

Bismarck and the unification of germany



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Bismarck and the Unification of Germany Source 1: In view of the attitude to France, our national sense of honour compelled us, in my opinion to go to war; and if we did not act according to the demands of this feeling, we should lose... the entire impetus towards our national development won in 1866, while the German national feeling south of the Main, aroused by our military successes in 1866;... would have to grow cold again... Under this conviction I made use of the royal authorization communicated to me... to publish the contents of the telegram...I reduced the telegram by striking out words.. The difference in the effect of the abbreviated text of the Ems telegram... made this announcement appear decisive. After I read out the edition to my two guests, Moltke remarked: ' Now it has a different ring; it sounded before like a parley; now it is like a flourish in answer to a challenge'; Bismarck: ' The Man and the Statesman', July 1870 [A. J. P Taylor] Volume 1. This excerpt was written by Otto Von Bismarck, July 1870. In this source Bismarck refers to his decision to edit and modify the Ems Telegram to provoke tension amongst France and Prussia by altering the dispatch to make it appear decisive. Bismarck states his ambition to go to war with France in order to achieve national unity amongst the German states which he believed would provoke German Unification. He explains in the source that with this aspiration in mind he decided to edit the telegram; to give it a more severe and direct tone. This secondary source is written from the perspective of Otto Von Bismarck therefore it contains some bias, as it is written in a subjective tone which supports Bismarck's actions and does not give an objective view of the events. The source is also written with hindsight and therefore has a limited reliability due to Bismarck's context. Hindsight has allowed Bismarck to project his own recollection of events,

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which may not have been strictly correct. Through Retrospect Bismarck has been able to promote his role in the unification process and project himself as the prime motive for war. Bismarck may have altered Molke's reaction in order to glorify his own actions and to make his role in the unification process seem more important and influential. However what Bismarck claims in his memoir is not strictly correct. Although Bismarck triggered events which fuelled Germany's unification he was not the primary motive for the Prussian-French conflict. The war was accomplished by much more complex objectives such as the Prussian prince's Candidacy to the Spanish throne. Otto Von Bismarck had an un-deniable opportunity to develop a well-prepared response that may have enabled him to polish his story to suit his purpose and encourage support for his motives. This text is written with hindsight after Germany's unification has been achieved. Consequently Bismarck's recollections of the circumstances surrounding the event promote his involvement and therefore cannot be viewed as objective making the source unreliable. Thus, historians cannot solely rely on this source alone when investigating Otto Von Bismarck and his role in the Em's dispatch. The source effectively captures an emotive and personal response from Bismarck and reveals Bismarck's motive for editing the telegram. Therefore, the source is extremely useful in terms of investigating Bismarck's involvement and perspective in Germany's unification. However, the source provides inadequate evidence when researching an objective, unbiased view on the subject condemning it as only somewhat useful.

Source 2: Bismarck- Blood and Iron speech made to Prussian parliament 1862 Source 2 depicts Otto Von Bismarck's speech, addressed to the Land tag Budget committee in 1862. In this exert Bismarck debates Prussia's need for a 'military power' in

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order to obtain an increase in military funding which he believes will solve issues throughout Prussia. Bismarck concludes that liberalism is insignificant in determining Prussia's future and argues that giving the majority a vote was an imprudent mistake in Prussian history ('1848-9'). The phrase 'blood and iron' was used to support the introduction of various military reforms such as conscription which would lead to Prussia's enhanced military power'. Furthermore Bismarck re-affirms the importance of advancing 'military power' by restating that the solution to all 'great questions' will be decided by 'blood and iron'. This source is a primary text written from the perspective of Otto Von Bismarck, a staunch upholder of militarism principle. Bismarck's overall motivation was for the parliament to approve an increase in military funding demanded by King Wilhelm. The language utilized throughout the speech is teeming with emotive phrases such as 'the mistake' and 'blood and iron'. The speech is written with a tone of certainty, in attempt to impact the decision of the Prussian Land tag committee. Therefore as the speech is relatively unreliable as it was written from a subjective tone and contains a vast amount of bias and emotive language and cannot be relied on alone when studying the values and beliefs of Prussia in the time period of the German Unification. However, the text is extremely useful despite its lack of reliability. The text is valuable as it is a primary source and unchanged evidence available from the time period. Consequently, the source is extremely useful when studying Bismarck's character and Prussia's militarist demands proposed by King Wilhelm at the time. The speech also has additional significance as it is written in Otto Von Bismarck's perspective making it very useful to historians. Source 3: Cartoon of Bismarck 'Taming Parliament', Punch Magazine 1866 Source 3 is a <https://assignbuster.com/bismarck-and-the-unification-of-germany/>

cartoon which was published in the British Magazine 'Punch' in 1866. The cartoon depicts Otto Von Bismarck 'cracking the whip' as the chambers of deputies cower behind their seats in fear. The new parliament was brought into power with the removal of liberal opposition in 1866 after Prussia's victory over Austria. The illustration of the new representatives in the Chamber of Deputies represents their submissive and ineffective role in government. The position of the figures in parliament conveys the politicians as fearful and insignificant as they shrink in their seats. The fear and inferiority of the politicians is juxtaposed to the powerful, controlling brute force of Bismarck in parliament. Subsequently Bismarck's attitude to the Prussian parliament is characterised as forceful, tyrannical and aggressive. The use of the whip expresses Bismarck as dominant and authoritative as he attempts to mould the new parliament into what he desires. The perspective of this cartoon is rather subjective and hyperbolic written from a primary perspective that opposes Bismarck's repressive style of leadership. This cartoon could be considered as very helpful to a historian researching opposing views on Bismarck at the time of his rule. The benefit of the cartoon is that it is a primary source and therefore is of much use and relevancy when studying past perspectives of Bismarck and the Prussian parliament. However, the cartoon has a limited reliance as it has an extremely subjective stance towards liberalism. The source can be viewed as an individual's opinion that may not be entirely dependable. The cartoon does not provide enough evidence or information for a historian to be able to rely upon the illustration on its own. However the illustration is partially reliant as it is a primary source which was it was drawn at the time of the event and the context dictates the perspective of the text. Source 4: L. C. B <https://assignbuster.com/bismarck-and-the-unification-of-germany/>

Seaman, From Vienna to Versailles, Methuen, 1965. This excerpt was written by L. C. B. Seaman in 1965, published in his renowned book 'From Vienna to Versailles, Methuen'. The source outlines France and Prussia's 'trivial' and 'irritation' motivations to go to war without 'intelligible causes' which had 'dreadful irrevocable consequences' on both Prussia and France. L. C. B. Seaman argues that both France had nothing to gain from the war except to 'perpetuate and deepen German disunity and that Prussia 'had few valid reasons' either. Seaman further states that Bismarck did not involve Prussia in the war to 'unite Germany' or to 'overthrow Napoleon' but to 'avoid a setback to Prussian influence and prestige, and to himself'. This source is written from the broad perspective of the historian L. C. B. Seaman who attributes an unbiased and balanced although subjective view to the events of the Prussian-Franco war. Seaman proposes a rational viewpoint gathered with hindsight to debate Bismarck and Napoleon's 'criminally irrational' motives for including Prussia and France in the war. Thus, this source is rather useful to historians researching an impartial outlook on the Prussian-Franco conflict of 1870. In retrospect, the source is only suitable for certain purposes such as evaluating an opinion of the war from a balanced perspective and is not beneficial when examining Prussia or France's beliefs on the conflict. The text does not present primary evidence of key characters such as Bismarck and Napoleon's recollections of the Franco-Prussian war which results in the source's failure to provide accurate historical memoirs and recounts to support his thesis. This greatly impacts on the text's reliability and dependability when studied by historians. On the other hand, as a result of hindsight Seaman is able to gather much support and information from past historical evidence in order for him to formulate a

rational and unbiased viewpoint that increases the sources reliability.

Therefore, the source is deemed very useful when researching an un-biased perspective on the events of the Prussian- Franco confrontation, however, merely somewhat reliable. By Eden Gillespie