

Student Essay on Germany Did Not Unite

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Essay

The Holy Roman Empire had a lot of political and religious tension which prevented the unification of the German states. Protestants were uneasy because in the early 1600s the empire favored Catholicism. This caused German Lutheran and Protestant states to join a Protestant Union to separate themselves from the emperor's rule, allowing them to practice their beliefs and religion.

Under the rule of a weak emperor the German states became further separated. The tension increased until a highly religious war broke out, the Thirty Years' War. Protestants were forced to give up their captured land back to the Catholic Church. Protestants wanted no part of the Catholic based government.

The Thirty Years' War was not won by either side which forced a draw finalized by the Peace of Westphalia. The war forced states to be more independent from the emperor and the outcome was the separation of power into 300 states, the emperor was left with very little control.

Instead of a central government being formed, the religious conflict remained to powerful after the war that princes were given the power to choose the religion of their own state. This caused the Holy Roman Empire to lose its political and governmental effect, thus separating the states further from each other politically, economically, and most importantly, socially. The Holy Roman Empire as a whole was weak and poor while individual states also suffered.

The destitute economy of Germany and its states created individual states to become more authoritarian, weakening the bond between states and therefore the unity of Germany.

The anguish economy and political stance made it virtually impossible for the states to reunite with one central power. Each prince had his own idea of how to run his state. In addition, the religious tension created from the rise of Protestants and strong beliefs of Catholics further separated the states.