

New Higher
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Question
Booklet.
TGS
J Davidson.



Chapter 9 : Why was Germany united by 1871?

At the end of the previous work booklet on Chapter 8, we are left with a feeling that it would be long time before the unification of Germany would happen. But by the 1860s, the positions of both Austria and Prussia had changed so significantly that a Prussian controlled unification of the German states was possible.

During the early nineteenth century, Prussia was the only German state that could match the power

and influence of the Austrian Empire. They were comparable in terms of size, population and wealth. Austria opposed the idea of German unification as it saw this as a threat to its own empire. Although they were a minority, there was a significant percentage of German-speakers in the empire. If they broke away to join a unified Germany, Austria would be smaller and weaker. To this end, Prussia and Austria were rivals.

Austria had become weakened.

Austria had lost key allies and was losing influence in Europe.

Austria had refused to help Russia in its war against France and Britain (the Crimean War, 1854-56) and lost a major ally as a result.

Austria was defeated in a war against the French and northern Italian states. As a result, it had been forced to surrender some territories.

Why was Germany united by 1871?

Meanwhile Prussia was strengthened.

Prussia had become the most industrialised state in Germany. She was now a force to be reckoned with in Europe.

Prussia was producing more key resources such as coal and iron than Austria and it had surged ahead of its rival in building road and rail networks to help promote trade.

Prussia had successfully set up an economic alliance (*Zollverein*) with other German states that made trade between states easier and more profitable. (BBC Bitesize)

This long chapter is about the part Bismarck played in the unification of Germany, as well as all the other reasons. A popular essay exam question, this section will identify the factors that played their part in unifying Germany. **Essay help:** Remember, a simple way to work out the importance of a factor is to remove it from the equation and ask yourself - "would unification still have happened?". If yes, but it would have taken much longer, then the factor plays a part, albeit a more minor part. If no or unlikely, then that factor is crucial to the story.

So keep in mind, all the way through this chapter, this question: *What were the factors that brought about a unified Germany by 1871?*

Using the textbook, *Britain&Scotland and Germany*, Chapter 9, answer the following:

- 1) Go straight to the William Carr quote and sum up his view on the importance of the 1848 revolution.
- 2) Now go back and read the stuff in the pink box. List the reasons why the position

of Prussian had strengthened and why Austria's position had weakened.

Changes in Austria.

1) Read p.108 and make brief notes on the serious blunder Austria made regarding Russia and what was happening in the *Bund* much against Austria's feelings.

Economic Changes

1) During the 1850s, Prussia tried hard to keep the status quo but at the same time bring in changes under their control, i.e. keep the aristocracy in charge but keep the peasants, workers and the Liberal middle class happy in the hope of avoiding future revolutions. What helped keep the situation under control was Prussia's growing economic strength. Take notes from pp.109-110 that explain what made Prussia stronger and Austria weaker during the 1850s.

Why are these figures important?

- 1) What did the smaller states begin to realise regarding Prussia?
- 2) What did Austria try to do to lessen the power Prussia had over Austria economically? How did Bismarck and the Prussians respond?

Otto Von Bismarck

The man who did most to unite the German states was **Otto Von Bismarck**. He was the Prussian Chancellor and his main goal was to strengthen even further the position of Prussia in Europe.

Bismarck's primary aims were to:

- unify the north German states under Prussian control
- weaken Prussia's main rival, Austria, by removing it from the Bund
- make Berlin the centre of German affairs - not Vienna
- strengthen the position of the King of Prussia, William I, to counter the demands for reform from the Liberals in the Prussian parliament (the Reichstag). (BBC Bitesize)

You are about to learn how Germany finally becomes unified under Prussian control thanks to the economic and military strength of Prussia as well as the relative weakness of Austria. It will involve three wars and a main player - Bismarck.

It is important to note that there is much debate about Bismarck's aims to unify all German states under Prussian rule. Some historians argue that Bismarck only intended to unify the north German states but the strength of nationalist feelings after 1866 led to German unification under its own steam. According to this opinion, Bismarck actually reacted to political changes in other German states and capitalised on it rather than pursuing a master plan from the beginning to control all German states. (BBC Bitesize) **So as you work through this section, think about the part played by Bismarck.**

Bismarck Arrives.

- 1) Once you have read the back story of Bismarck, make a note about Bismarck's alleged comment to Disraeli in 1862 and why it might prove that Bismarck planned the unification of Germany. Note A.J.P. Taylor's thoughts.
- 2) What did King William want to do and what was stopping him?
- 3) What alarmed many of his ministers?
- 4) What was Von Roon's suggestion?

This 'Army Budget' dispute between the parliament and the King was much bigger than just how the army was to be financed. It was really about who was now in charge of the country - the rising, powerful middle class with their Liberal ideals or the declining ruling elite with their old fashioned ideology?

Bismarck came from the ruling Junker class but recognised the power and influence of the middle class. Somehow, he would try to achieve all his aims (see bullet points on p.113) but keep not only the ruling elite happy but the growing middle class, who, don't forget, were keen to see a unified Germany.

- 5) Make sure you understand what *Realpolitik* means by making your own notes on it.
- 6) Using the last paragraph on p.113, sum up what Bismarck had to do and how he was going to do it.
- 7) Try to explain what Bismarck was saying in his speech (top of p. 114).
- 8) How did Bismarck get the Army budget through parliament?
- 9) Prussia now had a strong economy and a strong, well funded army. Find out more about the army reforms from your study notes. Copy down Mosse's quote, p.114.

Otto Von Bismarck and the unification of Germany.

Bismarck's Aims

1) What did Bismarck know would keep the Progressives (a party of Liberals joined together looking for more democracy and a united Germany) happy?

2) Read the top of p. 115 and get the basic idea of how Bismarck got on Russia's side and, due to him ignoring the opponents to reform, won some favour with the Progressives.

Bismarck knew Austria was a major obstacle to unification. To succeed in his aims war seemed inevitable. Before he fought the powerful Austrian empire, however, he needed to weaken its position in Europe.

Prussia refused to help Poland when it rebelled against Russian control. Bismarck then formed a powerful alliance with Russia.

Bismarck then formed another key alliance with France. In a meeting with Napoleon III, he promised to support France in its plans to invade and control Belgium.

Bismarck also struck a deal with Italy. Italy promised to help Prussia in any war against Austria, providing Austria were the aggressor and Italy gained Venezia in return. (BBC Bitesize)

Remember, you will be asked to make a judgement on the factors that contributed to the unification of Germany. Clearly, Bismarck is a major factor so be sure you take on board all these preparations, planning and deals he does. Has he planned the whole thing or is he just taking advantage of favourable circumstances that come his way? He is an interesting character for sure, as you will find out.

The Danish War.

The background to this war is complicated and you don't have to know it. What would help though is a map of the area being discussed (you can find one in the old Higher textbook.) Now read p.115 and Palmerston's quote.

- 1) What two benefits for Bismarck would come out of a successful war with the Danes?
- 2) Why did he decide to go to war with Austrian help?
- 3) Read how Bismarck characteristically isolated his enemy.

War with Denmark

1) Read over pp.116-117 and try to understand the difficult quotes provided. What you should take away from the war with Denmark is:

- Prussia looked like the defender of small states and nationalism
- The swift defeat of the Danes proved that the Army Budget that Bismarck forced through had created a strong, well equipped, well trained and well led army which could be useful in bringing about a unified Germany under Prussian control.
- Austria had looked like a land-grabber in this war
- The two duchies of Holstien and Schleswig were now ruled jointly by Prussia and Austria. Look at a map and see how far away the two duchies are from Austria. This joint rule would surely cause tension between Austria and Prussia.

Otto Von Bismarck and the unification of Germany.

Bismarck then engineered a treaty with Austria (the Treaty of Gastein) which he knew was unlikely to work. Prussia was to control Schleswig and Austria would control Holstein. This treaty was designed to provoke, since Austrians would have to go through a hostile Prussia to reach Holstein.

The Austrians tried to use their influence in the German Bund to pressure Prussia to address the Schleswig-Holstein issue. The Bund backed Austria in the dispute over Schleswig-Holstein. Bismarck would now have to get Austria out of the *Bund*.

The Austro-Prussian War

- 1) Copy (and keep handy) the two quotes from historians regarding their belief that Bismarck planned the war with Austria.
- 2) What was the difference of opinion between Austria and Prussia regarding the two duchies?
- 3) Why was Bismarck not ready for another war? So what function do you think the Treaty of Gastein served for Bismarck?
- 4) Why was Gastein a 'master - stroke' by Bismarck?

The Isolation of Austria

- 1) Describe why France had to be isolated and how she was isolated using pages 119 - 120. (Note also that Britain and Russia would stay out of any future war.)
- 2) Why did Bismarck think it wise to find an ally?
- 3) Why did he choose Italy?
- 4) Look at the Italian terms and make a brief note on why Bismarck had to act quickly and have Austria start the war.

5) Read over the last paragraph on p.120 and the top of p. 121 and consider how clever Bismarck was, offering votes for all males. Consider - did Bismarck really want that?; did Bismarck really believe it would happen?; what would the Liberals think of him for suggesting that?; how would Austria look rejecting such a suggestion?

6) Make your own notes, ensuring understanding, on how the action of Austria help Bismarck achieve his aim of getting Austria to start the war.

War with Austria

- 1) When did the Austro-Prussian war start and which side did the southern German states take?
 - 2) How did Bismarck keep the nationalists happy about the war?
 - 3) Read the short paragraph about the war and then, using the next paragraph give reasons how Prussia was able to win so convincingly.
 - 4) Why did Bismarck want a quick end to the war and why do you think he was so generous to the Austrians in the terms of the peace treaty?
 - 5) Using the important information on p. 123, make a detailed spider diagram showing the consequences of the Austro-Prussian war. Once that is complete, take a coloured pen and circle the parts that you feel has contributed to the unification of Germany. For example the 21 states formed to make a North German Confederation.
- Bismarck now turned his attention to the other great stumbling block to unification - the French. France had watched Prussia's growing power with alarm. As he had with Austria, Bismarck tried to weaken France as much as possible before war started.

Otto Von Bismarck and the unification of Germany.

The Franco-Prussian War.

- 1) Why did Bismarck not take over the Catholic southern states and force them to join the mainly Protestant Northern states?
- 2) Copy the Bismarck quote at the top of p. 124.

The Background to war.

- 1) Look back at the top of p.120 and remind yourself of Bismarck's promise to the French if they stayed neutral. Now read this section 'Background to war' and describe in your own words your thoughts on what Bismarck did once the war with Austria was over.
- 2) How were the southern states drawn into the North German Confederation? At this point would you call this a unification driven by nationalist feeling?

What was the Spanish Candidature?

This story is initially a bit confusing but it is a great story of how Bismarck behaved. This will be gone over in class but read this simplified version from BBC Bitesize first to give a basic understanding of the story:

Bismarck found his excuse for war with France when Spain offered its vacant crown to a relative of the Prussian King, William I.

France was outraged since it didn't want Prussia to become more powerful. The French insisted King William make his relative refuse the crown. King William refused to guarantee this.

Bismarck used the King's refusal as a way to provoke the French. He published a heavily edited and provocative telegram, known as The Ems Telegram, of the King's refusal, making it seem he had insulted the French ambassador. The French Emperor, responding to

fury from the French press and public, declared war on Prussia.

Essentially this was Bismarck winding the French up brilliantly, over the tone of a telegram essentially, so much so they declared war!

- 1) Copy (and keep handy) McKichan and Thompson's quotes.
- 2) Read over pp.124-126. A good way to summarise this is to jot down notes in three columns: 'what Bismarck did'; 'what William did'; 'what the French did'.
- 3) Note down historians Seaman and Feuchtwanger's conclusions.
- 4) What did the Southern German have to do?

The outcome of the Franco-Prussian war.

- 1) According to the textbook, what two things proved decisive for Prussian victory?
- 2) What happened on 18th January 1871?
- 3) Make brief notes on the Treaty of Frankfurt, May 1871. Or copy this:

As a result of the Franco-Prussian war, France lost the territory of Alsace-Lorraine on its border with Germany. It also had to pay Germany £200 million in compensation. A new imperial constitution was set up within the now unified German states, with William I as Emperor (Kaiser) and Prussia firmly in control.

Otto Von Bismarck and the unification of Germany.

How important was Bismarck to German Unification?

1) Using p.128, make a summary diagram which tackles the above question.

Summary - Bismarck's contribution to unification

- Economic co-operation meant that unification may have happened eventually anyway, but Bismarck made sure that it happened.
- He made sure that the army reforms took place.
- He successfully isolated other countries by making them look like aggressors.
- He made Prussia appear to be the defender of the German states and protector of their rights.

There was a lot in that chapter but I hope you'll agree that with a character like Bismarck and three wars to consider, it makes for a much more interesting section of the course than perhaps the previous one.

One essay to consider is an assessment of the factors that contributed to the unification of Germany. So you need to know details of and make judgements on:

- **economic factors such as the Zollverein**
- **Military factors such as the strength, training, equipment and leadership of the Prussian army**
- **what part did the wars themselves play?**

- **what part did Bismarck play in bringing about unification?**
- **Did there have to be a growing feeling of nationalism before unification would have happened, i.e. was nationalism and Liberalism the driving force or was it the ruling elite's desire to have a powerful Prussia which would keep Austria down that just happened to create a unified Germany?**

Start working on this popular, and often well done essay question.

Remember, it is usually delivered as an 'isolated factor' question (similar to Q2 on the 'Sample Essay Questions on p.129), so you must deal the isolated factor first and then discussed the other factors.

Don't forget to try removing a factor from the equation to measure its importance to the story.