

Robert Effinger, "Pursue One Great Decisive Aim with Force and Determination": Prussian and Russian State, Economic and Military Reform, 1806-1815

After Prussia and Russia were defeated by Napoleon in 1807, the Treaty of Tilsit settled a peace that permitted both states to re-evaluate themselves. The King of Prussia, Frederick William III, gave his top ministers near *carte blanche* to enact a series of reforms that would prevent Prussia from suffering another humiliating sequence of defeats after the battles of Jena and Auerstädt one year previously. The ministers implemented reforms that increased the power of the state alongside the efficiency of the bureaucracy and fostered a nationalist sentiment that was beginning to emerge. The end result of the reforms meant that when Prussia went to war in 1813, it was able to handle the stresses of Total War through an increased ability to extract resources from land and subjects.

Russia had not been humiliated in war and lacked a driving impetus for reform. Even Czar Alexander's desire to see through a number of reforms was foiled by his more conservative and reactionary nobility. While the Russian state survived the French invasion in 1812, the conclusion of the war left Russia drowning in debt with no progress made to alleviating it. This paper attempts to track the cause and effect of the reforms in both Prussia and Russia and how those reforms would ultimately contribute to the downfall of the French Empire under Napoleon.