

Essay on western civilization from 16th century until the 18th century

[Parts of the World](#), [European Union](#)



Institutional establishment

The period of 16th – 18th centuries was a period, new basic principles between countries were transforming. It was a time of the first pan-European war that took place in 1618 and lasted for 30 years. In 1756, the first global war began. It involved not only Europe, but also overseas territories. In these three centuries, Europe lost the faith in the monarchy and lived three bourgeois revolutions, powerful spiritual meltdowns. All those events have shaped the consciousness of a contemporary European. This is not a complete list of what happened in the Western civilization for those three centuries.

The 16th century was called the time of monarchs and palaces. Having ascended the throne, Louis Fourteenth said his famous words that he is a new prototype of an absolute power. Of course, this did not mean that all the vital resources of a country belonged to the monarch. However, he has a huge power, was the guarantor and arbiter in all disputes. Louis Fourteenth was the last monarch, who disposed an absolute monarchy in France. The next century brought the transformations in the political and social life. It was a change in the form of property. If the Feudalism gave property as a reward for the service and a monarch had an absolute right of property in medieval Western Europe, then under capitalism citizens could have an exclusive private property. Naturally it prepared a ground for the civil rights and freedoms. The change occurred not only in relations, but also in the minds and hearts of the people. The person became the center of the universe. The first sign of this changes occurred during the Italian Renaissance, based primarily on economic growth and flourishing trade and

banking capital of Italian cities.

In this period a Catholic Church was first for a long time criticized by Martin Luther. Luther's theses became the match that lit the fire of the Reformation (Kishlansky, 2011, p. 324-325). European society was already prepared to lose the shackles of medieval dogmas and restrictions, one of which was the authority of the Catholic Church. The storms of the supporters of Reformation and Counterreformation tore up the map of Europe equally. The rising bourgeoisie needed an efficient and cheap church. John Calvin continued the work of Luther. He supported the idea of predestination. According to his theory, God determined in advance who would become a winner in life. It psychologically explained that all had to become involved in the struggle for success, the result was predetermined, but unknown to the person (Kishlansky, 2011, p. 332-333). The revolution occurred not only in the heads, but in the pockets of Europeans, as the 16th century was the time of great geographic discoveries. Gold and silver leaked from America to Europe, which had the paradoxical consequences for Europe's economy and politics. The price of gold dropped repeatedly and led to the inflation. It was a time of Dark Ages for the West with numerous civil wars in Netherlands, France, Germany and other countries.

For Western Europe, the 16th century was the time of Spanish hegemony and the heyday of French culture. The whole first half of the century passed in the constant wars between French and Spaniards for the possession of Italian territories. For America, it was a period of colonization and new discoveries. The period of 16th and 18th centuries was the most effective in the history of Western civilization. It focused on a dynamic lifestyle, values of

technological development, improvement in a society and culture. Priority initiatives, the idea of the significance of individual creative development lie in the basis of Western society. West, as a carrier of creativity, was in a constant search, rebellion and change and, in the same time, demonstrated commitment to continuous discoveries.

References

Kishlansky, M. (2011). Sources in World History: Readings for World Civilizations (Vol. 2). Wadsworth.