



"HOW IS THIS FOR HIGH?"

HARPER'S WEEKLY

Before 1848, Germany was a confederation of 38 states ruled by princes or kings. Prussia was the largest and most powerful of these states. Many Germans believed that unification could only be achieved under Prussian leadership. But the Prussian king did not want to take a crown from the hands of revolutionaries and liberals. Unification would have to be on his terms.

He appointed Otto von Bismarck to be his chief minister in 1862. Bismarck set forth a policy called "blood and iron". Bismarck intended to use war to achieve his aims of unifying Germany. Bismarck started three wars. The Prussians fought against the Danes, the Austrians, and the French. By 1871, Germany was united. The policy of "blood and iron" had worked.

Originally published in 1871, a Harper's Weekly cartoonist, Thomas Nast, shows the crowning of King Wilhelm I of Prussia as Kaiser (emperor) of Germany, after the unification of the German states into a single nation in 1871. Nast shows Otto von Bismarck, the Prussian chancellor, as the artist who has redrawn the map of Germany. The emperor's kingly crown is in the wastebasket. However, the imperial crown rests squarely on the Kaiser's head.

"The great questions of the day will not be settled by means of speeches and majority decisions but by iron and blood."

~ Otto von Bismarck

Questions:

1. Why was German unification a difficult goal to achieve?
2. Who was Otto von Bismarck and what did he believe
3. In Bismarck's quote, what does he mean by "questions of the day will not be settled by speeches and majority decisions..."?
4. Explain the meaning of "blood and iron":



“The position of Prussia in Germany will not be determined by its liberalism but by its power ... Prussia must concentrate its strength and hold it for the favorable moment, which has already come and gone several times. Since the treaties of Vienna, our frontiers have been ill-designed for a healthy body politic. Not through speeches and majority decisions will the great questions of the day be decided - that was the great mistake of 1848 and 1849 - but by iron and blood.”

~ Otto von Bismarck

Questions:

1. According to Bismarck, what determines Prussia's position in Germany?

2. According to Bismarck, how will the greatest problems of the time be decided?

Excerpt adapted from hyperhistory.net

“Bismarck was very conservative in his political views. “King and Country” were his watchwords. While he remained a political conservative, Bismarck realized that things couldn't be the way they were before. Bismarck also believed that Prussia could lead the unification of Germany. Bismarck believed in the rights of the aristocrat based on his belief that it was the only way to maintain the stability within the state.”

How was Bismarck similar to Thomas Hobbes regarding the role of the monarch?



Keywords to associate with Otto von Bismarck:

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Question:

1. What countries bordered the German states?
2. Why might these nations be concerned with a unified Germany?
3. The northern German states were primarily Protestant. The southern states were primarily Catholic. Why would the southern Catholic states be hesitant about joining the northern states?