

**Enriching Knowledge Series for Junior Secondary
History Revised Curriculum: War and History:
New perspectives to Study the Military History
(Lecture 4) “War and Society” (New)
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War and Society: With
Reference to 19th Century
Prussia/Germany

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Why War?

- The craving for power which characterizes the governing class in every nation is hostile to any limitation of the national sovereignty. This political power-hunger is wont to batten on the activities of another group, whose aspirations are on purely mercenary, economic lines. I have specially in mind that small but determined group, active in every nation, composed of individuals who, indifferent to social considerations and restraints, regard warfare, the manufacture and sale of arms, simply as an occasion to advance their personal interests and enlarge their personal authority. (Einstein to Freud, 30 July, 1932)

Some Basic Questions

- Who wage war and why?
- Who actually fight in war and why?
- How to wage war successfully?

The Elements of War

- Technology, manpower and resources
- Tactics: the art of organizing an army, and using weapons or military units in combination against the enemy in military encounters
- Operational art: a component of military art concerned with the theory and practice of planning, preparing, conducting, and sustaining campaigns and major operations aimed at accomplishing strategic or operational objectives in each theatre
- Strategy: the art of organizing an army, using weapons or military units in combination, employing resources, mobilizing the people, etc. to deliver a or a part of a war plan
- Theater strategy: a war can be, and is usually divided into several theaters. Theater strategy is a integrative concept that coordinates and operate strategies in different war theaters to achieve a war plan
- Grand strategy

Dynastic Warfare in premodern Europe

- According to Martin Kitchen, a characteristic of the early history of German militarism, particularly in its Prussian form, is the close connection between the feudal aristocracy and the army
- The growth of the Prussian army after the suppression of the Peasant War and the Thirty Years War
- Only the very poor and helpless joined the army whose discipline was terrible
- War finance

Further Expansion under Frederick William I (1688-1740)

- Financial and manpower implications of the military expansion
- The reform in 1733 and the introduction of the Canton system
- *Bauernschutz* (peasant protection) 1709, 1713, 1739 and 1749: “that no one may permit peasant or cottager farms on his estate to go to ruin and to seize for himself the fields and meadows thereof, etc.”
- The predicament of the Junkers

Oblique Order: A Poor Man's War

How could an Army of Serfs fight a sophisticated War?

- Technical Improvement: flintlock, paper cartridge and better barrel
- Bayonet with socket
- The changing role of cavalry
- Why did the Prussian army move so slow, only 75 steps in a minute?
- Did incessant drill help?
- Lessons from the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748)

The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars

- *The levee en masse* 1793
- The execution of 17 generals and numerous officers gave rise to military meritocracy
- Nationalism, enthusiasm and heroism
- The growing importance of skirmishers who were “as sharp-sighted as ferrets, and as active as squirrels.”
- Napoleon’s divisions

The Aging Prussian military Structure

- 695 out of 1,800 officers were non-nobles, 79 out of 142 generals were above 60
- The lesson from the battle of Valmy (20 September 1792)
- The partition of Poland delayed a Prussian military reform

Enlightenment and War

- Georg Heinrich von Berenhorst (1733 - 1814)
- Dietrich Heinrich Freiherr von Bülow (1757–1807)

Gerhard Johann David von Scharnhorst (1755-1813)

- Background, education and limitations
- *Neues Militärisches Journal*, 1793-5
- War violence, the decline of aristocracy and the revolutionary war

Scharnhorst's Military Reform: Ideals and Reality

- The founding of the reform committee headed by Scharnhorst in 1807
- The compilation of 606 volumes of report
- Structural changes and military meritocracy
- The founding of the General War School in Berlin in 1810
- The removal of capital punishment
- Staff General with 31 members
- Difficulties: the role of cavalry, universal conscription, Landwehr, etc.
- Abortive reform in an age of restoration

Militarization of Society

- To arms, citizens, form your battalions! Let's march, let's march! Let an impure blood water our furrows!
- The legend of Ferdinand von Schill (1776-1809)
- Spanish warfare 1809
- But how to create a real “People’s War?”
- The glory of war: Napoleon, Alexander I, Francis the I and Frederick William III

The new Faces of War

- The growing competition in the international system
- Nationalism
- The growing complexity of war propelled by technological advancement
- For instance, in 1866 French battalions equipped with Chassepot came to shape
- Railway, steamships and telegraph
- War should be backed by modern state, not feudal kingdoms, which oversaw intelligence, industrial growth, taxation, conscription and war planning

The Issue of Universal Conscription

- The end of mercenary and the division of soldiers and civilians
- How reliable were conscripted soldier"? How long should they serve? How did they work with volunteers or reservists?
- How did universal conscription function in multi-racial countries?

The Prussian Solution

- Albrecht Theodor Emil Graf von Roon (1803 – 1879)
- Regular 63,000x3 years service =189,000; regular reservists 63,000x 5= 315,000; Landwehr 63,000x4 years= 252,000; over half a million combat-ready soldiers
- Landwehr supervised by officers of regular reservists
- The further development of Staff General
- Battle of Sadowa (3 July 1866), both sides employed half a million men

Technical Advancement

- Dreyse Gun
- The function of Railway
- Telegraph
- The Battle of Königgrätz (3 July 1866)
- The movement of 450,000 soldiers to France in the first month of the Franco-Prussian War

The German Success

- Command Structure: The French created after 1870 the French Staff College modelled on its German counterpart
- All-out offensive: Turkey vs. Serbia and Montenegro in 1876 and Greece in 1897
- But the logistics issues in the second phase of the Franco-Prussian War remained unresolved

The war of \$\$\$

- Krupp's breech-loading gun since the 1860s
- French Lebel rifle and German Mauser with magazines
- Maxim Gun 1883
- Investment in fortification : Britain in Portsmouth in 1851 and France in the border near Germany after 1871

Approaching War

- Ever larger army; Russia which possessed a one-million standing army became France's ally in 1894
- Russian military budget grew from 608 million rubles in 1908 to 959.6 rubles in 1913, forcing Moltke the younger to consider a war
- Germany had 144 guns per corps in 1862 and over 300 in 1905
- Schneider-Creusot rapid firing 75 mm gun became standard equipment of the French army in 1893
- Consequential infrastructural development