Absolutism And Louis Xiv Essay, Research Paper

Absolutism and Louis XIV

Louis XIV of France had had both a long and powerful reign on the throne. He was able to achieve this due to the development of absolutism in France. Absolutism is defined as the political idea that absolute power should be vested in a single ruler. The whole idea of absolutism originally came from philosopher Jean Bodin in the 16th Century. Louis? absolutism developed with four major parts: The breeding of a strong and controlled military, The building of Versailles to control the nobility, The selling of nobility, and The appointed of an advisor.

The first step to the creation of Louis? absolutism was the building of the military. Louis made war an activity of the state. He made sure all armed persons in France fought only for him. Much of this idea that law and force within a country should be monopolized by the lawful king came from Bishop Bossuet. This idea led to domestic peace. Louis also put the artillery organically into the army, systematized the military rankings and grades, and clarified the chain of command, putting himself at the top. The government also supervised recruiting and took most of the responsibility for equipping, provisioning, clothing, and housing the troops. Louis also established civilian administration in military. Under Louis, the army went from about 100,000 soldiers to about 400,000. The military made many gains under Louis, thus helping him gain absolutism.

Louis built Versailles as both a relaxing and entertaining place for himself, and to disable the nobles and gain an edge in absolutism. Louis demanded that nearly half of France?s 10,000 nobles be present at court everyday for ?role.? These 5,00 nobles were those who were thought to pose the most risk to Louis XIV?s absolutism. Louis reputedly said to these nobles ?If I cannot see you [at court], you do not exist.? As a result, the nobles spent much time at Versailles and were unable to get into any ?political mischief? as a result. Louis? virtual detention of the aristocracy helped him gain power.

Louis also helped himself gain power by selling titles of nobility. Since Louis had to fill many positions within the government with nobles, he would often use men whose upper-class status was recent. Such men, unlike hereditary nobles, could aspire to no independent political influence of their own. The sale of titles also helped Louis gain much needed money for his dwindling treasury.

The man most often responsible for raising such money was Jean Baptiste Colbert, Louis? Financial Minister. IN the beginning of his reign, Louis was unable to tax the nobles while keeping control of them. As a result, he had to find other ways of gaining money. He raised taxes to the lower classes, sold patents of nobility to bourgeois, and even sold government and military positions. None of these things worked however. The inability to tax the nobles alone hurt his bid for absolutism. Colbert worked hard to help Louis gain money for 20 years. The fact that Louis was even able to appoint an economic advisor without any consent showed Louis? power and absolutism. Though Colbert never did solve France?s economic problems, his mere appointment asserted the absolutism of Louis XIV.

Louis XIV gained his absolutism through strong controlled military, a leashed aristocracy, his ability to appoint nobles, and his ability to appoint an economic advisor. Louis silenced the aristocracy, parlement, and Estates General during his reign, thus establishing absolutism.