

Chapter 19: The Expansion of Europe in the Eighteenth Century

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1. Agriculture and the land
 - a. 80 percent of most Europeans depended on agriculture.
 - b. At best, each bushel of wheat sown yielded on average only five or six bushels of grain, distressingly low by modern standards.
 - c. By 1700, in most regions of Europe most people faced frequent famine and an agricultural system not much changed since the days of ancient Greece.
 - d. The openfield system
 - i. The openfield system, developed during the Middle Ages, divided the land into a few large fields, which were then cut up into long, narrow strips.
 - ii. The fields were farmed jointly by the community, but a large portion of the arable land was always left fallow.
 1. There was not enough manure to combat the eventual nitrogen depletion of the soil, so land was left fallow.
 2. Peasants switched from an alternating schedule of crop/fallow to a three year rotation of wheat/rye-oat/beans-fallow.
 - iii. Common lands were set aside for community use, for the draft horses and oxen as well as the cows and pigs of the village. After the harvest and gleaning of grain, the animals were pastured on the wheat or rye stubble.
 - iv. The labor and tax system throughout Europe was unjust, but eastern European peasants suffered the most.
 1. Lords could force five or six days of unpaid work per week.
 2. There were few limitations on the amount of forced labor the lord could require.
 3. Serfs could be sold.
 - v. By the eighteenth century most peasants in western Europe were free from serfdom, and many owned some land.
 1. However, peasants still had to pay heavy royal taxes, the church's tithe and dues to the lord, as well as set aside seed for the next season.
 - e. The agricultural revolution
 - i. It was not possible for the peasants to increase their landholdings by taking land from the rich landowners.
 - ii. The use of idle fallow land by crop rotation increased cultivation, which meant more food.
 1. The secret was in alternating grain crops with nitrogen storing crops, such as peas and beans, root crops, and grasses.
 2. Farmers began to develop sophisticated crop rotation patterns to suit the soil.
 3. This meant more fodder for animals, which meant more meat for the people and more manure for fertilizer.
 4. These improvements necessitated ending the open field system by "enclosing" the fields.
 - iii. Enclosure of the open fields also meant the disappearance of common land which hurt the small landholders and village poor.
 1. Many peasants and some noble landowners opposed these changes, because they retained berry picking and firewood gathering rights and grazing rights, thus retaining some independence and status.

2. The enclosure process was slow, and enclosed and open fields existed side by side for a long time.
 3. Only in the Low Countries and England was enclosure widespread.
- f. The leadership of the Low Countries and England
- i. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Low Countries led in intensive farming.
 1. This Dutch lead was due largely to the need to feed a growing population.
 2. The growth of the urban population provided good markets for specialized produce from each region of the Low Countries.

“The Mecca of foreign agricultural experts who came to see Flemish agriculture with their own eyes, to write about it and to propagate its methods in their home lands.”
 - ii. Dutch engineers such as **Vermuyden** helped England drain its marshes to create more arable land.
 1. “Turnip” **Townsend** was one of the pioneers of English agricultural improvement.
 - a. As an English ambassador to Holland, he learned of turnips and Dutch farming techniques. Draining, manuring and sowing crops in regular rotation, the farmers who leased Townsend’s lands earned higher incomes.
 2. **Tull**, doubting all accepted farming ideas like a true Enlightenment thinker, advocated the use of horses instead of oxen for plowing and drilling equipment for sowing seeds.
- g. The cost of enclosure
- i. Some historians argue that the English landowners were more efficient than continental owners, and that enclosures were fair.
 - ii. Others argue that the large landowner controlled Parliament enclosure acts forced small peasants and landless cottagers off the land.
 - iii. In reality, the enclosure and the exclusion of cottagers and laborers had begun as early as the sixteenth century.
 1. By 1750, many open fields were enclosed into sheep pastures to produce wool for the textile industry.
 2. The independent peasant farmers could not compete, and thus began to disappear.
 3. The tenant farmers, who rented land from the big landlords, benefited from enclosure.
 - a. They fenced fields, built rains, and improved the soil with fertilizers, increasing employment opportunities for wage workers in some areas.
 4. By 1815 a tiny minority of English and Scottish landlords held most of the land--which they rented to tenants, who hired laborers.
 - iv. The enclosure movement marked the rise of market oriented estate agriculture and the emergence of a landless rural proletariat.
 1. Although the proletariat lived economically as well as they did before enclosure, they lost the independence and self-respect that common rights had provided and were completely dependant on cash wages.
2. The beginning of the population explosion
- a. The limitations on population growth
 - i. The traditional checks on growth were famine, disease, and war.
 - ii. These checks kept Europe's population growth rate fairly low and cyclical.
 - iii. After the Black Death, standard of living increased for peasants and artisans

because of labor shortages and low food prices.

- iv. However, in 1500, the next wave of population growth outpaced the agricultural production. Further, food prices rose more rapidly than wages, intensified by inflation from the Americas, causing a decline in quality of life.
 - v. The growth rate was modest at 1%, but its effects were limited because of famine, disease and war.
 - vi. War spread disease and demanded scarce food supplies while disrupting the agricultural cycle.
- b. The new pattern of population growth in the eighteenth century
- i. Population growth resulted from fewer deaths, partly owing to the disappearance of the plague.
 1. Stricter quarantine measures helped eliminate the plague.
 2. The elimination of the black rat by the brown rat was a key reason for the disappearance of the disease.
 - a. The Asiatic brown rat also carries the plague, but the flea carries the flea poorly and has little taste for human blood.
 - ii. Advances in medicine, such as inoculation against smallpox, did **little** to reduce the death rate in Europe.
 1. Exception: Edward Jenner used cowpox to inoculate against smallpox
 - iii. Improvements in sanitation promoted better public health.
 - iv. The drainage of swamps also reduced Europe's large insect population, reducing disease related deaths.
 - v. An increase in the food supply and variety (potato from South America) meant fewer famines and epidemics, especially as transportation improved.
 - vi. The growing population often led to overpopulation and increased rural poverty.
 - vii. Increasing population and more efficient agricultural practices forced the growing labor force to look for new ways to make a living.
3. The growth of cottage industry
- a. Rural poverty and population growth led to peasants undertaking manufacturing at home.
 - i. Before, in the Middle Ages, industry was dominated and organized by strict urban craft guilds and urban merchants.
 - ii. Population growth increased the number of rural workers with little or no land, forcing them to supplement their agricultural earnings with other types of work.
 - iii. By the eighteenth century this **cottage industry**, or domestic industry, challenged the monopoly of the urban craft industry.
 - b. The putting out system
 - i. The putting out system was based on **rural workers** producing cloth in their homes for **merchant-capitalists**, who supplied the raw materials and paid for the finished goods.
 - ii. Capitalists were happy to employ the rural workers who would work for much less than the urban workers.
 - iii. Further, because the putting out system did not need to meet rigid guild standards which maintained quality but not technological advances, they were able to manufacture at a lower quality but more massively.
 - iv. This capitalist system reduced the problem of rural unemployment and provided cheap goods.
 - v. England led the way in the conversion from urban to rural textile production.
 1. By 1500, half of England's textiles were being produced in the countryside. By 1700 English industry was generally more rural than urban and was

- heavily reliant on the putting-out system.
 - 2. In the 1700s, faced with burgeoning populations of poverty, France was forced to encourage cottage industry.
 - c. The textile industry in England as an example of the putting-out system
 - i. The English textile industry was a family industry: the women and children would prepare the raw material and spin the thread and the men would weave.
 - 1. This took place in their tiny cottage.
 - 2. Each cottage had a loom--e.g., **Kay's** new "**flying shuttle**" loom.
 - 3. "Every person from seven to eighty (who retained their sight and who could move their hands) could earn their bread."
 - 4. The textile industry encouraged cottage workers to marry early and have large families.
 - ii. A major problem was that there were not enough spinners to make yarn for the weaver. (Four or five spinners were needed to keep one weaver steadily employed.)
 - 1. Wives found unmarried women and widows who spun for their living.
 - iii. Strained relations often existed between workers and capitalist employers.
 - 1. A popular English song written in 1700 called "The Clothier's Delight, or the Rich Men's Joy and the Poor Men's Sorrow" is about capitalist merchants boasting of how he keeps wages down.
 - iv. The capitalist found it difficult to control the worker, because rural labor was cheap, scattered and poorly organized.
- 4. Building the Atlantic economy in the eighteenth century
 - a. Great Britain (formed in 1707) by a union of England and Scotland, took the lead in a great expansion in world trade.
 - b. Mercantilism and colonial wars
 - i. **Mercantilism** is a system of economic regulations aimed at increasing the power of the state, particularly by creating a favorable balance of trade.
 - 1. They believed gold equaled power.
 - ii. English mercantilism was further characterized by the use of government regulations to serve the interests of private individuals.
 - 1. "Profit and power ought jointly to be considered." - Josiah Child, a director of the East India Company.
 - 2. On the other hand, France and continental countries put the needs of the state first and seldom saw a possible union of public and private interests for a common good.
 - iii. The Navigation Acts were a form of economic warfare.
 - 1. They required that most goods exported to England be carried on British ships.
 - 2. These acts gave England a virtual trade monopoly with its colonies.
 - a. The colonists were required to ship their products on British/American ships and to buy almost all of their European goods from Britain.
 - 3. The shipping industry's strong seamen could be drafted when necessary into the Royal Navy.
 - 4. Great Britain targeted the Dutch first with the Navigation Acts and three Anglo-Dutch wars. Eventually, Great Britain seized New Amsterdam, renaming it New York.
 - iv. The French quest for power in Europe and North America led to international wars.
 - 1. The loss of the **War of the Spanish Succession** forced France to cede parts of Canada to Britain.

- a. Review: Louis XIV wanted to become king of Spain as well, which threatened the balance of power as well as the safety of the British colonies in North America.
 - b. The Peace of Utrecht forced Louis XIV to cede his colonies to Britain and forced Spain to give up its **asiento** slave trade.
 - 2. Maria Theresa of Austria sought to crush Prussia--this led to the **Seven Years' War**, but she was unsuccessful.
 - a. New France under **Montcalm** was finally defeated by British forces at Quebec in 1759.
 - i. Although Montcalm's forces initially had the lead, France devoted too many resources to the European portion of the Seven Years' War, unlike Great Britain.
 - b. The Seven Years' War (1756-1763) was the decisive struggle in the French-British competition for colonial empire; France ended up losing its North American and Indian possessions in the **Treaty of Paris 1763**.
- c. Land and labor in British America
 - i. Colonies helped relieve European poverty and surplus population as settlers eagerly took up farming on the virtually free land.
 - 1. The nobility and gentry held most of the land in the British Isles.
 - 2. The availability of land made labor expensive in the colonies.
 - 3. Cheap land and scarce labor were critical factors in the growth of slavery.
 - ii. The Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch introduced slavery into the Americas in the sixteenth century.
 - 1. The Dutch transported thousands of Africans to Brazil and the Caribbean to work on sugar plantations.
 - 2. Blacks accounted for almost 20 percent of the total population.
 - 3. British adoption of slavery in North America created a new class of rich plantation owners.
 - iii. The English mercantilist system benefited American colonists.
 - 1. New England and the middle colonies exported food to the West Indies to feed the slaves and sugar and tobacco to Britain.
 - 2. Plantation owners had the exclusive privilege of supplying the British Isles with their products.
 - 3. The American shipping industry grew.
 - iv. The population of the North American colonies grew very quickly during the eighteenth century, and the standards of living were fairly high.
 - 1. There was an unusual degree of economic equality; the colonists benefited from hard work and the mercantile system created by the Navigation Acts.
- d. The growth of foreign trade
 - i. Trade with the English colonists compensated for a decline in British trade on the Continent.
 - 1. British exports of woolen cloth in foreign, continental markets declined as continental Europe began to develop their own cottage textile industries to deal with rural poverty and overpopulation.
 - ii. The colonies also encouraged industrial growth in Britain.
 - 1. British exports became more balanced and diversified, ranging from metal items to furniture and musical instruments.
- e. The Atlantic slave trade

- i. The forced migration of millions of Africans was a key element in European economic expansion.
 - ii. Before 1700, slaves were largely captives taken in battles between Africans or were Africans who committed crimes.
 - 1. African slaves were seldom sold in Europe; runaways merged into London's population, supported by the courts and the poor.
 - 2. In Britain, slave status was limited by law in 1772; the slave trade was abolished in 1808.
 - a. Women denounced the immorality of human bondage.
 - iii. After Britain became the undisputed leader in the slave trade, European governments adopted the **shore method of trading**, sending boats ashore or inviting African dealers to bring traders and slaves out to their ships.
 - iv. Africa's population stagnated or declined due to wars over slaves.
- f. Revival in colonial Latin America
- i. Spain's political revitalization was matched by economic improvement in its colonies.
 - 1. **Philip V**, Louis XIV's grandson, brought new leadership; Spain acquired Louisiana in 1763.
 - 2. Silver mining recovered in Mexico and Peru.
 - 3. Trade grew, though industry remained weak.
 - ii. In much of Latin America, Creole landowners dominated the economy and the Indian population by means of debt peonage.
 - 1. **Creole**- people of Spanish blood born in America
 - 2. **Debt peonage**- a form of serfdom that forced Hispanicized Indians to pay off their "debts."
 - iii. The most talented **mestizos**, the offspring of Spanish men and Indian women, aspired to join the Creoles.
 - iv. Compared to North America, racial mixing was more frequent in Spanish America.
- g. Adam Smith and economic liberalism
- i. Despite mercantilism's contribution to imperial growth, a reaction to it set in.
 - 1. Small, independent English merchants believed it was unjust for great trading companies like the East India Company to have exclusive trading rights.
 - ii. The Scottish professor **Adam Smith** founded modern economics through his general idea of freedom of enterprise in foreign trade. (***On the Wealth of Nations 1776***)
 - 1. He claimed that mercantilism stifled economic growth.
 - 2. He believed that free competition would prevent **price gouging**, or the unfair high sales price of goods.
 - 3. He advocated free competition; he believed that pursuit of self interest would lead to harmony and progress, for workers as well as employers.
 - 4. He applauded the modest rise of wages, saying, "No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable."
 - 5. He believed in a liberalist government that does only three things:
 - a. Provides a defense against foreign invasion
 - b. Maintains civil order with courts and police protection
 - c. Sponsors certain indispensable public works and institutions that could never adequately profit private investors