

# Age of Absolutism – Austria, Prussia, and Russia

## Austria

- Holy Roman Empire
  - o “Neither Holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire”
    - Voltaire
  - o Germanic States
  - o Decentralized elected emperor
    - Hapsburgs
  - o North – Protestant
  - o South – Catholic
- Collapse of HRE
  - o Peace of Westphalia
    - Destroys remaining political and religious unity
    - Survived in piece until 1806
- Austrian Empire
  - o Divided
    - Austria (Germanic)
    - Hungary (Magyar)
    - Bohemia (Czech)
  - o Austria
    - Personal empire of Hapsburgs
      - Ruled directly
- Austrian Expansion
  - o War with the Turks
    - John Sobieski
      - Polish
      - Saved Vienna
    - Expanded territory to southeast
  - o War of Spanish Succession
    - Gained territories in Europe
      - Netherlands
      - Milan
      - Naples
- Characteristics
  - o Capital is Vienna
  - o Polygenous
    - Ethnicities
    - Languages
  - o **Strong Nobility**
    - Serfdom persists
    - Very few overseas colonies
      - Attempted Nicobar Islands and Tianjin
        - o Neither successful
      - Few cities
      - Small middle class
  - o No National Assembly



- Weaknesses
  - o Small army
  - o Not Unified
  - o Nobility
    - Prevented much change
  - o Ethnicities
    - Hostility from Bohemia and Hungary
  - o Loss of Spanish Empire
    - War of Spanish Succession
      - Spanish possessions fall under Bourbon authority
- Pragmatic Sanction
  - o 1713
  - o Made following death of Charles VI
    - Maria Theresa **ONLY** heir to Austrian Throne
    - Forced other empires to accept
      - Caveat – They are not allowed to invade

## Prussia

- Background
  - o Territory
    - Located in north Germany
    - No true borders
      - Very disjointed
  - o Existed as elector state since 1529
  - o 1618
    - Electorate of Brandenburg (German) and Duchy of Prussia (Polish Germanic)
      - Brandenburg freed up after 30 years War
      - Prussia freed up after Second Northern War
- Hohenzollern
  - o Hereditary
  - o Absolutists
  - o Highly centralized
    - Very bureaucratic
- Army
  - o **Very Strong**
  - o Grew up around army
- Economy
  - o Centered on growing army
    - Demand drove economy
  - o Poor agriculturally
- Social Groups
  - o **Junkers**
    - Aristocracy
    - Land lords
    - Did not want to lose power
    - Supported Hohenzollerns as long as no taxes
      - Complete power over peasants
  - o Middle Class
    - Growing
  - o Peasants
    - Sinking deeper into serfdom

Nobility of Europe	
<b>Austria</b>	No taxes, Loyalty to army, full power
<b>England</b>	Paid taxes, some political power
<b>France</b>	No taxes, no power

- Religion
  - o Protestant
  - o Tolerant
    - Especially with scholars and artists
- Kings of Prussia
  - o Frederick William the Great Elector
    - One of the electors of HRE
    - Created Prussian State
      - Made powerful by building up army
  - o King Frederick I
    - Continued to build up state
      - Otherwise did not really do much
  - o King Frederick William
    - Lived modestly
      - Did not spend much
    - Built up military
      - Always wore military uniform
      - Potsdam Giants
      - Set up draft and reserve guard
    - Cruel to son
  - o Frederick William II
    - Frederick the Great
      - Enlightenment Monarch



## Russia

- Background
  - o Very late to modernize
    - Horribly Medieval
    - Under control of Golden Horde
    - Ivan the Terrible
      - r. 1547-1584
      - First "Tsar" of Russia
    - Mikhail Romanov
      - r. 1613-1645
      - Established Romanov Dynasty
        - o Existed until 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Peter The Great
  - o Social Reforms
    - 1<sup>st</sup> book of etiquette
    - Mandatory education for sons of landowners
    - Sent Russians abroad to study
    - Simplified alphabet
    - Edited the 1<sup>st</sup> Russian newspaper
    - Reformed Calendar
    - Decreed **Westernization**
      - No Beards
      - Women dressed western
      - Courts speak French

- Military Reforms
  - Professional army
  - Reduced powers of Boyars in army
  - Uniforms
  - Reorganized ranks
  - **Built navy**
- Economic Reforms
  - Mercantilist
    - Increased exports
    - Trading fleet
    - Encouraged mining, metallurgy, textiles
  - **Recruited experts from Europe**
  - Increased taxes
  - Depends on peasant labor
    - Serfs suffer
  - Moved capital
    - St. Petersburg
      - Built by serfs
      - Warm water seaport
    - **“Window to the west”**
- Administrative Reforms
  - Autocratic
    - Established bureaucracy
  - No Individual rights
  - Duma and Council of Boyars disbanded
  - Establish Senate
    - Controlled by Peter
  - State service required of all landowners/boyars
- Religious Reforms
  - Got rid of old believers
  - Appointed the Procurator of the Holy Synod
    - Head of Church
      - Selected by Tsar
    - Could be gotten rid of at any time
    - Peter indirectly in head of Church
- Foreign Policy
  - At war all but 2 years
  - **Grand Embassy**
    - Peter trying to gain support for war vs Ottomans
    - Brandenburg, Netherlands, England, Austria
  - Expanded borders
    - To the south against Ottomans
    - **Great Northern War**
      - Versus Sweden
        - Charles XII
      - Battle of Poltava
        - Defeat of Swedes
          - Marked start of decline
        - Peter gains access to Baltic

