8 – The Struggle for Wealth and Empire

The 18th century marks a turning point in the .history of Europe. Many of the developments of previous centuries – the Scientific Revolution, centralized states, commercial advance – reached their full flower during this period. Hope for change and optimism regarding the future took hold, particularly among the upper classes. At the same time, this period was one of immense contradictions: tradition vs. progress, privilege vs. equality, wealth vs. poverty, elite vs. popular culture. In this chapter, we review the social structure of the Old Regime (on the eve of the French Revolution), recount the continuing advance of commerce, and show how competition over wealth and trade led to a major conflict in two phases that altered the European balance of power.

Social Structure of the Old Regime

Demographic Changes

• THEME MUSIC

An oft-forgotten feature of the IS and PP themes is the so-called "vital revolution," the demographic shift to a society with a stable balance of births and deaths, based on improvements in medicine and hygiene that extend life expectancy and limit infant/child mortality. As you consult this section, consider how the 18th century laid the foundations for this trend.

Prior to the 18th century, Europe experienced periods of healthy population growth; inevitably, however, this had been followed by decline. Such declines usually resulted from scarcity of resources, warfare, and disease, known as a Malthusian Trap. The 18th century represented a shift in this trend-though not apparent at the time-in that Europe's population continued a steady and even significant growth in following centuries. From 1720, when the growth became evident, until the French Revolution (1789), Europe's population increased from about 120 to 180 million. What factors account for this growth?

Diet – As a result of the Agricultural and Commercial Revolutions (see below), Europeans secured access to increased amounts and' a wider variety of food supplies. Malnutrition and famine became rarer.

Transportation improvements – The building of roads and canals made it easier for national governments to address local shortages of grain and make good on crop failures.

Decline of the plague – Despite a few minor outbreaks, the dreaded bubonic plague, which every generation wiped out 10%-15% of the population in certain regions, mysteriously disappeared from the continent.

Weather – Europe's Little Ice Age was coming to an end, especially after 1750, which meant a longer growing season and more reliable crops.

Medical improvements – Though Edward Jenner introduced the smallpox vaccine in the 18th century, medical improvements actually played only a minor role in the population increase. Hospitals, medical training, and the understanding of disease remained woeful.

All of Europe took part in the population growth, but the increase tended to be more gradual in eastern than western Europe, except for Russia, which surpassed France as the most populous European nation around 1780. Urban areas grew the fastest, often straining their still-primitive infrastructure of roads, housing, waste removal, and charitable relief.

The Class System

• SKILL SET

Over the course of the 18th century, economic developments effected changes in the social structure, setting the stage for the French and Industrial Revolutions. As you read through this section, consider the Changes and Continuities Over Time (CCOT that mark a discrepancy between the traditions of the Old Regime (Three Estates) and those of amore dynamic class structure, linked to the growth of a money economy.

In the 18th century, European society continued to be divided into estates, or legally defined classes, which determined one's status. Though change was evident with the increasing importance placed on wealth, most nations continued to grant privilege for those who claimed hereditary descent from noble blood. Wealthy merchants and cash-strapped nobles often saw the benefit of blending families, fulfilling the twin purpose of raising the status of the merchants while infusing wealth into a threadbare aristocratic line. The chart below provides you with a snapshot of the class system in the 18th century. Keep in mind that this data represents a baseline for comparison's sake to evaluate the social impact of the French Revolution, which began in 1789.

Class	Activities	Status/Standard of Living	Development/Assessment
Nobility	•Lived primarily off of their estates, which varied considerably in size. •Often monopolized positions in the military as well as government and judicial offices. "Nobles often had more in common with those of the same class in other nations than they did with peasants in their homelands. "Often received a classical education, spoke French (the language of philosophy and culture in the 18th century), and if male, ventured on a grand tour. •A rite of passage, the grand tour . allowed male aristocrats to experience European art, ideas, as well as gambling and ***prostitution***.	•Noble status was defined by a set of legal and social privileges – the right to hunt, to be tried in special courts, to hold office, to claim exemptions from taxes. •With advances in commerce, nobles prided themselves on acquiring the newest fashions, carriages, art, and luxury items. •In England, to keep lands intact, families practiced primogeniture and entail, or granting all lands to the eldest son and prohibiting him or his heirs from ever breaking them up. Such laws forced younger sons Into business or the clergy and became a hated symbol of privilege. •In imitation of Louis XIV, many nobles built gracious country houses, especially in England. With the grandeur of a palace and the comfort of home, such residences expressed classical style and the increased desire for privacy.	•Aristocrats of the 18th century experienced a revival of power following the great age of absolutism. •Remarkably adaptable, nobles used investments and strategic marriages with merchants to meld their noble status with new wealth. •To support a more luxurious lifestyle, nobles tried to wring out of the peasantry whatever taxes, fees, dues, and obligations could be justified from the remnants of the feudal system. •The continued existence of this system of unequal privileges came under increasing attack by Enlightenment *philosophes* (see next chapter).
Peasants	•The great majority of Europeans (about 80%-85%) continued to work the land as either peasants or serfs. •Free peasants, who lived primarily in western and some parts of central Europe, often owned their own land or had the right to work the land of a lord. •Villages governed the lives of peasants. Decisions regarding agriculture, local disputes, public order, and religion were made by village leaders according to customs and the needs of the community.	•Standards of living for peasants varied significantly, depending on the degree of freedoms, soil/climate conditions, and strength of the nobility. •Those living east of the Elbe River or in southern Italy and the Iberian peninsula often faced more difficult burdens. •Nobles in eastern Europe and Russia were larger in number and exercised greater power over their peasants and , serfs. •Despite improvements in diet and transportation, peasants still fell prey to famines and diseases (because of greater susceptibility due to malnutrition).	•In some ways, little changed in peasant life. from the 16th to 18th centuries-nobles still held sway, customs dictated everyday life, and fate seemed to rule one's destiny. At the same time, changes were evident. •Peasant life was marginally more secure because of improved diet and better weather. •Discontent over a lingering feudal system often sparked revolts. The most famous of these was the Pugachev Revolt in the 1770s in Russia, the largest peasant uprising in European history. Such revolts underscored the growing dissatisfaction with the unequal class system.
Townspeople/ Bourgeolsie	•Towns attracted both people and capital. •Cities produced wealth through manufacture and trade. •The middle class often owned land In the countryside, living off rents and dues. •Peasants resented the parasitical role of the	•Cities technically existed outside the feudal structure and jealously guarded their liberties. •Standards of living ' varied widely between the merchant oligarchs who dominated political and social life, and the petty bourgeoisie of artisans and shopkeepers, down to the menial laborers, beggars, and prostitutes. •Wealthy merchants and entrepreneurs imitated the tastes and styles of the nobility, often intermarrying with them or gaining noble status through purchase of an office.	•Cities in the. 18th century paled in comparison with today's teeming industrial metropolises. Europe's largest city was London with around 1 million people. Many towns had only 10,000 to 50,000 inhabitants. •Towns played an important economic and cultural role, attracting migrants from the countryside, capital from investors, and ideas from all over Europe.

	towns, which seemed to absorb the wealth of the countryside but provide nothing in return.	•As commerce expanded, cities grew in size and eventually became overwhelmed with the problems of poverty and crime. Charitable institutions still existed to address needs, but attitudes hardened against professional beggars. Many nations passed laws to house the poor in hospitals or workhouses.	•Cities suffered under an inadequate infrastructure of streets, houses, and waste removal in the face of growing populations. •Belief in a "moral economy" led city-dwellers to demand "fair prices" for grains. •To avoid bread riots, governments also stored grain to provide reasonable prices.

Family Life and Child-Rearing

The 181h-century European family remained predominantly nuclear, with the exception of parts of eastern Europe where the tax system promoted extended families living under one roof. Average ages at first marriage in Europe remained high compared with other civilizations in the 18th century – often mid-to late 20s for both men and women – known as the ***European marriage pattern***. Couples delayed wedlock until they were able to support themselves economically and provide for children.

Families generally labored together as an economic unit. In agricultural settings, tasks tended ' to divide based on gender, with men involved in heavier work such as plowing, while women assisted with harvesting, mowing hay, and preparing food. Children were expected to contribute productive labor at an early age. In towns, boys were apprenticed to a local shop or filled any job that augmented the family income. Young women often found themselves in domestic settings as servants and maids, their goal being to earn a sufficient dowry to guarantee a favorable marriage partner. Theoretically, servants were to be treated as members of the family, with the heads of the household responsible for their well-being and moral upbringing. In fact, young women often found themselves subject to verbal abuse and the sexual advances of male family members.

Strong community controls in early modem Europe had ensured that couples avoided having children out of wedlock. As long as the couple was married prior to the birth of the child, social stigma did not attach to premarital sex. However, between 1750 and 1850 a rapid increase of ***illegitimacy*** occurred. It is unclear what caused this trend. One explanation is that the new opportunities provided by ***cottage industry*** – earning money at home by finishing products – allowed couples to earn income without access to land or regular employment. Additionally, small children could contribute to the family income quickly as part of this system. Furthermore, migration to cities tended to disrupt traditional patterns of arranged marriages and enforcement of marriage promises by men.

The unfortunate consequences of the out-of-wedlock births led to the related problems of infanticide and child abandonment. Though Europeans used traditional ***birth control*** methods to limit population, these techniques proved unreliable and dangerous, as in the case of abortion. Unwanted children were often "accidentally" smothered in bed during the night. Some nations even outlawed the common practice of parents and children sharing a bed to discourage these actions. Given the extremes of poverty and inequality that existed in 18th-century cities, it was not surprising that young women felt driven to infanticide. An illustration of this sad practice occurred when the city of Rennes; France opened a storm drain in 1721 only to find the skeletons of 80 infants within. Rather than the extreme measure of infanticide, many couples or mothers abandoned their children on the steps of a church or hospital. Wealthy philanthropists and Catholic religious orders established foundling homes to care for this burgeoning population. However, such homes were often overwhelmed, and the vast majority of the children under their care died before reaching maturity.

Traditionally, children were viewed as sinful "sprigs of Adam," and parents were warned that "to spare the rod was to spoil the child." The modern expression "rule of thumb," in fact, derives from the limitation on the width of a stick a husband was allowed to reprove both children and wife. Children were tightly swaddled to restrict their natural impulsive movements, as parents worked to instill discipline from the earliest ages. Upper-class women relied on wet nurses to provide nutrition for their children, which often meant they went undernourished or neglected.

Such views of children began to change slowly in the 18th century. A result of the ideas of John Locke and the educational writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (see next chapter), new attitudes began to stress the view of children as innocent creatures who needed tender love and guidance through progressive stages of development. Rousseau and others denounced the practices of wet-nursing and swaddling. Children, they argued, should be insulated from the adult world of vulgarity and cruelty. Among the upper classes, parents began to provide their children with

age-appropriate clothing, reading materials, and games. Books and toys were designed to stimulate children's interest and moral development. Simplified scientific ideas found their way into books like Tom Telescope's *Newtonian System of Philosophy,* probably written by John Newbery (1713-1767). Newbery, also famous for *The Pretty Little Pocket Book,* richly illustrated his books to appeal to children's eyes. Along with the jigsaw puzzle, parents lavished children with dolls, *camera obscuras* (a simple machine for projecting images), and tops. New family practices were also reflected in more government attention being given to primary education (see next chapter).

• SKILL SET

As practice for Argumentation and Use of Evidence (EVARG). consider the following prompt as you read through this section: How and why did child-rearing attitudes and practices change over the course of the 18th century?

The Dynamic Economy of the Eighteenth Century

At the center of the significant social, cultural, and intellectual developments occurring in 18th-century Europe stood an expanding and changing economy. More than ever, Europe became enmeshed in a global system of trade; at the same time, the continent reaped the fruits of incremental advances in manufacturing and agriculture. Ultimately, the national pursuit of wealth and empire fueled a series of mid-century wars that altered the European balance of power and set the stage for the French Revolution.

Cottage Industry

For centuries, European manufacturing had taken place in towns under the auspices of the guilds. During the 18th century, the system of cottage industry expanded, whereby a merchant capitalist paid wages to rural families to finish raw materials. Due to its lack of internal tariffs and weak guild structure, England experienced the most rapid expansion of this putting-out system. Though the British Isles later gained the reputation for industrial ingenuity, their manufactures in 1750 were easily surpassed by several other nations. However, England could boast an expanding base of textile production, one of the most basic of consumer goods. The many and varied steps of textile production lent themselves to the decentralized nature of cottage industry. Entrepreneurial expansion of manufacturing in the countryside allowed merchants to reinvest profits from trade and later provided sufficient capital for investment in large-scale industrial enterprises. In addition, cottage industry provided rural families the opportunity to supplement a livelihood often threatened by changes in the nature of agriculture.

The Agricultural Revolution

An inefficient agricultural system arrested European population growth. The open three-field system wasted a large proportion of useful land, and primitive techniques offered little margin for error, often plunging regions into famine, as had happened in the 1690s. Much of this insecurity was relieved by the Agricultural Revolution of the 18th century. The movement began in the Netherlands and England and featured the introduction of new crops and the application of new techniques. Some have labeled these changes in crop and livestock raising scientific agriculture.

To combat the waste of allowing fields to lie fallow, agricultural reformers like Charles "Turnip" Townsend (1674-1738) supported the use of nitrogen-replenishing crops such as turnips, clover, and alfalfa. Such fodder crops also fed livestock, whose manure was in turn used to further increase the output of fields. One of the crops vital to saving millions from malnutrition proved to be the potato. Easy to grow, rich in vitamins, and versatile, the crop became a staple of the peasant diet in Ireland, Prussia, and Russia. A large family could subsist on as little as an acre of potatoes.

Increasing production also involved solutions as simple as clearing more land. Using new drainage techniques, such as terracing, the Dutch and English were able to reclaim swamps and bogs. Jethro Tull (1674-1741), another reformer concerned about increasing yields, advocated soil aeration through use of the hoe and invention of the seed drill, which pushed the seed safely beneath the soil. Tull thus employed Enlightenment reason and empirical study in service of practical solutions. Improvements in livestock, through selective breeding, served as a natural next step. The English government granted awards to those who could produce the fattest and meatiest cattle, providing additional protein for the average person's diet.

Efficiency often requires doing things in a big way, or what is known as economies of scale. In agriculture, this meant that the traditional open-field system of scattered strips of land had to be abandoned. This process had already been underway in England since the 16th century with enclosure. Advances in agricultural techniques in the 18th century provided an additional spur, as Parliament passed enclosure acts, which allowed wealthy landowners to buy up common land and enclose it within large manors. This destruction of the commons produced an unequal system of landholding in England, with a few large landholders at the top, some independent yeoman and enterprising tenant farmers in the middle, and a mass

of landless laborers on the bottom. For this last group, the loss of land rendered them dependent on earning wages, driving them into the newly expanding and industrializing cities as an unskilled labor force.

• THEME MUSIC

The Agricultural Revolution highlights an overarching question for the PP theme – how technological advances can benefit overall wealth and those who patronize the new processes (e.g., the gentry). yet at the same time create poverty and Inequality for others (e.g., smallholders and peasants in traditional settings).

The Commercial Revolution, Phase II

While the Dutch remained important traders, they had been surpassed by the French and the English, both of whose commerce ballooned in the 18th century. East India companies, pooling the resources of numerous investors, were established by numerous nations and exploited the European taste for a whole range of new consumer goods. Triangular trade facilitated the exchange of goods between the continents of Europe, Africa, and the Americas, also promoting the human trafficking in slaves. Europe's sweet tooth caused untold suffering for Africans forced to work in the horrifying conditions of Caribbean sugar ***plantation "factories."***

Europeans continued to demand spices from the East – cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, pepper, saffron. The new beverages of ***coffee*** and ***tea*** appeared on the European menu, making the East Indies, India, and Ceylon focal points for colonial interest, and spawning new venues for conversation (tea-and coffee-houses). These colonial areas were also known for the production of fine cloth and rugs. Light, brightly colored ***silks***, calicoes, muslins, and chintzes poured into the homes of Europe's upper classes, as signs of status and refinement. Goods from overseas, as well as porcelain and cloth now produced within Europe, promoted a consumer revolution in tastes, as the well-to-do stocked their drawing rooms, boudoirs, and eating areas with genteel decor.

The biggest money-maker of all was ***sugar***. Small sugar islands in the Caribbean easily outpaced the entire North American mainland in value to the British Empire. Throughout the 18th century, sugar production skyrocketed. As sugar increased, so did slavery. Over 600,000 slaves were brought from Africa to the island of Jamaica alone from 1700 to 1786. Originally dominated by the Portuguese then the Dutch, the slave trade fell into the orbit of English trading interests after the War of Spanish Succession. Because much of the profit from the slave trade and sugar went directly to England's industrial expansion, it would be fair to conclude that British capitalism resulted in part from the enslavement of Africans. What's more, because profits were so easy to come by on these sugar islands, plantation owners inhumanely treated their slaves, causing one of the highest mortality rates in the world. Global trade produced a myriad of important results. Let's focus on three for right now:

AP Achiever

- The profits from commerce promoted the development of a market economy of private property. Governments became much more dependent on entrepreneurs as a source of taxation and to underwrite state borrowing of funds, through banks and other credit institutions.
- As noted above, the accumulation of wealth by the middle class (bourgeoisie) tended to facilitate their merging with the aristocracy, as both gained from intermarriage. ‘
- The potential for great riches led to an intensification of commercial rivalries, resulting in war. Conflict over territory in Europe merged with overseas competition for colonies and markets, producing the first world wars in history.

Diplomacy and War

Commercial competition invariably led to war in the 18th century. Soon after the Peace of Utrecht (1713-1714), one old rivalry (Britain vs. France) reasserted itself while another arose between Prussia and Austria over predominance of German affairs. These two rivalries stood at the center of diplomacy and war in the middle of the century. Spain experienced new life under the Bourbon monarchy of Philip V (1700-1749), and the Netherlands remained important financially, though) neither was able to exert influence equivalent to that enjoyed before 1715. In the east, Russia demonstrated that its modernization under Peter the Great made it a reckoning force within the system of European diplomacy.

Before moving on to the wars, we take a quick snapshot of Britain and France after 1715. For purposes of the AP exam, this review is helpful in the case of Britain to note how that nation developed a unique constitutional system following the Glorious Revolution and in the case of France to lay the foundations for the long-term causes of the French Revolutions.

• SKILL SET

Since Britain and France battled over power on the European continent and overseas, consider setting up a Venn diagram to illustrate the similarities and differences between their economic, political, and social systems (COMP).

France-Limping Absolutism

The landed and commercial classes in France between 1715 and 1789 increased their power and challenged absolutism under the weak reigns of Louis XV (1714-1774) and Louis XVI (1774-1793). Both proved inadequate to the task of addressing France’s pressing problems – Louis XV due to his preoccupation with hunting and controversial mistress and Louis XVI due to his indecision and scandalous wife (Marie Antoinette). The government’s need to fund the debt left over from its many wars along with the constant desire of investors to profit from the Commercial Revolution led to an unintended crisis in public finance. Unlike England, France never developed the notion of a public debt funded by banks – the debt was considered the king’s *personal* debt – and as a result lagged behind in the development of credit institutions and the ability to borrow money. Not surprisingly, the issues that forced the’ French monarchy to concede limits on its theoretically absolutist powers in 1789 were government debt and taxation.

Great Britain – the “King in Parliament” and Prime Minister

Following the Glorious Revolution in 1688, Britain developed a unique form of government known as the “king in parliament.” In short, English monarchs continued to play an important political role, but worked through Parliament and a Prime Minister to pass legislation and govern. After the last Stuart monarch, Queen Anne (1701-1714), died without an heir, England turned to a related German dynasty-the Hanoverians. Despite the unpopularity of the first Hanoverian, George I (1714-1727), who did not speak English, the dynasty was able to establish a functioning government system by relying on a prime minister and the cabinet system.

A major reason for Britain’s commercial success in the 181h century involved the close relationship between government finance and private enterprise. The ***Bank of England*** issued stock to finance government debt and also allowed investors to draw on a larger amount of capital than in other nations. As in France, this system almost led to a speculative disaster in 1720. Unlike France, Britain was able to salvage and further develop its system of public finance.

The man largely responsible for the development of Britain’s cabinet system of government was Robert Walpole (tenure, 1721-1743), also considered the first prime minister. Walpole appointed ministers to head up government agencies who also served in the Parliament. By carefully managing his parliamentary majority through issuance of government stocks and promises of patronage, Walpole was able to steer legislation through the House of Commons (the more important of the two houses of Parliament). Throughout his tenure” Walpole worked diligently to advance Britain’s commercial interests abroad while avoiding war (to keep taxes down), a task he was largely able to accomplish.

Eighteenth-Century Warfare

War in the 181h century was waged between highly trained and professional armies for specific strategic objectives. Soldiers were drawn from the underclass and less productive groups in society, perhaps "recruited" after a drunken night in a tavern. Their aristocratic army officers controlled them through harsh discipline. Because conflict proved less destructive to civilians and land than the religious wars of an earlier age, states entered into it more lightly and also withdrew from it more quickly. Questions of war tended to be calculated and strategic. Armies were expensive to maintain, train, and supply, so generals were reluctant to risk them carelessly in battle, often making warfare a game of movement and of securing supply lines. Infantry played the major role in war, their inaccurate smoothbore muskets and bright uniforms imparting a parade-ground atmosphere to battles. Nonetheless, 18th-century warfare was destructive and disruptive; it only seems less so in comparison with the conflagrations of the 20th century.

• THEME MUSIC

As you read this section, keep in the mind the strong connection between the SP and PP themes. Pursuit of commerce and colonies embroiled nations In conflict, stimulated the growth of military states, and altered the balance of power.

The War of Austrian Succession, 1740-1748

The War of Austrian Succession began with a cynical attack by Frederick II, the Great (17401786), king of Prussia, on Austria in defiance of the Pragmatic Sanction. Like a swarm of vultures, other nations (Bavaria, Saxony, Spain) rushed in to claim territorial prizes from the threatened empire. In continuance of their longtime opposition to the Habsburgs, the French joined the assault in alliance with Prussia. To prevent the dismemberment of Austria and maintain the balance of power on continent, Britain joined the fray on the side of the new Habsburg ruler, Maria Theresa (1740-1780). In this way, the two primary rivalries in European politics merged into a complex conflict, which would be fought in two phases (see Seven Years' War below).

Frederick the Great experienced a difficult youth. More interested in learning French and playing the flute than war, Frederick often feuded with his stern father, ***Frederick William I*** (see Chapter 7) who intended to break his son. The young Frederick attempted to escape the kingdom with a friend, whom Frederick William I had executed right before his son's eyes to teach him a lesson. Against odds, Frederick proved to be one the great rulers in German history and a true military genius. The primary target of Frederick's aggression was the resource-rich province of Silesia, which he was able to win and hold until the end of the conflict.

Frederick was almost equally matched by Maria Theresa. In an act of political theater, Maria Theresa held aloft her newborn son (the future Joseph II) before the Hungarian nobles in 1741 to appeal for their support, which they gave in a spasm of chivalric fervor. Though Maria eventually lost Silesia, she did well to hold onto most of her other possessions by treaty (1748), one that reflected an Anglo-French agreement and in which the Habsburg ruler had little say.

Britain and France waged war in several theaters in pursuit of their commercial and colonial objectives. Each side made advances against the other. The antagonists were thus content to return to the situation as it had existed before the war, with Frederick holding on to Silesia. Though the map had changed little beyond Silesia, the War of Austrian Succession had highlighted two issues: (1) France sat in an unfavorable strategic position hamstrung between major continental commitments with its large army and a growing commercial empire in need of naval defense, and (2) Austria and Prussia now uneasily coexisted as two relatively even powers in Germany, with the latter immensely enhanced by its capture of Silesia, which had doubled its population to 6 million and strengthened its economic base. Maria Theresa was just as determined to regain the territory.

The Reforms of Maria Theresa and Diplomatic Revolution of 1756

Maria Theresa embarked on a wide-ranging series of reforms after 1748. To reduce inefficiency, Maria Theresa centralized the collection of taxes and combined the chancelleries (administrative offices) of the various territories of her empire. The army was tripled in size, while a military academy and engineering school were also founded. Later in her reign, Maria Theresa promoted primary education in the interests of economic productivity, promoted smallpox inoculation, outlawed torture and capital punishment, and eased the burdens of serfdom. Though many of these reforms benefited her subjects, her primary goal was to strengthen the state so as to recapture Silesia.

In 1756, the great Austrian diplomat and advisor to Maria Theresa, Count von Kaunitz (1711-1794), engineered one of diplomacy's greatest coups. Von Kaunitz convinced France to give up its traditional opposition to the Habsburgs and enter an alliance against Prussia, a coalition that Russia also joined. This Diplomatic Revolution of 1756 forced Britain onto the side of Prussia to prevent another continental disruption to the balance of power (and a threat to Hanover, ancestral home to Britain's monarchy) and helped reignite the worldwide colonial conflict between France and Great Britain. Once again, despite the switch in alliances, .the two key rivalries had merged, this time to

produce a true world war with profound consequences for three continents.

• EXAMPLE BASE

Don't be intimidated by the details in this section. If It helps, consider a focus question: How did states manage their economic and political resources in pursuit of power and in addressing both internal problems and external challenges?

The Seven Years' War, 1756-1763

The Seven Years' War stands as Frederick II's darkest and finest hour. Though outnumbered by his enemies almost 10 to 1, Frederick fought brilliantly, even when his capital Berlin was burned to the ground and all seemed lost. Britain provided primarily financial support in order to concentrate its energies oil the colonial conflict with France. Frederick was aided by the disorganization of his opponents, who never seemed able to coordinate their attacks, and the French lack of enthusiasm for their new Austrian alliance. Despite his sometimes desperate situation and aging seemingly 20 years in 7 years' time, Frederick once again was able to hold onto Silesia by treaty (1763).

Fighting between France and Great Britain proved more decisive. Under the brilliant leadership of William Pitt the Elder (1708-1778), Britain won victories on land and sea in North America, the Caribbean, and in India. France found itself again depleted by fighting major wars on the continent of Europe and overseas. France and Britain both used their East India companies to exploit the decaying Mogul Empire in India, enlisting local rulers and warlords in pursuit of their interests. However, with its superior naval forces, Britain emerged victorious on balance, a fact that was reflected in the peace treaty.

By the Treaty of Paris (1763), Great Britain secured sole access to North America east of the Mississippi River and gained the dominant position in India, which became the "crown jewel of the British Empire." France was, however, able to win back its profitable sugar islands in the Caribbean. Though Britain clearly came out the dominant maritime power, French commerce continued to grow after 1763 and may have even outpaced Britain. The Treaty of Paris set the stage for major events on three continents. In North America (where the conflict was called the French and Indian War), British colonists were now free of the perennial French threat while the British were determined to make them pay for the costs of empire, a difference in outlook leading directly to the American Revolution. For Europe, the Seven Years' War confirmed the dualism in Germany of Austria and Prussia, but more importantly, set the stage for the French Revolution by increasing the debt of and criticism against the French monarchy. On the Indian subcontinent, Britain oversaw the further dissolution of the Mogul Empire and established a strong colonial presence that would change both civilizations.