The Thirty Years War

And the Emergence of Pre-Modern Europe
1618 -1648

Part 3

Battle of Jankau
March, 1645
• Please stay muted to avoid background noise
• Use your chat box to ask questions.
Axel Oxenstierna

- With the death of Gustavus in 1632, his 6 year old daughter Christina becomes Queen. (She abdicates in 1654 and goes to live in Rome)
- Oxenstierna (Lord High Chancellor) becomes regent and *de facto* military & political ruler of Sweden and absolute ruler of “Swedish Germany”.
  - Effectively moves the Swedish capital to Mainz in the Rhineland.
  - Returns to Sweden in 1636 and rules as regent until 1644.
  - Produced the first ever written constitution and provided “the best government in Europe” during this period.
- His core beliefs were critical to the rest of the TYW
  - Sweden should stay involved until fully compensated for her sacrifice.
  - France is an essential partner.
  - Sweden’s war aim: To be the strongest power in the Baltic region.
- In 1644, the eighteen-year old Christina assumes power and immediately orders her government to find a road to peace.
The End of Wallenstein

• By 1633, Wallenstein appears to have decided that the war was unwinnable and that a just peace for both sides should be somehow negotiated.
  • To this end he starts feeling out Saxony, Brandenburg, Sweden, and France on his own.
  • He also demands that the Edict of Restitution be revoked.
• This is too much for Ferdinand and in January 1634, Wallenstein is secretly charged with high treason and a “dead or alive” arrest warrant issued.
• In February he is murdered by a small group of his officers who were then richly rewarded by the emperor.
• Ferdinand then seizes Wallenstein's vast fortune (≈ $2B)
• Ferdinand’s son takes over command of the Imperial army.
Capt. Walter Devereux kills Wallenstein (Feb. 1634)
The Swedish Intervention (1630-1635) (3)

- The loss of Adolphus has greatly weakened the Swedish army.
  - However, Oxenstierna decide to invade Bavaria, and drive it from the war.
  - A combined Spanish-Imperial army under Spanish command is sent to cut them off. This leads to the First battle of Nördlingen in Sept 1634. **A critical battle!**

- Horn vs. Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand
- Under good leadership, the Tercio still can dominate the battlefield.
- Sweden (26,000 (mercenaries) + 60 guns) vs. Spanish/Imperial (34,000 + 32 guns)
- A decisive Imperial victory (12,000 loses vs. 2400)
- Results:
  - Sweden withdrew into the North for several years to regroup (this will take four years)
  - Sweden loses its German allies
  - The Imperial army (with much Spanish help) is once again the dominant military force in Germany.
The Treaty of Prague

- As a result of Nördlingen, the Northern German princes felt constrained to make peace with the Emperor: (The Treaty of Prague - May 1635)
  - Edict of Restitution is revoked
  - No princes will make separate alliances with foreign powers
  - There will be only one Imperial army (no more independent armies in the HRE)
  - Amnesty for all who fought on the Protestant side (except for Frederick’s descendants) (Frederick died in 1632)
The Swedish Intervention (1630-1635) (4)

• Nördlingen & the Treaty of Prague should have ended the war.
  • Sweden has essentially been knocked out.
  • The northern (Protestant) princes have basically surrendered.
  • Ferdinand again has control of the HRE

• Why did it not end?
  • This time France is the culprit.
  • Richelieu will not accept the perceived increase in Hapsburg power (still worrying about a “Hapsburg vice”.)
  • So... Catholic France enters the war against the Catholic Holy Roman Empire.
    • Declares war on Spain in May 1635 and opens up a new front in the low countries.
  • This will give Sweden time to recover
  • Oxenstierna will create two armies under two good generals (Baner & Leslie) and allied with France will add 13 more years to the war.

• This will be the bloodiest and most destructive phase of the War!
The French Intervention (1635-1648)  
(And Continued Swedish Participation)

• This is sometimes called the Franco-Spanish War but that fails to capture what’s really going on.
  • The stated excuse: “Hapsburg policy is bad for the church, therefore it is acceptable to join the Protestants to defeat the Hapsburgs.”
  • Richelieu’s real concern however is to avoid a surrounded France.

• Richelieu more than anyone completes the apparent transition from a religious war into one of dynasticism and nationalism.
  • France & Sweden vs. the Hapsburg Empires (Spain & the HRE)

• Richelieu’s strategic plan was a three-fold assault:
  • One French army to attack the Southern Netherlands
  • One French army to attack Alsace & Lorraine and cut the Spanish Road.
  • Financial and political help for insurrections in Catalonia & Portugal

• Meanwhile Sweden when ready is to drive into the HRE from the north.

• The northern attack starts well: a major French victory at Les Avins (May 1635) (A French army of 35K destroyed a Spanish force of 14K)
The French Intervention (1635-1648)  
(And Continued Swedish Participation)(2)

• France and Sweden align their strategies by the Treaty of Wismar (1636)
  • Sweden creates two armies and agrees to operate in central Germany
  • France contributes another $160M to support this.

• Sweden marches south in the spring of 1636.
  • Sweden also seeks to reestablishes its alliances with the northern German princes
The French Intervention (1635-1648)  
(And Continued Swedish Participation)(3)

• French lack of resources and failure to coordinate with the Dutch gave the Spanish a break
  • Within a year a series of well-executed offenses drove the French back to Paris
  • However now the Spanish ran out of resources and had to stop
    • Spain is now fighting a major war plus two major revolutions (Catalonia & Portugal) (As usual, Richelieu’s strategic planning is superb)
    • The second French army successfully cuts the Spanish Road in Lorraine.

• Wittstock (October 1636)
  • The Swedish armies regroup, combine, and attack the Imperial army just north of Berlin
  • Although the armies are equal in size, (18,000) it is a complete Swedish victory.
  • Reverses much of the damage done by Nördlingen.
  • Many northern German princes return to Sweden as allies.
Wittstock;

- Swedish losses – 3000
- Imperial losses - 7000
The See-Saw

- 1637 – Ferdinand II dies and his son becomes Ferdinand III
  - 25 years old.
  - A much more pragmatic figure especially with respect to religion.
  - Has commanded the Imperial Army for three years.
  - Wittstock has convinced him of the need for a negotiated peace.
  - It will only take him 10 years.

- Meanwhile two outside efforts for peace are made:
  - Pope Urban VIII tried to mediate peace based on all Catholics resolving their issues and uniting to defeat the Protestants (Make it a truly religious war).
  - Charles I of England sent a delegation to the Emperor seeking peace based on returning the Palatine to it’s original state which was a non-starter.
The See-Saw (2)

• Both side start jockeying for battlefield advantage to turn into a negotiating strength. This will go on back and forth.

• Meanwhile, Germany is being devastated by as many as 8 different armies marching back and forth across an already desolate countryside.

• In June 1641, France & Sweden further complicate things by agreeing that there will be no separate peace treaty; they will both keep fighting until both are satisfied. (Treaty of Hamburg).
  • Side note: There were a total of twelve of these sort of “side bar treaties” during the TYW greatly complicating the job of the final negotiators.
Spanish Netherlands (1637-1643)

• 1637 to 1640 see France & Spain engaged in widespread fighting on the French northeast border with little effect.

• In August 1640, the French capture the fortress of Arras which is a serious blow to Spanish strategy in the area. The French start making steady progress.

• In 1642 Richelieu dies but his plan is well established and will continue right to the end of the war.
  • Mazarin takes over control of France’s government

• In May 1643, the French win an overwhelming victory at Rocroi which ends Spanish participation for all practical purposes in the TYW.
  • It also ends the supposed dominance of the Tercio and the Spanish army.
  • Rocroi also give Mazarin the “whip hand” in the initial negotiations.

• Imperial Army is able to seriously defeat the French at Tuttlingen in November 1643 along the Rhine which gives Ferdinand some negotiating capital.
  • The emergence of Franz von Mercy as an able Imperial general
The “Great Condé (Louis II, the Duke of Enghien) makes his appearance as one of the great generals of the 17th century.

Losses:
French – 4000
Spanish - 7000
The Spanish await another assault at Rocroi
Sweden & the Empire (1642-1645)

• Following the Treaty of Hamburg, Sweden start expanding to the south.
  • Oct, 1642 Sweden wins another major victory over the Empire in the 2d Battle of Breitenfeld.
  • This causes Ferdinand III to start seriously pushing the various factions and states towards negotiations.

• It also causes Denmark to consider coming back in but on the Empires side!
  • A complete repudiation of the 1629 Treaty of Lübeck.
  • Sweden gets wind of this and turns on Denmark before she is ready and initiates the Torstenson War (1643-1645)
  • Denmark is completely defeated and drops out again.
    • This puts a final end to Danish hopes to be the dominant Baltic power.
2d Battle of Breitenfeld:  
(October 1642)

Swedish Army – 15,000
Imperial Army – 25,000

Losses:
Swedish – 4000
Imperial – 15,000

Swedish General Torstensson
Sweden & the Empire (1642-1645)(2)

• During this period of Swedish and French dominance, Ferdinand is desperately trying to put together a peace conference.

• In August 1644, the French (Condé & Turenne) try and fail to capture the city of Freiburg (Mercy).

• Sweden turns back south to Bohemia and inflicts another major defeat on the Empire at Jankau in March 1645.
  • Each army had 16,000 men. The Swedes lost 1500 and the Empire 10,000.
  • However, 3 years of continuous fighting and marching has worn down the Swedish army and this alone saves Prague.

• The least confusing way to look at the rest of the war is to look at the war itself right up to the end and then separately look at how the negotiations for peace played out.
The Last Few Years of War (1645-1648)

• Note that negotiations begin seriously in December 1644.

• The Battle of Herbsthausen: In May 1645, in an upset, the French army operating in Alsace was trapped and destroyed by an Imperial army (mostly Bavarian).

• However, before the Empire can take advantage of this, the French quickly regroup and at the 2d Battle of Nördlingen in August 1645, the French win a narrow victory over the same Imperial army.
  • The Swedes & French now march into and devastate Bavaria.

• In coordination with this, another Swedish army marched all the way into Austria and lays siege to Vienna.
  • The Swedes are just too worn out for this and give up when winter comes.
The Last Few Years of War (1645-1648)(2)

• The Treaty of Ulm: In March 1647, Bavaria decides there is no future with the Empire and concludes a separate peace with Sweden & France.
  • The Empire has now lost one of its most important entities (Maximillian)
• Imperial allies then start falling away rapidly:
  • Treaty of Eulenberg (Saxony (John George) declares neutrality)
  • Trier declares neutrality
  • Mainz declares neutrality
• Ferdinand is now the only Elector left in the war. All others have quit.
  • The Empire is essentially alone against Sweden & France
The Last Few Years of War (1645-1648)(3)

• 2d Nördlingen plus the Treaty of Ulm make it clear the Imperial army is doomed.
  • And then it gets a major reprieve: Spain agrees to a formal recognition of the Dutch and becomes totally available to fight the French (January 1648)
  • The Peace of Münster of January 1648 (ratified as part of the Peace of Westphalia in October 1648.)
  • This forces France out of Germany to defend its Spanish borders.
  • Sweden in addition to being worn out has lost its most important ally.

• France & Spain are now locked into the Franco-Spanish War and want the TYW to go away (nothing more to be gained). (The Franco-Spanish War will last until 1659)
The Last Few Years of War (1645-1648)

- France, Spain, Sweden, the Dutch, the Emperor and the princes of the HRE are all now ready for peace even without “victory”.
  - Everyone is worn out in Germany
  - Germany is so devastated that it really can no longer support the multiple armies.
  - France & Spain are settled in on their own war. (The Franco-Spanish War)
  - This causes the negotiations to finally start getting serious.
- Battle of Zusmarshausen: In May 1648, a combined French/Swedish army defeated a heavily outnumbered Imperial army. ( Marshal Turenne)
  - The “final nail in the Imperial army’s coffin”
- In July the Swedes then initiated a siege of Prague and take the castle and west of the Vltava. This siege would still be in progress when the war ended.
- In August 1648, the French under Condé soundly defeated the Spanish army at Lens forcing Ferdinand to make peace. The final battle of the TYW.
- **Prague is the last combat of the TYW!!!**
The Final Strategic Picture

• What is going on during these last four years of war?
• Mazarin’s strategic vision
  • Condé holds the line & Turenne & the Swedes end the war
• Turenne
  • Herbsthausen (May 45): Defeated (by Mercy)
  • Nördlingen (August 45): Victory (Mercy killed)
  • Trier (Nov 45)
  • Bavaria quits (March 47)
  • Zusmarshausen (May 48) final victory over the empire’s army
  • Prague (July 48) last siege of the war
• Condé at Lens, defeats the last Spanish army supporting the empire (August 1648)
• Ferdinand now has no choice but to make peace at any cost.
Marshal Turenne

The Siege of Prague
The Peace of Westphalia (1644-1648)(1)

- By January 1644, general agreement was reached on four key areas that required resolution:
  - The complaints of the Imperial Estates
  - Amnesty for the rebels
  - Satisfaction for the foreign participants
  - Compensation for the dispossessed
The Peace of Westphalia (1644-1648)(2)

• After 2d Breitenfeld (and the subsequent fall of Leipzig), Ferdinand is letting it be known that he will sacrifice much to achieve peace.
  • It still takes two years to get everyone together.
  • Key Point: The idea of international negotiation is a new idea and nobody knows how to do it or even what their objectives are.
  • Key initial emphasis is on preserving “honor”.
  • After numerous false starts, the first formal meeting is on December 1644.

• They decide to have two separate sets of negotiations, one at Münster, and one at Osnabrück.
  • Both cities were formally demilitarized and declared religiously neutral
  • A special mail service was set up between the two (and with the capitals of the parties involved.
The Peace of Westphalia (1644-1648) (3)

- The two-city arrangement is designed to prevent France & Spain from having to be in the same room.
  - Münster to resolve disputes between the HRE and France (and their various allies except Spain)
  - Osnabrück to resolve the disputes between the HRE and Sweden (and their respective allies except France)
- During the four years of negotiations, 109 different delegations came & went: They represented
  - 16 European States
  - 140 Imperial States
  - 38 other groups
  - The Papal nuncio and the Venetian envoy acted as mediators.
    - Innocent X becomes Pope in 1644
The Peace of Westphalia (1644-1648)(4)

- These men had no script and were making it up as they went.
  - Nothing like this had ever been tried before.
  - Everyone was trying for advantage and playing a “zero sum game”.
  - Negotiation positions change routinely based on battlefield news.

- Finally, by January 1648, several things came together to convince all parties that they needed to have peace even without “victory”
  - The battles were getting bloodier
  - Germany (the HRE) was becoming (or already was?) a basket case
  - Spain & France both decided to focus on their war and get out of the “German sideshow”
  - Sweden was worn out and had achieved its original goal.
  - The Dutch had achieved their goal (The Peace of Münster)
The Purpose of the Peace

“In short, the Empire was supposed to be strong enough to prevent Germans from falling out among themselves, but not so powerful as to become a threat to the European order itself.”

Historian Brendan Simms

(This is a tall order, but Hugo Grotius will provide the map.)
Peace Treaties

• The Peace of Westphalia actually consisted of three individual treaties
  • The Peace of Münster signed in May 1648 (Spain and the Dutch Republic)
  • The Treaty of Münster signed October 24, 1648 (France and the HRE) and
  • The Treaty of Osnabrück (Sweden and the HRE) also signed on October 24.

• A total of 25 nations (states) signed these treaties.
Hugo Grotius

• Dutch political philosopher (1583 – 1645)
• Prodigy (University at 11, first major work at 16.
• Ideas from his works
  • Freedom of the seas
  • Just War
  • Separate powers for church and state
  • Natural law as an element of God’s creation
  • Ius naturale and ius gentium
    • An international common law applicable to all.
• A key influence on the Glorious Revolution, the American Revolution, John Locke, and the Peace of Westphalia.
The Provisions of the Peace

• Ferdinand II’s efforts to re-catholicize the HRE were rescinded. All Imperial states were allowed again to choose their state’s faith.

• Catholics & Protestants (Lutherans & Calvinists) were given equal status under the law. (Toleration) (All other religions were banned)

• The Dutch agreed to provide a safe country for European Jews.

• The 1555 Peace of Augsburg was recognized as still valid and *Cuius Regio, Eius Religio* was reestablished (with Calvinism added).

• 1624 was selected as the normative year.

• However, if you did not share faith with your prince, you were now allowed to practice your own faith privately and did not have to emigrate.
The Provisions of the Peace (2)

- A general recognition of national sovereignty was mandated.
- Switzerland and Holland were formally recognized.
- The Palatine was split, and an electoral vote was added (8 total now).
- German princes were to conduct their own foreign policies.
- There were many territorial adjustments (100’s).
  - Austro-Hungary was created
  - Brandenburg-Prussia was greatly strengthened an expanded (Hohenzollerns)
- Zelo Domus Dei: Papal Bull which Innocent X declared all parts of the Peace detrimental to the Catholic religion as “Null & Void”
  - Ordered signatories to ignore their oaths
  - He was ignored instead
- “The terms of this Europe re-making treaty ...... produced much history”
Physical Consequences

• Bloodiest War in Central European History
  • 7 – 10 million deaths ≈ 20 – 30% of the population (≈ 2 million military deaths)
    • Pestilence was the biggest killer (Typhoid, Bubonic Plague, and Dysentery)
  • WWI – 5.5% of the population
  • WWII – 6% of the population

• Populations did not reach 1618 levels again for 100 years.

• Property damage (hard to come up with numbers but....
  • The Swedish army alone destroyed 2000 castles, 18,000 villages, and 1500 towns (≈ ⅓ of all towns in Germany).

• Remarkably, the economy recover quite quickly
  • A lot of available land was to be had
  • The sharp reduction in available workers caused wages to rise significantly.

• Simplicius Simplicissimus (Hans Grimmeishausen – 1668)
Political Consequences

• France is now clearly the strong man of Europe
• Spain has been significantly weakened and will never recover
  • This will not become obvious until the end of the Franco-Spanish War
• Portugal becomes independent
• Holland gains its independence and fixed borders.
  • Unlike almost everyone else in the TYW, it would continue a period of dramatic economic prosperity. (Tolerance and immigration)
• Sweden is now clearly the power in the Baltic region and Northern Europe
• The HRE is much reduced in size (to provide land as compensation to France and Sweden)
• However, Europe has gone from 50% Protestant in 1590 to 20% in 1690.
  • A direct result of the Hapsburgs “counter-reformation” efforts and the numbers of Protestant deaths during the TYW.
  • Protestantism was “saved” however.
The Holy Roman Empire after the Peace of Westphalia
Political Consequences (2)

• The Emperor can only beg and cajole the other members of the HRE. He has no direct authority over them.

• He does however have the only standing army in the HRE which does give him a measure of control. It also makes Austria the top dog in the empire. (These two meets Simms criteria)

• Austria will evolve through the 18th & 19th centuries into the Austro-Hungarian Empire

• The Holy Roman Empire itself will erode until officially disbanded in 1806.

• The other German states will be independent but Brandenburg – Prussia will gain strength steadily until in 1870 it will combine all the rest into a mega-state called Germany.
  • (Opinion) This will lead to a second thirty years war (1914 – 1945) to decide if Germany will or will not control all of mainland Europe.
Important but More Subtle Consequences

• It ended the great wars of religion.
• The political power of the Roman Catholic Church was essentially broken.
• The terrible slaughter of civilians and destruction of property caused a European-wide reaction against war by mercenaries and led to disciplined national armies by the 18th century.
• The Peace established a “blueprint” for resolving international disputes which has echoed down to today. Modern negotiations still reflect lessons learned from Westphalia.
“The Westphalian Sovereignty”

- Defined national sovereignty for the next 300 years
- Still plays a key role in international law
  - Only recently has there been some movement towards international justice to deal with crimes against humanity.
- Now seen as the most important and radical element of the Peace of Westphalia.
- The Thirty Years War trashed everything that Grotius wrote about and these horrors came to be seen as validation of the importance of his ideas.

"The idea of international society which Grotius propounded was given concrete expression in the Peace of Westphalia, and Grotius may be considered the intellectual father of this first general peace settlement of modern times."

(Hedley Bull: Oxford, 1992)
I learned much from my teachers, more from my colleagues, but most from my students.

The Talmud
Questions and Discussion