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Part 7. England: Democracy Through Evolution

UNDEMOCRATIC FEATURES OF THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT (1750)

Although the English had taken important steps toward democracy (see pages 147-149), England in 1750 retained many undemocratic features of government.

1. Voting Restrictions. By property qualifications, voting for members of the House of Commons was limited chiefly to wealthy landowners. More than 85 percent of the adult male population could not vote. Women had no political rights.

2. Open Ballot. Voting took place by an open show of hands, not by secret ballot. The open ballot deterred many persons from voting their true beliefs, and encouraged intimidation and bribery.

3. Unfair Representation. In apportioning representation to the House of Commons, the law ignored population shifts, caused by the Industrial Revolution, from rural districts to factory cities. Whereas the newly populated urban centers, such as Manchester and Leeds, remained unrepresented in parliament, areas with greatly reduced populations retained their original representation. These depopulated districts were called *rotten boroughs*. A district in which a powerful landowner personally selected the representative to the House of Commons was called a *pocket borough*.

4. Officeholding Restrictions. A man could not hold public office unless he (a) owned considerable property, (b) could afford to serve without salary, and (c) was a member of the Church of England or of some other Protestant sect. These restrictions closed government service to Catholics, Jews, and poor people.

5. Power of the Hereditary House of Lords. Since laws required the consent of both branches of Parliament, legislation desired by the elected House of Commons could be defeated by the hereditary House of Lords.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM IN ENGLAND TEMPORARILY HALTED BY EVENTS IN FRANCE (1789-1815)

The movement for democratic reform in England was delayed during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Eras. Englishmen associated reform with the violence and bloodshed of the French Reign of Terror, and were too preoccupied with Napoleon to bend their efforts to domestic reform. However, after Napoleon's exile in 1815, English liberals revived the movement for democratic reform.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM IN ENGLAND: PROGRESS THROUGH EVOLUTION

In the struggle to bring political democracy to Britain, the opposing sides each gave way a little to avoid violence. They thus practiced the method of *compromise*. Reformers sought to accomplish their purpose by a gradual step-by-step approach. Opponents of reform yielded under the pressure of overwhelming public sentiment. For these reasons, we say that England achieved democracy through *evolution*. (This contrasts with France's search for democracy through *revolution*.)

THE STRUGGLE TO EXTEND THE RIGHT TO VOTE

1. The Reform Bill of 1832. The introduction of this bill constituted the first important test of the "evolutionary" method. The bill represented a moderate step forward and enjoyed widespread public approval. In Commons, it was passed by the Whig party over Tory opposition. In the hereditary House of Lords, the bill was approved only after the King threatened to appoint enough new liberal Lords to ensure its passage. (Whereas the English nobles yielded peacefully and enfranchised the middle class, at about

the same time the French ruling classes employed repression, which led to the Revolution of 1830.)

This "Great Reform Bill" (a) reduced property qualifications for voting so as to enfranchise the middle class, (b) took representation away from many rotten and pocket boroughs, and (c) granted representation to many populous industrial cities. By these provisions, the bill shifted control of the House of Commons from the landed aristocracy to the commercial and industrial middle class.

2. The Chartist Movement. City workers, not enfranchised by the Reform Bill of 1832, organized the *Chartist Movement*. In the "People's Charter" they petitioned the government for (a) universal manhood suffrage, (b) equal election districts, (c) the secret ballot, (d) annual elections of Parliament, (e) removal of property qualifications for members of Parliament, and (f) salaries for members of Parliament. To rally support, the Chartists used mass meetings and parades.

The Chartist movement died out following its failure to secure reforms in 1848. In subsequent years, however, almost all Chartist demands were enacted into law.

3. The Reform Bill of 1867. This bill further reduced property qualifications for voting so as to enfranchise city workers. It was guided through Parliament by *Benjamin Disraeli*, the leader of the Conservative (formerly Tory) party. Disraeli hoped that the newly enfranchised city workers would join the landed aristocracy in the Conservative party. Together, he hoped, they could outvote the merchants and factory owners in the Liberal (formerly Whig) party. In this hope Disraeli was largely disappointed. The city workers usually supported the Liberals to obtain further democratic reforms. Later, they formed their own Labor party.

4. The Reform Bill of 1884. This bill extended the right to vote to agricultural workers. It was passed by the Liberal party under its Prime Minister, *William Gladstone*.

5. The Reform Bill of 1918. All men over 21 years of age received the right to vote, thus achieving *universal manhood suffrage*. Also, the law granted the vote to most women over 30. This reform, in appreciation of the contributions made by women during World War I, represented a triumph for the *suffragettes*. These advocates of woman suffrage were part of the *women's rights* movement for educational, professional, legal, and occupational equality with men.

6. The Reform Bill of 1928. In 1928 Parliament granted the right to vote to all women over 21 years of age. At last, England achieved the goal of *universal suffrage*.

LIMITING THE POWER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

1. Undemocratic Aspects of the House of Lords. No matter how many Englishmen were given the right to vote, Parliament could not be a truly democratic body while the House of Lords had equal powers with the House of Commons. Whereas the House of Commons is elected, the House of Lords is chiefly hereditary. As long as both Houses had to approve laws, the Lords could block any measure voted by the people's elected representatives in Commons. Furthermore, one party, the Conservatives, is assured permanent control of the House of Lords, since the Lords are mostly wealthy landowners—conservative in outlook.

2. The Issue of the 1909 Budget. The conflict between the House of Commons and the House of Lords came to a head over the *Budget of 1909*. In this bill, *Lloyd George*, Chancellor of the Exchequer (Treasury) in the Liberal party government, proposed to place heavy taxes on large incomes and estates. The budget was rejected by the landowners controlling the House of Lords. Parliament was dissolved and the budget issue carried to the people. In the election of January, 1910, Lloyd George's proposals won public approval as the Liberals were returned to power. The budget was reintroduced and, in view of the election results, accepted by the Lords.

3. The Parliament Act of 1911. The Liberals believed that public opinion was now aroused against the House of Lords. They therefore introduced a bill to weaken the Lords' legislative powers. After passage in Commons, the bill was defeated in the House of Lords. Parliament was again dissolved and the issue carried to the people. In December, 1910, the people voiced their approval of the bill by again returning the Liberals to power. When the Lords still refused to accept the bill, the King threatened to appoint enough new liberal Lords to ensure the bill's passage. Finally, in 1911 the bill was passed.

The *Parliament Act of 1911* provided that, even though the House of Lords withholds its consent, (a) money bills, approved by the Commons once, become law after thirty days, and (b) other bills, approved by the Commons three consecutive times over at least two years, become law. Thus, the act reduced the Lords' power over legislation to a temporary or *suspensive veto*. The act established the supremacy of the elected House of Commons over the hereditary House of Lords.

4. The Parliament Act of 1949. The Labor party government, expecting Conservative opposition to its nationalization program, proposed in 1947 to reduce the Lords' suspensive veto over general legislation to only one year. The government bill, twice rejected by the Lords, was three times passed by the Commons and became law in 1949. Thus, in the British government today, the House of Lords plays only a very minor role.

OTHER DEMOCRATIC REFORMS

1. In 1829 the *Catholic Emancipation Act* granted Catholics the right to serve in Parliament.
2. In 1833 slavery was abolished in all British possessions.
3. In 1858 Jews received the right to serve in Parliament.
4. In 1858 property qualifications for members of Parliament were removed.
5. In 1872 open voting was replaced by the secret, or *Australian*, ballot. (The secret ballot had originated in Australia.)
6. In 1885 the *Redistribution Bill* established election districts approximately equal in population.
7. In 1911 House of Commons elections were required at least once every five years.
8. In 1911 members of Commons received salaries.

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TODAY: AN ANALYSIS

The government of Great Britain (1) illustrates peaceful evolution from aristocracy to democracy, and (2) has served as a model for other democratic nations, including Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in the British Commonwealth, and Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, and Belgium in western Europe. The major features of the English *parliamentary system* are:

1. **No Formal Constitution.** Britain, unlike other democracies, has no formal written constitution. Instead, the British consider their constitution to be made up of (a) *written documents and laws*, such as *Magna Carta* (1215), the *Bill of Rights* (1689), and the *sufrage reform bills* (1832-1928), and (b) *unwritten precedents* (customs and traditions), such as cabinet responsibility to Commons.
 2. **The Monarch.** Great Britain is a monarchy, officially headed by a King or Queen. At one time an absolute ruler, today the British sovereign is a *figurehead*, said to "reign but not rule." The sovereign performs certain political duties, but is restricted by precedent. (a) He selects the Prime Minister, but by precedent must choose for this position the leader of the majority party in Commons. (b) He considers the bills passed by Parliament, but by precedent must approve them. (The last royal veto of a bill occurred in 1707.) (c) He reads the "Speech From the Throne" at the opening of Parliament, but by precedent he must advocate the program of the cabinet.
- The monarch's chief duties are social and ceremonial, such as welcoming foreign statesmen and dedicating public improvements. Most important, the

monarch serves as a symbol of unity for the people of Britain and the British Commonwealth of Nations.

3. Parliament. The English legislature consists of two Houses.

- a. The *House of Lords*, the lesser body, may only delay legislation temporarily. Lords consists of about 1,000 members, mostly hereditary, of whom on the average some 200 attend sessions.
 - b. The *House of Commons*, the supreme legislative body, has unlimited power to pass laws. Commons consists of 630 members, called MP's, meaning members of Parliament. They are directly elected by the people voting by districts. (Commons is often referred to as Parliament.)
4. **Cabinet Membership.** The cabinet consists of (a) the Prime Minister, who is the leader of the majority party in Commons, and (b) about twenty members of Parliament selected by the Prime Minister from his party. To promote national unity during crises, the Prime Minister may include in his cabinet some members of Parliament from the opposition party, thereby forming a *coalition government*. This was done during both world wars.

5. **Cabinet Powers.** The cabinet exercises both executive and legislative functions.

a. **Executive.** (1) The Prime Minister is the head of the government, and directs and coordinates its activities. (2) Each cabinet member heads a department, such as Foreign Affairs, Exchequer (Treasury), Commonwealth Relations, and Defense. (3) The cabinet enforces laws passed by Parliament.

b. **Legislative.** (1) Cabinet members are also members of Commons. (Occasionally, a cabinet member is chosen from the House of Lords.) (2) The cabinet draws up the legislative program of the majority party, prepares the necessary bills, introduces them into Commons, defends them in debate, and guides them to passage.

6. **Cabinet Responsibility.** The cabinet remains in office as long as it commands the support of a majority in Commons. If Commons votes "no confidence" in the cabinet or rejects a major cabinet-sponsored bill, the cabinet no longer controls Commons. Then the cabinet must either (a) resign, whereupon the opposition majority in Commons forms a new cabinet, or, as is done more frequently, (b) "go to the country"—dissolve Commons and call for new elections. If the majority in the newly elected Commons supports the cabinet, it remains in office; if the majority is hostile, the cabinet resigns, and a new government is formed by the opposition leader.

At all times, the cabinet is directly responsible to the majority in Commons and thereby indirectly responsible to the people.

TWO DEMOCRACIES: DIFFERENCES IN GOVERNMENT

ENGLAND	THE UNITED STATES
1. The constitution is <i>not</i> a single formal written document prepared at one time. Rather, the fundamental principles of government are contained in historic precedents, documents, and laws. These are subject to easy change.	1. A formal written constitution, drawn up at Philadelphia in 1787, established the fundamental structure and principles of government. The constitution may be amended only by a complex process.
2. Great Britain is a monarchy, headed by a hereditary ruler. The King or Queen is a <i>figurehead</i> , having no power but serving as a symbol of unity.	2. The United States is a republic, headed by an elected President. He is the chief executive and exercises great power.
3. Parliament is the legislature, consisting of (a) the hereditary House of Lords with minor powers, and (b) the elected House of Commons with unlimited legislative powers.	3. Congress is the legislature, consisting of two elected houses—the House of Representatives and the Senate—both exercising practically equal powers.
4. The House of Commons is elected for a maximum term of five years but may be dissolved earlier if the Prime Minister calls for new elections.	4. Congressional terms of office are definite. Representatives serve for two years, Senators for six.
5. The Prime Minister secures office as the leader of the majority party in Parliament.	5. The President is chosen by a nationwide vote (as expressed through the electoral college).
6. (a) The cabinet is selected by the Prime Minister from members of his party in Parliament. (b) The cabinet exercises both executive and legislative functions, thereby ignoring the principle of separation of powers. (c) The Prime Minister and his cabinet remain in office as long as they command a majority in Commons. Their term of office may span the life of more than one House of Commons. (d) Cabinet responsibility to Parliament assures that the same party controls the executive and legislative branches. Thus, the two branches always work in harmony.	6. (a) The cabinet is selected by the President from persons outside Congress, who take office with the consent of the Senate. (b) The cabinet exercises executive functions chiefly, thereby observing the principle of separation of powers. (c) The President serves a four-year term and is limited to no more than two terms. The cabinet remains in office at the will of the President. (d) The President (and his cabinet) may belong to one political party, while Congress (or either House) may be under control of another party. Thus, conflicts may arise between the executive and legislative branches.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN GREAT BRITAIN

1. **Liberal Party.** The *Liberals* (formerly called Whigs) played a leading role in British history in the 19th and early 20th centuries. As the Labor party developed, however, the Liberals lost their upper-class supporters to the Conservatives and their lower-class supporters to the Laborites. In 1981, as a minor party, they joined in alliance with the new Social Democratic party.

2. **Conservative Party.** The *Conservatives* (called Tories before the 1832 suffrage bill) remain one of Britain's major parties. They draw strong support from the aristocracy and upper middle class: large landowners, prosperous farmers, industrialists, merchants, bankers, and professionals. However, their success in recent elections shows that their leadership and program appeal also to less prosperous citizens. The Conservatives (a) advocate free enterprise under capitalism, with government regulation to prevent abuses, (b) favor the continuation of existing social services, and (c) seek close cooperation with the United States on international affairs. Under Margaret Thatcher as party leader and then Prime Minister, the Conservatives won large majorities in the elections of 1979, 1983, and 1987.

3. **Labor Party.** In 1901 the Labor party was created by Socialist reformers (see page 238) and practical labor union leaders.

Since the 1920's Labor has been one of Britain's major parties. The Laborites have drawn their support mainly from the lower middle class and workers: small farmers, shopkeepers, and union members. They traditionally (a) believed in a socialist economy with government ownership of important industries, (b) urged expanding national welfare programs, and (c) favored cooperation (but less than the Conservatives) with the United States.

Labor's defeat in the 1979 election led to a serious split in the party. Leftists who controlled the party favored these policies: within Britain—more radical socialist measures; in foreign affairs—withdrawal from the Common Market, opposition to NATO, and giving up British nuclear weapons. A number of moderate Labor MPs and former cabinet members left in 1981 to form what they hoped would be a broad-based *Social Democratic party* (see below).

Labor did poorly in the 1983 and 1987 elections. The party's 1983 tally (28 percent of the popular vote) was its worst showing in 60 years. In 1987 Labor won 31 percent of the vote, still far short of the Conservatives' 42 percent.

Neil Kinnock, chosen party leader after the 1983 defeat, sought to moderate Labor's policies to enhance the party's appeal to middle-class voters, for example, by softening his disapproval of the Common Market. After the 1987 election the party "democratized" its methods of selecting parliamentary candidates by reducing the influence of party activists (mainly leftists) and increasing the role of rank-and-file members. The party also reduced its emphasis on traditional policies such as nationalizing private industries.

4. **Social Democratic Party.** Forming the moderate Social Democratic party in 1981, organizers declared their support: within Britain—for a mixed economy of public and private enterprise; in foreign affairs—for a firm commitment to the Common Market and NATO.

At election times, the Social Democrats and Liberals worked together in a loose coalition called the *Alliance*, while each party kept its own leaders and policies. The Alliance won a respectable number of votes (22 to 23 percent) but relatively few seats in Parliament. After the 1987 election, members of the Social Democratic party voted to merge with the Liberal party.

Thereafter Social Democratic candidates with Liberal party support won important by-elections and raised hopes for future Alliance success. In the 1983 general elections, however, the Alliance gained only 23 seats in Commons, although it polled 25 percent of the popular vote—close to that polled by the Labor party. With *David Owen* heading the Social Democrats and *David Steel* leading the Liberals, the Alliance made plans to eclipse the Labor party as the main alternative to the Thatcher Conservative government.

OUTSTANDING LEADERS (19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES)

1. **Liberals:** (a) *William Gladstone* won passage of the Reform Bill of 1884. (b) *Herbert Asquith* won passage of the Parliament Act of 1911. (c) *David Lloyd George* fought for the Budget of 1909.

2. **Conservatives:** (a) *Benjamin Disraeli* sponsored the Reform Bill of 1867. (b) *Winston Churchill* exemplified British courage and determination as he guided the nation to victory in World War II (1945).

3. **Laborite:** *Clement Attlee*, Prime Minister from 1945 to 1951, nationalized important industries and expanded welfare programs.

Part 8. France: Democracy Through War and Revolution

SECOND FRENCH REPUBLIC (1848-1852)

By the Revolution of 1848 (see page 176), France established her Second Republic and elected Louis Napoleon as President. From this nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, the French envisioned stable government, economic prosperity, and foreign glory.

Louis Napoleon, however, used his elected position to further his personal power and popularity. He posed as the defender of democratic government, but in 1852 Louis Napoleon ended the republic and proclaimed the *Second French Empire* with himself as Emperor *Napoleon III*. In a plebiscite, the people approved these changes.

SECOND FRENCH EMPIRE (1852-1870)

1. **Government.** Napoleon III retained outward democratic forms: a constitution, a legislature, and universal male suffrage. In reality, his government was a dictatorship typified by secret police, censorship of the press, and state-controlled elections.

2. **Early Popularity.** Napoleon III gained support among (a) *city workers*—by legalizing unions and granting them a limited right to strike, and by providing employment on public works, (b) the *middle class*—by improving banking and credit facilities, by promoting railroad and canal building, and by encouraging the growth of industry, and (c) *nationalists*—by expanding French colonial control in Algeria, by seizing part of Indo-China, and by joining with England to defeat Russia in the Crimean War.

3. **Later Discontent.** Napoleon earned the hostility of (a) *advocates of democracy*—who realized that the Empire was a veiled dictatorship, (b) *Catholics*—who feared that Napoleon's aid to Italian unification was a threat to Church control of the Papal States, and (c) *nationalists*—who felt a loss of pride over Napoleon's humiliating failure in Mexico.

This was the *Maximilian Affair*. In 1863, with the United States engaged in the Civil War, the French invaded Mexico and enthroned their puppet, the Hapsburg *Maximilian*. By attempting to control Mexico, Napoleon violated the Monroe Doctrine (see page 175). In 1865, when the Civil War ended, the United States placed an army at the Mexican border and ordered the French to withdraw. Napoleon removed his troops. Maximilian remained, was captured by Mexican troops, and died before a firing squad.

4. **Downfall.** To revive his popularity and to check Prussian power, Napoleon opposed German unification. Bismarck, the chief minister of Prussia, wanted a war and goaded Napoleon into beginning hostilities. In the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), the French army was overwhelmed and Napoleon III was taken prisoner. French republicans, led by *Leon Gambetta*, declared the end of the Second French Empire.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THIRD FRENCH REPUBLIC (1871-1879)

The National Assembly, elected in 1871, contained a majority of royalists (or monarchists). They had won the election on the pledge to bring about an immediate peace; the republican minority, on the other hand, had favored continuing the war against Prussia. The royalists promptly accepted Prussia's harsh peace terms in the Treaty of Frankfurt (see page 205).

Regarding government, the National Assembly agreed to reestablish a monarchy, but was unable to decide between a Bourbon and an Orleanist king. In moves meant to be temporary, the royalists in 1871 set up a republic, and in 1875 outlined a governmental framework by four *Organic Laws*. These laws became the constitution of the *Third French Republic*. In elections between 1875 and 1879, the royalists lost control of the government to the republicans. These victories doomed royalist plans to restore monarchy.

EARLY CRISES IN THE THIRD REPUBLIC

The royalists, chiefly nobles and army officers, bitterly assailed the republic and plotted its destruction. The royalists were supported by the clericals, who included devout lay Catholics and high clergy. The clericals, remembering the Revolution of 1789, feared that a republic would weaken the Catholic Church in France.

There were two major attempts by the royalist forces to overthrow the republican government.

1. **Boulangier Affair.** In the late 1880's General *Georges Boulanger*, hero of the antirepublican groups, apparently planned to seize the government. To forestall a coup d'état, the republic in 1889 charged him with treason and ordered his arrest. Boulanger fled the country and soon afterwards committed suicide. By successfully handling the Boulanger threat, the Republic increased its prestige.

2. **Dreyfus Affair.** In 1894 *Alfred Dreyfus*—a French army captain, republican, and Jew—was court-martialed by royalist officers and declared guilty of selling military documents to Germany. Monarchists, clericals, and anti-Semites all cited the Dreyfus case to discredit the Republic. To Dreyfus' defense rallied the republicans. *Emile Zola*, in an open letter, "J'Accuse," charged the army high command with "framing" Dreyfus and seeking to

destroy the republic. In 1906, following several dramatic trials, Dreyfus was finally declared innocent, restored to military service, promoted, and awarded the Legion of Honor.

The Dreyfus Affair (a) swung public opinion strongly toward the Republic, (b) discredited anti-Semitism in France, (c) spurred the government to replace monarchist army officers with loyal republicans, and (d) brought about laws to weaken clerical influence.

ANTICLERICAL LAWS (1901, 1905)

1. The Associations Law of 1901 had the effect of closing schools conducted by religious orders. The law aimed to compel pupils to attend public schools, where they would be exposed to republican books and teachers.

2. The Separation Law of 1905 abrogated (ended) the Concordat of 1801 (see page 169). No longer would the government nominate bishops and pay salaries to the clergy. The law meant complete separation of Church and State.

GOVERNMENT OF THE THIRD FRENCH REPUBLIC (1875-1940)

1. Constitutional Framework. The Third Republic's constitution (the Organic Laws of 1875) established a democratic government as follows: (a) All men received the right to vote. (b) The elected legislature—the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate—passed the laws. (c) The President, chosen by the legislature, served as a figurehead. (d) The cabinet, headed by the Premier, governed the country, exercising both executive and legislative powers. The cabinet was responsible to the Chamber of Deputies and remained in power as long as it commanded a majority of the Deputies.

2. Political Parties. Many political parties arose and elected members to the Chamber of Deputies. They were seated by party: (a) radicals at the left, (b) moderates at the center, and (c) reactionaries at the right. (This seating arrangement illustrates the political meaning of the terms *Leftist*, *Centrist*, and *Rightist*.)

3. Bloc Government. Since many parties were represented in the Chamber of Deputies, no one party alone could command a majority of seats. Consequently, a cabinet was formed by a bloc, or coalition, of several parties. If one of the parties in a bloc disagreed with the others on a major issue, it left the cabinet. Frequently, the cabinet thereupon no longer had a majority in the Chamber. Then a new bloc, representing a new majority, formed a new cabinet. During the 65 years of the Third Republic, such cabinet changes occurred more than 100 times. Although democratic, the bloc system did not provide stable, efficient government.

4. Accomplishments. In *domestic matters*, the Third Republic (a) survived royalist plots aimed at its destruction, (b) separated Church and State, (c) provided free, compulsory public elementary education, (d) established a social security system of sickness and old age insurance, and (e) encouraged business growth and prosperity.

In *foreign affairs*, the Third Republic (a) expanded the French colonial Empire in northern Africa and Indo-China, (b) together with its allies, defeated Germany in World War I, and (c) in the late 1930's, prepared, though inadequately, to meet the threat of an armed Nazi Germany.

5. Downfall. The Third Republic ended when German armies overran France at the beginning of World War II (see page 388). The Nazis directly ruled over northern and western France, called the *occupied zone*. The Nazis permitted a puppet French government, with its capital at the city of Vichy, to rule unoccupied France. Under Marshal *Henri Pétain*, the Vichy regime was a French version of an authoritarian state.

Meanwhile, in England, General *Charles de Gaulle* established a *Free French* government-in-exile to continue the war against Nazi Germany.

GOVERNMENT OF THE FOURTH FRENCH REPUBLIC (1946-1958)

1. Constitution. After France was liberated from German occupation, it established the *Fourth Republic*. The constitution, similar to that of the Third Republic, provided a democratic but unstable government.

a. *Universal Suffrage*. All men and, for the first time, women received the right to vote.

b. *Weak President*. Elected for a 7-year term by the legislature, the President was a figurehead.

c. *Powerful Legislature*. The legislature consisted of two houses. (1) The *Council of the Republic*, indirectly elected, could hold up legislation only temporarily. (2) The *National Assembly*, directly elected for a 5-year term, *alone* could pass laws. Also, it could overthrow the cabinet.

d. *Responsible Cabinet*. Headed by the Premier, the cabinet governed France, exercising both executive and legislative powers. The cabinet remained in office as long as it controlled a majority in the Assembly.

2. Leading Political Parties

a. *Extreme Left*. The *Communist party* opposed France's pro-Western foreign policy and favored a French Communist dictatorship.

b. *Center*. Four main parties existed in the "center": the left center *Socialists*, the center *Radicals* and *Popular Republicans* (Christian Democrats), and the right center *Independents*. These parties differed regarding business controls, labor policies, tax measures, Catholic interests, and the Algerian rebellion. However, they united in allegiance to the Republic.

THE GERMAN EMPIRE: UNDEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

1. **Autocracy.** (a) Unlike the English King, the German ruler was no figurehead. The Kaiser commanded the armed forces, conducted foreign affairs, and appointed his choices to major government positions. (b) The *Chancellor* (Prime Minister) and other cabinet members were responsible to the Kaiser, not to the legislature. (c) In the two-house legislature, the *Bundesrat*—whose members were appointed by the heads of the various states—exercised important law-making powers; the popularly elected *Reichstag* had few powers.

2. **Prussian Domination.** Prussia contained almost two-thirds of the area and the population of the Empire. The King of Prussia automatically became Emperor of Germany. The chief minister of Prussia usually served as Chancellor of Germany. Prussia controlled enough votes in the *Bundesrat* to block any military law, tax measure, or constitutional amendment.

THE GERMAN EMPIRE UNDER BISMARCK'S DIRECTION (1871-1890)

As Germany's *Iron Chancellor*, Bismarck pursued conservative and nationalist policies.

1. **Centralization of Power.** To promote uniformity within Germany, the national government took away from the states their control over railways, telegraph lines, postal service, banking, and coinage. Also, national codes of law replaced the varying state legal systems.

2. **Continuation of Militarism.** The Empire adopted the Prussian system of compulsory, peacetime military service. Militarism was extolled by government officials, patriotic societies, and nationalist writers. In conducting foreign affairs, Bismarck emphasized military alliances.

3. **Encouragement of Industrialization.** Unification encouraged economic growth. Germany rapidly changed from an agricultural to a predominantly industrial nation and experienced great prosperity. The German government, eager to attain economic self-sufficiency, assisted the industrialists by (a) **high tariffs** to protect home industry against foreign competitors, and (b) **imperialism** to secure colonial raw materials and markets.

4. **Persecution of Subject Nationalities.** Bismarck tried to compel the Empire's minorities—Poles, Danes, and Frenchmen—to forsake their own cultures and adopt German ways. Despite persecution, these minority groups resisted *Germanization*.

5. **Measures Against Catholics.** The German Catholics, who inhabited chiefly the four southern states, opposed Bismarck and feared domination

by Protestant Prussia. To protect their interests, Catholics organized the *Center party*, which advocated stronger states' rights. Bismarck opposed the Catholics because of their attitude on states' rights and because of their ties to the Pope. This loyalty to an international Church, Bismarck believed, evidenced a lack of German nationalism.

To weaken the Catholic Church, Bismarck in 1872 started a struggle called, by his supporters, the battle for civilization, or *Kulturkampf*. He secured laws placing the Catholic clergy under state control, ending Church influence in education, and requiring civil marriage ceremonies. These measures, denounced by the Pope and defied by clergy and laymen, intensified Catholic resistance and helped the Center party increase its representation in the Reichstag. Eventually, Bismarck permitted the repeal of most of the anti-Catholic laws as he realized their failure and desired Catholic support against another enemy, the Socialists.

6. **Measures Against the Socialists.** As German industry grew, city workers became more numerous and sought higher wages and better working conditions. The workers voted for the Reichstag candidates of the *Social Democratic (Socialist) party*. The Socialists pleaded the workers' cause and denounced Bismarck's policies of autocracy and militarism. Bismarck detested the Socialists because of their democratic, antimilitarist attitude and their ties to the international Socialist movement. He felt that supporters of any worldwide organization could not be true German patriots.

To combat the German Socialists, Bismarck employed: (a) **Repression.** In 1878 he secured laws which forbade Socialist meetings, banned their publications, and subjected their leaders to arrest. (b) **Social Security.** Bismarck believed that the workers would reject the Socialist party if they received government help toward economic security. Between 1883 and 1889, therefore, he secured laws to assist workers financially in case of sickness, accident, and old age. (Bismarck's social insurance program set an example later followed by most industrial nations. See pages 241-242.)

Neither repressive laws nor social legislation weakened Socialism in Germany. Even operating under severe handicaps, the Socialist party spread its ideas and even increased its Reichstag membership.

7. **Foreign Policies.** See page 335.

THE GERMAN EMPIRE UNDER WILLIAM II

In 1888 *William II*, a strong-willed believer in the "divine right" of kings, inherited the throne. Determined to direct German affairs personally, the new Kaiser in 1890 dismissed Bismarck from office.

Kaiser William II reversed two of Bismarck's policies: friendship for Russia and repression of Socialists. Otherwise he maintained Bismarckian conservatism and nationalism. William ruled autocratically. He favored Junker landlords, industrialists, and military officers; strengthened the army and built an imposing navy; and furthered imperialism.

The Kaiser's policies of militarism and imperialism helped bring about World War I. Still later, Adolf Hitler followed a course of militarism and imperialism, and brought on World War II.

D. IRELAND: FORMER COMMONWEALTH MEMBER

ECONOMY AND PEOPLE

An agricultural country, raising grains, potatoes, and sugar beets, Ireland—the *Emerald Isle*—exports farm produce and imports manufactured goods. It trades chiefly with Britain. Ireland's 3 million people are Catholic.

BRIEF HISTORY

England conquered Ireland during the Middle Ages and for several hundred years ruled the country harshly. In the 19th and early 20th centuries the British gradually enacted reforms to eliminate major Irish grievances.

1. **Religious Issue.** Protestant England discriminated against Catholic Ireland by (a) forbidding Catholics to hold political office, and (b) taxing Catholics to support the Anglican Church in Ireland.

Solution. In 1829 the *Catholic Emancipation Act* declared Catholics eligible for public office. In 1869 the *Disestablishment Act* ended taxation of Irish Catholics for the support of a Church to which they did not belong.

2. **Land Issue.** Through conquest and rule, Englishmen gained ownership of most Irish farmlands. Chiefly *absentee landlords*, the English extorted high rents from the Irish peasants who remained as tenant farmers. (The Irish raised potatoes as their principal crop and main food. During Ireland's potato famine of the 1840's, many Irish migrated to the United States.)

Solution. From 1870 to 1903 Parliament passed several *Land Acts* providing long-term, low-interest government loans to enable Irish tenant farmers to purchase their land holdings. The leading advocate of such legislation was Britain's Prime Minister, *William Gladstone*.

3. **Independence Issue.** Britain denied Irish demands for self-government and independence. Twice in the late 19th century, Parliament defeated Gladstone's proposals for Irish *home rule*.

In 1905 Irish nationalists formed the *Sinn Fein party*. Its outstanding leader was *Eamon de Valera*. In 1916, while Britain was fighting World War I, the Irish revolted in the unsuccessful *Easter Rebellion*. Thereafter the Sinn Fein began guerrilla warfare to evict the British.

Solution. In 1921 Ireland (without Northern Ireland) received dominion status. Gradually the Irish government severed its political ties to Britain. During World War II Ireland remained officially neutral. In 1949 the *Republic of Ireland* withdrew from the Commonwealth.

NORTHERN IRELAND: A PERSISTENT AND COMPLEX ISSUE

Northern Ireland, containing six of the nine provinces of Ulster, is sometimes referred to as Ulster. Northern Ireland contains two groups hostile toward each other: (1) Scotch-Irish Protestants, descendants of 17th-century English and Scotch settlers, who are pro-British and total two-thirds of the population, and (2) Irish Catholics who are anti-British. By the 1920 Government of Ireland Act, the British Parliament divided Ireland so that the North could remain part of Great Britain. This division was condemned by Ireland, which demanded the return of the six northern provinces.

In 1969 Northern Ireland erupted into violence. The local Protestant-dominated government pledged to remedy justifiable Catholic grievances of police brutality and of discrimination in voting, jobs, and public housing. Despite this pledge, Catholic militants in the outlawed *Irish Republican Army (IRA)* continued bombings and shootings. They blamed Britain for the political division of the island and demanded that Ulster be reunited with the rest of Ireland. Protestant militants organized their own paramilitary force, the *Ulster Defense Association*. As violence continued, Britain sent troops to Ulster, suspended the local government, and imposed direct British rule. The Irish Republic also moved against the IRA, claiming that IRA terrorism was hindering the reunification of Ireland by embittering relations between Catholics and Protestants in Ulster. In combatting terrorism, British authorities in Northern Ireland sometimes violated the civil rights of IRA suspects.

Britain tried to restore local government in 1974 and again in 1982 under a power-sharing arrangement between Catholics and Protestants. Each time, the effort failed due to lack of cooperation. In 1985 Britain reached an agreement with the Republic of Ireland under which the Republic would play a consultative role in deciding a broad range of policy matters in Northern Ireland. Hard-liners on both the Protestant and Catholic sides denounced the agreement. Violence continued, but at a lower level than in the 1970's. By the late 1980's the death toll due to violence in Northern Ireland had topped 2,600.