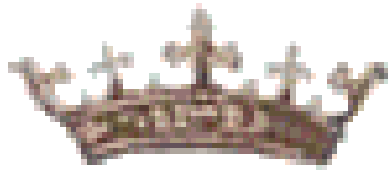




The Age of Absolutism 1550-1715

Intermediate Step in building
the Modern Nation-State



Trials and Tribulations of the 16th and 17th Centuries

- From 1560-1690's, Wars of Religion, revolutions, economic and social crises, fallout from the Protestant Reformation, great power rivalry, all led to upheaval in Europe and a desire for the restoration of order and stability in Europe.
- Many nations increased the power of the monarchs in order to provide order, security, stability and enlightened rule and it worked!
- **Absolutism** was an intermediate step in the evolution to a modern nation state of empowered citizens.
- Absolutism was an influence on the Enlightenment, which was in part a reaction to the abuses of Absolutism.



Age of Absolutism

- Era where kings of Europe centralized their power and unified their people, giving them a national identity.
- Led to the development of modern nation-states
- Provided for progressive and enlightened social and political advance in an era of rapid change and political transformation.



Absolutism-Terms to Know

- **Divine Right**-The belief that God chose a ruler to rule.
- **Monarch**-A ruler who is part of a ruling family that passes down power to the eldest son (primogeniture) from generation to generation
- **Absolute Monarch**-A monarch who has unquestioned, absolute rule and power.
- **Balance of Power- Countries have equal strength in order to prevent any one country from dominating the others.**
- **ABSOLUTISM** is a political system in which total power is vested in a single individual or a group of rulers. Today the term is usually associated with the government of a dictator. It is considered the opposite of constitutional government such as that found in the U.S.
- **Absolutism** is distinguished from democracy by the unlimited power claimed for absolute rulers as contrasted with the constitutional limitations placed on heads of state in democratic governments.
- The development of modern absolutism began with the emergence of European nation-states toward the end of the 16th century and flourished for more than 200 years.
 - It is, perhaps, best exemplified by the reign (1643-1715) of King Louis XIV of France. His declaration L'état, c'est moi ("I am the state") sums up the concept neatly (DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS, God appoints kings to power, right to rule).
 - **A series of revolutions, beginning with the Glorious Revolution in England (1688), gradually forced the monarchs of Europe to yield their power to parliamentary governments.**



Prelude: Wars of Religion

- By 1560, **Calvinists and Catholics** were at war with each other in France. Wars of Religion would soon engulf all of Europe!
- **France**
 - **French Wars of Religion** (1562-1598) pitted the Protestant **Huguenots** (7% of pop, 40-50% of nobility.) against the Catholic majority in vicious conflict.
 - **Thirty Years War (1618-1648)** War of religion and for political supremacy between the Bourbon and Hapsburg dynasties that included most of the European powers lasted for over 30 years, with massacres occurring on both sides in religious violence. Ended in 1648 with the **Peace of Westphalia**.
 - **Henry of Navarre**, a member of the **Bourbon Dynasty** became king in of France in 1589 and converted to Catholicism, becoming **Henry IV**.
 - **Henry IV** issued the **Edict of Nantes** in **1598** which made Catholicism the state religion while preserving the rights of Protestant Huguenots to worship and hold public office.
- **Spain**
 - The son of Holy Roman Emperoro **Charles V**, **Philip II of Spain**, was called the “**Most Catholic King**”, representing absolutism in support of the Catholic Church.
 - Defeated the Turkish fleet at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 and tried to crush Protestantism in the Netherlands, but failed.
 - **Philip II** lost the **Spanish Armada** in **1588** and ceded leadership at sea to England, changing the course of history. The Netherlands became independent of Spain and a major trading and naval power in the 17th century.
 - **Philip II** bankrupted Spain in his quest to defend Catholicism, expand his empire and control his far-reaching territories and ended Spain’s dominance. As a result, Spain entered a slow, inevitable decline after his reign.



Decline of Spain and the Rise of the Dutch (Netherlands)

- At the time of Philip's reign, Spain had the most populous and wealthiest empire in the world.
- Spain's government though, was inefficient, technology used was out of date and court finances were ruined due to Thirty Years War, loss of Spanish Armada and massive debt. Spain continued to be an important, but fading power.
- **William the Silent**, prince of the province of Orange in the Netherlands, led a rebellion that won independence from Spain and created the **United Provinces of the Netherlands**, the modern Dutch state in 1609.



PARIS



Crises of the 16-17th Centuries

- The 16th& 17th centuries were marred by wars of religion and empire
- Thirty Years War destroyed central Europe and led to the emergence of France as the dominant power on land in Europe. Warfare changed, gunpowder, navies and large standing armies transforming wars into national endeavors.
- Great power rivalry, political and social instability coupled with religious war reshaped Europe into spheres of power and an ongoing struggle for a balance of power.
- France and Spain would emerge first as absolutist powers, followed by Russia. The Kings unified their people into modern nation-states!



The Thirty Years War 1618-48

- Called the last of the **Religious Wars**, it was originally between Catholic forces under the command of the Holy Roman Emperor and Calvinist princes from Bohemia in central Europe who wanted to be free from Catholic control
- It had a great power political component- France and Sweden joined forces against the Holy Roman Emperor & Hapsburg dynasty to prevent catholic hegemony.
- Most destructive conflict Europe had experienced to date.
- Most of the war was fought on German land, which was plundered, destroyed and depopulated.
- **Peace of Westphalia (1648)** ended the war by (1) reaffirming the **Peace of Augsburg (1555)**, allowing people of the German States and others the freedom to choose the religion they would follow, including Calvinism and religious tolerance for all(2) recognizing the sovereignty of states over their lands and citizens (3) recognized international boundaries and diplomatic channels for resolving conflicts.
- France emerged as the most powerful nation on the continent after the war and would be the center of Absolutism on the continent.



England: The Tudors

- English sovereigns were not really absolutist; they were part of a **constitutional system** where they shared power with a legislative assembly called **Parliament**
- **Magna Carta** signed in 1215 by King John I: basis of modern constitutional government!
- 1485-1603 The Tudor Dynasty ruled England during the Age of Absolutism.
- **Henry VIII** had started the tradition of **consulting Parliament** (the English congress) before levying a new tax to raise money.
- Parliament supported Henry VIII's **Edict of Supremacy** making him head of Church of England.
- Henry's son, the sickly Edward VI was king until 1553, when he died. His catholic half sister Mary I became queen. Mary I persecuted protestants, earning the nickname "Bloody Mary". Mary died in 1558 and was succeeded by her protestant half-sister Elizabeth I, one of England's greatest monarchs.
- **Queen Elizabeth I** controlled and consulted Parliament, forbidding topics like her marrying. (her nickname was the "Virgin Queen"), behaving often like an absolutist. She was popular.
- **Queen Elizabeth I** Sent privateers like Sir Francis Drake against the Spanish and enhanced English power, wealth and prestige!
- **Spanish Armada (1588)** was defeated under her leadership. England ruled the waves and eventually created a large empire!



England: The Stuarts

- Elizabeth I died in 1603 without an heir.
- Rule passed to the Stuarts of Scotland, who did not deal with Parliament as well as the Tudors had. They wanted to be absolutists!
- James I had to deal with numerous problems. **Puritans who wanted to purify the Church of England from Catholic influence.** James had to go so far to keep the **dissenters off his back as to have the Bible re-translated (King James Bible).**
- James used lots of money on himself and on his wars, and when anyone in Parliament disagreed, he would dissolve parliament and collect taxes on his own.



England: The Stuarts

- Charles I took the throne after James, and acted the same way as his father.
- **Petition of Right**: A document that prohibited the king from raising taxes w/o consulting Parliament. It also forbade him from imprisoning anyone without giving just cause.
- **English Civil War**: The supporters of Charles (cavaliers) clashed with the supporters of Parliament (roundheads) led by Oliver Cromwell. The roundheads won, and executed Charles I in 1649.
- Monarchy was abolished and Cromwell ruled as Lord Protector by fiat until his death.



England: The Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell

- **Cromwell fought off challenge from Charles II** and penalized Irish Catholics who tried to help restore him to the throne.
- Cromwell and his Puritans closed theaters and made Sunday a mandatory day of worship.
- **When Cromwell died the Puritans lost their grip on England, and Parliament and the monarchy (Charles II) was restored in what was called The Restoration.**



Oliver Cromwell

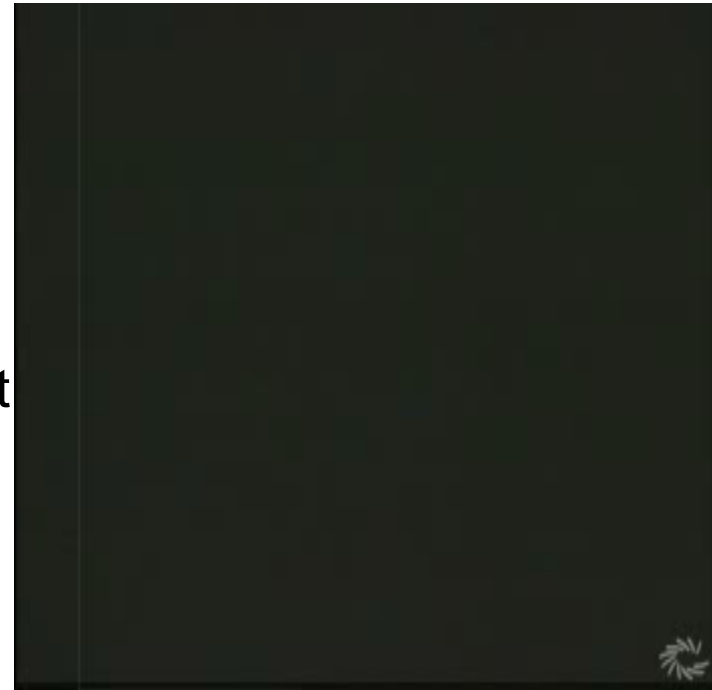
England: From Restoration to Glorious Revolution

- **The Restoration**: Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660, opens the theaters and accepts the Petition of Right.
- Charles' brother James II took over in 1685, and openly supported Catholics, causing tension with the protestant Parliament.
- Fearing he will restore the Catholic Church in England, Parliament replaced him with his Protestant daughter Mary and her Dutch Protestant husband William of Orange. This was known as "**The Glorious Revolution**", a bloodless change of power



William and Mary: The Glorious Revolution

- Before they were crowned they had to accept the English Bill of Rights, pass by Parliament on 16 December, 1689.
- This created what is known as a limited or constitutional monarchy, where a Constitution or Parliament restricts the monarch's powers, a prelude to the modern constitutional monarchy in England.
- **Parliament** had “the power of the purse.” (just like the US House of Representatives) Taxes and spending had to be approved by the people's representatives!
- Established the principle of habeas corpus, the idea that nobody could be held in prison indefinitely without cause.
- The Toleration Act of 1689 granted limited religious freedom to Puritans, Quakers, and other dissenters, but **NOT** Catholics.
- England remained permanently Protestant.



Rise of France

- Absolutism in France was created under Cardinal Richelieu during reign of Louis XIII. Richelieu secularized France and fostered national unity and loyalty to the French state and the King.
- Cardinal Richelieu centralized power by alienating the nobility and increasing king's power.
- Like a skillful puppeteer, **Cardinal Richelieu** worked behind the to change French foreign policy.
 - His main goal was to centralize power around the monarchy and make France the leading power in Europe.
 - He went against the Edict of Nantes, stripping away the many rights and freedoms given to French Huguenots and other religious groups.
- Richelieu picked his successor Cardinal Mazarin who would watch over the new king, Louis XIV.
- The greatest threat to the monarchy was the nobility
- Monarchs created permanent standing armies for the first time, enhancing their power!
- Louis XIV built the Palace at Versailles as a testament to his power and used it to gain control of the nobility
- The cost of the Palace at Versailles bankrupted France and the opulence within it was unmatched during the era.

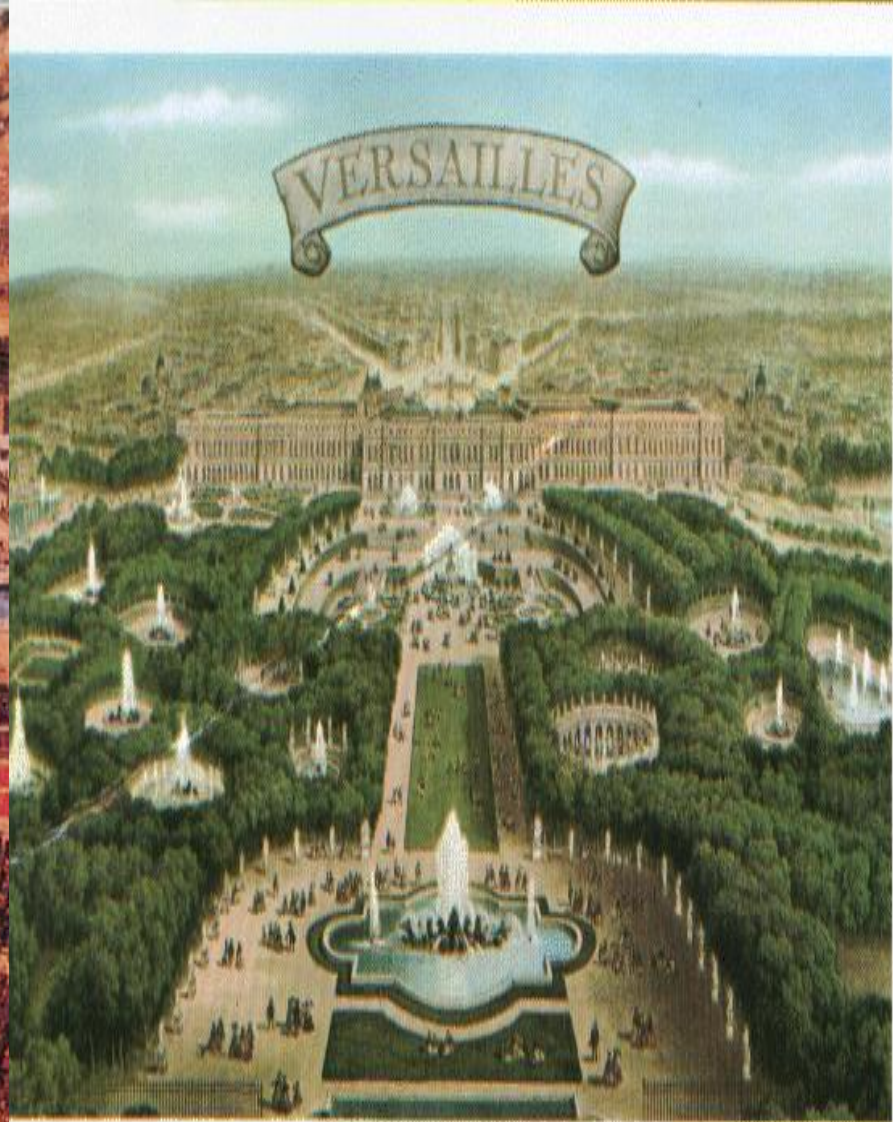


Louis XIV:The Sun King

- Louis XIV epitomized the absolutist belief that the monarchy personified the state. He ruled as absolute monarch during most of his reign.
- The Fronde (civil war) traumatized Louis when he was young. Distanced himself from people, living in Versailles, 9 miles outside of Paris
- He claimed divine right to rule.(God intended him to have all power)
- Like the sun is the center of the universe and everything revolves around it, Louis XIV believed “*L’etat, c’est moi*” (I am the state). Hence his nickname was “The Sun King”
- He centralized government, or brought everything to depend on his rule, run from his palace at Versailles.
- His palace at Versailles became a symbol of his absolute power over the nobility and all of France.



The Sun King's Palace at Versailles



The Versailles Palace Today



The Hall of Mirrors



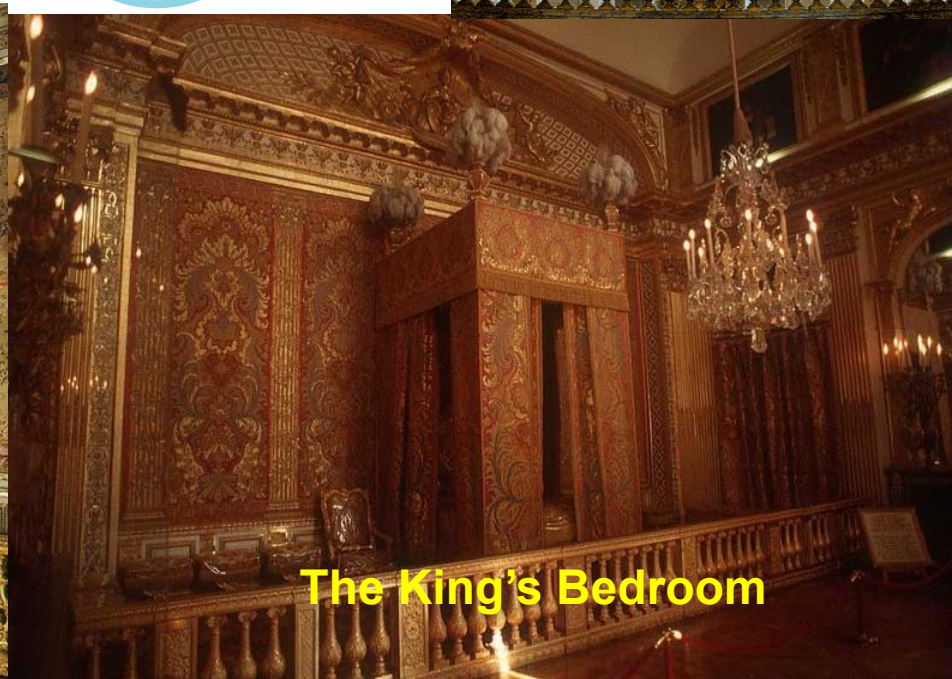
Louis XIV
Loved to
Spend
Money!!!



The Chapel at Versailles



The Queen's Bedroom



The King's Bedroom

Louis XIV: The Sun King (continued)

- He ruled for 72 years
- He ignored the *Estates General* (French Parliament/Congress) and ruled by decree.
- He built up the strongest military in Europe, funded, trained, and loyal to the central government.
- He spent lavishly, in the arts and architecture. During his reign France became the cultural model for other countries and ballet came to be an important art form.
- He neglected the common people as France lurched towards bankruptcy and famine became common.
- He revoked the Edict of Nantes
- English and Dutch kings fought with him to try to keep a balance of power in Europe.
- His wars left the treasury drained & France bankrupt.
- Versailles bankrupted France. It was a symbol of power.
 - Daily routines at Versailles were exploited by Louis XIV
 - The nobility competed against each other to perform menial tasks for the king; reinforced king's supremacy over the nobles!

Austria

- Despite losses during the 30 Years War, the **Hapsburg** family formed a strong Catholic nation in Central Europe (Austria, Czech Republic and Hungary). They had strong leadership under **Maria Theresa**, 1740-1780.
- Hapsburg Monarch was unifying figure; not as absolutist as the rest of Europe, territories and populations were too diverse.



Maria Theresa (cont'd)

- **The Pragmatic Sanction** – A royal decree by **Charles VI** (1718) having the force of law by which Europe's rulers promised not to divide the Hapsburg lands and to accept a female succession.
- She made war with Prussia when they seized some of her land (Silesia).
 - Despite a lack of knowledge in politics, she was a good enough politician to get help from other nations (Great Britain and the Netherlands).

Prussia

- Became a powerful Protestant state in Europe.
- North German Princes called Hohenzollern united their lands after the Peace of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years War in 1648
 - They took the power of the other lords, known as Junkers, but gained their loyalty back by giving them powerful jobs in the army.
- They centralized government as an absolute monarchy under Frederick William, the Great Elector, who did this by forming one of the fiercest militaries ever seen, 4th largest in Europe...
 - “Prussia is not a state which possesses an army, rather an army that possesses a state.”

18th Century Prussia



Prussia (continued)

- Frederic William's son, named Frederick II, who was treated harshly by his father, became a brilliant military leader, and was given the title Frederick the Great in 1701.
- Austria and Prussia had both arisen as powerful states, and competed with each other for power over central Europe for a long time to come.



Frederick the Great of Prussia

Frederick the Great and Prussia



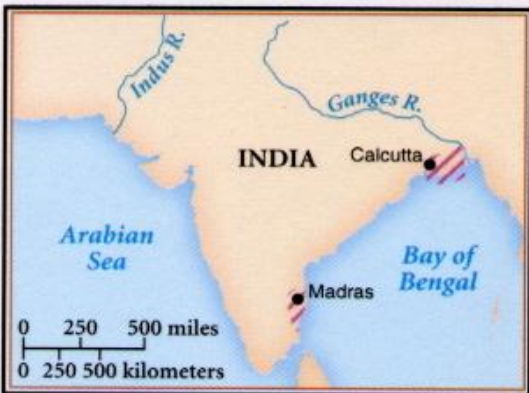
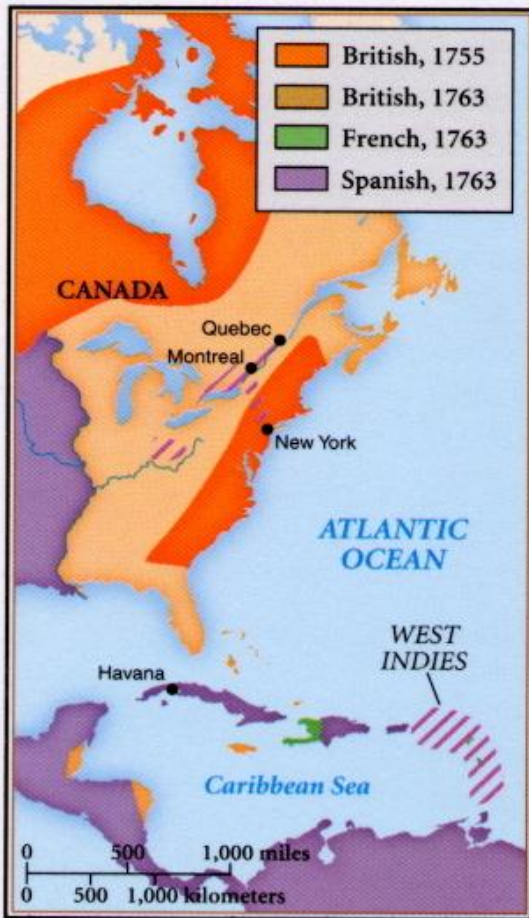
The War of Austrian Succession



MAP 19.2 War of the Austrian Succession, 1740-1748

The War of Austrian Succession (Prussia cont'd)

- **Frederick the Great invades the Austrian territory of Silesia.**
 - Enormous desire to expand Prussian territory.
 - Silesia rich in natural resources like coal.
- **Frederick the Great rejected the Pragmatic Sanction which justified Maria's power.**
- **Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle(1748)(also called Treaty of Aachen)**
 - Austria gave up Silesia to Prussia
 - Officially recognized Prussia's rise as an important European nation.



MAP 19.3 The Seven Years' War, 1756–1763

The Seven Years' War (Prussia Cont'd)

- Maria Theresa was determined to get Silesia back.
- She becomes allied to Russia, whose Empress Elizabeth was an archenemy of Frederick the Great...we now have the tables set for another war.
- Seven Years War--The Seven Years' War was a global military conflict between 1756-63, involving all great powers of the time and affecting North and Central America, Europe, the West African coast, India and even the Philippines in a truly global conflict.
- Frederick the Great, by the war's end, is able to keep most of Silesia, England controls North America and the dynamics of power are balanced precariously.



Russia

- **Ivan IV**, nicknamed “**Ivan the Terrible**”, was the first Czar
 - **Unified Russia and expanded to the east into Asia**
- **Peter the Great**, Czar from the **Romanov family**
 - Took over when he was 10, but did not really exercise power until 1689.
 - Grew up going to the “**German Quarter**” and learned of new, western technology.
 - Worked numerous jobs to learn skills and transplant in Russia
 - Sought to “**westernize**” Russia and unify Russia with the west .
 - Succeeded in tying Russia to the West as a European power!



Russia (continued)

- Peter's goals
 - Westernize Russia
 - Strengthen the military
 - Expand Russia's borders
 - Centralize royal power
- He did this by forcing the landowning nobles, called boyars into service of the government or the military.
- He also took control of the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church



Russia (continued)

- Peter the Great's biggest problem was that Russia had no warm water ports. He battled with the Ottoman Turks to try to gain control of the Black Sea, but could not defeat them.
- He had, however, defeated Sweden during the Northern War for good cold water ports along the Baltic Sea.
- Peter built his capital, the city of St. Petersburg, on the Baltic Sea, giving him a "gateway to the West."
 - He forced laborers to drain a swamp along the Neva river, resulting in hundreds dead.



Russia (continued)



- Peter the Great made Russia better by bringing western technology and “upgrades” into the country, as well as infrastructure upgrades.
- Peter the Great made life worse for the Russian people by
 - Bring serfdom into Russia
 - Forcing serfs to work in the army or on public projects
 - Showing no mercy to anyone who resisted his changes.
 - He tortured and killed anyone who resisted, including his own elite palace guards –whose corpses he left rotting in the streets.
 - Absolute rule in Russia. He even killed his own son!

Russia Under Peter the Great



 The Expansion of Russia under Peter the Great. Peter added vital territory on the Baltic Sea to the vast Russian empire.

Catherine the Great

- When Peter the Great died, he did not leave an heir to the throne. The Romanov family began to battle for power.
- Catherine was born in Prussia, but came to Russia to marry Czar Peter III. She learned Russian and converted to Orthodox Christianity.
- Peter III went crazy, and was assassinated by his own guards... who then made Catherine their leader.



Catherine the Great (continued)

- She embraced Peter the Great's ideas of westernization and serfdom.
- She became strong by letting the boyars go without paying taxes and taxing the peasants heavily herself. Many more Russians were forced into serfdom.
- She defeated the Ottomans to gain control of the Black Sea.
- In the 1790s she divided up, or partitioned, Poland between Russia, Prussia (Under Frederick the Great) and Austria. By the time they were done, Poland would be gone from the map, not to re-appear as a free Poland until 1919.

Summary:

- **Absolute monarchies** with centralized governments began to rise to power in Europe.
- The dominant powers in Europe were England, France, Prussia, Austria, and Russia.
- **Religious divisions** were evident: Protestants (England + Prussia), Catholics (France + Austria), and Eastern Orthodox Christianity (Russia).
- Competitions formed between certain nations in a balance of power struggle.
 - -England v. France- in the new world
 - -Prussia v. Austria over the German States
- **Alliances** were formed between these powers constantly to preserve a **balance of power** in Europe. These alliances would also shift depending on the goals of the leaders involved. Modern Statecraft!
- **Absolutism** worked in that it provided enough unity, order and stability over time that absolute monarchs were no longer needed. Today they are figureheads only, representing their nations!

