

Name: _____
Date: _____

Global History & Geography 10
Ms. Masseo

The Unification of Germany

Introduction:

The 19th century was one of constant political turmoil. Napoleon conquered lands and united them into an empire that collapsed soon afterward. During the Congress of Vienna, powerful monarchs and their delegates reorganized the political boundaries of Europe. Shortly thereafter, nationalist and working class revolutions challenged the power of monarchs, leading to the independence of some nations and constitutional reform in others. Germany, however, did not yet exist as nations. What we know as Germany was largely independent and confederated kingdoms, or imperial territories. Starting in the 1860s, political and military forces threw off foreign imperial power, and for the first time united these territories as nation-states.

Task:

- Using your homework, the text and the documents below, develop a claim to the following question: Should Otto von Bismarck be a national hero of Germany?
- Create a packet of evidence that you will present to the “judge” to prove your claim.

Document 1: Johann Gustav Droysen: *Speech to the Frankfurt Assembly, 1848*

We cannot conceal the fact that the whole German question is a simple alternative between Prussia and Austria. In these states German life has its positive and negative poles--in the former, all the interests which are national and reformative, in the latter, all that are dynastic and destructive. The German question is not a constitutional question, but a question of power; and the Prussian monarchy is now wholly German, while that of Austria cannot be. . . . We need a powerful ruling house. Austria's power meant lack of power for us, whereas Prussia desired German unity in order to supply the deficiencies of her own power. Already Prussia is Germany in embryo. She will "merge" with Germany...

Document 2: Otto von Bismarck: *Letter to Minister von Manteuffel, 1856*

“Because of the policy of Vienna [the Congress of Vienna, 1815], Germany is clearly too small for us both [Prussia and Austria]; as long as an honorable arrangement concerning the influence of each in Germany cannot be concluded and carried out, we will both plough the same disputed acre, and Austria will remain the only state to whom we can permanently lose or from whom we can permanently gain. . . . I wish only to express my conviction that, in the not too distant future, we shall have to fight for our existence against Austria and that it is not within our power to avoid that, since the course of events in Germany has no other solution.”

Document 3: Otto von Bismarck: *Blood & Iron Speech, 1862*

“The Conflict is viewed too tragically, and presented too tragically in the press; the regime does not seek war. If the crisis can be ended with honor, the regime will gladly do so. The great independence of the individual makes it difficult in Prussia to rule under the Constitution. In France it is otherwise; there, individual independence is lacking. The constitutional crisis, however, is no shame, but rather an honor. We are perhaps too educated to put up with a constitution - we are too critical. Public opinion wavers; the press is not public opinion; we know how that arises. There are too many Catilines [a reference to a Roman politician who plotted to overthrow the government], who have revolution at heart. The members [of the House], however, have the task of standing over public sentiment, and of guiding it. Our blood is too hot, we prefer armor too great for our small body to carry, but we should put it to service. Germany does not look to Prussia's liberalism, but to its power. Bavaria, Wurttemberg, and Baden would like to turn to liberalism, but they shall not assume Prussia's role. Prussia must collect its forces for the favorable occasion, which has several times been neglected; Prussia's borders are not favorable to a healthy national life. Not by speeches and decisions of majorities will the greatest problems of the time be decided - that was the mistake of 1848-49 - but by iron and blood.”

Document 4: Otto von Bismarck: 1866

“We had to avoid wounding Austria too severely; we had to avoid leaving behind in her any unnecessary bitterness of feeling or desire for revenge; we ought rather to reserve the possibility of becoming friends again with our adversary of the moment, and in any case to regard the Austrian state as a piece on the European chessboard. If Austria were severely injured, she would become the ally of France and of every other opponent of ours; she would even sacrifice her anti-Russian interests for the sake of revenge on Prussia. . . .The acquisition of provinces like Austria Silesia and portions of Bohemia could not strengthen the Prussian state; it would not lead to an amalgamation of German Austria with Prussia, and Vienna could not be governed from Berlin as a mere dependency. . . .Austria's conflict and rivalry with us was no more culpable than ours with her; our task was the establishment or foundation of German national unity under the leadership of the King of Prussia.”

Document 5: The Imperial Proclamation, January 18, 1871

Whereas the German princes and the free cities have unanimously called upon us to renew and to assume, with the restoration of the German Empire, the German imperial office, which has been empty for more than sixty years; and Whereas adequate arrangements have been provided for this in the constitution of the German Confederation;

We, Wilhelm, by the grace of God King of Prussia, do herewith declare that we have considered it a duty to our common fatherland to answer the summons of the united German princes and cities and to accept the German imperial title. In consequence, we and our successors on the throne of Prussia will henceforth bear the imperial title in all our relations and in all the business of the German Empire, and we hope to God that the German nation will be granted the ability to fashion a propitious future for the fatherland under the symbol of its ancient glory. We assume the imperial title, conscious of the duty of protecting, with German loyalty, the rights of the Empire and of its members, of keeping the peace, and of protecting the independence of Germany, which depends in its turn upon the united strength of the people. We assume the title in the hope that the German people will be granted the ability to enjoy the reward of its ardent and self-sacrificing wars in lasting peace, within boundaries which afford the fatherland a security against renewed French aggression which has been lost for centuries. And may God grant that We and our successors on the imperial throne may at all times increase the wealth of the German Empire, not by military conquests, but by the blessings and the gifts of peace, in the realm of national prosperity, liberty, and morality. **Wilhelm I, Kaiser und König.**



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Claim:

Evidence #1

Evidence #2

Evidence #3

Evidence #4

Evidence #5

Evidence #6

Do you think the judge will agree with you? Why or why not?