

Absolutism in Europe

- The Theory of Absolutism
 - Rulers want to be absolute monarchs—rulers with complete power
 - Believe in “divine right”—idea that monarchs represent God on earth. (The idea can be derived from [Romans 13: 1-4](#).)
- Growing Power of Europe’s Monarchs
 - Decline of Feudalism, rise of cities help monarchs gain power
 - Decline of Church authority also increases power
- Crises Lead to Absolutism
 - The 17th century is a period of great upheaval
 - Monarchs impose order by increasing their own power.

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Possible Basis of “Divine Right of Kings” Romans 13:1-4

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer.”



2

The Reign of Louis XIV

Louis XIV took the sun as the symbol of his total power and declared “I am the state.”

- He never called a meeting of the Estates-General, the council made up of representatives of all the social classes, during his reign.
- During this time, Louis appointed middle-class **intendants** to carry out his policies and **built the French army into the strongest force in Europe.**

3

4

All of France’s economic policies were aimed at making the nation the wealthiest state in Europe.

Finance minister **Jean-Baptiste Colbert** imposed mercantilist policies to bring wealth to the treasury.

He had **new lands cleared** for farming.

He put high tariffs on imported goods.

He fostered **overseas colonies** and carefully regulated trade with these colonies.

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Even Colbert’s efforts could not produce enough income to support Louis’s spending.

An example was Louis’s decision to build the immense palace of **Versailles**.

The king let nobles live at Versailles tax-free to prevent them from threatening his power. Through elaborate court ceremonies such as the **levée**, he turned nobles from potential rivals to courtiers angling for privileges.

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Versailles was designed to be a symbol of royal wealth and power.



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The Age of Absolutism



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THE PRACTICE OF ABSOLUTISM

- Absolute Monarchy = Absolutism = the king has absolute power/authority
- Divine Right Monarchy/Divine Right Theory – kings receive their power from God
- JACQUES BOSSUET – *Politics Drawn from the Words of Holy Scripture* = spelled out the divine right theory

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FRANCE AND ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

- France during the reign of Louis XIV -> best example of absolutism
- French culture, language, and manners dominated Europe
- French wars and diplomacy shape the politics of the 17th century
- Monarchs wanted to be like Louis XIV

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When Henry IV was assassinated in 1610, his nine-year-old son became King Louis XIII. At first, nobles sought to reassert their power.

Then, in 1624, Louis appointed **Cardinal Richelieu** as chief minister. Richelieu used all of his cunning to **strengthen the central government**.

He outlawed Huguenot armies and gave the nobles high posts at court to tie them to the king.

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CARDINAL RICHELIEU



- The architect of French absolutism
- 1. Eliminated the power of the huguenots
- 2. Kept in check the power of the nobles -> network of spies
- 3. Reformed and strengthened govt power – **INTENDANTS** – a royal official who collected taxes, recruited soldiers, and carried out the king's policies in the provinces
- 4. Less successful in financial reform -> too much spending, resistance to taxes

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Picture of
Louis XIII

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Louis XIV became king in 1643 and faced an uprising of nobles, merchants, and peasants.

This effort to take power away from the king was called the *Fronde*.

Rioters drove the young king from his palace.

Louis never forgot about this experience. He decided to take complete control of government and solidify his power as an absolute monarch.

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CARDINAL MAZARIN

- Chief minister to young Louis XIV
- Continued Richelieu's policies
- The Fronde = tax revolt/civil war in France
- Louis will create strong monarchy to check the nobles
- French citizens look to monarchy for stability



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THE SUN KING - LE ROI SOLEIL



“ONE KING,
ONE LAW,
ONE FAITH”

Louis XIV

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■ Picture of Louis XIII



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Religious Wars and Power Struggles



- Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu
 - Louis XIII appoints Cardinal Richelieu in 1624 as minister who rules France.
 - Increases power of the Bourbons by limiting Huguenots' freedom
 - Also weakens power of the nobility

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Louis XIV Comes to Power

- A New French Ruler
 - Louis XIV is the most powerful ruler in French history.
- Louis the Boy King
 - Hatred of Cardinal Mazarin, Louis' minister while he was a boy, leads to riots.

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- Louis Weakens the Nobles Authority
 - Louis takes control of the government in 1661.
 - He appoints **intendants**—government agents—to collect taxes.
- Economic Growth
 - Jean Baptiste Colbert—finance minister—helps the economy grow. He believes in mercantilism.
 - In 1685, Louis cancels Edict of Nantes; Huguenots flee France.

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Mercantilism



Jean-Baptiste Colbert

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Jean Baptiste Colbert [(1619-1683)]



- £ Architect of French mercantilism or "Colbertism."
- £ He was a bullionist.
- £ There are four professions of importance to the nation:
 - Agriculture
 - Trade
 - Army
 - Navy
- £ Uniform weights & measures.
- £ Opposed tolls on internal trade.

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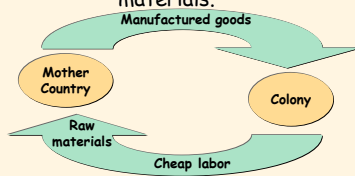
Characteristics of Mercantilism

1. Each nation must try to achieve economic self-sufficiency.
2. Thriving agriculture should be carefully encouraged. Less of need to import foods.
3. Sea power was necessary to control foreign markets. Less need to use the ships of other nations to carry your trade goods. Your own fleet adds to the power and prestige of the nation.

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Characteristics of Mercantilism

Colonies would provide captive markets for manufactured goods & sources of raw materials.



A large population was needed to provide a domestic labor force to people the colonies.

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Who Benefited Most From Mercantilism?

- £ Monarchs.
- £ Merchant capitalists.
- £ Joint-stock companies.
- £ Government officials.

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The Sun King's Grand Style

- A Life of Luxury
 - Louis lives very well, with every meal a feast.
- Louis Controls the Nobility
 - Louis keeps nobles at palace to increase his power over them.
 - Builds magnificent palace at Versailles
- Patronage of the Arts
 - Versailles is a center of arts during reign of Louis XIV
 - Purpose of the arts is to glorify Louis

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Versailles: Home of the "Sun King"



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L'ouis XIV as Apollo



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L'ouis XIV as Apollo



by Jean Nocret, 1670

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The Sun Symbol



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Louis XIV Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1665



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Marie Theresa & the



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Versailles Statistics

- f 2,000 acres of grounds
- f 12 miles of roads
- f 27 miles of trellises
- f 200,000 trees
- f 210,000 flowers planted every year
- f 80 miles of rows of trees
- f 55 acres surface area of the Grand Canal
- f 12 miles of enclosing walls
- f 50 fountains and 620 fountain nozzles
- f 21 miles of water conduits
- f 3,600 cubic meters per hour: water consumed
- f 26 acres of roof
- f 51,210 square meters of floors
- f 2,153 windows
- f 700 rooms
- f 67 staircases
- f 6,000 paintings
- f 1,500 drawings and 15,000 engravings
- f 2,100 sculptures
- f 5,000 items of furniture and objects d'art
- f 150 varieties of apple and peach trees in the Vegetable Garden

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Louis XIII's Old Chateau



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Versailles Today



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Palais de Versailles



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Palais de Versailles



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Versailles Palace, Park Side



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Garden View of Versailles



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Chateau de Versailles



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Chateau de Versailles



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**André
Le Nôtre,
Royal
Gardener**



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Versailles' Northern Gardens



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Gardens at Versailles



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Chateau de Versailles Gardens



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The Orangery



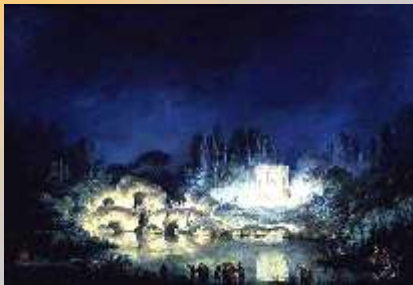
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Grounds at Versailles



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The Lightening of the Belvedere



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Fountains, Fountains, and More Fountains!



58

And More Fountains!



59

And More Fountains!



60

And Even More Fountains!!!



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Temple of Love



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Hall of Mirrors



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The King's Bed



The Queen's Bed



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Louis XIV's Chapel



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Louis XIV's Chapel Altarpiece



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Organ in Louis XIV's Chapel



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Louis XIV's Opera Stage



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Cabinet with Views of Versailles, 19c



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Louis XIV Furniture



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The Gallery of Battles



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Louis XV [r. 1715 – 1774]



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