The Rise Of Prussia Essay, Research Paper

RISE AND GROWTH OF NATIONAL STATES FORMATION AND GROWTH OF PRUSSIA EARLY HISTORY OF PRUSSIA. The German Ducy of Brandenberg in north central Europe on the Baltic Sea was a part of the Holy Roman Empire. This was ruled by the Hohenzollern family, a line of rulers, called Electors. Since the 15th Century they had gradually extended their borders. FREDERICK WILLIAM – 1640-1688-THE GREAT ELECTOR. Frederick made Prussia first among the German states. He centralized the government, and raised enough money to build up a strong army. His son Frederick I (1701-13) took the title of King of Prussia. Frederick William II (1713-40) annexed Swedish Pomerania. FREDERICK II (THE GREAT) – 1740-1786-GREATEST PRUSSION KING. As an enlightened despot Frederick the Great encouraged education and religious toleration; he promoted industry and built canals, roads and bridges. In foreign affairs, he seized the rich province of Silesia from Austria and successfully fought off attempts to regain it in the Seven Years War (1756-63). This war involved the major nations of Europe, with England on the side of Prussia, and France helping Austria. The war was fought in America, too, but there it was known as the French and Indian War. In 1772 Frederick took part in the first of three partitions of Poland and gained the western part of that country. By the time he died, Frederick had made Prussia the most miltaristic and centralized government in all of Europe. He had also doubled its area and army, and made it a serious rival to Austria in the management of German affairs – long a monopoly of the Hapsburgs. NATIONALISM AS A FACTOR IN WORLD HISTORY THE LANGUAGE OF NATIONALISM. Many 19th-Century authors insisted that just as a person has an inalienable (cannot be surrendered or transferred) right to freedom, so did each nationality have a natural right to a separate political life. The nationalist movement did more to change the map of the world than any other single force. Nationalism is an emotion of feeling of intense loyalty of a group of people to their state. These loyalties may be based on geographical boundaries, one religion, same language, common customs and traditions. A nationality is a group of people who have such a common heritage. A national state is an independent country consisting of such a nationality. Patriotism means devotion to the welfare of one s country. Chauvinism and jingosim are extreme nationalism for unreasonable glory, especially of the sort fed by military deeds. FORMS OF NATIONALIST EXPRESSION. Nationalism expressed itself in a variety of ways. It led to: 1. Changing the Map of the World. As people came under the influence of nationalist ideas, those who were not free from foreign rule sought and fought for their freedom. Since 1945, 40 new countries have come into existence. 2. The Development of Militarism. As the nation-in-arms became more common, the building up of armed forces became an important expression of nationalism. 3. Frequent Wars. Force was the usual method by which a nation won its freedom or, after gaining it, sought to increase its power. 4. Imperialistic Adventures. Winning control of and exploiting undeveloped areas of the world was part of the role of a great power. This became a dominant motive for countries which gained nationhood fairly late – like Germany and Italy. 5. Economic Nationalism. The new national states tried to become self- sufficient. This meant placing tariffs on foreign goods to stimulate domestic production and having colonies serve as sources for raw materials or markets for finished products. HOW NATIONALISM IS KEPT ALIVE. An important force in helping nationalism grow was the state-controlled school system. (That is why many struggles took place on the issue of state- versus-church control of schools.) Studies in geopraphy, history, art and scientific achievement promote feelings of pride. STEPS LEADING TO THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY ROADBLOCKS IN THE WAY 1. Opposition of the many petty rulers, each of whom feared the loss of power. 2. Differences in religion between the Catholic south and the Protestant north. 3. Jealousy and fear of Prussia, the largest state. 4. Rivalry between Austria and Prussia – both competed to control smaller German states. 5. Foreign opposition form France (which did not want a large and powerful neighbor). FACTORS FAVORING UNIFICATION 1. Common language, history and cultural traditions, awakened and stimulated by the writings of Fichte, Herder, Hegel and others. 2. The Industrial Revolution, with roads, railroads and growing trade all uniting the German states. EARLY EFFORTS TOWARD UNIFICATION. 1. Napoleon helped unification by (a) destroying the Holy Roman Empire, (b) reducing the number of German states (c) stimulating nationalism in Prussia after defeating it at Jena. 2. The Congress of Vienna (1815) created a German Conferation of 38 states, with Austria the leader and Prussia second. 3. Formation of the Zollverein (economic union) by Prussia and other German states (1833) established free trade among its members, thus creating an economic basis for union. 4. The Frankfort Assembly (1848) tried to create a unified Germany but failed because of Austrian opposition, differences among the German leaders, and Prussian unwillingness to lead a democratic movement. LEADERS IN THE FIGHT FOR UNIFICATION 1. Otto von Bismarck became chief minister of Prussia, built up the army and prepared Prussia for leadership. Through his blood an iron policy (willingness to use war and force) Bismarck became the chief architect of German unification. 2. William I, King of Prussia, who supported Bismarck and his policies. 3. General H. von Moltke, who planned and led the Prussian armies to victories in the wars that created a united Germany. WARS TO WIN UNIFICATION. 1. The Danish War (1864). In 1863 Denmark annexed the two duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, though they were part of the German confederation. This led to a war in which Austria and Prussia defeated Denmark and took over the duchies. 2. Austro-Prussian War (1866). Bismarck brought about a war with Austria over the future of Schleswig-Holstein. He defeated Austria in the Seven Weeks s War, even though many of the smaller German states sided with Austria. The peace treaty was lenient; the German Confederation, which Austria led, was dissolved, and a North German Confederation created under the leadership of Prussia. Austria was forced to give Venetia to Italy, an ally of Prussia. However, the south German states refused to join the new Confederation. 3. Franco-Prussian War (1870-71). To get these south German states into a united Germany was the next step. These states – Bavaria, Wuttemburg, Baden and Hesse, mainly Catholic – feared Protestant Prussia. Only a war with a foreign nation would lead them into a union for mutual protection. Napoleon III was willing to go to war to save his throne. The result was a disaster for the French. The south German states joined with the other German states, the French armies were destroyed, Paris was besieged and taken. By the Treaty of Frankfort, Alsace-Lorraine was given to Prussia, and a billion dollars was paid to Germany. The German empire was created in January, 1871, with William of Prussia becoming Emperor William I. All German states except Austria were united into one nation. THE GERMAN EMPIRE – ITS GOVERNMENT. The German Empire became the leading power in the continent. Its govern- ment was constitutional in appearance, but in reality autocratic. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE BRANCH POWERS Executive: Commanded the armed forces and controlled German Emperor foreign affairs. Could declare war with the (Kaiser) consent of the Upper House of the legislature.

Appointed one-third of the members of the Bundesrat and thus could control it. Appointed the Chancellor who was responsible only to the Emperor. Could block any proposed change to the Consitution through his votes in the Bundesrat. Had great powers also as King of Prussia. Legislative Upper House Represented hereditary rulers of the 26 (Bundesrat) states of the Empire. Prussia had one-third of the members in this house. All laws had to be approved by the Bundesrat. It was the more important body. Lower House Popularly elected by all adult males over (Reichstag) 25, but had little power except to debate the proposals of the Emperor introduced into the Upper House. 1. Militarism. The German army became the strongest in Europe. Conscription (a draft) was adopted, modern arms and equipment maintained. The German military played an important role in social and political life. 2. Industrialism. Industry in Germany was encouraged by government aid through tariffs (after 1879) and subsidies. Coal and iron production increased, steel manufacturing grew, the chemical industry became a world leader. Railroads were unified nationally. A national system of coinage was introduced. An imperial bank was organized. The German merchant marine began to rival England s. 3. Foreign Relations. The chief aim of Bismarck s foreign policy was to prevent a war of revenge by France. To isolate France a system of alliances was organized. Austria and Russia became members with Germany in the League of the Three Emperors (1873-78). When Austrian and Russian conflicts over the Balkans became serious, Bismarck signed a Dual Alliance with Austria alone (1879), which became the Triple Alliance in 1881 when Italy joined. Bismarck negotiated a secret Reinsurance Treaty with Russia in 1887. 4. Imperialism. Bismarck was opposed to an imperialist program until the 1880 s. However, on demands from German industrialists and nationalists, he began a program of overseas expansion. He seized territory in Africa and in the Pacific. 5. Anti-Catholicism. Catholics were opposed to many of Bismarck s policies. To weaken their influence, Bismarck put through laws in 1872 which expelled the Jesuits form the country. He also put Church training schools under the authority of the government, made civil marriages compulsory and transferred control of education to the state. But this struggle with the Catholic Church, called the Kulturkampf (or battle for civilization ), strengthened the Catholic Center political party which increased its representation in the Reichstag. In 1878 Bismarck was forced to repeal most of these May Laws. 6. Conflict with Socialism. The growth of industrialism in Germany had created a large working class. There was much discontent over poor working conditions and low wages. Socialist progaganda was making headway. To break up this growing influence, the German legislature adopted laws in 1878 and 1890 which banned socialist newspapers and socialist meetings. To persuade the workers to place their faith in him and the German Empire rather than in Marx and socialism, Bismarck adopted a program of social legislation in the 1880 s which included sickness, accident and old age insurances. But in spite of this, the socialists grew in numbers and representation in the Reichstag. 7. Germanization. Against the non-German peoples in the Empire (the French in Alsace-Lorraine, the Poles in Silesia) Bismarck followed policies of Germanization. Only the German language was to be taught in the schools and the publication of books and newspapers in the native language was limited. GERMANY AFTER BISMARCK (1890-1914) Emperor William II forced Bismarck into retirement and increased German power and influence. He built a powerful army and a large navy, second only to Britain s. German industry continued to expand and Germany became a strong competitor of Englan in foreign trade. German imperialism became tougher, challenging France in North Africa and England in the Balkans and the Near East by the construction of the Berlin-to- Bagdad Railroad. William II posed as the friend of the Moslems and his saber rattling (militarist threats) created uneasiness and suspicion of Germany through- out Europe. NATIONALISM IN THE AUSTRIAN EMPIRE NATIONALITIES THAT MADE UP THE AUSTRIAN EMPIRE. The Austrian Empire was the most powerful state in central Europe after the Congress of Vienna. It governed a strange patchwork of peoples and nationalities. Germans were the ruling national group in Austria. They ruled Czechs and Slovaks in Bohemia, Poles in Galicia, Magyars, Rumanians, Serbs and Croats in Hungary, Italians in northern Italy and Slovenes in the Adriatic provinces. After 1815 nationalist ideas spread among many of these people. NATIONALISTIC IDEAS ARE NOT TOLERATED. Neither the Austrian nor Hungarian rulers tolerated the spread of nationalistic ideas among their subject peoples. The Hungarians in particular tried to enforce Magyarization of the Rumanians, Slovaks, Croats and Ruthenians. They required all non-Magyars, to speak the Magyar language and permitted few non-Magyars the right to vote and hold office. The Austrians were more liberal in their treatment of the Poles, Czechs, Slovaks and Italians. They allowed some home rule to the Poles and promised it to others. NATIONALISM IN IRELAND ORIGINS OF THE IRISH PROBLEM. Over a period of hundreds of years, since the 12th Century, England had brought most of the Irish people under her control. English rulers had taken much land from the Irish and given it to English lords. Colonies of Scotch Protestants were settled in Northern Ireland, called Ulster today. In 1801 the Irish Parliament at Dublin was abolished by an Act of Union which created the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The Irish were given representation in the British Parliament, but this did not satisfy them. For the next century the Irish fought for their own Parliament or independence from Great Britain. THE RELIGIOUS PROBLEM IN IRELAND Though most of the Irish were Catholics, and the English were Protesants, the Irish had to pay taxes to support the Anglican Church. Until 1829 only those Irishmen who belonged to the Anglican Protestant Church could become members of Parliament. In 1829 Daniel O Connell, an Irish Catholic, was elected to Parliament. The Irish threatened to revolt if he were barred. Parliament adopted the Catholic Emancipation Act which in 1829 permitted Catholics to sit in Parliament as well as hold public office. In 1869 a Disestablishement Act was passed which provided that the Irish no longer were required to pay taxes for the support of the Anglican Church. THE LAND PROBLEM – SERIOUS AND COMPLICATED. Most of the Irish peasants lived as tenants on farms owned by English landlords who lived in England (absentee landlords). Their rents were high, the land was poor and they always faced the danger of eviction if they complained too much. In 1845-47, the potato famine struck and many Irish emigrated to the United States and elsewhere. In 1879 Charles Parnell organized a Land League to a fight for fair rent, fixed holdings and freedom of land sale. With the support of Prime Minister Gladstone, Parliament passed land acts in 1881 which provided that (1) rents were to be regulated by local land courts, (2) no tenant could be evicted so long as he paid his rent and (3) a tenant was to be paid for improvements when he moved. This law did not solve the problem of absentee landlords. Between 1885 and 1903, the British created a fund from which peasants could borrow money to buy their farms and their landlords, repaying the government in small installments. Thus, absentee landlordism in Ireland was almost ended. THE POLITICAL PROBLEM – THE IRISH DEMAND HOME RULE. The Irish wanted their own Parliament, or self-government, which the English were unwilling to grant. In 1886 Gladstone introduced a Home Rule bill into Parliament which was defeated. In 1893 he introduced a second Home Rule bill which passed the Commons but was defeated by the House of Lords. In 1912-14 a third Home Rule bill was passed by three successive sessions of Commons but never went into operation. The Protesants of Ulster opposed it, as did the Sinn Fein (shinn fayn) Party, which wanted complete independence. In the midst of the quarrel, World War I broke out and the question was put aside. During the war the Sinn Feiners organized the Easter Rebellion (1916), which was put down by the British. The Sinn Feiners, led by Eamon de Valera (dev-ah-lair-ah), set up an Irish Republic in 1918. For the next three years Irish Republicans and British fought.