

Albert Bettanier, *The Black Spot* (c. 1887)

Abstract

As part of the Treaty of Frankfurt (May 10, 1871), which marked the official end of the Franco-Prussian War, Germany annexed Alsace-Lorraine, a move that substantially contributed to the persistent hostility of defeated France toward the newly founded German Empire. The annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, which the French regarded as a grave offense to the “Grande Nation,” is the subject of this painting by French artist Albert Bettanier titled *La Tache noire ou La leçon de géographie* [*The Black Spot, or The Geography Lesson*]. As the painting makes clear, resentment and revanchism were instilled in French citizens from childhood onward. German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck was aware of the dangers posed by a vengeful France but had followed through with the annexation nonetheless. For the remainder of his chancellorship he attempted to vanquish his “cauchemar des coalitions” (“nightmare of coalitions”) – ones directed against Germany, to be precise – by designing an elaborate system of international alliances. After his 1890 resignation, however, the German government allowed the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia to lapse, marking the first step in France’s emergence from isolation.

Source



Source: Albert Bettanier, *La Tache noire ou La leçon de géographie*, oil on canvas, c. 1887. Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin. Accessed via wikimedia commons,
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Geography_Lesson_or_\"The_Black_Spot\".jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Geography_Lesson_or_\)

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