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GERMAN CULTRUE
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Topic 2: The German Empire

UM-SJTU Joint Institute, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China

Jie Hu 518370910057

Content

- Introduction

- Unification of Germany

- Government system

- Economic and politic development

- The end of the empire

Introduction

- Existed from 1871 to 1918

- Motto: Gott mit uns

- Anthem: Heil dir im Siegerkranz

- Capital: Berlin

- Emperor: Wilhelm I (1871-1888), Friedrich III (1888), Wilhelm II (1888-1918)

Flag

Coat of arms

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Empire

Unification of Germany

- German confederation

- "The iron chancellor"

- Dano-Prussian War

- Austro-Prussian War

- Franco-Prussian War

German Confederation

Boundaries (in red) of the German Confederation with Prussia in blue, Austria in yellow, and the rest in grey

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Confederation

- Consist of 39 German-speaking states

- Created by the Congress of Vienna in 1815

- The states could not reach an agreement, which made German Confederation weak

- The German revolutions of 1848-1849 trying to unify the Confederation ended up with failure

"The Iron Chancellor"

https://www.pensador.com/autor/otto_von_bismarck/

- The chancellor of North German Confederation from 1867 to 1871, the chancellor or German Empire from 1871 to 1890

- Supporter of the "Kleindeutsche Lösung", i.e., founding a unified German without Austria (the "Großdeutsche Lösung" included Austria)

- Delivered the "Iron and blood" speech

Dano-Prussian War

- Also known as the Second Schleswig War

- Broke out in 1864

- Focus on the conflict over the Schleswig-Holstein Question

- The Kingdom of Prussia and the Austrian Empire formed an alliance against the Kingdom of Denmark

- Ended up with the victory of the alliance, and Prussia and Austria took over the administration of Schleswig and Holstein.
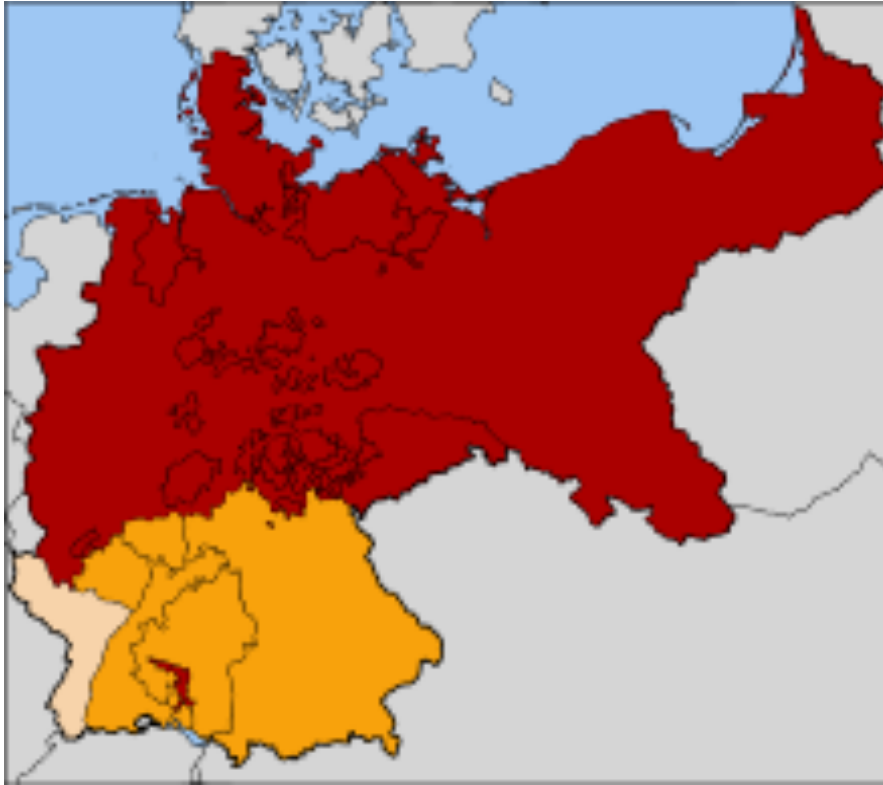
Austro-Prussian War

The Austrian (red) and Prussian (green) troops and their allies

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austro-Prussian_War

- Broke out in 1866

- Both Prussia and Austria led a number of German states, and Italy formed the alliance with Prussia

- The Prussia-led alliance won the war, and the Prussia-led North German Confederation was founded

Franco-Prussian War

Map of the North German Confederation (red), four Southern German States (orange) and Alsace-Lorraine (beige)

- Broke out in 1870

- Caused by Bismarck's irritation

- The four Southern German states aligned with the North German Confederation to fight against the French Empire, and finally joined the North German Confederation

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franco-Prussian_War

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Government system

- Federal parliamentary semi-constitutional monarchy(1871-1916)

- Federal parliamentary semi-constitutional monarchy under a military dictatorship(1916-1918)

- The emperor had the absolute power to appoint or dismiss officials (including the chancellor)

- The members of the federal parliament, which has the legislative power, were nominated by the kings of the German states

- Every adult man (older than 25) had the right to vote in the Reichstag, but the power of the Reichstag was restricted by the federal parliament

Economic and politic development

- Abandoned free trade and enacted heavy import tariff to benefit the development of industry in 1873

- Enacted tariffs to protect German agriculture and industry in 1879

- Established welfare state to benefit workers

- Invested a lot in chemistry, motors and electricity, establishing the leading position in the world

Economic and politic development

- Founded alliance with Russia and Austria-Hungary in 1881

- Signed a reinsurance pact with Russia in 1887, which was abolished in 1890

- Established a commission to produce a common civil code in 1881, which came into effect in 1900

- Expanded colonies in Asia and Pacific, leading to conflicts with the UK, Russia, Japan and the US

The end of the empire

- German Empire in World War I

- The November revolution

German Empire in World War I

- In the Western Front, German Empire desired a quick victory, which ended up with failure. In 1916, the Battle of Verdun broke out, and both sides suffered great loss. The war came to a stalemate.

- In the Eastern Front, German Empire achieved success. The Russian army was beaten by the German army in the battle of Tannenberg. In 1917, revolution broke out in the Russian Empire, and Russia had to quit the war in 1918.

German Empire in World War I

Paul von Hindenburg

Erich Ludendorff

Hindenburg and Ludendorff were commanders of the Eastern front. Their success earned them great prestige. They became the real ruler of the German Empire by the end of the war.

The November revolution

- In the spring of 1918, German Empire launched several attacks, but all of the attacks ended up in failure. Many German soldiers desired an end to the war.

- In late October 1918, in Kiel, soldiers of the German Navy refused to carry out the order to attack. The revolt spread to many cites soon, and the workers and soldiers seized the power. The emperor had to flee. On 9 November 1918, SPD proclaimed the foundation of a new government, and German Empire came to the end.

Quiz

1. In which year was German Empire founded?

2. In which year did Bismarck resigned?

3. Which country was the ally of Prussia in Austro-Prussian war? (except the German states)

Quiz

4. Who could vote in the Reichstag?

5. Who was the emperor of German Empire in 1900?

6. Which party found a new government in 1918?

Thanks!

Feel free to ask if you have any questions.

References

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German Empire

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[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Schleswig_War

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[6] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paul_von_Hindenburg-2.png

[7] https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erich_Ludendorff