**Absolutism in Eastern Europe: c. 1600-1740**

Austria/ HRE

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| Conditions | Policies | Results |
| HRE forced monarchs to turn their attention inward and eastward to consolidate their diverse holdings into a strong unified state.  (weakness)- Austria was NOT a national state   * 1. Naples, Sardinia, and Milan in Italy   2. Austrian Netherlands (Belgium)   3. Hungary and Transylvania (modern-day Romania)   Each had its own laws and political connection to the Emperor | Ferdinand II (1619-1637) took control of Bohemia during the 30 Years’ War  Ferdinand III (1637-1657): centralized gov’t in the old hereditary provinces of Austria proper.  **Leopold I** (1658-1705)  Severely restricted Protestant worship  **Siege of Vienna:** Successfully repelled Turks from gates of Vienna in 1683 (with the help of the Polish: King John III Sobieski)  **Emperor Charles VI** (1711-1740)  Issued **Pragmatic Sanction** in 1713  Hapsburg possessions were never to be divided and henceforth to be passed intact to a single heir.  His daughter, Maria Theresa, inherited Charles’ empire in 1740 and ruled for 40 years | * + Habsburg lands were so diverse and included people of so many different cultures and language that it was difficult to establish any sort of unity.   + Despite the Pragmatic Solution, less than two months after the death of Charles VI, Frederick II of Prussia invaded the Habsburg province of Silesia in eastern Germany. |

**Prussia and the Hohenzollerns**

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| Conditions  The Hohenzollern family had ruled the principality of Brandenburg since 1415- looked to add territory in the 16th and 17th century | | Results  The “Great Elector” established Prussia as a Great Power and laid the foundation for the future unification of Germany in the 19th century | |
| Frederick William- the Great Elector   * Frederick William demanded obedience from the ***Junkers***—as the German landlords were known—but in exchange allowed them to demand obedience from serfs.   Most significant: Oversaw Prussian militarism and created the most efficient army in Europe. | Frederick I   * Fought in two wars against Louis XIV to preserve the European balance of power: * War of the League of Augsburg (1688-97) and the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1713) * “King of Prussia” | **Frederick William I** (r. 1713-1740) “Soldiers’ King”   * **“Sparta of the North”- 3rd largest army** * Obsessed with finding tall soldiers for his army (6’2+) * 80% of gov’t revenues went towards the military | Frederick II (“Frederick the Great”) – (r. 1740-1786) “Enlightened Despots”  Most powerful and famous of the Prussian kings |
| **Ottoman Empire** | | **Poland** | |
| could not maintain possessions in eastern Europe and the Balkans in the face of Austrian and Russian expansion- After 1560 the decline in western expansion resulted in the gradual disintegration of the empire   * **Suleiman the Magnificent** (r. 1520-1566) was perhaps the most powerful ruler in the world during the 16th century  1. **“Janissary corps”:** those Christian slaves who were not selected for the Ottoman bureaucracy served loyally instead in the Turkish army 2. Ottoman Empire was fairly tolerant regarding religion in its conquered provinces | | **liberum veto** – voting in Polish parliament had to be unanimous for changes to be made; thus, little could be done to systematically strengthen the kingdom   * Russia and Prussia encouraged certain members to invoke the liberum veto to weaken Poland. * By 1800, Poland ceased to exist as a sovereign state; carved up by Russia, Austria and Prussia | |

Comparison

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| West | Similar | East |
| * The nobility was effectively brought under control * the middle-class was relatively strong, and peasants were generally free from serfdom. * Louis XIV built French absolutism upon the foundations of a well-developed medieval monarchy and a strong royal bureaucracy. * Exploration- Economic growth- increased tax based and slight move away from a agricultural economy (Mercantilism) | * Maintained large standing armies * Employed a secret police to weaken political opponents * Control of religion | * Eastern absolutism was based on a powerful nobility, weak middle class, and an oppressed peasantry composed of serfs. * Threat of war with European and Asian invaders were important motivations for eastern European monarchs’ drive to consolidate power. * in reduced political power of the nobility. However, nobles gained much greater power over the peasantry. * Serfdom |