Southern Germany and the North German Confederation (April 11, 1868)

Abstract

Between 1866 and 1871, the leaders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, including the former Saxon statesman Count Friedrich Ferdinand von Beust (1809–1886), did their utmost to help the southern German states remain aloof from Bismarck's North German Confederation. For Bavaria, Baden, and Württemberg, Prussian's authoritarianism and militarism flew in the face of their more liberal traditions. Thus, the cartoon's caption is more than a little ironic: "In the end, the South Germans, too, will join; we are obviously still too liberal for them!" In fact, to southern Germans, Bismarck's manipulative relationship with the North German Reichstag and the imposition of the Prussian "system" on the federal states (Saxony, Hanover, etc.) that had been forced to join the North German Confederation seemed to offer not a liberal solution to German unity but only higher taxes, broader conscription, and stricter censorship. Thus south-German critics of Prussia joked that there were only three rules for joining the emerging Germany: "Pay up! Sign up! Shut up!"). This woodcut appeared in the Austrian journal *Figaro* on April 11, 1868.

Source

Source: "Die Süddeutschen werden schon auch noch kommen, wir sind ihnen vorderhand nur noch zu liberal!" ["The South Germans will come, too; for the time being, we are just too liberal for them!"]. Caricature (n.d.), from "Figaro," Austria, April 11, 1868.
bpk-Bildagentur, image number 30013140. For rights inquiries, please contact Art Resource at requests@artres.com (North America) or bpk-Bildagentur at kontakt@bpk-bildagentur.de (for all other countries).

© bpk

Recommended Citation: Southern Germany and the North German Confederation (April 11, 1868), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/forging-an-empire-bismarckian-germany-1866-1890/ghdi:image-1390> [November 19, 2026].