

## Periods of the Thirty Years' War

**\*The Thirty Years' War was the last of the "Wars of Religion." It took place in the Holy Roman Empire, but virtually every European power became involved either directly or indirectly. Internally, the causes of the war appeared to be religious. However, foreign powers became involved for primarily political reasons. Ultimately, the war was fought for political and financial gains as much as for religious reasons.**

- I. The Bohemian Period (1618-1625): **Ferdinand II (the Holy Roman Emperor), the Catholic League (Maximilian of Bavaria), and Spain v. the Palatinate (Frederick V) who was supported by England, France, and the Netherlands**
  - A. in 1618, the Habsburg Ferdinand, the archduke of Styria, became the ruler of Bohemia
    1. he was also in the line of succession to the imperial throne
    2. he wanted to restore the traditional faith throughout the eastern Habsburg lands (Austria, Bohemia, and Poland)
    3. he revoked the religious freedoms of Bohemian Protestants...they responded with the **"defenestration of Prague"** (the Protestant nobility literally threw Ferdinand's agents out a window)
    4. in 1619, Ferdinand became emperor Ferdinand II
    5. the Bohemians, however, declared Frederick V (Calvinist elector Palatine) their overlord)
  - B. Escalated into an international war...
    1. Spain sent troops to aid Ferdinand
    2. George I of Saxony, a Lutheran, also supported Ferdinand
      - a. hoped to gain territory (How religious!...will not be the first time politics and greed overshadow religion during this long conflict)
      - b. also, Calvinist religious animosity overrode a common Protestantism
    3. the Palatinate received support from England, France, and the Netherlands
  - C. Battle of White Mountain (1620)
    1. Ferdinand's army, under Count Johann von Tilly, routed Frederick V's troops
    2. By 1622, Ferdinand had managed to not only subdue and re-Catholicize Bohemia, but conquer the Palatinate as well
- II. The Danish Period (1625-1629): **Ferdinand II (the Holy Roman Emperor), the Catholic League (Maximilian of Bavaria), and Albrecht of Wallenstein (a Protestant mercenary) v. Denmark (Christian IV) who was supported by England, France, and the Netherlands**
  - A. There was fear among Protestants that Ferdinand II intended to re-conquer and re-Catholicize the whole empire
    1. the Lutheran king Christian IV of Denmark was persuaded by the English, French, and the Dutch to pick up the Protestant banner
    2. he was quickly defeated by Maximilian and forced to retreat into Denmark
  - B. Albrecht of Wallenstein

1. Ferdinand was worried that Maximilian was becoming too difficult to control, so he hired Albrecht of Wallenstein
  2. By 1628, he commanded an army of 100,000, had penetrated into Denmark, and was a law unto himself, completely outside the emperor's control
- C. Edict of Restitution: issued by Ferdinand in 1629
1. reaffirmed the illegality of Calvinism
  2. ordered the return of all church lands acquired by Lutherans since 1552

**\*This act struck panic in the hearts of Protestants and Habsburg opponents everywhere. Resistance quickly reignited.**

- III. The Swedish Period 1630-1635): **Ferdinand II (the Holy Roman Emperor) v. Gustavus Adolphus (the king of Sweden) who was supported by France and the Netherlands**
- A. in 1630, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, a deeply pious king of a unified Lutheran nation, became the new leader of Protestant forces within the empire
1. he was supported by the French minister Cardinal Richelieu (who wanted a decentralized Germany and to keep the Habsburg forces tied down in Germany)
  2. he was also supported by the Netherlands (who remembered when they were dominated by the Habsburgs)
- B. Battle of Breitenfeld (1630): with the help of Brandenburg and Saxony, the Swedish king reversed the course of the war
- C. Battle of Lutzen (1632)
1. Adolphus died at the hands of Wallenstein's forces
  2. Created a brief standstill in the war

**\*To top it all off, Wallenstein was assassinated (on Ferdinand's request) in 1634. The Holy Roman Emperor was resentful of his independence and Wallenstein was attempting to strike bargains with the Protestants.**

- D. Peace of Prague (1635)
1. The German Protestant states, led by Saxony, reached a compromise with Ferdinand
  2. The Swedes (who wished to gain more territory and booty) refused to join the agreement
- IV. The Swedish-French Period (1635-1648): **The Swedish, the French, and the Spanish run amok in Germany...**
- A. The French openly entered the war in 1635, sending men and munitions, as well as money, to the Swedes
- B. For thirteen years, Germany was ravaged and looted by Spanish, Swedish, and French soldiers
1. the Germans were too weak and disunited to do anything about it
  2. an estimated one-third of the German population died as a direct result of the war

- V. The Treaty of Westphalia: brought all hostilities within the Holy Roman Empire to an end
  - A. Provisions:
    1. rescinded Ferdinand's Edict of Restitution
    2. firmly reasserted the major feature of the religious settlement of the Peace of Augsburg: the ruler of each land was again permitted to determine the religion of his or her land
    3. gave Calvinists legal recognition
    4. proclaimed the independence of the Swiss Confederacy and the United Provinces of Holland (the Northern Netherlands)
  - B. Results:
    1. perpetuated German division and political weakness into the modern period
    2. Brandenburg-Prussia emerged as the most powerful northern German state
    3. After defeating Spain in 1659, France became the dominant power on the continent