

Notes: Enlightened Absolutism

Spielvogel Chapter 18

I. Enlightened Absolutism

A. people have natural rights

- i. right to choose religion, freedom of speech & press, and right to hold private property
- ii. these rights are protected by an “Enlightened” ruler
- iii. rights of individual groups cannot be trusted to masses, who tend to oppress minorities

B. Enlightened rulers also:

- i. foster arts, sciences, & education
- ii. rule not arbitrary – rule by force of law/subject to law

II. Warfare

A. Views

- i. philosophes argued that wars were foolish, wasting lives and resources
- ii. rulers insisted on preserving the “balance of power”
 - a) became this period's primary excuse for going to war

B. Changes

- i. substantial increase in the size of the army (standing armies were fairly new, remember)
- ii. reflected social classes
 - a) officers were aristocrats
 - b) Middle-class becomes lower ranking officers
 - c) lower-class make up rank-and-file
 - many of them were conscripted
- iii. war not as destructive as it had been in the past
 - a) not ideologically-driven
 - b) larger armies required higher taxes (not willing to get their taxpayers killed, even if they were lower class)
 - c) standing armies already costly – hate to increase it with a costly war
 - led to limited objectives in warfare
 - d) clever tactics favored over direct confrontation
 - system of formalities evolved, designed to keep armies from utter destruction

III. Austria

A. Vienna, the capital city, had become a center for high culture in Europe

B. War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748)

- i. Habsburg emperor Charles VI (1711-1740) knew that his daughter Maria Theresa would take his place
 - a) he spent his life negotiating the Pragmatic Sanction (other countries recognized Maria as the legal heir)
- ii. Pragmatic Sanction was ignored by Frederick II of Prussia, who invaded part of Austria (Silesia)
 - a) France also invaded part of Austria
 - b) Great Britain came to Austria's aid
- iii. in the end, countries seized landholdings of other countries throughout the entire world
- iv. all returned in 1748, except Silesia

C. Maria Theresa (1740-1780)

- i. reworked system of administration throughout Austrian Empire
- ii. Catholic: not open to Philosophes' suggestions for reformation

D. Joseph II (1780-1790)

- i. son of Maria Theresa
- ii. continued expanding Habsburg power in Austria
- iii. Enlightened monarch
 - a) Reforms
 - abolished serfdom
 - gave peasants hereditary rights to their holdings (semi-successful)
 - eliminated international trade barriers
 - abolished death penalty
 - complete religious toleration
 - b) Reforms alienated nobility and the Catholic church, and even commoners
 - example: tried making German official national language, which alienated non-German speakers, nobles and peasants alike
 - c) successors undid most of his reforms
 - his self-composed epitaph reads: “Here lies Joseph II, who was unfortunate in everything that he undertook.”

IV. Louis XV (d. 1774) – France

- A. supposed to be the Enlightened monarch, but was strongly influenced by his mistress Madame de Pompadour
 - i. she made many of France's important government decisions

V. Great Britain

- A. from “English”/“Scottish” to “Britains” in the United Kingdom
- B. Patronage – awarding of titles, posts, and positions in church & government
 - i. deputies to the House of Commons were chosen by borough (small town)
 - ii. no equality to how many came from each borough
 - iii. ended up with “pocket boroughs,” where a borough was controlled by a single person
 - a) for example: Duke of Newcastle controlled representatives of *seven* boroughs
- C. Hanoverians – when the last Stuart ruler died, the crown was offered to the rulers of the German state of Hanover.
 - i. George I (1714-1727) & George II (1727-1760) did not speak British or understand the British system
 - a) Duke of Newcastle handled patronage
 - b) Robert Walpole, the prime minister, handled governmental matters
- D. The Seven Years' War (1756-1763)
 - i. Maria Theresa angry because Prussia held onto Silesia (see War of Austrian Succession)
 - a) organized a “diplomatic revolution”
 - the Bourbons and Habsburgs resolved their differences and France allied with Austria
 - Russia joined also, because they felt Prussia stood in their way
 - Britain, enemy of France over colonies, joined Prussia
 - ii. European Front
 - a) Prussia initially did well, but began to be worn down when the ruler of Russia died
 - Russia now withdrew its troops, leading to a stalemate
 - b) Peace of Hubertusburg (1763) – all captured territories returned; Silesia officially recognized as part of Prussia
 - iii. Indian Front (called the “Great War for Empire” on worldwide front)
 - a) French and British each backed opposing Indian princes
 - b) British won – now sole control of India per the Treaty of Paris (1763)

- iv. North America (called the “French and Indian War” on North American front)
 - a) attempt to gain St. Lawrence River and the Ohio River Valley
 - American Indians wanted it to be French, since the French were less invasive
 - b) William Pitt the Elder (British prime minister) felt that annihilation of French colonies was necessary to pave the way for British settlement
 - focus on naval power – keep France from supporting army in America
 - c) British defeated Quebec by scaling cliffs
 - d) Treaty of Paris (1763) – Great Britain gains lands east of Mississippi
 - Great Britain also gets Canada
 - v. major result: Great Britain became the world's greatest colonial power
- VI. Decline of the Dutch Republic
- A. rebellions by the “Patriots” calling for democratic reforms
 - B. crushed by Orangists (rulers, remember William?)
- VII. Prussia
- A. Frederick William I (1713-1740)
 - i. established the General Directory, which supervised all government affairs
 - a) increased differences between socio-economic classes
 - b) Set up the Junkers, landed aristocracy who owned large estates with lots of serfs
 - The Junkers controlled the army and the peasants
 - Frederick controlled the Junkers
 - c) Peasants had no control over their lives (even had to get nobles' permission to marry)
 - d) only way middle class could gain prestige was through civil service
 - B. Frederick the Great (1740-1786) = Frederick II
 - i. diligent ruler known for efficiency and honesty
 - ii. followed philosophes' recommendations (except for abolishing serfdom – he increased class-based stratification) – Enlightened Monarch
 - iii. enlarged army and used it in War of Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War (not very enlightened)
- VIII. Russia
- A. Catherine the Great (1762-1796)
 - i. German wife of Tsar Peter III, who was assassinated by nobles
 - ii. said she wanted to be Enlightened, but worked with nobility to strengthen their position relative to peasants
 - iii. led to very poor conditions for peasants, and even revolts in border districts
 - iv. Cossacks: independent tribes in southern Russia – instrumental in the rebellion
 - a) led by Emalyan Pugachev (Pugachev's rebellion – 1773)
 - b) focused on Volga River valley, north of the Caspian Sea
 - c) peasants seized landlords' estates, killing over 1,500 estate owners & their families
 - d) government rallied, Pugachev captured & killed
 - e) conditions for peasants made even poorer – end all reforms in rural areas, expand serfdom
 - v. Catherine expanded Russian territory
 - a) west into Poland (acquired 50%)
 - b) south to Black Sea (required fighting Turks)
- IX. Goodbye for now, Poland
- A. three surrounding countries divided Polish state in three partitions (1791, 1792, 1795)
 - B. see map p. 502

X. the rest of Europe

A. Spain

- i. now with a Bourbon king (remember Wars of the Spanish Succession?)
- ii. had lost lands in Italy & Netherlands in Treaty of Utrecht (once again, the Wars of Succession), so now it had enough money to get by
- iii. Charles III (1759-1788) reduced power of Inquisition and banished the Jesuits

B. Portugal

- i. the marquis of Pombal – ruled through several monarchs (from 1699-1782)
 - a) reduced power of nobles & church
 - b) once he died, things went right back to the way they were

C. Scandinavia – Gustavus III (1771-1792) – Enlightened Monarch of Sweden

- i. est. freedom of religion, speech, press
- ii. no more torture
- iii. laissez-faire economics
- iv. assassinated by nobles, but they couldn't undo his reforms

XI. Examining big three “Enlightened Monarchs”

A. Joseph II (Austria) – truly was

B. Frederick II (Prussia) – was, but loved war & class divisions too much

C. Catherine (Russia) – started out, but kept nobles happy too much

XII. Economic and Social Change

A. Steadily increasing population

- i. mostly due to a decline in death rates (better food, better transportation to get food to people)
- ii. death still common, especially from diseases, especially those caused by poor sanitation
 - a) incidentally – the last significant outbreak of plague occurred in 1720 in S. France

B. marriage – ave. 27-28 for men; 25-27 for women (gave them time to acquire finances necessary to support a family)

- i. ave. five births per family in lower classes; move from 6 circa 1675 to 2 circa 1760
- ii. cottage industry – everyone in the home contributed to the family economy
- iii. survival of children – more likely
 - a) led to children's clothing styles, attacks on primogeniture, toys (including jigsaw puzzles), and mothers breast-feeding their own kids (even in the aristocracy)
 - b) unfortunately, infanticide was fairly common for economic reasons
 - more often, though, children were abandoned in foundling homes
 - in foundling homes, mortality rates ranged from 50 to 90%
 - survivors had to perform miserable jobs

C. Agricultural Revolution!

i. Increased food production

a) more farmland

- no land lying fallow – instead planted nitrogen-replenishing crops (alfalfa, turnips, clover)
- enclosure – large landowners enclosed open fields/small holdings into large farms (especially popular in Britain)
 - took land from poor farmers, who had to become wage laborers or tenants farmers – destroyed their way of life
- most people in this time period were rural, except in the Dutch Republic, Britain, and some of Italy

b) increased yield per acre

- Jethro Tull (1674-1741)
 - used a seed drill to plant (less loss to birds)
 - constantly cultivated soil (air and moisture got to plants better)
 - add corn and potatoes
 - c) healthier/more livestock
 - could eat the crops mentioned in a). More food=more animals
 - d) improved climate – end mini-ice age of 17th century
- D. Financial changes
- i. move toward paper money (not backed by hard currency)
 - a) allows issue of credit, especially in Great Britain
- E. move from cottage to factory production
- i. Richard Arkwright (1732-1792) – invented water frame, a water-powered spinning machine