

D. Rise of the German Empire

1. We have already learned how France and Germany split separately after 843 AD. Now we need to look more closely at how Germany evolved after the failure of the Frankish Union.
2. Like the French kings, who had such a hard time reigning in the powerful dukes of Normandy, German kings also struggled to deal with unruly lords. In fact, Germany's landscape was much more anarchical. Even though there technically was a German king, there were literally *hundreds* of separate territories that were essentially independent. (See map to the right.)
3. Because the German part of the Frankish split included Rome (the headquarters of the popes, the leaders of the Catholic Church), the German kings aspired to a greater role than merely the kings of their own nation. As allies of the pope, they aspired to a universal monarchy and were anointed with the unique honor of "*Holy Roman Emperor*"—a medieval title obviously integrating Roman history and Christianity together.
4. However, this claim to imperium added a further destabilizing element to German kingship. Kings who found themselves out of favor with any particular pope would find their lords especially unreceptive to the king's supposed authority, and, given the lack of integration of the German lands, the kings could rarely impose it.
5. This situation persisted through the entire medieval period (until 1789). Thus, when Napoleon rose to power in France, he found that this still un-integrated Germany was especially susceptible to invasion. He made short work of it, and upon his conquest of 1806, Napoleon proceeded to formally abolish the "Holy Roman Empire."
6. Severely humiliated by the Napoleonic conquest, German leaders—especially the leaders of the major northern Germanic state called *Prussia*—began to work towards the formal unification of Germany.
7. One man stands above all others in the project as the architect of Germany unification: *Otto von Bismarck*.
8. Realizing that France was fearful of German unification and would try to prevent it, Bismarck orchestrated a series of wars within Germany and between France and Germany that made France appear to be the "bad guy," which allowed Prussia to pose as the standard-bearer of Germany.
9. Arduous military preparations gave Prussia the advantage in the confrontation that materialized in the form of the *Franco-Prussian War* of **1870-1**. Prussian-led Germany triumphed, and a German Empire was proclaimed in the palace of the French kings at Versailles with France practically supine and the balance of power in Europe having radically shifted in favor of Germany.



Germany, after the Frankish split, was in fact a mere miscellany of hundreds of territories with the grandiose title of "Holy Roman Empire" belying the fact that kings had little direct control over it.



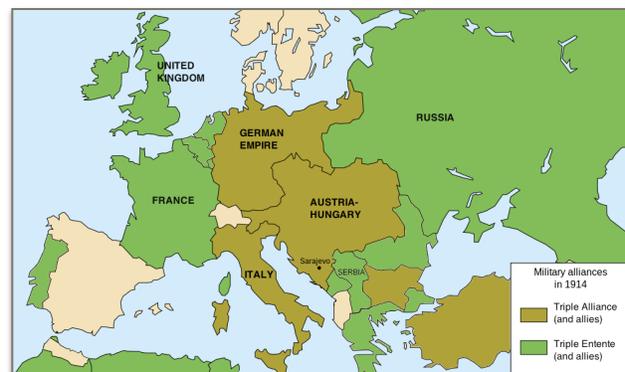
The Proclamation of the German Empire by Anton von Werner, captures the triumph of Prussian-led Germany over France in 1871. Otto von Bismarck features in the white jacket at the head of the stairs as his fellow commanders salute the new German emperor.

VII. Modern European History Revisited

A. The World Wars

1. **World War I (1914-19)** follows directly from the formation of the German empire, which was the leading partner of an alliance of ambitious imperial powers in the center of Europe that instigated the war.

2. With its ambitions frustrated by the United States in **World War I** and its populace seduced by a resentment and hatred of other nations stemming from centuries of being dominated by France (as during the Napoleonic Period), Germany became susceptible to the message of Adolph Hitler's *Nazi* (national socialist) party and embarked a new imperial effort in **World War II (1939-45)**.



The German Empire established in 1871 was the driving force behind the "Triple Alliance" in the center of Europe, which is responsible for initiating **World War I (1914-19)**.

B. Russia and the European Union

1. As the Franco-German relationship continued to dominate Europe itself, Russia continued strengthening its connection to Europe.
2. Participating in the *Europe of Nations*, however, was extremely painful for Russia. When Napoleon invaded and Moscow was burned to the ground, the true meaning of

being connected to a Europe of warring nations became evident. Russian patriotism became increasingly defensive with regard to Europe.

3. When Russia came under attack again in **World War I (1914-19)**, this time by the alliance of central powers led by the German Empire, its monarchs were blamed for the failure to catch up to Europe and overthrown in a revolution. Russia turned to communism as a supposed way to accelerate its development.
4. When Russia was again invaded in **World War II (1939-45)**, the fear of Europe became a paranoia. Instead of being dominated by Europe, Russia's leaders resolved to dominate Europe. They invaded and occupied Eastern Europe, imposing communism on it.
5. Had the United States not stood in the way, it is likely that all of continental Europe would have come under communist rule. The formation of **NATO in 1949** (see page 10, above) prevented the subjugation of Europe, and permitted the revival of Europe under American protection.
6. To this day, the looming military presence of Russia to the east features prominently in the motivation behind the **European Union**. Europe would like to restore its former primacy in that relationship, and indeed in its relationship with the United States, which had now assumed a singular role in leading the world.