Absolute Monarchs in Europe

Ch 21
1500-1800
Absolutism in Europe

- Feudalism declines, cities + national kingdoms lead to absolutism

- **Absolutism**
  - Political belief that one ruler should hold all of the power within a country
  - Been practiced throughout the world
  - **Absolute monarch** – king or queen (emperor, czar) with all of the power in their country
    - Believed they had divine right (God willed them to lead + they were answerable only to God, not the people) to rule
### Causes

1. Religious + territorial conflicts create fear + uncertainty
   - People want stability
2. Growth of armies to deal w/ conflicts
   - taxes to pay troops
3. Heavy taxes lead to unrest + peasant revolts

### Effects

1. Rulers regulated religious worship + social gatherings (control spread of ideas)
2. Rulers size of their courts to appear more powerful
   - (courts = people who follow them around)
3. Rulers create bureaucracies to control their countries’ economies
Spain

- **Phillip II**
  - Inherited Spain, the Spanish Netherlands, + the American colonies from his father
  - Aggressive
    - Seized Portugal when Portuguese king died w/o an heir (Phillip was his nephew)
    - Defended Catholicism against Muslims + Protestants
      - **Spanish Armada** launched against Protestant England to punish Queen Elizabeth’s support of Spanish Protestants against Phillip
    - Protestant wind (storm that destroyed most of the Armada)
  - Arts flourish due in part to wealth brought in from the colonies
## Spanish empire weakens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inflation + Taxes</th>
<th>Due to the excessive wealth brought in from the colonies, the value of $ declined</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Prices of goods soared</td>
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<td>Nobles not taxed, burden falls on the lower classes</td>
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<td>Prevented them from accumulating enough wealth to start their own businesses – no middle class develops</td>
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<td>Spanish manufactured goods made using old-fashioned + expensive methods.</td>
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<td>Spanish buy foreign goods</td>
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<td>Spanish must repay foreign debts for $ borrowed to fight wars</td>
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The Dutch Revolt

- Philip has to maintain an army to keep his subjects under control
- Dutch had little in common with their Spanish rulers
  - Spanish Catholic – Many Dutch were Protestant
  - Spanish economy sluggish – Dutch middle class prospered
- Spain raises the taxes in the Netherlands to try to crush Protestantism
- Dutch revolt + fight with Spain for 11 years before declaring themselves an independent country in 1579
The Independent Netherlands (the Dutch)

- Different from the rest of Europe
  - Religious toleration
  - Republic (not a kingdom)
  - Each province had an elected governor
- Able to focus on economic development
  - Prospers through trade
  - Become the bankers of Europe
  - Had the largest fleet of ships in the world
    (close to 5,000 in 1636)
France

Series of 8 religious wars between Catholics + Huguenots (French Protestants) from 1562-98

- Henry IV (the 4th)
- Converts from Protestantism to Catholicism (“Paris is well worth a mass.”)
  - Political move
  - Issues Edict of Nantes
  - Religious tolerance
  - Declared Huguenots could live in peace + set up their own houses of worship in some cities
- Enacts good financial policies
- Assassinated
- Louis XIII (the 13th)
- Appoints Cardinal Richelieu
- Louis XIII is weak
- Cardinal Richelieu tries to lead according to moral principles, but was ambitious + enjoyed authority
- Richelieu power of monarchy by:
  1. Moved against Huguenots
     - Protestants couldn’t have cities w/ walls
  2. Weakens power of nobles
Louis XIV (the 14th)

- Most powerful ruler in French history
- During his reign, France was the most powerful country in Europe
- Became king at 4 yrs old (1643)
- “I am the state”
- Further power of nobles by excluding them from his councils
- Powers of gov.’t agents who collected taxes + administer justice
  - (they had to report to him regularly)
- Followed beliefs of Mercantilism
- Cancels Edict of Nantes
  - Many Huguenots flee country
- Surrounds himself w/ luxury
  - Made nobles wait on him hand + foot (literally)
  - Patron – arts should glorify the king + his values
- Fights in various (expensive) wars
- Dies leaving country powerful but in debt, peasants bitter due to high taxes + abuse of power – will lead to revolution
War of Spanish Succession

- 1700, childless king of Spain leaves his throne to Louis XIV’s grandson, Philip of Anjou
  - Both countries now ruled by French Bourbons
- Other countries felt threatened by Bourbon dynasty’s power. Join together to prevent the union of the French + Spanish thrones.
- War drags on until 1714
- Under Treaty of Utrecht, Louis’s grandson was allowed to remain king of Spain as long as the thrones of France + Spain weren’t united

End Section 2
Central Europe

- German States

- Rule by princes (some Protestant, some Catholic)
  - Protestants + Catholics form their own groups w/ neither group trusting the other
  - In 1618, the future Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand II (head of the Hapsburg family) closed some Protestant churches
  - Protestant princes rebel
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>30 Years’ War</strong> (1618-1648)</th>
<th><strong>Conflict over religion, territory, + power</strong></th>
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<td><strong>The Catholic French king supports Protestants</strong> - doesn’t want Hapsburgs to become as powerful as the French king</td>
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<td><strong>At the end, German states pop.</strong> (20 – 16 mil) + economy in ruins</td>
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<td><strong>Peace of Westphalia</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Weakened Spain + Austria</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Strengthened France</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Made German princes independent of Holy Roman Empire</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Ended European religious wars</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Allowed all parties to negotiate peace terms</strong></td>
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<td>***** Ended idea of Catholic empire, recognized Europe as a group of equal independent states***</td>
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Central European Powers

- Poland, Holy Roman Empire, + Ottoman Empire – None are very powerful
  - Maintains feudalism (no middle class)
  - No strong kings

- Austria grows stronger
  - Hapsburgs centralize gov.’t, create standing army, + regain lost land from Ottomans
  - Diverse empire
  - Led by Maria Theresa

- Prussia grows stronger
  - Created absolute monarchy + develop a highly militarized society
  - Led by Frederick the Great
    - Believed in religious tolerance + legal reform
- War of Austrian Succession
  - Frederick believed Maria Theresa wasn’t forceful enough to stop him from taking some of Austria’s land (Silesia)
  - Austria w/ Great Britain
  - Prussia w/ France
  - Austria loses Silesia

- 7 Years’ War (French + Indian War)
  - Austria w/ France
  - Prussia w/ Great Britain
  - Doesn’t change territory in Europe, but radically changes territories of North America

End Section 3
Russia

- Czar Ivan IV (the 4th) “Ivan the Terrible”
- Became ruler when 3 yrs old
- Boyars (Russian landowning nobility) fought for power to control Ivan
- When he was 16, had himself crowned the 1st Czar of Russia
- 1547-1560 “good period”
  - Added land to Russia
  - Gave Russia a code of laws
- 1560-1581 “bad period”
  - Turns against boyars
  - Organized secret police force, whose job was to hunt down “traitors”. Traitors were executed + lands given to a new class of nobles loyal to Ivan
  - Thousands died
  - Killed his oldest son. The son who inherited the throne was weak.
Russia

Before Peter the Great

- Cut off from Europe
  - 1. Geographically
    - Only seaport closed in winter
  - 2. Politically
    - Used to be ruled by the Mongols
  - 3. Religiously
    - Russians are Orthodox Christians
  - Still have serfs – peasants tied to the land
Peter the Great
- One of Russia’s greatest reformers
- the czar’s powers
- Visited Europe in disguise to learn about European customs + manufacturing techniques
  - Wanted to “westernize” Russia - knew boyars wouldn’t go along w/ it
- To force boyars to modernize, he increased czar’s powers
  - Put Russian Orthodox Church under his control
  - power of boyars, promoted lower class members to nobility
- Modernized army
  - Hired European officers to train soldiers, soldiers stayed in the military for life (required heavy taxes)
- Introduced potatoes
- Started Russia’s 1st newspaper (he edited 1st issue)
- Raised women’s status
- Had nobles dress like Europeans
- Advanced education
  - Students could now study abroad
England (Britain)

- Charles I
- Parliament has financial control + won’t give him $ until he signs the **Petition of Right**

  - 4 points:
    1. He wouldn’t imprison subjects w/o due cause
    2. He wouldn’t levy taxes w/o parliament’s consent
    3. He wouldn’t house soldiers in private homes
    4. He wouldn’t impose martial law in peacetime

  - Charles signs it, then ignores it
  - It’s important b/c it presents idea that the law is higher than the king
    - Contradicts the ideas of absolute monarchy
- To get $, Charles I imposed many fees + fines on English citizens
  - His popularity
- Angers Puritans b/c he won’t reform Anglican Church
- Tries to force Scottish Presbyterians to accept Anglican Bible
- 1641 Parliament passes laws to limit royal power
  - Charles tries to arrest parliament’s leaders, but they escaped
- Mob forms in London against him
- Charles I flees + raises army in the North
- **English Civil War**

- 1642-49

- Those loyal to Charles I called Royalists or Cavaliers

- Puritan opposition

- Led by Oliver Cromwell

- Captured king, tried him for treason + publicly executed him

- 1st time in history
Oliver Cromwell

- Abolished monarchy + House of Lords
- Establish a Commonwealth (Republican gov.’t)
- Have a written constitution
- Cromwell later tears up constitution + became a military dictator
- Crushes Irish rebellion
  - Seizes Irish lands + gives them to English soldiers
- Thousands of Irish die
- Promotes Puritan morality
  - No theater, dancing, sports events
- When he dies, his gov.’t collapses
Charles II
- 1659 Parliament votes to ask Charles I’s son to be king
- Parliament passed Habeas Corpus
  - Right to be brought before a judge + hear charges
  - Can’t be held in jail indefinitely
  - Monarch can’t put someone in jail just for opposing them
The Glorious Revolution

Charles II’s Catholic brother James II inherits the throne

Upsets Protestants

Parliament invites James’s Protestant daughter Mary + her husband William to come jointly rule England

They come + James II flees
William & Mary

- Recognize parliament as their partner in governing
- Creates a constitutional monarchy
  - Limits monarch’s powers
- Sign English Bill of Rights which says a king/queen CANNOT:
  1. Suspend parliament’s laws
  2. Levy taxes w/o permission from parliament
  3. Interfere w/ freedom of speech in parliament
  4. Penalize citizens who petition king/queen w/ complaints