
ABSOLUTE MONARCHS

Rise of
European
Absolutism



Who are Absolute Monarchs?

- Kings or queens who held all power within their states' boundaries
- Believed god created the monarchy and monarchs were God's representative on earth (Divine Right)
- Has unquestioned, absolute rule and power
- part of a ruling family that passes down power from generation to generation

What is Absolutism?

- Government in which all power is vested in a single ruler or authority

Divine Right of Kings

- Belief that God chose the ruler
- Belief that God granted monarchs with the power to rule
- Therefore, the king was answerable ONLY to God



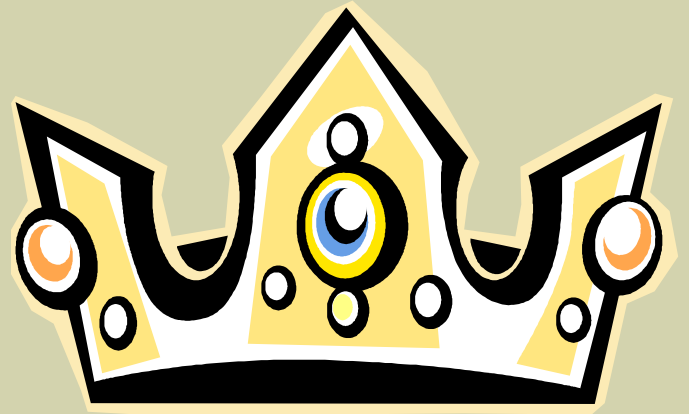
Balance of Power

- Countries have equal strength in order to prevent any one country from dominating the others.

Why Did Absolutism Develop?

Long-Term Causes of Absolutism

- The **rise of cities** & the support of the middle class
- The growth of **national kingdoms**
- Loss of **Church** authority
- **Decline of feudalism**



Immediate Causes of Absolutism

- Religious and territorial **conflicts** created fear and uncertainty
- The growth of **national armies** to deal with conflicts caused rulers to raise **taxes** to pay troops
- Heavy taxes led to additional unrest & peasant **revolts**

Age of Absolutism

POWER

The background is a light beige color. On the left side, there is a vertical bar of a slightly darker beige shade. Two horizontal lines, one dark purple and one light grey, run across the top of the page. A large, dark purple rectangular border frames the word 'SPAIN' in the lower half of the image.

SPAIN

Phillip II

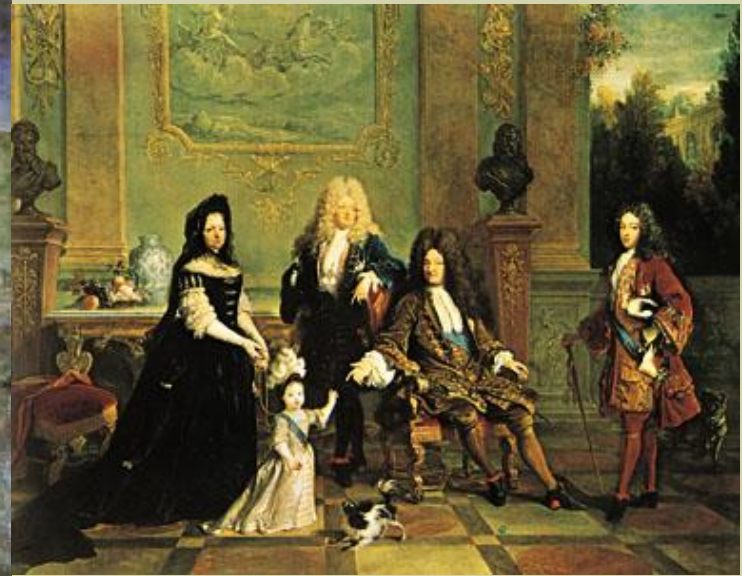
- Son of Charles V – ruler of the Holy Roman Empire
- Became ruler of Spain, Netherlands, and the Spanish American colonies
- Created an empire that circled the globe



Phillip II

- **Defender of Catholicism against Muslims and Protestants**
 - **Defeated Ottomans at Battle of Lepanto (1571)**
 - **Spanish Armada destroyed by England (1588)**
 - **Spanish empire never recovers**





FRANCE

Louis XIV

Background

- Grandfather – Henry IV enacted the Edict of Nantes
- Cardinal Richelieu helped Louis' dad establish control of France
- Louis became king at 4 years old when his father died
- Louis grew hate the nobility, because of the riots that tore France apart during his childhood



“L’ètat, C’est Moi”



- Like the sun is the center of the universe and everything revolves around it, Louis XIV believed “*L’ètat, C’est Moi*”
 - I am the State
- Louis’ view was that he and the state were one in the same
- Became the most powerful ruler in French history

Louis XIV - The Sun King

- He centralized government, or brought everything to depend on his rule, run from his palace.
- His palace at Versailles became a symbol of his absolute power.
- Ruled for 72 years.
- Ignored the *Estates General* (French Parliament).
 - Excluded the nobility from the French councils
- Built up the strongest military in Europe.
 - Funded, trained, & loyal to the central gov't.
- Spent lavishly, in the arts and architecture.
 - France became the cultural model for Europe.
 - Ballet came to be an important artform.
- Neglected the common people.

Louis attacks the Nobility

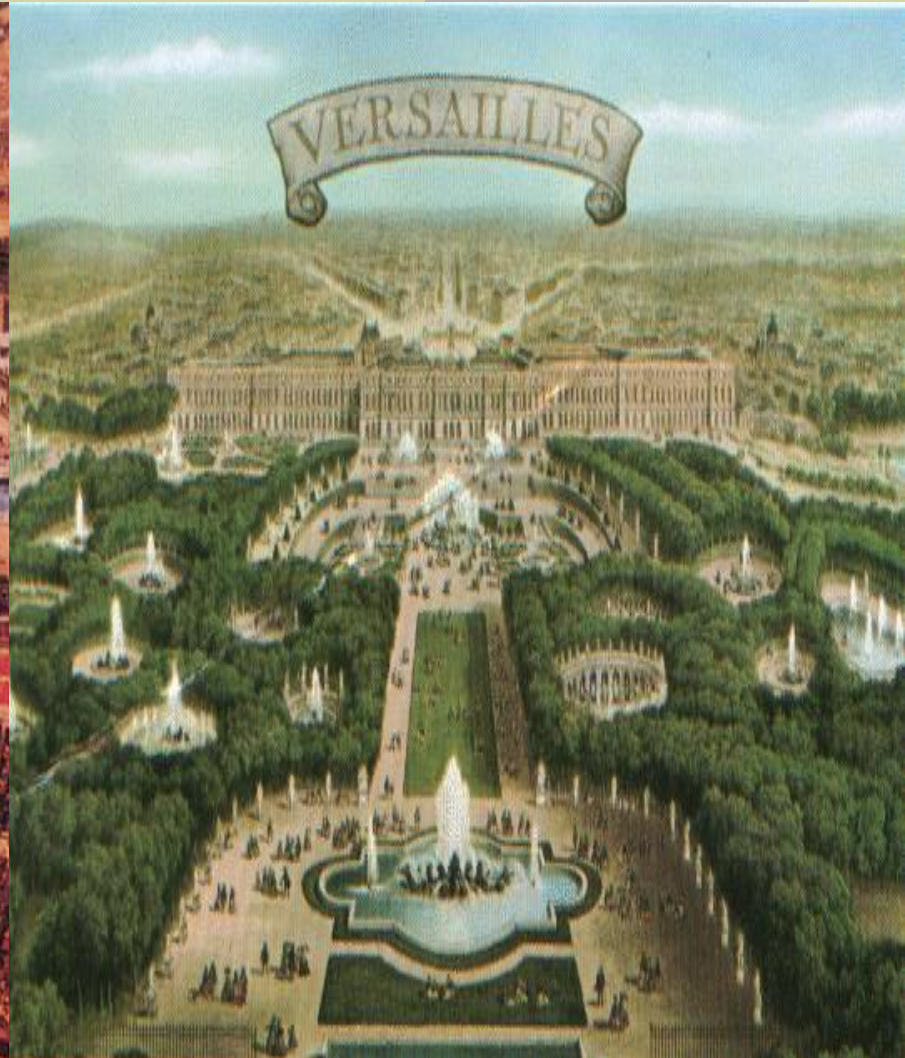
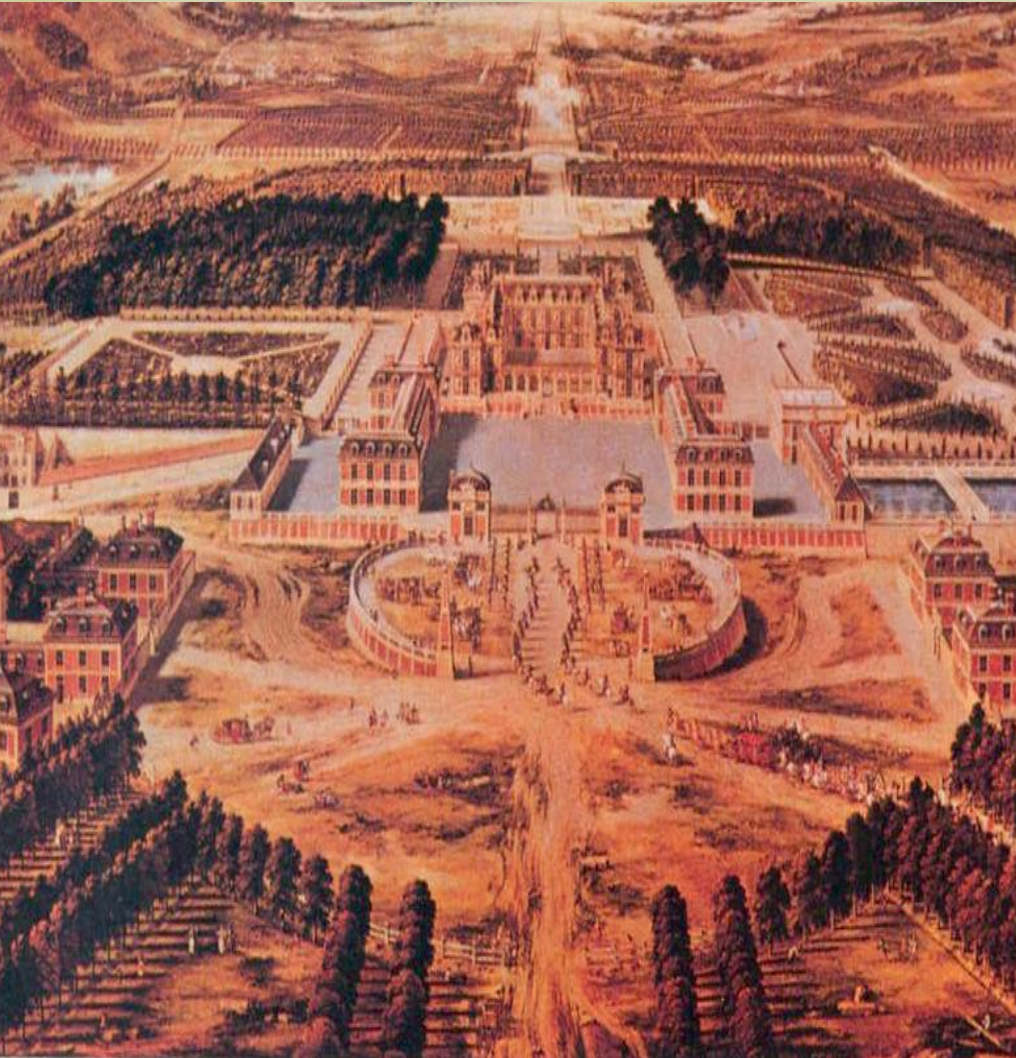
- Increased the power of government agents called **intendants** (collected taxes)
- **Revoked the Edict of Nantes.** (Calvinists rights)
- English and Dutch kings fought with him to try to keep a balance of power in Europe.
- His wars left the treasury drained.

Devoted to making France an Economic Power

- Jean Baptiste Colbert became Louis' minister of finance
- Wanted to make France self-sufficient
- Colbert developed the theory of mercantilism:
 - Wanted to export (send goods over seas) more than you import (bring goods in from over seas)



The Sun King's Palace at Versailles



Versailles Today





The Hall of Mirrors



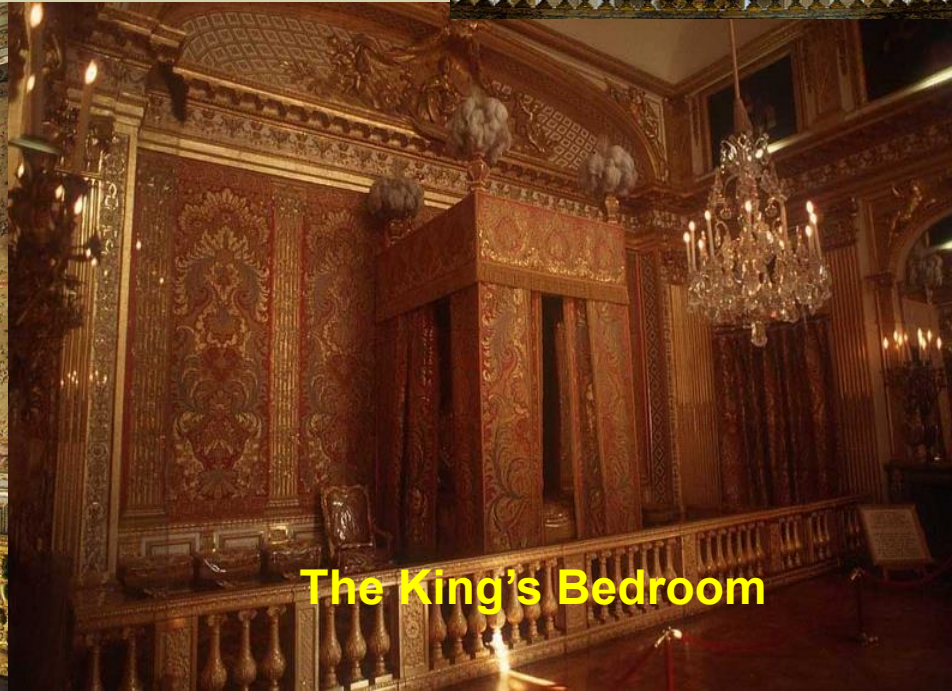
Chapel at Versailles



**Louis XIV
loved to
spend
money!**



The Queen's Bedroom



The King's Bedroom

French Military Campaigns

- Louis spent \$ on military campaigns to expand French boundaries
- These wars almost bankrupted the country
- Countries learned to join together to defeat France



War of Spanish Succession

- Spanish king left his throne to Louis XIV's grandson in 1700
- Europe was outraged & worried about the two biggest powers being united by blood
- War lasted 13 years & France lost
- Louis lost 3 out of 4 sons
- His grandson becomes king of Spain
- Louis died in 1715



Louis' Legacy

- **When Louis died in 1715, people cheered!**
- **Mixed Legacy**
 - **Positive: France ranked above all other European nations in art & literature. Considered the military leader of Europe**
 - **Negative: Constant warfare & the construction of the Palace of Versailles put France into staggering debt. Plus the poor were burdened by high taxes**



Austria & Prussia

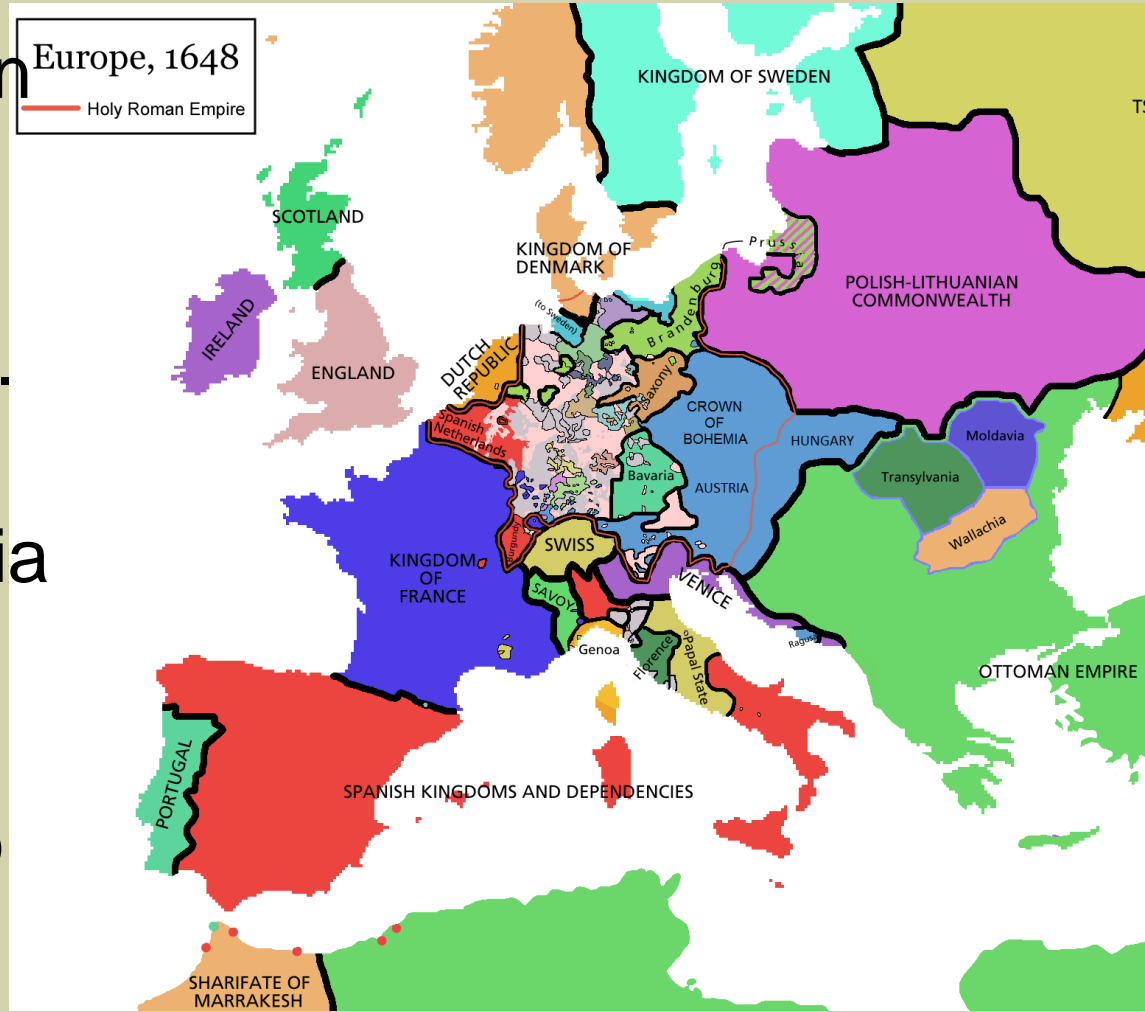
Austria

- The Hapsburg family of Austria sets up a strong **monarchy**
- Despite loses during the 30 Years War (1618-1648), the Hapsburgs family formed a strong Catholic nation in Austria. They had strong leadership under **Maria Theresa**, 1740-1780.
 - Most famous monarch



Mini Review

- **1618-1648**
- **Religious** conflict in the Holy Roman Empire (Germany)
- Protestant States v. **Catholic** States
- Peace of Westphalia ends the **war**
- Divides the Holy Roman Empire into **30+** kingdoms



Maria Theresa

- 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. (no male heir – Maria's father)
- 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

- Very militaristic kingdom
- Becomes the most **powerful** of the German states
- Heart of modern-day Germany



Prussia

- Became a powerful Protestant state.
- N. German Princes → Hohenzollern united their lands after the Peace of Westphalia.
 - Took the power of the other lords, known as Junkers (YUUNG-kər), but gained their loyalty back by giving them powerful jobs in the army.
- Centralized gov't as an absolute monarchy under Frederick William the Great Elector (1640 - 1688), by forming one of the fiercest militaries.
- reorganizing the state finances
- rebuilt towns and cities
- All these measures contributed to the foundation of the future Prussian monarchy.

Frederick William I (1713 – 1740)

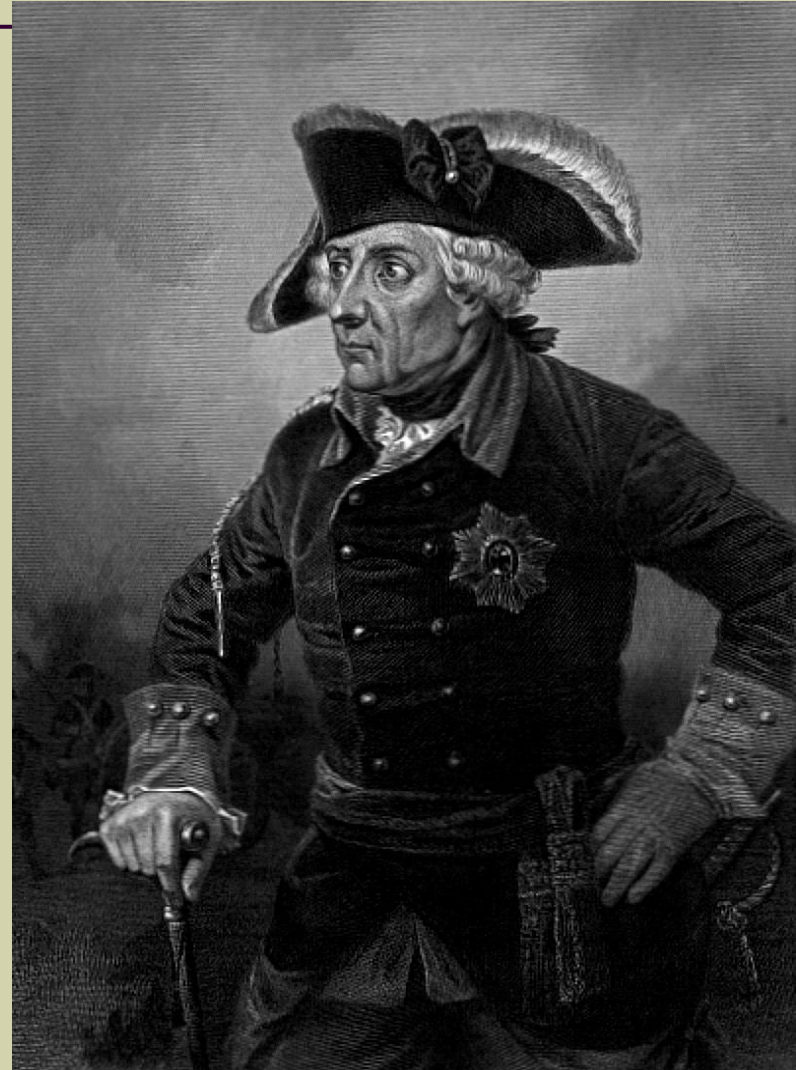
- **Frederick William I - 2nd**
Prussian king
- Transformed his country from a second-rate power into the efficient and prosperous state
- His son and successor, Frederick II the Great, made a major military power on the continent.



Prussia

Frederick II “the Great” (1740 - 1786)

- Treated harshly by his father
- Became a brilliant military leader
- Given the title Frederick the Great.
- 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

The War of Austrian Succession



MAP 19.2 War of the Austrian Succession, 1740–1748

The War of Austrian Succession 1740 - 1748

■ **Frederick the Great invades** (Austrian territory) **Silesia.**

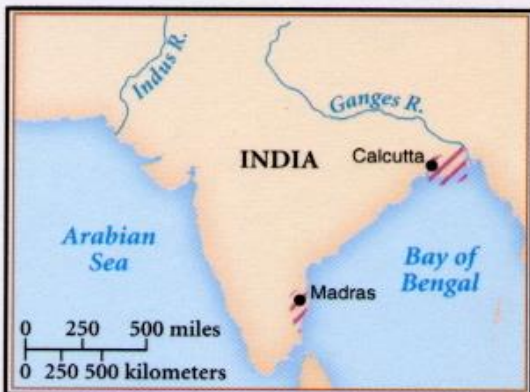
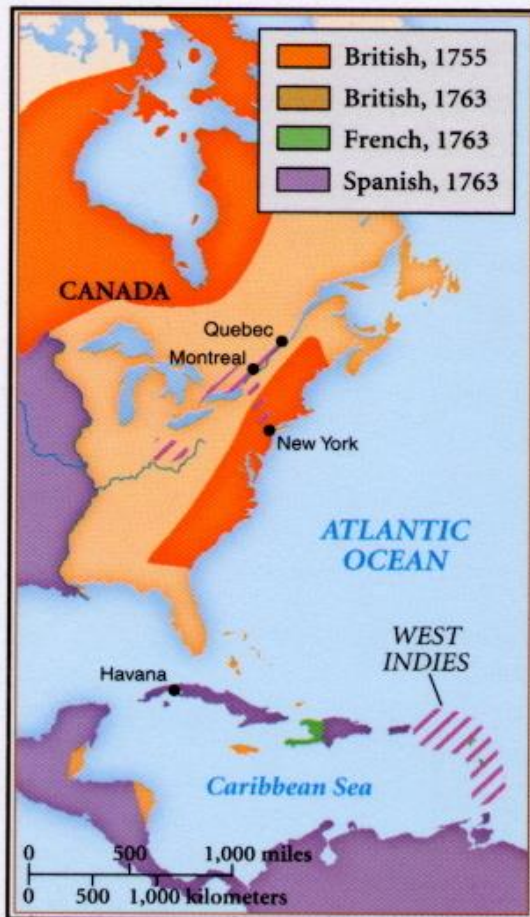
- **Enormous desire to expand Prussian territory.**
- **Silesia rich in natural resources.**

■ **Frederick the Great rejected Pragmatic Sanction which justified Maria's power.**

- a solemn decree of a ruler on a matter of primary importance and with the force of law
- **Pragmatic Sanction** of 1713 issued by Emperor Charles VI - Habsburg lands were allowed to pass to his daughter (**Maria Theresa**) if he had no male heir

■ **Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle** (eks – la – shaPEL)

- **Officially recognized Prussia's rise as an important European nation.**



MAP 19.3 The Seven Years' War, 1756–1763

The Seven Years' War 1756 - 1763

- Maria Theresa was determined to get Silesia back.
- Allies w/Russia → Empress was an enemy of Frederick the Great... set for another war.
- Last major conflict before the French Rev to involve all the great powers of Europe.
- The Austrian Habsburgs attempted to win back the rich province of Silesia.
- Involved colonial struggles b/tw Great Britain and France over control of N America and India.
- Frederick the Great is able to keep most of Silesia.
- Prussia emerged from the war as a great power whose importance could no longer be challenged.



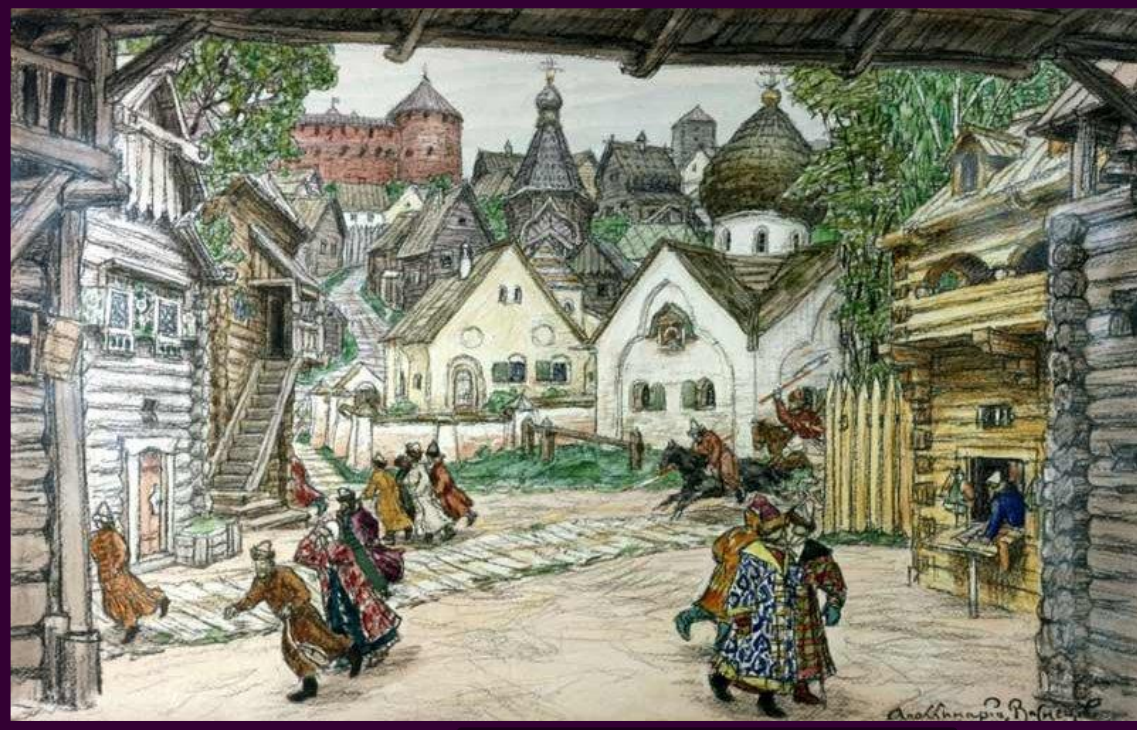
RUSSIA

Ivan the Terrible



Oprichniki

- Established by **Ivan the Terrible**
- Russian **secret police** force
- **Terrorized** the Russian people



Boyar Policy

Boyars: Russian **nobles**

- Ivan reduced nobles' power
- Seized their **land** and placed it under his control



Peter the Great



- Westernized Russia
- Forced the Russian **nobility** to adopt **western** customs

EXAMPLES:

- **Clothing & Hair** Styles (No beards!)
- Women & parties
- Eating potatoes
- Building with **stone**

Saint Petersburg

- Built a new **Russian capital**
- “Window to the **West**”
- Nobles were required to have a **house** in Saint Petersburg



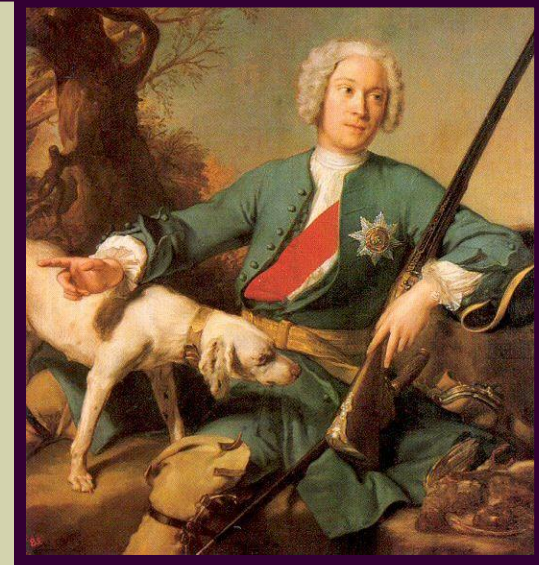
Noble Taxation

- Russian nobles paid **NO** taxes
- Burden fell on the **poor** in Russia



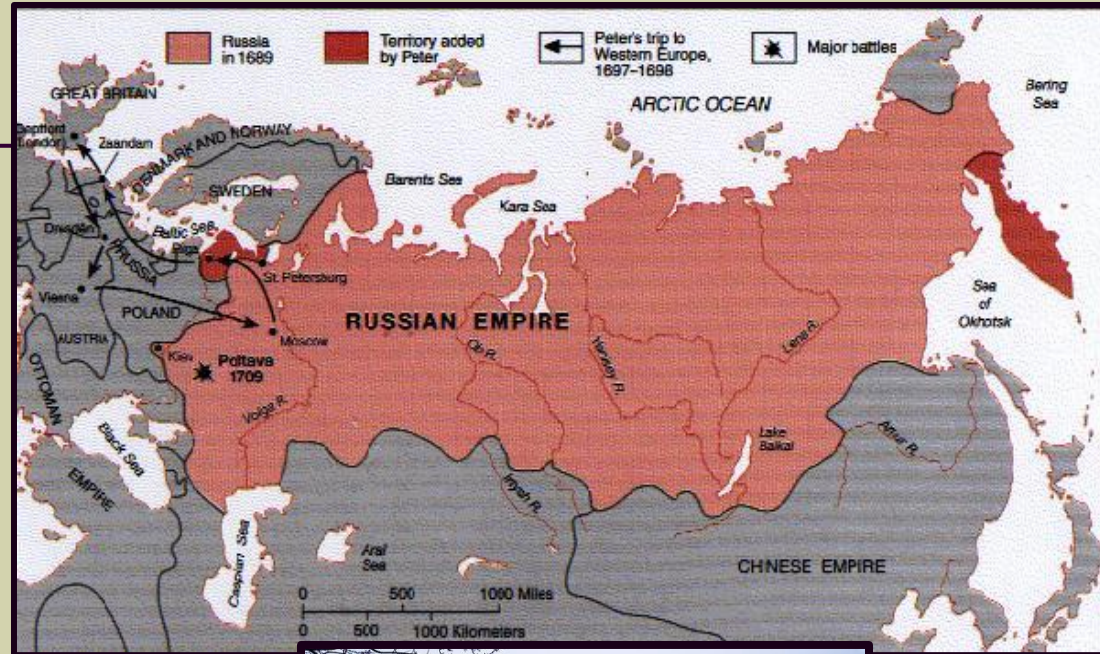
Economic Reforms

- Brought agriculture & craft production under strict government **control**
- Encouraged better **trade** & manufacturing



Territorial Expansion

- Expanded & modernized the **army**
- Hired **European** officers to train soldiers with weapons & tactics
- Took territory from **Sweden**
- Gave Russia access to the **sea**



Religion

- Brought the Russian **Orthodox Church** under state control
- Created the **Holy Synod** to run the Church under his direction



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

- Embraced Peter the Great's ideas of westernization and serfdom.
- Became strong by allowing the boyars (nobles) go without paying taxes and taxing the peasants heavily herself. Many more Russians were forced into serfdom.
- Defeated the Ottomans to gain control of the Black Sea.
- Divided up 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 reappear as a free Poland until after WWI in 1919.

Effects of Absolutism

Immediate Effects of Absolutism:

- Regulation of **religion** & society
- Rulers create bureaucracies to control their countries' **economies**
- **Loss** of power by nobility & legislatures
- Larger courts & huge building projects to demonstrate **power**

Long-Term Effects of Absolutism:

- Western influence on **Russia**
- English political reforms influence U.S. **democracy**
- **Revolution** in France

Summary

- Absolute monarchies with centralized governments began to rise to power in Europe.
- The dominant forces in Europe were Spain, France, England, Prussia, Austria, and Russia.
- Religious divisions were evident Protestants (England + Prussia), Catholics (France + Austria), and Eastern Orthodox Christianity (Russia).
- Competitions formed between certain nations.
 - 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.