

but it was not a binding affair although it did serve to unite the general population against common foes.

Three bodies were involved in the makeup of the Reichstag:

- 1) the Imperial Electors
- 2) the Princes of the church and local rulers
- 3) the delegates of free cities

In the case of the Electors, these were parties who had a vote in the next imperial election...a vote that was usually hereditary. They were most often the heads of independent Teutonic states.

The papal office had enormous concern with having adequate representation and control of the Reichstag. This situation had been pressing since the days of Henry IV and Hildebrand (400 years earlier). But Papal efforts to control the Reichstag were neither well conceived nor well executed due to the changing attitudes and ambitions of the varying popes. Consequently the decisions of the Reichstag were often contrary to the will of the pope, sometimes with the evident satisfaction of the German princes.

The Germanic relationships with the pope were in the arena modulated by balance. The popes sought mostly to maintain a situation in which no secular ruler could be strong enough to challenge the authority of the bishop of Rome..particularly in the role of world policy and decision making. Consequently the popes were prone to play one country against another. Germany represented a pivotal block of nations, sometimes to be urged to help the French, sometimes the Spanish, etc. When the German rulers were not willing to be used in this way, Germany's value to the papacy was greatly lessened. The degree of independence felt by the Reichstag with regard to Rome and the Emperor was a large factor in how well any policy of the church could be carried out in central Europe.

A great shortcoming in the Reichstag was any representation of the poorer classes. This would cause considerable difficulty in understanding and controlling the action of the masses in the next few years and in securing cooperation one state with another.

The Humanistic Spirit

We have touched on this earlier but at this point our hope is to indicate more of some of the