

Unit 4 Absolutism

Section 1: France and Louis XIV

17th Century Crises

- The 17th century was period of great upheaval
- Monarchs impose order by increasing their own power
- Decline of feudalism, rise of cities help monarchs gain power
- Decline in Church authority also increased power

Absolutism

- Absolutism gives a monarch absolute or total authority in dealing with the state
 - This power is absorbed by the Monarch and takes liberties away from elected representatives and citizens
 - Divine right- kings received power from God so they were responsible to no one except God

Henry IV

- Henry IV assassinated in 1610, his assassination instituted a crisis
 - His successor, Louis XIII, was too young to rule
- Cardinal Richelieu became Louis XIII's advisor and exerted a major influence over Louis XIII to rule absolutely

Richelieu- Domestic Policy

- Richelieu commanded total subordination of all groups
 - quick executions to stop noble uprisings
 - would not call the Estates General to session
 - Huguenots could no longer practice their faith

“Reason of State”

- Richelieu came up with the political philosophy of “Reason of State”
 - Reason of State= Machiavellian philosophy of social control that states: “what is done for the state is done for by God...actions if privately committed would be a crime”

Louis XIV Takes the Throne

- Louis XIII died in 1643, Louis XIV inherited the throne at the age of four
- His mother Anne became his regent, but Chief Minister Cardinal Jules Mazarin held the true power throughout Louis XIV's early reign and became his closest advisor
- Under the long reign of Louis XIV the absolutist state reached its height
- Louis XIV (1661-1715) is regarded as the traditional/best example of the 17th c. absolute monarch
 - He dominated all aspects of French life, culture, politics, religion, and economics

French Classicism

- The art and literature of the day is characterized as “French Classicism”
- Art was a mandated act by the state to promote the state

Louis XIV

- Louis XIV had complete authority over:
 - Formulation of foreign policy
 - Making of war and peace
 - The ability to levy taxes
- The key to his centralizing control was his ability to dominate the nobility in France
 - Never called a meeting of the Estates General= no chance to plot against him
 - Built the legendary royal Palace of Versailles= helped him keep control of the nobility

French Taxation

- France had a long-standing policy to avoid taxation of the nobility allowing for taxation of the poor
- The merciless taxation of the farming class eventually led to the downfall of the French economy

Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683)

- Colbert was Louis' financial advisor/ architect of his economic policy
- Adhered to mercantilism
- Mercantilism= prosperity of a nation depended on a plentiful supply of gold and silver

Mercantilism

- Basic tenets:
 - Exports should exceed imports
 - High tariffs
 - Internal improvements necessary

Huguenot Exile

- Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes (in 1685) which had granted Huguenots religious tolerance
 - many productive Huguenots left France
 - those who chose not to convert were exiled

Louis XIV- Warfare

- One other method of exalting himself above others was almost constant state sponsored warfare
- The military was reorganized, to become highly organized = a military machine
- Waged four wars between 1667-1713
- Other European nations formed coalitions to prevent French domination
- Only gained a small amount of territory but spent large sums of money

War of Spanish Succession

- Charles V gave his Spanish empire to Louis XIV's grandson Phillip of Anjou
- The Grand Alliance was formed- led by the Dutch and the English to prevent succession
- The War of Spanish Succession was a lopsided loss for France, and Louis was forced to admit defeat in the Treaty of Utrecht

Section 2: Absolutism in Central Europe

Thirty Years' War

- Tension rises between Lutherans and Catholics in central Europe
- In 1618, Protestants revolt against Catholic Hapsburg rulers
- Result is Thirty Years' War—conflict over religion, land, power
- War ruins German economy, greatly decreases population
- Peace of Westphalia (1648) ends war
- Treaty weakens Hapsburgs, strengthens France
- Treaty introduces idea of negotiating terms of peace

Prussia

- Seat of nobility power was the great city-state/province of Brandenburg (present day Berlin)
- Damages of the Thirty Years' War allowed Brandenburg family to assert absolute control under Frederick William (The Great Elector)
- Frederick who had inherited the lands at 20 had the task of bringing the lands to order
- His first initiative was to establish a system of taxation that could not be challenged and was distributed without consent
- Order was established by a series of warriors in his military class

- He was able to establish total control due to the chaos of the period and the appeal to the narrow self-interest of the ruling nobility

Prussia (cont.)

- In 1701, Frederick William's son Frederick officially took the title of king=King Frederick I
 - Brandenburg-Prussia became just Prussia
- King Frederick I had a "dog-eat-dog" outlook on society
 - Saw military strength as the key to society
 - He established a strong bureaucracy that gave him total control
 - Trend was set; give the nobles power in the form of money and you can establish a military absolutist state while taxing the peasants into submission

Austria

- After the defeat of the Turks in 1687 Austria took control of all of Hungary, Transylvania, Croatia, and Slovenia thus establishing the Austrian Empire in Europe
- However, the Austrian monarchy never became a highly-centralized absolutist state because it contained so many national groups
- The Austrian Empire remained a collection of territories held together by the Hapsburg emperor

Section 3: Absolutism in Russia

Absolutism in Eastern Europe

- Absolutism developed differently in Eastern Europe than in Western Europe
- Differences:
 - more feudal in nature
 - industrialization was less advanced
 - ideas of the Renaissance were non-existent
 - no religious tensions

Mongol Control of Russia

- In the years between 1200 and 1700, Russia did not experience the Renaissance, the Reformation, or the Scientific Revolution
- Society divided into two classes: Boyars (nobles) and Serfs (everyone else)
- 14th and 15th centuries, Russia was cut off from contacts with the west by the domination of the Mongols (see maps)
- The Mongol invasion, conquest, and rule put an end to the fighting Boyars for a period of 200 years
 - The princes of Moscow found great power in serving the Mongols and became a hereditary class of ruling princes
 - Eventually they became so powerful that they were able to replace the Mongol Khans themselves

End of Mongol Rule

- With each passing generation the princes gained control in Moscow
- Ivan III stopped acknowledging the Khan as supreme ruler in 1480
- Ivan the Terrible: Ivan IV ascended the throne at age 3
- At age 16 he seized total control and ruled with an absolute ferocity for a period of 40 years
- Defeated the last of the Mongols by 1556 giving him tremendous credibility

Ivan the Terrible

- Greatest move of strength was to eliminate all Boyars, and make all landed nobility that of the service nobility
 - Meaning you own land, you owe allegiance/service to the Tsar, or you can be a peasant
- After the death of his wife, he became a hardened man dependent on violence to crush anyone in his way
 - Ruled through terror with a powerful secret police

Michael Romanov

- Ivan's death in 1584 led to a period of chaos and confusion over who was to control the nation
- The period between his death and the death of his son Theodore were known as the time of troubles
- Not until a Polish Invasion in 1613 did the Nobles crush the disunity and unite under Michael Romanov, distantly related to the first wife of Ivan IV
- Religious disunity spurred revolts by 1670, the results were horrifying for Boyars, murder and mayhem were common tactics

Peter the Great

- The next great ruler in Russia was Peter the Great
- Member of the Romanov dynasty (this dynasty will rule from 1613-1917)
- 6 feet 9 inches tall
- After visiting western Europe in 1696-1698 he was determined to westernize Russia
 - especially militarily
- Peter viewed Russia's army as an extension of their societal problems- backward and lagging behind the powers of the West

Peter the Great (cont.)

- Policies
 - Majority of governmental expenditures were for military purposes
 - Wanted to modernize Russia
 - Strengthen the power of the military
- He studied abroad, (sailing and shipbuilding) cut his beard and made others, brought foreigners to his court to study
- He made serfs more important to his court, mandating membership and military commitment
 - Taxes were very high and serfs were commissioned to work in western style factories

Peter the Great (cont.)

- Peter the Great's primary foreign policy goal was to “open a window to the west,” meaning an ice-free/ warm water seaport easily accessible to Europe
- Could only be achieved on the Baltic- the coast of which was controlled by Sweden
 - Defeated Sweden in a hard-fought war gaining the land he wished
- 1703- began construction on St. Petersburg= a symbol that Russia was looking westward to Europe
- Under Peter, Russia became a great military power and by his death in 1725, an important European state

Section 4: Pre-War England

Constitutional Monarchy

- England's success and growth as a constitutional nation stood in contrast to the development of other countries of the period
- Queen Elizabeth represented a height of absolutist power in England
- Elizabeth died in 1603 making the Tudor dynasty extinct- the Stuart line of rulers was inaugurated when James I (Elizabeth's cousin) took the throne
- Believed in divine right of kings and paid little attention to reform

James vs. Parliament

- James I attempted to undermine the influence of Parliament but they had the control of the treasury of England
- James had no power to tax his English subjects without the consent of Parliament

Charles I

- James alienated the English gentry by raising English custom rates on his own authority
- Mutual distrust made it impossible for James and his richest subjects to work together
- England stumbled through the rest of James' reign with no major crises
- When James' son Charles I succeeded in early 1625, however, the political atmosphere quickly turned hostile
- King Charles and his favorite minister, the Duke of Buckingham, raised taxes to fight an unsuccessful war

Mistakes of Charles

- After funding an attack on the Spanish port of Cadiz and failing to overtake it Charles I went bankrupt and had to ask parliament for funds
- The members of the Commons demanded Buckingham to be executed
- Charles dissolved parliament before any taxes were agreed upon
- Charles raised the money he needed by collecting customs on his own authority and forcing important men to lend him money
 - Seventy who refused were imprisoned

Mistakes of Charles (cont.)

- While war with Spain continued, Buckingham got England involved in a war against France, too
- In 1628, another Parliament had to be called to pay the bills
- This parliament required the king to assent to a Petition of Right

Parliament Dissolved

- But when the Commons tried to get Buckingham dismissed, Parliament was dissolved again
- Buckingham was assassinated by a man who disapproved of his religious policies- Charles blamed his opponents
- 1629-1640= Charles' gov't followed an unpopular but not disastrous policy
- It took another element to lead to war: religion

Section 5: English Civil War

Religion

- In the later years of Elizabeth's reign and during the reign of James, Calvinism had grown popular in England
- Charles attempted to impose more ritual into the Anglican Church- which many in England associate it with Catholicism

Scottish Revolt

- The attempt to reintroduce the prayer book of Edward VI's time was unpopular in much of Great Britain
 - it caused a riot in the cathedral when it was imposed on the people of Edinburgh in 1637
- In the next year, 1638, large numbers of Scots signed a national covenant to resist the king's policy
- Charles assembled a small English army and sent it north to deal with the Scots
- However, the army signed a truce with their opponents without firing a shot

Parliament Called into Session

- Charles called two parliaments in 1640 to get money in order to deal with the Scots
- First parliament was dissolved almost immediately= Short Parliament
- Charles still needed money so another parliament was called= Long Parliament
 - Long Parliament sat for thirteen years, made war on the king, and eventually executed him

Irish Crisis

- A Catholic revolt broke out in Ireland, and there were rumors that 30,000 Protestants had been massacred
- An army would have to be raised to put this rebellion down. But who was to control it?
 - Parliament suspected Charles I was sympathetic to Catholicism

Civil War Begins

- In January of 1642, Charles sent men into the House of Commons and tried to arrest five leading members
- Parliament called upon Charles to give over control of the gov't
- Charles' refusal started the English Civil War

Civil War

- The English Civil War was not a single conflict
- Historians usually distinguish between two main wars:
 - a hard-fought one between 1642 and 1646, which the King lost
 - and a much shorter war in 1648, which was essentially a war between the victors

Civil War (cont.)

- It was immediately clear that the king had the capability to fight and that he might possibly win
 - There were early Royalist victories in September and October 1642

- However, Parliament's professionalized army, the New Model Army, turned the tide of war
 - NMA was full of Independents (extremist Puritans who were strongly against Charles I)
- Oliver Cromwell was the commander of the New Model Army

Charles Surrenders

- In May of 1646, Charles, having surrendered a number of setbacks, surrendered himself to the Scottish army operating in the north of England
- The Scots arrested him, and eventually [early 1647] sold him to the English for half a million pounds
- The English Parliament faced the problem of putting the country back together and the decision had to be made about what to do with Charles

New Model Army Disbanded

- In the early spring of 1647, the members of parliament decided to get rid of the New Model Army
- The soldiers would be sent home without their back pay
- The army refused to disband
- In August, riots and demonstrations by those who supported Charles broke out in London
- Now the army (with its Independent allies in Parliament) was effectively in charge, but it was still split about what to do next

Charles' Trial

- Parliament now took a radical step- it put the King of England on trial
- The dramatic trial began on January 20, 1649
- Charles was charged with high treason "and other high crimes against the realm of England"
- The court found Charles I guilty, and he was executed on January 30, 1649
- Parliament took power after Charles I's death, and then Cromwell was the next individual leader of England

Cromwell in Power

- Although Cromwell's government began by abolishing the House of Lords and the monarchy, their revolution did not go very far
- After Cromwell's death in 1658 the monarchy was restored and Charles II (Charles I son) was installed as king

Section 6: Restoration and Glorious Revolution

Religious Troubles

- Charles II was sympathetic to the Catholic Louis XIV and Catholicism in general
- Charles and his brother, James, had spent much of their youth at Louis' court, and both were secret Catholics

- 1672 James (brother of Charles) openly admitted he was Catholic
- The king and his ministers could not manage Parliament, and got little money from it
 - In 1670, Charles, through a secret treaty signed at Dover, entered into an alliance with Louis and began receiving money from him

Declaration of Indulgences

- In 1672 Charles II issued the Declaration of Indulgences
- This suspended the laws that Parliament had passed against Catholics and Puritans after the restoration of the monarchy
- Parliament forced the king to suspend the declaration

James Takes the Throne

- When Charles died in 1685, James II, his brother, took the throne
- Remember, James was Catholic, which made many in England very uneasy
- But James was in his fifties and may soon be succeeded by his Protestant daughter Mary due to the fact that he had no sons but...
- In June of 1688 James' wife had a son
- Parliament had to choose between moving against the king or accepting a Catholic dynasty
- The answer was William of Orange

William of Orange

- William was the husband of James' Protestant daughter and heir, Mary
- Parliament invited William to invade England
- William and Mary raised an army and invaded England while James, his wife, and their infant son fled to France

The Glorious Revolution

- With little bloodshed, England had undergone its "Glorious Revolution"
- As a result of the Glorious Revolution in England Parliament established itself as a major participant in the running of the English gov't
 - Destroyed "Divine Right" theory

Constitutional Monarchy

- Bill of Rights affirmed:
 - Parliament's right to make laws and levy taxes
 - Citizen rights to keep arms
 - Citizen rights to have a jury trial
- Parliament did not have complete control of the government, but it now had the right to participate in affairs of state= constitutional monarchy