

Finally... first parliamentary meeting in Frankfurt

Eyewitnesses report

SILKE GATERMANN 20. MAI 2020, 01:01 UHR

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Representatives wanted!

In the circles of politically interested people, the news is out that representatives are in demand for a first National Assembly. The location has already been decided on.

Here you explain who can apply to be a representative in Frankfurt.

Angelina

-585 freely elected representatives from all the states (with voting rights for about 85 per cent of all men over 25 years, and no voting rights for farm and factory workers, no for women)
-many of the representatives were professors or had a university education that it was called a "parliament of professors"
-no workers or peasants among them

Anika

585 freely elected representatives from all the states met in the St Paul's Church to plan their strategy. But the 585 elected

people does not represent the whole population. They only represent 85% of all men over 25 years and not the farm and factory workers, and no women. Many of the representatives were professors or had a university education that it was called a "parliament of professors". But there were no workers or peasant among them.

Neele

Who can apply to be a representative in Frankfurt?

585 people, from all states, can become a freely elected representative.

The only things you have to consider are that you can only be a representative if you are not a woman, do not work on a farm or in a factory and you need to be over the age of 25.

So the representatives are all men who are over the age of 25 and they all have a good job and a good, some even a university, education. Most of them are professors that it was called a "parliament of professors". There were also no workers and/or peasants among them.

Alina

To be a representative of Frankfurt you have to be:

Over 25 years old

male

not a farmer or factory worker

On 18th May 1848 585, freely elected representatives from all states met in St. Paul's church in Frankfurt-on-Main, to plan a strategy.

Their goal was to have a unified and democratic Germany with a central government, a liberal constitution, and a catalogue of basic civil rights.

Friedrich

Hello I am one of the 585 representatives from all the different states for the 85 percent of all men over 25 who can vote, women, farmers and factory workers cannot vote. All 585 people including me have a very interesting and educational education behind us many of us are professors we met in the St Pauls Church in Frankfurt am Main and it was very interesting to meet all these people.

Hannes

In 1848 585 freely elected men with special skills. Most of them had very good education and had a lot do with politics. That is what the people need to bring to The National Assembly. The National Assembly met in the St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt-on-Main. But on difference between back than and today is that not everybody can participate. Woman, factory workers and farmers weren't even allowed to come and it didn't matter if they were smart or had an good or bad education. Because the higher classes from the beginning thought the they were worth more or better educated.

Voices of the elected representatives

You are being interviewed by a reporter as you will be one of the representatives going to Frankfurt.

Here you can write from the perspective of the elected member or from the reporter's point of view.

Anika

I was so happy that I was one of the elected people that was part of the planning team for a unified and democratic Germany. I wanted a unified and democratic Germany for a long time and then I finally had the chance to help planning everything in Frankfurt. We met at St Paul's Church in Frankfurt, which was also our provisional central government. We were 585 people in the church and many of us were professors or they had a university education. On the 18 May 1848 we began planning a unified and democratic Germany with a central government, a liberal constitution, and a catalogue of civil rights. Formulating the catalogue of basic civil rights was our most important task and the discussion lasted until October. But in December 1848 the catalogue was finally published. But it was not always easy for us. We had some setbacks. We had no territory, no civil servants, no police force, no military, and no judiciary. One big shock was when other European countries and the government in the 39 German states did not recognize our newly formed state. Another setback was the problem of Schleswig-Holstein. Another third setback came the next day. Radicals tried to break out of the national assembly by force.

Neele

Voices_of_the_elected_representatives_.m4a

PADLET DRIVE

Alina

Im so glad, that I could be one of the 585 elected representatives. Anyways we met in St. Pauls church and tried planning a strategy. There were three setbacks. One of them was, that we neither had a territory for the Government nor civil servants, Police force, no Military, and no justice. But we always kept our eye on the main goals, which were: having a unified and democratic Germany, a liberal constitution, and a catalogue of Basic Civil Rights. The catalogue got published in December 1848

First representatives arrive in Frankfurt

Settling in.

Here you can report from a perspective of a Frankfurt resident or write a letter back home from the perspective of an elected member. What are the first impressions of an eyewitness of the first National Assembly?

Lara

Frankfurt resident:

During the time when the National Assembly met in a church of my home city, the behavior of the inhabitants here changed completely. The radical ones tried to shut down the National Assembly, but that ended in violence. Many people got hurt and that resulted in agitation in the whole city. In the beginning of these brutal events my family and I were afraid of more brutal and dangerous attacks, before the troops of the Austrian

Emperor defeated the radicals. The representatives came in and the problems came with them. Not only these attacks happened, we all were excited of the new constitution or new rules. Our minds only thought of a big change with hope for more rights and more freedom of press.

Jalina

The impressions of a representative in the first few weeks of the National Assembly:



Letter Representative National Assembly

Audio mit einer Länge von 1:33

PADLET DRIVE

Eve

Dear Family

I wanted to tell you how it went with the first National Assembly. You have probably heard already about it, but it went pretty bad and chaotic. In the beginning everything went fine. We all came to the St Paul Church ... I think 585 people. But then the radicals came and shut down everything. The chaos broke out and many tried to get away. Families were anxious about their children and how it goes on. All were scared and that more attacks will come. The thing is that the Austrian Emperor supports the radicals. I hoped something completely different from this event. That finally something changes and that we come to new results and rules...

Major topics of discussion of the first month

May and June of 1848 - first six weeks of discussions and debates

Here you write about the topics, problems, conflicts, results.... Again, you can write a short letter back home as a representative or report for a newspaper to inform the public. You may also want to think of those who are not represented but took part in the March demonstrations. What will they say about the discussions?

Svea

Dear family,
my vacation to Germany is very different than I had imagined, but it is very exciting to see what is going on here. There are some conflicts and issues under discussion. On the one hand, they argue about the size of Germany. Since I did not understand it myself at the beginning, I assume that you do not know it either and I will briefly explain it to you. It is discussed which countries should belong to Germany. Either all German-speaking provinces belong to Germany. Then Austria would have to separate from its multinational state (this would be called the Greater German solution) or Austria does not belong to Germany at all. That would be the small German solution. On the other hand, a big question is which form of government the new state should have. A monarchy ruled by an emperor who must abide by a constitution. In addition to that, you don't know who should be at the top of a monarchy. That means who is more powerful - Austria or Prussia? Or you can make a democracy with a government made up of elected representatives. The composition of Parliament, which is supposed to decide on the problems that I have just described to you, is also questioned. The members of parliament are mostly academics (scholars, professors, doctors, pharmacists), nobles and rich citizens (merchants) are represented. But very few artisans and no peasants are represented. They cannot afford to put their work on hold for the long period of time for the parliamentary sessions. Accordingly, the interests of farmers and workers are not represented. In addition, many of the members of parliament had no political experience at all. Hard to imagine, don't you think? Anyway, I miss you very much and I am looking forward to seeing you.

Best regards

Dad

Schleswig-Holstein lost to Denmark? What about our plan to unite all speakers of German?

War in the North!

While representatives are discussing in Frankfurt, Denmark and Prussia are fighting a war over the provinces of Schleswig and Holstein.

What will representatives say about this? What will people living in Schleswig say about this?

Angelina

Jago

Monarchy or republic? Does the new German union need a king?

There have been heated debates about the constitution and the future form of government.

Here you can talk about advantages and disadvantages of the different forms. Decide on an eyewitness position first, then talk about / write down your arguments.

Julius

History__Angelina.m4a

PADLET DRIVE

Sarah

I have been living in Schleswig since I was a child in. This means I speak German because Schleswig and Holstein are German speaking provinces. I don't want that the province where I live becomes a part of Denmark. I was happy that Prussia went to war against Denmark to prevent the annexion. But I heard that the three countries Russia, Sweden and England put pressure on Prussia to withdraw its troops. I would have preferred if Denmark and Germany accept that we, the people who live in Schleswig and Holstein could have decided by our own to which country we want to belong. After the national assembly didn't accept the peace treaty we hoped to stay a part of Germany but a few days later the national assembly changed its vote and we were lost to Denmark. We didn't understand how this could happen?

I live in Schleswig and I see very difficult times ahead. Denmark wants our territory and we will go to war. I have been looking to Frankfurt with hope for the past weeks and months, but now I am very disappointed. We need a strong Germany that supports and defends us here. All of the efforts and work to become a strong nation have unsuccessful so far. The other countries take no notice of a nation state and do not accept a united Germany. We have the choice either to flee or accept Danish rule in our homeland.

Garstedter Weg 93

PADLET DRIVE

Florian

I think a republic is much better than a monarchy. Because in the monarchy one person has the power to change everything. He doesn't need any agreement of someone. In a republic you can choose someone who you like and he is a „representative“ for you so you have indirectly a right to say something. The only negative thing is that everything has to be discussed and that takes time.

Adam

Hello my name is Adam and today we will talk if Germany should be a monarchy or a republic.

In a Monarchy the will rule a successor at some point and that's not necessarily bad, because a successor will prepare himself to be the ruler one day. Thus the danger that he will harm the people is very small. In a Monarchie the desicions are much faster than in a republic wich can be very useful in important situations. But there are also disatvantages. for example that the opinion of the citiziens are not taken into account and the ruler asserts only his own interest. In a republic, the president is responsible or can be held responsible for the laws and constitution. However the most important factor is that the president is elected by the citiziens. But the problem of the votes is that they aren't 100% accurate, because not everyone of the people votes and sometimes this can cause to inaccurate results.

You can not tell wich one ist better, because erverybody has his own opinion of wich one is better. But for me a repuplic is better, because the citiziens can deside if a president should be a president for longer time or not. And that really good, because if there is a president wich the citiziens doesn't like, they can vote that he should leave office.

Friedrich

I think a monarchy is not a smart Idea because than he can rule what he want to like to rule and that is not fair for me and the other people in Germany. The most kings enrich themselves and the rest people are doing badly thats the main point, because in a republic all people in the country can vote for themselves representatives and these people than can vote a president and how long he is president. These guy would make the main desicions, but the parlement or the ministers have to allow this, but sometimes can it take a long time and these is the only bad point.

Sarah

I prefer a republic because it's not a good idea to give one person the whole power about one country. In many cases that went wrong and caused a war and many deads. I think the better possibility would be a republic. The citizens would be also happier if they could vote and have a right to decide who would be their goveneur. I can't see any good point about a monarchy.

With or without Austria?

In September and October 1848 the situation is increasingly tense. After losing Schleswig to Denmark, may Germans lose faith in the Power of the National Assembly.

Here you can report about public opinion on the question whether Austria should be part of the union. Remember: Austria has many provinces with people not speaking German. Austria is still a very strong monarchy. Who should be a leading power: Austria or Prussia?

Julius

hello my name is julius

today I present the results if Austria should belong to Germany and which are the positive and negative aspects.

After many conversations and settlements apart there is actually only one positive aspect why Austria should belong to Germany and this aspect is that Germany becomes bigger and so Germany gets more power and a better position in the economy. The negative points are much more. The main reason why Austria should not belong to Germany is that both have a different form of government and there can be many conflicts if you have to decide for one. Most Germans see it exactly the same and are rather for the smaller Germany so that there are no conflicts and peace

Adam

Hello my name is Adam and today we will talk about whether Germany shoulf unifie with Austria.

A good argument for it is that Germany and Austria would be a great power in Europe and they would have a better economy and army. They would be respectet by every country in Europe. But unfortunately thats the only argument whether Germany should unifie with Austria. The Problem of that would be that the german citiziens would get in trouble with the Austrian. One reason for that is that they don't speak the same language and if Austria and Germany unifie, then Austria would given Germany a Chatholic majority wich would be a problem with fiercely protestant Prussian and Bismarck and that would lead to trouble between the two countries. furthermore, the Ruler of Austria called himself the Emperor of Austria Hungry and the Prussian King wants to adopt the same level of title and that's when the fight starts and it hasn't been clarified yet whether Germany should be a monarchy or republic.

It's clear that a unified germany with Austria wouldn't go well and sooner or later the two countries would get in trouble.

Svea

I am an Austrian and this is my perception of the discussion whether there should be a Greater German or Small German solution. In my opinion Austria should not become part of Germany. There are enough different German provincess so that foreign ones can not be intergrated there. In addition, Austria does not have the same culture (music, fashion, fodd, literature, dance) as germany. Austria would also be shared with its power.

Hannes

I'm a German and in my opinion we should not get Austria in to Germany because a land that is that big so I mean like Austria and Germany together is in my Opinion to big to be controlled by one single government because the other country's around us are a lot smaller and for them it is way easier to deal with the problems of the county. The thing I want to say is that if our country can't even manage to get an fair assembly in Frankfurt-

on-Main I think that we are not able to rule about to countries that big.

Eve

Im Austrian and im against a union of Germany and Austria, because i think that we are so different and there will come a lot of problems with it. There would be a lot of incidents and it would take a long time for complet peace between us. Im sure that we would be a big power in europe, but that doesnt worth all the stress we would get in our home. I dont understand Germans and they dont Unterstand me. How can we live together like one Country ?

I am a German and at these days, I ask myself many times, if Germany should build up a new republic together with Austria. Therefore, I think about the advantages and the disadvantages of a "big German Solution". Of course, a great Germany will have more power and influence in Europe. But will we find together to that strength or will we struggle who is going to lead the new Great Germany? In some aspects, we have a different mentality and different targets. Some Austrians even speak no German and we have different relationships to the neighbor countries, - Prussia in the north and west and Austria in the south and east. I am afraid that we would run into a great divided country and not a strong and unified Germany.

Jago R.

A strong central government or a federation of strong independent states? What will be better for us?

Republic or Monarchy?

Increasingly, the radicals that do not see any of their aims discussed in the National Assembly are taking to the streets.

Report about the new demonstrations in September and October in Frankfurt and Vienna.

You can also report about the final solution here.

Jalina

On September 17th 1848 radicals violently tried to disrupt the National Assembly. They wanted to install a more radical one and announce that Germany becomes a republic. Because they had no military the National Assembly had to ask for protection by troops whose powers it had tried to limit. In October 1848 Austrian troops of the emperor bombared Vienna. They defeated the radicals who were protesting in the city. Two thousand people died and many others were arrested.

After many other events the revolution failed and Germany turned into a constitutional monarchy. In this form of government a constitution limits the power of the monarch.

Anything else an eyewitness in Hamburg might have wanted to say

Lara

I'm in the lower class, what means that there weren't such big changes for me as for others, but I have seen how the whole population of Hamburg behave. I live in St. Pauli, where the big fights between Prussia and the citizens happened. Me and my 10-year-old child didn't want to take part in these fights, but my husband does and he is strong, but they threw stones and mud on him. He came back with dirty skin and clothes and little injuries everywhere. I really know that he wasn't smart to start participating in these fights and it wasn't the only thing happened in Hamburg in this period of time, but for me it was the hardest to accept. My child and me cried the whole day, while his father could have died. I can't believe, the Prussians have done this and they helped the government to make our lives such more worse. I'm glad, that we finally got a new constitution and the hated 'Torsperre' definitely isn't existing anymore.

Florian

I'm a normal man and I have a normal job as a worker in the harbour. I lived in St. Pauli so my way to the work wasn't that long. I don't earn a lot of money. I earn 500 Mark in one year. I was part in the protests but I got hurt. Before I got hurt I saw many terrible things for example in front of me a man got shot. So I was no longer part of the protesters. The change for us wasn't so big for us. And I'm very barrios that we didn't get voting rights.