

Berlin Enlightenment

In 1740 Frederick II, known as Frederick the Great, came to power in the Kingdom of Prussia. Under the rule of the philosophically-oriented Frederick II, Berlin gave birth to an intellectual renaissance in which it became one of the most important centers of the Enlightenment in Europe. The city was an important printing press location, as well as the new home of many drama groups. Later, it hosted a National Theater, the Academy of the Arts and the Academy of Sciences.

Central to the Berlin Enlightenment was a learned society of friends known as the *Aufklärer* (en-lighteners), including the publisher and bookseller Friedrich Nicolai, the poet and philosopher Karl Wilhelm Ramler, the philosopher Johann Georg Sulzer, Thomas Abbot, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and Moses Mendelssohn. They pursued literary and literary interests, often linked with the goal of civil emancipation; at the same time, they were loyal and patriotic to the State of Prussia. The union of the civil enlightenment and the state of Prussia and its King bespoke their underlying national goals, and the advancement of German language and literature. This was also hindered by Frederick II's preference for the French language.