

The Decline of Absolutism in England



England in the 17th Century

- Theme: Change over time
 - Absolutism → Constitutionalism
- End of the Tudor Monarchy
- Reign of the Scottish Stuarts
 - Interrupted by the English Civil War and the English “Republic”
- By the end, England will have a Glorious Revolution!



The Ascension of the Stuarts

- King James I
 - Scot
 - Sympathetic to Catholicism
 - Male lovers
 - Uninterested in fulfilling the “majestic” role of the monarch
 - Proponent of divine right monarchy



English House of Commons

- Unlike other European representative bodies, the HOC has a strong heritage
 - Magna Carta
 - “Model Parliament”
 - “power of the purse”
- Due to CR, the HOC members were very wealthy, very educated, and very power-hungry



King Charles vs Parliament

- Petition of Right
 - Due process of law
 - No taxation without consent
 - No quartering
 - No martial law
- First document since Magna Carta that attempts to limit power of king
 - Charles ignored it and failed to call Parliament for 11 years!



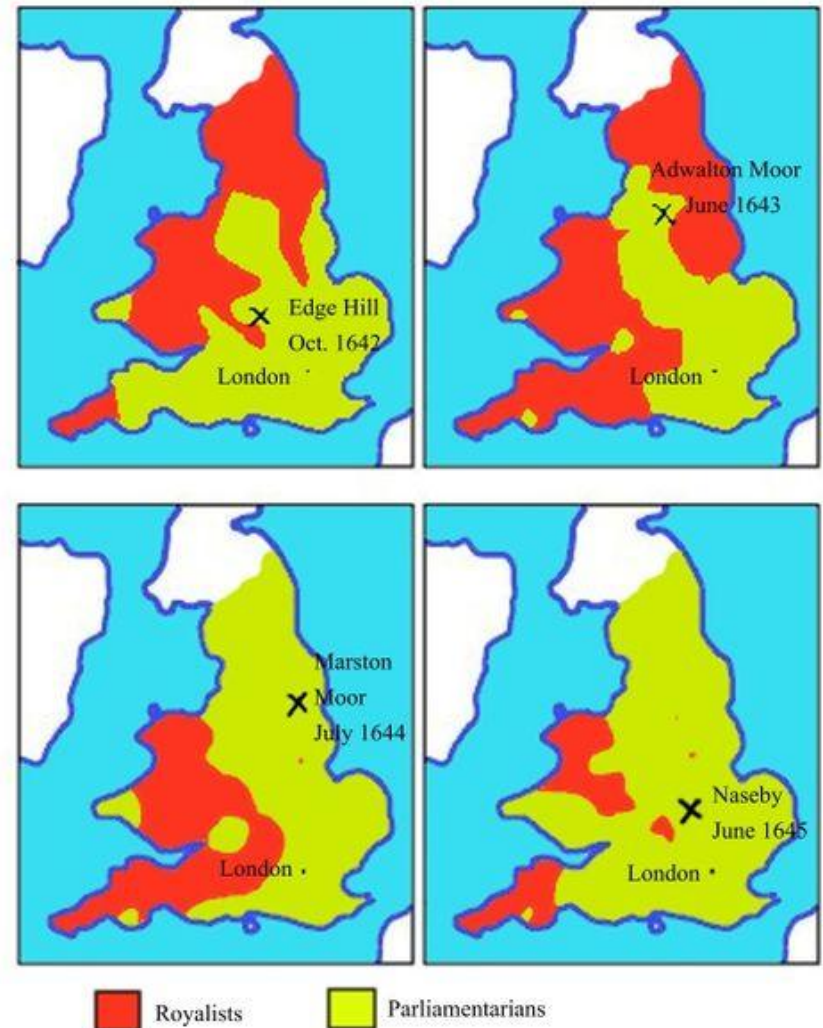
Causes of the English Civil War

- The Personal Rule
 - 11 years without calling Parliament!
- Levied taxes without seeking Parliament's consent
 - Ship Money
- Religious policies
 - “Arminianism” seemed like Catholicism
 - Growing unrest among Puritans!
- War with the Scots in 1640
 - In desperation, he called Parliament...the “Long Parliament”



The English Civil War (1642-1649)

- Cavaliers – Royalists
 - At first, more experienced
- Roundheads – Parliamentarians and Puritans
 - Controlled the money and London
- Oliver Cromwell raises the New Model Army
 - Defeats Charles in 1647



A sign of things to come?



The English “Republic”

- Instrument of Government (1653)
 - Supposedly created the first English Republic
 - It was quickly dismissed by Cromwell
- Protectorate → Military dictatorship
 - Cromwell instituted Puritanical Absolutism



The Puritan Revolution?

- Religious radicalism flourished during the English Revolution
 - Repressed sects worshipped freely and new sects appeared
- Age of Pamphleteering
 - Calls for religious toleration
- Once the Puritanical NMA took power, radical ideas were crushed
 - Levellers, pre-modern liberals, were silenced!

THE ¹⁹
World turn'd upside down:
OR,
A briefe description of the ridiculous Fashions
of these distracted Times.
By T. J. a well-willer to King, Parliament and Kingdom.



London: Printed for John Smith. ¹⁶⁴⁶ 1647.
Jan: 28.

The Restoration of 1660

- King Charles II
 - Good relations with Parliament due to creation of Cabal
 - Test Act – Banned non-Anglicans from gov't
 - Secret agreement with the “Sun-King”
 - Money for Catholicism
 - Exclusion Crisis
 - Whigs vs Tories
 - Parliament tried to restrict English throne to non-Catholics, but Charles dissolved it



An English Nightmare

- King James II
 - Openly Catholic!
 - Violated the Test Act
 - Suspended the law at will
 - Issued religious freedom to all in England!
- The straw to break the camel's back
 - James' wife gave birth to a son!
 - Whigs and Tories temporarily unite!



Glorious Revolution (1688-89)

- A party of Englishmen offered the throne to James' daughter Mary and her husband Prince William of Orange
- Why so glorious?
 - Lack of bloodshed
 - Triumph of Parliament
 - Monarchs recognized the supremacy of Parliament
 - Power is shared between the two!



The Triumph of Constitutionalism

- English Bill of Rights
 - Limitation of government by law
 - Balance between the power of government and rights of the people
- Key points:
 - Right to bear arms
 - Freedom of religion
 - Law made in Parliament
 - No quartering



English Cabinet System

- Under the Hanoverian Kings, key members of Parliament became chief ministers of the state
 - Though they worked with king, they were responsible to HOC
- Sir Robert Walpole became first PM
 - Held legislative and executive power!

