

CHAPTER 24

THE TRANSFORMATION OF EUROPE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the dramatic transformation of Europe between 1500 and 1800 from a subregion of Eurasia to a dynamic global powerhouse. The expansion of European powers overseas is addressed in Chapters 22 and 23. Here we will consider some of the internal changes that enabled the nations of western Europe, in particular, to assume such preeminence. This transformation occurred simultaneously and on multiple levels. Also, this chapter considers state-building and social and economic change in Russia under Peter I and Catherine II.

- Religious transformation. The Protestant Reformation, launched by Martin Luther in 1517 in Germany, successfully challenged the monopoly of the Roman Catholic church on western Christendom. The printing press, recently introduced to Europe from China, advanced the ideas and texts of the Reformation throughout Europe.
- Political transformation. Powerful nation-states evolved with the resources and institutions to advance national interests abroad. At the same time, two models for political order emerged, represented by the absolutist monarchies of France and Spain and the constitutional monarchies of England and the Netherlands.
- Economic transformation. The emergence of capitalism is evident in changes to the structures of banking, finance, and manufacturing. Adam Smith advocated a free market economy, with prices and wages determined through competition.
- Intellectual transformation. New technologies and new scientific discoveries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries fueled debate about the nature of the universe and called into question the authority of the Church in such matters. This discussion eventually led to the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, an intellectual movement that raised important questions about the nature of humanity, religion, and political authority.

OUTLINE

I. The fragmentation of western Christendom

A. The Protestant Reformation

1. Martin Luther (1483–1546) attacked the sale of indulgences, 1517
 - a) Attacked corruption in the Roman Catholic church; called for reform
 - b) His argument was reproduced with printing presses and widely read
 - c) Enthusiastic popular response from lay Christians, princes, and many cities
 - d) By mid-sixteenth century, half the German people adopted Lutheran Christianity
2. Reform spread outside Germany
 - a) Protestant movements popular in Swiss cities, Low Countries

- b) English Reformation sparked by King Henry VIII's desire for divorce
 - 3. John Calvin, French convert to Protestantism
 - a) Organized model Protestant community in Geneva in the 1530s
 - b) Calvinist missionaries were successful in Scotland, Low Countries, also in France and England
- B. The Catholic Reformation
 - 1. The Council of Trent, 1545–1563, directed reform of Roman Catholic church
 - 2. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) founded 1540 by Ignatius Loyola
 - a) High standards in education
 - b) Became effective advisors and missionaries worldwide
- C. Witch-hunts and religious wars
 - 1. Witch-hunts in Europe
 - a) Theories and fears of witches intensified in the sixteenth century
 - b) Religious conflicts of Reformation fed hysteria about witches and devil worship
 - c) About sixty thousand executed, 95 percent of them women
 - 2. Religious wars between Protestants and Catholics throughout the sixteenth century
 - a) Civil war in France for thirty-six years (1562–1598)
 - b) War between Catholic Spain and Protestant England, 1588
 - c) Protestant provinces of the Netherlands revolted against rule of Catholic Spain
 - 3. The Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), the most destructive European war up to WWI
 - a) Began as a local conflict in Bohemia; eventually involved most of Europe
 - b) Devastated the Holy Roman Empire (lost one-third population)

II. The consolidation of sovereign states

- A. The attempted revival of empire
 - 1. Charles V (reigned 1519–1556), Holy Roman emperor
 - a) Inherited a vast empire of far-flung holdings
 - b) Unable to establish a unified state
 - c) Pressures from France and Ottomans halted expansion of the empire
- B. The new monarchs of England, France, and Spain
 - 1. Enhanced state treasuries by direct taxes, fines, and fees
 - a) State power enlarged and more centralized
 - b) Standing armies in France and Spain
 - c) Reformation increased royal power and gave access to wealth of the Church
 - 2. The Spanish Inquisition, Catholic court of inquiry, founded 1478

- a) Intended to discover secret Muslims and Jews
 - b) Used by Spanish monarchy to detect Protestant heresy and political dissidents
- C. Constitutional states
1. Constitutional states of England and the Netherlands: political experiments in which states harnessed popular support to magnify state power
 - a) Characterized by limited powers, individual rights, and representative institutions
 - b) Constitutional monarchy in England evolved out of a bitter civil war, 1642–1649
 - c) In the Netherlands, representative government emerged after a long struggle for independence
 - d) In both states, constitutional government enabled merchants to flourish
 2. The English Civil War
 - a) Tensions between kings and parliament over taxation and religion
 - b) Kings tried to institute new taxes without parliamentary approval
 - c) Religion: Anglican kings vs. Calvinists (Puritans)
 - d) Civil War ensued; Charles I beheaded
 3. Glorious Revolution (1688–1689)
 - a) Restoration of monarchy in 1660 after period of Puritan dictatorship
 - b) Continuing conflict between kings and parliament resulted in deposition of King James II; William and Mary assume throne
 - c) New arrangement: kings rule in cooperation with Parliament
 4. The Dutch Republic
 - a) King Philip II of Spain controlled the Netherlands
 - b) Philip, a devout Catholic, suppressed Calvinism there, provoking rebellion
 - c) In 1581, organization of the United Provinces as a Dutch Republic
- D. Absolute monarchies
1. Based on the theory of the divine right of kings
 2. Cardinal Richelieu, French chief minister 1624–1642, crushed power of nobles
 3. The Sun King of France, Louis XIV (reigned 1643–1715)
 - a) Model of royal absolutism: the court at Versailles
 - b) Large standing army kept order
 - c) Promoted economic development: roads, canals, industry and exports
 4. Absolutism in Russia
 - a) By 1600, Russian a vast Eurasian empire
 - b) Romanov Dynasty (1613–1917) greatly centralized government

- c) Peter I (reigned 1682–1725) transformed Russia using western European models
 - d) Fascinated with technology, Peter imposed program of rapid modernization
 - (1) Russian industries to incorporate the most advanced science and technology
 - (2) Russians sent abroad to study
 - (3) Peter himself traveled to Europe to study government, military, and industry
 - e) Military reform: to build powerful, modern army
 - (1) Offered better pay and modern weapons to peasants
 - (2) Aristocratic officers ordered to study mathematics and geometry
 - (3) Built navy for expansion into Baltic and northern seas
 - f) Bureaucratic reform: to facilitate collection of taxes and improve administrative efficiency
 - g) Social reforms challenged established customs and provoked protest
 - (1) Ordered subjects to wear western clothing
 - (2) Ordered men to shave beards
 - h) St. Petersburg built by Peter in 1703
 - (1) New capital on the Baltic Sea
 - (2) Headquarters for Russian navy, administrative center for government
 - i) Catherine II (reigned 1762–1795) continued administrative reforms
 - (1) Divided empire into fifty administrative provinces
 - (2) Promoted economic development
 - (3) Worked to improve conditions among peasants and to eliminate cruel punishments
 - j) Pugachev's Rebellion in Caucasus (1773–1774): the end of Catherine's reforms
 - (1) Adventurers, exiles, peasants, and serfs, led by Yemelian Pugachev
 - (2) Killed thousands of nobles, officials, and priests; crushed by imperial army
 - (3) Pugachev's rebellion soured Catherine on reform; afterwards she focused on preserving autocratic rule rather than promoting change based on western European models
5. The partitioning of Poland (three partitions, 1772–1797)
- a) A weak Poland partitioned out of existence by Austria, Prussia, and Russia
 - b) Lesson: European states needed strong, effective government in order to survive

- E. The European states system
1. The Peace of Westphalia (1648) ended the Thirty Years' War
 - a) Laid foundation for system of independent sovereign states
 - b) Abandoned notion of religious unity
 - c) Did not end war between European states
 2. The balance of power
 - a) No ruler wanted to see another state dominate
 - b) Diplomacy based on shifting alliances in national interests
 3. Military development costly and competitive
 - a) New armaments (cannons and small arms) and new military tactics
 - b) Other empires—China, India, and the Islamic states—did not keep pace

III. Early capitalist society

- A. Population growth and urbanization
1. Population growth
 - a) American food crops improved Europeans' nutrition and diets
 - b) Increased resistance to epidemic diseases after the mid-seventeenth century
 - c) European population increased from 81 million in 1500 to 180 million in 1800
 2. Urbanization
 - a) Rapid growth of major cities, for example, Paris from 130,000 in 1550 to 500,000 in 1650
 - b) Cities increasingly important as administrative and commercial centers
- B. Early capitalism and protoindustrialization
1. The nature of capitalism
 - a) Private parties sought to take advantage of free market conditions
 - b) Economic decisions by private parties, not by governments or nobility
 - c) Forces of supply and demand determined price
 2. Supply and demand
 - a) Merchants built efficient transportation and communication networks
 - b) New institutions and services: banks, insurance, stock exchanges
 3. Joint-stock companies like EEIC and VOC organized commerce on a new scale
 4. Capitalism actively supported by governments, especially in England and Netherlands
 - a) Protected rights of private property, upheld contracts, settled disputes

- b) Chartered joint-stock companies and authorized these to explore, conquer, and colonize distant lands
 - 5. The putting-out system, or protoindustrialization, of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
 - a) Entrepreneurs bypassed guilds, moved production to countryside
 - b) Rural labor cheap, cloth production highly profitable
- C. Social change in early modern Europe
 - 1. Early capitalism altered rural society: improved material standards, increased financial independence of rural workers
 - 2. Serfdom in Russia
 - a) Law code of 1649 placed serfs under strict control of noble landlords
 - b) Serfs were not slaves but could be sold as private property
 - c) A caste-like social order that restricted occupational and geographic mobility
 - d) Capitalism flourished in western Europe because of serfdom in eastern Europe
 - 3. Profits and ethics
 - a) Medieval theologians considered profit making to be selfish and sinful
 - b) Adam Smith: society would prosper as individuals pursued their own interests
 - c) Capitalism generated deep social strains also: bandits, muggers, witch-hunting
 - 4. The nuclear family strengthened by capitalism
 - a) Families more independent economically, socially, and emotionally
 - b) Love between men and women, parents and children became more important

IV. Science and enlightenment

- A. The reconception of the universe
 - 1. The Ptolemaic universe: A motionless earth surrounded by nine spheres
 - a) Could not account for observable movement of the planets
 - b) Compatible with Christian conception of creation
 - 2. The Copernican universe
 - a) Nicolaus Copernicus suggested that the sun was the center of the universe, 1543
 - b) Implied that the earth was just another planet
- B. The Scientific Revolution
 - 1. Galileo Galilei (1564–1642)
 - a) Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) demonstrated planetary orbits to be elliptical
 - b) With a telescope, Galileo saw sunspots, moons of Jupiter, mountains of the moon

c) Galileo's theory of velocity of falling bodies anticipated the modern law of inertia

2. Isaac Newton (1642–1727)

a) Published *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* in 1686

b) Offered mathematical explanations of laws that govern movements of bodies

c) Newton's work symbolized the scientific revolution—direct observation and mathematical reasoning

C. The Enlightenment

1. Science and society

a) Enlightenment thinkers sought natural laws that governed human society in the same way that Newton's laws governed the universe

b) John Locke attacked divine-right theories of government, advocated constitutional government; sovereignty resides in people, not state or rulers

c) Adam Smith: laws of supply and demand determine price

d) Montesquieu: used political science to argue for political liberty

e) Center of Enlightenment was France where philosophes debated issues of day

2. Voltaire (1694–1778)

a) French philosophe, champion of religious liberty and individual freedom

b) Prolific writer; wrote some seventy volumes in life, often bitter satire

3. Deism popular among thinkers of Enlightenment, including Voltaire

a) Accepted the existence of a god but denied supernatural teachings of Christianity

b) God the watchmaker ordered the universe according to rational and natural laws

4. The theory of progress—the ideology of the philosophes

5. Impact of Enlightenment

a) Weakened the influence of organized religion

b) Encouraged secular values based on reason rather than revelation

c) Subjected society to rational analysis, promoted progress and prosperity