

ial interests beyond the ability of the state to sustain them. When silver from the Americas slowed to a trickle, Spain's own limited natural resources and inability to collect taxes efficiently, combined with demographic stagnation that began early in the seventeenth century, as well as, arguably, resistance from Aragon and Catalonia, prevented a revival of Spanish preeminence. The long revolt of the Netherlands ended with recognition of Dutch independence in 1648. That the Dutch Republic and England, two trading nations, had emerged as European powers reflected the shift of economic primacy to northwestern Europe.

ENGLAND AND THE DUTCH REPUBLIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



England and the Dutch Republic were anomalies in the seventeenth century. At a time when aggressive European monarchs were forging absolute states (see Chapter 7), these two seafaring, trading nations maintained representative governments.

The Stuart monarchs' flirtation with absolutism in England brought bitter discord, resistance, and civil war. In the Dutch Republic, which had earned its independence in 1648 after a long war against Spanish absolute rule, the prosperous merchants who dominated the economic and political life of the country brushed aside the absolutist challenge of the House of Orange, which wanted to establish a hereditary monarchy.

In both England and the Netherlands, religious divisions accentuated the struggle between absolutism and constitutionalism. Both the protracted revolt of the largely Protestant Dutch against Catholic Spain and the English Civil War echoed the religious struggles between Catholics and Protestants during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) in Central Europe (see Chapter 4). The Dutch had risen up in open rebellion in 1566 in part because the Spanish Habsburgs attempted to impose the Catholic Inquisition on what had become a Protestant country. In England, Kings James I and Charles I attempted to return the English Church to the elaborate rituals that many people associated with Catholicism, thereby pitting the monarchy against Parliament. This constitutional crisis led to the defeat and execution of Charles I in 1649, the fall of the monarchy, and in 1688, to the "Glorious Revolution," which brought King William III and Queen Mary to the throne. Parliament, which historically represented landed interests, suc-

ceeded in balancing and constraining royal authority. By virtue of Parliament's victory in the English Civil War, England remained a constitutional monarchy. England's new monarchs agreed to a Bill of Rights, which affirmed the civil liberties of English people and the rights of Parliament.

The emergence of England and the Dutch Republic, both predominantly Protestant states, as great powers reflected the vitality of the middle classes in both nations, the relative unity of the two states, and the location of both rising powers on the Atlantic. England's international commerce developed rapidly. And as Amsterdam emerged as a banking center and first port of call for international trade, the Dutch Republic enjoyed the golden age of its culture.

CONFLICTS IN STUART ENGLAND

Conflicts between the Stuart kings and Parliament, in which religious conflict played an important part, led to the English Civil War, which helped define the constitutional and political institutions of modern Britain. The monarchy tried to enhance its authority at the expense of Parliament by attempting to impose extralegal taxes without the consent of Parliament. But the English gentry, whose status and influence came from ownership of land, emerged from the period with their parliamentary prerogatives intact.

Conflicts between James I and Parliament

King James I (1566–1625) succeeded his cousin Queen Elizabeth to the English throne in 1603. As King James VI of Scotland, he had overcome court factionalism and challenges from dissident Presbyterians. After he also became king of England, the two countries were joined in a personal union. The first Stuart king of England, James was lazy, frivolous, and slovenly, particularly enjoying hurling jelly at his courtiers. But there was more to him than that. He was an intelligent and well-read blunderer, once described as “the wisest fool in Christendom.” Before coming to the throne, James had sketched out a theory of divine right monarchy. And in a speech to Parliament in 1609 the king had called “the state of monarchie . . . the supremest thing upon earth: for Kings are not only God’s Lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon throne, but even by God himselfe they are called Gods.” James described Parliament as nothing but “cries, shouts, and confusion.” Relations between the monarch and Parliament degenerated rapidly.

The English monarchy found itself in a precarious financial position, with Queen Elizabeth’s war debts at least partially to blame. James brought to court like-minded dandies, most of whom proved not only unpopular with Parliament but incompetent as well. In the last years of his reign, James became increasingly dependent on his young, handsome favorite, George Villiers, the duke of Buckingham (1592–1628). A relative newcomer to court

circles, Buckingham convinced the king to sell peerages and titles, offices, monopolies, and other privileges to the highest bidder. Opposition to the monarch's attempts to raise money in such ways mounted within Parliament.

Although it met only sporadically and at the king's pleasure, Parliament transformed itself from a debating society into an institution that saw itself as defending the rights of the English people. The House of Commons, lashing out at the beneficiaries of royal monopolies, impeached on charges of bribery Lord Chancellor Francis Bacon (1561–1626), philosopher of science and once the king's friend. Here, too, there was a principle at stake: the accountability of ministers to Parliament.

English foreign policy contributed both to the monarchy's mounting debt and to the emerging political crisis. Queen Elizabeth had denied that Parliament had the right to discuss matters of foreign policy unless invited by the monarch to do so. Parliament still insisted on that right. Thus, James favored peace with Spain, but Parliament clamored for war because Catholic Bavaria, an ally of Habsburg Spain, had invaded the Protestant Upper Palatinate. And in 1621, asserting its right to influence foreign policy, Parliament refused to provide more funds for the conflict, setting the stage for the greatest constitutional crisis in English history.

Parliament denounced the monarch's attempt to arrange a marriage between his son, Charles, the heir to the throne, and the daughter of Philip IV of Spain. As dynastic marriages were an essential part of foreign policy, cementing or building alliances, members of Parliament objected to a royal foreign policy that seemed pro-Spanish and therefore pro-Catholic. Parliament declared its right to discuss the proposed marriage, and thus foreign affairs. But James defied Parliament by stating that it could not discuss matters of foreign policy, denying that the privileges of Parliament were "your ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance." Rather he described them as "derived from the grace and permission of our ancestors and us."

James's wedding plans for his son fell through in 1623, however, when the Spanish king refused to allow Charles, who had gone to Madrid, even to set eyes on his daughter. But two years later, James then arranged Charles's marriage to another devout Catholic, Henrietta Maria of France, the daughter of Henry IV and Maria de' Medici. The secret price of this liaison included the king's promise that he would one day allow English Catholics, who numbered 2 or 3 percent of the population, to practice their religion freely. In a country in which anti-Catholicism had been endemic since the English Reformation of the mid-sixteenth century, James seemed to be taking steps to favor Catholicism.

James was succeeded upon his death by his son, Charles I (ruled 1625–1649). The young king was indecisive and painfully shy, traits compounded by a stammer. Even more than his father, Charles rejected the view that his appointments to ministries and other important offices should represent a wide spectrum of political and religious views. He stubbornly refused to oust the duke of Buckingham.



(Left) King James I. (Right) The young Charles, heir to the throne and later Charles I.

RELIGIOUS DIVISIONS

King Charles I once claimed, "People are governed by the pulpit more than the sword in time of peace." In the seventeenth century, no other realm of life so bitterly divided Europeans as religion. In England, religious divisions helped accentuate and define the political crisis. The Established or Anglican Church faced a challenge from the Puritans, a dissident religious group of Calvinists that had emerged during Elizabeth's reign.

Many Puritans were more sure of what they were against than what they were for. Puritans were strongly attracted by the Calvinist idea that each individual was predestined by God through His grace to be saved or not to be saved. They emphasized preaching and the individual's personal understanding of the Bible, spiritual devotion, discipline, and sacrifice as the basis of religion. Because they emphasized the personal worth of the individual minister, not the value of an ecclesiastical title, Puritans opposed the role of bishops in the Church of England. They wanted authority to be taken away from bishops and given to local synods (ecclesiastical councils made up of clerical and lay leaders). They de-emphasized the sacraments and wanted worship to be simpler than the contemporary Anglican Church services. Relentlessly hostile to Catholicism, Puritans held that elaborate church accoutrements in the Church of England—such as stained-glass windows and ornate altar rails—smacked of the Roman papacy.

Puritans did not choose the name by which they came to be known in the late sixteenth century, which was originally intended as a term of abuse. Considering themselves "the godly," they believed that they represented the

true Church of England. They constituted not more than 10 percent of the population, and perhaps a third of all gentry, but their influence grew. University graduates who had embraced Puritanism formed “a godly preaching ministry” in many parishes, providing opportunities for Puritans to preach and win converts.

The Puritans were increasingly hostile to those who espoused a kind of Protestantism known as Arminianism. At first no more than a handful of ecclesiastics with the king’s ear, Arminians soon came to wield considerable power. Charles I became an Arminian, and so did the duke of Buckingham. English Arminians, like their Dutch counterparts, rejected the Calvinist idea of predestination, which Puritans accepted, and, unlike the latter, believed that an individual could achieve salvation through free will. Arminians also accepted rituals that to the Puritans seemed to replicate those of the Catholic Church, and they emphasized the authority and ceremonial role of bishops, which Puritans opposed with particular vehemence. The Arminians emphasized royal authority over the Church of England. Increasingly they seemed to be proponents of royal absolutism.

The king’s aggressive espousal of Arminianism enhanced the influence of William Laud (1573–1645), bishop of London. In 1633, Charles named Laud to be the head of the Church of England as Primate of England (archbishop of Canterbury). The pious, hard-working, and stubborn son of a draper, Laud warned Charles that the religious extremes of Catholicism and radical Puritanism both posed threats to the Established Church. An Arminian, Laud espoused High Church rituals, and because of this, the Puritans thought that he was secretly working to make Catholicism the established religion of England. Under Elizabeth I and James I, Catholics had remained a force in some sectors of English life. Fear of a “popish plot” to restore Catholicism as the religion of the English state existed at all levels of English society. Landowners whose families had purchased ecclesiastical lands during the Reformation now worried that Laud might return them to the Catholic Church. Catholicism and “popery” was popularly identified with the Spanish Inquisition, the Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre in France, and the duke of Alba’s “Council of Blood” in the Netherlands.

Charles I and Parliament Clash

Charles’s fiscal policies deepened popular dissatisfaction with his reign. In 1625, the king decreed a forced loan on landowners, which he levied without Parliament’s consent and which he insisted be paid within three months, an unprecedented short period of time. The next year, he ordered the imprisonment of seventy-six gentlemen who refused to meet the royal demand. Parliament refused to consent to the levies unless Charles met its demands for fiscal reform. The king convoked three Parliaments in four years, but dissolved each when it refused to provide him with funds. Parliament continued to demand that Charles appoint ministers it could trust

and began impeachment proceedings against the duke of Buckingham. However, Buckingham disappeared as a source of irritation to Parliament when a disgruntled naval officer who had not been paid assassinated him in 1628.

Charles again asked Parliament to provide him with more funds. In response, Parliament promulgated the Petition of Right, which it forced Charles to accept in return for the granting of a tax. This constrained the king to agree that in the future he would not attempt to impose "loans" without Parliament's consent, and that no "gentlemen" who refused to pay up would be arrested—nor would anyone else be imprisoned without a show of just cause. The Petition of Right, which was initially put forward in 1628 by Sir Thomas Wentworth (1593–1641), then an opponent of the crown and one of the men imprisoned for refusing to pay the forced loan, was a significant document in the constitutional evolution of England. It defined the rights of Parliament as inalienable and condemned arbitrary arrest, martial law, and taxes imposed without its consent.

Angered by the Petition of Right and by Parliament's insistence that customs duties were a violation of the Petition, Charles ordered Parliament's dissolution in 1629. Because it was the role of the speaker of the house to communicate with the king on behalf of Parliament, members of the Commons physically held the speaker in his chair so he could not leave. They proceeded to declare that anyone who attempted to collect funds not levied with the approval of Parliament would be considered "a capital enemy to the kingdom and commonwealth," as would anyone who sponsored "innovation of religion," which is what Puritans considered Laud's espousal of elaborate High Church ceremonies. A defiant Parliament then disbanded.

For the next eleven years, Charles ruled without Parliament and tried to raise monies in new and controversial ways. Inflation had increased not only the royal debt but also the cost of ships and arms for waging war. The monarchy had exhausted its credit. Unlike James, Charles had some scruples about peddling privileges, but none at all about other means of raising funds. He fined gentlemen who did not attend his coronation. Most controversially, Charles ordered that "ship money" again be imposed without Parliament's consent on inland towns beginning in 1634.

Charles's high-handed royal policies led to a rebellion in Scotland. The king had seized lands from Scottish nobles, and, at Laud's instigation, in 1637 he ordered the imposition of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer on the Scottish Presbyterian Church (established as the Scottish national church in the 1560s). The Scots had never been pleased with the union with England that had been weakly forged in 1603 when James VI of Scotland ascended the English throne as James I. They demanded that Charles allow a general church assembly to consider the prayer book. In 1638, some Scottish leaders signed the *National Covenant*, attacking the pope and the prayer book and swearing to defend their religion and liberties. Faced with the resolution of Scots to maintain the Presbyterian Church, Charles convoked the



Riot in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, when the bishop begins to read from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer.

church assembly in Scotland, but he also began to prepare for an invasion of Scotland. In the meantime, Scottish nobles and landowners began evicting Anglican bishops and taking over churches. The Scots rose up in arms.

This was a turning point in the dramatic reign of King Charles I. Desperately needing funds to defeat the Scots, in 1639 the king demanded that the city of London help pay for the war. After several small allocations, London finally consented to lend the crown a large sum, but only on the condition that Charles convene Parliament and allow it to sit for a reasonable period of time.

Nobles and gentry led resistance to royal policies from the beginning; some were already in touch with the rebellious Scots, who in 1640 occupied the northeastern English port of Newcastle without resistance. Running short of cash and facing mutinies in the royal army, in April 1640 the king summoned Parliament for the first time in eleven years. But when it refused to allocate money for the war against Scotland until Charles agreed to consider a list of grievances, the king dissolved this "Short Parliament" after less than two months. Charles I's defiance of Parliament initiated a full-fledged constitutional crisis.

THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

The political crisis of the Stuart monarchy became a constitutional conflict about how England was to be governed. To the king's opponents, Parliament existed to protect fundamental English liberties that had been established under the Magna Carta in 1215. By this reasoning the king did not have the right to dispense with its counsel and its traditional authority to allocate

royal finances, nor did he have the right to impose taxes without historical precedent. While Parliament, led by Puritans, was not yet claiming sovereignty, it was clearly asserting its traditional role as a balance to royal authority.

Defenders of Parliament believed Laudian religious reforms and the collection of ship money to be the work of power-crazed men perhaps manipulated by the pope. Justices of the peace resented the usurpation of their authority by various decrees of martial law and by royal courts that impinged on regional courts. Local officials believed that the king's lieutenants were exceeding their traditional authority over military affairs by bypassing established routines of local approval of military levies. London merchants felt aggrieved that they were not able to export cloth because of royal control over cloth exports through the monopoly of the Merchant Adventurers (see Chapter 5). The monarchy alienated other Londoners by allowing some craftsmen to operate outside the structure of the London guilds and by attempting to force the city to provide more money for the war with Scotland. The sale of the right to collect royal customs generated controversy as well, particularly as the government sold more privileges to pay off those who "farmed" taxes.

In the meantime, Charles surrounded himself with confidants, advisers, artists, and musicians, whose sense of royal decorum and aesthetic tastes seemed to suggest the influence of continental Catholicism. The queen brought to the court Flemish artists who emphasized the religious themes of the Catholic Reformation, leading critics to believe that a plot was afloat "to seduce the King himself with Pictures, Antiquities, Images & other vanities brought from *Rome*."

Those who consistently supported Parliament became known as the supporters of "Country," while those who supported virtually unlimited monarchical prerogatives were identified with "Court." Titled nobles, of whom there were about 1,200, generally supported Charles. Gentry formed the core of the political opposition to the king. During the previous century, many gentry had extended their landholdings, and men enriched by commerce or service in the law or army had become part of the gentry through the purchase of land. The roots of confrontation may have come from the struggle of these economically dynamic gentry to obtain political power commensurate with their rising station in English life. Some gentry of lesser means who had fallen upon hard times may have blamed the monarchy for their plight and hence supported Parliament.

The English Civil War has been called the "Puritan Revolution," even though its causes extended beyond the question of religion and Puritans were not alone in resisting the monarchy. There were indeed many Puritans in Parliament, including the body's leader, John Pym (1584–1643). A brilliant speaker and debater, Pym was a zealot, an impetuous and perhaps even paranoid man whose strong convictions were in part defined by an obsession that a "popish plot" existed to restore Catholicism to England. Puritans were



John Pym.

numerous among the lesser gentry in eastern England, areas that took the side of Parliament during the Civil War.

As the political crisis grew in the 1630s, the authority of Anglican bishops, their appointment as state officials, and their right to nominate ministers also smacked of "popery." Charles I echoed the famous statement of his father, James I, "No bishops, no king!"—an assertion that would come back to haunt him. Laud expanded the power of ecclesiastical courts, which tried people accused of offenses against the Church of England. This reminded some people of the Spanish Inquisition.

Moving toward Conflict

Having dissolved the "Short Parliament" in May 1640, Charles again convoked a newly elected Parliament the following October. The crown's strengthening of the army with Catholic Irish regiments, commanded by Wentworth, who was now a supporter and adviser of the king and had been named the earl of Strafford, confirmed to credulous ears that a "popish plot" was in the works. Ordinary people smashed altar rails and shattered stained-glass windows. The English army suffered defeat in Scotland; the war required yet more funds. Led by Pym, Parliament turned its wrath upon Charles's advisers. It indicted Strafford, who was tried and executed in London before a rejoicing throng. Parliament denounced as illegal the most unpopular royal acts during the previous eleven years and abolished some of the courts controlled by the monarchy. Parliament proclaimed that it could only dissolve itself, and that in the future the king would have to summon it every three years. In the meantime, Irish peasants rose up against the English in 1641 and killed many Protestant landlords. The Irish rebellion highlighted the rights of Parliament by making urgent the issue of who controlled the militia.

In November 1641, Parliament passed the Grand Remonstrance. Presenting what Parliament considered a history of royal misdeeds, the document denounced "a malignant and pernicious design of subverting the fundamental laws and principles" of English government. It called for religious and administrative reforms. Its passage by a narrow margin indicated that Parliament remained divided over how far to carry its opposition to royal policies.

Puritans, who narrowly controlled the House of Commons, wanted to reform both church and state. Wealthy nobles began to form a solid bloc around the cause of the king, fearing that reform might weaken their influence. Shortly after the passage of the Grand Remonstrance, the high sheriff of Lancashire called upon "gentlemen" to take arms with their tenants and servants on behalf of the king "for the securing of our own lives and estates, which are now ready to be surprised by a heady multitude." In some places, fighting began that month, as both sides fought for control of the militias.

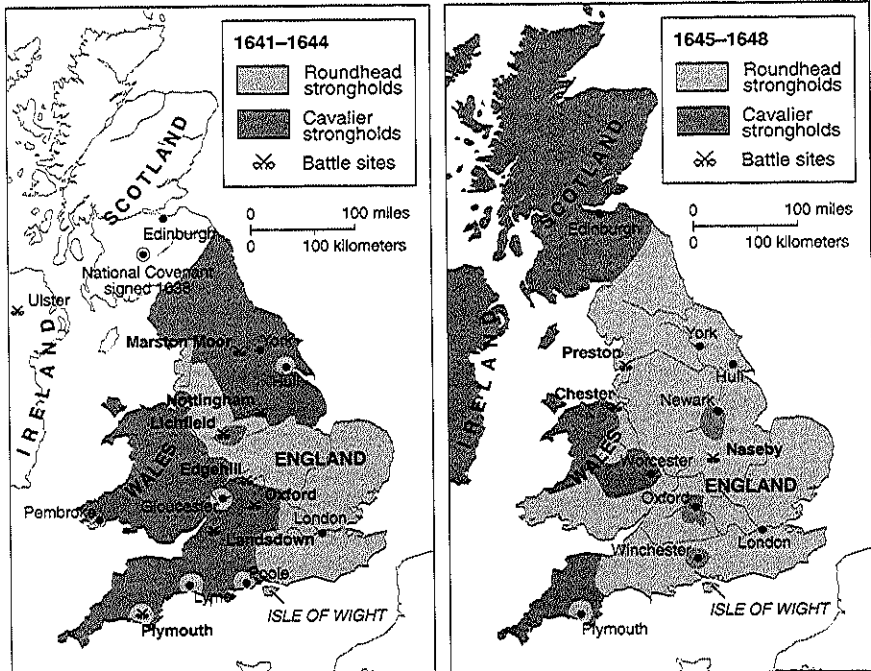
The king attempted a bold coup against Parliament in January 1642. He personally led several hundred armed soldiers into Parliament and ordered the arrest of Pym. Forewarned by someone, Pym and other leaders had left the House of Commons before Charles arrived, but they remained in London where they were protected by artisans and craftsmen. The latter opposed the crown's support of monopolies and for religious reasons supported Laud. Charles, fearing for his safety in London, where people had become more forceful in their support of Parliament, headed north with his family to more friendly country, and his supporters left Parliament. In June, Parliament's "Nineteen Propositions" denounced the confrontational royal policy. In August 1642, Charles mobilized his forces at Nottingham.

Taking Sides

As civil war spread, Parliament's soldiers came to be known as "Roundheads" for the short, bowl-shaped haircuts many of them wore. The king's "Cavaliers" liked to think of themselves as fighting the good fight for God and king against those who would shatter social harmony by making "subjects princes and princes slaves." But so far as civil wars go, there was little actual fighting. Winter interrupted relatively short "campaign seasons." There were only four major battles (see Map 6.1). The two sides fought to a draw on October 23, 1642, at Edgehill, south of Birmingham. When a royal military advance on London was turned back, Charles set up headquarters in Oxford, fifty miles northwest of London. In February 1643, the king rejected Parliament's terms for a settlement. When a second royal march on London failed, both sides intensified massive propaganda campaigns to win support. The war became a war of words, among the first in history. More than 22,000 newspapers, newsletters, pamphlets, broadsides, sermons, and speeches were published between 1640 and 1661.

Yet life in thousands of villages was disrupted by requisitions, plundering, and general hardship. About 10 percent of the English population was forced to leave home during the war. Many counties—perhaps most—were neutral, as local leaders struggled to maintain control and keep their counties free of fighting and devastation.

Without London's credit institutions, Charles financed the war with gifts and loans from nobles, selling more titles, and forced levies. The Roundheads, in keeping with Parliament's resistance to monarchical centralization,



MAP 6.1 THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR Major battles during the English Civil War, as well as Cavalier and Roundhead strongholds.

kept civil, fiscal, and military authority relatively decentralized in regions under its control. Parliament raised funds through heavy excise and property taxes, and confiscated the property of some prominent families supporting the king's cause. A regional military structure developed, based on associations of counties pledging mutual assistance to the parliamentary cause.

Parliament drew considerable support from the most economically advanced regions where commercialized agriculture had developed through deforestation, the draining of marshland, and acts of enclosure, and where cloth manufacturing had brought prosperity, particularly in the south and east. Charles I retained the allegiance of most of northern and western England, regions of more traditional agriculture and social hierarchy. In some places, villages became sites for religious and political struggle. For example, in regions where traditional festive rituals had survived the assault of Puritans, who considered them frivolous, disruptive, and ungodly spectacles that brought drinking, dancing, and sexual freedom, support was strong for the king, whose supporters—wealthy country gentlemen—encouraged such merriment.

Oliver Cromwell and the New Model Army

In 1643, Parliament allied with the Scots, many of whom were Presbyterians. John Pym's sudden death at the end of the year did not lessen Parliament's resolve to force the king to capitulate. In July 1644, the Roundheads and Scots defeated the Cavaliers at Marston Moor, near York. About 45,000 men fought in this battle, the largest of the English Civil War. This gave Parliament control of northern England. Scottish participation only added to the determination of the "war party" to whom Charles listened.



Oliver Cromwell.

Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), who led the Roundheads to victory at Marston Moor, emerged as the leader of Parliament. Cromwell, born into a modest gentry family, never lost what more well-heeled gentry considered his rough edges. Several years before being elected to Parliament in 1640, he had undergone—perhaps during serious illness—a deep spiritual conversion, becoming convinced that God had chosen him to be one of the Puritan elect. Cromwell displayed idealism as well as the stubbornness of someone who is convinced that he is always right.

Combining three armies, Parliament formed the New Model Army in 1645. Cromwell instilled strict discipline, and the Roundhead soldiers' morale improved with regular wages. Unlike its predecessors, the New Model Army won grudging good will in the counties by paying for supplies and not plundering, in contrast to the king's army.

Divisions within Parliament

Two political groups emerged in Parliament: Presbyterians and Independents. Presbyterians, a majority within Parliament, were moderates. Originally a pro-Scottish group that had rallied behind John Pym, most (despite the name "Presbyterians") were Puritans. Opposed to the bishops' authority, they rejected religious toleration and wanted an established national Calvinist Church. They were ready to accept a negotiated settlement with the king.

The Independents were militant Puritans who desired more drastic changes than the Presbyterians. They wanted the church to be a loose alliance of congregations that would choose their own ministers, a more radical position than that of the Presbyterians. The Independents were less willing to compromise with the king on the issue of parliamentary prerogatives.



Crowds watch Puritan soldiers leaving London, c. 1647. Note the “roundheads” and the armed preacher urging them on.

They opposed the creation of a new established church and favored toleration of some religious dissent. Some of them even desired more far-reaching political reforms that would protect individual rights. Cromwell's rise to leadership reflected the ascendancy of the Independents in Parliament.

Cromwell purged Presbyterian commanders within the New Model Army, replacing them with Independents loyal to him. Singing psalms as they rushed fearlessly into battle, Cromwell's “Ironsides,” as his troops were called, maintained an air of invincibility. In June 1645, the New Model Army routed the royalists. Charles surrendered to the Scots a year later, hoping to obtain a less draconian peace than if he capitulated directly to Parliament. But the Scottish army soon withdrew from England and left the king in the custody of Parliament in February 1647.

Radicals

As the war dragged on, England fell into virtual anarchy amid growing resentment over the billeting of soldiers, food shortages, and rising prices. The English Civil War unleashed forces that seemed to challenge the foundation of social and political order. During the siege of royalist Oxford, a hungry sentry called down to the besieging forces, “Roundhead, fling me up half a mutton and I will fling thee down a lord!” At times the Roundheads

appeared to hold back as if wary of the consequences of victory. Even some gentry who had taken the side of Parliament feared that a crushing victory might unleash "turbulent spirits, backed by rude and tumultuous mechanic persons [i.e., ordinary people]" and attacks against property by the mob, "that many headed monster."

In such an uncertain climate, new religious groups proliferated. Baptists did not believe that children should be baptized, reasoning that only adults were old enough to choose a congregation and hence be baptized. Some Baptists permitted couples to marry by simply making a declaration before the congregation.

"Levellers" were far more radical. They called for new laws that would protect the poor as well as the wealthy. Levellers, many of whom had been Baptists or Puritans, found adherents among small property owners, London artisans, and the ranks of the New Model Army "wherein there is not one lord." Yet, while the Levellers proposed a new English constitution and demanded sweeping political reforms that would greatly broaden the electoral franchise, they still based these rights on property ownership, which they defined as men having "a permanent fixed interest in this kingdom," excluding wage laborers and servants. Women were also prominent in Leveller petition campaigns, but calls for female enfranchisement were extremely rare.

Smaller groups of radicals soon went even farther. The "Diggers," who called themselves the "True Levellers," denied the claim of Parliament to speak for Englishmen and opposed the private ownership of land. They espoused agrarian reform and began a brief colony that began to share wasteland with the poor and the landless. The "Ranters" rejected the idea of heaven, hell, and sin, and postulated that true salvation could be found only in drink and sex.

To some people in mid-seventeenth-century England, the world indeed seemed "turned upside down." Some radicals opposed not only hierarchical authority, but also paternal authority within the family. The assumption that the king ruled his nation as a husband and father directed his wife and children had been prominent in early modern political theory. Now some pamphlets denounced the subjugation of women to their husbands.

Parliament's Victory

Pressured by the Presbyterians, who feared the radicals of the New Model Army, Parliament ordered the disbandment of part of it without paying the soldiers. The army, however, refused to disband, and instead it set up a general council, some of whose members were drawn from the lower officer corps and even the rank and file, perhaps reflecting Leveller influence.

The New Model Army considered Parliament's attempts to disband it to be part of a plot against the Independents. A few regiments mutinied and prepared a political platform, the *Agreement of the People*, written by

London Levellers. This text anticipated later theorists by claiming that all "freeborn Englishmen," not just property owners, were the source of political authority and that "the poorest man in England is not at all bound in a strict sense to that government that he hath not had a voice to put himself under." Cromwell ruthlessly restored order in the New Model Army, subduing mutinous Leveller regiments and ordering several leaders shot.

In November 1647, King Charles escaped the custody of Parliament and fled to the Isle of Wight. Against the opposition of Presbyterians who hoped that some compromise could still be reached with the king, the House of Commons passed a motion that no further addresses should be made to King Charles. The implication was that Parliament alone should proceed to establish a new government without Charles's participation or consent, probably indicating that Cromwell and many other members of Parliament had already decided that Charles I should be put to death and a republic declared.

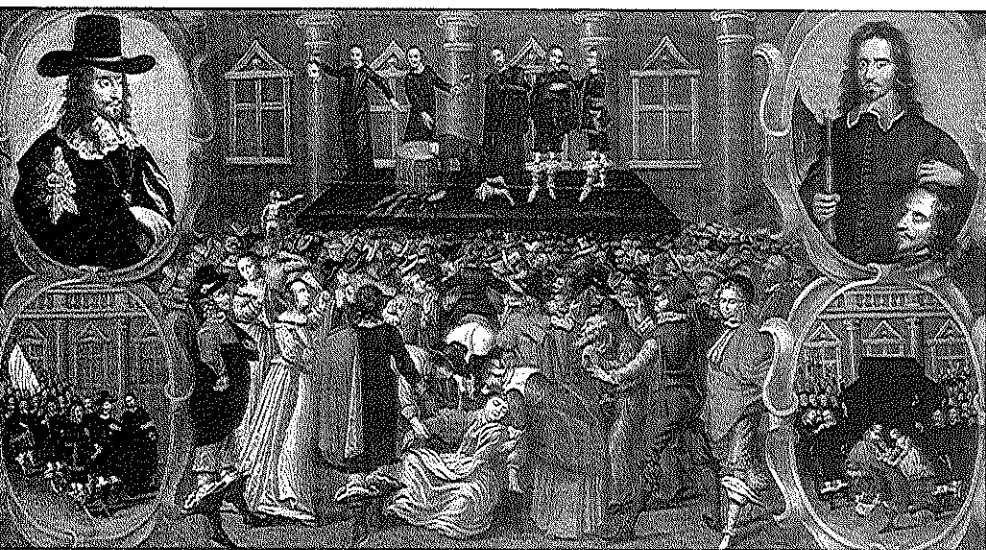
In May 1648, Presbyterian moderates joined Cavalier uprisings in southern Wales and southern England. Charles had been secretly negotiating with the Presbyterian Scots, hoping that they now would join an alliance of Anglicans and members of Parliament who had become disillusioned with Cromwell's radicalism. But the New Model Army turned back a Scottish invasion in August, and besieged royalist forces in Wales surrendered. The king was placed under guard on the Isle of Wight, "more a Prisoner," as an observer put it, "than ever . . . and could not goe to pisse without a garde nor to Goffe [play golf]."

A detachment of the New Model Army, under Colonel Thomas Pride, then surrounded the Parliament house and refused to let Presbyterians—and some Independents as well—join the other members. "Pride's Purge," which took place without Cromwell's consent or knowledge, left a "Rump Parliament" of about a fifth of the members sitting.

The Rump Parliament, dominated by Independents, appointed a High Court to try the king on charges of high treason. Charles refused to defend himself and was found guilty. Charles I was executed at Whitehall on January 30, 1649, the first monarch to be tried and executed by his own subjects. Charles's beheading had immediate international repercussions; one power after another severed diplomatic relations with England.

The Puritan Republic and Restoration

The Rump Parliament abolished the monarchy and the House of Lords. It established a Puritan republic, the Commonwealth of England, with Cromwell as its leader. In 1649, Cromwell brutally put down the Irish uprising that had gone on for eight years. The Act of Settlement in 1652 expropriated the land of two-thirds of the Catholic property owners in Ireland, assuring the ascendancy of English Protestants in that strife-torn land for



Eyewitness depiction of Charles I's execution, January 30, 1649.

the next 300 years. The Scottish Protestants did not fare any better for having supported Charles, however belatedly, as Cromwell then conquered Scotland in 1650–1651. Having defeated both the Irish and the Scots, Cromwell then fought wars against the Dutch Republic from 1652 to 1654 and Spain from 1655 to 1659, with an eye toward reducing the power of both of these economic rivals.

The Rump Parliament met until 1653. It would not dissolve itself and so Cromwell, torn between his determination to assure a “godly reformation” in England and a mistrust of political assemblies, dissolved it in a military coup. The Long Parliament (if the Rump session is counted) had lasted since 1640. Cromwell now picked 140 men to serve as a new Parliament. This body came to be called the Barebones Parliament, named after one of its members, a certain “Praise-God Barbon,” a leather merchant.

England became a military dictatorship. The army council dissolved the Barebones Parliament six months later and proclaimed a Protectorate under a new constitution, the Instrument of Government. Cromwell took the title “Lord Protector” and held almost unlimited power. The contention of the philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), who had supported Charles I against Parliament, that the natural state of mankind is one of war, “every-one against everyone,” seemed now to apply to England.

The Puritan republic turned out to be as oppressive as the monarchy of the Stuart kings. Cromwell imposed taxes without parliamentary approval and purged Parliament when it disagreed with him. When Parliament produced its own constitution, Cromwell sent its members packing in 1655.

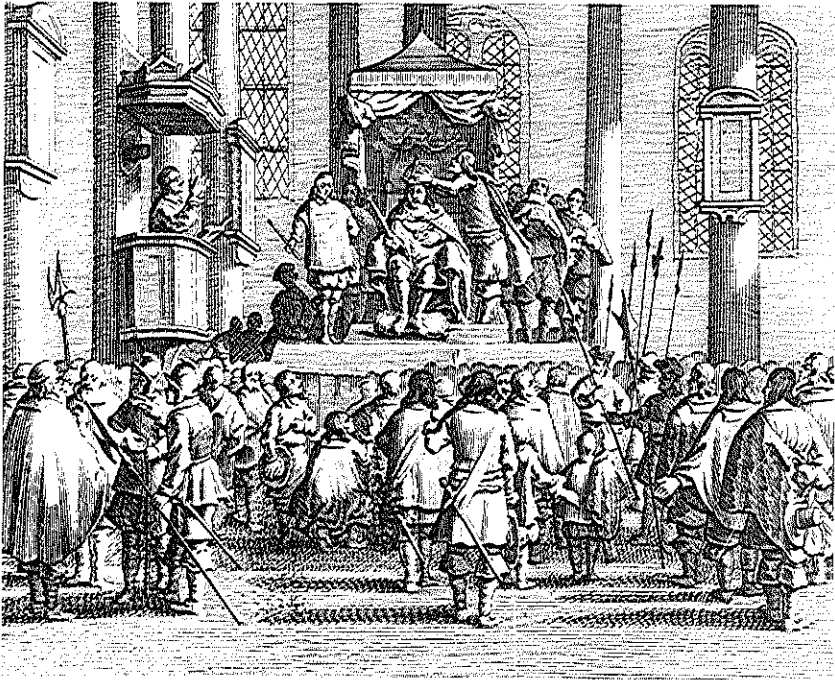
But, like Charles I before him, he was obliged to recall Parliament the following year to vote money for war, this time against Spain.

Although Cromwell granted *de facto* religious freedom to all Puritan sects (including the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists), he continued to deny such freedom to Anglicans and Catholics. He did, however, allow Jews, who had not been allowed in England since 1290, to return in 1655. But Cromwell lost support as a result of financial impositions necessary to fight wars and supply an army of 50,000 men in England. The Lord Protector proved to be a better military administrator than a civilian one. Cromwell also alienated people through his exhortations that people behave in "godly" Puritan ways, as set forth in a code enforced by the army. Cromwell began to wear armor under his clothes and took circuitous routes in order to foil assassins who might be stalking him.

In the meantime, Cromwell claimed to be a humble caretaker of government who would keep order until godly righteousness prevailed. In 1657, a newly elected Parliament produced another constitution and offered Cromwell the throne of England. He refused, perhaps because he believed God had spoken to him against this and because a monarchy would alienate elements in the army. But he accepted the terms of the "Humble Petition and Advice," introducing a second house of Parliament (a nominated House of Lords) and a quasi-monarchical position for the Lord Protector, including the right to name his successor. Cromwell then dissolved Parliament because republicans in it were hostile to an evident monarchical direction. A year later, Cromwell died, succeeded by his considerably less able son, Richard (1626–1712), the New Protector. After Richard, several military successors stumbled on, backed by remnants of the New Model Army.

Increasingly, however, it seemed to the upper classes that only the restoration of the Stuart monarchy could restore order in England. Charles (1630–1685), heir to the throne of his executed father, lived in exile in The Netherlands. Armed force would still play a deciding role in this tumultuous time. General George Monck (1608–1670), a former royalist officer who now commanded the army in Scotland, had shrewdly kept Scottish tax money to pay his soldiers. His army became the only reliable force in England. After Parliament tried to assert control over the army, Monck marched with his forces on London and dissolved Parliament. New elections returned an alliance of royalists and Presbyterians, giving Parliament a moderate majority inclined to accept a restoration. When Charles issued a conciliatory proclamation, Parliament invited him to assume the throne of England. Eleven years after his father's execution, he crossed the English Channel in May 1660 and was crowned King Charles II on April 23, 1661.

Charles II, who disbanded the New Model Army, manifested considerable charm, energy, courage, unfailing good humor, and loyalty to those who had remained loyal to him (with the notable exception of the queen, to whom he was anything but faithful). He could also lash out vindictively when he believed himself betrayed. He earned the affection of most of his subjects



The coronation of King Charles II in 1661.

because the return of monarchy seemed to end the extended period of division and chaos. He used grand royal ceremonies to help restore faith in the monarchy, even attempting to cure sufferers of scrofula with the “royal touch” of his hand, as had his predecessors centuries earlier.

Although the English Civil War was a victory for parliamentary rule, in some ways the Restoration turned the clock back to before the conflict. The Church of England again became the Established Church. The crown refused to extend official toleration to other religions, and the Church of England expelled Presbyterian ministers. Once again the king, chronically short of money, depended on Parliament for funds.

The way now seemed clear for England to continue to expand its commerce and influence in a climate of social and political peace. Between 1660 and 1688, the tonnage hauled by English ships more than doubled, as the merchant fleet established regular trade routes to Newfoundland, Virginia, and the Caribbean. In 1664, a small English force seized the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, which became New York City. Tobacco, calico, furs, sugar, chocolate, and rum brought from the New World changed habits of consumption. London became a booming port, and the East India Company emerged as a powerful force in shaping royal policy. Lloyd’s of London began to insure vessels sailing to the New World in 1688. By then almost half of

England's ships were trading with India or America. Exports and imports increased by a third by 1700.

England's foreign policy entered a new, aggressive period in support of English manufacture and commerce. To undermine Dutch commercial competition, Parliament passed a series of Navigation Acts between 1651 and 1673, requiring that all goods brought to England be transported either in English ships or in those belonging to the country of their origin. This led to three wars with the Netherlands, in 1652–1654 (undertaken by Cromwell), 1665–1667, and 1672–1674.

THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

The highly charged issues of royal authority and Catholicism, which had sparked the English Civil War, led to another constitutional crisis and planted the seeds for the Glorious Revolution of 1688, when Parliament summoned a new king to rule England. Then the following year Parliament passed the Bill of Rights, which enshrined the rights of Parliament and the English people, and above all, men who owned property.

Stuart Religious Designs

After the return of the Stuarts to power, religion once again surfaced as a divisive issue in England, threatening to shatter the political unity seemingly achieved with the Restoration. Charles II had returned if not with strong Catholic sympathies at least with the conviction that he owed toleration to Catholics, some of whom had supported his father. Again, a Stuart king's seemingly provocative policies generated determined opposition from Parliament, which asserted its prerogatives.

Charles favored Catholics among his ministers and seemed to be trying to appeal to Dissenters in order to build a coalition against the Church of England. In response, Parliament passed a series of laws against Dissenters (1661–1665), known as the Clarendon Code. The Act of Corporation (1661) required all holders of office in incorporated municipalities to receive communion in the Anglican Church. The Act of Uniformity (1662) stated that all ministers had to use the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. Nonconformists had to take an oath that they would not try to alter the established order of church and state in England. Hundreds of Quakers, members of a pacifist group formed in 1649, refused to pay tithes or take oaths and were incarcerated, left to die in prison.

In 1670, Charles II signed a secret treaty of alliance with Louis XIV of France. He promised the king of France that he would declare himself a Catholic when the political circumstances in England were favorable. In return, he received subsidies from the French monarch. Charles ended restrictions on religious worship and laws that had been directed at

Catholics and Dissident Protestant groups. The hostile reaction to his decision, however, forced the king to reinstate the restrictive measures. In 1673, Parliament passed the Test Act, which largely superseded the Clarendon Code and excluded non-Anglicans from military and civil office.

Many people in England suspected that there were plots afoot to restore Catholicism as the state religion. Although Charles II's agreement with Louis XIV remained secret, in 1678 a strange man named Titus Oates loudly claimed the existence of a plot by the Catholic Church against England. Oates claimed that the Jesuits were preparing to assassinate the king and slaughter all English Protestants. They then would proclaim James, Charles's devout Catholic brother, king. (James was heir to the throne since Charles had no legitimate children, although he had a good many who were not.) Oates had made it all up, as the king knew perfectly well. But the monarch could not speak up because of his own secret promise to Louis XIV of France to restore Catholicism to England.

In the 1670s, two factions had emerged in Parliament that in some ways echoed the split between "Court" and "Country" before the Civil War. Members of Parliament who supported the full prerogatives of the monarchy, some of them trumpeting the theories of divine-right monarchy, became known as Tories, corresponding to the old "Court" faction. Those members of Parliament who espoused parliamentary supremacy and religious toleration became known as Whigs (corresponding to "Country"). Whig leaders orchestrated a plan to exclude James from the royal succession because of his Catholicism. During the ensuing Exclusion Crisis (1678–1681), the Tories defended James as the legitimate heir to the throne of England. When in 1679 some members of Parliament tried to make Charles's illegitimate son heir to the throne, Charles dissolved Parliament. In three subsequent parliamentary elections, Whigs profited from the mood of anti-Catholicism to take a majority of seats.

Parliament's passage in 1679 of the Habeas Corpus Act reflected Whig ascendancy. This act forced the government to provide a quick trial for those arrested. By establishing the legal rights of individuals accused of crimes, it further limited monarchical authority. The Habeas Corpus Act was thus part of the century-long struggle of the House of Commons for the maintenance of its constitutional role in England's governance.

In 1681, Charles II attempted, like his father before him, to rule without Parliament. Two years later, a number of Whigs were charged with plotting to kill both the king and his brother, and the king had them executed. On his deathbed two years later, Charles proclaimed his Catholicism.

Thus, in 1685, Charles II's brother assumed the throne as James II (1633–1701). In Scotland and in western England, royal armies crushed the small insurrections that rose up in favor of Charles's illegitimate son (who was executed). Naïve as he was devout, James forgot the lessons of recent history and began to dismiss advisers who were not Catholics.



The prince regent riding a horse along a street strewn with the heads of members of the opposition placed on large stones.

In 1687, James made Catholics eligible for office. The Dissenters also benefited from toleration, because the new king needed them as allies. The king did not denounce Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, which ended toleration for Huguenots (French Protestants, see Chapter 7). This made English Protestants even more anxious. When it became apparent that the queen was pregnant, James boldly predicted the birth of a son and Catholic heir to the throne. For the enemies of the king, the timing of the birth of a son and the fact that the only witnesses were Catholics inevitably sparked rumors that the newborn was not really the king's son but a surrogate baby.

Royal prerogative thus remained the central constitutional issue. James may have entertained visions of implanting monarchical absolutism, a tide that approached from the continent. Certainly he sought to restore Catholicism as the state religion. In April 1688, he issued a declaration of toleration and ordered the Anglican clergy to read it from the pulpit. When seven bishops protested, James put them in prison. However, when the bishops were tried in court, a jury declared them not guilty.

The "Protestant Wind"

One of James's Protestant daughters by a previous marriage, Mary (1662–1694), had married the Protestant Dutchman William of Orange (1650–1702), the stadholder (chief official) of the Netherlands. A group of Tories and Whigs, the "immortal seven"—six nobles and a bishop—invited William to restore Protestantism and, from their point of view, the English constitution. William, eager that England assist the Dutch in resisting Louis XIV's aggressive designs, prepared to invade England from the Netherlands. His followers flooded England with propaganda on behalf of his cause.

The context of European international politics seemed favorable to William. Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes had outraged the Dutch, who worried that James's successful restoration of Catholicism in England might make the Dutch Republic more vulnerable to Catholic France. They believed that England was an indispensable partner in helping resist Louis XIV's grand ambitions. A friendly Protestant monarch on the throne of England might even reduce tensions stemming from the trade rivalry between the Dutch Republic and England.

The Catholic continental monarchs would not aid James II. Louis XIV's principal interest remained continental territorial expansion. Despite declaring war on the Dutch Republic, Louis limited his attacks to verbal bluster and the seizure of several Dutch ships in French ports. Emperor Leopold of Austria, another powerful Catholic monarch, was tied up fighting the Turks in the east.

James did little to prepare military defenses except to appoint Catholic officers in his new regiments and to bring more troops from Ireland. He relied on his navy to protect his throne. Hoping for a last-minute compromise, he promised to summon a "free" Parliament. But it was too late.

In a declaration promulgated early in October 1688, William accused James of arbitrary acts against the nation, Parliament, and the Church of England. Aided by a munificent wind—later dubbed the "Protestant wind"—that blew his ships to the southwestern coast of England but pinned James's loyal fleet farther away in the Channel or kept them in port, William landed at Torbay on the English Channel with a force of 15,000 men on November 5,

William III of England and Queen Mary, joint rulers of England.



1688. William marched cautiously to London, encouraged by defections from James's cause. Uprisings on William's behalf in several northern towns further isolated the king. James was in a state of virtual physical and psychological collapse. At the end of November, he promised to summon Parliament and allow William's supporters to sit. But riots broke out against his rule and against Catholics. In December, James left England for exile in France. Parliament, victorious again, declared the throne vacant by abdication and invited William and Mary to occupy a double throne.

The Bill of Rights

This "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, less dramatic than the English Civil War, was arguably of more lasting importance in the constitutional evolution of England. Parliament passed a Bill of Rights in 1689 that ratified the Revolution of 1688, ending decades of constitutional battles. Accepted by William and Mary, it became a milestone in English history. It was passed at a time when the rights and influence of representative bodies lay in shambles throughout much of the continent as absolute monarchs consolidated their power (see Chapter 7). The Bill of Rights reaffirmed the rights of Parliament and guaranteed the rights of property owners to self-government and of the accused to the rule of law. In particular, it reasserted Parliament's financial authority over government by enumerating what a monarch should not do and by reducing royal control over the army. The Toleration Act (1689) stipulated that Protestant Dissenters could hold public services in licensed meeting houses and could maintain preachers. Anglicanism, however, remained the Established Church of England, and only Anglicans could hold office. Catholics could not occupy the throne and, like Dissenters, they were excluded from government positions.

The Glorious Revolution pleased the English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704), friend of some of the wealthy landowners who sent James II into exile. Locke was specific about the ways in which the power of monarchs ought to be limited. "The end of government," he wrote, should be "the good of mankind." Locke argued that the rights of individuals and, above all, the ownership of property found protection when Parliament's rights limited monarchical prerogatives. Knowing of the bloody chaos of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) on the continent, Locke also advocated religious toleration and espoused the right of subjects to rise up against tyranny, as the English supporters of Parliament had against Charles I.

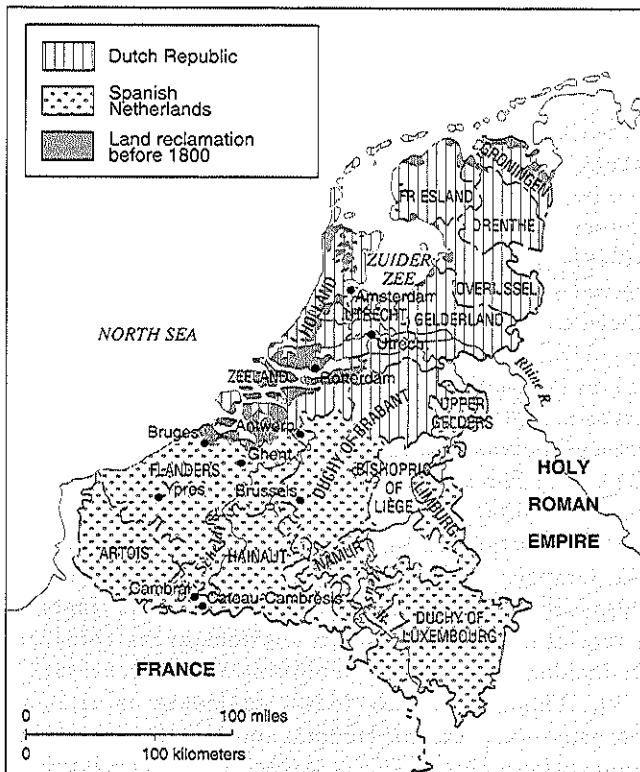
The Glorious Revolution reaffirmed the political domination of the gentry, whose interests Parliament represented above all. English monarchs named nobles to hereditary seats in the House of Lords, but wealthy landowners elected members to the House of Commons. The gentry's economic and social position was more secure than during the inflationary years of the first half of the century. Order and social hierarchy reigned, and the fear of popu-

lar disorder ebbed. Benefiting from the consensus of 1688, the elite of wealthy landowners, increasingly more open to newcomers than their continental counterparts, would continue to shape British political life in the eighteenth century. The English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution affirmed the principle of representation not only in England, but also in the North American colonies, an important legacy for the future.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

The Dutch Republic of the United Provinces (usually known today as the Netherlands, or sometimes simply—and erroneously—as Holland, its most populated and prosperous province) was the other European power (besides

MAP 6.2 THE NETHERLANDS, 1648 At the conclusion of the Thirty Years' War, the Dutch war of independence also ended, with the northern United Provinces becoming the Dutch Republic and the southern provinces remaining under Spain as the Spanish Netherlands.



Poland) that defied the pattern of absolute and increasingly centralized rule that characterized seventeenth-century Europe. Spain ruled the Netherlands from 1516, when Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who had inherited the territories of the dukes of Burgundy, became king of Spain. After a long, intermittent war that had begun in 1566 against Spanish rule (Chapter 5), the Dutch Republic officially became independent in 1648 (see Map 6.2 and pp. 98–202). The United Provinces, a confederation of republics, had been federalist in structure since the Union of Utrecht in 1579, when the provinces and cities of the Dutch Netherlands came together to form a defensive alliance against the advancing Spanish army. The Dutch Republic, from which William of Orange had launched his successful invasion of England in 1688, resisted the aspirations of the House of Orange for a centralized government dominated by a hereditary monarchy. Like their English counterparts, most people in the Netherlands did not want absolute rule, which they identified with the arbitrary acts of the Catholic Spanish monarchy.

The Structure of the Dutch State

The States General served as a federal legislative body of delegations from each of the seven provinces of the Dutch Republic. Each of the provinces held to traditions of autonomy, provincial sovereignty, and, since the Reformation, religious pluralism. Nobles received automatic representation in the States General. But their economic and political role in the Republic was relatively weak, except in the overwhelmingly agricultural eastern provinces.

The Dutch Republic was in some ways less a republic than an oligarchy of wealthy families who monopolized political power. No republican ideology existed until at least the second half of the seventeenth century. But Dutch citizens enjoyed some basic rights unavailable in most other states at the time. Provincial courts protected the Dutch against occasional arbitrary acts of both the central government and town governments. Solid fiscal institutions generated international confidence, permitting the Republic to raise sizable loans as needed.

The princes of the House of Orange served as *stadholder* of the Republic. A stadholder was at first appointed, and served as a political broker. He had influence, but not authority. He was not a ruler, and could not declare war, legislate, or even participate in the important decisions of the Republic. Many of the Orangist stadholders chafed under the restrictions on their authority, although they dominated some high federal appointments and named the sons of nobles to important positions in the army and navy. The Orangist stadholders dreamed of establishing a powerful hereditary monarchy. In 1650, William II (1626–1650), stadholder of five of the seven provinces, arrested six leaders of Holland and sent an army to besiege Amsterdam. A compromise reinforced the stadholders' power. But with William's sudden death several months later, the balance of power swung back to the

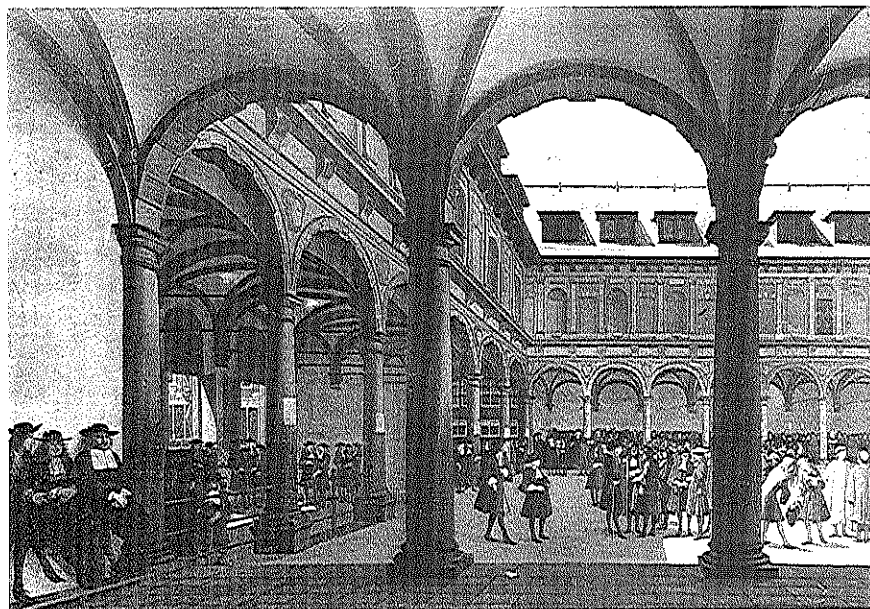
regents (wealthy merchants and bankers) of the provinces. Any possibility of the Netherlands becoming an absolute state ended.

Expanding Economy

The Dutch economy developed more rapidly during the first two-thirds of the seventeenth century than did the economies of its competitors, England and France. The increased affluence brought by foreign trade helped the Dutch carry on the war against Spain. In 1609, following the signing of a truce with Spain, the Amsterdam Public Bank opened its offices in the town hall. The bank's principal function was to facilitate Amsterdam's burgeoning foreign trade by encouraging merchants to make payments in bills drawn on the bank. Foreign merchants were attracted to Amsterdam, particularly after mid-century, when bills of exchange became acceptable as currency.

Amsterdam's banking, credit, and warehousing facilities were soon unmatched in Europe. Although an ordinance in 1581 had included bankers among those occupations considered disreputable—along with actors, jugglers, and brothel keepers—and therefore excluded them from receiving communion in the Dutch Reformed Church, bankers came to be respected by the beginning of the seventeenth century. Good credit allowed the United Provinces to raise loans by selling negotiable bonds at low interest rates.

The Amsterdam Bourse in the seventeenth century. Merchants had fixed places at the Stock Exchange where they met to arrange various financial matters.





Canals and rivers expedited internal trade in the Dutch Republic. These boats along the Spaarne at Haarlem carried goods to the port, where they were loaded for distant trade.

The Dutch Republic, small in territory and population, expanded its agricultural resources during the first half of the seventeenth century. Workers and horses reclaimed much of the country's most fertile land from the sea. Increased productivity generated an agricultural surplus that was invested in commerce or manufacturing; an increased food supply sustained a larger population. Commercial livestock raising and capital-intensive farming became lucrative.

The Dutch Republic's population rose by a third between 1550 and 1650, to almost 2 million people, which made it Europe's most densely populated country after several of the Italian states. More than half of the population lived in towns. As Amsterdam became a major international port of trade and London's primary rival, its population rose from about 50,000 in 1600 to about 200,000 by 1670.

Early in the seventeenth century, construction of three large canals expanded Amsterdam's area by almost four times. These canals permitted boats to dock outside merchants' warehouses, where they were loaded with goods, which they then carried to the large ships of the port. Handsome townhouses reached skyward above new tree-lined streets along the canals. Built for bankers and merchants, the townhouses had narrow and increasingly ornamented facades, dauntingly steep staircases, and drains and sew-

ers. The city spread out from the port along the semi-radial canals. The Dutch Republic benefited not only from relatively good roads, which expedited internal trade, but also from 500 miles of canals dug during the middle decades of the century.

Dutch traders steadily expanded their range and the variety of goods they bartered. They specialized in bulk goods carried by specially designed long, flat vessels that could be cheaply built and operated. The Dutch Republic's merchant fleet tripled during the first half of the century. Dutch shipbuilding boomed, aided by wind-powered sawmills. The Dutch Republic's 2,500 ships in the 1630s accounted for about half of Europe's shipping. Amsterdam became the principal supplier of grain and fish in Europe as the Dutch dominated the lucrative Baltic trade. Dutch ships hauled most of the iron produced in Sweden, and carried wheat and rye from Poland and East Prussia, dropping off what was needed for local consumption and then carrying what was left to France, Spain, and the Mediterranean. Capital investment and shrewd knowledge of markets made the herring trade a crucial part of Dutch prosperity. Dutch fishing boats were omnipresent in the rich North Sea fishing grounds. In 500 ships solid enough to stand up to the storms of the North Sea, Dutch fishermen worked in waters as far away as northern Scotland, the Shetland Islands, and Iceland. As many as 200 million herring a year were salted and packed in wooden casks, then exchanged for grain, salt, wine, and other commodities.

In 1602, a group of investors founded a private trading company, the Dutch East India Company, to which the government of the Dutch Republic granted a monopoly for trade in East Asia. When the Thirty Years' War and a Spanish embargo on Dutch commerce reduced continental trade, Dutch traders successfully developed trade overseas with India, Ceylon, Indonesia, and Japan. The Dutch East India Company proved to be stiff competition for the English company of the same name.

Tolerance and Prosperity

In contrast to England, where religious division led to civil war, the Dutch Republic remained a relative haven of toleration in an era of religious hatred. During the last decades of the sixteenth century, perhaps 60,000 Huguenots fled to the Dutch Republic to escape persecution in France and the Spanish Netherlands. Published works circulated throughout the Netherlands defending the rights of religious dissidents, including Mennonites, Lutherans, Quakers fleeing England, and Dutch Collegiants (a dissident Protestant group). Amsterdam's Jewish community numbered 7,500. Most were immigrants from the German states, and they spoke Yiddish among themselves, as well as German and Dutch; others had originally left persecution in Spain and Portugal. The municipal government rejected a request by Christian merchants that their Jewish competitors be restricted, as in many European cities, to a specific neighborhood, or ghetto. The

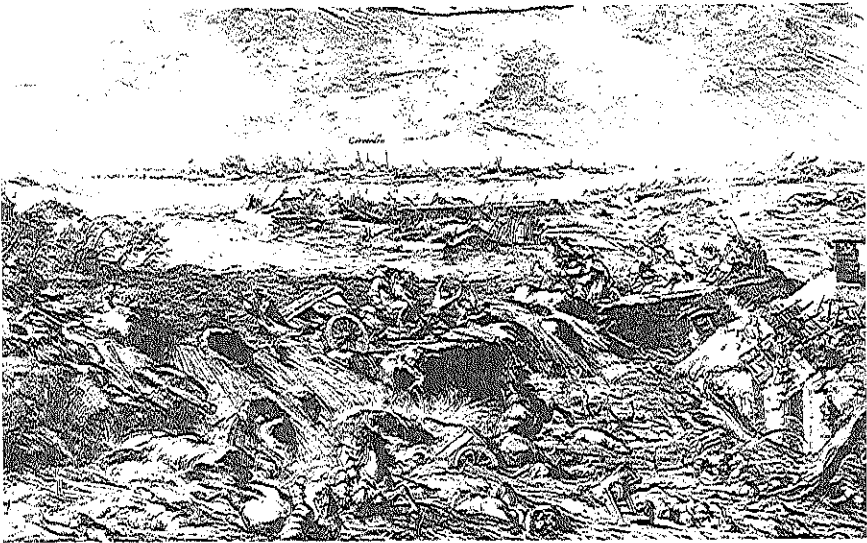
Amsterdam regents built 1,000 dwellings for refugees. Refugees from religious persecution in other countries contributed to the prosperity of the Dutch Republic.

Nonetheless, despite the religious toleration generally accorded in the Dutch Republic, the Dutch Reformed Church, a strict Calvinist religion, did persecute and discriminate against some religious groups. Dutch Arminians asked for protection from persecution in a Remonstrance (which gave them their most common name, the Remonstrants). Catholics, most of whom lived in the eastern provinces, also faced Calvinist hostility, although many had fought for Dutch independence. Jews were excluded from most guilds, and gypsies were routinely hounded and persecuted. Overall, however, toleration seemed less divisive to the Dutch than intolerance, and it seemed to make economic sense as well.

The Dutch Republic blossomed like the famous tulips that were so popular in Holland (the craze over this flower, originally imported from Turkey, reached such a fever pitch that a single tulip bulb could cost as much as the equivalent of three years' wages for a master artisan). To the eyes of a French visitor, Amsterdam was "swollen with people, chock-full of goods, and filled with gold and silver." The Dutch in the middle decades of the seventeenth century reached a level of prosperity unmatched in Europe at the time. Real wages rose during the last half of the seventeenth century while falling elsewhere. Dutch families enjoyed a relatively varied diet, consuming more meat and cheese—as well as, of course, fish—than households elsewhere in Europe. Amsterdam's market offered a plethora of colonial goods, such as coffee, tea, cocoa, ginger, and other spices; dried and pickled herring and other fish; a wide range of grains; finished cloth from Antwerp and Florence; Silesian linens; and English woolens. Dutch manufacturers, with windmills providing power, found lucrative outlets for draperies, worsteds, papers, books, and jewels. Even at the beginning of the century, Amsterdam had almost 200 breweries and more than 500 taverns.

Although prosperity reached far down the social ladder, the Dutch Republic also had its poor, who lived in the narrow streets around the Bourse (Stock Exchange), in poor farmhouses in the eastern flatlands, and in the huts of ethnic Frisian fishermen exposed to the onslaught of the waves and wind of the North Sea. The urban poor occasionally rioted and sometimes stole in order to survive. The proliferation of charitable institutions demonstrated Dutch compassion but also the desire to confine vagrants and beggars, as well as a capacity to lash out in brutal repression when patience with the poor grew thin. Beatings, floggings, branding, and even death remained common forms of punishment, and gallows stood at the main gates of large cities.

Yet despite prosperity, a sense of precariousness and vulnerability permeated the Republic. The armies of the ambitious king of France camped across the low-lying Southern Netherlands (now Belgium). The Republic had almost no natural resources and was subject to sudden calamities



Dike breach at Caevarden. Because so much land had been reclaimed from the sea, many of the Dutch lived in chronic fear of flooding.

brought by weather. A good part of the Dutch Netherlands would have been under water were it not for the famous dikes. These occasionally broke with catastrophic consequences long remembered (a flood in 1421 had claimed over 100,000 lives). A sense that disaster might be looming was reflected by the popularity in the Republic of novels and histories about disasters. This may explain the sense of solidarity and patriotic duty that brought people of various classes together against Spanish rule.

Seventeenth-Century Dutch Culture

Dutch painting in the golden age of the seventeenth century reflected not only the Republic's commercial wealth, but also its toleration and openness to secular styles and subject matter. The Dutch press enjoyed relative freedom; books were printed in the Republic that could not have been printed elsewhere. The first English and French newspapers were published in 1620, not in London and Paris, but in Amsterdam. Dutch publishers diffused knowledge of the Scientific Revolution (see Chapter 8). Dutch writers and poets discovered their own language, translated Latin authors, and popularized Dutch accounts of the revolt against Spain.

Dutch painting reflected the prosperity and taste of the middle class. Like the artists of the Renaissance, Dutch painters depended on the patronage of people of means, particularly wealthy Amsterdam merchants. Although Delft and several other towns each claimed their own style, the great port of Amsterdam dominated the art market. Some shopkeepers and craftsmen were

prosperous enough to buy a painting or two, and some well-off peasants did as well.

Holland's regents, in particular, patronized Dutch painting. In contrast, the princes of Orange and some nobles patronized French and other foreign artists whose work reflected baroque themes associated with the Catholic Reformation found in the Southern Netherlands. Flanders became a northern outpost of the Catholic Reformation, encouraging religious themes with emotional appeal. In the Dutch Republic, by contrast, ecclesiastical artistic patronage was generally absent. Indeed, the Dutch Reformed Church ordered the removal of paintings from its churches.

Dutch painters looked to picturesque urban and rural scenes within their own country for inspiration. The Dutch school retained much of its cultural unity at least through the first half of the seventeenth century. Until 1650, the Republic remained relatively isolated from outside cultural influences, despite the arrival of refugees and immigrants. Very few Dutch artists and writers had the resources to travel as far as Italy or even France; even those who earned a comfortable living showed little inclination to go abroad. The group paintings of merchants or regents and municipal governments were usually commissioned by the subjects themselves, as in the case of Rembrandt van Rijn's *The Night Watch* (1642), a theatrically staged masterpiece presenting a group of city officials in uniform.

Rembrandt (1606–1669) was the son of a miller from Leiden. He was one of a handful of Dutch painters who amassed a fortune. Certainly, few artists have so successfully portrayed human emotions through the use of color, light, and shadow. Despite his posthumous fame, in his own time the brooding Rembrandt was a loner isolated from other painters. He bickered with his patrons and squandered most of what he made. Rembrandt increasingly became his own favorite subject, and he did at least eighty self-portraits, some of which reveal a thinly disguised sadness.

Dutch painters depicted everyday life. The prolific Jacob van Ruisdael (c. 1628–1682) mastered the visual effects of light on figures, trees, and household objects. The remarkable ability of Delft-born Jan Vermeer (1632–1675) to place simple scenes of ordinary people in astonishing light exemplifies the Golden Age of Dutch painting. Within the Dutch school of the seventeenth century, only Rembrandt frequently turned to the classical biblical themes that were so predominant in Flemish art. Although seascapes and naval scenes proliferated in Dutch painting, there were few canvases depicting battles, a favorite subject in absolute states, and those took their place on the large walls of noble châteaux in the distant countryside, not in the narrow houses of Amsterdam.

The Dutch considered the household a place of refuge and safety from the struggles of the outside world, as well as the basis of economic, social, and political order, and therefore worthy of artistic representation. Frans Hals (1580–1666) brought middle-class subjects and militia companies to life in remarkably composed individual and collective portraits. Paintings of fami-



A peasant family pausing to pray before mealtime.

lies at work, at play, or eating were particularly popular. Jan Steen (1626–1679) portrayed boisterous revelers of different means. Still lifes of platters of food became staples for Dutch artists, with titles such as *Still Life with Herring* and *Jug Still Life with Lobster*. The banquet became a favorite subject, with all of its accoutrements, such as oak table and chairs, iron cooking pans, elegant plates and drinking vessels, and its rituals, such as the prayer, the careful carving of the meat, and rounds of toasts.

The relationship between parents and children emerged as another familiar domestic theme. The Dutch painters also frequently portrayed servants, furniture and other household goods, and domestic pets. However, women on Dutch canvases appear more equal to men than they were in reality.

THE DECLINE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

The relative decline of Dutch power is perhaps not surprising, given the greater economic resources and populations of France and England. England

emerged in the second half of the century as the world's dominant commercial power, although the decline of Dutch trade was not complete until early in the eighteenth century.

The Dutch Republic tried to steer a course between England (its greatest commercial rival) and France, but this proved impossible. Wars against England in defense of Dutch commercial interests drained resources. Furthermore, Louis XIV of France had designs on the Netherlands. In 1667, France imposed damaging tariffs on Dutch goods and also forced the Dutch out of the cinnamon-producing island of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in the Indian Ocean. In Brazil, the Dutch West India Company failed to dislodge the Portuguese. Few Dutch demonstrated much enthusiasm for these distant places, and the Republic's colonial empire lagged behind those of England and Spain, to be sure, but also behind that of France.

With Spain weakened, Louis XIV coveted the Southern Netherlands, the conquest of which would place the Dutch in direct danger. Should France be able to open the Scheldt River (closed by the Spanish in 1585 with the goal of breaking the Dutch rebellion) to international trade, Antwerp's return to its former prosperity would be at Amsterdam's expense. In 1672, Louis XIV invaded the Dutch Republic, having signed a secret treaty with King Charles II of England (see Chapter 7). French armies quickly occupied all of the Republic except for two provinces, one of which was Holland. But the Dutch successfully defended the Republic, defeating the English fleet and pushing back the French army.

Taking advantage of the invasion, William of Orange (King William III of England in 1688) forced the States General to name him stadholder in 1672. He ordered the dikes opened, literally flooding the French into retreat. Royalist mobs murdered the leading official of the Republic and several influential regents of Holland who had dedicated themselves to keeping the stadholders in place. Supporters of the House of Orange eased into important political positions in that province. The Orangists controlled the Republic's foreign policy until the end of the century, but they still could not impose a monarchy on the provinces. With William's death in 1702, the main Orange dynastic line ended.

After the Glorious Revolution in England in 1688, the United Provinces allied with England and Sweden, fearing that Louis XIV of France might again invade. The alliance helped stave off the French threat in the last decades of the century, but at the same time it dragged the small country into a series of wars with France that lasted until the mid-eighteenth century, necessitating considerable spending on armies and southern fortifications.

The relative decline of Dutch influence in Europe could be first seen by about 1670 or 1680. Some luxury products, such as linen and Delft porcelain, continued to sell abroad, but Holland's textile industry and shipbuilding failed to keep pace with those of its rivals, above all England. Higher production costs (particularly wages) and a lack of technological innovation were at least partially to blame. Rivals imposed tariffs, which kept out many Dutch

products. Dutch ships lost control of the Baltic trade. The Dutch faced competition in the herring market from England, France, and Sweden. The protectionist policies of Britain and Sweden protected their own fishermen while cutting off their domestic markets to Dutch herring. English warships destroyed Dutch ships in the wars fought between the two rivals. Furthermore, some Dutch entrepreneurs lent money abroad or invested in the colonies, land, government stocks, and even in English manufacturing, not in Dutch businesses. Investment in agriculture and land reclamation fell off.

Spain's golden age of art coincided with its decline as a great power. In contrast, Dutch painting languished with the nation's decline. Painters began looking abroad for inspiration and, in doing so, lost some originality. In the 1650s, the Amsterdam regents ignored the Dutch school when planning the construction and decoration of the new town hall, which combines Italian classicism and the Flemish baroque flamboyance. Some Dutch leaders now took pride in speaking French, believing it the language of good taste. French classicism overwhelmed Dutch literature and poetry. Although the French military invasion of 1672 failed, a cultural invasion succeeded. Dutch artists began to offer pale imitations of French works. There were fewer paintings of attentive and hardworking municipal and provincial officials.

The originality of Dutch political life also waned with relative economic decline. The great merchant families maintained increasingly tight control over the position of regent and other influential posts. A form of municipal corruption ("contracts of correspondence") allowed them to divide up or even purchase lucrative government positions. More regents were now major landowners and had little in common with merchants, who had vital interests in government policies.

Government became more rigid, more distant from the Dutch people, and less tolerant, persecuting religious dissenters and undertaking a witch hunt against homosexuals. The Dutch army became increasingly one of mercenaries, not citizens. The Dutch Republic's loss of vitality and economic primacy was accompanied by its decline in international affairs.

CONCLUSION

At the dawn of the eighteenth century, England and the Netherlands remained non-absolutist states. The victory of Parliament in the English Civil War, the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and the Bill of Rights of 1689, accepted by the monarchy, guaranteed the rights of Parliament and the rule of law. While the Netherlands entered a period of decline, as had Spain, Great Britain (as England became known in 1707 after the formal union with Scotland) would remain a great power in the eighteenth century, enriched by commerce and empire. In the meantime, the kings of Spain and the rulers of France, Prussia, Austria, Russia, and Sweden increased their authority over their subjects as continental Europe entered the age of absolutism.

THE AGE OF ABSOLUTISM, 1650–1720



In Louis XIV's France, architects and artists were paid to glorify the monarch. In 1662, the king chose the sun as his emblem; he declared himself *nec pluribus impar*—without equal. To Louis, the sun embodied virtues that he associated with the ideal monarch: firmness, benevolence, and equity. Henceforth, Louis XIV would frequently be depicted as Apollo, the Greek and Roman sun god.

The rulers of continental Europe, including Louis XIV (ruled 1643–1715), relentlessly extended their power between 1650 and 1750. The sovereigns of France, Prussia, Russia, Austria, and Sweden, in particular, became absolute rulers, in principle above all challenge from within the state itself. To the east, the power of the Turkish sultan of the Ottoman Empire was itself already in principle absolute. Rulers extended their dynastic domains and prestige, making their personal rule absolute, based on loyalty to them as individuals, not to the state as an abstraction. But at the same time, they helped lay the foundations for the modern centralized state. Absolute rulers asserted their supreme right to proclaim laws and levy taxes, appointing more officials to carry out the details of governance and multiplying fiscal demands on their subjects. They ended most of the long-standing privileges of towns, which had survived longer in Western Europe than in Eastern Europe, such as freedom from taxation, or the right to maintain independent courts.

The absolute state affected the lives of more people than ever before through taxation, military service, and the royal quest for religious orthodoxy. Absolute rule thus impinged directly on the lives of subjects, who felt the extended reach of state power through, for example, more efficient tax collection. A Prussian recalled that in school no child would question “that the king could cut off the noses and ears of all his subjects if he wished to