

...who bowed down to the King and handed over to him all his conquests. The follow-up of these events was the proclamation of the King of Piedmont, Victor Emmanuel II, as the King of the whole of Italy. Thus the monarchy of Piedmont played an active role in the unification of Italy.

**B. The unification of Germany under the leadership of Bismarck :—**

(Like Italy, Germany was made up of a number of states ~~loosely~~ strung together. The German confederation consisted of 300 states, big and small.) The country was "a crazy quilt of conflicting sovereignties." (In 1806, Napoleon conquered Germany and reduced the number of the states from 300 to 39. This was the first step in the unification of Germany. It is, therefore, said that Napoleon was the creator of modern Germany. The Vienna Settlement with regard to Germany was hopelessly disappointing from the point of view of German Liberals and Patriots.) Provision was made for a **Federal Diet** which was to be presided over by Austria. Now the formidable enemy of German



(In the unification of Germany, the kingdom of Prussia played a formidable role. Prussia was already occupying a position in the map of Germany which made her the leader of all other States, so that it was possible for Bismarck to accomplish momentous task—the unification of Germany and the creation of the German Empire. He had no faith in Parliamentary institutions. He believed in autocracy and military force.)

(Meanwhile, the customs union, called the *Zolleverein*, founded in 1818 among all German States except Austria had its far-reaching effects upon Germany. It gave the leadership in Germany to Prussia and proved that Germany would prosper without Austria. Thus the economic union under the leadership of Prussia paved way for the political unity of Germany.) In 1848, the Austrian empire was on the point of dissolution and a revolutionary Parliament in *Frankfurt* decided to create a united Germany including all German speaking territories. Accordingly, a deputation went to Berlin to offer the imperial Crown to *Frederick William IV*, who refused to accept it, lest he would affront Austria. Thus the German efforts in 1848 for unification and independence ended disastrously.

(It was at a critical stage of Prussian history that *Bismarck* was called upon to assume the direction of affairs. The appointment of Bismarck as the Prime Minister of Prussia in 1862 opened up a new chapter in the history of Germany. According to Bismarck, Germany could achieve her independence by a simple way—by the sword—by a policy of **Blood and Iron**. Bismarck had come to office with clear-out views and definite aims. Germany must be united, but the unification must be effected under the dominant leadership of Prussia. To him a united Germany meant a Prussianised Germany. But Prussia would never be able to assume the leadership of Germany so long as there was Austria to thwart her projects. Hence Austria must go, and as she would not go voluntarily, war was necessary. This was the inescapable conviction of the loyal Prussian minister and he was determined to act upon it. Hence, Bismarck needed three wars to complete the unification of Germany.

(**The War with Denmark :—**The first war was the *Danish War*, that is a war with Denmark. The two duchies, namely *Schleswig* and *Holstein*, situated in the north of Germany were under the control of Denmark. But the subjects wanted the merger of the duchies with Denmark, but the Germans wanted it with Germany.) When the King of Denmark proceeded to annex the two duchies, Bismarck took exception to the fact and in collaboration with Austria he declared war against Denmark. The Danes were no match for the combined armies and by the *Treaty of Vienna* (1864), the King of Denmark, *Christian IX* surrendered the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein to Austria and Prussia.

(Having got the Duchies, there arose the question of their division. The suggestion of Austria was that both of them should be handed over to the *Duke of Augustenburg*, but Prussia refused to do so. Ultimately, it was agreed



by the *Convention of Gastein* (1865) that Prussia was to occupy and administer Holstein and Austria was to occupy and administer Schleswig. The question of the duchies was not to be brought before the German Diet. It was pointed out that the convention of Gastein was a great diplomatic victory for Bismarck. He was able to oust the Duke of Augustenburg altogether and he was also able to create a situation in which there was every possibility of trouble with Austria.

**Austro-Prussian War :—**The convention of Gastein was not favourable to Austria. She was given control over a territory which was hedged in by Prussian territory on both sides. It is rightly pointed out that the convention merely "*Papered over the cracks*". It was not a solution of the problem. Austria felt that her position in Holstein was not secure and she began to encourage the claim of the Duke of Augustenburg. She also decided to refer the matter to the Diet of the German confederation. Evidently that was a violation of the convention of Gastein. Bismarck asked Austria to stop the Propaganda in Holstein in favour of the Duke of Augustenburg. Austria refused and the Prussian troops entered Holstein and turned out the Austrians. Bismarck also proposed the reform of the German confederation on the basis of universal suffrage, but Austria opposed the same. Austria prevailed upon the Diet of the German confederation to take action against Prussia. Prussia left the German confederation and declared war against Austria in 1866.

The war between Austria and Prussia was a very short one and that is why it is called the *Seven Weeks' War*. Prussia completely routed Austria in the battle of *Sadowa*. After the victory at Sadowa, the Prussian troops clamoured for a march on Vienna and they were supported by the King. Bismarck was opposed to such a move and ultimately he had his way. He offered very lenient terms to Austria and the same were accepted by the *Treaty of Prague* (1866). By that treaty, "Austria acknowledged the dissolution of the German confederation as hitherto constituted." Austria accepted her exclusion from Germany, ceded Venetia to Italy, and her share in Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia, and agreed to recognise any reconstruction of Germany to be made by Prussia. All the states north of the *Maine* were to join the North-German confederation under the leadership of Prussia. The Southern states of Germany were allowed to remain independent.

**Franco-Prussian War :—**The results of the Austro-Prussian War had fully vindicated Bismarck's policy of '*Blood and Iron*'. Prussia established her position as a first class military power and welded together the greater portion of Germany under her dominant control. Now that unity had been partially achieved, Bismarck set himself to bring it to completion. In this way, '*the Age of Metternich*' was replaced by the '*Age of Bismarck*' and no wonder Berlin took the place of Vienna. Bismarck now required one more



war as a stepping stone to the unification of Germany. He realised that France was the greatest obstacle in his way. So, according to Bismarck a war with Austria must be followed by a war with France. A war with France, the hereditary enemy of Germany would provide the necessary unifying force, and bloodshed in a common cause against the common enemy would cement the union. This, he said, lay in the logic of history. The smoke of bitterness between France and Prussia was fanned into a leaping fire by Bismarck's tampering with the *Ems Telegram*. He altered the telegram and published it so as to convey the impression that the French ambassador, Benedetti, had been insulted by the King of Prussia. The indignation of the French people rose to a fever heat and France declared war against Prussia in 1870. But in the *Battle of Sedan* (1870) France was completely routed and Napoleon III, the Emperor of France, became a Prisoner in the hands of the Prussian army.)

(The war was ended by the *Treaty of Frankfurt* of 1871 by which France ceded Alsace and Lorraine to Germany. She was also to pay a huge war indemnity. A ceremony was held in the famous Hall of Mirrors at Versailles in 1871 where the King of Prussia William I, was declared the Emperor of Germany. The Southern States of Germany also joined the German Confederation. It was in this way that the unification of Germany was completed.)

**The Role of Bismarck :—**According to G B Smith, "As a states man", Bismarck is one of the greatest figures in German history. The unification of Germany was the one thing Bismarck was determined to prevent, because his whole purpose was the preservation of Prussian power against the rising tide of liberalism and radicalism. The demand for real German unity had been made clearly enough in 1848, but by the revolutionaries, and that in itself was enough to damn it. Bismarck was, therefore, fighting both Liberals and Radicals in Germany between 1862 and 1871, just as Napoleon III fought the same forces in France between 1848 and 1851. From 1862 till just after Sadowa the liberals were opposed to him, because he was acting in defiance of the Prussian constitution. But just as the Liberals in the Second Republic wanted Louis Napoleon as their ally against the Reds, so in Prussia, the Liberals wanted Bismarck as their ally against the rest of Germany. Many French Liberals for gave Louis Napoleon the Coup d'etal in the interests of internal security. Most Prussian Liberals for save Bismarck his illegal collection of taxes from 1862 to 1866 because he had created the North German confederation, and won a decisive military victory for Prussia.

**C. Polish Nationalism : Polish Revolts :—**