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OUTLINE OF
 PRUSSIAN HISTORY
 TO 1871

BY
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A SHORT OUTLINE OF PRUSSIAN HISTORY, TO 1871

THE German Empire to-day consists of twenty-six separate and individual states, each having its own ruler and its own government, but combined for certain purposes, like the United States of America, into a federal union under the hereditary sovereignty of the King of Prussia. This federal empire was established in 1871, after Prussia had defeated in turn her two great rivals, Austria and France. It was the creation of Bismarck and the then King of Prussia, and in the arrangements made for its administration Prussia was deliberately given the preponderance of power in its government—which preponderance it still retains. We have to see, therefore, how Prussia gradually attained to this position of leadership among the many German states. The history of Germany for the last two hundred years is the history of the rise of Prussia, and the history of Prussia is largely the history of the house of Hohenzollern.

The Counts of Hohenzollern were established as far back as the tenth century at the castle of Zollern in South Germany, but it was not till 1147 that one of them became Elector (i.e. Prince) of Brandenburg, the district between the Elbe and the Oder, in the centre of which is Berlin. From this province as a nucleus grew the modern kingdom of Prussia. At that time the Prussians proper dwelt in the districts around Danzig

and Königsberg, called respectively West and East Prussia. They were a Slavonic race, like the Russians, not Teutonic, like the Brandenburgers, and were subject to the King of Poland. They remained heathen long after the rest of Germany was Christianized.

East Prussia was added to the possessions of the Elector of Brandenburg in 1525, but remained under Polish suzerainty.

From 1618 to 1648 the whole of Germany was distracted and devastated by the Thirty Years' War—a civil conflict arising out of religious differences—and at its close the history of Brandenburg-Prussia really begins.

In 1640 there ascended the throne of Brandenburg the Elector Frederick William, known in history as the Great Elector. He was the first great Hohenzollern and the direct ancestor, eight generations back, of the present German Emperor. At the end of the Thirty Years' War his dominions were increased by the addition of part of Pomerania (on the Baltic, north-east of Brandenburg), two small provinces adjoining Brandenburg on the south-west, and a few detached fragments on and near the Rhine. The whole area was approximately a sixth of that of the present German Empire and a quarter of that of modern Prussia. Thus the Great Elector displays from the beginning one of the chief distinguishing marks of the Hohenzollerns. 'He it is who is the real founder of the State of Prussia. . . . Centralization of government, military rule, constant territorial aggrandisement have been the characteristics of the Prussian monarchy' (Wakeman). The same historian sums up his character in these words :

A true Hohenzollern in his absolute identification of his country with his own crown, he never rose above the pure selfishness of patriotism. Not one spark of

generosity illuminated his policy, not one grain of idealism coloured his ambition, no sentiment of moral right ever interfered with his judgment, no fear of future retribution arrested his action. Mean-minded, false, and unscrupulous, he was the first sovereign to display the principles of seventeenth-century Machiavellianism . . . in all the hideous brutality of German coarseness.

Another writer says :

To him the aggrandisement at home and abroad of the House of Hohenzollern was the one and only end. . . . Territorial acquisitions were what he above all desired, and he attained the great success of freeing East Prussia alike from Swedish and from Polish suzerainty (Atkinson).

Frederick William was the founder of Prussia's national standing army, that instrument of policy which Frederick the Great was afterwards to raise to the highest pitch of perfection, and which was to wipe out at Leipzig the disgrace and humiliation of Jena. By the year 1655 it numbered 26,000 men.

In 1688 the Great Elector was succeeded by his son, Frederick III, who in 1701 was crowned at Königsberg as King Frederick I of Prussia. Henceforth we are concerned no longer with Electors of Brandenburg but with Kings of Prussia.

The next king, Frederick William I, ascended the throne in 1713. He was an unattractive personality, harsh and despotic, but he played an important part in the development of the Prussian kingdom, building on the foundations laid by the Great Elector. His policy was characterized by thoroughness, absolutism, and secrecy. He raised the numbers of his army during his reign of twenty-seven years from 38,000 to nearly 90,000 men, including his famous Giants' Regiment of

Potsdam Grenadiers. He ruled his army with a rod of iron, and attached the utmost importance to drill of a very stiff and formal kind. The army was fed at first by voluntary enlistment, but in 1733 a system of universal liability to service was established, though with many exemptions. The class distinctions which were so marked a feature of Prussian society down to 1807 were rigidly observed in the army. The officers were all drawn from the native nobility, or Junkers. In training this army the king was largely assisted by the famous Prince Leopold of Dessau, commonly known as 'the Old Dessauer', who had served under Prince Eugene at Blenheim and Malplaquet, and had helped to train Marlborough's infantry. But despite the care lavished upon it, Frederick William made little use of his army in furthering the interests of his kingdom. It remained for his son to employ it for the purposes of aggression and aggrandizement.

Frederick William I married Sophia Dorothea, the sister of the English King George II, whose electorate of Hanover adjoined the province of Brandenburg.

On the death of Frederick William I in 1740 he was succeeded by his son Frederick II, better known as Frederick the Great, the most celebrated of the Hohenzollerns, and one of the greatest generals of modern times. In the same year the Emperor Charles VI also died, leaving the crown of Austria, in accordance with an arrangement of long standing, to his daughter Maria Theresa, a beautiful and spirited princess. Frederick at once invaded Silesia, the valley of the upper Oder, which was a part of Maria's inheritance. England, France, and Bavaria joined in, and the Silesian war became the war of the Austrian Succession. But Frederick was playing entirely for his own hand—all that he

wanted was to add Silesia to Prussia, and he was entirely successful.

In 1756 another great war, known as the Seven Years' War, broke out between Frederick and Maria Theresa. France this time joined Austria, and England in consequence sided with Prussia. Frederick's chief battles were fought at Rossbach, Leuthen, Minden, Kunersdorf, and Torgau. The war ended in 1763 with the Treaty of Hubertsburg, and Silesia became permanently Prussian.

Nine years later took place the First Partition of Poland. This was accomplished without bloodshed—a peculiarly cynical transaction—by a treaty between Prussia, Russia, and Austria. Galicia fell to Austria's share, and Frederick acquired West Prussia (without Danzig, however), which joined up the disconnected parts of his dominions.

Of Frederick the Great's personal characteristics—his passion for all things French, his friendship with Voltaire, and his devotion to music—we cannot here speak, but something must be said of his military reforms, for he was first and foremost a soldier.

His army was only half composed of Prussians; the remainder were drawn from other states. As in the days of Frederick William I it relied largely for its efficiency on the formal drill inculcated by 'the Old Dessauer', combined with steady fire tactics. Frederick at first had a preference for the *arme blanche*, but gradually became converted to the doctrine that 'battles are won by fire superiority'.

In tactics, Frederick's favourite mode of attack was the 'Oblique Order', by which was meant a rapid concentration of his forces on one wing, immediately after deployment, so as to roll up the enemy's line by taking it in the flank. Occasionally he employed

a 'turning movement' instead of an outflanking one, by sending a portion of his army right round his enemy's flank to attack in the rear.

Three years after the death of Frederick the Great in 1786 the French Revolution broke out. His nephew, who succeeded him as Frederick William II, was the first to take up arms against revolutionary France, in alliance with the Emperor Leopold II, the brother of the ill-fated Queen Marie Antoinette. A Prussian army, under the Duke of Brunswick, invaded France and captured the fortresses of Longwy and Verdun, but retired after the celebrated cannonade of Valmy, a long-range artillery duel with the French which led to nothing. But Prussia's action, though she posed as the champion of outraged royalty, was entirely selfish, and on finding that France was no easy prey to be partitioned like Poland, she withdrew from the contest after three years, much to the vexation of her allies.

In 1793 the Second Partition of Poland gave to Prussia the district of Posen, on her eastern frontier, along with Danzig and Thorn, and two years later, by the Third Partition, she obtained the whole of the Warsaw region. This partly accounts for Frederick William's withdrawal from the struggle with France, for the task of trying to assimilate his new Polish subjects was quite sufficient to occupy him. It is noteworthy that Prussia still regarded the east as the only possible direction in which she could expand. By the Treaty of Basel (1795) she even relinquished to France some parts of her western possessions, as the Rhine became the French boundary.

For the next eleven years (1795-1806) Prussia maintained her neutrality, despite the various coalitions made against France and the attempts of the allies to

obtain her aid. In 1797 Frederick William was succeeded by his son, Frederick William III. He was 'simple, pious and straightforward, but rather stupid', and his accession made little change in the affairs of Prussia. But ever since the death of Frederick the Great her administration, both civil and military, had been declining. Her army was content to rest on its laurels, while the bureaucratic and centralized government instituted in the spacious days of Frederick the Great and his father naturally decayed and grew corrupt when weaker hands controlled it. And, meanwhile, Napoleon was subjugating continental Europe and bringing each nation in turn to its knees. In 1806 Prussia's turn came, and her humiliation was the more complete as her self-confidence had been so great.

Napoleon's plan was to win over to himself the smaller states of Germany by flattering them with the appearance of independence. He raised the rulers of Bavaria, Saxony, and Württemberg to the rank of kings, and then proceeded (1806) to form the Confederation of the Rhine, consisting of sixteen of the chief central and southern German states, as a menace to Prussia and Austria and a substitute for the Holy Roman Empire, which very soon ceased to exist.

This Confederation, with a total population of 8,000,000, was under Napoleon's protection, and its armies were at his disposal. His next step was to force war on Prussia, whose neutrality he had already contemptuously violated in his march against Austria in 1805.

The Prussian army in 1806 has been described as :

nothing but the army of Frederick the Great grown twenty years older. . . . Old age had rendered the majority of the higher officers totally unfit for

military service. . . . Aged men, with the rank of majors, colonels, and generals, mouldered in the offices of country towns, and murmured at the very mention of a war, which would deprive them of half their salaries. . . . The higher officers were, on an average, nearly double the age of French officers of corresponding rank (Fyffe).

The only young officers were the nobles, who, it is said, arrogantly sharpened their swords on the doorstep of the French Embassy before proceeding to meet Napoleon.

The result of the meeting was completely disastrous for Prussia. Napoleon and Davoust utterly routed her armies in the twin battles of Jena and Auerstädt (near Weimar). All the chief fortresses of Prussia thereupon surrendered to Napoleon, and Davoust occupied Berlin. Napoleon himself visited the tomb of Frederick the Great at Potsdam, and removed from it Frederick's sword and Order of the Black Eagle, which he sent back to Paris. His treatment of Prussia was harsher and more cruel than that of any other of his conquests, and it has been suggested that this was due to his jealousy of the memory of Frederick the Great. 'The bitter thoroughness of the war of 1870', says Dr. J. E. Morris, 'was the result of the rout of Jena-Auerstädt.'

By the year 1807 the Kingdom of Prussia was reduced to the four provinces of Brandenburg, Silesia, and the two Prussias, a total area of about 62,000 square miles, with a population of under 5,000,000. (Prussia's area to-day is nearly 135,000 square miles, and her population 40,000,000.) Her Polish possessions were taken from her and given to the King of Saxony, who became Grand Duke of Warsaw. Her army was limited to 42,000 men, and was to be at the service of Napoleon. An impossible fine was levied upon her, and in default

of payment the country was garrisoned by French soldiers. Certain of her old provinces (Magdeburg and Halberstadt) were combined with Brunswick and Hesse-Cassel to make the new Kingdom of Westphalia for Napoleon's brother Jerome, but the remaining states of the Confederation of the Rhine continued to be ruled by German princes.

But this era of Prussia's deepest degradation was the starting-point of a new upward movement towards national honour and self-respect. The national spirit of the people was aroused, and at the crisis of their fate they were fortunate in being served by capable, disinterested, and patriotic ministers, though, strangely enough, most of them were not actually Prussians. The period between 1807 and 1813 was marked by important administrative reforms, as well as by the growth of a strong patriotic sentiment, aimed chiefly, of course, at the overthrow of French domination. These reforms are connected with the names of Stein, Hardenberg, Scharnhorst, and Gneisenau. Baron von Stein was placed in office at the end of 1807 by Napoleon, but proved less amenable to that monarch's wishes than he had anticipated and was summarily removed a year later. In that short time, however, he accomplished much, and his work of reform was continued in 1810 by Prince von Hardenberg.

Stein was responsible for the abolition of serfdom and class privileges throughout Prussia. The position of the Prussian serf before that date has been compared to that of the villein in England in the time of the Wars of the Roses, which shows how backward was the development of the country. A system of municipal self-government was established at the same time. It was intended to form part of a wider scheme of

representative government, but the minister's premature dismissal prevented the completion of the measure.

Education was also dealt with, the national system being reorganized and improved, and several new universities were founded, among them that of Berlin (1809). It is noteworthy that compulsory school attendance had been instituted as early as the year 1716.

More striking and far-reaching, however, than these changes were the reforms adopted in the organization of the army. They were planned by a military commission under the presidency of von Scharnhorst, who was aided and advised by Field-Marshal von Gneisenau, afterwards Blücher's chief of staff at Waterloo. In order to evade Napoleon's limitation of the army to 42,000 men, the short-service system was introduced. By this system men were passed rapidly from the standing army of 42,000 into the Reserve, making way for new recruits. This, combined with a more vigorous enforcement of the universal liability to service, resulted in the training of large numbers of men without appearing to violate Napoleon's commands. At the same time a *Landwehr* and a *Landsturm* were organized (though they were not enrolled until 1813), the former a militia for home defence only, and the latter a mass levy of the entire population, who were drilled and inspected in secret.

Thus Prussia directed into useful channels the patriotic ardour of her people, and prepared to throw off the foreign yoke. The chief stumbling-block in her way, strangely enough, was not Napoleon but her own King Frederick William III, who held out to the last against the growing national and anti-French sentiment of his people. His hand, however, was at length forced by the daring action of General York. In 1812 Prussia was compelled

to aid Napoleon in his disastrous attack on Russia, and York was in command of the Prussian forces. After the retreat from Moscow he boldly withdrew his army from Napoleon, went over with it to the Russians, and concluded a treaty with them entirely on his own responsibility. The king played up to his lead, while Stein, now an exile in St. Petersburg, used his influence with the Czar in the same direction. The result was an alliance between Russia and Prussia against France. The treaty was signed at Kalisch early in 1813. Prussia had to give up what was left of her Polish possessions, and turn her eyes from the Slavonic east to the Teutonic west.

The War of Liberation (1813) was short and decisive. The allies were at first defeated at Lutzen and Bautzen (May), but during a seven weeks' armistice they were joined by Austria and Bavaria. Though they lost another battle at Dresden (August), the great three days' Battle of the Nations at Leipzig (October) ended in the complete rout of Napoleon, and Jena-Auerstädt was avenged. Next year Blücher invaded France. After various battles the allies entered Paris and compelled Napoleon to abdicate. The remaining events of the years 1814 and 1815 are not specifically Prussian, and are too well known to need mention.

After Europe had finally freed herself from the presence of the great Corsican, Prussia found herself possessed of somewhat less territory than she had owned in 1806. By the arrangements made at the Congress of Vienna (1814-15) she obtained a block of provinces on both banks of the Rhine (which were far more valuable than her lost Polish provinces), parts of Saxony and central Germany, and the districts of Posen and Pomerania. The chief German states, thirty-eight in number, were

formed into a *Bund*, or Federation, under the permanent leadership of Austria—practically the old Confederation of the Rhine, with the addition of Austria and Prussia.

The outstanding feature in European history in the generation which followed the downfall of Napoleon is the conflict of the allied principles of nationalism and liberalism with the forces of reaction. It is to be seen in all countries, though here in England it took less violent forms than on the continent. The ideal which in this connexion is called liberalism was crystallized in each country in the demand for a constitution—a settled form of government not subject to the personal caprice of the sovereign. With this demand was closely bound up, especially in Germany and Italy, the desire for national unity. The party of reaction regarded such ideas as revolutionary. In the end liberalism was largely victorious, but reaction died hard. Its chief exponent was the famous Austrian chancellor, Prince Metternich, who ‘dominates the stage of European history for a generation’.

Three waves of revolution mark the progress of the conflict. That of 1820 was confined to Portugal, Spain, and Italy; in 1830 France was the chief theatre of revolt; in 1848 France, Germany, and Austria were all involved. In Prussia Frederick William III had promised a constitution as early as 1815, but nothing came of it. Four years later Metternich promulgated the Carlsbad Decrees, somewhat resembling Castlereagh’s Six Acts of the same year, for the suppression of revolutionary ideas, and Prussia remained under an absolutist and reactionary *régime*. Several of the smaller German states, however, had been granted constitutions, and in them alone was any liberty to be found.

The suppression of a Polish revolt against Russia by

the capture of Warsaw in 1831 (the occasion of the famous dispatch 'Order reigns in Warsaw') led the Prussian king, still under Metternich's sway, to tighten still further his hold over his people. Everywhere there was latent rebellion, and particularly amongst the students and professors of the universities. To this period belong several of Germany's national patriotic songs, including Becker's 'German Rhine' and 'The Watch by the Rhine'.

At the same time Prussia prospered considerably during this period from an economic point of view, and her riches increased. An important step in the direction of German unity was the inauguration, between the years 1828 and 1836, of the Zollverein, or German Customs Union. By this means Prussia gradually drew the other states of Germany into commercial alliance with herself, to the detriment of Austria's influence.

On the death of Frederick William III in 1840 great hopes were entertained of the chances of a more liberal *régime* under his successor Frederick William IV. But though he dallied with the idea of a constitution, no real advance was made. Constitutional government, indeed, appears to be as repugnant to the temperament of the Hohenzollerns as it was to our Stuart kings in the seventeenth century. Divine right is an obsession with them as it was with Charles I, and the absence of any real political ability among their people, which they themselves admit, has always prevented the establishment of any real system of representative government.

The new king summoned a United Diet in 1847, but he granted it no legislative powers, and stated clearly that he would never consent to a constitution. His

words in this connexion have become famous : ' I will never allow a sheet of written paper to intervene like a second Providence between our Lord God in Heaven and our country, to rule us by its paragraphs and to put them in the place of ancient loyalty.'

By this time discontent had risen to such a height that the country was ripe for rebellion. ' The train was now laid throughout central Europe ; it needed but a flash from Paris to kindle the fire far and wide ' (Fyffe).

The signal was given from Paris early in 1848, and the flame spread rapidly throughout Germany and Austria. The history of Prussia at this time is largely bound up with that of Austria and the other German states, and is singularly complex and confusing. It was a tumultuous year, but nothing tangible resulted in Germany. All attempts at establishing a united German Empire came to hopeless grief on the three rocks of political incapacity, Austro-Prussian jealousy, and Hohenzollern arrogance. Once more Frederick William IV played with the notion of a constitution, but it was to be one of his own choosing and not the one his people desired. The army, moreover, remained loyal to him, and suppressed the national assembly at his bidding. It seemed, indeed, as if some progress was being made when, early in 1849, the sovereignty of a united Germany was offered to Frederick William, with the title of Emperor, by the German Parliament which had been sitting at Frankfort since May, 1848. But he haughtily refused a ' crown of mud and wood ' from the hands of such a body, and all other attempts at settlement met with a like fate. In the result, all Germany was plunged back into reaction for another ten years. Everywhere the conditions existing before 1848 were restored, and vigorous repression was again

the order of the day. It is true that Metternich had been overthrown and driven into exile, but his principles remained intact. German unity, though its earliest foundations were laid on a commercial base, could only be accomplished by the sword, and the men who were to wield it had not yet arrived.

In the year 1858 King Frederick William IV withdrew from public affairs owing to mental disorder, and handed over the reins to his brother Prince William. As in 1840, so now, the hopes of the nationalists revived. The prince regent summoned a moderately progressive ministry and inaugurated a corresponding policy. His chief care, however, was the army. This numbered at his accession some 130,000 men. But while the population of Prussia had increased from 12,000,000 (in 1814) to 18,000,000, the numbers of the army had remained almost stationary. Consequently the full number of recruits was not summoned to the colours, and, at the same time, their period of service in the active army had been reduced from three years to two. William therefore started by enforcing the universal obligation of service, which meant raising the full number of 63,000 recruits annually instead of only 40,000, and keeping them for the full three years. This brought up the numbers of the active army to nearly 200,000 men. By extending the period of service in the Reserve from two years to four he provided for an army of 440,000 men between the ages of 20 and 27, exclusive of the *Landwehr*.

In 1861 King Frederick William died and the prince regent became king as William I. Next year he summoned to his councils the man who was to accomplish the great task of founding the German Empire, Otto von Bismarck. His policy was concise and simple : Prussia was to rule Germany, and to obtain the leadership by force. Unity

was to be realized, in his own words, 'not by speeches nor by the decisions of a majority, but *by blood and iron.*' In the hands of such a man, with a clear goal before him, undeterred by any moral scruples in his advance towards it, and gifted with consummate diplomatic ability, the sovereigns of Europe were the merest puppets. He played with them one by one as a cat plays with a mouse, and made them each in turn serve his purpose in the attainment of his great end. With the assistance of von Roon, the War Minister, and von Moltke, the chief of the general staff, he employed the newly-reorganized army as his instrument, and forced unity upon the German people by his own particular methods. Three wars were required for the purpose : against Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866, and France in 1870 ; and they were thoroughly and decisively carried through.

The ostensible cause of the Danish War was the question of the succession in Schleswig-Holstein, two provinces under Danish rule but chiefly German in population. Bismarck's real motive, however, was to destroy the *Bund*, the German Federation of 1815, by going to war on his own account, against the wishes of the Diet. The two provinces were easily crushed by Prussia in temporary alliance with Austria, and as King William was not yet won over to his minister's designs against Austria, a temporary settlement was effected by the Convention of Gastein (1865), by which Holstein was given to Austria and Schleswig to Prussia.

Next year Bismarck negotiated a three-months' alliance with Italy, in order to have her assistance against Austria, and he then proceeded to quarrel with the latter, with the aim of expelling her from the confederation. The southern states allied themselves

with Austria, but the Prussian invasion of Bohemia ended after seven weeks in the complete defeat of the Austrians at Sadowa, and though the Italians were beaten at Custozza the war came speedily to an end. It was settled by the Treaty of Prague that Austria was to withdraw entirely from German affairs. Prussia was to annex the states of Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, and Nassau, which separated the two halves of her dominions, and to form a North German Confederation which the four southern states, Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, and Hesse-Darmstadt, were to be permitted to join. This they each proceeded to do, by making offensive and defensive alliances with Prussia.

The rising power of Germany was now beginning to threaten the stability of the balance of power in Europe. It was particularly resented by France, who had hitherto been the predominant power on the continent. Bismarck was not at all averse to war, as he saw in it the best means of consolidating the newly-formed union of the German states. From 1867 to 1870 French irritation against Prussia steadily increased, and matters came to a head in the latter year when a prince of the house of Hohenzollern was suggested to fill the vacant Spanish throne. French counsels were singularly divided and uncertain. Gramont, the foreign minister, pressed eagerly for war, while Ollivier, the president of the cabinet, opposed it. Napoleon III himself hesitated and wavered between the two parties. At length Bismarck precipitated matters by publishing the famous telegram from Ems, stating that King William had refused to see the French ambassador, and France declared war on July 19.

The chief events of the Franco-Prussian War may be briefly related. The French forces amounted to some-

thing under 250,000 men, while Prussia had nearly double that number. Both sides wished to take the offensive, but a French invasion of South Germany was soon found to be impossible, owing to the utterly unprepared state of the French army. Early in August the French Army of the Rhine was defeated by the Prussian 1st Army at Forbach-Spicheren, while the Army of Alsace, under MacMahon, was destroyed by the Prussian 3rd Army, under the Crown Prince, at Wörth. Then the three Prussian armies combined to attack the Army of the Rhine, and inflicted on it three defeats in five days, at Borny, Mars-la-Tour, and Gravelotte. The Prussian 1st and 2nd Armies next laid siege to Metz, while the 3rd marched on Châlons. MacMahon attempted to relieve Metz, but was surrounded and forced to capitulate, with the Emperor himself and his whole army, at Sedan (September 2). As a French historian tersely puts it: 'There was no French Army left.' The remainder of the war centred on Paris, which was invested by the Prussian 3rd and 4th Armies on September 19. The 2nd Army remained before Metz, and compelled Bazaine to surrender that city six weeks later. During the winter the French armies of the Loire, of the East, and of the North, were all defeated, and on January 24, 1871, Paris capitulated. A week earlier King William had been crowned Emperor at Versailles. Bismarck insisted on the cession of Alsace and part of Lorraine, the occupation of Paris by the Prussian army until the treaty of peace was ratified (this was only forty-eight hours), and the payment of an indemnity of six milliards of francs (which was reduced to five by the efforts of Thiers). The treaty embodying these terms was finally signed at Frankfort in May.

Negotiations between Prussia and the southern states had been proceeding during the war, so that at its close the German Empire was already established. The new provinces were annexed not to Prussia but to the Empire, and being acquired by conquest they were placed on a different footing from the other members of the confederation, having no self-government and no representation in the *Bundesrath*, or federal council. Bismarck's purpose was thus at length consummated, and Prussia's rule over a united Germany was an accomplished fact.



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