

The second reich was governed by the personal rule of the kaiser essay sample

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During the period of the second Reich, the Kaiser managed to keep a huge amount of power within it. With the ability to dismiss the chancellor and the Reichstag, it can be seen that the Kaiser could manipulate the governing powers until they became a united power which had the same views as him. However, it can be argued that this power that the Kaiser had could not be used freely, as he was limited by how popular he was with both the population and the army. It was this constraint of popularity which meant that the Kaiser had to control what he did in order to keep both the army and the people on his side, meaning that he didn't have absolute personal rule.

With the ability to dissolve the Reichstag or dismiss the Chancellor at his leisure, it can be seen that the Kaiser holds a lot of power within the Reich. This meant that if any of the ministers within the Reich went against what the Kaiser believed or if the chancellor himself went against the Kaiser, he could simply dismiss the chancellor or dismiss the Reich and remove the opposition all together. This type of personal rule is shown within the daily telegraph affair in which a telegraph showing the Kaiser's negative views for Britain was sent ahead and caused outrages within Britain. The consequences of this event was that the Kaiser blamed the chancellor for letting the telegraph go ahead without checking to make sure what message was conveyed within it.

Ultimately, the Kaiser decided to dismiss the Chancellor (Bulow) and when the Reich had the opportunity to challenge the Kaiser over this dismissal, they did not take it up and this showed just how much control the Kaiser had over the second Reich. This control was shown once again through the

Zabern affair, in which soldiers of the German army caused serious outrage when they attacked a disabled man in public and when the population thought that they should have been punished, nothing was done as both the Chancellor and the Kaiser who was acting as the head of the army sided with the soldiers.

The Kaisers control was shown when the Reich voted for no confidence in Bethmann, the chancellor and the Kaiser took no action and Bethmann remained in his position. Both of these events show how much power the Kaiser really had and how little power the Reich had. Ultimately, the Kaiser had an extreme amount of control over the Reich shown through the powers he had available to use such as the dismissal of the chancellor and the Reich itself and he was able to keep this control with the established support he already had within the Reich from army ministers who were high ranked within the Reich. However, it can be argued that this control could not be abused because he needed to keep the popularity of the army and the people to stop any kind of revolution.

There were factors which affected what the Kaiser did and how he used the control that he had over the Reich. The army was a large factor in this because if the Kaiser lost the support of the army then he had no force which he could use to put down any opposition to any actions that the Kaiser may take. Although the Kaiser was acting as the chief of the army, they showed that they were willing to act on their own accord and this showed that they were willing to take actions without the Kaiser's advisory. During the Zabern

affair, the army showed that they were willing to defend their actions taken without the support of the Kaiser or the Chancellor.

With a large army willing to go against the Kaiser in the Zabern affair if the need arose, if they were to go against the Kaiser on a larger scale such as a revolution, the Kaiser would not have any power to stop them as he had no other military force to call upon. This meant that the Kaiser needed to keep the army on his side and keep them supporting him if he was to stay in power. Another factor which reduced the amount of control the Kaiser had on the Reich was the power of Prussia, Prussia had a large majority within the Bundesrat, the governing body which sent topics for the Reich to discuss.

Because of this majority, Prussia could block topics within the Bundesrat meaning that they would never reach the Reichstag and would not have the possibility of being passed as a law. This showed that the Kaiser didn't have personal rule over the Reich as he could not dictate what was passed into the Reichstag from the Bundesrat meaning his power was reduced over the second Reich. Additionally, with the German states still being federal, this meant that they each had individual control over minor policies. So the Kaiser could not control these policies for Germany as each state would have a different view on them. This meant that the Kaiser did not have personal rule because he could not enforce a policy change on the states if they were on the minor policies, reducing his control.

In the end, the Kaiser had forces which he needed to appease to stay in power such as the army and the large groups within the Reich and Bundesrat

such as the Elites as well as small factors within the constitution which the Kaiser never read which reduced his power such as the states being federal meaning that he did not have complete personal rule. Overall, the Kaiser held an immensely significant amount of power within Germany and the Reich however, this control could not be considered personal rule as the Kaiser had to stay within the constraints which would keep him popular with large powers such as the army so that he could stop any real opposition and the elites so that he could control what was passed in the Reichstag without having to dissolve it and lose popularity with the population.

As well as this, his control was reduced from the start with the states being federal, he did not have absolute control over some of the policies of Germany, this all meant that the Kaiser could use all of his control but he had to be careful as to what he used and when he used it which completely goes against the notion of 'personal rule'.