

# Age of Absolutism

Monday, August 22, 2005  
07:59

## - **Absolutism**

### o **Principles**

- Ruler had complete power
- Being the "father"
- Duty to care for his people
- Allegiance to the ruler not to the state
- Origin: restore law and order after Religious Wars
- **Thomas Hobbes**
  - Monarch had complete power
  - People gave up all of their power
  - People had no power to revolt
- **Jean Bodin**
  - Divine Right
- **Bishop Bousset**
  - Ruler's authority comes from God alone
    - ◆ Not a contract
  - Tutor of Louis XIV

### o **Characteristics**

- Great power
- Sometimes abusive
- Many wars
- Radical decisions
- Centralized power
- Weakened opposition
- Large standing armies
- Religious unity = strength
- Stronger bureaucracy

# Louis XIV

Tuesday, August 31, 2004  
08:05

## - Background

- VERY LONG REIGN
  - (1643 - 1715)
  - Ruled for 72 years
  - since 5
- MADE France the STRONGEST COUNTRY IN EUROPE
  - Largest population
  - Most fertile soil
  - Most self sufficient
  - Center of art and culture
  - Wealthiest nation
- Political Principles:
  - Absolutist
  - Divine right
  - "I am the state"
    - L'etat est moi
  - Strong centralized GOVMNT
  - Relied on bourgeoisie = Middle Class
  - Took over in 1661 when Mazzarin (chief minister, regent) died

## The Fronde = rebellion by nobles

- 1648 - 1653
- Failed
- Louis never trusted nobles again
- Discovered by Mazzarin
- Nobles tried to strengthen the **Parlement**
  - Local courts (judicial)
- Rebels executed

## - Social Reforms

- Weakened nobles
- Appointed bourgeoisie to bureaucracy
- Built **Chateau de Versailles**
  - Invited nobles and had them do silly jobs
  - Nobles kept out of Paris
- Cultural center
  - France = trend setter for all of Europe
  - French = language of diplomacy
  - Arts flourish

## - Religious Reforms

- Repealed the Edict of Nantes
  - Before: Protestants had same rights, can build churches, can fortify towns
  - Richelieu: took away right to fortify towns
  - Louis XIV: took away everything

## - Economic Reforms:

- **Jean Baptiste Colbert** = finance minister
- **Mercantilist**
  - Government should control economy
  - Self-sufficiency
  - EXPORT more than you IMPORT
  - AS MUCH specie as possible

- **Strengthened economy**
  - Sent out professionals to *record all of the resources and assets of states*
  - Improved *tax system*
    - Colbert's flaw: did not tax nobles
    - In England nobles were willing to pay taxes in order to have a say in government; France = opposite
  - Abolished local tariffs
    - Created an area: **5 Great Farms**
      - Tariff union
      - No tariffs; free trade
  - High tariffs on imported goods
  - Wrote a **Commercial Code**
    - Trading laws
  - Set up *trading companies*
  - Gave *subsidies* to new industries
    - Silks and tapestries
  - Built roads & canals
  - Improved agriculture
  - Encouraged new industries
  - Invited foreign artisans to France
- **Administrative Reforms:**
  - Intendent method of administration - sent intendents to supervise
  - Built bureaucracy
  - *Never called a meeting* of the **Estates General** (legislative): *did not want to share power*
  - Destroyed **Parlements** (par le MON) - local courts controlled by the nobles
- **Military Reforms:**
  - Made private armies illegal
  - Established army
  - Set artillery
  - Enlarged the professional army
  - Established chain of command
  - Provided uniforms and equipment
  - Marching
  - First "Modern army"

## Foreign Policy

### Louis XIV Wars:

#### - PURPOSE:

- To extend the borders to natural frontiers to:
    - Alps
    - Rhine
    - North Sea and English Channel
    - Pyrenees
  - To weaken England and Holland as commercial powers/competitors
  - To weaken the Hapsburgs (rivalry)
  - (no religious motives behind war; but wanted everyone in France to be Catholic)
    - Great king = Great warrior
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- 2 wars against the Spanish Netherlands (Belgium) and the Dutch (Netherlands)
    - Dutch War
    - War of Devolution - Dutch
    - Both inconclusive
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- **War of Devolution (1667-1668)**
    - Against **Triple Alliance**
      - England
      - Netherlands
      - Sweden
    - Triple Alliance won
    - **Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle**
      - Kept two trading towns
      - Gave up most of what he had conquered
    - LOUIS XIV LOST
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- **Dutch War (1672-1678)**
    - **William of Orange (Dutch)** put together an alliance
      - Holland = little army = need alliance
      - Dutch bring ships and money to alliance
    - Louis XIV was successful at first
      - Personally led invasion
      - But Dutch flushed out the dykes on him
    - **Treaty of Nimwegen**
      - Louis XIV gained
        - French Comte
        - Artois
        - parts of Alsace and Lorraine
      - Dutch remained independent
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- **War of the League of Augsburg (1688 - 1697)**
    - *France v.* **League of Augsburg**
      - League of Augsburg = German states
      - Leopold = emperor of Austria (**Hapsburg**)
      - King of Spain = *Charles II* (**Hapsburg**)
      - King of Sweden
      - The Electors of Bavaria, Saxony and the Palantinate

- The Dutch Republic
    - After 1689 England under William of Orange
  - Cause
    - Louis XIV attacked German cities along the Rhine
  - War dragged on
    - 11 years
    - No decisive victories or defeats
    - French navy was weak
    - Louis forced to impose taxes on nobles
  - **Treaty of Ryswick**
    - Territories returned
    - **Status quo** - things remained the same
- **War of Spanish Succession (1701 - 1713)**
  - MOST important
  - "1st world war"
  - Most European countries involved
  - **CAUSE:**
    - Charles II of Spain died with no heir
    - Spanish throne claimed by both Louis XIV and Leopold
      - Both grandsons of Spanish kings
    - Charles II will: **Philip of Anjou** (French grandson of Louis XIV) = Named heir to Spanish throne
      - Louis XIV: "The Pyrenees no longer exist"
    - Upset the balance of power
    - Other European powers feared French dominance
      - HATED IT (except Spain and France)
  - **Grand Alliance:**
    - England
    - Holland
    - Prussia
    - Austria
  - **War went poor for the French**
    - **Battle of Gibraltar**
      - English capture Gibraltar
    - **Battle of Blenheim** -English Duke of Marlborough (John Churchill) won
      - Louis loses along the Danube river
    - **Battle of Ramillies in Brabant** - Marlborough wins again
  - **Peace of Utrecht (BALANCE of POWER)**
    - Ended **War of Spanish Succession**
    - Wanted to maintain the balance of power
    - Philip of Anjou keep Spanish throne BUT
      - Never could their be the same ruler of FR. And SP.
      - Territory given (Spanish Netherlands) to Austria (Austrian Netherlands) + land in Northern Italy
      - Territory given to England (keep Gibraltar) + French lands in N. America
    - England Got
      - **Gibraltar**
      - **Minorca**
      - **Nova Scotia**
      - **New Foundland**
      - **Hudson Bay Territory**
      - *Right to control the slave trade in the new world = Asiento*
    - Dutch got

- Gained some land as barrier against France along the Scheldt River
  - Austria got
    - Spanish Netherlands (Austrian Netherlands) - didn't want that much
    - **Milan** - N.Italy
    - **Naples** - N.Italy
    - **Sardinia** - N.Italy
  - Prussia
    - **Elector of Brandenburg** was allowed to call himself "King of Prussia"
  - Duke of Savoy = "King of Savoy"
  - France got to keep Alsace
  - **Philip of Anjou** was allowed to be king
    - France and Spain can never be ruled by the same person
- **Long-term effects of the War**
- French treasury drained/*bankrupt*
  - Depopulated = 20% of people died
    - War
    - Starvation
    - Revolts
  - Trade disrupted; tax system in ruins
  - Confirmed system of sovereign states (1st time was Peace of Westphalia)
  - *England became dominant*
  - Principle of *balance of power* maintained
  - *Legacy of warfare* inherited by 18th Century
- **Weakness of Louis XIV:**
- Financial collapse
    - Extravagant spending
    - Wars
    - Debt
  - Religious persecution (internal mostly)
  - Tax collection uneven
    - Nobles didn't have to pay taxes

# Austria and Prussia

Friday, October 14, 2005

06:58

## Austria

- **Background**
  - **Holy Roman Empire**
    - "Neither Holy nor Roman nor an Empire" - Voltaire
    - German Particularism
    - Germanic states
    - Decentralized elected emperor
    - Hapsburgs
    - Protestant: North
    - Catholic: South
  - **Charles V**
    - Largest Hapsburg empire
    - Problems
      - ◆ Turks
      - ◆ French
      - ◆ Protestant
    - Tried to hold the empire together
    - Retired in 1585; divided the empire
  - **Collapse of HRE**
    - Peace of Westphalia; = no agreement between the states
    - Divisions (religious, etc)
  - **Austrian Empire**
    - Parts
      - ◆ Austria (Hapsburgs) (Catholic)
      - ◆ Hungary (Magyars)
      - ◆ Bohemia (Czechs)
    - Personal empire of the Hapsburgs (ruled this one directly)
    - Personal union of the emperor
- **Austrian Expansion**
  - War with Turks
    - **John Sobieski** = saved Vienna from being captured
    - Expanded territory
  - War of Spanish Succession
    - Spanish Netherlands = Austrian Netherlands
    - Milan and Naples
- **Characteristics**
  - Vienna = capital
  - Mostly German (BUT many different groups)
    - **Ethnic polyglot**
    - Different languages...
  - Nobles powerful
    - Serfdom
  - Very few cities
  - Small middle class
  - No national legislature (*Diet* = formal assembly; in Sweden they had this)
- **Weaknesses**
  - Destruction after 30 years war
  - Small army
  - Strong nobles

- Different ethnic groups
- Antagonism from Bohemia and Hungary
- Loss of the Spanish Empire (to the Bourbons)

- **Pragmatic Sanction**

- 1713
- Maria Theresa = Only heir to Austrian throne (daughter of Charles VI)
- PS = agreement of all European leaders to accept Maria Theresa as the leader of Austria; and not to invade her

## Prussia

- **Hohenzollerns** = ruling family
  - Hereditary dynasty
  - Absolutist
  - *Very bureaucratic*
  - *Highly centralized*
- **German Dualism**
  - Austria and Prussia (Competing states)
- **Army**
  - VERY STRONG
  - Country grew up around the army
- **Location**
  - No true borders
  - Northern Germany
  - Disjointed territory
  - Grew slowly by adding new territory
- **Economy**
  - Dedicated to maintaining the army
  - *Military demand = drove economy*
  - Poor agricultural state
- **Social groups**
  - **Junkers**
    - Aristocracy
    - Land lords
    - Don't want to lose power
    - Supported Hohenzollerns if: no taxes and complete power of peasants
      - **Nobles of Europe:**
        - England: paid taxes ; gained political power
        - France: no taxes; no power
        - Austria: no taxes ; loyalty to army ; free to run states
  - Middle class
    - Growing
  - Peasants
    - Sank deeper and deeper into serfdom
- **Religion**
  - Protestant
  - TOLERANT
    - Invited talented artisans to Prussia

## KINGS OF PRUSSIA

- **Frederick William the Great Elector**
  - One of the electors of HRE
  - Created Prussian state
  - Build up Prussia by strengthening the army
- **King Frederick I**
  - Continued to build up state

- Didn't do anything important
- **King Frederick William I**
  - Grandson
  - Lived modestly, didn't spend a lot
  - Worked very hard
  - Wore an army uniform all the time
  - Royal guard = very tall army men
  - Set up the draft and military reserve
  - Cruel to his son
- **King Frederick William II - "Frederick the Great"**
  - Made Prussia strong

# Peter the Great

Monday, October 17, 2005  
07:59

## PETER THE GREAT

- **Most important to know**
  - o Russian
  - o Westernized Russia
  
- **Social reforms**
  - o 1st book of etiquette
  - o Mandatory education for sons of landowners (gentry)
  - o Sent Russians abroad to study
  - o Simplified alphabet
  - o Edited the 1st Russian newspaper
  - o Reformed calendar
  - o Decreed (ordered) Western customs
    - No beards
    - Women dress Western
    - Courts speak French
  
- **Military Reforms**
  - o Professional army
  - o Reduced power of Boyars in army
  - o Uniforms
  - o Reorganized ranks
  - o Built navy
  
- **Economic Reforms**
  - o **Mercantilist**
    - Increased exports
    - Trading fleet
    - Encouraged mining, metallurgy, textiles
  - o Recruited experts from Europe
  - o Increased taxes
  - o *Careers open to talent*
  - o Depend on peasant labor
    - *Serfs suffer*
  - o Moved capital
    - Move to **St. Petersburg** (built by the nobles, "on top of the bones of the serfs")
    - "Window to the West"
  
- **Administrative Reforms**
  - o Autocrat (autocracy - absolute monarchy)
  - o No individual rights
  - o **Duma** and **Council of Boyars** disbanded
  - o Established Senate
    - Controlled by Peter
  - o Built bureaucracy
  - o Reorganized local administrations
  - o Abolished hereditary succession
    - Czar picks successor
  - o State service required of all landowners/boyars

- **Religious Reforms**
  - Got rid of **Old Believers** (old customs)
  - Appointed the **Procurator of the Holy Synod** - head of church
    - Selected by the czar
    - Got rid of any time
    - Peter in control of church indirectly
  
- **Foreign Policy**
  - At war all the time
    - All but 2 years
  - Expanded borders
  - Sweden = main enemy
  - **Great Northern War**
    - Versus Sweden
    - Gained **warm water ports** on Baltic