

CHAPTER 23-THE TRANSFORMATION OF EUROPE

In 1517 the Roman Catholic Church came under the first of a number of successful attacks when Martin Luther posted his ninety-five theses (complaints) and began the Reformation. His attack on the corruption of the Church, spread by the newly invented printing press, was met with positive popular reaction among many social classes and by the mid-sixteenth century, half of the German people are Lutheran Christians.

The Reformation soon spread outside Germany into Switzerland and the Low Countries, as well as England, where Henry VIII used the Reformation to separate the English church from Rome. John Calvin established a new community in Switzerland and also sent missionaries to Scotland, France, England, and the Low Countries. The Roman Catholic Church responded to these new religious ideas with the Catholic Reformation, which included the reform of the priests and the establishment of the Jesuits, a significant missionary order.

This split between the Catholic and Protestant Church was far from peaceful. Fear and hysteria led to the witch hunts of the sixteenth century. Hundreds of thousands died in religious wars that occurred between the mid-1500s and 1600s, including the wars of religion in France and the Thirty Years' War.

One of the major movements of the 1550s was the establishment of sovereign states. Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, tried to re-establish the Holy Roman Empire, but new states rising in this period prevented it. These states, such as England, France and Spain, were ruled by "new monarchs." They used tax money to centralize their governments, create standing armies, and stabilize state religion as in the case of the Spanish Inquisition. These states were not all alike. England and the Netherlands had constitutional governments. These governments had limited powers and included individual rights and representative institutions. Both of these countries had a wealthy merchant class and an overseas commercial empire. Spain, Austria, Prussia, and France had absolutist governments with power focused on the monarch and a large standing army to enforce that power. The best example of absolutism was the reign of Louis XIV of France.

This period also saw rapid changes in society and economics. New foods, especially those from the Americas, and increased resistance to disease meant rapid growth of populations and, with that, the growth of cities. There was also the beginning of capitalism and industry. This period also marks the start of joint-stock companies, new banking practices, and stock exchanges. The putting-out system started industrialization, with entrepreneurs bypassing the guild system and involving countryside peasants in the production cycle. These changes brought about changes in living conditions and ethics (profits were not longer considered evil), financial independence, and improved relations within families. At the same time there were intellectual changes. This period marks the start of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment.

Key Concept 4.1. Globalizing Networks of Communication and Exchange

- V. The new connections between the Eastern and Western hemispheres resulted in the Columbian Exchange.
- VI. The increase in interactions between newly connected hemispheres and intensification of connections within hemispheres expanded the spread and reform of existing religions and created syncretic belief systems and practices.

Key Concept 4.2. New Forms of Social Organization and Modes of Production

- II. As new social and political elites changed, they also restructured new ethnic, racial and gender hierarchies.

Key Concept 4.3. State Consolidation and Imperial Expansion

- I. Rulers used a variety of methods to legitimize and consolidate their power.
- III. Competition over trade routes (*such as Omani-European rivalry in the Indian Ocean or piracy in the Caribbean*), state rivalries (*such as the Thirty Years War or the Ottoman-Safavid conflict*) and local resistance (*such as bread riots*) all provided significant challenges to state consolidation and expansion.