Prussian Army Reforms and Nineteenth-Century Warfare Analysis

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Nowadays, people require organizational changes to become physically and mentally agile in order to operate in a complex and dynamic environment. If people of any organization do not comply with the strategy of dynamic changes, they fall prey to defeat. Prussian Army also confronted this challenge after its defeat by Napoleon-I in the battle of Jena-Auerstedt in 1806 due to its weak battle formation strategy. Prussia lost about half of its territory to France and was excluded from a great European power. Besides, Prussians were forced to pay massive payments as a tribute to rationalize the leadership about changes in administration as well as military doctrine (Showalter, 1972). Prussian Army, after suffering from decisive defeat at the hands of the French, initiated reforms and regulations based on other nations' enlightenment ideas from 1807 onwards. These reforms proved to be a turning point for Prussia, and it emerged as the most influential modern state after its subjugation to the French Empire in 1812.

King of Prussia asked for the decentralization of Army administration and aimed major military reforms led by General Scharnhorst, Hermann Boyen, and August Gneisenau. General Scharnhorst accepted the task of leading a Military Reorganization Commission assigned to him by the Prussian king. He immediately delved into the reasons for the lack of responses and delegation of power between subordinate officers and generals. On the other hand, he researched that the French Army was agile and well-organized in its formation, responsive, and officers flexibly split inflexible unit formations into smaller ones (Showalter, 1972). Scharnhorst's top priority was to train the officers and even soldiers to follow state and administration orders so that officers would become self-organized and independent in response to the dynamic developments during the battle. Under Scharnhorst's command, officers were forced to follow what Prussian called "Befehlstaktik," which is translated as "top-down command," reform for the officers and soldiers to achieve a breakthrough in the battle.

Moreover, a significant reform in the area of military weapons marked the revolutionized Prussian Army tactic during the 1870-1871 war. French Army used 'Chassepot' rifles as the front-loading weapons, and in response, the Prussian Army used a rear-loading weapon to counter-attack the French troops while escaping the fire of chassepot rifles (Showalter, 1972). Furthermore, the strategy "Auftragstaktik" of the Prussian Army was a military tactic that emphasized the outcome of the 1871 battle by providing the subordinate officers with a clear and specific goal. The mission was a planning initiative for the officers to achieve the goal in a certain time frame with the forces needed to achieve that goal.

The main conclusion of this discussion regarding the organizational changes in the Prussian Army is that dynamic change is always necessary for survival. The dynamic tactics and complex

organizational changes trained the defeated Prussian Army to flexibly self-organize the military organization and empower the top-to-down command to reinforce the changes as well.

Question no. 02. Compare and contrast the leadership styles and fighting methods of Napoleon Bonaparte and the Duke of Wellington. Why do you think Napoleon has enjoyed a greater reputation in the eyes of most historians?

The twenty-five-year European war came to an end in 1814 when Napoleon Bonaparte surrendered and was banished to Elba, a Mediterranean island. In the other frame of European history, the Duke of Wellington and the European allies restored their European continent to normality. However, Napoleon managed to escape from Elba in 1815 and, on March 20th, 1815, resumed his monarchy as an Emperor again (Connelly, 2012). He enabled the release of his captured troops and reformed his Grand Army, as he was famous for his rapport with his troops. On the other hand, Wellington and European powers reassembled to overthrow Napoleon through a catastrophic war yet again.

Emperor Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington were two great, successful military leaders as well as great enemies of their age. Napoleon was a great military captain who scored significant victories with the French army, yet his opponents considered him to be a tyrant. He never tolerated his rivals and never felt remorse for the numerous assaults he inflicted on people. Many of his opponents diagnosed him as a psychopath because of his strict and ruthless fighting strategy. He hated people and killed millions in the ruthless wars he waged during his life. He drew new military tactics to establish his administrative ambitions and judicial foundations and form his own Napoleonic code (Connelly, 2012). His naked ambition cost at least 6 million people a painful death across Europe, which finally led him to humiliation against the Duke of Wellington and British powers at Waterloo.

By contrast, the Duke of Wellington had a moulded nature and exceptional energy on the battlefield with respect to his fighting strategy. He was renowned as a rival military captain associated with Napoleonic contests. He gained fame for leading 5 year Iberian Peninsula campaign against the French and also for commanding the European allies against Emperor Napoleon at his final battle of Waterloo. He gravitated as a well-respected captain who won fights in difficult circumstances by inspiring loyalty, passion, and discipline in his army. The secret to why Napoleon was a fierce military commander among his contemporaries and especially against the Duke of Wellington was his quick, decisive nature and his ability to concentrate on a single specific objective. He always exploited the goals of his major opponents and delivered them a decisive blow on the battlefield.

I opine that Napoleon was celebrated as an outstanding leader in the eyes of historians because of his unique autocratic style of leadership. Unlike his opponents, he held a central position to split the

larger units of his enemies apart by centralizing the power only to himself during the fight. He always opted to lead his Napoleonic troops without any opinion of others involved in his commandment. He was regarded as the best military captain of all time because of his military tactics, which included intense drilling and assaults among soldiers of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, all combined to lead disastrous invasions. Therefore, historians considered him as the master of warfare.

Question no. 03. In what ways did the wars fought in Europe and North America between 1853 and 1865 differ from the wars fought between 1792 and 1815?

Beginning in the 18th and 19th centuries, the tug of wars in Europe for longstanding power conflicts and struggles affected the whole planet as Europe was the control centre of all colonial empires. Between 1792 and 1815, as well as the wars fought between 1853 and 1865, Great Britain, the United States, France, and Spain were majorly involved in catastrophic wars. These wars involved the rest of the world, especially the colonies in North America, which was the main centre of action in the wars from 1792 to 1815.

The time frame from 1792 to 1815 was a series of Napoleonic wars fought between France and European alliances. The major war figures of this period were Emperor Napoleon of France and the Duke of Wellington as Napoleon's opponent. Emperor, through his ruthless military exploits, became the French Emperor and made France and the French Army the most influential powers in the European continent. As a ruthless yet well-organized military leader, Napoleon defeated the Prussian, Russian, and Austrian armies through new and creative military tactics against the enemies. The conflicts Europe and North America went through between 1853 and 1865 were different than those of the Napoleonic wars, as Napoleon centralized all the power to himself only to dominate European states as puppets. The wars of the interval between 1853 and 1865 were aimed at religious tensions, which were quite opposite to Napoleon's strategy, who won all the fights by forcing the rulers to sign specific treaties regarding their support of the Emperor against European alliances. North America, at the beginning of the Napoleonic wars, remained neutral. However, North America in 1812 was also embroiled in the conflicts and ended up in a fight against Great Britain (Connelly, 2012).

The lapse from 1853 to 1865 is also significant in the history of military wars, as the Crimean War was fought between France, the United Kingdom, and the Ottoman Empire against Russia, and Imperial Russia lost the war. It was a brutal conflict that pitted at least 650,000 lives against an egocentric ruler, Czar Nicholas-I, who wanted to expand his influence over the eastern Mediterranean as well as the Middle East by declining the Ottoman Empire. The main cause of the Crimean War was the religious tensions between Russian Orthodox believers and French Catholics over access to places, especially Jerusalem, which is considered sacred by all sects to date. Ottoman Empire at that time

was under the pressure of Russia and France as both the territories granted special privileges to the Holy Lands of the Ottoman Empire. Russia, while attempting to pressurize the Ottoman Empire, invaded Ottoman territory in July 1853. In response to Russia's invasion, France, with its allies of the United Kingdom, got involved in the conflict. The causalities rose because the war was poorly commanded on both sides. Also, a disproportionate number of deaths were reported due to the disease faced by wounded soldiers. The disastrous outcomes led Russia to accept a humiliating defeat in the war, fought in a thick and confused religious fog.

References

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