings tended to use particular styles, so that the Romanesque style was preferred for buildings associated with justice, the Gothic for town halls and schools, the antique (Greek, Roman, Egyptian) for administrative and parliamentary buildings, and the Venetian style for commercial buildings.

An important architect of the period was Gottfried Semper, working in Dresden. He built the gallery at the Zwinger Palace and the Semper Opera, completed in 1878. Semper's buildings have features derived from the early Renaissance style, Baroque and even feature Corinthian style pillars typical of classical Greece. A different style of historicism is evident in the Rossbach building in Leipzig.

The most famous example of the penchant for medieval buildings is the castle of Neuschwanstein, which Ludwig II of Bavaria commissioned in 1869. It was designed by Christian Jank, a theatre set designer, while the architectural expertise was provided first by the Munich court architect Eduard Riedel and later by Georg von Dollmann.

Expansion of Berlin as the capital of the German Reich

Writing in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* after spending half a year in Berlin, starting in October 1891, the American author Mark Twain said: "I feel lost in Berlin. It has no resemblance to the city I had supposed it was. There was once a Berlin which I would have known, from descriptions in books ... a dingy city in a marsh, with rough streets, muddy and lantern-lighted, dividing straight rows of ugly houses all alike, compacted into blocks as square and plain and

uniform and monotonous and serious as so many dry-goods boxes. But that Berlin has disappeared ... It is a new city; the newest I have ever seen ... The main mass of the city looks as if it had been built last week."

If a city can be seen as a living organism, then the years between 1870 and 1914 were Berlin's adolescence, a time when the sleepy capital of the Kingdom of Prussia became a booming metropolis, sometimes marked by military discipline and sometimes by bohemian excess, but always willing to experiment.

There was initially a distinct lack of enthusiasm when Berlin became capital of the German Empire in 1871. Bismarck even considered establishing the seat of his empire in Kassel instead. He found the Berliners too liberal, too subversive and too prone to socialist intrigues, and the liberal press in particular was a thorn in his flesh.

Berlin, not an ancient city like Rome, Paris or London, or even Trier and Cologne within Germany, caught up with other European metropolises at a breath-taking pace. The railroad provided the first catalyst, transforming Berlin in the 1840s into one of central Europe's most important rail hubs. Goods and commodities could now be transported long distances, an important development for mechanical engineering and for the trade in metals and textiles, as well as for the electrical industry, which established itself here in the city on the Spree River, drawing many job-seekers to Berlin.

Industry could be said to be the true catalyst of the city's growth. By 1864, over half the city's inhabitants were not native Berliners. These new residents came primarily from surrounding Brandenburg and from Silesia, today the Czech Republic and Poland. The economic boom after 1871, sparked by the receipt of five billion francs in war reparations from France, increased Berlin's drawing power, providing fertile ground for the establishment of banks, insurance companies and trade and industrial enterprises – 250 new businesses registered

in the year 1872 alone. Berlin's population in 1849 was only around 412,000, but by 1880 it had passed the 1 million mark. By 1914, 1.84 million people lived in Berlin, which had become Europe's most densely populated city.

The government kept pace, putting its stamp on the city with awe-inspiring halls of justice, schools and palatial post offices, while the Kaisers publicly displayed their power and their tastes with museums, grand boulevards and statues. One manifestation was the new parliament building in the form of the Reichstag, completed in 1894 and designed by Paul Wallot. The Siegessäule, or Victory Column, originally planned in 1864 to celebrate victory in the Schleswig-Holstein war, was inaugurated in 1873, also celebrating victories over Austria and France. Its height was increased and it was moved to its present site in 1945.

The city's old baroque buildings were massively overcrowded even in the 1860s, and sanitary conditions were catastrophic. People relieved themselves in public and disposed of wastewater and excrement in the street gutters. British health expert Edwin Chadwick called Berlin the "most foul-smelling, dirtiest and most pestilent" capital in the civilized world in 1872, declaring that its citizens could be "recognized by the smell of their clothes".

An underground "radial" sewage system using pressure pipes and pumping stations to direct wastewater to sewage irrigation fields at the city's outskirts was then installed, and by 1900 Berlin was considered the cleanest large city in Europe.

A grid-like network of streets was planned, and along them kilometres of tenement houses with no front yards. The owners of these square-shaped lots squeezed in as many apartments as they could behind grand, stucco-decorated facades, nesting as many as seven buildings behind one another and leaving inner courtyards of

just precisely the mandatory 28 square meters (300 square feet) necessary to use a fire extinguisher.

An example of the buildings designed to enhance the prestige of the German Reich and Berlin as a capital city is the Bode Museum, built on Museum Island, and completed in 1904.

The visible impact on Strasbourg of the annexation of Alsace/Lorraine into Germany

Strasbourg was deliberately endowed with a number of prestigious buildings in its very extended German district, the Neustadt. This is now the main record of Wilhelmian architecture since most of the major cities in Germany proper suffered intensive damage during World War II. Streets, boulevards and avenues are homogeneous, the buildings surprisingly tall (up to seven stories), demonstrating an architectural style that mingles five centuries of European architecture with Neo-Egyptian, Neo-Greek and Neo-Babylonian styles. The former Kaiserpalast, now the Palais du Rhin, epitomizes the grand scale and stylistic sturdiness of this period. Five buildings were placed on the Kaiserplatz, now the Place de la République, so asserting Elsass as an integral part of the united Germany.

Judith Hayward

Concluding Remarks on Otto von Bismarck

Otto von Bismarck was a great man who unified Germany.

‘A generation of conservative German historians exalted the wisdom, moderation, and vision of the statesman: the public and propagandists exalted the strong man, the essential German. The real Bismarck was violent, intemperate, hypochondriac, and misogynist. Three late twentieth century biographers have in common depicted Bismarck as lacking the redeeming human virtues of kindness,

generosity, compassion, humility, abstinence, patience, liberality and tolerance. He was also a religious hypocrite, using the Protestant religion only to achieve his political aims. He promoted antisemitism in order to demonise liberal and progressive Jewish politicians.

For 28 years he crushed opposition, cowed cabinets, poured hatred, scorn and anger on political opponents in public and private.

He smashed the possibility of responsible parliaments in 1878 when he used two attempts to assassinate the Kaiser to destroy moderate bourgeois liberalism. He persecuted Catholics and Socialists. He respected no law and tolerated no opposition.

His legacy in culture was literally nothing. He had no interest in the arts, never went to a museum.'

But his greatest sin according to Max Weber was that

'He left a nation totally without political education....totally bereft of political will...'

And we see the consequences of this during William II reign and after the first world war in the failed attempt at democracy during the Weimar Republic which led to the rise of fascism and Adolf Hitler.

Largely from Jonathan Steinberg : ' Bismarck- a life'.

MA

Epilogue on German History

What is history?

Can we learn from it?

But how to look at history is something that has concerned people since events were first recorded, and how to look at German history in particular. Whether history is made by the actions of 'Great men'

as thought by Thomas Carlyle or that great men are insignificant and that it is the actions of the common man that is ultimately significant as Leo Tolstoy tells us in the conclusion of War and Peace. Probably at school great emphasis was given to dates and battles. Looking at German history, there are different theories and ways at looking at it for example from the point of view of nationalism or of the difficulties in adapting to modernity or has the tumultuous history of Germany taken a special path a *Sonderweg* ? And no doubt our presenters will want to cover these different ways at looking at German history. For our course each of the presenters will give their own particular slant and it is for you to make your own judgements and to add your own personal opinion.

My answer to the first question, which may be different to yours, is that it is just a story or stories recorded by individuals or groups of individuals or even by countries. In both French and German, the word for history also means story.

E. H. Carr, a prominent British Historian said:

The facts of history are indeed facts about individuals, but not about actions of individuals performed in isolation...They are facts about the relations of individuals to one another in society and about the social forces which produce from the actions of individuals results often at variance with, and sometimes opposite to, the results which they themselves intended.

This is particularly true of the history of Germany. But what are the facts?

My answer to the second question 'can we learn from history?'

Hegel, the famous contemporary German philosopher said

What experience and history teaches us is this – that nations and governments have never learned anything from history, or acted on any lessons they might have drawn from it.

So far in our German history courses we covered two years ago the German Democratic Republic forged as a result of the division of Third Reich Germany after the Second World War. Last year we considered the Weimar Republic formed, 'forged' not being the right word, as a result of the defeat of the Second Reich after the First World War.

Today we are going to start talking about how this Second Reich was formed and what better than to ask was it too formed as a result of war? In this case not one war, not two wars but three! Was there a unique pattern in German history?

Ladies and Gentleman, only you will be able answer these questions as our course progresses.

MA

PS

Having now completed the course, my answer to myself, is no and no!

I think unfortunately German history, however terrible, is not unique.

I think 'War', as we have heard from our many contributors, was only one manifestation of the amalgam of modernity, nationalism and politics that led to German unification.

