



Dr. Blosa Science

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The Science Foundation College
Uganda East Africa
Senior one to senior six
+256 778 633 682, 753 802709
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Bismarck and Germany Empire 1871-1890, isolation of France, maintenance of peace in Europe, achievements and failures

Questions to ponder

1. Assess the achievements of Otto von Bismarck in Europe between 1870 and 1890.

(Give a brief introduction of Bismarck and then identify and explain his achievements and failures in Europe between 1870 and 1890. A clear standpoint is required).

2. Explain the role of Bismarck in maintaining Peace in Europe from 1870-1890./How did Bismarck maintain peace in Europe between 1870-1890./How far was Bismarck a man of peace from 1870-1890

(Give a brief introduction of Bismarck and then identify and explain the role of Bismarck in maintaining peace in Europe between 1870 and 1890. Give a generalised conclusion or a standpoint for the last question).

3. How did Bismarck isolate France between 1871 and 1890?/To what extent was Bismarck successful at isolating France between 1871 and 1890

(The question is single sided and requires a candidate to explain how Bismarck managed to keep France isolated in Europe between 1870 and 1890)

Summary and course of the Bismarck and Germany Empire 1871-1890

Otto von Bismarck played a crucial role in shaping the **German Empire** from its formation in 1871 until his dismissal in 1890. Here are some key points about his tenure:

1. **Chancellor of the German Empire:** Bismarck served as the first Chancellor of the German Empire, a position he held from 1871 until 1890.
2. **Consolidation of Power:** Bismarck worked to consolidate the newly unified German states under Prussian leadership, ensuring political stability and centralizing power.

3. **Social Reforms:** He implemented several social reforms, including the introduction of health insurance, accident insurance, and old-age pensions, which were pioneering at the time.
4. **Kulturkampf:** Bismarck initiated the **Kulturkampf**, a series of policies aimed at reducing the influence of the Catholic Church in Germany.
5. **Foreign Policy:** Bismarck's foreign policy focused on maintaining the balance of power in Europe and isolating France. He formed alliances such as the **Three Emperors' League** and the **Reinsurance Treaty** with Russia.
6. **Dismissal:** Bismarck was dismissed by Emperor Wilhelm II in 1890 due to growing tensions between them and Bismarck's inability to adapt to the younger emperor's more aggressive foreign policy.

Positive achievements of Bismarck between 1870 and 1890

1. **Unification of Germany:** Bismarck played a pivotal role in unifying the German states into a single nation, culminating in the proclamation of the German Empire in 1871.
2. **Social Reforms:** He introduced groundbreaking social welfare programs, including health insurance, accident insurance, and old-age pensions, laying the foundation for the modern welfare state.
3. **Economic Growth:** Bismarck's policies promoted industrialization and economic growth, transforming Germany into one of the leading industrial powers in Europe.
4. **Foreign Policy:** He successfully maintained the balance of power in Europe through alliances such as the **Three Emperors' League** and the **Reinsurance Treaty**, preventing major conflicts and isolating France.
5. **Military Strength:** Bismarck strengthened the German military, making it one of the most powerful and efficient forces in Europe.
6. **Kulturkampf:** His campaign against the influence of the Catholic Church, known as the **Kulturkampf**, aimed to reduce the Church's political power and integrate Catholics into the German state.
7. **He encouraged development of transport and communication networks in Germany.**
8. **He avoided conflicts with Britain through good relationships.**
9. **Bismarck supported parliamentary government by introducing the Bundesrat and Reichstag for Germany empire**
10. **Bismarck supported the establishment of republican government in France in 1875.**
11. **Contributed to the rise of the third French Republic**

Negative achievements/failures of Bismarck between 1870 and 1890

1. **Kulturkampf:** His campaign against the Catholic Church, known as the **Kulturkampf**, led to significant social and political tensions. The measures taken to reduce the Church's influence were seen as repressive and alienated many Catholics.
2. **Political Repression:** Bismarck's government was often authoritarian, suppressing political dissent and limiting civil liberties. This created an environment of political repression and limited democratic development.

3. **Economic Challenges:** The economic depression of 1873, known as the **Gründerzeit**, led to widespread unemployment and social unrest. Bismarck's policies were sometimes seen as inadequate in addressing these economic challenges.
4. **Colonial Ambitions:** While Bismarck initially focused on European affairs, his later support for colonial expansion in Africa and the Pacific was controversial and led to conflicts with other European powers.
5. **Alienation of Allies:** His dismissal of the **Reinsurance Treaty** with Russia in 1890 led to the formation of the **Franco-Russian Alliance**, which isolated Germany and increased tensions in Europe.
6. **He was anti Jew/Semitism**
7. **His alliance system divided Europe into antagonistic camps.**
8. **He suffocated socialism**
9. **Neglected Slav nationalism by giving out Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria through the Berlin congress of 1878.**
10. **Lead to collapse of the second French Empire of Napoleon III**

Role of Bismarck in maintaining peace in Europe between 1870 and 1890

1. **Three Emperors' League:** Bismarck formed the **Three Emperors' League** in 1873, an alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, aimed at maintaining the balance of power and isolating France.
2. **Reinsurance Treaty:** After the collapse of the Three Emperors' League, Bismarck negotiated the **Reinsurance Treaty** with Russia in 1887, ensuring that both powers would remain neutral if the other was involved in a war with a third great power.
3. **Isolation of France:** Bismarck's foreign policy focused on isolating France diplomatically to prevent it from forming alliances that could threaten Germany.
4. **Diplomatic Skill:** Bismarck's diplomatic skills and ability to navigate complex international relations helped prevent major conflicts and maintain stability in Europe.
5. **Calling of Berlin conference 1884** to solve the colonial and imperial conflicts, which had seriously started to jeopardize peace in Europe.
6. **The dual alliance of 1879 with Austria-Hungary** encouraged good relationship and checked a possible Russia attack on Germany or France.
7. **Military reforms.** He built a strong army to protect Germany in case of invasion
8. **He promoted law and order in Germany.**

Means used by Bismarck to isolate France between 1870 and 1890

1. **Three Emperors' League:** Bismarck formed the **Three Emperors' League** in 1873, an alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, to isolate France and maintain the balance of power in Europe.
2. **Reinsurance Treaty:** After the collapse of the Three Emperors' League, Bismarck negotiated the **Reinsurance Treaty** with Russia in 1887, ensuring that both powers would remain neutral if the other was involved in a war with a third great power.

3. **Diplomatic Maneuvering:** Bismarck used his diplomatic skills to keep other European powers, such as Britain and Italy, neutral or aligned against France.
4. **Ems Telegram:** By editing and publishing the **Ems Telegram** in a way that insulted the French, Bismarck provoked France into declaring war, which led to the Franco-Prussian War and further isolated France.
5. **Maintaining Alliances:** Bismarck worked to maintain strong alliances with other European powers, such as Austria-Hungary and Russia, to prevent them from allying with France.
6. **He imposed heavy war indemnity on France after the Bismarck 1870-1890 Franco-Prussian war.**
7. **Bismarck sent an army of occupation to Paris after the defeat of Franco-Prussian war.**
8. **In 1878 Bismarck called Berlin congress.** This helped to prevent war between Britain, Austria against Russia in the Balkans Peninsular after revising the treaty of San Stefano. Peace was maintained while France was kept isolated.
9. **He initiated the Dual Alliance in 1879 between Germany and Austria.** These states agreed to help each other in case of aggression by another country. This protected Germany from France aggression.

Failures of Bismarck to isolate France 1870-1890

Despite Bismarck's efforts to isolate France, there were several failures:

1. **Reinsurance Treaty Collapse:** The **Reinsurance Treaty** with Russia was not renewed in 1890 due to Bismarck's dismissal and Wilhelm II's policies. This led to the formation of the **Franco-Russian Alliance** in 1891, which isolated Germany.
2. **Diplomatic Isolation:** Bismarck's aggressive diplomacy sometimes alienated potential allies, making it difficult to maintain a united front against France.
3. **Colonial Rivalries:** Bismarck's late entry into colonial expansion created tensions with other European powers, which indirectly weakened his efforts to isolate France.
4. **Internal Conflicts:** The **Kulturkampf** and other internal policies created divisions within Germany, distracting from foreign policy goals.

Reasons for the downfall Bismarck by 1890

Bismarck's downfall by 1890 was due to several factors:

1. **Conflict with Kaiser Wilhelm II:** Bismarck's relationship with the young Kaiser Wilhelm II deteriorated over time. Wilhelm wanted to assert his own authority and was impatient with Bismarck's conservative policies.
2. **Failure of the Anti-Socialist Laws:** Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Laws, aimed at curbing the rise of socialism, failed to suppress the growing labor movement. This led to increased social unrest and dissatisfaction.

3. **Political Isolation:** Bismarck's authoritarian style alienated many potential allies within the German political landscape. His attempts to manipulate political parties and bypass the Reichstag (German parliament) created enemies.
4. **Economic Challenges:** The economic depression of the 1870s and the subsequent social issues strained Bismarck's policies and his ability to maintain stability.
5. **Diplomatic Failures:** The failure to renew the **Reinsurance Treaty** with Russia in 1890 led to the formation of the **Franco-Russian Alliance**, isolating Germany diplomatically.
6. **Fatigue and exhaustion.** Bismarck exhausted from tireless sacrifice in unification of Germany.

These factors collectively contributed to Bismarck's dismissal by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1890, marking the end of his influential career.

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