

REVOLUTIONS IN ENGLAND

People in 17th-century England took actions to bring an end to absolute monarchy. In two revolutions, the English limited the power of their kings and made their government more democratic.

1. The Puritan Revolt. The death of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603 ended the rule of the Tudor family in England.

a. James I. Following Elizabeth, James I ruled England from 1603 to 1625. He was a member of the Stuart family, which had ruled Scotland for a long time. Tension quickly grew between James and Parliament.

Members of Parliament resented James because he was a foreigner. They also disliked his many requests for money and his efforts to impose taxes without Parliament's consent. Parliament also distrusted James's desire for an alliance with Spain, which was a Catholic country. James had been raised by Presbyterians. As king of England, he supported the Anglican church. Another cause of friction was James's dislike of Puritans, who held many seats in Parliament. The Puritans were a powerful Calvinist sect. They considered Anglicanism too close to Catholicism and tried to "purify" the rituals of the Church of England. James and Parliament clashed many times throughout his reign of 22 years.

b. Charles I. Under James's son, Charles I (ruled 1625–1649), relations between the king and Parliament became worse. Like his father, Charles was a strong believer in absolutism and the divine right of kings. He, too, supported the Church of England. Like his father, Charles discriminated against Puritans.

Charles had little respect for Parliament. When Parliament refused to give him money to build up his military forces, he forced people to lend him money. Those who refused were sent to prison or drafted into the army.

In 1628, Parliament agreed to give Charles the money he wanted if he signed the *Petition of Right*. This document prohibited the ruler from imposing taxes without the consent of Parliament. It also stated that no person could be sent to prison without having the charges made public. Charles agreed to these provisions but later ignored them. He raised taxes without the consent of Parliament. He also had people arrested and secretly tried in a special court called the Star Chamber. In this royal law court, people were denied a jury. When Parliament objected, Charles dismissed it and ruled alone for 11 years, until 1640.

Charles did not call Parliament into session again until he had exhausted every other way of raising money. The House of Commons was controlled by Charles's Puritan enemies. Their efforts to restrict the power of the king led to more tension. Before granting any new taxes, the Puritans insisted that Charles be less autocratic. In 1642, Charles attempted to arrest some of the Puritan leaders of Parliament. This action touched off the English Civil War, also called the Puritan Revolt (1642–1648).

c. *Cavaliers vs. Roundheads.* Those who fought for the king were called Royalists or Cavaliers. They included the nobles, many Roman Catholics, wealthy landowners, and supporters of the Church of England.

Those who fought for Parliament were known as Roundheads. (They cut their hair short, while most of the Cavaliers wore their hair long.) Chief among them were the Puritans. Parliament also had the aid of the Scots, who objected to Charles's interference with their Presbyterian (Protestant) religion. Small farmers, merchants, and others who had suffered from the king's policies also supported the Roundheads.

After 1643, Oliver Cromwell, a deeply religious Puritan, led the Roundhead forces. He trained and organized his men into a superior fighting force. It was called the New Model Army. Cromwell's victory over the Royalists in 1648 left Parliament and the Puritans in control of England. Early in 1649, Parliament tried Charles I,



Oliver Cromwell at the time of Charles I's execution.

convicted him of treason, and beheaded him. Absolutism and the monarchy had temporarily come to an end.

2. Commonwealth and Restoration. After he had won the civil war, Oliver Cromwell made England into a republic in 1649. It was called the *Commonwealth*.

a. Commonwealth and Protectorate. In the new government, Cromwell and Parliament shared power. But tension soon developed between the two. Cromwell dissolved Parliament twice and after 1654 ruled as a dictator. He took the title of Lord Protector of England. During the period of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, England had its first, and only, written constitution. It was called the Instrument of Government.

Between 1649 and 1651, Cromwell put down royalist uprisings in Ireland and Scotland. He treated the Irish in a particularly harsh and cruel manner.

Many English people came to resent Cromwell's rule. He closed all theaters and other places of public amusement. He also did not permit any opposition to his religious or political ideas. Heavy taxes and Puritan intolerance of the Anglican religion, to which the majority of English belonged, increased dislike of Cromwell.

b. The Restoration. After Cromwell's death in 1658, Parliament again had the most power. But the majority of the English people wanted a king again. In 1660, Parliament invited the oldest son of Charles I to return to England from his exile on the continent of Europe. The rule of Charles II (1660–1685) is called the *Restoration*. While the monarchy was restored, it was marked by a sharing of power between the king and Parliament. Charles II reigned as a limited monarch.

An important step to protect individual rights was taken during the Restoration period. In 1679, Parliament passed the *Habeas Corpus* Act. It stated that a person who was arrested could obtain a writ, or order, demanding to be taken before a judge within a certain period of time. The judge would then decide whether the person should be placed on trial or released.

Political parties began to develop during the Restoration. Supporters of the king came to be called Tories. Those who wanted Parliament to be stronger than the king were known as Whigs. Limited monarchy, *habeas corpus*, and the rise of political parties contributed to the growth of democracy in England.

The Merry Monarch

In 1658, the lord protector of England, Oliver Cromwell, died. With his death, the hope of a Puritan England vanished. In 1660, the English, dissatisfied with Cromwell's military dictatorship, invited Charles II to become king of England. Eleven years earlier, his father, King Charles I, had been executed by Cromwell.

With great ceremony, Charles II was crowned. His first acts as king were to grant pardons to many of his former enemies and to proclaim religious freedom. He was a tolerant ruler who had no wish to persecute anyone. Throughout his reign of 25 years, Charles managed to control the powerful religious and political groups that threatened to throw England into another civil war. While Charles sympathized with the Roman Catholics, he

made peace with the Puritans and the Church of England (Anglicans).

Charles had other immediate problems to deal with. As a result of commercial competition, England went to war with Holland in 1664. A widespread plague struck England in 1665. In 1666, the Great Fire of London destroyed most of the city.

Throughout these troubles, Charles quietly remained in command. In doing so, he acquired more power for the monarchy. Yet, as king, Charles contributed to the growth of democracy in England. For example, he approved the *Habeas Corpus* Act of 1679, which safeguarded citizens from improper arrest and jailing.

Charles recognized that science, mathematics, and technology would be important to the nation's future. In 1662,



King Charles II.

he founded the Royal Society of London, an "invisible university" where scientists such as Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, and William Harvey could meet, discuss theories, and publish papers.

Charles promoted the arts as well. Music and painting flourished, as did architecture. After the Great Fire, there was a need for good architects to design hundreds of new churches and public buildings in London.

Charles was an easygoing monarch. He played with his dogs and generally enjoyed life. Because of this, people

called him the "Merry Monarch." Charles liked horse racing and often rode in races himself. He was a good tennis player. The game became popular again after being out of favor during the Cromwell years.

Charles II died at the age of 55. With his last breath and with some wit, he begged his friends to forgive him for taking such a long time to die.

Give two reasons why Charles II was a popular king.

3. The Glorious Revolution. James II became king of England in 1685. He was the younger brother of Charles II and the last Stuart to rule. A Roman Catholic convert and a believer in absolute monarchy, he was disliked by Parliament. But Parliament was willing to support James because he had Protestant daughters married to Protestant princes who would succeed him. When James's second wife, a Catholic, gave birth to a son in 1688, Parliament became worried. (A son, no matter what age, inherited the throne before a daughter.) Parliament feared that another Catholic king would rule England upon the death of James II. Most members of Parliament agreed that this could not be allowed to happen.

Parliament secretly invited James's daughter Mary and her husband, William of Orange, the ruler of Holland, to rule England as Protestant king and queen. They accepted. When William landed in England with an army and marched on London, James II fled to France. Because William and Mary won their victory without bloodshed, this event is called the *Glorious Revolution*. The monarchs officially began their joint rule in 1689.

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 ended absolute monarchy in England forever. Limited monarchy became the permanent form of government. In 1689, the English *Bill of Rights* made it clear that Parliament would have more power than the kings and queens of England. The bill, also known as the Declaration of Rights, stated that taxes imposed without the consent of Parliament were illegal. It declared that the ruler could not suspend laws passed by Parliament. It prohibited English courts from imposing cruel punishments. It provided for frequent meetings of Parliament and gave all members of Parliament freedom of speech.