

1: Introduce myself

2: Three periods for the Dutch in the Central Commission

- The period of King Willem I and his rivalry with Prussia
 - Most authoritarian period in Dutch history
 - Until 1830: Rivalry with Prussia
- Period of Prussian dominancy in the Central Commission
 - Dutch opposition
 - Fear of Prussia
 - Tried to oppose the Prussian policy within the CCNR, but too weak
- Late 19th Century until 1914:
 - Prussian policy from earlier periods now positive for:
 - The development of Rhine transport and the Port of Rotterdam
 - The fact that Prussia used the supranational organization to liberalized Rhine transport completely, now advantageous
- In 1914 Rhine navigation and the Act of Mannheim one of the reasons for Germany to keep the Dutch out of war

3: King Willem I

- After collapse of Napoleon: banks of the Rhine split up again
- Congress of Vienna (1814- 1815) should prevent that:
 - Should be free from where the river became navigable to the sea
 - Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR):
 - Non-discrimination principle
 - No staple rights, compulsory transshipment, or monopolies
 - Low duties on navigation
 - focusing point.
 - Trade interests should come first: Implementing these decisions of the Vienna
- King Willem I: Most authoritarian regime the Netherlands ever had
 - Thought of himself as a King by the Grace of God: Prussian Prince
 - King because of the popular rebellion against the French in 1813
- More important: London: North sea ports not in hands of major power
 - William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806): in 1805 a memo to Czar Alexander I about a Dutch restoration
 - Should include Antwerp
 - Antwerp was a loaded gun pointed at the heart of England

- Wanted to keep all North sea ports out of the hands of a major Continental power: Neither French nor Prussian
- Also policy of British Foreign Minister in 1813: Castlereagh
- 1813: After the Battle of Leipzig of October 1813: English made clear that one of their demands to the French would be the restoration of the Dutch independence
 - Should include all North sea ports, also Antwerp
 - Strong enough to defend itself
 - Castlereagh: Was not in favour of a restored Dutch Republic. It should be ‘*plus monarchique*’

4: Arrival of the Prince of Orange at Scheveningen

- November 1813: Amsterdam Rebellion
 - The Hague: Some dignitaries formed a provisional government and ask the Prince of Orange to come home and take over the sovereignty
 - Came to Scheveningen (The Hague) with a British man of war
 - The The Hague dignitaries claimed already: The seas are free again, commerce will recover.

5: The United Netherlands

- Decision of the Congress of Vienna
 - King Willem unsatisfied
 - Had hoped to incorporate German Rhineland and Luxemburg
 - Prussia had hoped for a smaller Netherlands that should be part of the German Confederation
- Willem I: Hated all decisions of Vienna that limited his sovereignty
 - Not a major power: no seat among these in the Concert of Europe
 - Not free in Rhine matters: Rhine Commission that should liberate Rhine traffic according to certain principles:
 - Non-discrimination of flags
 - No staples or monopolies
 - Limited taxation and tolls

6: Rivalry with Prussia

- Two countries: Prussia bigger, the Netherlands richer
 - The Dutch regained their colonies
 - The Dutch King: Hoped for a weak moment of Prussia to kick the Prussian troops out of Luxembourg and claim the German Rhineland
 - Dutch also wanted to recover their staple trade: taxed transit
 - Transit called naked transit
 - Wanted involvement of Dutch traders: Not interesting anymore
 - Only increased costs of German trade
 - Lobby of the Dutch ports for transit taxes
 - Lobby of Cologne against it
- Prussia hated the new Kingdom of the Netherlands
 - Undermined the trade of its new territories with France
 - Hans von Bulow 1815 wrote Hardenberg to use the Prussian troops to correct the border
 - New Territories: Especially Cologne: Wanted free Rhine Navigation: Trade of German Rhineland needed that.

7: Negotiations about trade and transit taxes in Rhine Commission

- According to Vienna: Free trade *jusqu'à la mer*
 - Rhine committee should ensure that the navigation of the river would be free from where it became navigable *jusqu'à la mer*, to the sea.
 - Ships under the flag of any Rhine State allowed on every track of the river.
 - Staples and guild regulations should disappear.
 - Free navigation meant not yet the abolition of all tolls and taxes.
 - *Jusqu'à la mer*: To or into the sea: quarrel between the Dutch and the Prussians

8 1707: Rhine split just across the border

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- Dutch interpretation: old-fashioned and against all liberal principals
 - Dutch: *jusqu'à la mer*: to no into the sea: from where there tide is visible, Dutch free to tax
 - Juridical correct, but undermined by ridiculous claim that only the Lek, not the Waal was a the part of Rhine
 - The Rhine split just across the border:

- Since 1707: 2/3 of the Rhine water to the Waal
 - 1/3 to the Pannerdensch Canal, that would later split again in IJssel and Lek.
 - Lek very tiny river.
 - Prussians knew their interpretation on the *Jusqu'a la mer* topic was juridical weak
 - Refused to implement any of the Vienna agreements on the Rhine
- Compulsory transshipment in Cologne and Mainz: staple
- Dutch *Beurtvaart* (monopolies on regular transport) also remained intact
 - Monopolies: hardly any innovations or improvement of efficiency
 - Netherlands and Prussia involved in a struggle for power:
 - Compromise could be more advantageous to the other:
 - no attempts to solve the problems
- Prussia backed by Grand-Duchy Hessen
 - Hoped to transform Mainz into a major Rhine port
- Netherlands by all other Rhine states
 - France: did not want to liberalize Rhine
 - Nassau: Needed income from toll
 - German states feared Prussian power
- 1825: Prussian King withdrew his commissioner from the CCNR
 - Asked the commission to terminate activities
 - Bilateral negotiations between Netherlands and Prussia stuck
- 1828: Prussian-Hessian *Zollverein*: Prussia became more powerful
 - For Dutch clear that they had to accept concessions
 - 1829 Agreement on main points between Prussia and Netherlands: send to Rhine commission: Act of Mainz de facto ready
- 1830: Belgian Rebellion: changed the situation for two reasons:
 - Netherlands a small country: Prussia now dominant
 - Dutch king turned away from Western powers: France and Britain: Too liberal
 - Tried to find support from Austria, Prussia and Russia: Moral support yes, military support against the Belgians, no.

9: 1831 Rhine Convention of Mainz

- Netherlands became a small country:
 - Had to accept leadership of the larger countries
 - Convention of Mainz
 - Transit taxes much lower and frozen: *droit fixe*
 - Waal recognized as part of the Rhine
 - No monopolies or staples anymore
 - Ended Staples in Mainz, Cologne and monopoly of Dutch shipping between Sea and Cologne
- 1830: Kingdom of the Netherlands fell apart in The Netherlands and Belgium

10: Period of Prussian dominancy in the Central Commission

- Transport Revolution
 - Railways: would destroy inland navigation almost everywhere
 - Larger scale than traditional shipping
 - Cheaper as less transshipment was needed
 - Monopolistic tendencies

1843 Railway Cologne-Antwerp: Dutch ports lost monopoly

- Also: Railways to German ports
- Threat for Dutch, but also threat for new Prussian industry
- Could destroy Rhine shipping needed cheap transport
- From the mid-19th century German industrialization
 - Ruhr area dominant
 - Railways seemed to have the future
- According to Mainz Convention:
 - Commission should control channel
 - 1847: Prussia took initiative to do so
 - Feared end of Rhine shipping: railway monopolies
 - 1849 First Rhine inspection
 - Very negative on the Dutch track

Prussia now wanted to free the Rhine of:

- Unnecessary regulation and taxation
- Natural obstacles
- Stronger position for CCNR
- CCNR an instrument for Prussia

- Put pressure on other members
- Netherlands Difficult position:
 - New competition of railways
 - Prussian pressure to regulate the river: needed to introduce large scale steam shipping
 - In the 1840-1850s: In difficult financial situation after policy of Willem I
 - Participated half-heartedly
 - Had not enough money to invest
 - Had not enough knowledge how to regulate the river
 - Was in the first place interested in flood-prevention

11: 1851: Liberal Prime-minister Thorbecke promises nonetheless:

- To liberalize Rhine traffic from any taxes and tolls
- To start improving the river
 - o Reaction on the new competition from railways to Antwerp and the German ports
 - o Reaction on Prussian pressure
 - o Start to improve the river by:
 - Narrowing the river bed by creating summer dikes
 - Groynes
 - Hoped that this would result in faster flowing river to grind out it by its own water
 - Failed

12: 1860s: Rhine regulation and normalization

- Dredging needed
 - o Low-land river flowed too slow to use the stream as an instrument to deepen it
 - o Another problem: at places where rivers came together: in a delta almost everywhere, hardly any stream
- For the Dutch: transport a minor problem compared to floods
- Every few years a substantial part of the country flooded

- First large project: digging of the new Merwede: Would result in a much better flow of superfluous water and ice to the sea
- Germans: Would result in too little water in dry periods

13: 1860s: Pressure of Prussia increased:

- Prussian expansion seen as a threat:
 - o Why a war with Denmark because of a complicated dynastic geographical situation, and not with the Dutch
 - o German nationalists claimed the Netherlands as long lost territory
 - o War of 1866: with Austria:
 - All German Rhine-states allies of Austria
 - Prussia annexed Hannover, Frankfurt, Hesse-Kassel and Nassau
 - Peace of Prague: German Rhine states had to accept:
 - o Complete Liberalisation of the Rhine including abolition of all tolls
 - o Control on Rhine shipping and building activities by CCNR
 - o Control on channel and canalization activities
 - Stronger position for CCNR

14: Rhine Convention of Mannheim 1868

- Target: acceptance of the Rhine paragraphs of the Peace of Prague by France and the Netherlands
- The Netherlands
 - Feared Prussian dominance
 - Berlin wanted to extent authority of CCNR to waters linked with the Rhine
 - All building activity along the Rhine
 - Included all defence works of the Holland Waterline
 - Dutch delegation left the negotiations
 - Semi-official Prussian press - *Kölnische Zeitung* - discussed Dutch independence
 - The Hague bowed its head
- Since 1868: Rhine shipping free
 - Canalisation paid by states, not by ship owners
 - Indirect subsidy

- Dutch by then already started to canalize their part of the river by dredging, building summer dikes and groynes and straitening the river
- Now pressure from Germany most severe because after the New Merwede was ready, in dry periods the river really was extremely low

15: 1871 Unification of Germany

- Something changed in Rhine regime
 - Until 1871, situation understandable within realist framework
 - 1815-1831: Balance of power and rivalry
 - 1831-1871: Prussian hegemony
 - Autocratic Prussia: power politics
 - After 1871: Germany dominant in region
 - In the CCNR apart from the Netherlands five seats for German *Länder* (including Alsace)
 - Germany had to find compromises between interests of its member states

16: Rhine canalised

- Dutch spend more money than any other member state on river improvement
- 1890: from Mannheim to the sea open and free
 - o Canalization proved effective
 - o From 1870: growth rail transport limited
 - o Siemens-Martin steel production
 - o Scale enormous: more coal, iron-ore etc. needed
- With the depth of the channel, scale in Rhine shipping could increase
- Rhine shipping became efficient and cheap
- Transport of bulk extremely cheap

In Germany: increased opposition against extremely cheap transport:

- From German ports
- From farmers
- Industry far from waterways
- Industry along Rhine, shipping interests, but also German Rhine states opposed ideas to introduce tolls
 - o Against the Mannheim Convention

- For Prussia and Germany the CCNR too important to go on with such ideas

Until 1831 CCNR seemed a failure

- Essential in technology shift
 - Everywhere else railways destroyed inland navigation
 - Local monopolies in transport: high transport costs
- Regulation railways and shipping done by same ministry
- Rhine area: special shipping commission
 - Took initiatives to prevent collapse navigation
 - Prussian pressure to modernise infrastructure resulted in canalisation
 - From 1880 infrastructure modernised: enormous increase in scale
- 1890 and 1914: Freight rates Rhine shipping decreased by 75 per cent
 - Dutch rail freights rose with 9 percent
 - German rail freights decreased with 9 percent.
 - Competitive transport market in Northwestern Europe
 - Rotterdam became the main German port

17: Did it keep the Dutch out of war in 1914?

- From 1890: Netherlands of growing economic interest for Germany.
 - 25% of German imports and 22% of German exports crossed the Dutch border on a Rhine barge
 - According to the Belgian and French press: Dutch in danger
 - Too important for Germany to keep it neutral in case of war
- Other voices:
- MP Ch. A. baron de Bieberstein 1872:
 - As the Germans can get everything what they need in the Netherlands since it is a free trade country, they will leave us alone
 - Dutch envoy in Berlijn, W.A.F. baron Gevers: expressed in 1907 the same opinion, but complained that nobody realized that
 - 1910: The Times of London: Dutch neutrality is in the interest of Germany: Germany can use the Dutch ports in time of war
 - 1912: *Kölnische Zeitung*.

- Germany can press the Dutch to become a member state of the German Reich
- Will cost a lot for coastal defence
- Dutch will supply us, without hat anyway
- In time of war supply by a neutral country favourable
- Helmuth von Moltke in 1909: In case of war no attack through the Netherlands:
 - Military reasons: extra enemy
 - Combination of the Convention of Mannheim and Declaration of London of 1909 will make it difficult for the enemy to limit imports over Dutch ports as long as these are neutral ports

The Rhine Commission and its work played an essential role in Dutch history