

Social Crises, War, and Revolution

Big Idea

Social, economic, and religious conflicts challenged the established political order throughout Europe. As you read, use a chart like the one below to identify which conflicts were prompted by religious concerns.

Religious Conflicts



Notes

Read to Learn

Crises in Europe (page 458)

Determining Cause and Effect

Why did witchcraft hysteria begin to decline by 1650?

From 1560 to 1650, Europe had severe economic and social crises. One major economic problem was **inflation**, or rising prices. By 1600 there was an economic slowdown. Less silver was coming from the silver mines, so Spain's economy, which depended on silver, declined. Also, ships were being attacked by pirates, and Spain had lost many artisans and merchants when it expelled the Jews and Muslims. Italy was also declining economically. Population in Europe grew in the sixteenth century, but it began to decline by 1650 due to wars, famine, and plague.

A belief in **witchcraft**, or magic, disturbed society. Traditional village culture had included a belief in witches for centuries. However, the religious zeal of the Inquisition and the hunt for heretics extended to witchcraft. Possibly more than a hundred thousand people were charged with witchcraft. More than 75 percent of these were women, and most were single or widowed and over 50 years old. Accused witches were tortured severely. Therefore, they usually confessed to allegiance to the devil and practices such as casting evil spells. The witchcraft hysteria began to lessen by 1650 because fewer people believed in evil spirits.



Read to Learn

The Thirty Years' War (page 460)

Drawing Conclusions

Why did religious disputes continue even after the Peace of Augsburg?

The Peace of Augsburg in 1555 allowed religious disputes to continue in Germany. This was because the peace settlement did not recognize Calvinism. The Thirty Years' War, which began in 1618, concerned religion, but it was also a struggle for territory. It began with Catholic forces led by the Hapsburg Holy Roman emperors fighting with Protestant nobles in Bohemia. The nobles were primarily Calvinist. Denmark, Sweden, France, and Spain entered the war, and it became more political. Finally, it was a struggle between France and Spain and the Holy Roman Empire for European leadership.

The war officially ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The Peace divided the more than 300 states of the Holy Roman Empire into independent states and gave them power to determine their own religion and foreign policy. This brought an end to the Holy Roman Empire as a political entity.

Revolutions in England (page 461)

Making Inferences

How did religious issues in England affect American history?

When Queen Elizabeth I of England died in 1603, the throne passed to her cousin, James I. James believed that he ruled by the **divine right of kings**. This meant that his power came from God. Parliament thought that it and the king should rule England together. The conflict came to a head after James's son, Charles I, was king. Charles also believed in the divine right of kings. He tried to curb the power of Parliament and also to add more ritual to the Church of England. In 1628 Parliament passed a Petition of Right limiting the king's powers, but Charles ignored it.

England slipped into civil war in 1642. Royalists, called Cavaliers, fought parliamentary forces, called Roundheads. Parliament won, led by Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell led Parliament to execute Charles I in 1649. Then Parliament abolished the monarchy and the House of Lords and established a **commonwealth**, or republic. However, after Cromwell died in 1658, Charles I's son, Charles II, was restored to the throne.

Charles was Protestant, but sympathetic to Catholics. When he died, his brother James became king. James II tried to make England more Catholic. Parliament waited for James's Protestant daughters to succeed him, but when James had a son English nobles invited William of Orange (husband to James's daughter Mary) to invade England. England had undergone the "Glorious Revolution." William and Mary accepted the throne, along with a Bill of Rights. The Bill, based on the Petition of Right, laid the foundation for a limited, or constitutional, monarchy.

