

History (Lecture XX, Class Notes)

Main topic: The Formation of Modern Germany, 1815-1871

I. The Revolutions of 1848 in Central Europe

- A. Until 1848, Austria continued to be the major power of Central Europe, and Prince Metternich convinced all the German kings to keep their kingdoms separate.
- B. In 1848, when France became a republic again, people throughout Germany and the Austrian Empire also tried to obtain constitutional governments by having their own diets (parliaments), including one in Prague and one in Frankfurt.
- C. Fearing the outcome, Metternich ran away to England, but the Austrian Emperor stayed behind and used the army to maintain “divine right.”
- D. The Frankfurt diet offered the kingship of Germany to the King of Prussia, but at Olmutz in 1850, Austria and Russia forced Prussia to accept a divided Germany.

II. Bismarck and the Rise of Germany

- A. In 1861, Wilhelm I became the new king of Prussia.
- B. Wilhelm’s main advisor was a man named Otto von Bismarck, who believed that Prussia must defeat Austria and create a new Germany through “blood and iron” (war).
- C. In 1864, Prussia and Austria conquered the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein from Denmark, but Prussia insisted on keeping both.
- D. Then Prussia defeated Austria in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, and Prussia took control of most of northern Germany.
- E. Prussia was fast becoming the major power in central Europe, but Bismarck still had to deal with Napoleon III of France in order to make a German Empire.