

Absolutism in france



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Absolutism in France Absolutism was the belief that the monarch of a country possessed unlimited power that was granted him based on a theory known as the divine right of kings. The epitome of absolutism in both theory and execution took place in France under the aegis of King Louis XIV. It had become the practice to anoint kings with holy oil when they were crowned and so the natural assumption from this symbolic act was that a king was actually a representative of God placed on earth to fulfill the duties of a protectorate of the people within the earthly domain. The extreme perspective on this belief would be something akin to blasphemy since it elevated the mortal king to an almost demigod status.

In the court of Louis XIV this extreme was realized in the court at Versailles. The theoretical construct of absolute power would be the total investment of all authority within the throne, but the political realities at Versailles were such that Louis realized that order could only fully be established by working closely with his nobles. Absolute power in Louis' case meant that authority of the distant local nobilities must be kept under a tight rein in order to maintain order throughout the state. At the same time one of the ultimate goals involved in establishing absolutism in France was the restriction of privileged interests that had in the recent past become a hindrance to the execution of royal power.

The estates of both the nobility and the clergy, as well as the political authority of some regions that held a slender threat of autonomy, presented continuing obstacles to Louis' dream of absolute authority. A strong centralized monarchy was necessary to realizing his goals of wielding power without the intrusion of these special interests. The finest method toward achieving this goal was not coercive techniques in the form of stamping out

those obstacles, but the secret weapon of those who lust for absolute power even today: propaganda.

The brilliance of Louis' claim for unchecked power lay within his realization that he could convince the citizens that holding power in a strong centralized monarchy was the most effective way of ensuring domestic tranquility. Real or imagined threats to the security of citizens remains the most efficient way of getting citizens to sacrifice liberties and freedom even in contemporary times. The genius of Louis XIV was that he was able to convince the nobles and even the clergy that diluting their own power and investing that authority into his hands was the pathway to creating a staunch force to stand in opposition to threats from both within and without. The ultimate result of French absolutism was that Louis was successful in winning control several items he clearly lusted over. The move toward absolute authority brought the France's military under completely control of the crown. Perhaps even more importantly, the king and his court gained the ability to legislate and execute laws. And, perhaps even more important than that, the movement toward an absolute monarchy placed the ability to collect and spend revenue directly into the hands of the king. The creation of a complex bureaucracy that was dependent upon a strong centralized government further ensured the power of oversight of itself upon which an absolutist form of government needs so desperately in order to make sure that even prying eyes do exist they can be mercilessly confused by the architects of the process of discovering corruption and illegal activities.