Unit 2: Absolutism Notes

Absolutism

- Absolutism – A state where the king or queen holds all of the power.
- Absolute monarchs believed in divine right.
  - Divine Right – The idea that God created the monarchy and the monarch was God’s representative on Earth.

Spain

Spanish Power

- In the early 1500s, Spain grew into a world power thanks to the exploitation of new lands.
  - Conquistadors – Spanish soldiers and explorers who took part in the conquest of America.

Philip II

- Philip II inherited Spain and Spanish American from his father.
- He was a member of the Hapsburg royal family.
- Philip II was a devout Catholic and looked to expand his kingdom.
- At the beginning of Philip’s reign (1554), Spain was the richest empire in the world.

Religious Wars

- In Philip’s defense of Catholicism, he became the enemy of the Protestants.
- The Netherlands were under Hapsburg control, but were mostly Protestant.
- Philip heavily taxed them, causing them to revolt.
- England pledged to help the people of the Netherlands (the Dutch) fight the Spanish.

Spanish Armada

- To get back at Elizabeth, Philip decides to invade England.
- He builds the Spanish Armada.
- Philip hoped to overthrow Elizabeth.
- The Spanish Armada was defeated and many ships and men are lost at sea.
• With this defeat, the Spanish Empire began to weaken.

France

• France is mostly Catholic
• Since the Reformation, the Catholics have been fighting a group of Protestants called Huguenots (aka Calvinists)
• The Edict of Nantes is eventually passed.
  ○ Edict of Nantes – Declaration of religious tolerance.

French Royal Family

• France’s royal family is the House of Bourbon.
• When the king (Henry) is killed, Louis XIII is his successor.

Louis XIII

• Louis XIII is a weak king
  ○ Louis’ prime minister, Cardinal Richelieu, is a strong leader and takes control of the country.
• Richelieu is a powerful figure in the Catholic Church.

Richelieu’s Policies

• Upheld the Edict of Nantes, but did not allow Huguenot cities to have walls.
• Took power away from the nobles and gave it to government officials called intendants.

Richelieu and the Thirty Years War

• The Holy Roman Empire was a Catholic kingdom in Central Europe ruled by the Hapsburg royal family.
• The 30 Years War was fought because the Protestant German-States of the Holy Roman Empire wanted to rule themselves.
• Richelieu involved France in the Thirty Years War against Spain.
  ○ Wanted to weaken the Hapsburg Family.

Louis XIV

• Louis XIV took over after death of Louis XIII.
• He was determined to make the monarchy so powerful that no one could challenge him.

• Called himself “The Sun King”

• Expanded the power of intendants over the nobles.

• Appointed Jean Baptiste Colbert as minister of finance.
  • Colbert tried to make France self-sufficient and not reliant on imports.

Palace of Versailles
  • The Palace of Versailles was a palace built by Louis XIV.
  • The palace was a sign of the absolute power of the monarch.

End of Louis XIV’s Reign
  • Louis fought many wars in an attempt to expand France’s borders.
  • England and other countries fought France and Spain in the War of Spanish Succession.

France upon Louis XIV’s Death
  • Louis’ constant wars and extravagance led to the bankruptcy of France.
  • The peasants had been heavily taxed and grew upset at the monarchy.

Central Europe – Austria and Prussia

Thirty Years War
  • War fought between the Hapsburg Catholics of Holy Roman Empire and German Protestants.
  • Richelieu and France sided with the Germans in order to stop the Hapsburg family from gaining more power.

The Fall of the Holy Roman Empire
  • Almost 100 years after the Thirty Years War, religious differences cause the Holy Roman Empire to split between two kingdoms.
    ○ Austria - Catholic
    ○ Prussia – Religious Tolerance (Protestant and Catholic)

Austria
  • Austria is ruled by the Hapsburgs.
• Very diverse empire. Many different ethnic groups.

Maria Theresa
• Their king dies without a son and allows his daughter, Maria Theresa, to rule after his death.
• She is the first woman to rule in the Hapsburg family.
• Maria Theresa decreased the power of the nobility.
• Fought the war of Austrian Succession shortly after taking the throne in order to legitimize taking the throne.
• Created marriage alliances across Europe.

Prussia
• Prussia was ruled by the House of Hohenzollern
• Believed having a strong military was the only way to ensure safety.
• Mostly Germanic people.

Frederick the Great
• Frederick the Great was an enlightened leader.
• Believed the people should have some say in the way he governed.
• Although Frederick was a patron of the arts, he built Prussia’s army to be the best in the world.
• Challenged Maria Theresa in the War of Austrian Succession and gained valuable land for Prussia.

Russia

Ivan the Terrible
• Ivan the Terrible becomes the first Czar of Russia.
  • Czar or Tsar – the monarch of Russia.
• Takes power away from the boyars.
  • Boyars – Russian nobles.

Peter the Great
• Peter the Great takes the throne of Russia after a few weak czars.
Family of Romanov

- Wants to westernize Russia.
  - Westernization – Using Western Europe as a model for change.

Peter’s Reforms

- Increased taxes to pay for an advanced military.
- Improved status of women.
- Fought Sweden for land to build a port-city.
  - Named St. Petersburg
- Took control of the Orthodox Church.
- Imposed a “beard tax”

England

Parliamentary Monarchy

- Since the Magna Carta (1215) England has had a parliament to share in the ruling process.
- Elizabeth was not an absolute monarch...
- ...But she did hold a lot of influence and power.
- Parliaments Job:
  - Create Laws
  - Get money for the monarch.
  - It was up to the monarch whether or not to enforce the laws.

Queen Elizabeth’s Reign

- Under Elizabeth, England grows to be the greatest power in the world.
- She dies without an heir, leaving the empire to her cousin (James).
- This changed England’s royal family to the House of Stuart.

Charles I

- Charles I takes after James’ death and continues to disrespect parliament.
- Marries a Catholic.
  - **Strike One.**
- Constantly at war and wastes a lot of money.
  - **Strike Two.**
- Dissolves parliament and tries to arrest parliament leaders when he doesn’t get his way.
  - **Strike Three**
- English Civil War begins...

**English Civil War**

- Fought between:
  - Royalists (Cavaliers) who were loyal to Charles
  - Puritans (Roundheads) who believed Parliament should have more power.
- Oliver Cromwell becomes general and builds the New Model Army.
- Eventually, Cromwell captures King Charles.

**Execution of the King**

- Charles I was held prisoner and tried for treason against parliament.
  - He was killed in a public execution.

**Oliver Cromwell**

- Cromwell allowed a constitution to be drawn up, but tore it up and ruled as a dictator.
- Believed that the Puritan way of life would reform England.
- Cromwell did not take the title of king. Instead he called himself Lord Protector of England.
- Tolerated all religions except Catholicism.
  - (As long as they followed his laws)
- The Irish rebelled, Cromwell invaded them and seized the Eastern part of Ireland.

**The Restoration**

- After Cromwell died, England wanted the monarchy back.
• **Charles II**, Charles I’s son, was asked to take the throne back.

• Charles II signed an important document called “Habeas Corpus”
  - Habeas Corpus - Allowing prisoners to be given a reason for their arrest.

• Charles II died and **James II** took over.

James II

• James II was Catholic and his son was too.

• Parliament feared a Catholic line of kings.

William and Mary

• **Mary Stuart** (James’ daughter) and her Protestant husband **William** overthrew the king and took over.

• This is known as the Glorious Revolution.
  - Bloodless (No battles fought)

• Established a new constitutional monarchy.
  - Parliament and the monarchy were equal in the ruling process.