

A Brief Chronology of The Thirty Years' War

The Thirty Years' War (1618-48) ravaged central Europe, and especially what is today Germany, with religious and political wars.

1618: The Roman Catholic archbishop of Prague, in Bohemia, ordered the destruction of a Protestant church. The Protestants appealed to Holy Roman Emperor Matthias for protection, but when he ignored their protests, they revolted. In the so-called Defenestration of Prague, rebels threw two of the Emperor's officials out a window. The Catholic King of Bohemia, Ferdinand, was ousted and replaced by the Protestant Frederick.

1619: Ferdinand was chosen Holy Roman Emperor.

1620: Emperor Ferdinand's forces defeated the Bohemian Protestants.

1625-29: Other Protestant countries joined the fray. Danish King Christian IV and others fought Ferdinand's forces in Saxony. Gen. Albrecht von Wallenstein came to Ferdinand's aid, along with forces of the Holy League (a military alliance of German Catholic states), defeating the

Danish King. The Emperor dismissed Wallenstein.

1630-31: Sweden's King Gustav Adolf (Gustavus Adolphus), a Protestant, sent troops against Ferdinand. Wallenstein makes unsuccessful overtures to Gustav Adolf for a military alliance. Ferdinand called back Wallenstein, agreeing to his conditions, and also made an alliance with King Philip IV of Spain.

1632: Wallenstein's army fought the Swedes at the Battle of Lützen. The Swedes won, but King Gustav Adolf was killed.

1634: The Swedish army was destroyed in the Battle of Nordlingen. Wallenstein activated his plan for a revolt against the Emperor. The Emperor ordered him arrested. Wallenstein tried to escape, but was assassinated.

1635: France intervened on the side of the Protestants, and the struggle continued, now between the French Bourbons and Austrian Habsburgs.

1644: Peace negotiations, under the leadership of France's Cardinal Mazarin, began in two cities of Westphalia (now western Germany), with the Catholics and Protestants meeting separately.

1648: The Peace of Westphalia was signed, enshrining the principles of national sovereignty and "the advantage of the other."