

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

**The Iron Way
The Influence of Prussian Military Reforms on the German
Nation-building Process**

BACHELOR THESIS

Bratislava, 2024

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on the German Nation-building Process**

Study Program: Liberal Arts
Field of Study: 6718 Political Science
University: Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts
Thesis Supervisor: Lucas Sprouse, MAHR
Degree of Qualification: Bachelor of Arts (BA)
Date of Submission: February 16, 2024
Date of Defence: June 17, 2024

Bratislava, 2024

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this bachelor's thesis is my own work and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and cited in references.

Bratislava, February 16, 2024

Samuel Strecha

Signature:

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my appreciation to my bachelor thesis advisor and teacher Lucas Sprouse, MAHR, for his support and guidance during the process of writing this thesis and also his dedication in teaching history classes at BISLA. I would like to also thank BISLA for enabling me to grow not only academically but also as a person. Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family for their endless support in my pursuit of academic and personal goals. Without their support, I would not have been able to even try to pursue them.

Abstract

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Place and Date: Bratislava, June 17, 2024

Page and character count: 38 pages (79 819 characters)

Level of qualification: Bachelor of Arts (BA.)

This thesis addresses Prussian military reforms during the 19th century and their impact on the German nation building processes. 19th century Prussia went from a humiliating defeat by Napoleonic France at the beginning of the century to leading the unification of Germany as the century was coming to an end. Prussian military reforms were led by brilliant thinkers including General Gerhard von Scharnhorst, General Carl von Clausewitz, Field Marshal August Neidhardt von Gneisenau and Prussian Minister of War Hermann von Boyen. Understanding military reforms between 1806 and 1813 provides a unique perspective on military reforms that happened before the German Wars of Unification in 1859 and 1860. These military reforms were led by Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke, Minister of War Albrecht von Roon and the first Chancellor of the German Empire Otto von Bismarck. The impact of these military reforms on German unification is better understood through the nation building theory of Charles Tilly. It is important to analyze the impact of military reforms on nation building processes not only to better understand 19th century Prussia but also to better understand the importance of the role of the military in society. The author uses primary and secondary sources to analyze this problem.

Keywords: Prussia, Military Reforms, Gerhard von Scharnhorst, German Unification, Wars Before German Unification, Napoleonic Wars, Otto von Bismarck

Abstrakt

Autor bakalárskej práce: Samuel Strecha

Názov práce: Železná cesta: Vplyv pruských vojenských reforiem na nemecký národovotvorný proces

Názov vysokej školy: Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts

Vedúci bakalárskej práce: Lucas Sprouse, MAHR

Predseda komisie pre obhajoby bakalárskych prác: prof. PhDr, František Novosád, CSc.

Členstvo komisie pre obhajoby bakalárskych prác: doc. Samuel Abrahám, PhD. PhDr. František Novosád, CSc. Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD., prof. Silvia Miháliková

Dátum a miesto: Bratislava 17. Jún, 2024

Rozsah práce: 38 strán (79 819 znakov)

Stupeň kvalifikácie: Bakalár (Bc.)

Táto práca sa zaoberá pruskými vojenskými reformami v priebehu 19. storočia a ich vplyvom na procesy budovania nemeckého národa. Prusko v 19. storočí prešlo od ponižujúcej porážky Napoleonovho Francúzska na začiatku storočia do vedúcej role pri zjednotení Nemecka, keď sa toto storočie blížilo ku koncu. Pruské vojenské reformy viedli brilantní myslitelia vrátane generála Gerharda von Scharnhorsta, generála Carla von Clausewitza, poľného maršala Augusta Neidhardta von Gneisenau a pruského ministra vojny Hermanna von Boyena. Pochopenie vojenských reforiem medzi rokmi 1806 a 1813 poskytuje jedinečný pohľad na vojenské reformy, ku ktorým došlo pred nemeckými vojnami o zjednotenie v rokoch 1859 a 1871. Tieto vojenské reformy viedol poľný maršál Helmuth von Moltke, minister vojny Albrecht von Roon a prvý kancelár nemeckej ríše Otto von Bismarck. Vplyv týchto vojenských reforiem na nemecké zjednotenie je lepšie pochopiteľný prostredníctvom teórie budovania národa Charlesa Tillyho. Je dôležité analyzovať vplyv vojenských reforiem na procesy budovania národa nielen pre lepšie pochopenie Pruska v 19. storočí, ale aj pre lepšie pochopenie dôležitosti armády v spoločnosti. Na analýzu tohto problému použije autor primárne a sekundárne zdroje.

Kľúčové slová: Prusko, Militárne reformy, Gerhard von Scharnhorst, Zjednotenie Nemecka, Vojny pred zjednotením Nemecka, Napoleonské vojny, Otto von Bismarck

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Introduction

In 1701, the Kingdom of Prussia was a relatively small state compared to the major states in Europe. It was not only small but also lacked resources. This gave Prussia a huge disadvantage in military conflicts. Therefore, Prussian rulers knew that they needed to excel in their military craft. Geography and a lack of resources led Friedrich Wilhelm to establish the first standing army in Brandenburg-Prussia. He learned the importance of the standing army in foreign affairs from the Thirty Years War and new technologies gave him a “monopoly of violence” in internal affairs (Citino, 2005, page. 5). At first, his standing army only had five and a half thousand men but it consisted of some 29 thousand men by his death in 1688 (Citino, 2005, page. 7). This was a pretty large number of soldiers compared to the population of the state.

The state served the army, not the other way around. Friedrich Wilhelm's reign is seen by many historians as the birth of militarism in Prussia (Citino, 2005, page. 29). By creating a large standing army and institutions like the General War Commissariat which systemised the administration and funding of the army, it is often argued that the state served the army. French statesman Count Mirabeau said in his famous quote “Prussia was not a country with an army but an army with a country” (Showalter, 2004, page. 118). This shows that the Prussian military tradition was understood not only in Prussia but also in other European states.

By the 18th century, Prussia was one of the major powers in Europe. King Friedrich der Große left a spectacular legacy as he won the Silesian Wars against Prussia's rival Austria and gained new territories for Prussia. His successful military campaigns and his reorganization of the military led Prussia to become a major military power in Europe. Friedrich der Große contributed heavily to the military tradition in Prussia. By the end of the 18th century, “the heavily militarized nobility was perceived as a functional service class in Prussia” (Büsch, 1997, page. ix). This perception was caused by two factors. First, officers in the military only consisted of the nobility and second, the king

only chose military men for public posts as he wanted disciplined and obedient men for these posts (Büsch, 1997, page. ix). This emphasis on the military boosted an already strong military tradition in Prussia.

Friedrich der Große's successor was his nephew, Friedrich Wilhelm II. During his reign, Prussia faced its most humiliating defeat. Prussia was defeated by Napoleonic France at the Battle of Jena-Auerstädt in 1806. This defeat left Prussia in ruins. Not only were they defeated by their biggest rival, France, but Prussia ended up being occupied by France. This humiliating defeat led influential theorists and bureaucrats in Prussia to push for military and social reforms. People like General Carl von Clausewitz, General Gerhard von Scharnhorst, Field Marshal Neidhardt von Gneisenau, Minister of State Heinrich Friedrich Karl vom und zum Stein, General Friedrich Wilhelm Freiherr von Bülow, and Prussian Chancellor Karl August von Hardenberg led these reforms. All of them were influenced by Prussia's defeat and they understood that if Prussia wanted to be a major power in Europe once again, it needed to reform. While people had begun thinking about reforming the state before 1806, it lacked a proper push. The push came with the humiliating defeat at the Battle of Jena-Auerstädt.

With a reformed military, Prussia and the armies of the Sixth coalition defeated Napoleon at the Battle of Leipzig. Prussia did not play a crucial role in this battle as they had limited time to implement military reforms properly but Prussia finally got rid of her French occupiers and continued to strengthen the army so she could become a major military power in Europe once again. The upcoming "peace years" which were the years between the Napoleonic Wars and Wars of Unification enabled Prussia to modernize her military and prepare for the upcoming Wars of Unification. German unification is an event studied by many scholars. The unification of many small kingdoms, duchies and other political entities under the Prussian leadership was a phenomenon that fascinates scholars around the world. To understand the unification of Germany, one must understand 19th century Prussian military reforms.

This thesis will focus on the impact of Prussian military reforms on German Unification. It is important to understand Prussian military reforms as it was precisely war-making that unified Germany. Therefore, the state-making process in Germany was done through war-making. Even though Prussia is not the only country in the world that has done state-making through war-making, it is a unique case because of its heavy military tradition. Therefore, nation-building theories fit Prussia to an extent. The nation-building theory that will be applied to the Prussian case is a theory developed by an American political scientist and sociologist Charles Tilly.

War-making is intertwined with state-making as war-making is unifying more territories together and to have an efficient military, state ministries need to cooperate together which creates state-making. Charles Tilly in his work "War-making and State Making as an Organised Crime" (1985) argues that European nations built state apparatus through war-making. He explains that war-making led to the extraction of resources from the population of certain territories. This extraction consisted of men, arms, food, lodging, transportation, and supplies of money to buy them (p.35). The process of extraction led to the elimination of a lord's territorial rivals which led to state-making. A by-product of extraction was the creation of institutions for tax collection agencies, police forces, courts, exchequers, and account keepers which also led to state-making (Tilly, 1985). War-making also led to state-making through the expansion of military organization itself. All of these factors were necessary for war-making and also led to state-making. The structures created by war-making eliminated the rivals of the lord and managers of the state created alliances with specific social classes. These strategic decisions led to the creation of state apparatuses. Members of these social classes loaned resources, provided technical services or helped ensure the compliance of the rest of the population in return for protection against their own rivals (Tilly, 1985).

To be able to apply this nation-building theory, one needs to understand the German nation-building process. As Germany was united through a war-making process which escalated during the Wars of Unification, an understanding of political realities in Prussia before the Wars of Unification is

crucial. Since the Prussian Minister-President Otto von Bismarck understood that a strong army was required to unite Germany, he supported Albrecht von Roon and his proposition for military reforms. Military reforms before the Wars of Unification were crucial to the German nation-building process because a strong military enabled Prussia to win the Wars of Unification. The second set of reforms between 1859 and 1871 built on the first set of reforms between 1806 and 1813 and perfected the Prussian military establishment.

These two sets of reforms played crucial roles in German nation-building processes. The defeat at Jena-Auerstädt left a big scar on Prussian society which can be seen in the Prussian drive towards enlightened reforms. Military reforms between 1806 and 1813 and military reforms before the Wars of Unification played crucial roles in unifying Germany. By freeing army units from arbitrary restraints, creating a German national spirit and strengthening the Prussian Army, military reforms paved the way for the German nation-building process.

Chapter 1: Reforms between 1806-1813

The Prussian reforms between 1806 and 1813 were vast in both scope and importance. Leading Prussian statesmen felt a need for reforms due to Prussia's humiliating defeat to France at the Battle of Jena-Auerstedt. Leading social reformers Chief Minister of Prussia Karl August von Hardenberg and Prussian statesman Heinrich Friedrich Karl vom und zum Stein, along with members of the Military Reorganization Committee understood that if Prussia wanted to become a major military power in Europe, they needed to reform (Clark, 2001). On top of the above mentioned reformers, King Friedrich Wilhelm III himself felt the utmost need for these reforms (Clark, 2001, p. 313). Prussia was in a dire situation which called for drastic reforms to take place.

1.1 Military Reforms

Debates about reforming the Prussian military were not new in 1806. After Friedrich der Große's death, there were debates that continued during the revolutionary years and early years of the Napoleonic campaign about re-examining the old "Frederician" system (Clark, 2001 p. 323). It is not a surprise that the Prussian military officers tried to analyze the Napoleonic Army as it launched an unprecedented campaign in Europe. The practice of "big war" and the professionalization of the military were key subjects of examination for Prussian military officers that argued for a re-examination of the "Frederician" system (Clark, 2001, p. 323). Military officers discussed these new realities at the Military Society which was founded in 1802 and consisted of prominent figures like General Gerhard Johann von Scharnhorst. Scharnhorst wanted Prussia to establish a territorial militia as a reserve force and Field Marshal Karl Friedrich von dem Knesebeck went so far as to call for the establishment of a "national" Prussian force (Clark, 2001, p. 324). Long-serving senior officers, whose respect in the Prussian military blocked possible reform movements, were opposed to these ambitious Military Society proposals.

However, this anti-reformist feeling was before the defeat at Jena-Auerstedt: after 1806, it totally changed. "If Prussia was to survive, she too would have to

undergo not just military but also social, economic and political reform” (Gates, 2003, p. 86). The objective of these reforms was to allow Prussia to be better able to mobilize its resources for war (Gates, 2003, p. 89). Friedrich Wilhelm established the Military Reorganization Committee after the Treaty of Tilsit. It was headed by Field Marshal August Neidhardt von Gneisenau and included members like Prussian Minister of War Hermann von Boyen and Scharnhorst. The committee's aim was to establish the criteria in the military for responsible professionalism. The idea behind this was to make military officers professionals based on their performance, not as a privilege they gained by birth: the principle of equality of opportunity was applied in the military. Based on this criteria and also because of the humiliating defeat, 208 officers, among them 17 generals, were purged from the ranks (Gates, 2003, p. 89). Even though the principle of equal opportunity was applied, there had to be some compromises made with the Junkers, Prussian aristocrats. The Regulations of 1808 stated that the nobility lost its legal privileges for commissions but was still in charge of officer appointments. While this only led to a few untitled officers, it was the first sign of a more liberated society (Gates, 2003, p. 89). In 1808, the War Ministry was established to oversee all military affairs; moreover, old cadet schools were replaced by training institutes for subalterns and a prestigious military academy in Berlin (Gates, 2003, p. 89).

Scharnhorst wanted to bring people and the military more closely; he even had the idea to create a *Volksarmee*. He argued that this would connect people and the military into an “intimate union” but King Friedrich Wilhelm and Chief Minister of Prussia Karl August von Hardenberg did not support it because they feared French reaction. After the Treaty of Paris in 1808, Prussia was under French occupation, had to pay insurance money to France in the value of 140 million Francs and limit her army to 42 thousand men (Paret, 1967). The creation of a *Volksarmee* would therefore come with the undeniable risk of French intervention. Because of this fear, Scharnhorst had to make compromises when it came to the system of recruiting for the army. He bypassed the Treaty of Paris by constantly replacing trained soldiers with new recruits, this system was called *Krumpersystem*. This approach created an

army reserve but the numbers were far off the ideal numbers from the perspective of the reformers (Citino, 2005, p. 129).

Even though Scharnhorst's idea of a *Volksarmee* was not implemented, the reformers experimented with another concept which was the *Landwehr*. The *Landwehr* was a militia separated from the regular army filled with citizens. The need to bridge the gap between the Army and the society was still there, therefore the reformers faced a challenge on how to achieve it. Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III favored universal conscription so that every Prussian subject would serve in the regular army and therefore he would feel the need to defend the country. However, the reformers believed that this would not be popular mainly amongst the more well-off citizens. Because of this belief, the reformers favoured concepts closer to a militia type of army. They believed that citizens would join their local unit, separated from the regular army, and train for four weeks a year in time of peace to defend their province in case of war (Walter, 2009, p. 272). These proposals did not take place because of the limitations Prussia was given in the Treaty of Paris (Walter, 2009, p. 272).

This militia type of army, the *Landwehr*, was created when Prussia went to war with France in 1813. The creation of the *Landwehr* was a compromise between the reformers and the king. Universal conscription was established on February 9, 1813 when all the exemptions from military service were suspended for the duration of the war, which was the king's proposal in the debates regarding the creation of the bridge between the Army and society (Walter, 2009, p. 273). This order was followed by the creation of the *Landwehr* on 20 March 1813 when the king announced the creation of the "separate, wartime-only force, with strong local ties, raised and paid by the county estates, which also appointed the company officers" (Walter, 2009, p. 273). This meant that the *Landwehr* officers were equals to the regular line officers of the same rank and that Prussians aged between 17 and 40 were liable to be drafted or conscripted to the *Landwehr*.

The realities of the use of the *Landwehr* during the Wars of Liberation showed the differences between Scharnhorst's idea of a separate citizen's militia for

patriotic subjects. Even though the Landwehr was supposed to be a separate militia to fight next to the regular army, the Landwehr was mostly used as a replacement and manpower for the regular army. Even the prospect of the equality of officers in the Landwehr and the regular army was abused by the regular army officers. The Prussian military establishment allowed these realities to happen because of the military necessity to give Prussia the best use of manpower (Walter, 2009, p. 274). The creation of the Landwehr allowed the military establishment to be more flexible not only during the Wars of Liberation but also after the Napoleonic Wars.

However, these reforms did not go without being noticed. In 1810, Napoleon pressed for Scharnhorst's removal from office. On top of this, Hardenberg's foreign policy disappointed the remaining innovators. In 1812, Prussia had to provide Napoleon with its troops for the invasion of Russia which left many officers in a dilemma, should they remain at their posts in the Prussian Army or should they leave for the Russian ranks. For example, General Carl von Clausewitz resigned from the Prussian Army which led him to join the Russian Imperial Army and Boyen left his post as Minister of War (Gates, 2003, p.90).

Even though many brilliant officers left their posts or were purged, enlightening ideas were still present. The Reformists knew that if Prussia wanted to stand up against Napoleonic France, they needed to examine the French military in order to ascertain the reasons behind France's dominance. Prince August of Prussia understood this. As a prisoner of war in French captivity, he sent a memorandum to the Military Reorganization Committee; in this memorandum, he highlighted the slowness of Prussian movements and the flawed coordination of the infantry, artillery and cavalry (Paret, 1967, p. 126). Prince August ended his memorandum of tactical recommendations by saying that "In modern times one generally cannot expect great results with patriotism...In nearly all contemporary wars love of honor and ambition have been a greater influence, and have often replaced enthusiasm and patriotism" (Paret, 1967, p. 127). His view on patriotism is rather unique as reformists such as Scharnhorst or Stein at that time believed the exact opposite. Paret in his book *Yorck and*

the Era of Prussian Reform argues that Prince August's demoralization after the defeat at Jena-Auerstädt influenced his view on patriotism (1967, p. 127).

The importance of patriotism was not the only major debate for Prussian military reformers; they also looked into the effectiveness of combined arms. Scharnhorst's protégé, Karl von Tiedemann – a man who was recommended for the post of Minister of War after Boyen's resignation but refused and left to Russia – was mesmerized by the combined arms concept. Tiedemann was fascinated by the French use of light troops during the Napoleonic Wars. He believed that the synergy between light infantry, heavy infantry and units of different arms should be exploited to achieve success. This concept would allow divisions to be able to exercise semi-autonomous actions. With the standardization of drills, units could operate smoothly together (Gates, 2003, p. 91). Like Gneisau, Clausewitz and many other Prussian reformists, Tiedemann felt the need for all-purpose troops. This concept called for creating soldiers with the skills of both light and heavy infantrymen. These special troops, called Jäger, were to be trained in open-order tactics which necessitates better-educated soldiers (Gates, 2003, p. 91).

Even though the Prussian Army did not implement these tactics during the Napoleonic Wars, they shaped Prussian military tactics in the future years. Not only were bigger deployments of all-purpose units and the concept of combined arms seen as too liberal for the old Prussian officers, they were also hard to implement quickly. Reformers such as Scharnhorst and Clausewitz believed that bringing subjects of the kingdom into a more intimate union with the army would increase patriotic feeling, which as they observed from the French, is a key for success. Along with these reforms, the ideas born during this time shaped the future of the Prussian Kingdom.

1.2 Social Reforms

In a similar vein as military reformers, social reformers understood the need for a complete overhaul of society after the humiliating defeat of Prussia. Prussian

reformers believed that a defeated Prussia could only rise again if both the state and the military reformed themselves. As in other empires and kingdoms in 19th century Europe, the army in Prussia played an important role but the position of the army in Prussia was rather unique. French statesman Count Mirabeau remarked "Prussia was not a country with an army but an army with a country" (Showalter, 2004, p. 118). Because of this, social reforms were interconnected with military reforms; therefore, it is important to understand the correlation between them. Baron Heinrich Friedrich Karl vom und zum Stein and Chief Minister of Prussia Karl August von Hardenberg were the leaders of social reform movements. Baron vom Stein was also a member of the Military Reorganisation Committee which shows the deep relationship between social reforms and military reforms.

Stein, Hardenberg and their collaborators understood the situation that Prussia was in; their goal was to bureaucratize the monarchy. "They based this claim on the presumption that the disaster of 1806-7 had been caused by the adversarial tensions within the executive, that it could have been avoided with a better decision-making structure capable of steering the monarch into the required decisions." (Clark, 2001, p. 321). One of the first tasks they wanted to tackle was to enable Prussia to function independently on the European stage once again. As mentioned earlier, they wanted to achieve this by focusing on the executive and the military (Clark, 2001, p. 321).

Stein was a man with admiration towards corporate representative institutions. He believed in communication and collaboration as a means for an effective administration. Stein's impulsive character can be seen in his diplomatic dealings with the French occupiers (Clark, 2001, p. 320). Gerhard Ritter in his book *Freiherr vom Stein* (1931) argues that Stein was a weak opponent of Napoleon. Because of this, Stein was forced to vacate the office of Prussian Minister of State as Napoleon sensed his reformist drive and named him an international criminal (Gates, 2003, p. 88). This post was then given to Count Dohna and later to Karl Altenstein. While Count Dohna and Karl Altenstein did not reverse Stein's reforms, they lacked his drive (Gates, 2003, p. 88).

On the other hand, Hardenberg was focused on the authoritative role of the head of state, the concentration of power and Prussia's economic situation. Contrary to Stein, Hardenberg was diplomatic and thoughtful (Clark, 2001, p. 320-321). These character traits enabled him to perform better in Prussian foreign relations. Like Stein, Hardenberg understood the importance of public opinion (Clark, 2001, p. 321). This could be seen in his disapproval of the nobility's privileges and his belief that the state can better control the population if the population had equal rights (Simon, 1956, p. 91). This understanding between these two reformers enabled them to cooperate effectively and sparked their wave of reforms.

While both Stein and Hardenberg both individually held the office of Minister of Prussia, were subsequently both dismissed, and both held the office once again, their cooperation laid the framework for the overall reforms during this period. Despite Napoleon's and Friedrich Wilhelm III's interventions, both Stein and Hardenberg were able to help restructure the Prussian State. Their cooperation laid in the same enlightened ideas which allowed their reforms to continue since the King replaced them with each other after dismissing them. Both understood the problem of the "cabinet system" which was present in Prussia. The "cabinet system" was a group of foreign ministers and cabinet secretaries that were close to the monarch. This group fought over the influence on the monarch in order to influence the policy-making processes (Clark, 2001, p. 321). Stein and Hardenberg argued that this system caused the Prussian defeat at Jena-Aurestädt. In 1807, the King dissolved his cabinet of advisors and a year later he established an executive consisting of 5 ministers. The theory behind this was to push the King into an expert debate over decisions with the responsible minister (Clark, 2001, p. 321). Their aim was to bureaucratize the monarchy which would lead to a system that could make quick and rational decisions.

The Edict of 1807 not only established changes in centralized government but also in local governments. The local governments were to be changed in a way in which the local population would participate more. Local elections were to be held and other practices of popular participation were applied (Gates, 2003,

p.87). The reasoning behind this was that if people felt that they had a voice in the state, it would encourage them to be more loyal and therefore more patriotic. This means that they would have a stronger drive to defend the state from an invader. These changes would later be seen as crucial steps towards a modern state of the 19th century.

1.3 The King's Reaction

As Prussia was an absolutist monarchy, King Friedrich Wilhelm III had ultimate power over the policy-making processes. To be able to reform the state, the King himself had to be open to these ideas and reformers had to lobby the King's advisors to be able to ensure these reforms were successful. Therefore, it is important to understand King Friedrich Wilhelm's role during the reform years as, in practice, he held the biggest power. Following the Edict of 1807, the King held onto power *de facto* even though *de jure* he shared it with his ministers.

To better understand his view, one needs to look at the situation in which Prussia was in 1806. As Napoleon was advancing through Prussia and King Friedrich Wilhelm III was fleeing eastwards, the Prussian Army was in disarray. Military fortresses throughout Prussia were surrendering even if they had numerical or defensive advantages. In other words, they were surrendering in situations in which they should have been able to defend themselves from invaders. Christopher Clark in his book *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia 1600-1947* argues that "The collapse of Prussia, it seemed, was as much a question of political will and motivation as of technical inferiority" (2001, p. 312). The unfolding of these events led the King to question the Prussian system and the might of the military.

His questioning of these events is best seen in the Declaration of Ortelsburg in 1806. This declaration is a raw, emotion-filled document, handwritten by the King himself. In this document, the King reflects on the situation which he called the "almost total dissolution" of the Prussian Army. He is also blaming his soldiers for easily abandoning their posts and fortresses which he believed was

a crucial factor and set a dangerous precedent in the Prussian military. He then proceeds to issue threats that he would have all commanders who surrender their fortresses, all soldiers who surrender to the enemy or anyone switching sides shot without mercy. Even though this document is under the influence of the King's emotions from the events happening at that time, the last part of the document shows us that the King wanted to solve this problem. He wrote that any soldier who fought with distinction would be accepted to the officer corps regardless of his social status (Clark, 2001, p. 312). This last part of the declaration shows us not only the importance of the battle at Jena-Auerstädt but also the mindset of King Friedrich Wilhelm III. The King wanted to reform the state as is seen in the Declaration of Ortelsburg but the upcoming years under French occupation would show the complexities of reform movements. At the end of the day, the King was for the reforms but he was forced to make compromises not only with the Prussian Junkers but also with the occupiers.

1.4 The Importance of the Reforms of 1806-1813

As Dr. Evelin Lindner in her book *Making Enemies: Humiliation and International Conflict* explains, humiliation is the “nuclear bomb of the emotions” (2006, p. xiii). She argues that the emotion of humiliation has the power to destroy everything and everybody in its path. One can also see these symptoms in Prussia after the Battle of Jena-Auerstädt. As previously mentioned, this humiliating defeat led intellectuals, leading bureaucrats, liberals, and nationalists to rebuild Prussia: moreover, the King himself accepted that reforms were necessary to enable Prussia to operate autonomously on the European stage once again.

It was not only the strong emotion of humiliation that enabled these reforms to happen: the interconnection between social reforms and military reforms permitted Prussia to modernize its army and the state at the same time. The interconnection of military reforms and social reforms could be seen in the emancipation of Prussian subjects and the consequential empowering national spirit.

The equal opportunity to apply for military commission that was given to Prussian subjects and the establishment of the Ministry of War demonstrate not only the professionalization of the military but also the emancipation of the Prussian people as a whole. As military reformers worked closely with social reformers, the emancipation can also be seen in the political sphere in Prussia. On top of the establishment of the Ministry of War, Stein also pushed the King to abolish the “cabinet system,” establish ministries, and support local governors.

Due to Stein's understanding of the importance of patriotic feelings in case of war, he wanted to bring people closer to the state so they would have the will to defend their state. This way of thinking was aligned with Scharnhorst, who wanted to bring people and the military into a more “intimate union”. Even though these reform ideas were constantly challenged by the Junkers and compromises had to be made, they brought people closer to the state and therefore helped the state become closer to a modern state of the 19th century.

To achieve the emancipation of Prussia's subjects, the education level of Prussia had to be increased. Education was not only given to the nobility but also to the lower classes. With the creation of *Jäger* units and the implementation of the combined-arms concept, the education of soldiers had to be improved as these special units had to operate in open-order tactics. Scharnhorst looked at the French deployment of all-purpose units, *Jäger* counterparts, called *tirailleur*. He explained their importance on the battlefield and argued that physical sharpness and the high intelligence of common men enabled France to deploy these special units. These special units had the ability to use terrain to their advantage while Prussian soldiers waited for the orders of their officers (Paret, 1967, p. 77). This shows us that the emancipation of common people was done through education.

Social and military reformers agreed on the importance of patriotism in times of war. Once again, they looked at French successes in the Napoleonic Wars and looked closely at their revolutionary drive. Major Georg Heinrich von Berenhorst, who at the time of the reforms was already retired, wrote an extensive criticism of the Prussian Army. He examined the French drive and

said that patriotic fighters will always defeat those who do not feel patriotism towards their state. He also pointed out that if Prussia wanted to have a better military, the state needed to grant individuals deeper participation in politics (Paret, 1967, p.77). These ideas are linked with Scharnhorst's idea of a more "intimate union" and Stein's reforms of local governments.

Even though all of these ideas were not implemented due to the influence of the Junker class and compromises that had to be made, the reforms between 1806 and 1813 shaped the future of Prussia. As education of the common people increased, society became emancipated and patriotism was in the air during the upcoming years. While the Prussian Army did not have time to implement all of the changes within the period of the Napoleonic Wars, Field Marshall Blücher's passionate attack on the French right wing at the Battle of Waterloo foresaw the future of the Prussian Army. The attack was full of German patriotism united against an external threat: precisely this feeling of external threat would later unite the German lands.

Chapter 2: Reforms in 1859/71 and Wars of Unification

After the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Europe was at peace but the spirit of the French Revolution shook the monarchies throughout Europe. The Prussian monarchy was not an exception. As the War of Liberation during the Napoleonic Wars was fought in the spirit of defending the German lands, German nationalism grew. Military and social reforms also helped German nationalism grow which laid the ground for various movements calling for the unification of Germany. These movements were led by liberal and socialist groups which, naturally, directly opposed the conservative Prussian monarchy.

To understand these skirmishes between the crown and liberal and socialist movements, it is important to understand the attempted revolution of the 1840s, with its peak in the spring of 1848. The War of Liberation during the Napoleonic Wars created a euphoria of nationalism that was hard for the monarchy to suppress fully. With the death of Friedrich Wilhelm III in 1840, people looked upon the new monarch, Friedrich Wilhelm IV to socially and economically reform the state (Hoyer, 2021, p. 30). Because the new king was the least charismatic king of his generation, his unshakable and violent opposition towards nationalists created big groups of reformers, liberals, socialists and other various factions that strived for a stronger union between the German states (Hoyer, 2021, p. 31). All of these factors led to the failed but influential revolution in the spring of 1848.

Even though this revolution failed, it brought both the national song "Deutschlandlied" that would later become the German national anthem and the tri-color of black, gold and red that would later become the flag of Germany to the fore. Not only did this revolution bring about national symbols, it cornered the king into making public appearances with the German tri-colour to calm his subjects. This gesture did not mean that the king would accept the reform movements but it predicted the events of the upcoming years, not only in Prussia but also in the German lands as a whole.

All of these events had a profound impact on the unification of Germany in 1871. Having said that, this thesis is focusing on Prussian military reforms and their impact on German unification. On top of the events of the 1840s, economic unions such as the *Zollverein Union* had a great impact on unifying Germany. This union was set up by Prussia to boost their industrial potential. The *Zollverein Union* bettered infrastructure and logistics: by 1866, the map of this union looked similar to the map of Unified Germany (Hoyer, 2021, p. 27). Nonetheless, Germany was mainly unified through wars. Therefore, it is necessary to examine military reforms and their application in the Wars of Unification to understand the peak of the German nation-building process and the role of the military in Prussian society and politics.

The master of political intrigue, the first Prime Minister of the German Empire, Otto von Bismarck and his military allies Minister of War Albrecht von Roon and Prussian Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke played key roles not only in military reforms, but also in the Wars of Unification. As in the past, German states only united against external threats: the Wars of Unification were no different. Bismarck understood this more clearly than any other statesmen in Prussia and this can be seen in his famous speech of 1862 where he said “It would take war to unify the German People” (Hoyer, 2021, p. 9; Pflanze, 1955, p. 552). With this in mind, the military reforms in the 1860s and the Wars of Unification show the impact of these reforms on the German nation-building process.

2.1 Military Reforms

The military reforms between 1859 and 1871 are labeled by some scholars as a “Military Revolution” (Walter, 2001, p. 4). However, this subchapter will not look into this problem but rather summarize the major changes these reforms brought about. These reforms were not just a mere continuation of the military reforms that had already taken place between 1806 and 1813: they implemented new, unique technological and logistical changes into the military. To understand these reforms, one needs to look at the cooperation between then Minister-President Otto von Bismarck, Minister of War Albrecht von Roon and Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke as precisely this cooperation created

new military practices and enhanced the military's effectiveness. This allowed the military to operate on a highly efficient level which empowered the army to be successful in the Wars of Unification.

Without the “Crazy Junker”, there would be no military reforms. Otto von Bismarck, who earned this nickname from his political colleagues, played the most important role in the German unification process. Bismarck was a gifted orator and politician. His political skills in defending King Friedrich Wilhelm IV during the Revolution of 1848 and in parliament the next year did not go unnoticed. The king promoted Bismarck to be a Prussian envoy in the Parliament of the German Confederation in Frankfurt in 1851 (Hoyer, 2021, p. 38). His activity in this parliament is often marked by historians as an aggressive style of not only defending Prussia but also by trying to politically isolate Austria from the other German states (Hoyer, 2021, p. 41). When King Friedrich Wilhelm IV died in 1861 and his brother Prince Wilhelm became King Wilhelm I of Prussia, Bismarck's position changed.

As the new King of Prussia, Wilhelm I understood the power liberals had gained in parliament through their majority and was willing to work with them. In order to work with the liberals in parliament, the king sent Bismarck, an outspoken conservative, far away to St. Petersburg and then to Paris as a Prussian envoy. During Bismarck's time as an envoy, Wilhelm I and Minister of War Albrecht von Roon wanted to reform the military but they were not able to push these reforms through a parliament controlled by liberals. As the situation started to look desperate for the king and von Roon, the latter sent a letter to Bismarck who was located in Paris at the time. In this letter, von Roon said that there was danger and that Bismarck should hurry back. Bismarck did not waste time and rushed back to Berlin where he, through his manipulative rhetoric, convinced Wilhelm I to name Bismarck Minister-President of Prussia (Hoyer, 2021, p. 45). With Bismarck as Minister-President of Prussia, the process of German unification under the Prussian Kingdom could start.

When Prince Wilhelm became regent in 1857 because King Friedrich Wilhelm IV suffered a stroke, he immediately noticed a problem with the Prussian

military structure. Along with the prince, the vast majority of the military establishment realized that the two biggest problems facing the military centered on the standing army and the Landwehr. The standing army only had 150,000 soldiers which made the Prussian position in Europe problematic as Russia and France had much bigger armies. The Landwehr played a crucial role during the Wars of Liberation and Prince Wilhelm was concerned that their loyalty was not towards the Prussian monarchy but towards German speaking lands (Hoyer, 2023, p. 43). To tackle these problems, Prince Wilhelm promoted Albrecht von Roon to the office of the Ministry of War. The prince and von Roon were old friends from the time when von Roon served under the prince as the VIII Corps Chief of Staff. They liked each other and shared the same ideas which allowed them to cooperate effectively (Walter, 2009, p. 287).

As the Landwehr was originally created during the Wars of Liberation to fight against the invaders, it was fueled by German patriotism. It was separated from the regular army and the officers were from the bourgeois class. After the Wars of Liberation, the Landwehr underwent a change that ended their militia status and became part of the Prussian Army, although the name "Landwehr" remained in use. The reformers understood the public popularity of the Landwehr as it fought the invaders side by side with the Prussian Army: therefore, they kept the Landwehr. Later on, this created problems as the Landwehr was filled with German patriotic feelings rather than Prussian patriotism. Even though the military establishment kept the Landwehr, it was relegated to the second-line reserve in the regular army (Walter, 2009, p. 275).

German patriotism was not the only problem with the Landwehr. Another problem was the quality of the Landwehr officer corps. In 1818, the Landwehr officer corps was closed to amateurs and only educated, wealthy classes could apply. However, people from these classes did not have to have any special military training after they joined, they just had to serve in the regular army for a year. This was controversial among the regular army officers as they believed that it took 3 years to turn a man into a soldier (Walter, 2009, p. 279). Dierk Walter in his article "Roon, The Prussian Landwehr and the reorganization of 1859-1860" argues that the regular army officers did not try to improve the

Landwehr officer corps but rather “made the low quality of its officer corps the core of their Landwehr criticism” (Walter, 2009, p. 280). This indicates the power-struggles in the officers corps of the Prussian Army establishment which can be also seen with the fact that the regular army officers looked down on Landwehr officers.

The Ministry of War tried to solve the quality problem of the Landwehr through various interventions to its officer corps. Between 1831 and 1841, the number of regular army officers in command of the Landwehr companies rose significantly and by 1841, half of the infantry companies and cavalry squadrons were commanded by regular army officers. This trend did not stop after 1841: by 1858, the whole Landwehr infantry was commanded by regular army officers (Walter, 2009, p. 281). Not only did the commanding of the Landwehr change during these years but the structure also continually merged the Landwehr with the regular army. Even though the Landwehr was continually being merged with the regular army, its autonomy lay in the political ideology of Prussia and in the fact that it was created as the “people's army”. It made universal conscription during peacetime socially acceptable and it allowed the middle class to serve in the army. This, in turn, allowed Prussians to carry the patriotic traditions of the Wars of Liberation (Walter, 2009, p. 282). Another reason for not abolishing the Landwehr was financial. Prussia was in debt during the 19th century and did not have enough money to replace Landwehr troops with regular army troops (Walter, 2009, p. 282).

When Albrecht von Roon became the Minister of War in 1859, the problems with the Landwehr were already being solved. Plans were already past the draft stage and the government had already started to implement them (Walter, 2009, p. 286). Therefore, his role was not crucial in the planning aspect of military reorganization. However, von Roon did play a crucial role in later stages of the reorganization: along with King Wilhelm I, he pushed these reforms through a parliament controlled by liberals even though he lacked political experience before he took office. These reforms are referred to as “Roon's reforms” precisely because he oversaw the political process behind them. As he was not in the inner circle of the Prussian military establishment, he lacked

knowledge about organizational details and the financial expenditure of the military (Walter, 2009, p. 286). This can be seen in his pamphlet called "Remarks and Drafts on the Fatherland's Military Constitution". He wrote this pamphlet in July 1858, before he became Minister of War. Dierk Walter argues that even though this pamphlet is used by historians to understand von Roon's contribution to military reforms, his lack of knowledge about the internal military realities prove otherwise (Walter, 2009, p. 286).

The reorganisational plans were finally submitted to the civilian government and parliament in the winter of 1859. The result of these plans was an attempt to free the field army of their former Landwehr loyalties. However, this meant doubling the field army line which meant doubling recruitment (Walter, 2009, p. 283). Based on draft requirements, Prussia could only field 63 thousand soldiers: but the War Ministry's aim was to field 80 thousand. To raise these numbers, Landwehr troops were used. The War Ministry declared "five age classes of the Landwehr's first levy a part of the war (first-line) reserve" (Walter, 2009, p. 283) which raised the number of available troops. The majority of these troops maintained their Landwehr loyalties. These soldiers were supposed to be used for garrison and occupational duties but during the Wars of Unification, these troops were also used to bring the units to war strength, replace losses and even create new units (Walter, 2009, p. 283; Wawro, 1996, p. 16). While the Prussian Army was now ready to face European powers numerically, the reforms did not end there.

The War Ministry began implementing the reorganisational plans concerning the Landwehr while parliament continued to heavily discuss budgetary restrictions for the army. This is where Bismarck comes into play after rushing back to Berlin because of von Roon's letter begging for help. Precisely during these heated debates in the parliament, Bismarck, the new Minister-President, delivered his famous speech:

Germany is not looking to Prussia's liberalism, but to its power: Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden may indulge liberalism, and yet no one will assign them Prussia's role (...) it is not by speeches and majority resolutions that the great questions of the time are decided - that was the big mistake of 1848 and 1849 - but by iron and blood. (Bismarck, 1862)

This speech shows that Bismarck did not believe in words and ideas but in action. After this speech, Bismarck ruled without a parliament-approved budget until 1866 and defended his breaking of the Prussian constitution by saying that it was the right thing to do (Hoyer, 2023, p. 46). Bismarck had already mastered oratory and manipulated political movements: finally, he knew how to manipulate the entire Prussian political system to achieve his goals.

The general staff that first emerged during the first decades of the 19th century in Prussia was modernized and improved. Between 1815 and 1862, Scharnhorst disciples who operated as chiefs in the Prussian general staff continued and bettered the general staff. They created military maps, wrote military histories, trained officers through “war games”, gathered intelligence on foreign armies, and cultivated a unique leadership technique called “directive command” (Walter, 2001, p. 12). General staff represented a rational decision-making process, and Scharnhorst's disciples filled the Prussian Army with warriors that respected this. Although the general staff was not in charge of mobilization and troop deployment, the railways allowed Prussia to deploy their army much faster, so the mobilization and deployment of troops became inseparable from war planning. This advancement gave general staff the authority to be in control of mobilization and deployment in the 1850s. Along with mobilization and deployment, the general staff was also responsible for technological innovations (Walter, 2001, p. 13).

The Order of June 2, 1866, issued by King Friedrich Wilhelm I, allowed the general staff to issue orders to the army and corps commanders in the king's name. The decree states that “from now on, my orders concerning the operational movements of the concentrated army and its individual parts shall be communicated to the commands through the chief of the general staff of the

army” (Moltke, 1892-1902). This order allowed Helmuth von Moltke, who was at that time the Chief of General Staff, to mobilize, deploy, maneuver and organize the Prussian Army more swiftly compared to Prussia's enemies. This change of operational leadership was only available because the king understood that in modern warfare, even the Prussian soldier king needed professional support (Walter, 2001, p. 13).

These military reforms also allowed the army to implement two crucial technological innovations: railways compatible for military deployment and the implementation of the needle gun. Prussia carefully prepared their railways for military deployment and had a decent railway network. This enabled them to deploy their fighting troops swiftly but all supplies were left behind as they were supposed to catch up to the troops during their advancements (Walter, 2001, p. 16). Compared to the effectiveness of railways, the use of needle guns was not a major game-changer for Prussia in the Wars of Unification. The needle guns could fire 5-7 shots per minute which was a huge jump from a musket's 2 shots per minute. However, the needle gun was not popular among the majority of the military establishment as many officers believed that the needle gun's faster fire-power would lead to wasted ammunition. The needle gun first saw action during the German Revolution of 1848 and after that, the Prussian military establishment knew they needed to implement the needle gun. In his article “A Military Revolution?” Dierk Walter explains that needle guns in the 1850s would have made Prussia the master of Europe, but in 1866, it was already worse than its French counterpart (Walter, 2001, p. 20). Despite this, it allowed Prussia to be on par with France in the fire-power dimension of warfare during the Franco-Prussian war.

Even though the Prussian reforms between 1859 and 1871 built on the reforms between 1806 and 1813, this second set of reforms directly prepared the Prussian Army for the Wars of Unification. They enabled the Prussian standing army to increase in size, dismantled the Landwehr, and utilized technological innovations, which enabled Prussia to not only deploy troops to the battlefields quicker but also to be ready in terms of firepower. The most important order of these military reforms is the new general staff's authorizations. The

professionalization of the mobilization and deployment enabled Prussia to gain a huge advantage in the coming Wars of Unification.

2.2 Second Schleswig War

With the passing and implementation of the new military reforms, Prussia and Bismarck were looking for territorial expansion. They did not have to look far: Schleswig and Holstein were duchies situated north of German lands. Holstein was mostly German-speaking and was part of the German Confederation while Schleswig had a large Danish-speaking minority which was in union with the Danish royal family. While Bismarck was looking for possibilities to expand Prussian territory, Danish King Christian IX signed a document to annex the territory of Schleswig in 1863 (Hoyer, 2023, p. 49). This gave Bismarck a chance not only to expand Prussian territory but also to start the Wars of Unification.

First, Bismarck had to ask the Parliament of the German Confederation in Frankfurt to start up a defence mechanism to send troops to Holstein. The Confederation agreed and sent a combined force to defend Holstein but Bismarck wanted more. Bismarck and his Austrian counterparts agreed to send troops to Schleswig. First, Prussia and Austria asked the parliament in Frankfurt for approval but their request was denied. Bavaria and Saxony even went so far as to threaten to restrict Austrian troops and goods and talks that the Confederation Army would fight Prussian and Austrian troops if they crossed the borders to Schleswig circulated. However, Bismarck called their bluff and Prussian and Austrian forces attacked Schleswig in 1864 (Hoyer, 2023, p. 49). Prussian forces marching side by side with Austrian forces created a deceptive image of *Großdeutschland*¹ and predicted how Bismarck would construct the Wars of Unification, by deception.

¹ *Großdeutschland* was an idea in 19th century stating that all German-speaking people should be united under the leadership of Austria (Hoyer, 2023)

The needle gun gave an advantage to the Prussian forces over their Danish opponents not only because it fired faster, but also because it was a powerful defensive weapon. However, it was not the needle gun that won them the conflict: Austria's rifled artillery gave the Prussians and Austrians a huge advantage, mainly during the sieges as it precisely hit the intended targets. While the Austrians were ahead in the forms of artillery, they lagged behind in every other aspect. The Prussians, on the other hand, learned valuable lessons from their Austrian allies (Embree, 2006, p. 36, 344).

The Danish Army had no chance against these two major European powers. The Danes could only have prevented a catastrophic defeat if they had an ally but they isolated themselves. They had to give these duchies to the victors and pay financial compensation. This war that lasted less than a year caused a decline in relations between Prussia and Austria as anti-Prussian tendencies rose in Austria (Embree, 2006, p. 344). The division of conquered duchies between Prussia and Austria proved to be problematic for their relations: after one and a half years, Prussia and Austria marched against each other. This military experiment not only gave the Prussian Army valuable lessons for the upcoming wars with Austria and France but it also provided Bismarck with new political maneuvers for provoking war with Austria.

2.3 German War

Even though the Prusso-Austrian victory in Schleswig and Holstein could have been seen as a spark for *Großdeutschland* and cooperation between Prussia and Austria, Bismarck's objective was different. From 1863, Bismarck was preparing Prussian diplomatic relations with Russia with great care so that in case of war with Austria, Russia would not intervene. Bismarck used Schleswig and Holstein territories for provoking war with Austria by not only creating a provocation in Holstein but by also rejecting Austrian proposals to solve problems regarding the territories. Bismarck's objective was to annex Schleswig and Holstein to Prussia and decrease Austrian influence in the German states. He planned to achieve this by war, if necessary (Clark, 2001, p. 532).

In the autumn of 1865, the Convention of Gastein, signed by Prussia and Austria, declared that Holstein would be under Prussian control and Schleswig under Austrian control. However, this treaty would not be honored by Prussia and continuous Prussian provocations in Holstein peaked in 1866 when Prussia used a pro-Augustenburg² nationalist meeting in Holstein to accuse Austria of breaching the Convention of Gastein. After this event, the Prussian Crown Council came to the conclusion that war with Austria was inevitable and Prussia started preparing for war (Clark, 2001, p. 533).

First, Bismarck started to diplomatically decrease the chances of French or Russian intervention in the upcoming war. He gave land assurances to France so that she would not intervene in the war and he conducted relations with Russia with great care. Bismarck believed that Russia would not intervene as she was preoccupied with internal political reforms. Finally, on 8 April 1866, Prussia signed a treaty with Italy stating that if war broke out with Austria, both countries would militarily assist each other in the following 3 months. As the movement of Italian troops triggered a partial mobilization in Austria on 21 April and caused a chain reaction of mobilization in Prussia which peaked in full-scale mobilization on both sides, Prussia and Austria were both ready for war. With Prussian troop movements into Holstein and Prussia declaring that the Confederation was dissolved, Prussia and Austria went to war in the summer of 1866 after Italy declared war on Austria on 19 June (Clark, 2001, pp. 533–534).

Many contemporaries such as French Emperor Napoleon III predicted Austria to win the war. Even though Prussia had a little numerical advantage in the Bohemian theatre of war, the majority of states in the German Confederation sided with Austria, most notably Saxony and Hanover. However, Prussian military reforms proved to be efficient. These primarily included the modernisation of the general staff, the usage of military railways and the implementation of needle guns. On top of technological and structural

² Austria supported the Augustenburg Dynasty's rule over Schleswig and Holstein unlike their Prussian counterparts. The Austrians used the Augustenburg Dynasty in their proposals to Prussia and in the Confederal Diet during their complaints against Prussian provocations.

innovations, Chief of General Staff Helmuth von Moltke's innovative strategies and tactics helped Prussia win a war against Austria. Moltke bet on the speed of their troops and he used railways to swiftly deploy Prussian troops (Wiens, 2023, p. 25). His strategy was offensive and his tactics were defensive which meant that he broke the army into small groups so they could move swiftly and they would only merge together right before the attack. Once the Prussians were facing Austrian troops, they used the environment to lure Austrians into committing bayonet charges. When Austrian troops committed to a bayonet charge, Prussian troops equipped with the needle gun shot at them. The Austrians did not have a chance and retreated on many occasions (Clark, 2001, pp. 536–539).

Prussian decision-making speed, thanks to the authority of the general staff, and the speed of army manoeuvrers, thanks to the usage of railways and needle guns, enabled them to defeat Austria in just seven weeks. On 22 June 1866, Austria capitulated to Prussia and the unification of northern Germany started taking shape. Bismarck wanted Austria to dismantle the German Confederation in order to create the North German Confederation. Bismarck achieved his goals, Austria's influence over German states heavily decreased and the newly formed North German Confederation was dominated by Prussia with Prussia having special control over military and foreign affairs. Many of the Prussian liberals started to celebrate Bismarck as they viewed Prussia as a progressive state and Bismarck as a unifier of Germany (Clark, 2001, p. 544-546). Bismarck understood that for complete unification, a war with France was necessary, so he started preparing the ground for it.

2.4 Franco-Prussian War

As Bismarck understood that German lands could only truly unify in a situation in which France declared war on Prussia, he continually tried to create such a crisis. Not only did he try to provoke France into declaring war but he also conducted foreign relations with other European powers with great care so that when the war came, nobody would side with the French. The perfect situation

for provoking war with France came during a Spanish succession crisis (Chrastil, 2023, p. 7).

After the Spanish Revolution in 1868, Queen Isabella II was deposed and a crisis over succession started. Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen who was a relative of Prussian King Wilhelm I was one of the candidates for the Spanish throne. Bismarck saw this opportunity as perfect to create a conflict with France as the candidacy of Leopold would endanger France because it would lead to the Prussian encirclement of France. Therefore, Bismarck quietly persuaded Leopold to announce his candidacy. Leopold announced his candidacy which created an uproar not only in the French government but also in French society. Leopold would later revoke his candidacy, but the French wanted a security guarantee from Prussia that no Hohenzollern would ever be on the Spanish throne and this was a perfect situation for Bismarck to provoke a war (Chrastil, 2023, p. 7).

The famous “Ems Telegram”³ shocked not only French citizens and officials but also German-speaking people as a whole. After the Ems Telegram became public, French citizens were cheering for war and France declared mobilization on 15 July and declared war on 19 July. Even though Bismarck could not have planned the Spanish succession crisis or France's harsh demands for security guarantees from Prussia, he achieved his objective, war with France in which France was seen as the aggressor. When the crown delegation came to Berlin and Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm announced war with France, the crowds cheered (Chrastil, 2023, p. 8). The reaction of the German-speaking people hugely differed from the reaction during the Napoleonic Wars and marked the beginning of the process of Unification of Germany.

The French declaration of war united not only states that were in the North German Confederation but also southern German states. After the declaration

³ The “Ems Telegram” was a Prussian telegram that politely declined France's request for a guarantee from King Wilhelm I that the Hohenzollern Dynasty would never propose a candidate to the Spanish throne. The telegram was first sent to Bismarck who slightly edited the king's response so that it would sound insulting (Clark, 2001, p. 549).

of war, Prussia started to prepare railways to the Rhine River for the transportation of troops and declared general mobilization. Other German states followed Prussia and declared mobilization too. While enthusiasm for war differed in each state, the idea of another French occupation was present in every state. German patriotic songs such as “Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland” were sung in every German state: even Bavaria, which was reluctant to join forces with Prussia, agreed that the French declaration of war was unjustified and that war needed to be fought by a united Germany (Chrastil, 2023, pp. 9–13). The patriotic feelings could be seen in every German state and they were ready for war against their eternal foe.

Minister-President Otto von Bismarck diplomatically prepared the battleground before the fighting had even started. France was seeking allies but no European power wanted to join them. Prussia would have to be seen as an aggressor for others to side with the French. Moreover, Bismarck's exposing of land assurances given to Napoleon III before the Prussian war with Austria assured that Britain would stay neutral as Napoleon III wanted lands in Belgium. Before the battles took place, Britain signed a double treaty with France and Prussia to guarantee Belgian neutrality (Chrastil, 2023, pp. 18–20). Prussia and every German state except for Austria were ready for war.

In this war, Prussia made the most of their military reforms and were much better prepared than their French enemy. Prussia had a much better prepared military and its general staff played a crucial role. The railways were used to their greatest extent which could be seen in Prussia's faster troop deployment compared with that of France. Prussia deployed half a million troops while France was only able to deploy 250 thousand troops. Not only did Prussia draw from their military reforms but also from their war with Austria which taught them valuable lessons regarding artillery technology and their deployment tactics. However, the needle guns that gave Prussians a huge tactical and strategic advantage in their war with Austria were outperformed by French guns: France even used early machine guns that wreaked havoc among the Prussian lines. Nonetheless, Prussian early victories lowered French morale and the war peaked during the Battle of Sedan on 1 and 2 September when French troops

capitulated and Napoleon III himself was taken prisoner (Clark, 2001, pp. 550–552).

The capitulation of a large French force and the imprisonment of Napoleon III created turmoil in French society. The war continued for several more weeks and even Paris was besieged by the Prussian Army. As Bismarck predicted that Germany would only be unified against external threats, the nation finally became a reality. German-speaking people were fighting side by side, suffered together, and enjoyed victories together. Even though Bismarck had to persuade southern states to join the union, the German Empire was created on January 18, 1871 in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles (Clark, 2001, p. 552). A peace treaty with France was signed on May 10, 1871 in Frankfurt, and Bismarck achieved the unimaginable: he united Germany under Prussia.

Chapter 3: The Nation-Building Process and Military Reforms

The Unification of Germany was the biggest event between the Napoleonic Wars and the First World War. The merging of German states into one empire disrupted the balance of power in Europe. The German Empire was united under the Prussian Kingdom which was a highly militaristic state and was united after a series of wars. The nation-building process was mainly achieved through the war-making process. While Prussian military tradition is visible since Friedrich der Große's military achievements, the military roots that enabled capable war-making were put down during the reforms between 1806-1813. These reforms reformed not only the Prussian military establishment but also other aspects of Prussian society. The Prussian military establishment was professionalized and bureaucratized, which led to the creation of the Ministry of War and the general staff. Both of these things contributed to the state-making process by institutionalizing war-making bodies. The realities of the reforms between 1806 and 1813 corresponds with Charles Tilly's theory on state-making through war-making.

Not only does the first set of reforms between 1806–1813 correspond with Tilly's theory, the second set of reforms between 1859 and 1871 also does. One can say that the second set of reforms and the political situation in the 1860s is an exemplary case of state-making through war-making. The process of unifying Germany by war-making can be seen in Bismarck's approach when compared with the approach of liberals. While liberals wanted to achieve unification slowly through economic union, Bismarck wanted unification through war. This reality corresponds with Charles Tilly's theory stating that war makes states (Tilly, 1985, p. 25). In the case of German Unification, it is more than visible that there were three wars that directly enabled German unification; more precisely, The German Empire was united under a threat from other powers. This also corresponds with Tilly's theory on protection. As Bismarck understood that German lands could only be united in the face of the threat of a French invasion, he provoked these wars through deception to show the German-speaking people that they were victims and they needed to unite in order to survive.

To construct these wars was not an easy task for Bismarck. As is the tradition in absolutist states, Bismarck first had to defeat his internal opponents. He understood that if the liberal opposition and the socialist opposition were to unite, the monarchy would be in danger; therefore, he secretly held talks with socialist leaders. This created a false reality for liberals in which they thought that the socialists wanted to cooperate with conservative Bismarck. This created a distrust between liberals and socialists which ruled out cooperation between liberals (Hoyer, 2021). Not only did Bismarck understand the dangers of a united front of liberals and socialists, he even deported his political opponents (Hoyer, 2021). This also corresponds with Tilly's theory that state-making is also done through neutralizing opponents inside the territory.

Tilly also argues that internal state-making is created by external competition. This can be applied to the events of the Wars of Unification as Prussian external competition with Austria in the German Confederation resulted in the German War with Austria and prepared Prussia for war with France. This external competition created internal state-making such as military reforms. Not only can it be applied to the Wars of Unification but also to the Wars of Liberation when external competition with France created internal state-making in terms of military and social reforms. To better understand the impact of Prussian military reforms on the German nation-building process, one needs to closely examine the results of Prussian military reforms in 1806 to 1813 and 1859 to 1871.

3.1 Freeing People from Class Restraints

The emancipation of Prussian subjects through military and social reforms did not only allowed society to more participate in Prussian politics but also gave the population higher literacy and numeracy rates. Minister of State, Karl vom und zum Stein's social reforms brought subjects more closely to Prussian politics by allowing them to have local elections. The idea behind this was that if Prussian subjects participate more actively and directly in Prussian political life, they will feel a duty to defend their country. Stein's idea corresponds with Scharnhorst's idea of a more intimate union between subjects and the army.

He wanted to achieve this by allowing individuals who were not members of the aristocracy to apply to become army officers; he wanted to create equality of opportunity. Even though the aristocracy was still in charge of the appointment committee, it freed people from class restraints.

Not only was society freed more from class restraints but also soldiers in the army. The creation of the War Ministry bureaucratized the military establishment that freed the army from the king's possible arbitrary orders, at least in theory. The creation of Jäger units that operated in the open-order tactics called for better education of these soldiers. In addition to Jäger units, the creation of multi-purpose units that had to exercise operations of light and heavy infantry and the implementation of combined-arms tactics also resulted in higher education levels among soldiers. Better education led to the emancipation of people. It was not only beneficial for the army but also for the state as literacy and numeracy levels rose.

The reforms between 1806 and 1813 put roots down for the professionalization of the army, while the military reforms between 1859 and 1871 only perfected the professionalisation of the army. The creation of the general staff during the Napoleonic Wars played a crucial role in the unification process. The General Staff not only professionalized command of the army but once the Order of 1866 took place, the military command became autonomous from the king. This order freed the army from possible arbitrary orders from the king and emancipated the military establishment that could now operate on a rational-decision basis. This allowed the army to prepare for the Wars of Unification and learn from each of those wars. The cooperation of military reformers and social reformers during the reforms of 1806 and 1813 put down roots for the professionalization of the army which meant educating the military establishment more and resulted in a more emancipated society.

3.2 The Creation of German Patriotism

The French occupation of Prussia shocked the population. While the reformers were trying to analyze France's success in the Napoleonic Wars, they came to

the conclusion that the patriotic feeling of French soldiers was one of the factors of France's success. Scharnhorst, Stein, and Hardenberg understood this and wanted to boost patriotic feelings in Prussian lands so the whole state would have the will to defend the fatherland. Stein and Scharnhorst, through their idea of a more intimate union, boosted patriotic feelings by enabling Prussian subjects to participate in Prussian politics and the army regardless of their social class. The creation of the Landwehr enabled Prussia to fight against the French occupation but simultaneously created soldiers who were loyal not to Prussia but to the German lands. The Landwehr and German patriotism won the Wars of Liberation against the French occupiers as it created the idea that Germany could only be united against external forces and be victorious.

The memory of the Wars of Liberation was not only present in Prussia but also in other German states. The patriotic feelings towards a unified Germany prevailed and peaked during the German Revolution of 1848 when the tri-colour flag and the patriotic song "Deutschlandlied" emerged. It is important to acknowledge the revolutionary years of the 1840s; patriotic symbols emerged precisely during these years and pushed the king into acknowledging liberal opposition. The Wars of Liberation created a German myth under which German states could unite and the German Revolution of 1848 created the symbols of a united Germany.

When the second set of military reforms came in 1859, the government's struggle with the Landwehr peaked. Even though the Ministry of War pushed for the total dismantling of Landwehr, the standing army could not be battle ready without Landwehr troops; therefore, German patriotism still existed in the regular army. German patriotism peaked in Prussia during the Franco-Prussian War when France declared war on Prussia. The fear of French invasion prevailed not only in Prussian society but throughout the German states. Even though the enthusiasm for war was not the same in every German state (southern states such as Bavaria and Saxony were the least enthusiastic compared to other states), it was enough to unite the armies to stand side by side against the eternal threat of France.

While the Prussian Army was much better prepared than the French Army, the German patriotic song “Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland” was sung much louder than the French “Marseillaise” and that reality enabled Germany to unite. Military and social reforms emancipated the Prussian society through patriotism and that enabled Prussia to fight the Wars of Liberation and be victorious. These military and social reforms shaped Prussian society during the years of relative peace until 1862 with the Wars of Liberation serving as a myth of a united Germany. The second set of military reforms before and during the Wars of Unification prepared the Prussian Army to be able to win these wars and peaked when the united German states defeated their eternal rival, France. Nobody could argue against the power of a united Germany; as the German-speaking people fought side by side, suffered together, and won together, it enabled Germany to unite under Prussia.

3.3 The Finest Army in Europe Reborn

The humiliating defeat that befell Prussia ignited military reforms that transformed the Prussian Army into a military machine that was able to defeat the Austrian Army in just seven weeks, besiege Paris and humiliate France by unifying Germany in the famous Hall of Mirrors. Prussian military reforms played a crucial part in modernizing, professionalizing and technologically innovating the Prussian Army. Without these reforms, Prussia would not have been able to win the Wars of Unification.

Military intellectuals that were behind military reforms between 1806 and 1813 such as Scharnhorst, General Carl von Clausewitz, General Friedrich von Bülow, Field-Marshal August Neidhardt von Gneisenau precisely pointed out what needed to be done for Prussia to be able to stand a chance against France. They analysed French victories in the Napoleonic Wars and correctly identified factors that led to Prussian defeat. They identified the importance of a soldier's will to fight for his country, which is why they worked on boosting patriotism. The professionalization of the army was one of the major needs that the Prussian Army had to implement; therefore, they created equal opportunity in the officer corps. The military reformers wanted to choose officers based on

merit and not class. Even though it did not completely work in practice, it made the Prussian military establishment base their decision on rationality. Not only professionalization of the military on equal opportunity was implemented but also Scharnhorst's introduction of the general staff. It was in charge of producing military maps, military history, military journals, and gathering military intelligence on other powers. The professionalization of the military continued after the first set of reforms between 1806–1813.

The Landwehr that was created during the Wars of Liberation boosted the number of the soldiers which not only produced veterans, but also enabled the bourgeois class to participate in military affairs as the Landwehr officer corps was initially made up of the bourgeois class. Even though the War Ministry was trying to merge the Landwehr with the regular army as they feared that Landwehr soldiers' loyalties were to German lands and not to Prussia during the years between the two sets of reforms, the Prussian military establishment could not merge it completely as they needed soldiers. After the reforms of 1859, Landwehr soldiers were supposed to practice garrison duties and replace losses in the regular army. The Landwehr also enabled Prussia to make conscription socially acceptable as the Landwehr was popular among society because of the Wars of Liberation.

On the other hand, the military reforms between 1859 and 1871 implemented crucial technological innovations such as the use of railways for army deployment and needle guns. The use of military railways gave Prussia a huge advantage in the Wars of Unification, mainly in the wars with Austria and France. It allowed Prussia to deploy troops much faster than their opponents and outmanoeuvre them. The needle guns gave Prussia a tactical advantage mainly against the Austrian Army as it allowed Prussia to move much more quickly on the battlefield and boosted the infantry's firepower. The needle guns did not make a difference against France but enabled Prussia to be on par with French guns. Both of these technological innovations enabled Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke to use his innovative tactics against Austria and France. Even though Moltke's innovative tactics were not part of the second set of

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military reforms, he used the reformers to modernize military tactics and defeat Prussia's enemies.

Conclusion

It is impossible to talk about the causes of German Unification without the impact of military reforms. Military reforms, which enabled the Prussian military to be victorious in the Wars of Unification, were not only militarily important but also socially important. The first set of reforms between 1806 and 1813 laid the roots for the modern Prussian military and established Prussian military thinking for the next decades. The first set of reforms introduced the Landwehr, an early general staff, equality of opportunity and functioning based upon merit. The second set of reforms built on the first set of reforms as it gave new authorities to the general staff, tried to merge the Landwehr with the regular army and implemented new technological innovations in the Prussian Army.

The reforms impacted not only the Prussian Army but also the Prussian society. The introduction of the Landwehr enabled ignoble Prussians to participate in professional military life. Education emancipated Prussian subjects, which led to literacy and numeracy levels rising. The social reforms also enabled Prussian subjects to participate in Prussian political life. All these realities were important to make Prussia a modern, progressive, and leading state in the German lands. Military reforms between 1806 and 1813 and military reforms before the Wars of Unification played crucial roles in the unification of Germany. By freeing army units from arbitrary restraints, creating a German national spirit and by strengthening the Prussian Army, they paved the way for the German nation-building process.

By understanding these realities, one can better understand the Unification of Germany. Prussia chose a unique path for nation-building compared to other European powers in the 19th century. Prussian military reforms enabled Prussia to unify Germany and to become a major military power in Europe. The Prussian military reforms of the 19th century were crucial not only for the Unification of Germany but also to the understanding of Germany's role in the First World War.

Resumé

Táto práca sa zameriava na vplyv pruských vojenských reforiem na zjednotenie Nemecka. Je dôležité pochopiť pruské vojenské reformy, pretože Nemecko bolo zjednotené práve vojnami. Štátotvorný proces sa v Nemecku robil prostredníctvom vojenských procesov. Aj keď Prusko nie je jedinou krajinou na svete, ktorá vytvorila štát prostredníctvom vojnových konfliktov, ide o unikátny prípad kvôli ťažkej pruskej vojenskej tradícii. Práve preto, sa teórie budovania národa do určitej miery hodia na Prusko. Teória budovania národa, ktorá bude aplikovaná na pruský prípad, je teória vyvinutá americkým politológom a sociológom Charlesom Tillym.

Aby bolo možné aplikovať túto teóriu budovania národa, je potrebné pochopiť nemecký proces budovania národa. Keďže Nemecko bolo zjednotené prostredníctvom vojnových konfliktov, ktoré vyeskalovali počas vojen o zjednotenie, pochopenie politických reálií v Prusku pred vojnami o zjednotenie je kľúčové. Keďže pruský minister-prezident Otto von Bismarck pochopil, že na zjednotenie Nemecka je potrebná silná armáda, podporil Albrechta von Roona a jeho návrhy na vojenské reformy. Vojenské reformy pred vojnami o zjednotenie boli kľúčové pre proces budovania nemeckého národa, pretože silná armáda umožnila Prusku vyhrať vojny o zjednotenie. Vojenské reformy v rokoch 1859 až 1871 nadviazali na vojenské reformy v rokoch 1806 až 1813 a zdokonalil pruské vojenské zriadenie.

Tieto dva súbory reforiem zohrali kľúčovú úlohu v procesoch budovania nemeckého národa. Porážka pri Jene-Auerstädte zanechala v pruskej spoločnosti veľkú jazvu, ktorú možno vidieť v pruskej túžbe po osvietených reformách. Vojenské reformy medzi rokmi 1806 a 1813 a vojenské reformy pred vojnami o zjednotenie zohrali kľúčovú úlohu pri zjednocovaní Nemecka. Oslobodením armádnych jednotiek od svojvoľných obmedzení, vytvorením nemeckého národného patriotizmu a posilnením pruskej armády, vojenské reformy vydláždili cestu nemeckému štátotvornému procesu.

Pruské reformy medzi rokmi 1806 a 1813 boli rozsiahle rozsahom aj významom. Poprední pruskí štátnici cítili potrebu reforiem v dôsledku potupnej porážky Pruska s Francúzskom v bitke pri Jene-Auerstädt. Poprední sociálni reformátori ako hlavný minister Pruska Karl August von Hardenberg a pruský štátnik Heinrich Friedrich Karl vom und zum Stein spolu s členmi Vojenského reorganizačného výboru pochopili, že ak sa chce Prusko stať hlavnou vojenskou mocnosťou v Európe, je potrebné Prusko reformovať (Clark, 2001). Okrem spomínaných reformátorov pociťoval najvyššiu potrebu reformovať aj samotný kráľ Friedrich Wilhelm III. (Clark, 2001, s. 313). Prusko bolo v zúfalej situácii, ktorá si vyžadovala drastické reformy.

Majster politických intríg, prvý predseda vlády Nemeckej ríše Otto von Bismarck a jeho vojenský spojenci minister vojny Albrecht von Roon a pruský poľný maršal Helmuth von Moltke zohrali kľúčové úlohy nielen vo vojenských reformách, ale aj vo vojnách o zjednotenie. Rovnako ako v minulosti sa nemecké štáty zjednotili iba proti vonkajším hrozbám: Vojny o zjednotenie neboli iné. Bismarck tomu rozumel jasnejšie ako ktorýkoľvek iný štátnik v Prusku a je to možné vidieť v jeho slávnom prejave z roku 1862, kde povedal: „Na zjednotenie nemeckého ľudu by bola potrebná vojna“ (Hoyer, 2021, s. 9; Pflanze, 1955, s. 552). S ohľadom na túto skutočnosť vojenské reformy v 60. rokoch 19. storočia a vojny o zjednotenie ukazujú vplyv týchto reforiem na nemecký národovtvorný proces.

Zjednotenie Nemecka bolo najväčšou udalosťou medzi napoleonskými vojnami a prvou svetovou vojnou. Zlúčenie nemeckých štátov do jednej ríše narušilo rovnováhu síl v Európe. Nemecká ríše bola zjednotená pod Pruským kráľovstvom, ktoré bolo vysoko militaristickým štátom a zjednotenie nastalo po sérii vojen. Proces budovania národa sa dosiahol najmä prostredníctvom procesu vytvárania vojny. Zatiaľ čo pruská vojenská tradícia je viditeľná už od vojenských úspechov Friedricha der Große, korene ktoré umožnili Prusku začínať a vyhrávať vojnové konflikty, boli zasadené počas reforiem v rokoch 1806-1813. Tieto reformy zreformovali nielen pruské vojenské zriadenie, ale

zreformovali aj iné aspekty pruskej spoločnosti. Pruské vojenské zriadenie sa profesionalizovalo a byrokratizovalo, čo viedlo k vytvoreniu ministerstva vojny a generálneho štábu. Obe tieto veci prispeli k procesu tvorby štátu inštitucionalizáciou vojnových orgánov. Realita reforiem medzi rokmi 1806 a 1813 korešponduje s teóriou Charlesa Tillyho o vytváraní štátu prostredníctvom vytvárania vojny.

Pochopením týchto skutočností možno lepšie pochopiť zjednotenie Nemecka. Prusko si v porovnaní s inými európskymi mocnosťami v 19. storočí zvolilo jedinečnú cestu budovania národa. Pruské vojenské reformy umožnili Prusku zjednotiť Nemecko a stať sa hlavnou vojenskou mocnosťou v Európe. Pruské vojenské reformy v 19. storočí boli kľúčové nielen pre zjednotenie Nemecka, ale aj pre pochopenie úlohy Nemecka v Prvej svetovej vojne.

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