Nationalism, Democracy and Socialism

Western European nationalism

Structure

1. ‘German-ness’ before the German unification
2. Liberal nationalism and romantic nationalism in 19th century
3. The rise of an aggressive, anti-Semitic form of nationalism in the late 19th century
4. Nationalism in France after the Franco-Prussian war

The Germanic lands before the German unification

- Flaws of the Holy Roman Empire: loose confederation, headed by an Austrian emperor, with numerous very small states
- The Holy Roman empire excluded many German-speakers (in East Prussia) and included non-German (Czechs, Walloons and Flemings)
- After the invasion of several Germanic states by the Napoleonic army, dissolution of the Holy Roman empire in August 1806
- New political framework imposed by the French in 1806: the Confederation of the Rhine
- In 1815, the German Bund or Confederation was set up
- However, the Holy Roman Empire, the Confederation of the Rhine and the German Bund were loose confederations and not a nation-state

German-ness

- According to an ‘official historian’ during the Third Reich, Kurt Pastenaci, the sentiment of Germanness existed long before the 19th century, ever since the Stone Age
- In middle ages based on a common language there was limited awareness of Germanness
- Challenged by the cosmopolitanism of German elites between the 16th and 18th century. Latin and later French had greater prestige than German for a long time
- Other obstacles to national identity: inner divisions, persistent loyalty to narrow fatherland

Desire of national independence under Napoleonic occupation