

Age of Absolutism (17th-18th Century)



Thirty Year War



- 1618-1648. Most destructive conflict in Europe until World War I. 8 million dead, mostly civilians.
- Began as a war of religion within the Holy Roman Empire, became a general conflict over the balance of power in Europe.
- Bourbons (France) vs. Hapsburgs (Spain, Austria, some of German and Italian states)

Consequences of Thirty Year War

- Treaty of Westphalia (1648) ends the war
- Changed the way countries dealt with one another – national sovereignty was respected for the first time – political borders must be respected and the government of every country is the only authority within its borders.
- Codified rules of warfare: civilians should not be harmed by soldiers, rulers are responsible for the actions of their subjects and soldiers.
- England and France became the two dominant powers of the 17th Century and led the revolutions in science, philosophy and political theory



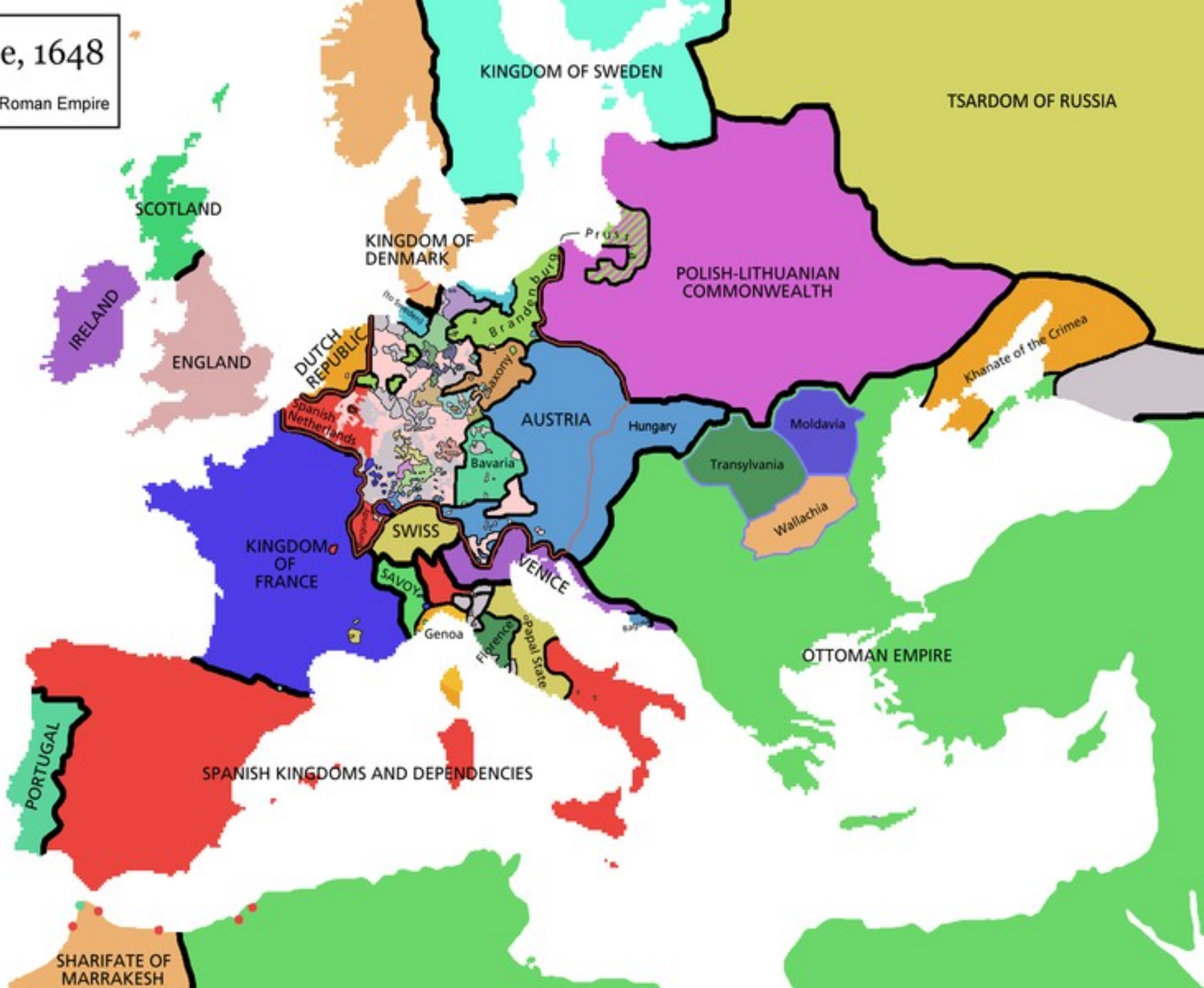
Consequences Continued

- Sweden becomes the dominant power of Northern Europe
- Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Austria become dominant powers of Central Europe.
- Russia begins to enter the affairs of Europe (fought its own war against Poland during the Thirty Year War)
- Map of Central Europe radically redrawn: true German kingdoms established
- The terms of Peace of Augsburg are re-confirmed
- Letters of *Marque* – a legal way for countries to sponsor piracy – become more legally recognized and codified.



Europe, 1648

Holy Roman Empire



Anglicanism and Puritanism in England

Queen Elizabeth I passed Act of Supremacy and Act of Uniformity – founding of Anglican Church – a compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism.

Puritans: Protestants who did not think Anglican Church was reformed enough. Radical Protestants who wanted to live in communities with no music, partying, dancing or colourful clothing.

English Civil War: three short but savage wars between the Parliament (mainly Puritans and Anglicans) and the King/Royalists (mainly Catholic and Anglicans). Approximately 600,000 dead.

Both Puritans and Royalists (Cavaliers) exiled to America

Leads to establishment of Great Britain, incorporating Ireland and Scotland

Leads to powerful parliament and predominantly Protestant England



English Civil War

- Conflict between absolutist monarchs and the Parliament
- Religious struggle between Catholics, Puritans, and Anglicans
- Roundheads vs. Cavaliers
- 1st Civil War (1642-1646) and 2nd Civil War (1648-1649) fought between Charles I and Parliament
- 3rd Civil War (1649-1651) fought between Charles II and Parliament
- Charles I executed, Charles II exiled
- Parliament forms Commonwealth of England with Lord Oliver Cromwell as the dictator
- Rights of Puritans and other protestants confirmed



Glorious Revolution (1688)

- James II (son of Charles II) comes back from France, proves very unpopular due to pro-Catholic policies.
- William of Orange, Dutch prince, asked to depose James II by Parliament, becomes King William III of England. (not the same guy as William of Orange who rebelled against Spain).
- Bloodless coup as James II flees England.
- Parliament reigns supreme and has the true power in England; Bill of Rights is passed in 1689 - English constitution; the beginning of Constitutional Monarchy.



Absolutism in France

- Absolutism (definition): monarchical power unrestrained by all other institutions
- Secularization and centralization of the state by Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin
- Abolishing feudalism and destroying the power of aristocracy
- Creating a strong centralized state based on national identity, rather than a religious one.
- Central aim is unity rather than diversity (the two being somewhat antithetical)



Louis XIV “The Sun King” (1638-1715)

- Longest reign in French history – 72 years
- Epitomized the belief that the monarchy personified the state: *L'etat, c'est moi* - “I am the state”
- Created a system of absolute monarchical rule by destroying the power of aristocracy and remnants of feudalism in France – all power now came from the king, although he relied on his cabinet of ministers, and a powerless parliament also existed.
- Under him royalist France reached the height of her power
- Was a great patron of the arts, literature and philosophers, made France the cultural centre of Europe



Versailles

Symbol of the power of the French king to raise your prestige

Cunning way to control the aristocracy who compete among each other to live in Versailles and engage in useless activities

Creating a great court – centre of power

A representation of Enlightenment and Rationalist beliefs – a perfectly ordered and planned microcosm.





Absolutism in Russia

The power of the Tsar was in theory absolute

Challenges to Tsar's power: the *Khanates*, the Orthodox Church, Western neighbours, other Russian princes

Contact with the West increases: Polish invasion (1612), English and German merchants, imported artists and artisans

New dynasty: Romanovs.



Peter the Great (1672-1725)

West-oriented tsar (Emperor of All Russias)

Enamoured with all things Western, particularly fashion, technology, military government

Travels in Europe (particularly Low Countries) incognito as a young man

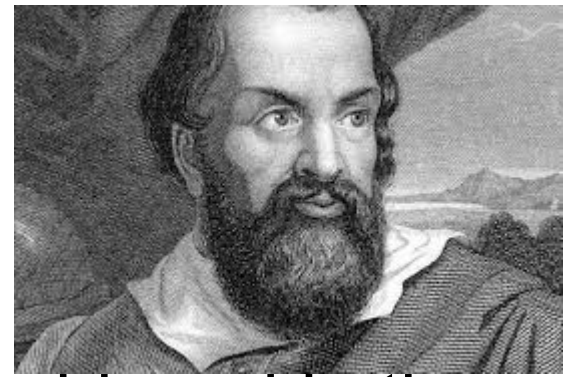
Seeks to modernize Russia by any means necessary: uses brute force and repression to raise stamp out old fashion, and raise money, amass soldiers, build factories, and curb the power of nobility

Defeats the Polish-Lithuanian and Swedish Coalition – Russia becomes one of the great European countries

Focuses on building a navy and opening Russia to sea trade – wars with Ottomans over Black sea, and construction of St. Petersburg



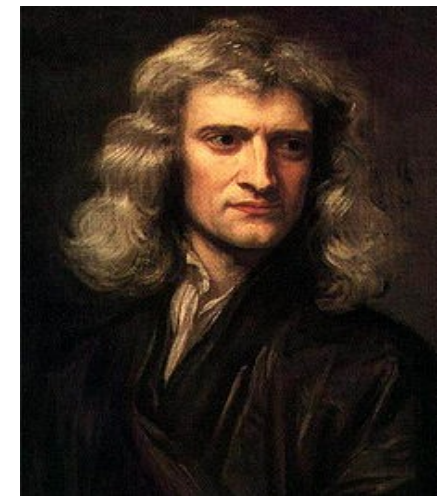
Church/Science Schism



- The gulf between the church and science widened in the 17th Century
- The church used to be the repository of knowledge, but now starts to fight anything it can't control. You should do science with their funding and permission.
- In 1633 Galileo was tried in the Church court for his theories of heliocentrism (he thought our sun, not our earth was the center of the universe)
- Galileo defied the church and was tortured into silence
- Reformation meant that thinkers could pursue new theories outside of the reach of Catholic Church, particularly in England and Netherlands

Scientific Revolution

- From mid 16th to the beginning of the 18th Century, a revolution in science would challenge how Europeans perceived themselves and the universe
- Isaac Newton formulated his Three Laws of Motion, formulated the theory of optics, gravity – father of modern physics
- Isaac Newton and Gottfried Leibniz independently invent calculus
- William Harvey – his human blood circulation discoveries challenged the accepted belief that the heart worked by divine intervention
- Christiaan Huygens – discovery of centrifugal force, theory of sound, improved telescope, invented the pendulum clock.
- Robert Hooke – wave theory of light, rebuilt London, instrumental to creation of The Royal Society (1660) – first institution devoted to scientific progress



Scientific Methods and Modern Philosophy

- For centuries it was believed that truths were arrived at by studying the Bible
- The 17th Century saw a rise in systematic skepticism, experimentalism, and reasoning based on observed facts and mathematical laws by scientists who believed in God, but did not bow to the Church.
- Francis Bacon – direct observation was essential to ascertain truth
- Rene Descartes – applied mathematical methods and reasoning to philosophy



Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Lord Chancellor of England,
philosopher, scientist, poet

- Father of empiricism and the scientific method
- Empiricism: knowledge can only be obtained through the senses and observation. What we learn through experience is more useful than religious/spiritual knowledge
- Scientific Method: knowledge must be gathered systematically through empirical and measurable experiments



Rene Descartes (1596-1650)

French philosopher and author

Father of modern philosophy and rationalism

Creator of Cartesian coordinate system and analytical geometry

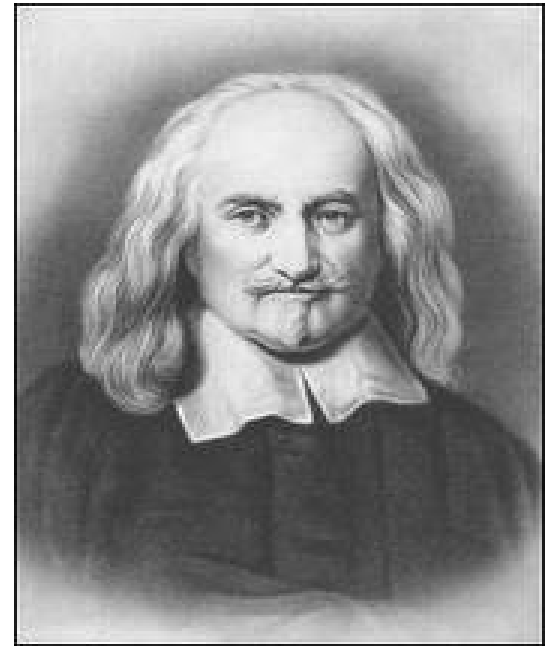
Argued that knowledge comes not directly from God, but from man's God-given ability to reason (God designed us to figure things out ourselves)

Thinking is existence: *Cogito ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am")



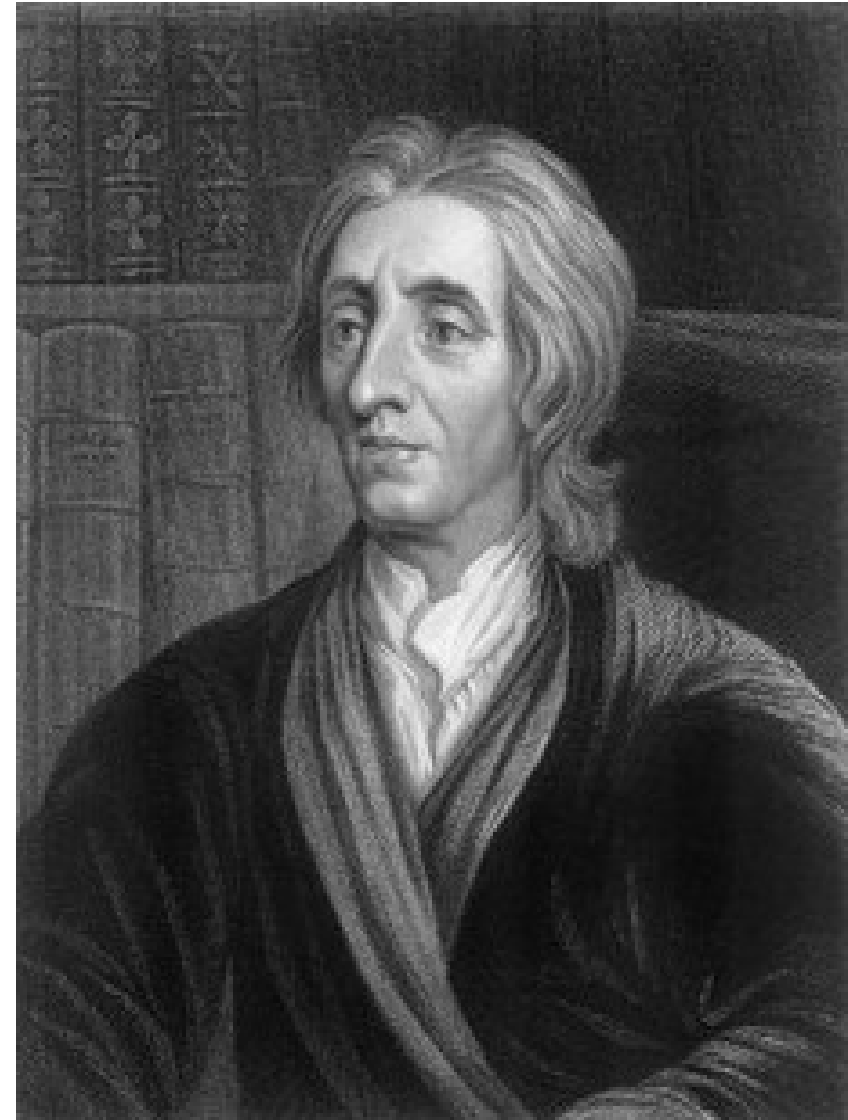
Thomas Hobbes (1588 –1679)

- English Philosopher, author of “Leviathan”
- Lived through the chaos of the English Civil War
- Argued that man is inherently irrational, brutish, selfish and violent, unless governed by laws.
- Argued that monarchies grow out of mutual desire for peace.
- Defended monarchy and absolutism as the reliable sources of law and order.



John Locke (1632 – 1704)

- English Philosopher and doctor
- One of the most important Enlightenment thinkers
- Believed that people would over time join together to benefit from cooperation – Social Contract
- Argued that people are basically rational and reasonable, unlike Hobbes
- Argued that property is created through labour, and property rights are most important
- The first of British empiricists, father of modern liberalism
- Influenced Voltaire, Rousseau, Jefferson, who were key figures in the French and American revolutions.



Literature and Thought

- Growth of creative literature, particularly plays, poems, travel accounts (fictional and otherwise), philosophical treatises
- Salons: social gatherings to refine taste, social network, and to educate
- Moliere, Shakespeare, Sir Francis Bacon, Miguel de Cervantes, John Milton, John Bunyan, Baruch Spinoza.
- Age of Enlightenment: use the power of reason to reform society and advance knowledge and arts. (the opposite of today's focus on compassion/tolerance/inclusion)



Baroque

Dominant style of 17th century: art, music, architecture

A style promoted by the Catholic Church during Counter-Reformation

Baroque art and architecture uses dramatic motions, visuals and sounds, exaggerations, contrasts, emotions, to achieve a sense of grandeur

Age of first great composers: George Handel, Johann Sebastian Bach, Johann Pachelbel

Supplanted in 18th century by Rococo style – even more ornate, but less serious and more playful





Fashion and Art

- Nobles and commoners are not allowed to dress the same
- Baroque fashion was like art, music and architecture - dramatic and exaggerated and ostentatious
- Noble men and women alike were expected to be well-educated and refined. Both sexes were literate.
- Painters such as Caravaggio, Rembrandt, Rubens, Vermeer. Sculptors such as Bernini.
- Baroque art: dramatic, stark, theatrical, deep blacks, often symbolic, based on both Classic and Christian mythologies, as well as real life, and still life







Colonization of the New World

Age of Exploration establishes Spain as dominant colonial power. England and France rise in 17th century as competitors for colonial expansion

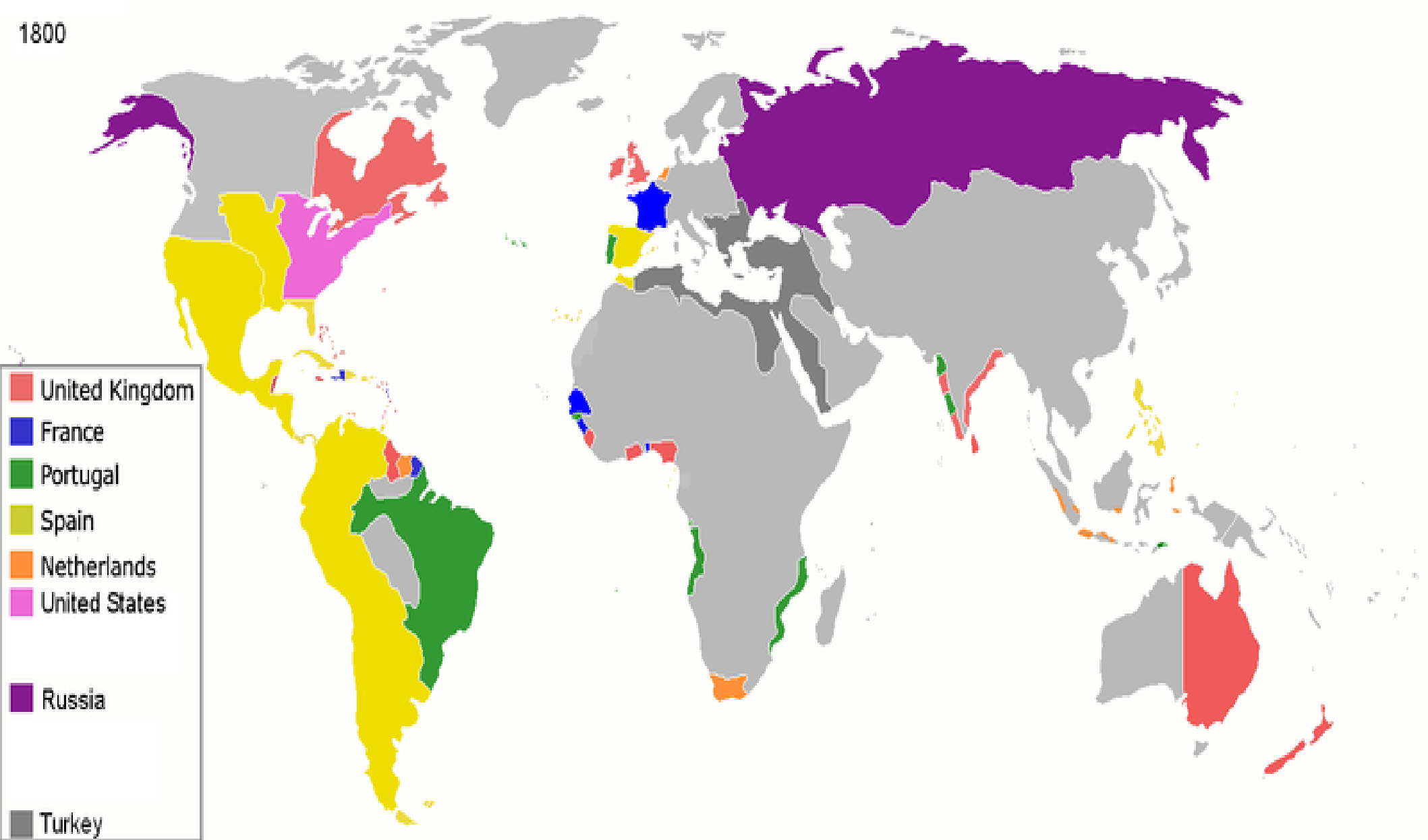
Colonialism: establishment, maintenance, and acquisition of colonies for re-settlement and commercial purposes. The *metropole* culture, society, and economics supplants the native civilization.

Mercantilism: belief that control of foreign trade is the main source of prosperity and security of a state. Primary economic theory of 16th-17th centuries.

Imperialism: using political, economic, and military power (direct power or hard power) to establish an empire and subjugate distant territories and people.



1800



Mercantilism

High tariffs: protect domestic industries from foreigners

Self-sufficiency: nation should only rely on its own power in order to be strong - promoting domestic manufacture

Exclusive trade with colonies: often at unfavourable terms to the colony

Export subsidies: country must export more than it imports – gold and silver flow into the country

Selling manufactured goods to colonies and other countries

Monopolies: so the government can control the economy easier

Jean-Baptiste Colbert: Louis XIV's finance minister

Sir Robert Walpole: first Prime Minister of Britain





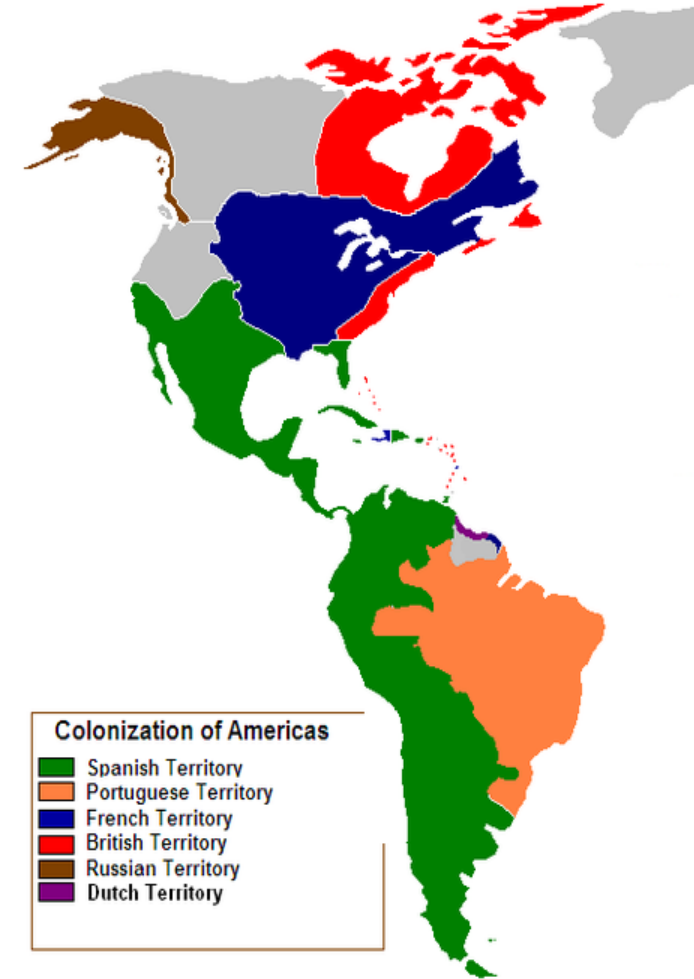
Sugar, tobacco, and
cotton to Europe

Slaves to the
Americas

Textiles, rum and
manufactured
goods to Africa

Great Colonies of the New World

- In mid-16th century Europeans begin to colonize the New World rather than simply raid it or trade with the natives
- Europeans attracted by potential wealth, freedom from religious persecution, abundant land, glory and prestige
- Founding a colony:
 - 1) Establish a coastal trading post and port and fortify it.
 - 2) Establish plantations and/or trading posts and push inland.
 - 3) Ship slaves from Africa, use native slave labour, or ship indentured servants from Europe to work the plantations.
 - 4) Establish forts (that later become towns) and expand outward.
 - 5) Create colonial administration and attract colonists from the *metropole*.



Spanish America

Silver from Americas accounted for 1/5 of Spanish budget

240,000 Spanish colonists settled Spanish possessions in Americas

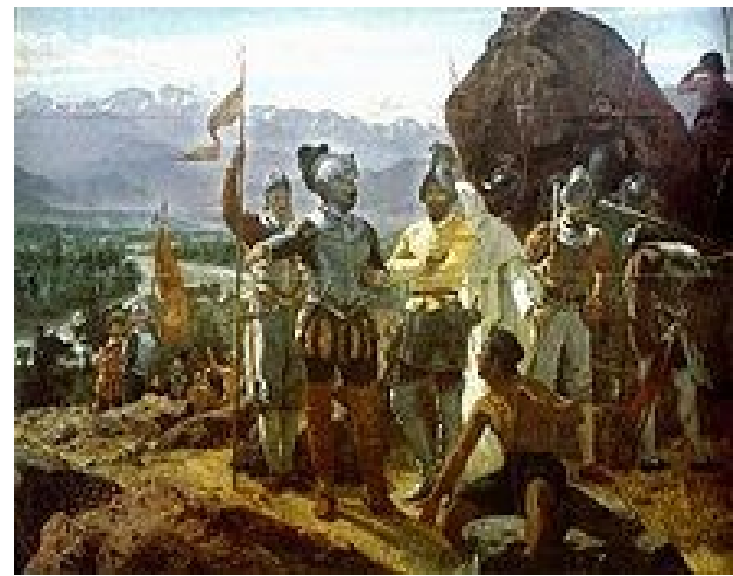
Most of South America, as well as Central America, California, and Florida settled and occupied by Spain

Mexico City (1585) – administrative centre of Spanish empire in the New World

Havana and Cuba (1592) – transport and sugar-manufacturing centre

Santiago (1541) – one of the earliest European cities in New World, capitol of Chile

Spain began to rebuild and strengthen her power in the Americas following the War of Spanish Succession and the new Bourbon dynasty



H A V A N A



Dutch America

During 17th century Dutch were the commercial, shipping, financial and colonial leaders of Europe

The most tolerant society in Europe: true republic, Parliament, freedom of expression and religion

Overseas though the Dutch behave like other European powers

Dutch West India Company seizes Portuguese colonies: Sint Maarten, Curacao, Aruba, Bonaire: spice, sugar, coffee, salt.

Dutch lead establishment of fur trade in North America: Hudson River, New Amsterdam (later New York)

Dutch also lead the growing African slave trade to the Americas



Portuguese America

Following the Treaty of Tordesillas (1492), Brazil was the centre of Portuguese possessions in Amer



Dutch-Portuguese War ends
Portuguese power in the Caribbean

First Portuguese settlement founded in 1532, Rio de Janeiro founded in 1565.

Brazil was the source of coffee, sugar, spices, hardwood, gold, and precious stones

Portuguese established massive slave trade to Brazil

Brazil remained Portuguese colony until 1822



French America

French possessions in North America were massive, but sparsely populated by Europeans (except Quebec)

Newfoundland, Quebec, New Brunswick, Louisiana, much of Canada. In Caribbeans: Dominica, Guadelope, Hispaniola, Haiti, Martinique, Trinidad & Tobago

French colonization was influenced by: political and military reasons (block Spain and Britain), population pressures at home, fur trade, and fisheries.

Quebec City (1608) – most fortified city in North America, centre of French American empire

Louisbourg (1720) – large French naval base and fortress in Acadia



English America in 18th Century

- Jamestown (1607) – first English colony in North America
- Pilgrim migration to N. America in 1620 – Plymouth colony founded in December 1620. Thanks to initially good relations with natives the colony begins to prosper – Province Massachusetts Bay in 1691 (New England)
- Other religious migration to English colonies: Hutterites, Amish, Quakers.
- Kingdom of Great Britain founded in 1707 begins state-sponsored colonization in earnest (unlike earlier colonies)
- Colonies of Virginia, Carolina, Maine, Nova Scotia, Upper Canada, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Georgia, and others
- Colonies in Caribbean included: Jamaica, Barbados, Virgin Islands, Antigua, Grenada.
- Hudson's Bay Company: English fur-trade monopoly, owns much of North America



Africa

- Portuguese established trading ports and forts as early as 15th century. Europeans were mostly interested in Africa for trade and re-supplying ships bound for India and China.
- Trade with Africa increased during 16th and 17th centuries: slaves, ivory, pelts, precious stones, and other luxury goods
- Dutch establish a permanent colony at Cape Hope in 1652 – will become Cape Town and European South Africa
- Europeans had mapped out the coast of Africa fairly well, but the interior of Africa will remain barred to Europeans until 19th century due to natural hazards, hostile native populations, malaria, and little interest.
- Slave trade was facilitated by numerous African wars and demand for European goods. Approximately 12 million slaves were shipped across the Atlantic.



TO BE SOLD, on board the
Ship *Bance-Yland*, on tuesday the 6th
of May next, at *Ashley-Ferry*; a choice
cargo of about 250 fine healthy
NEGROES,
just arrived from the
Windward & Rice Coast.
—The utmost care has
already been taken, and
shall be continued, to keep them free from
the least danger of being infected with the
SMALL-POX, no boat having been on
board, and all other communication with
people from *Charles-Town* prevented.
Austin, Laurens, & Appleby.
N. B. Full one Half of the above Negroes have had the
SMALL-POX in their own Country..

China

- From 1368 to 1644 China was ruled by the powerful Ming dynasty
- From 15th century on, the Chinese government allowed European trade with the Portuguese, Spanish and the Dutch, but only at designated ports.
- Portuguese trade through Macao, while the Dutch conquer Taiwan in 1620s to create a base for trade with China and Japan
- British trade primarily through Canton
- The expansionist and largely tolerant Ming dynasty is replaced after a massive peasant revolt by Qing (Manchu) dynasty
- The Qing dynasty was more isolationist, conservative, and less interested in trade with Europeans. It was also very anti-Christian and antagonized the Europeans
- The Europeans were primarily interested in silk, art objects, ceramics, spices. The Chinese were primarily interested in European silver, weapons, and quicksilver.



India

- Portuguese had monopoly over trade with India until mid-17th century – established port of Goa
- Dutch conquer Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1658 and establish a permanent colony for trade with India and tea plantations. Dutch also conquer Batavia (Java), Bengal (Bangladesh), Siam (Thailand), and Indonesia.
- Dutch East India Company (VOC) becomes richest private company in history, establishes monopoly on European trade with India.
- Europeans exploited political divisions in India between the Hindu rajas, and the war between the Muslim Mughal empire, the Sikhs, and the Maratha (alliance of Hindu rajas)



Japan

- Japanese were even more hostile to Europeans than China and Korea.
- Portuguese began trade with Japan – St. Francis Xavier brings Christianity to Japan in 1548. Portuguese have initial monopoly on Japanese trade.
- Japanese only allowed European trade through a few ports.
- Japanese civil war (*Sengoku Jidai*) facilitated demand for European goods, especially weapons, but post-1600 Tokugawa Shogunate government is extremely anti-European.
- The Dutch break Portuguese monopoly and establish their own monopoly that will last until 1854 when Americans force Japan to open all its ports to foreign trade.
- Japanese considered Europeans to be barbarians, and Christianity was a great threat to the Shogunate government.



17th Century Summarized

Politics

- New powers (Netherlands, France, England, Russia)
- Absolutism: belief in absolute power of the monarchy unchallenged by anyone else
- Treaty of Westphalia (1648): national sovereignty
- Glorious Revolution in England (1688): constitutional monarchy
- New political ideologies: Hobbes, Locke, Mazarin, Richelieu

Religion

- Martin Luther's 95 Theses in 1517, Wittenberg, Germany
- Protestant Reformation
 - Lutheranism in Germany
 - Calvinism in Scotland, Switzerland, Netherlands, France
 - Zwinglianism in Switzerland
 - Quakers, Hutterites, Mennonites, Puritans flee to America
 - Counter-Reformation and wars of religion from 1545-1648

17th Century cont'd

Art and Science

- Scientific Method: Francis Bacon, Rene Descartes, Isaac Newton, Huygens, William Harvey, Galileo, Copernicus
- Baroque style in architecture, art, music, sculpture
- Palace of Versailles and salons: patronage of arts, philosophy, science
- Printing Press: revolution in media, education, politics, religion
- Beginning of Enlightenment: belief that rational humans can understand and control the universe

Exploration, Colonization, Trade

- Colonialism: permanent colonies
- Mercantilism: extracting wealth from colonies through trade and tariffs
- New colonial powers: France, England, Netherlands
- Colonial empires in Asia and America
- New trade with India, China, and Japan
- Slavery to provide labour for European plantations and mines in America

The Big Questions

- How and why did mercantilist system come about and what were its pros and cons?
- Why did Reformation happen? What effect did it have on European politics, religion, and society?
- What factors allowed the Europeans to increase their power relative to the rest of the world?
- Why did the scientific revolution happen? What effects did it cause?
- What were the reasons for the adoption of absolutism as the model of government in 17th century Europe? What effects did absolutism create? Why didn't England go absolutist?