Reformation and Consequences: Crash Course European History #7

Crash Course: European History
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===== (00:00) to (02:00) =====

[episode introduction]

Hi, I'm John Green. This is *Crash Course: European History* and today we're going to watch religious reform spread, while states shape up operations to make them better adapted to governance, and also making war. Mostly making war. As you'll recall from our last episode, the Peace of Augsburg was supposed to settle the religious divisions that resulted from the Protestant Reformation. I mean, it was called the *Peace* of Augsburg afterall, but... well Stan, unfortunately we're going to have to switch the TV to the religious war graphic.

[title sequence]

The 1555 Peace of Augsburg did bring peace to the Holy Roman Empire, at least. Although, I guess all peace is temporary. Really everything is temporary. I'm sorry, what were we talking about? We'll get to existentialism later, but in the meantime there was turmoil almost everywhere else in Europe. For one thing, monarchs were starting to see the need to centralize and professionalize the exercise of state power. This was necessary because they needed more money, especially for weaponry, including increasingly lethal weapons. And also money for building roads and harbors and ships, so that they could move war-making stuff around. And also other goods.

To pay for all of this, they used better tax collection, and also piracy and global expansion. Both Ivan the Terrible in Russia and Suleyman the Magnificent, the Ottoman sultan, were taking new territory. And moreover, with Protestantism fragmenting and moving so swiftly in many different directions there was a sense that unifying a state's people, notably in relgion, would hold kingdoms together and keep citizens prospering... instead of killing one another.

European monarchs also employed legal scholars to help regularize the law and use it unify their administrations. The monarchs who focused on instituting this tight state organization and expanding royal powers are sometimes called "The New Monarchs", even though now of course they are quite old.

===== (02:00) to (04:00) =====

What's that? Stan informs me that in fact they are not old. They are all currently deceased. But as these new monarchs sought to consolidate, new religious subgroups, or sects, were constantly splintering European communities. As Protestantism evolved, some of these sects promoted more radical kinds of equality that fanned out from the idea that all people could have a direct connection to God.

And that proved problematic, not only for religious hierarchies, like the Catholic Church, but also for political ones like aristocracies and monarchies. Some Anabaptists, for instance, used *sola scriptura* to experiment with polygamy, citing the Bible's command to "be fruitful and multiply." And Quakers encouraged women to preach and engage in religious activism. Now that was radical. Let's go to the ThoughtBubble.

[entering the ThoughtBubble]

The appeal of new sects and reformers and preachers pulled at the fabric of political unity and secure power that monarchs desperately craved. John Calvin of France was formost among these reformers. Like Martin Luther, Calvin started by studying law, and like Luther, eventually dropped it for theology. Then, in 1534, large posters denouncing the Catholic Church appeared all over Paris, an event called the "Affair of the Placards." French authorities rounded up suspected Protestants, executing some of them and causing others, including Calvin, to flee. France and the French, even those from the highest ranks of the nobility, became violently divided among religious factions for several generations.

Meanwhile, from exile in Geneva, Calvin set up a theocracy. That is, a state based on and run according to religious doctrine. Calvin's most important addition to Protestantism was the concept of predestination. Calvin maintained that God had determined even before the creation of the world which of its humans would be saved... and which would be damned as sinners.

===== (04:00) to (06:00) =====

[Calvin, continued]

For a variety of reasons, he felt that citizens needed to be strictly regulated to keep them from falling into sin and to maintain their godly nature. So for instance he imposed fines for drunkeness and blasphemy and dancing and gambling. But wait a second, those are all of the major hobbies? Thanks, ThoughtBubble.

[exiting the ThoughtBubble]

So, Calvin's theocracy in Geneva came to be known as the Protestant Rome. It was the epicenter of the Reform Church and Calvin himself was seen as a "father" to the many who left their families to participate in this experiment. Calvinism became even more far flung than Lutheranism, with communities springing up from the British Isles to Hungary and other parts of eastern Europe.

So at the same time, Henry the Eigth of England was using Protestantism in an entirely new way: to get divorced and acquire land. Henry was working to consolidate his kingdom after a long civil war known as the War of the Roses, and he was married to Catherine of Aragon, who was the aunt of Charles the Fifth, making her a very politically desirable spouse... if not the perfect romantic match.

Henry's circle included many famous Christian humanists, like Thomas More, and also the noblewoman Anne Boleyn who backed religious reform and with whom Henry was...enamored. And that was a bit of a problem since Henry was already married. Refused a divorce from the pope, Henry cut ties with Rome, divorced Catherine of Aragon, banished her from his royal court, and then announced himself to be the head of the Church of England. He then gained support for this move by selling off church lands - especially monasteries and convents - to aristocrats and other wealthy allies, to keep them on his side.

The Church of England, or "Anglican" Doctrine was modified slightly from that of the Catholic Church. But the main change was that the power of the state increased dramatically in England by combining secular and reglious authority in one figure: the King.

===== (06:00) to (08:00) =====

[the Anglican Church, continued]

It also meant that instead of shipping a lot of money to Rome, more wealth flowed into the royal treasury and plus it meant that Henry could marry Anne Boleyn, which he did... and then later executed her for purported treason. Thomas More was also executed for refusing to acknowledge Henry as the head of the Church, and although power had been concetrated in the state, the actual citizenry remained very divided over religion.

And this came to a head after Henry's death. Initially Henry's nine

year old son became King Edward the Sixth, but he died, possible of tuberculosis at just age 15. And then after a struggle for power, Henry's daughter Mary became Queen of England. Mary wanted to take England back to the Catholic Church and soon married a Catholic, Charles the Fifth's son, Philip the Second of Spain. And that move might have united England and much of mainland Europe under one royal family and the Catholic Church, except that Mary died in 1558 at the age of 42.

Mary's sister Elizabeth, who had been persecuted and for a time, imprisoned during Mary's reign, became queen and restored England to Protestantism. Although Mary's husband Philip wrote that he only quote "felt a reasonable regret over her death," he ended up missing Catholic England very, very badly - so badly that he launched the famous Spanish Armada to take back England for his family and the Church. But thanks in part to bad weather, Elizabeth's England defeated the Armada, and Elizabeth built up the royal treasury and found a more moderate path when it came to religion than either her sister or her father had found.

Philip meanwhile managed to bankrupt Spain, despite all of the New World gold and silver that was flowing in. One of the great lessons of history is that wars are expensive. Another great lesson of history? Don't forget about inflation. Philip and his court did not have a great understanding of inflation and did not comprehend why the appearance of much more gold in Europe lead to a decline in the price of gold.

===== (08:00) to (10:00) =====

Meanwhile in France, the spread of Calvinism tore the French Crown and nobility as it stirred controversy and conflict in cities. Ideas of Calvinist reformation merged with social and political resistance in France, as city councils and aristocrats began to fight over the role of both Church and State.

Did the globe open up? Is there a gnome in there? It's a statue, and in France at the time, people began smashing statues of saints and breaking the noses off statues of the Virgin Mary. These people were called the *iconoclasts,* that is, literal destroyers of icons. Iconoclasm sounds kinda fun... I'm gonna try destroying this icon.

[John drops gnome figurine; shattering noises heard. He stares intently into the camera]

I feel powerful.

We shall rise up and say no to garden gnomes! Especially in films. Like *Gnomeo and Juliet*. And the other one.

We shouldn't be making jokes because eventually all of this lead to civil war in France. *Gallicanism*, a French interpretation of Catholicism, arose in the cities and towns of southwestern France and it held that French political - not the Pope in Rome - ruled the Church in France, but it was still Catholic. French Calvinists, on the other hand, became known as Huguenots. Relgious war broke out and rival leaders in France, even in the face of political disaster, refused to come to any agreement. The Catholic-Protestant division increased until a group of nobles was assassinated in 1572. And then thousands of Huguenots in Paris and elsewhere were killed in what is known as the "Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre" later that year.

King Henry of Navarre, a Huguenot, narrowly escaped death in the massacre. He later joined Protestant forces fighting Catholic armies, but then allied himself with the Catholic monarchy to defeat the radical Catholic nobility in the last of the wars of religion. Four years after inheriting the throne, he converted to Catholicism in 1593 with the the thought, quote, "Paris is worth a mass" and he was finally crowned king.

===== (10:00) to (12:00) =====

But although Henry was now Catholic, he issues the Edict of Nantes in 1598, which allowed Protestantism in the French kingdom. Like Elizabeth, Henry was a politically savvy monarch who found middle paths through difficult conflicts. Those who put aside their personal beliefs to accomplish political tranquility, especially in France, came to be known as *politiques.*

These days of course it seems impossible that politcs could increase tranquility, but imagine how political slickness must have seemed to a 16th century French or English person. I mean, war beget war beget war until monarchs found a different way. And from that perspective, politics is - dare I say it - magnificent! Across Europe, the conflict over religion drew in an extensive cast of characters, among them both highborn, aristocratic women and common women rioting in the streets of major cities. Luther himself had argued for the equality of souls, but an inequality in public life, writing:

"The dominion of women from the beginning of the world has never produced any good; as one is accustomed to saying: 'Women's rule seldom comes to a good end.' When God installed Adam as lord over all creatures, everything was still in good order and proper, and everything was governed in the best way. But when the wife came along and wanted to put her hand too in the simmering broth and be clever, everything fell apart and became wildly disordered."

Still, the Protestant Reformation had a lot of appeal for many women. The idea of a direct relationship with God via scripture encouraged common people, including women and girls, to learn to read. Protestant women set up schools for Protestant girls, and of course in England, a woman ruled both the nation and the Church.

Now even with the reign of Queen Elizabeth and the Edict of Nantes, the century long lethal struggles over religion were not entirely over. But several momentous changes had occurred.

===== (12:00) to (13:38) =====

[conlusion]

New ideas about human spirituality had been born and taken hold across Europe. People so fervently believed in these reformed religions that they left home and family to create new communities. New style monarchs had aimed for earthly power and begun to consolidate governments, in part to pay for religious warfare. And Spain, under Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second, had gone from riches to rags in order to enforce Catholicism.

[next time]

Next time, we'll turn our attention to the less political revolutions taking place in 16th century Europe. Revolutions in commerce, in agriculture, and in urban development, as well as a transcontinental system of slavery that created vast wealth for some and absolute devastation for many others. Thanks for watching. I'll see you next time.

[end credits]

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Thanks again for watching. And as they say in my home town, don't forget to be awesome.