

The age of absolutism

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Frederick the Great Among the prime reforms that Frederick the great sought was to modernize and unite the otherwise disconnected lands. He thus engaged in wars with Austria in a bid to capture the prosperous province of Silesia. Frederick reformed the judicial system by permitting men out of the noble stock to be part and parcel of judges and senior bureaucrats. He pursued religious policies that advocated for religious tolerance though he showed outright favouritism to Protestantism to other religions. For instance, he did not include Catholic adherents to his senior state positions. While Frederick was a diehard supporter of both art and philosophy, he came up with some laws that barred the press freedom. However, the freedom that the press enjoyed under him was comparatively laudable. Frederick advocated for agricultural reforms and sought to bring as many colonists as possible under Prussia. To achieve this, he repeatedly de-linked himself from ideas of nationality or religious affiliations. Instead, he made the Prussians understand that a person's nationality or religion was of little concern to him. This triggered massive immigration into Prussia thus setting a stage of quick recovery of his nation that had suffered great losses from the wars. Also, similar to leading personalities in the Age of Enlightenment, Frederick was linked to Freemasonry and his adherence made the group legitimate as well as protected their interests.

A reflection of some of the reforms that Frederick the Great made or sought to accomplish, as well as the laws which were passed under his regime clearly sets him apart as an enlightened absolutions. Essentially, enlightened leaders embraced the ideals of the Enlightenment, more so its insistence on governance through rationalities. During his childhood, Frederick was tutored by French instructors who not only instilled French culture in him, but also

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introduced him to both the Roman and Greek classical literature. However, his father was against this and wanted his son to study matters pertaining to politics and military. Following an attempt by Frederick and his friend to escape across the border away from his father's regime, he had to suffer prison term after his arrest. Also, he had to watch his friend being beheaded for the same mistake. This perhaps informs his decision to revamp the judicial system, bring to an end torture, and establish Prussia's first criminal code. The age of Enlightenment was also characterised by territorial protection and economic empowerment. Frederick was keen to ensure that Prussia is protected adequately from foreign aggression from either the Germans or surrounding nations. This made him engage in wars to strengthen and expand the borders of his country. He also extended arable land. Furthermore, despite that he was a freemason and somehow detested Catholics, Frederick still encouraged religious tolerance. He allowed the other religions to engage in their activities without persecution.

In light of the above, I agree with the assertion by most historians that Frederick the Great is a perfect example of Enlightened leader. He applied rationality in his leadership and hardly did he use brutal power against his people. Instead, he sought to make his territory secure, strengthen the economy, fortify the military, and improve systems that governed the countries internal operations. In addition, he sought international alliances with other leaders across the globe so as to strengthen his control of Prussia and surrounding regions.

Work Cited

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