

## **THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY, 1815- 1871**

The unification of Germany, just like the Italian unification, involved the amalgamation (union) of the various German states to form the German Empire. It was a process spearheaded by Prussia. The various German states which were brought together were Hanover, Silesia, Posen, Nassau, Hassel - Cassel, Saxony, Holstein, Schleswig, Baden, Bavaria, Wurttemberg and Prussia among others. The German unification was officially completed in 1871. The German empire was proclaimed on **18<sup>th</sup> January 1871** at Versailles Palace in the Hall of Mirrors in France after the Franco- Prussian War of 1870- 1871.

### **OBSTACLES TO THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY**

The influence of Napoleon I of France up to 1815 delayed the unification of Germany. In 1806, Napoleon I defeated Austria which was controlling the German states and therefore Austria surrendered the German states to France. Napoleon I then reduced the German states from over three hundred to only thirty-nine (39) states and formed them into the Confederation of the Rhine which he put under the French control up to his downfall in 1815. This therefore meant that the German states could not gain their independence under the French control which was a great power.

The Vienna settlement of 1815 delayed the unification of Germany. The 1815 Vienna settlement created the German Confederation of 39 states under the leadership of Austria with a Diet or Parliament at Frankfurt. This arrangement became a major road block to the unification of Germany because Austria which presided over the German Confederation Parliament was just interested in preserving her strong empire. Therefore, she did not allow discussing any matters concerning the unification of Germany.

The Austrian influence was a major obstacle to the unification of Germany. Austria remained a dominant power in Germany and her survival as an empire was made possible by the disunity of the German states. From 1815, Austria effectively controlled the thirty-nine (39) states that formed the German Confederation with a parliament at Frankfurt. Austria was always against the forces of liberalism and nationalism and therefore she did not support the creation of a united Germany. Besides, Austria exploited the resources of these German states which led to economic backwardness that hindered the unification process. It was also Austria that influenced King Fredrick William IV of Prussia to refuse the leadership of the German unification in 1848 during the liberal resolutions which led to the failure of the unification attempts of 1848-1849. Above all, Prussia always feared the military superiority of Austria and this therefore delayed the German unification.

Besides Austria, there were other foreign powers that were controlling the German states and yet they were not interested in creating a united Germany. For example, Hanover was under Britain, Holland controlled Luxembourg while Schleswig and Holstein were under Denmark. This delayed the unification of Germany because none of the above foreign powers was ready to surrender the German states so as to create a united Germany.

Metternich and his oppressive system delayed the unification of Germany. He hated liberalism and nationalism which he feared would lead to the collapse of the Austrian empire. He therefore

suppressed all the liberal and nationalistic movements in the German states. For example, he introduced the *Carlsbad Decrees of 1819* which imposed strict censorship of the press, banned political meetings and students' political societies, dismissed university professors and the liberal leaders in Germany. The Metternich system therefore effectively worked against the success of the German liberals and nationalists and therefore led to failure of the 1830 and 1848 revolutions in the German states which delayed the unification of Germany.

The individualism of the small German states delayed the unification of Germany. The princes or leaders of states like Bavaria, Wurttemberg, Hanover and Hamburg feared that the unification of Germany would make them lose their powers and independence. They therefore opposed any attempts to bring together the various German states so as to create a united Germany.

Economic backwardness was another obstacle to the German unification. By 1848, Germany as a whole was economically backward and the industrial revolution had not made any progress in Germany. The German states therefore remained basically agricultural states. Above all, transport and communication facilities remained poor together with low levels of trade. Therefore, such wide spread poverty in the German states hindered the success of the unification struggle in Germany.

The military weakness of the German states was another obstacle to their unification. The German states were very poor and therefore they could not raise and maintain a strong army to challenge the Austrian military might. Even Prussia which was the leading German state was militarily weak as compared to Austria. This therefore explains the failure of all the first attempts to get rid of foreign rule in Germany since the 1814-1815 Vienna congress like the 1830 and 1848 revolutions. Hence, Austria dominated the German states for a longer time because of being defenseless.

The weakness of the German Confederation Parliament or Diet delayed the unification of Germany. This parliament was created by the Vienna settlement in 1815 at Frankfurt but it was too weak to promote the German unification. For example, it was penetrated by the influence of Austria and Metternich who was against the German unification. The parliament was composed of Austrian representatives who were enemies of the German unification. As a result, they only catered for the interests of Austria at the expense of Germany. This parliament therefore could not pass resolutions that were in favor of the German unity and independence. As a result, it delayed the German unification.

The weakness of the German nationalists was another obstacle to the unification of Germany. The Germany nationalists were composed of the intellectuals, working class, university professors and students who were largely urban based and uncoordinated. They depended on parliamentary speeches, meetings, banquets and resolutions and never had the military ability to challenge the Austrian domination of the German states. This therefore explains why Austria easily defeated them during the 1848-1849 revolutionary period, thus delaying the process of German unification.

The lack of able leadership delayed the unification of Germany. Germany lacked able leaders who would provide the kind of leadership necessary to unite all the German states. King Fredrick William III of Prussia who was in a better position to lead the struggle for German unification was weak and a close ally of Austria. Even king Fredrick William IV who succeeded him in 1840 was also weak and therefore he failed to lead the unification struggle. He disappointed the Germans in

1848 when he was offered the leadership of the struggle but he turned it down. This eventually led to the failure of the 1848 revolutions in the German states against Austria. Therefore, it was after the coming to power of King William I in **1861** that the unification program was drawn up especially with his appointment of Otto von Bismarck as the Minister- President of Prussia in 1862.

The lack of foreign assistance delayed the unification of Germany. All efforts to unite the German states before 1860 failed mainly because of the lack of foreign assurance. This was because all the major powers of Europe were hostile to the German struggle to achieve her independence. It was therefore difficult for the German states which were militarily and economically too weak to achieve independence and unity on their own without external support. This lack of foreign assistance explains why both the 1830 and 1848 revolutions in the German states failed, thus delaying the unification struggle.

The lack of a common plan by the German nationalists also delayed the German unification. The German nationalists who would have worked for German unity lacked a common unification plan or method and instead were divided along two conflicting plans for the unification process. Some Germans looked at Austria for leadership in the German affairs while other Germans favored Prussian leadership and they did not want to involve Austria in the German affairs. This therefore created differences and disagreements among the German revolutionary leaders which delayed the unification of Germany.

Religious differences among the German states delayed the unification struggle. The Northern German states were predominantly **Protestant** and therefore they looked towards Prussia for the leadership of the United Germany while the Southern German states like Baden, Bavaria and Wurttemberg were dominated by the **Catholics** who favored Austria, a fellow catholic state. These catholic states never trusted Prussia and therefore they looked at her with a lot of suspicion. These religious differences therefore created disunity between the Germans, hence delaying the entire process of German unification.

The opposition from the **liberals** in the **Prussian parliament** at **Berlin** and the conservative **Junkers** delayed the unification of Germany. The liberals wasted valuable time discussing useless issues and opposed crucial issues in the unification process like raising a strong Prussian army that would be used to expel the foreigners out of the German states. This therefore explains why the 1848 revolutions failed in the German states. Even after 1850, the liberals continued to oppose reforms like increase in taxation, raising and maintaining a big Prussian army. Therefore, it was only after their suppression by Otto Von Bismarck in 1862 that the unification of Germany was realized. Similarly, the Prussian Junkers (landlords) in the government opposed being involved in the German affairs because the unification would make the economically prosperous Prussia responsible for the general poverty of the Southern German states. This therefore delayed attempts to unify Germany.

The social backwardness of the Germans also delayed the unification of Germany. The majority of the people in the German states especially in the rural areas were illiterate and therefore they were socially backward. The elite class was very small and because of this, the illiterate German people could not easily be mobilized to join the nationalistic movements that were intended to unite the German states.

The negative attitude of **France** towards a united Germany also delayed the unification of Germany. The position of France as great power in Europe had for long been made possible by the weakness of her neighbor, Prussia. France for that matter could not tolerate the creation of a united Germany in her neighborhood because a strong Germany would be a military threat to France's position as a land master in Europe. Therefore, France especially under Emperor Napoleon III opposed any attempts aimed at establishing a united German Empire until 1871 when she was defeated and humbled by Prussia under Otto Von Bismarck.

The poor mobilization of the masses delayed the unification of Germany. Before 1860, most Germans were ignorant about the benefits of unification because they were not fully sensitized about the advantages of a united Germany as opposed to a divided Germany. This was because unlike the Italians who had men like Mazzini, the Germans lacked strong personalities to address the problem of total unification. This explains why the thirty-nine (39) German states had strongly believed in the Austrian domination until 1866 yet Austria wanted to promote her selfish interests in Germany.

### **FACTORS THAT FAVOURED THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY**

Although the Unification of Germany was delayed by numerous obstacles, the years after 1860 witnessed rapid movement towards the achievement of German unification under the Prussian leadership which was finally completed in January 1871. This was because of the following favorable factors;

The work of Napoleon I of France favored the Unification of Germany. During his reign, Napoleon I conquered the German states from Austria and reduced them from over three hundred to only thirty-nine (39) states. Napoleon I then spread the 1789 French revolutionary ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity to the German states under his control. He also reminded the Germans that their glory and achievements of the past could still be revived. This strengthened the spirit of nationalism and unity among the thirty-nine (39) German states which eventually paved way for the unification of Germany by 1871.

The common characteristics among the German favored the unification process. The Germans had a common language, culture and other traditions. This promoted some form of unity and the Germans therefore looked at themselves as one people. This therefore stimulated the idea of nationalism among the Germans, thus preparing a back ground for the German unification which was achieved in 1871.

The creation of the Zollverein also facilitated the unification of Germany. This was an economic union of the German states formed in 1834 under the leadership of Prussia to eliminate custom duties or tariffs in the German states. By 1844, nearly all the German states were members of this economic union except those which were still under the direct control of Austria. Those German states that refused to join the Union suffered heavy tariffs (Custom duties) on their exports to the union members. The Union therefore created economic co-operation among the German states. This economic unity between Prussia and other German states prepared ground for a political union which was achieved in 1871.

The collapse of the Congress System by 1830 favored the unification of Germany. When the Congress System collapsed, Europe remained without a concerted effort or togetherness to suppress any liberal and nationalistic movements like the unification of Germany. The fact that the unification of Germany was a violation of the Vienna settlement of 1815 meant that the congress powers were bound to suppress it if the congress system had existed up to the 1860s.

The downfall of Metternich and his oppressive system in 1848 greatly contributed to the Unification of Germany. He was overthrown by the 1848 revolution in Vienna and his downfall meant the end of the old order and the triumph of the new order. Before 1848, Metternich had suppressed the liberal and nationalistic movements in the German states through the Carlsbad Decrees of 1819. His successors i.e. **Schwarzenberg** (1848-1852) and later **Count Von Boul** (1852 -1859) was weak and proved to be less repressive like Metternich himself. This therefore enabled Otto Von Bismarck to mobilize the Germans freely which resulted into the total German unification by 1871.

The Crimean War of 1854-1856 favored the unification of Germany. After the war, Austria experienced strained relations with Russia and the Western European powers. Austria's neutrality in this war destroyed the historical connection and friendship between her and Russia and the Western European powers. Therefore, coupled with Austria's poor leadership and other domestic challenges, Prussia was in position to challenge her, thereby enabling Otto Von Bismarck to lead the German Unification up to 1871 when it was completed.

The lessons learnt from the 1848 revolutions and the failure of the liberals to unify Germany in 1848 favored the unification struggle. In 1848, the Germans attempted to unify their nation by constitutional means. Using their parliament at Frankfurt, they began the task of making a constitution which would give the Germans unity and liberty. After many discussions, the German Confederation parliament resolved to exclude Austria and establish a Prussian led Empire. Prussia supported them but eventually Austria mobilized her forces and defeated them. Because of this humiliation, it was learnt that German unity would not be achieved by liberal discussions and resolutions of the majority but by "blood and iron" or force or militarism. Therefore, under Otto Von Bismarck the adopted militarism or force against Austria and other foreign powers and this eventually contributed to the unification of Germany by 1871.

The emergence of Prussia as a leading state favored the Unification of Germany. Prussia led the unification struggle because of the advantages that she had over other German states. By the 1815 Vienna settlement Prussia was strengthened territorially by acquiring part of Saxony and the Rhine land province. Therefore, Prussia acquired German nationals and annexed them onto her population. Prussia also remained independent and united as the rest the German states were under foreign domination and disunited. Because of this therefore, she was strong enough to challenge the disunited Austrian Empire when the unification struggle started.

The work of the German scholars also facilitated the unification of Germany. The German scholars sensitized the Germans and made them aware of their identity as a superior race by capitalizing on the past glory of the Germans. These scholars therefore made the Germans proud people and this explains why it was easy to mobilize them against foreign domination during the unification struggle.

The role of the foreign powers after the 1860s facilitated the unification of Germany. For example, Austria assisted Prussia in the liberation of Schleswig and Holstein from Denmark in 1864. Also, the Italian unification struggle weakened the Austrians to the advantage of Prussia. The Italians also helped the Prussian troops against Austria in 1866 which resulted into the liberation of Holstein from Austria and the annexation of the Northern German states by Prussia. Otto Von Bismarck also secured the neutrality of European powers like Britain, France and Russia whose co-operation and good will enabled Prussia to succeed over her enemies, thus leading to the unification of Germany by 1871.

The rise of King William I favored the unification of Germany. He replaced King Fredrick William IV as a **regent** in 1858 and became King of Prussia in 1861. William I was anti-liberal and also hated the Austrian domination of the German affairs. He favored the modernization of that Prussian economy which had been backward. He also modernized the Prussian army to the highest degree of military efficiency (ability) and it was this strong army that was used to defeat Prussia's enemies during the unification struggle like Denmark, Austria and France. Above all, he appointed men who had the German unification at heart like Von Moltke as Chief of Staff and Von Roon as Minister of War in 1859. He also recalled and appointed Otto Von Bismarck as Minister-President or Prime Minister of Prussia in 1862, a man who led the unification struggle of Germany up to 1871 when it succeeded.

The rise of Otto Von Bismarck greatly favored the unification of Germany. He was born on **1<sup>st</sup> April 1815** in a Protestant Junker or noble family in Prussia. He was a well-educated man who studied Law at the Universities of Gottingen and Berlin. Otto Von Bismarck served in the army as a *Lieutenant* and then returned to his family estates. As a politician, Bismarck was **conservative** and **anti-liberal**.

In 1847, Bismarck was elected to the Prussian parliament at Berlin. He was very outspoken and in fact he spoke violently against the liberals who were the majority in the Prussian parliament. He also spoke violently against Austria and to him the liberals and Austria were the greatest obstacles to the German unification.

Between 1851 and 1859, he was the Prussian representative to the German Confederation Diet or Parliament at Frankfurt which was under the presidency of Austria. Between 1859 and 1862, he served as the Prussian ambassador to Russia and later to France. In 1862, due to the problems that were being caused by the liberals in Prussia, he was recalled and appointed as the Minister-President or Prime Minister by King William I.

Otto Von Bismarck is regarded as the father of modern Germany and this is because of the great role that he played in the creation of a United Germany as noted below;

He suppressed the **liberals** in the Prussian Parliament who had rejected King William I's military reforms. In 1862, King William I presented budget proposals for the army to the Prussian parliament. The proposals which involved increase in taxes would enable him to strengthen the Prussian army but the liberals who were the majority in the parliament rejected them. When Bismarck was appointed Minister-President in 1862, he embarked on the task of crashing the liberal opposition in Prussia. He remarked that; *"Germany has its eyes not on Prussian Liberalism but on its power or strength. The great question of the day shall not be decided by speeches and*

*resolutions of the majority - that was the mistake of 1848-1849, but by blood and Iron".* As a result, he eliminated all the liberals from all important positions in the civil service and the army. Their newspapers were all censored, others were arrested and imprisoned. Because of this, the King was able to collect taxes or money so as to implement the proposed military reforms. This strengthened Prussia, thus enabling her to lead the German unification.

Bismarck improved the Prussian economy which facilitated the unification of Germany. He built modern roads, railway lines and telegraphic systems which promoted trade and commerce in Prussia. He also set up industries as well as modernizing agriculture. It was this strong Prussian economy that was used to shoulder or finance the expensive German unification struggle up to 1871 when it succeeded.

Bismarck modernized the Prussian army which helped to unify Germany. The Prussia army was enlarged from 500,000 to 750,000 soldiers and these were trained to the highest degree of military ability. He also collected taxes which he used to purchase modern weapons that were more superior to those of Prussia's enemies like Austria. It was this strong Prussian army that defeated Denmark in the Danish war of 1864, Austria in the Austro-Prussian war of 1866 and France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, there by paving way for the unification of Germany.

He also helped to improve the Prussian education sector. Low levels of education and social backwardness had hampered the German unification for long. However, when Otto Von Bismarck rose to power, he worked with King William I of Prussia to establish a number of schools which educated many Prussians. This therefore reduced illiteracy which in turn made the mobilization of the Germans for the unification struggle easy.

Bismarck led to the liberation of Holstein and Schleswig from Denmark in 1864. These two German states were liberated through a war that Bismarck fought against Denmark in 1864. In this war, Bismarck secured military assistance from Austria and the neutrality of Russia and France which helped Prussia to easily defeat Denmark. After the war, Bismarck annexed the German state of *Schleswig* to Prussia while Holstein was given to Austria. This was an important step in the Unification of Germany.

He played a major role in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. This war enabled Prussia to annex Holstein and the Northern German states of Saxony, Hanover, Havel-Cassel and Nassau among others, which had been controlled by Austria. Before the war, Bismarck persuaded Emperor Napoleon III of France to keep neutral by promising him territories along River Rhine. He also asked the Italians to support him in this war by promising them the state of Venetia which was still under Austria. Consequently, Austria was defeated in 1866 which led to the liberation of *Holstein* and other Northern German states from Austrian control which was a major step in the Unification of Germany.

Bismarck was vital in the creation of the *North German Confederation*. In **1867**, Bismarck and King William I decided to unite all the German states that had so far been liberated in 1866 into a new union known as the *North German Confederation* which was led by Prussia and therefore Austria was completely expelled from the German affairs. These states included among others Schleswig, Holstein, Havel-Cassel, Hanover, Nassau and Frankfurt. Bismarck became the

Chancellor of this new confederation while William I became the King. This increased the determination of the Germans even to liberate the remaining three Southern German states.

He was vital in the unification of Germany by diplomatically isolating France under Emperor Napoleon III. He frequently exposed Napoleon III's plan of annexing the Southern German states and Belgium. This consequently provoked hostility from the Southern German states against France and also hostility from Britain towards France because of Napoleon III's attempt to violate the **1839 London Treaty** that had granted Belgium independence and neutrality. Because of this state of affairs, Prussia was able to succeed over France during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871.

It was his skills and calculation that led to that to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 -1871. He manipulated the 1868 Spanish succession dispute to the advantage of Prussia. He changed the telegram which King William I had sent to him after the discussions with the French ambassador at EMS. Bismarck changed the telegram to appear as if the French ambassador had been insulted and humiliated by King William I. This provoked Emperor Napoleon III to declare war on Prussia in 1870 which ended with the defeat of France. After the war, Bismarck annexed the three Southern German states of Bavaria, Wurttemberg and Baden which were under the influence of France. This led to the creation of the United German Empire in January 1871 which completed the Unification of Germany.

Bismarck worked closely with Von Roon and Von Moltke who were military officers of the Prussian army appointed by King William I in 1859. Von Roon was the *Minister of War* and Von Moltke was the *Chief of General Staff*. Both were anti-Austrian and were after increasing the size of the Prussian army. They gave the King and Bismarck military guidance that helped the Prussian army to succeed over her enemies. They also provided military leadership and morale to the Prussian soldiers which motivated them to fight harder. This therefore led to the success of all the wars that were fought by Prussia during the course of the German Unification.

1. Assess the contribution of Otto Von Bismarck to the Unification of Germany.
2. "Without Otto Von Bismarck, German unity would have remained a dream". Discuss.
3. Examine the contribution of Otto Von Bismarck to the Unification of Germany.

## **OTHER ARCHITECTS OF THE GERMAN UNIFICATION**

### **KING WILLIAM I**

He was a King of Prussia and later Germany from 1861 up to 1888. He succeeded his brother King Fredrick William IV of Prussia. However, unlike his brother, King William I had a clear mind and strong will to unite the German states. He was more authoritative, aggressive and not scared of Austria. He was a professional soldier who closely worked with Bismarck to unite Germany.

#### **His roles**

He helped in the improvement of infrastructure. King William I developed Prussia's infrastructures like roads and railway lines which made the mobilization of the masses and transportation of the Prussian troops possible. This quickened the German Unification.

He strengthened the army of Prussia which played an important role in the struggle for German Unification. King William I embarked on a programme of strengthening the Prussian army by using its numbers and equipping it with modern weapons ready to challenge the German enemies. It's this army that fought Denmark, Austria and France to unite Germany.

He appointed Bismarck as Minister-President in 1862. Bismarck who was a German nationalist played a very important role in the German Unification. Fredrick William IV had isolated Bismarck from politics which delayed the German Unification. However, when King William I came to power, he put Bismarck at the centre of Prussia's politics and this position enabled Bismarck to unite the German states by 1871.

He played another role in the annexation of Schleswig which had been under the control of Denmark. He was behind the Danish War of 1864 in which Denmark was defeated by the Prussian army and Schleswig was annexed to Prussia in 1864.

He provided able and clear leadership to Prussia when he put in place a stable and favorable atmosphere to champion the unification process. For example, there was maintenance of law and order. He also appointed important men to help him in modernizing the Prussian army like Von Roon and Von Moltek.

He played another role in the annexation of Holstein and other Northern German states which were under the Austrian rule. He supported Bismarck in the 1866 war against Austria. Austria was defeated after which the state of Holstein and other Northern states were liberated. By supporting Bismarck in the 1866 Austro –Prussian war, King William I played a big role in the German Unification.

He helped in the annexation of the Southern German states in 1871 which marked the end of unification process. King William I supported Bismarck during the war against France which had influence over the Southern German states. France was defeated by 1871 and the Southern Germany states were annexed to the Northern German Confederation to complete the process of German unification by 1871.

When the unification of Germany was achieved in 1871, King William I became its first Emperor (Kaiser) while Bismarck became Chancellor. This was in recognition of the role played by King William I in the struggle for the German Unification. He remained the Kaiser of Germany until his death in 1888.

## **VON ROON AND VON MOLTEK**

These were Prussian military officers who played a big role in the German Unification. Von Roon was the Minister of War and Von Moltek was the Chief of General Staff. They were assisted by Bismarck and King William I to strengthen the Prussian army i.e. they increased it from 500,000 to 750,000 soldiers. It was this strong army that fought Denmark, Austria and France.

## **NAPOLEON I**

He took over the German states from Austria and created the Rhine Confederation which comprised of 39 German states. This arrangement helped to unite all the German states under one

confederation which later led to the rise of nationalistic feelings among the Germans as they realized that unity would be possible.

### **NAPOLEON III**

He also facilitated the German Unification. Bismarck appealed to Napoleon III before the Danish war of 1864 to be neutral which he did and in 1866 before the Austro- Prussian war. He was promised the Rhine land territory in case he was neutral in the war and he accepted which led to annexation of Holstein and other Northern German states like Saxony and Havel-Havel.

Also Napoleon III had a hand in of the liberation of the Southern German states when he blundered by demanding to be rewarded the Rhine land territory which Bismarck was not ready to do. This led to the outbreak of the 1870 -1871 Franco – Prussian war that led to the liberation of the Southern states of Bavaria, Wurttemberg and Baden.

### **TSAR ALEXANDER II OF RUSSIA**

He made Russian forces neutral in the Danish war OF 1864 which led to of liberation of Schleswig from Denmark. Russia was also neutral in the Austro – Prussian war of 1866 as well as the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871 which led to the liberation of the Northern states and Southern German states respectively.

### **VICTOR EMMANUEL II**

He was the King of the Italy. He sent the Piedmont's army which directly supported the Prussian army in the Austro – Prussian war of 1866 which led to the liberation of the Northern German states.

Victor Emmanuel II was neutral in the Franco – Prussian war OF 1870 – 1871 which led to the annexation of Southern German states by Prussia.

### **STEPS TO THE GERMAN UNIFICATION**

The unification of Germany was completed in 1871 by Otto Von Bismarck through three successful wars and these were;

- The Danish war, 1864
- The Austro-Prussian war, 1866
- The Franco-Prussian war, 1870-1871

### **THE DANISH WAR OF 1864**

This war broke out between Denmark and Prussia over the issue of the two states (Duchies) of Holstein and Schleswig which were located in the south of Denmark. The states were historically ruled by Denmark but treated as separate states because they contained a German population. Holstein had more Germans than Schleswig. In 1848, the Germans in the two states attempted to break away from Denmark but they failed and their case was settled by the **London Treaty of 1852**. According to this treaty, it was stated that the two states would remain under the Danish

kingdom, but would not be subjected to its laws. However, in **March 1863** the king of Denmark issued a new constitution which tried to annex Schleswig and Holstein to Denmark, ignoring the independence of the two states. Bismarck therefore used this opportunity to prepare for a full scale war against Denmark.

Before the war, Bismarck secured friendly relations with the neighboring countries, thus isolating Denmark such that she could not have friends to help her against Prussia. For example, he secured the neutrality of Russia by assisting the Tsar of Russia during the Polish revolt of 1863 when he arrested and handed over the Polish rebels who had ran to Prussia. Therefore, Denmark was isolated from Russia.

Bismarck also secured the neutrality of France by promising Napoleon III a territory along River Rhine in case he didn't intervene to support Denmark against Prussia. Therefore, Napoleon III remained neutral during the Danish war. Bismarck also secured an alliance with Austria in **January 1864** with a condition that after the war, Austria would be given the state of Holstein.

Having isolated Denmark from Russia, France and Austria, Bismarck demanded Denmark to withdraw the 1863 constitution and submit the matter of Schleswig and Holstein to a congress of European powers. As expected, Denmark refused to comply which prompted Bismarck and Austria to jointly declare war on Denmark in 1864.

With the support of Austria, Denmark was defeated and the two territories were liberated. At the end of the war, the Treaty of Vienna was signed in **October 1864** and according to this treaty, Denmark surrendered Holstein and Schleswig to Austria and Prussia which were to jointly administer the two territories. Later, the affairs the two territories were decided by Prussia and Austria in the **Gastein Convention of August 1865**.

### **THE GASTEIN CONVENTION OF 1865**

This treaty which was between Prussia and Austria was arranged by Bismarck after the Danish war of 1864. By this treaty, Prussia was to administer Schleswig which had a less German population while Austria took over Holstein which had a big German population. Bismarck did this so as to create future misunderstanding with Austria in order to end the Austrian influence in the German confederation. Indeed, this is what sparked off the Austro Prussian War of 1866 which led to the expulsion of Austria from Holstein as well as the complete elimination of Austria from the German affairs. All in all, the Danish war of 1864 was an important stage in the process of German unification because **Schleswig** was added to Prussia from Denmark.

### **THE AUSTRO-PRUSSIAN WAR OF 1866**

This was a war between Austria and Prussia and it was another important stage in the process of German unification because it involved the complete elimination of Austria from the German affairs since the 1815 Vienna settlement. To achieve this Prussian victory, Bismarck skillfully isolated Austria before the war so as to deny her any possibility of friendship with any European power in case of war with Prussia.

Bismarck secured the neutrality of Russia. This war because Russia was already friendly to Bismarck since 1863 when the Polish revolt broke out in the Polish territories of Russia and

Bismarck assisted the Russian government to crash it. Bismarck also promised to support Russia to violate the 1856 Black Sea clauses in the Paris Treaty of 1856 signed at the end of the 1854 to 1856 Crimean War such that the Russian warships would operate freely on the Black Sea.

Bismarck also isolated Austria from France. Through the secret **Biarritz** meeting of 1865 with Napoleon III, Bismarck won the French neutrality in the event of a war between Austria and Prussia by a verbal promise to support Napoleon III to take over Belgium. Bismarck was also to fulfill the promise of giving Napoleon III some territory located west of the Rhine River (Southern Germany) in case France remained neutral in a war between Prussia and Austria.

Bismarck also isolated Austria from Italy when he came to an understanding with the Italian government under King Victor Emmanuel II in 1866. By this understanding, Bismarck promised Italy the state of **Venetia** which was still under the Austrian control if the Italian government supported Prussia against Austria. According to this Prusso-Italian alliance, Prussia was to attack from the north while Italy from the south.

After isolating Austria, Bismarck who wanted war provoked Austria by sending the Prussian troops to occupy Holstein which was under Austria and this annoyed Austria. He also proposed changes in the German Confederation Parliament at Frankfurt which would exclude Austria.

Austria rejected Bismarck's moves and stated that the occupation of Holstein was a violation of the Gastein Convention of 1865 which had given Holstein to Austria. She also stated that excluding Austria from the German Confederation Parliament was a violation of the Vienna settlement of 1815 which had created the German confederation parliament under Austria. Austria therefore decided to ally with the Northern German states against Prussia and on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1866, Austria declared war on Prussia. Austria was defeated by the Prussian-Italian forces at **Sadowa** in Bohemia on **23<sup>rd</sup> August 1866**. The war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Prague of 1866.

### **THE TREATY OF PRAGUE OF 1866**

This treaty which was signed in the city of Prague was arranged by Bismarck between Prussia and Austria. By this treaty, Austria which had been defeated surrendered all the German states north of **River Main** to Prussia i.e. Prussia annexed Holstein together with the Northern German states of Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Nassau and the city of Frankfurt. The annexation of these German states by Prussia was a big step towards the German unification.

Later in 1867, Bismarck and King William I decided to join all the liberated German states into a new organization under Prussian leadership known as the **North German Confederation**. This organization was made up of Prussia, Schleswig, Holstein, Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Saxony, Nassau and the city of Frankfurt. Austria was excluded from this new organization which marked the end of the Austrian influence in the German affairs and this was a big step towards the German unification. By this time, it was only the three Southern German states of Bavaria, Baden and Wurttemberg that had not been annexed to Prussia to complete the unification of Germany.

**NOTE;** Bismarck carefully handled Austria after the war because he didn't want to make her a permanent enemy to Prussia. Therefore, Bismarck opposed the victory march of the Prussian army to Vienna. He didn't ever impose any war indemnity on Austria. This lenient policy enabled Bismarck to isolate France from Austria during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871.

## **THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR, 1870-1871 OR THE ANNEXATION OF BAVARIA, BADEN AND WURTTENBERG**

This was a war between France under Napoleon III and Prussia under Otto Von Bismarck and King William I. The war occurred between 1870 and 1871 and it was fought purposely to eliminate the remaining obstacle to the German unification (France). It was therefore the final stage in the unification of Germany because after the defeat of France, Prussia managed to annex the Southern German states of Bavaria, Baden and Wurttemberg. Consequently, the German Empire was declared on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1871 at Versailles place in the Hall of Mirrors in France.

The war had many causes as will be seen later but it was sparked off by the EMS TELEGRAM which was twisted or changed by Bismarck. The war was therefore encouraged by Bismarck.

In 1868, Queen Isabella of Spain was overthrown in a revolution. The revolutionaries offered the throne to a Prussian prince **Leopold** who was relative of King William I of Prussia. The French government opposed the candidature of Leopold in Spain because Napoleon III did not want France to be surrounded by a German dynasty in the East and South. The Prussian king also opposed the candidature and as a result, Leopold withdrew his candidature.

In 1869, Bismarck decided to revive the candidature of Leopold in Spain. He encouraged Leopold to accept the offer so as to cause a conflict between Prussia and France, defeat her and annex the Southern German states. In 1870, the Spanish government officially offered the throne to prince Leopold which he accepted. This greatly annoyed France. Consequently, the French Foreign Minister, **Gramont** stated that unless Leopold withdrew, France was to take the matter as a cause for war. Leopold became scared and after being advised by the Prussian king not to accept the throne, he withdrew his candidature for the second time.

The French government, however, insisted that the King of Prussia gives guarantee (assurance) that the candidature of Leopold in Spain would not be renewed in future. The Prussian king met the French ambassador **Benedetti** at EMS and refused to give any guarantee on Leopold's candidature. The king sent a telegram to Bismarck informing him of what had taken place with Benedetti at Ems. Bismarck was permitted to give an account of the events to the press.

Bismarck realized that the opportunity of fighting France was to be missed given the withdrawal of Leopold. He therefore decided to edit the telegram so that the twisted or changed version would give a different interpretation. He made it to appear that the king had refused to see **Benedetti** because the French demands were very unfriendly. It was therefore made to appear as if the French ambassador had been **insulted** by the king.

When the press broke the news, the public in Germany rejoiced that King William I had saved the honour and prestige of their country by rejecting the French demands. In France however, the public was annoyed because the Prussian king had insulted their ambassador and had undermined France as a whole. The French therefore decided to declare war on Prussia in 1870. However, France was defeated because Bismarck had for long prepared for this war.

## **THE CONTRIBUTION OF BISMARCK TO THE SUCCESS OF THE FRANCO - PRUSSIAN WAR**

Before the war, Bismarck diplomatically isolated France in Europe so that she had no ally to assist her. For example, he isolated France from the three Southern German states of Bavaria, Baden and Wurttemberg by making them sign a military alliance with Prussia. He revealed to them that Napoleon III had a plan to annex them to France.

He also isolated France from Austria. This was done by the lenient terms of the treaty of Prague 1866. Prussia did not want permanent enmity with Austria and therefore did not annex any territory from Austria. Austria was just made to surrender the German states to Prussia. Austria therefore could not support France.

France was also isolated from Italy. Already Bismarck had assisted Italy to get Venetia in 1866. To make it worse, France still occupied Rome which the Italians badly needed to complete their unification.

Bismarck isolated France from Britain. He did this by publishing the 1865 proposal by France to annex Belgium which was under the guardianship of the British. This annoyed Britain and therefore there was way no she could support France against Prussia. Russia had already been isolated by Bismarck from any country against Prussia. Therefore, France had no friend to assist her which contributed to the victory of Prussia over France.

## **THE COURSE OF THE FRANCO - PRUSSIAN WAR**

When the war started, the French soldiers were surrounded together with Napoleon III and his son. The two were arrested and France was defeated by Prussia at the Battle of Sedan in 1871. The capture of Napoleon III marked the end of the Second French Empire. When the news of the capture of Napoleon III reached Paris, a revolution was staged and his government was replaced by a new president. Thus, there was the establishment of Third Republic in France. The war ended with the signing of the Frankfurt Treaty of 1871.

## **THE FRANKFURT TREATY OF 1871**

The terms of the treaty included;

- France was made to pay a war indemnity of 500 million Francs to Germany. This was to be paid in three years and it was a major strain on France's economy. France was also to suffer an army of occupation until the payment of the war indemnity was completed.
- By the same treaty, France lost her northern provinces of ALSACE and LORRAINE to Germany. These provinces were rich in iron, coal and also had over 1.6 million French people and therefore their loss greatly annoyed the Frenchmen. This action prompted France to think about revenge on Germany.

**NOTE:**

The Franco - Prussian war enabled Bismarck to complete the German unification. On 18<sup>th</sup> January 1871, the Germans went to Paris in France and organized a victorious ceremony in the **HALL OF MIRRORS** at VERSAILLES PALACE. France was a defeated nation. It was left heartbroken and it should be observed that a new and very strong Germany emerged on the map of Europe.

### **CAUSES OF THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR**

The desire by Bismarck to complete the German unification caused the Franco - Prussian War of 1870-1871. In order to complete the German unification, there was a need to bring the Southern German states of Bavaria, Baden and Wurttemberg under the Prussian control but the greatest obstacle was France. Napoleon III had insisted that these Catholic states remain outside the new **North German Confederation** that Bismarck had created after the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. This therefore influenced Bismarck to develop the determination and desire for war between France and Prussia and indeed explains why Bismarck exploited every opportunity like the Ems telegram to provoke France into war by 1870.

The traditional enmity between Prussia and France since 1789 caused the Franco - Prussian war of 1870-1871. Historically, the relationship between France and Prussia was that of enmity and suspicion. This can be traced as far back as 1789. When the French revolution broke out in 1789, it threatened the survival of the regime in Prussia which was autocratic. This therefore led to the formation of a coalition that included Prussia against revolutionary France. This was worsened by the French defeat of Prussia at the Battle of Jena in **1804** and as well as in **1807**. In 1813-1814 during the Fourth Coalition, Prussia also fought against France and in 1814 to 1815 Prussia was among the Great Powers that met at Vienna to punish France for disturbing European peace. It is therefore this long term enmity between the two countries that Bismarck exploited to provoke France into war by 1870.

The rise of uncompromising leaders in both countries also caused the Franco- Prussian war. In France, there was Emperor Napoleon III who rose through a coup in 1852 while Otto Von Bismarck took over as Minister - President in Prussia in 1862. Bismarck was more interested in completing the unification of Germany with the use of the Prussian military might. Napoleon III on the other hand was determined to restore the French glory and military power by defeating Prussia. The presence of such men with an uncompromising character therefore worsened the already fragile relations between the two countries which eventually caused the Franco - Prussian war by 1870.

The violation of the **Biarritz verbal agreement** to Napoleon III by Bismarck caused the Franco - Prussian war. The Biarritz agreement of **1865** was an understanding that was reached up on between Bismarck of Prussia and Napoleon III of France on the eve of the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. In this agreement, Bismarck had promised to compensate Napoleon III with a territory in the Southern German states (Rhine lands) in case he played a neutral role in the Austro - Prussian war of 1866. However, Bismarck completely changed his mind after the victory of Prussia against Austria at Sadowa. This annoyed Napoleon III who decided to attack Prussia in 1870, thus leading to the Franco - Prussian War.

The Spanish succession dispute between Prussia and France caused the Franco - Prussian war. This dispute emerged after the overthrow of **Queen Isabella** of Spain in 1868 and the subsequent

offer of the Spanish throne to a Prussian prince Leopold. Napoleon III was compelled to get involved in this dispute because he feared the encirclement of France by an alliance between Prussia and Spain. This dispute therefore complicated and destroyed the already fragile relations between France and Prussia which aroused mistrust and suspicion between the two states. This eventually resulted into the Franco – Prussian war of 1870 – 1871.

The changing of the Ems telegram by Bismarck caused the Franco – Prussian war. This telegram had been sent to Bismarck by King William I of Prussia informing him of what had taken place in the meeting between the king and the French ambassador Benedetti. Bismarck's message in the changed telegram which was published both in the German and French newspapers made it sound as if the king had **insulted** the French ambassador. This annoyed the French people so much to the extent of declaring war on Prussia in 1870 so as to divert the humiliation that had been inflicted on France, hence making the outbreak of the Franco – Prussian war of 1870 – 1871 inevitable.

The influence of Empress Eugenie, the wife of Napoleon III caused the Franco – Prussian war of 1870 – 1871. By 1870, Napoleon III was bed – ridden because of a chronic urinary tract infection. This gave a chance to Empress Eugenie and her friends, including the French Generals and Marshals to pressurize Napoleon III to declare war on Prussia in 1870. This is why Eugene proudly remarked that “This is my war”.

Prussia's military might (strength) contributed to the outbreak of the Franco – Prussian war in 1870. By 1870, Prussia was undergoing rapid military progress due the military reforms undertaken by Otto Von Bismarck. For example, Prussia had chemical industries which produced modern weapons which helped to modernise her army that fought the Danes and Austrians in 1864 and 1866 respectively. This military might greatly inspired Bismarck to provoke France into war by 1870, thus causing the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871.

Napoleon III's desire to regain prestige at home and foreign respect caused the Franco - Prussian war. From 1860, Napoleon III had allowed a lot of freedom of speech in France which gave his critics a chance to expose his weaknesses. For example, the Mexican adventure of 1864 – 1866 and his neutrality in the Austro- Prussian war of 1866 had totally destroyed his prestige (reputation) internally and externally. Therefore, Napoleon III fought against Prussia because he wanted to regain his prestige and popularity in France and Europe at large, hence leading to the Franco – Prussian war of 1870 – 1871.

The role of the press led to the outbreak of the Franco – Prussian war in 1870. The newspapers in both Prussia and France published information which influenced public opinion in those countries to demand for war. For example, they published Bismarck's twisted or changed version of the Ems telegram and this worsened the already fragile relations between France and Prussia. This eventually contributed to the outbreak of the Franco – Prussian war in 1870.

Bismarck's desire to silence the Catholics at home and abroad also caused the Franco – Prussian war of 1870 – 1871. Right from 1862 when Bismarck became Minister – President his relationship with the Catholics in Prussia remained bad because he was a protestant. Externally, Bismarck feared that catholic France would ally with the catholic German states of Baden, Bavaria and Wurttemberg to frustrate the process of German unification. He therefore thought that by fighting and defeating France, this would weaken the catholic influence both at home and abroad.

The neutrality of other European powers caused the Franco – Prussian war of 1870 – 1871. By 1870, Bismarck had succeeded in completely isolating France from the European powers through diplomacy. For example, he had isolated France from the Southern German states of Baden, Bavaria and Wurttemberg by signing a military alliance with them after revealing to them that Napoleon III wanted to annex them. Bismarck further published France's plans to take over Belgium and Luxembourg which annoyed Britain. By 1870 therefore France had no ally to assist her in a war against Prussia. This increased Bismarck's determination to fight against France which eventually sparked off the Franco – Prussian war of 1870 – 1871.

The dishonesty or treachery character of Bismarck also caused the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. Bismarck had frustrated Napoleon III on a number of occasions to the extent that Napoleon III lost popularity in France. For example, he looked stupid after the Austro – Prussian War of 1866 when he demanded for the Rhine land territory or Southern Germany without evidence. The French at home were annoyed that Bismarck had fooled Napoleon III while the Bonapartists and other glory seekers decided to oppose Napoleon III for having accepted to be deceived by Bismarck which undermined the glory of France. The already disappointed Napoleon III decided to declare war against Prussia in 1870.

The impact of the Austro – Prussian war of 1866 also led to the outbreak of the Franco – Prussian war of 1870 – 1871. This was one of the major unification battles in which Prussia supported by the Italians fought against Austria. During this war, the Prussian army put up a very impressive or good fight against the military power of Austria. Consequently, Austria was defeated by Prussia at Sadowa in 1866. The success of the Prussian army in this war encouraged Bismarck to fight against France, thus causing the Franco – Prussian war by 1870.

France's desire to maintain her supremacy in Europe also caused the Franco – Prussian war of 1870 – 1871. By 1870, the balance of power in Europe was in favor of France and Britain. France was the dominant power on land while Britain was the sea master. However, Prussia's military growth by 1870 threatened France's position in Europe which Napoleon III could not tolerate. France therefore thought that the defeat of Prussia would safe guard her position on the continent as a land master. This therefore made the outbreak of the Franco – Prussian war inevitable by 1870.

### **EFFECTS OF THE FRANCO – PRUSSIAN WAR**

The Franco – Prussian war resulted into the defeat of France in 1871 by Prussia at the Battle of Sedan close to the border of Belgium. This defeat was too humiliating to France and Napoleon III as a leader. Many French troops perished and Emperor Napoleon III was taken as a captive. Similarly, the French national flag was also taken by the Germans. It was such a humiliating defeat that the Frenchmen never forgot.

It led to the signing of the **Frankfurt Treaty** of 1871. This treaty was signed between France and Germany at the end of the war. According to this treaty, France lost her two provinces of Alsace and Lorraine rich in coal and iron to Germany which she retained until the end of World War I of 1914-1918. This became a great asset in the industrialization of Germany after 1871. By the same treaty, France was forced to pay a heavy war indemnity or fine of 500 million Francs to Germany within a period of just three years and also to suffer an army of occupation until the payment of

the war indemnity was completed. Generally, France was weakened economically and militarily by this treaty.

The war led to the end of the second French Empire. Since Napoleon III had been exiled by the Germans during the course of the Franco – Prussian war, this marked the end of the second French Empire that he had established in 1852 following his coup d'état. This was another humiliation suffered by the Frenchmen because of this war.

The war completed the unification of Germany under King William I. Because of the Franco-Prussian war, Napoleon III's claims over the catholic Southern German states of Baden, Bavaria, and Wurttemberg ended and therefore they were able to join the other German states in the north so as to achieve the total unification of Germany by 1871.

In the same way, the war led to the completion of the Italian unification. When the Franco – Prussian war broke out in 1870, France withdrew her troops in Rome. These troops had been kept thereby France to guard the Pope since 1849 when the Italian revolutionaries led by Mazzini and Garibaldi had forced him into exile and had established a Republic over Rome which was short lived. When these French troops in Rome were withdrawn at the start of the war, the Italians used that opportunity to occupy Rome and they declared Italy as a united state in 1870.

The Franco–Prussian war led to the rise of the Third French Republic in 1870 under **Adolph Thiers** and later **Patrice de MacMahon** as presidents. This republic lasted until **10<sup>th</sup> July 1940** when the **Vichy government** was formed in France after her defeat by Nazi Germany in World War II.

The war led to the repudiation or violation of the 1856 Paris Treaty. This treaty had been signed at the end of the Crimean war of 1854 – 1856. After the Franco – Prussian war, Russia exploited the opportunity and violated or cancelled this treaty that had stopped her from moving her warships to the Black Sea. Russia did so with the support of Chancellor Bismarck of Germany so as to compensate her for having remained neutral during the Franco – Prussian war. The 1856 Paris treaty was violated when Russia extended her imperialism towards the Turkish Empire through the Black Sea. This threatened European peace as it caused conflicts between Russia and other European powers particularly Britain and Austria in the 1870s.

The war changed the European balance of power created by the 1814 – 1815 congress of Vienna after the end of the “Napoleonic Wars”. This balance of power had been in favor of France and Britain i.e. France was the land master while Britain was the sea master. However, the Franco – Prussian war changed this balance of power in favor of Germany as it established itself as the new land master in continental Europe with one of the most powerful and professional armies in the world, hence replacing France. This created a struggle by France to regain her former glory which eventually contributed to the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

The war contributed to the Scramble and Partition of Africa. The loss of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany influenced France to look for compensation in Africa by acquiring some colonies. France wanted these colonies to raise enough manpower and financial resources for her successful war of revenge against Germany. Germany also started supporting France's acquisition of more colonies in Africa in order to divert her attention from recovering Alsace and Lorraine. For example,

Germany supported the French conquest of Tunisia in 1882 in the interest of making her forget about Alsace and Lorraine. The scramble for Africa created colonial conflicts among the European powers which almost brought about a war over colonies by 1884.

The war created a “**revengist movement**” in France against Germany. The defeat of France in the Franco- Prussian war led to the birth of a spirit of “revenge” in France characterized by a deep sense of bitterness, hatred and demand for a war of revenge against Germany. This was particularly manifested in the desire for another war with Germany in order to recover Alsace and Lorraine. This became one of the factors that contributed to the outbreak of World War I of 1914-1918 as France fought against Germany so as to recover her lost territories of Alsace and Lorraine.

It laid a foundation for the Alliance system in Europe. This system was initiated by Bismarck when he wanted to isolate France and deny her a chance of getting friends (allies) in Europe that she would use to wage a successful war of revenge against Germany. It started with the *Dreikaiserbund Treaty* of 1872 signed between Austria- Hungary, Russia and Germany followed by the *Dual Alliance* of 1879 between Germany and Austria- Hungary and in 1882 it became the **Triple Alliance** with Italy on board. This provoked Britain and France to form the *Dual Entente* of 1904 which became the *Triple Entente* with Russia on board in 1907. This Alliance system divided Europe into two hostile camps which created suspicion and mistrust among the European powers and became a major factor that caused World War I in 1914.

The war led to massive loss of lives. The French army of about 200,000 soldiers was encircled by the Prussian troops in the French city of Metz in the Western part of Lorraine. Some of them were killed and others wounded. Napoleon III was forced to surrender to the Prussian troops at Sedan which was close to the border of Belgium. He was arrested together with around 100,000 troops and sent to exile from where he died later. Besides, a number of German troops perished either within the Southern German states or in Paris after being besieged for a long time.

The war led to the destruction of property. During the course of the war, a lot of property was destroyed in terms of infrastructures like railways, bridges, buildings as well as industries. This was the case in France where the Prussians used their advanced military hardware or weapons to bombard several infrastructures and facilities so as to force Napoleon III into surrendering.

The war inspired the rise of nationalism in Europe after 1871. A number of nationalities who were not united and dominated by the foreign of powers were inspired by Bismarck’s policy of “Blood and Iron” to fight for freedom and unity. Nationalistic movements like “**Pan-Slavism**” and the “**Great Serbian Movement**” in the Balkans as well as the **Young Turks Movement in Turkey** took lessons from the German nationalism that had crashed France at Sedan in 1871.

The war led to the declaration of the German Empire in France. On **18<sup>th</sup> January 1871**, following the defeat of France by Prussia, the Germans went to the French capital of Paris and declared their Empire in the **HALL OF MIRRORS** at Versailles Palace. This was really too much for the French to contain and therefore, it was extremely humiliating. King William I of Prussia became the first Emperor of the newly created German Empire with Otto Von Bismarck as the Chancellor

The war gave birth to the “Bismarckian era” or period in Europe between 1871 and 1890. After the war, Otto Von Bismarck who had served as Minister-President in Prussia since 1862 became

the Chancellor of the new united German Empire. Consequently, Bismarck dominated European affairs for the next two decades up to 1890 when he resigned from office. As Chancellor of the German Empire, Otto Von Bismarck helped to maintain peace in Europe until the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

1. Discuss the causes and consequences of the 1870-1871 Franco - Prussian war.
2. Assess the impact of the 1870-1871 Franco -Prussian war on Europe up to 1918.