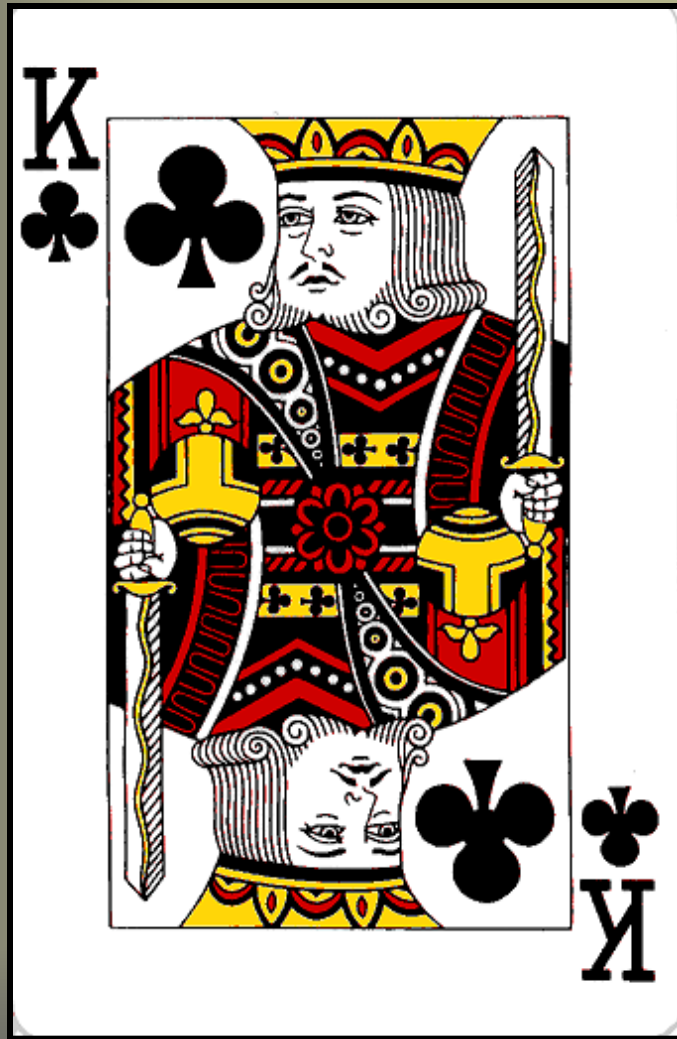


The Age of Absolute Monarchs





Overview

In the 1500s and 1600s, several rulers in Asia and Europe sought to centralize their political power. Claiming divine right, or authority from God, leaders such as Philip II in Spain and Louis XIV in France gained complete authority over their governments and their subjects.

England resisted the establishment of absolutism. After a civil war, England's Parliament enacted a Bill of Rights that limited the English monarch's powers.



Overview

Main Ideas:

- Monarchs acted to establish absolute power
- Monarchs used the divine right theory and similar ideas to justify their power
- Parliament and the Puritans in England resisted absolutism
- A limited monarchy was established in England

Absolutism



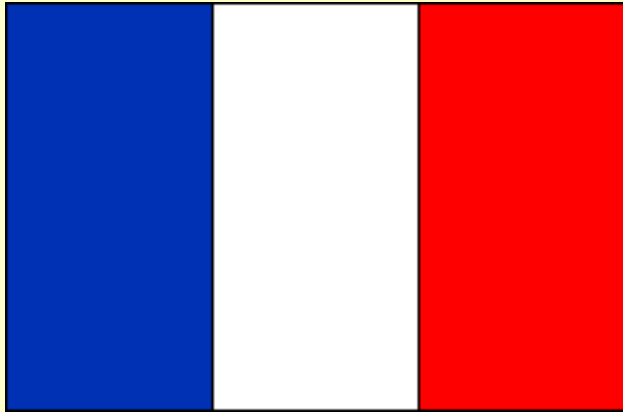
Absolutism: Belief that monarchs hold supreme power, and are responsible only to God.

- King has all power
- People have no power

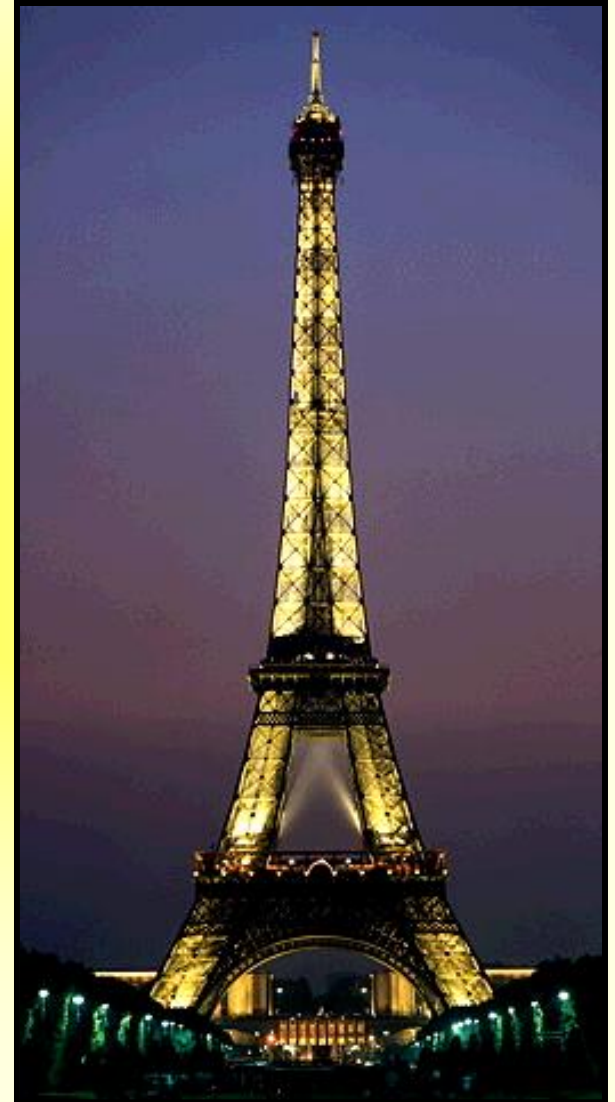
Divine Right Theory: Idea that a king gets his authority to rule directly from God.

- Kings gain power & centralized governments lose power

ABSOLUTISM IN FRANCE



By the late 1600s, France had replaced Spain as the most powerful European nation.



Henry IV (of Navarre)

Country: France

Years: 1589-1610

Achievements:

Edict of Nantes ends religious wars in France

Downfalls:

St Bartholomew's Day Massacre occurs during his reign; Religious toleration alienates him from other Huguenots and by French Catholics; 12 assassination attempts finally result in his death





Louis XIV

Country: France

Years: 1643 – 1715 (72 years!)

Achievements: Called himself the “Sun King” and said “I am the state.” Strengthened the monarchy, expanded bureaucracy, built palace of Versailles, strongest army in Europe, made France a wealthy cultural center.

Downfalls: He used the wealth for his own benefit, peasants starved, numerous wars, never called Estates General. The French monarchy would not survive long after Louis’ death.











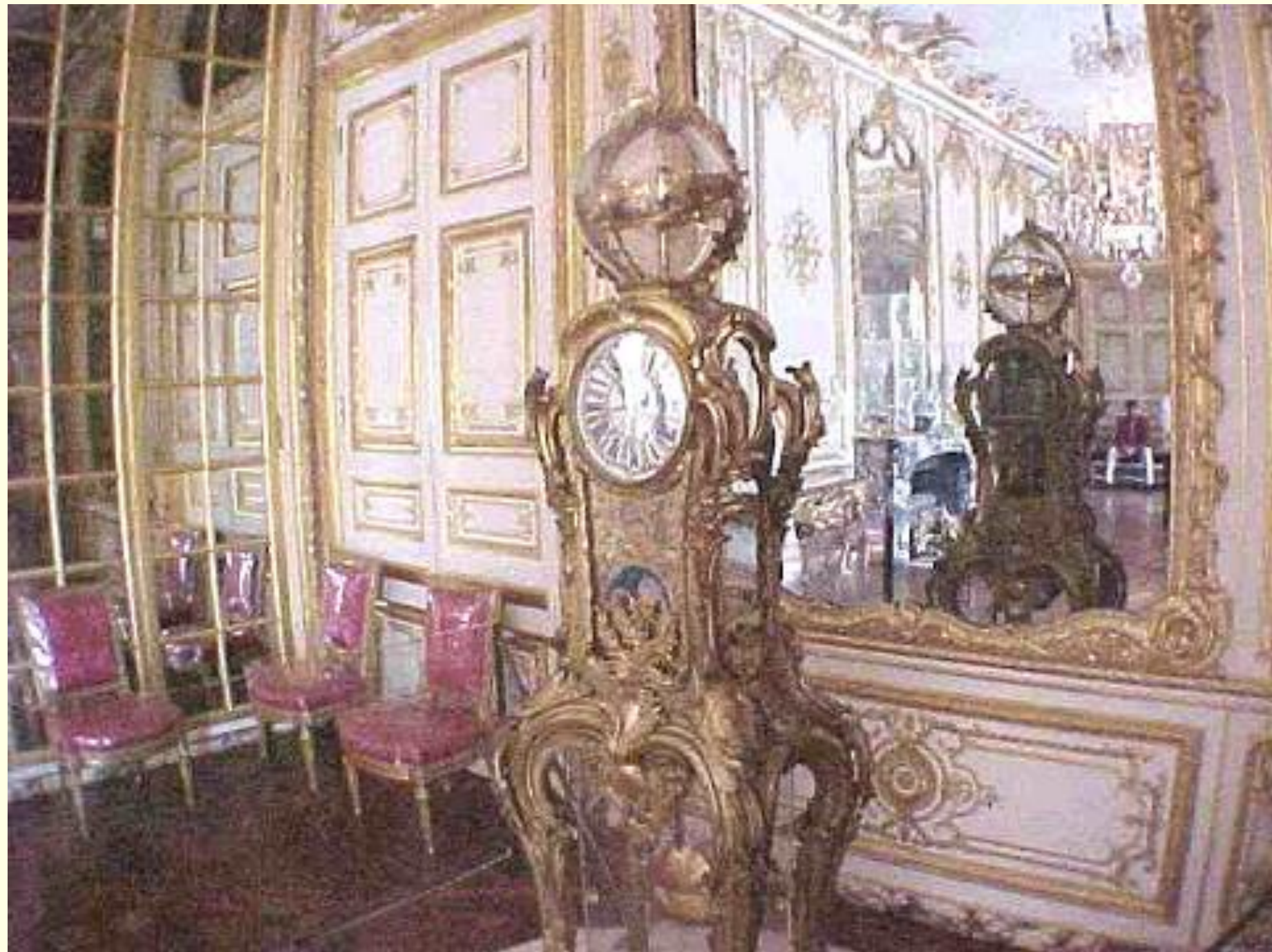














ABSOLUTISM IN ENGLAND

While other nations turned to absolutism in the 1500s and 1600s, England's Parliament resisted the throne.



James I

Country: England

Years: 1603 - 1625

Achievements: Translated the bible, the famous King James version.

Downfalls: Had difficulties with Parliament – he needed money for his wars and extravagant lifestyle. He eventually dissolved Parliament and imposed his own taxes. Fought with the Puritans, who were seeking to purify the Church of England.





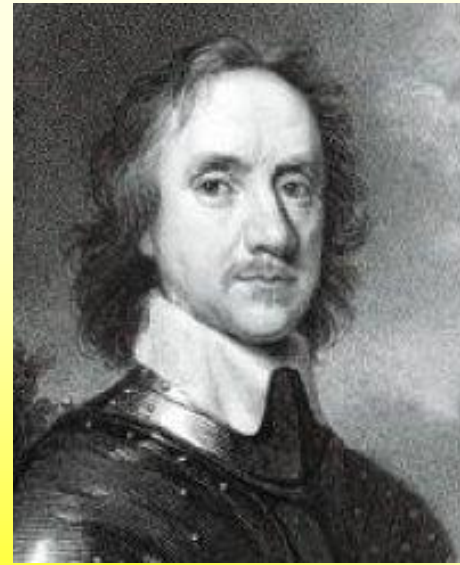
Charles I

Country: England

Years: 1625 -1649

Achievements: Strong army, seized nations.

Downfalls: He put his enemies in prison without trials, high taxes, angered Puritans, he dissolved Parliament and had to call them back because he needed the money. This led to the English Civil War. He was put on trial and beheaded by Parliament in 1649.



**Oliver
Cromwell**

Cromwell was the skilled military commander who won the civil war and captured Charles I. Charles I was the first king ever to be tried and executed by his own subjects. This event shocked other European monarchies and signified that absolutism would not be tolerated in England.

Charles II

Country: England

Years: 1660 - 1685

Achievements: Was asked to take the throne after several years of Puritan rule. He reopened theatres, dancing, and music.

Downfalls: Obeyed Parliament, limited monarchy, limited power.

Limited Monarchy - a government in which a legislative body limits the monarch's powers.





James II

Country: England

Years: 1685 - 1688

Achievements: reinstated absolutist policies.

Downfalls: Parliament feared a return to Catholic dominance and asked James' daughter and son-in-law, William and Mary, to take the throne. When they arrived from France James II **ABDICATED**, completing a bloodless transfer of power, known as the Glorious Revolution.

William & Mary

Country: England

Years: 1689-1702

Achievements:

“Glorious Revolution” as they peacefully assume the throne; end of religious warfare; English Bill of Rights

Downfalls: Obeyed Parliament, limited monarchy, limited power.



English Bill of Rights – a set of acts passed by Parliament to ensure its superiority over the monarchy. It stated:

- King must work with Parliament
- House of Commons has financial control
- Abolished excessive fines and cruel and unusual punishment
- Affirmed **habeas corpus** – no person could be held in jail without first being charged with a crime.

Toleration Act of 1689 – Granted Protestant dissenters, such as Puritans and Quakers, limited toleration (not for Catholics though).

ABSOLUTISM IN RUSSIA

The driving force behind Russia's rise to power was Ivan III (Ivan the Great). He built the framework for absolute rule in Russia, which would only get worse.



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Peter the Great

Country: Russia

Years: 1682 - 1725

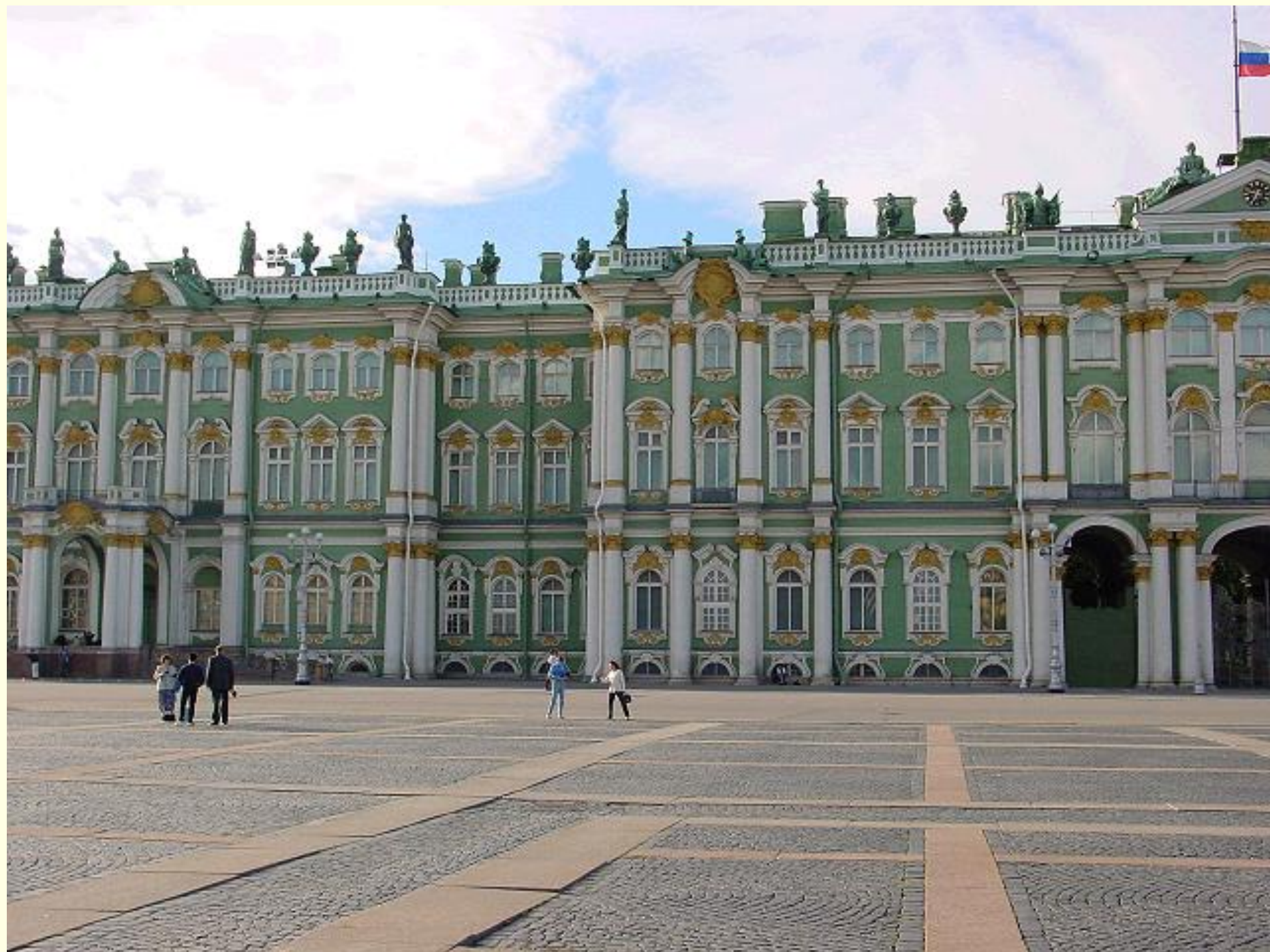
Achievements: Westernization, St. Petersburg, modern army, new industries, education, warm water port (Baltic Sea), extended borders, unified the nation, reduced power of nobility, gained control of Russian Orthodox Church.

Downfalls: Did not reach Black sea, reforms died with him.



















Catherine the Great

Country: Russia

Years: 1762- 1796

Achievements:

Successful coup against her husband; “Enlightened Despot” builds academies, libraries and promoted learning

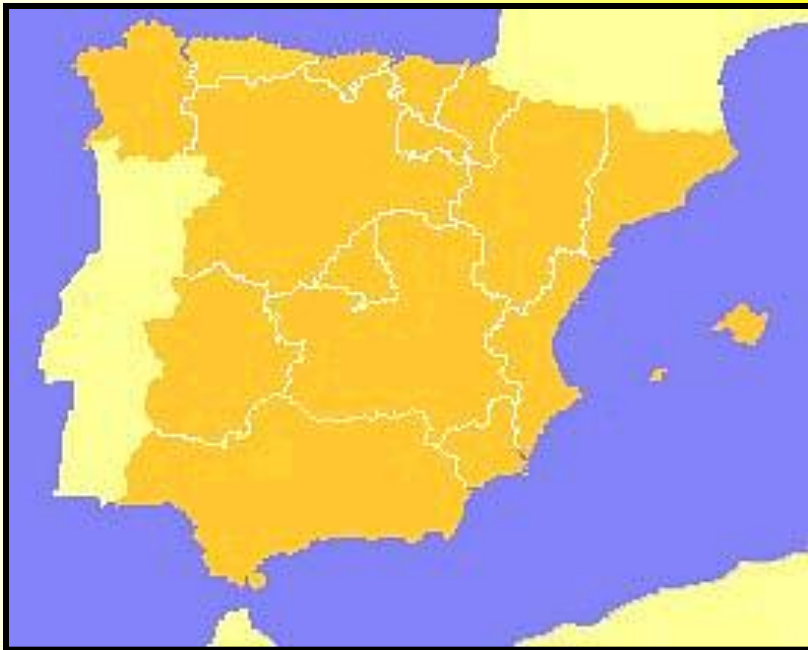
Downfalls: Reversed liberal reforms made by Peter the Great harming peasants;
Coup d’etat ousts Peter III





ABSOLUTISM IN SPAIN

In the 1500s Spain was the most powerful nation in Europe.



Charles V

Country: Spain (Holy Roman Empire)

Years: 1519 - 1556

Achievements: Ruled over Spain, Austria and the Netherlands as Holy Roman Emperor.

Downfalls: Large diverse empire with many threats: Turks, French, and German Protestant princes. Exhausted, he gave up his titles and divided his empire in 1556. His brother Ferdinand became Holy Roman Emperor, and his son Philip II ruled Spain, the Netherlands, and the vast Spanish overseas empire.



Phillip II

Country: Spain

Years: 1556 - 1598

Achievements: Hard-working ruler who ushered in the Golden age of Spain – the most powerful nation. He also Helped the Catholic Church persecute Protestants during the Counter-Reformation.

Downfalls: Spanish armada defeated by England. After Philip II Spanish power slowly declined as rulers taxed people too much and spend money on overseas wars.





ABSOLUTISM IN AUSTRIA



Maria Theresa

Country: Austria

Years: 1740 - 1780

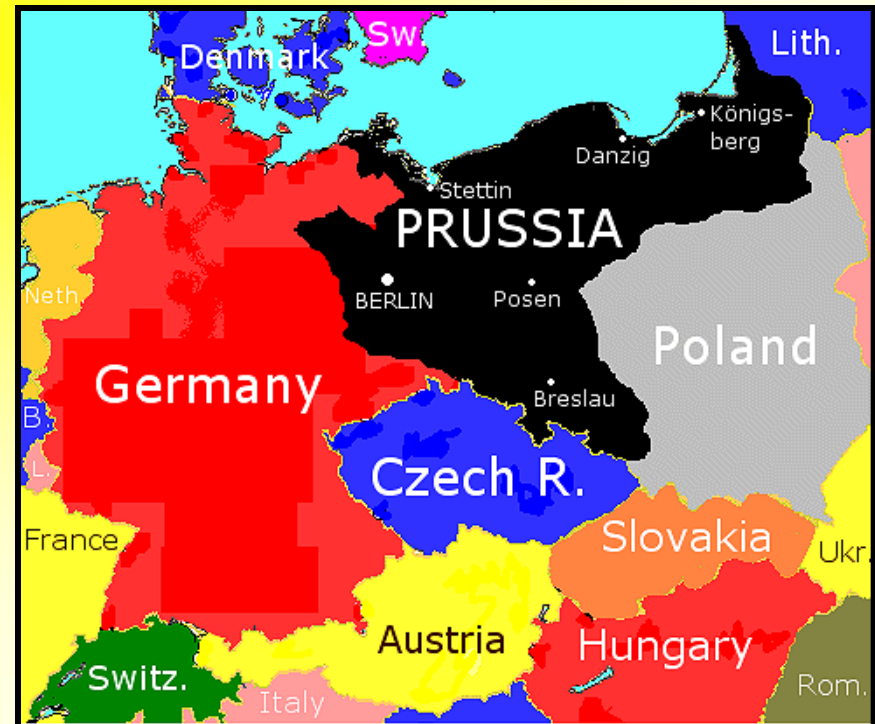
Achievements: Reclaimed Austrian lands, strengthened and unified Austrian monarchy, first woman to rule Hapsburg lands, enlightened despot.

Downfalls: War of Austrian succession led to the loss of Silesia, spent much time defending her right to rule.





ABSOLUTISM IN PRUSSIA



Frederick the Great

Country: Prussia

Years: 1740 - 1786

Achievements: Seized Austrian lands, disciplined, strong army, enlightened despot.

Downfalls: Badly treated and fled the country.



Summary

Through the 1500s and 1600s absolutism became dominant through much of Europe and parts of Asia. In Spain, France, and Russia, absolutist monarchs claimed that they ruled by divine right and sought to extend their political power. While other nations accepted absolutism, England stood as a contrast to this trend. After the Puritan Revolution and the Glorious Revolution of the mid-1600s, the English Bill of Rights was passed establishing England as a limited monarchy.