
UNIT 1: BACKGROUND: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRISIS IN 17TH CENTURY EUROPE

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism
- 1.3 Economic Crisis
- 1.4 Climate Change
- 1.5 Demographic Decline
- 1.6 Conflicts and Wars
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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to understand

- concept of general crisis of 17th century in Europe,
- role and impact of transition from Feudalism to Capitalism, and
- political, economic, and social upheaval of 17th century in Europe.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The 17th century in Europe is usually portrayed both as a time of war and crisis, social unrest and civil resistance, and as a period of almost unequalled material progress, a new world order, and restoration. Few historical controversies have been as prolonged, wide-ranging, and fruitful as the debate over “the crisis of the seventeenth century.” The emergence of capitalism, the development of the modern state, the history of revolts and rebellions, population growth, price history, the question of unequal development—these are just some of the subjects that fell within its purview. In addition, the crisis debate drew upon and stimulated some of the best and most interesting new developments in historical methodology, such as British Marxism, historical sociology, the Annales School, the new social history of the

1960s, modernization theory, historical demography, and world systems studies. Historians' have taken recourse to the crisis concept for the seventeenth century across the various sub-fields of their discipline.

1.2 TRANSITION FROM FEUDALISM TO CAPITALISM

Capitalism during the 17th century is generally described as a parasite operating under the constraints of a feudal apparatus. Hobsbawm held that if capitalism is to rise, feudal or agrarian society must be revolutionized. He outlined the criteria necessary for capitalism to become dominate. First, there must be enough accumulated capital to fund capitalistic expansion. Second there must be increase in the division of labour so production can increase to capitalistic levels. A large quantity of wage earners who exchange their monies for goods and service at market is also required, and lastly the current colonial system must be revolutionized as well.

The obstacles to the fulfillment of these criteria are as follows. Peasants and much of the general population rarely used money except when dealing with the state. Under the self-sustaining localized agrarian economies of feudalism, there are an insufficient number of buyers of mass produced goods. This makes mass production uneconomical and thus capitalistic profits impossible. Under feudalism and the absence of a mass market, sellers would opt to make the most profit possible per sale by limiting production and focusing on luxury goods (*i.e.* silk and pepper) instead of more revolutionary commodities (*i.e.* sugar and cotton) which should be mass produced and sold at lower prices to generate maximum aggregate profits. With the lure of these revolutionary capitalistic profits absent, so is the fundamental motivation for establishment of capitalism.

Europe in the early 17th century was faced with a number of obstacles to economic development *i.e.* Population declined or stagnated, the gains of the north-western states not exceeding the losses of the Mediterranean world. From the 1620's to the 1650's was a distinct period of crisis in commerce *i.e.* the Sound tolls of the Baltic, trade of foodstuffs, the poor profits of the Dutch and English East India companies as well as Amsterdam's Wisselbank's profits. The expansion of Europe experienced contraction from 1600-1640 while at home it experienced a socio-revolutionary crisis from 1640-1660. One of the only positive results of this crisis was the rise of absolutism, since it solved three main problems in Europe *viz.*, Government became enforced over large areas; it could gather enough capital for lump-sum payments; and it could now run its own armies. But even absolutism was a result of economic crisis. For the causes of this crisis four areas were important: the specialization of 'feudal capitalists' in the case of Italy, the contradictions of expansion in Eastern Europe, the contradictions of expansion in overseas and colonial markets, and the contradictions of home markets. Italy was a prime example of how the capital up to this point was poorly invested. The poor economic choices of the wealthy (investment in the arts and architecture instead of improved means of production)

created the economic decline of Italy. In the old colonial system initial costs followed by a crisis because of rising protection costs and limited technological advancement. This same lack of innovation meant the slow growth of capitalism, as Hobsbawm states it, "economic expansion took place within a social framework which it was not yet strong enough to burst". These obstacles combined with the sharp deflation following the Thirty Years' War created a European-wide economic crisis.

1.3 ECONOMIC CRISIS

The seventeenth-century crisis was not a universal retrogression, but that it hit the various sectors at different times and to a different extent. The long-term trends in trade and industry are unclear: there were crises at one time or another in every European production centre and in all branches of European trade, but it is impossible to pinpoint a time or a period when European trade and industry as a whole was hit by a depression. On the other hand, the demographic trends and agricultural prices and production indicate that there was something seriously the matter with the European economy, and the low relative prices combined with the falling yield indicate that we should seek the explanation not solely in poorer climatic conditions or in population pressure—for in that case the prices would have been rising—but in the inability of the population to buy corn and their inability to survive. Finally, if we take a look at the public sector and reckon protection to be a service, in the economic-theoretical meaning of the word, the whole question of a seventeenth-century crisis falls to the ground. Never before was Spain so thoroughly protected as under Philip-IV, never before was Germany so thoroughly protected as during the Thirty Years' War, and never before was France so thoroughly protected as under the cardinals, and Louis-XIV. The production of protection was the seventeenth century's 'leading sector'. It would be reasonable to suppose that these phenomena were interrelated. An increase in taxation in the widest sense, which exceeded the increase in production in an economy still chiefly based on subsistence agriculture, would have precisely these effects. Part of the population was always living at or near subsistence level, and an increase in the tax burden would reduce their chances of surviving an especially difficult year. Furthermore, it may be regarded as probable that a population would react to a drop in its available income by a reduction in the birth rate, *e.g.*, by raising the age at first marriage. The effect in the agricultural sector would, with the exception of a few privileged localities, be purely negative, as the decrease in private demand would not be compensated for by an increase in public expenditure. For industry and trade the effects would be more complicated. Increased public demand would probably more than compensate for the reduced private demand, but not necessarily within the same production areas. Moreover, the difference in the level of taxes and in the tax systems would have different effects on the production costs and thereby on the ability to compete in the various production centres.

1.4 CLIMATE CHANGE

The General Crisis overlaps fairly neatly with the Little Ice Age whose peak some authorities locate in the 17th century. Of particular interest is the overlap with the Maunder Minimum, El Niño events and an abnormal spate of volcanic activity. Climatologists such as David Rind and Jonathan Overpeck have hypothesised that these three events are interlinked. Across the Northern Hemisphere, the mid-17th century experienced almost unprecedented death rates. Geoffrey Parker has suggested that environmental factors may have been in part to blame, especially the global cooling trend of this period.

1.5 DEMOGRAPHIC DECLINE

During this period there was a significant decline in populations particularly in Europe and China. The cause for this demographic decline is complicated and significantly unproven but war, climate change and migration are the main factors that contributed to this population crisis. War ravaged Europe for almost the entirety of the century with no major state avoiding war in the 1640s. Some states saw very few years of peace for example Poland only saw 27 years of peace, the Dutch Republic 14, France 11, and Spain only 3. An example of the impact of war on demography in Europe is Germany, whose population was reduced by approximately 15% to 30% in the Thirty Years' War. Another factor for the demographic decline in Europe was the spate of climatic events that dramatically affected the food supply and caused major crop failure in the marginal farmland of Europe. During this period there was a drop of 1–2 °C, which coincides with the Maunder Minimum and frequent, large spates of volcanism which acted to drop temperatures enough to cause crop failures in Europe. Crop failures were met with a wave of urban migration that perpetuated unsustainable urban populations and caused in some areas a Malthusian crisis. Although in some areas the early stages of the subsistence crises were not necessarily Malthusian in nature, the result usually followed this model of agricultural deficit in relation to population.

1.6 CONFLICTS AND WARS

One important example of the crisis is the thirty years war. It was a war that took place in central Europe (especially in Germany) between 1618 and 1648, in which the majority of the great European powers intervened. This war would mark the future of the European continent in the centuries to follow. The origin of this war goes back to the Peace of Augsburg, which basically stated that the religion of the ruler of the land will be the religion of the people. This resolved the conflicts between the Catholics and the Protestants for a while, but due to the diverse religions practiced in the German states, it did not solve the underlying religious issues definitively. Just by analysing the phrases above, we automatically get the sense that it was religious conflicts the root cause of this war. This is confirmed by the event

that sparked the war, the revolt in Bohemia. In this revolt, member of the predominantly protestant bohemian legislature threw two catholic government officials out the window, as a sign of protest against the religious policies of the newly elected king, the catholic Ferdinand-II. However, the Catholics defeated the protestants, and this leads us to another example of religion causing the 30 years war; the intervention of the Danish and then the Swedish. This happened because of the fear of these kingdoms that their sovereignty as protestant lands was threatened by the Catholic success in the war, and also because the declarations of the king Frederick-V, where he said that all Europe should be back to Catholic. Nevertheless, at this point the Catholics are still winning the war, and this catches the awareness of Cardinal Richelieu, who was the chief minister of King Louis-XII of France. From this point on, this religious war becomes political, because even though he was catholic, France decides to join the war and help the Protestants. The reason for this was simple, balance of power; the French felt that Habsburgs have gained too much power and they did not want just one great power to control Europe.

This war is a great example of how religious and political reasons shaped this European crisis, and how these events led to the economic and social problems that a war brings, in order to fund the war with money and men. After all, this war was ended with the Treaty of Westphalia which ironically ended up being like the treaty of the peace Augsburg that stated that the religion of the prince is the religion of the people. The political effects of this war were very traumatic as well, first it weakened the power of the empire, and the individual territories of the Germany gained more autonomy even than before the war.

Another problem that rose during this crisis was the war of the three kingdoms. This is another great example to argue that Trevor Roper was correct in explaining the main cause of the crisis. This war happened after England, Ireland and Scotland became united under the power of only one ruler. This was possible because, since Queen Elizabeth of England had no direct heir to her throne, the next in line was James Stuart, the king of Scotland. So what types of problems this created? First, James was a firm believer of the “divine right monarchy”, which basically means that he was placed there by god and does not have to report to anyone else. This belief did not bring many problems to other nations; however, the fact that England had a parliament created a lot of political tensions in this era. Expanding upon this, the wealth that the members of the parliament had acquired from the agricultural innovation, the expansion of their land and sheep count, increased this problems even more, because they now wanted to match their political power with their economic power. The fact of this happening brings us back to our thesis, and shows a religious problem becoming political, which ultimately becomes social. Historians argue this because the parliament starts to have power from the times of King Henry, when he needed their approval to separate from the Catholic Church (religion). Years after, this backfires to King James, because it gave more authority to the wealthy parliament, and clash with his ideals of divine right and absolutism

(Politics). Subsequently, creating a lot tension and confusion among the people of the three kingdoms, whose laws and taxes kept changing as the power of the monarchy and the parliament would fluctuate (Social).

To further support our point, we can cite the historian Paul Hazard, who coined the term “crisis of the European consciousness” to define an ideological crisis that could be found in the intellectual ambient of Europe after the wars of religion. This is a valid argument since it is logical to believe that religious conflicts could rupture the emotional stability of a society that is very much influenced by god and religion. The raise and growth of new religions that differed in many matters with ancient Catholicism brought into the map many thinkers that challenged even more the traditional beliefs. Intellectuals such as Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke and Newton share a common time, it can even be dated astronomically with the famous Halley’s comet of 1680 which allowed Pierre Bayle drafting its Charter, and use this to make fun (in a way) at the Religious superstitions and affirm that knowledge must be constantly proven and updated. However, this eventually created some social problems, since most of the universities and teaching centers were controlled and had the patronage of the church, being either catholic, like the Jesuits, or protestants. This is another example of how religious conflicts (Trevor’s argument) happened first and the led to social problems (Hobsbawn argument)

Possibly the best example of the religious and political causes of this crisis was the glorious revolution. Going back to the origin of the problem, old King James-II was a Catholic that had already irritated the parliament by relaxing the restrictions on the Catholics and allowing them to hold positions in public offices. Nevertheless, James was old and next line for the throne was his daughter Mary, a protestant that was married to William of Orange; so the parliament does not really take any action. However, things turn ugly after James-II has a son that would mean the continuity of Catholic rule in England, which the parliament would not allow. This caused the glorious revolution, and causes James to escape to France with his son, and William of Orange is invited to be king of England.

It is interesting to see how the biggest political problem that King James-II had was the fact that he was catholic, once again religion. In addition, the fact that the parliament is the one that invites William to be king summarizes the amount of power that he would have, which as we can see, was very limited. He was given many restrictions, such as the obligation to be an Anglican, he was not allowed to have a standing army, he was not allowed to veto a parliament act and there was no arbitrary arrest. Based on this, comes a liberal social movement that will support the ideas of the parliament in a way, and moves England even further away from absolutism. A leader of this movement is John Locke. We can see in his “*Two treatises to the government*” his idea of the natural right to live, which basically states that we all have a right to liberty and the possession of property. Moreover, if the government does not protect the natural right to live of the people, they can rebel and a demand a ruler who does not violate their rights.

Trevor and Hobsbawm use the Fronde in France as another example of the general crisis. It begun because of general discontent of the people. His beginnings were based on the economic crisis and increasing the tax burden generated to address the cost of participation of France in the Thirty Years War. Its most direct cause, however, can be found in the means used by the monarchy to raise taxes. With the arrival of the regent the people expected the monarchy to cut rates, but not so: Cardinal Mazarin thought that France could support the war and did not let up the pressure. In addition, the Parliament of Paris tried to limit the power of King Louis-XIV and also the nobility felt threatened by the king and wanted more of a voice in the government. All of the causes of the Fronde have political implications to it. Even If it is argued that the raise of the taxes was a social problem, it was a political decision to raise the taxes for war and specially to actually enter the war, with the ideals of balance of power.

Check Your Progress

1. Write a note on transition from Feudalism to Capitalism in Europe.

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2. Discuss in brief about Conflicts and Wars during 17th century Europe.

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1.7 LET US SUM UP

Socio-Economic and Political or popularly called as the general crisis was characterized by a series of wars, revolts, decline of population and political and social changes that in many cases could have been avoided if the right precautions would have been taken. However, the fact Europe was undergoing a time political absolutism and the close relation between church and government, made it impossible to avoid the conflicts. The numerous wars that happened aided by plagues and diseases, caused the first decline in the population after the middle ages, therefore creating social and economic problems in the region. This is the reason why Trevor Roper was right by saying that the root cause of the crisis was political

and religious which then led to economic and social problem, aggravating even more the situation.

1.8 KEY WORD

Consciousness : awareness of one's own existence, sensations, thoughts, surroundings, etc.

Crisis : a time of intense difficulty or danger

Fronde : a series of civil wars in France between 1648 and 1653

1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress

1. See Section 1.2
2. See Section 1.6

UNIT 2 : MAJOR ISSUES-POLITICAL AND INTELLECTUAL CURRENTS

Structure

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- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Periodization
- 2.3 Reformation
 - 2.3.1 Church of England
 - 2.3.2 Consequences of the Protestant Reformation
 - 2.3.3 Historiography
 - 2.3.4 Age of Enlightenment
- 2.4 Diplomacy and Warfare
 - 2.4.1 Thirty Years' War 1618-1648
- 2.5 Major States
 - 2.5.1 Holy Roman Empire
 - 2.5.2 Spain
 - 2.5.3 France
 - 2.5.4 England
 - 2.5.5 Papacy
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 Key Words
- 2.8 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to know;

- background for the growth of early modern period in Europe,
- major political and religious events of European society, and
- role of the major European states in the early modern period.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Early modern Europe is the period of European history between the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, roughly the late 15th century to the late 18th century. Historians variously mark the beginning of the early modern period with the invention of moveable type printing in the 1450s, the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, the end of the Wars of the Roses in 1487, the beginning of the High Renaissance in Italy in the 1490s, the end of the Reconquista and subsequent voyages of Christopher Columbus to the Americas in 1492, or the start of the Protestant Reformation in 1517. The precise dates of its end point also vary and are usually linked with either the start of the French Revolution in 1789 or with the more vaguely defined beginning of the Industrial Revolution in late 18th century England.

Some of the more notable trends and events of the early modern period included the Reformation and the religious conflicts it provoked (including the French Wars of Religion and the Thirty Years' War), the rise of capitalism and modern nation states, widespread witch hunts and European colonization of the Americas.

2.2 PERIODIZATION

Regardless of the precise dates used to define its beginning and end points, the early modern period is generally agreed to have comprised the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment. As such, historians have attributed a number of fundamental changes to the period, notably the increasingly rapid progress of science and technology, the secularization of politics, and the diminution of the absolute authority of the Roman Catholic Church as well as the lessening of the influence of all faiths upon national governments. Many historians have identified the early modern period as the epoch in which individuals began to think of themselves as belonging to a national polity—a notable break from medieval modes of self-identification, which had been largely based upon religion (belonging to a universal Christendom), language, or feudal allegiance (belonging to the manor or extended household of a particular magnate or lord).

The beginning of the early modern period is not clear-cut, but is generally accepted to be in the late 15th century or early 16th century. Significant dates in this transitional phase from medieval to early modern Europe can be noted:

1450: The invention of the first European movable type printing process by Johannes Gutenberg, a device that fundamentally changed the circulation of information. Movable type, which allowed individual characters to be arranged to form words and which is an invention separate from the printing press, had been invented earlier in China.

1453: The conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans signalled the end of the Byzantine empire, the Battle of Castillon concluded the Hundred Years' War.

1485: The last Plantagenet king of England, Richard-III, was killed at Bosworth and the medieval civil wars of aristocratic factions gave way to early modern Tudor monarchy, in the person of Henry-VII.

1492: The first documented European voyage to the Americas by the Genoese explorer Christopher Columbus; the end of the Reconquista, with the final expulsion of the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula; the Spanish government expels the Jews.

1494: French king Charles-VIII invaded Italy, drastically altering the status quo and beginning a series of wars which would punctuate the Italian Renaissance.

1513: First formulation of modern politics with the publication of Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

1517: The Reformation begins with Martin Luther nailing his ninety-five theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany.

1526: Ferdinand-I, Holy Roman Emperor gains the crowns of Bohemia and Hungary.

1545: The Council of Trent marks the end of the medieval Roman Catholic Church.

The end date of the early modern period is variously associated with the Industrial Revolution, which began in Britain in about 1750, or the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789, which drastically transformed the state of European politics and ushered in the Napoleonic Era and modern Europe.

The role of nobles in the Feudal System had yielded to the notion of the Divine Right of Kings during the Middle Ages (in fact, this consolidation of power from the land-owning nobles to the titular monarchs was one of the most prominent themes of the Middle Ages). Among the most notable political changes included the abolition of serfdom and the crystallization of kingdoms into nation-states. Perhaps even more significantly, with the advent of the Reformation, the notion of Christendom as a unified political entity was destroyed. Many kings and rulers used this radical shift in the understanding of the world to further consolidate their sovereignty over their territories. For instance, many of the Germanic states (as well as English Reformation) converted to Protestantism in an attempt to slip out of the grasp of the Pope.

The intellectual developments of the period included the creation of the economic theory of mercantilism and the publication of enduringly influential works of political and social philosophy, such as Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1513) and Thomas More's *Utopia* (1515).

2.3 REFORMATION

The Protestant Reformation was a reform-oriented schism from the Roman Catholic Church initiated by Martin Luther and continued by John Calvin, Huldrych Zwingli,

and other early Protestant Reformers. It is typically dated from 1517, lasting until the end of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. It was launched on 31 October 1517 by Martin Luther, who posted his 95 Theses criticizing the practice of indulgences to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, commonly used to post notices to the University community. It was very widely publicized across Europe and caught fire. Luther began by criticizing the sale of indulgences, insisting that the Pope had no authority over purgatory and that the Catholic doctrine of the merits of the saints had no foundation in the gospel. The Protestant position, however, would come to incorporate doctrinal changes such as *sola scriptura* and *sola fide*.

The Reformation ended in division and the establishment of new church movements. The four most important traditions to emerge directly from the Reformation were Lutheranism, the Reformed (also called Calvinist or Presbyterian) tradition, Anglicanism, and the Anabaptists. Subsequent Protestant churches generally trace their roots back to these initial four schools of the Reformation. It also led to the Catholic or Counter Reformation within the Roman Catholic Church through a variety of new spiritual movements, reforms of religious communities, the founding of seminaries, the clarification of Catholic theology as well as structural changes in the institution of the Church.

The largest Protestant groups were the Lutherans and Calvinists. Lutheran churches were founded mostly in Germany, the Baltics and Scandinavia, while the Reformed ones were founded in Switzerland, Hungary, France, the Netherlands and Scotland.[2]

The initial movement within Germany diversified, and other reform impulses arose independently of Luther. The availability of the printing press provided the means for the rapid dissemination of religious materials in the vernacular. The core motivation behind the Reformation was theological, though many other factors played a part, including the rise of nationalism, the Western Schism that eroded faith in the Papacy, the perceived corruption of the Roman Curia, the impact of humanism, and the new learning of the Renaissance that questioned much traditional thought.

There were also reformation movements throughout continental Europe known as the Radical Reformation, which gave rise to the Anabaptist, Moravian and other Pietistic movements.

The Roman Catholic Church responded with a Counter-Reformation initiated by the Council of Trent. Much work in battling Protestantism was done by the well-organised new order of the Jesuits. In general, Northern Europe, with the exception of most of Ireland, came under the influence of Protestantism. Southern Europe remained Roman Catholic, while Central Europe was a site of a fierce conflict, culminating in the Thirty Years' War, which left it devastated.

2.3.1 Church of England

The Reformation reshaped the Church of England decisively after 1547. The separation of the Church of England (or Anglican Church) from Rome under Henry-VIII, beginning in 1529 and completed in 1537, brought England alongside this broad Reformation movement; however, religious changes in the English national church proceeded more conservatively than elsewhere in Europe. Reformers in the Church of England alternated, for decades, between sympathies for ancient Catholic tradition and more Reformed principles, gradually developing, within the context of robustly Protestant doctrine, a tradition considered a middle way (via media) between the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions.

2.3.2 Consequences of the Protestant Reformation

The following outcomes of the Protestant Reformation regarding human capital formation, the Protestant ethic, economic development, governance, and "dark" outcomes have been identified by scholars.

2.3.3 Historiography

Margaret C. Jacob argues that there has been a dramatic shift in the historiography of the Reformation. Until the 1960s, historians focused their attention largely on the great leaders and also the theologians of the 16th century, especially Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli. Their ideas were studied in depth. However, the rise of the new social history in the 1960s look at history from the bottom up, not from the top down. Historians began to concentrate on the values, beliefs and behaviour of the people at large. She finds, "in contemporary scholarship, the Reformation was then seen as a vast cultural upheaval, a social and popular movement and textured and rich because of its diversity".

2.3.4 Age of Enlightenment

The Age of Enlightenment refers to the 18th century in European philosophy, and is often thought of as part of a period which includes the Age of Reason. The term also more specifically refers to a historical intellectual movement, The Enlightenment. This movement advocated rationality as a means to establish an authoritative system of aesthetics, ethics, and logic. The intellectual leaders of this movement regarded themselves as a courageous elite, and regarded their purpose as one of leading the world toward progress and out of a long period of doubtful tradition, full of irrationality, superstition, and tyranny, which they believed began during a historical period they called the Dark Ages. This movement also provided a framework for the American and French Revolutions, the Latin American independence movement, and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth Constitution of May 3, and also led to the rise of liberalism and the birth of socialism and communism. It is matched by the high baroque and classical eras in music, and the neo-classical period in the arts, and receives contemporary application in the unity of science movement which includes logical positivism.

2.4 DIPLOMACY AND WARFARE

The 17th century saw very little peace in Europe – major wars were fought in 95 years (every year except 1610, 1669 to 1671, and 1680 to 1682). The wars were unusually ugly. Europe in the late 17th century, 1648 to 1700, was an age of great intellectual, scientific, artistic and cultural achievement. Historian Frederick Nussbaum says it was:

prolific in genius, in common sense, and in organizing ability. It could properly have been expected that intelligence, comprehension and high purpose would be applied to the control of human relations in general and to the relations between states and peoples in particular. The fact was almost completely opposite. It was a period of marked unintelligence, immorality and frivolity in the conduct of international relations, marked by wars undertaken for dimly conceived purposes, waged with the utmost brutality and conducted by reckless betrayals of allies.

The worst came during the Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648, which had an extremely negative impact on the civilian population of Germany and surrounding areas, with massive loss of life and disruption of the economy and society.

2.4.1 Thirty Years' War 1618-1648

The Reformation led to a series of religious wars that culminated in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), which devastated much of Germany, killing between 25% and 40% of its entire population. Roman Catholic House of Habsburg and its allies fought against the Protestant princes of Germany, supported at various times by Denmark, Sweden and France. The Habsburgs, who ruled Spain, Austria, the Crown of Bohemia, Hungary, Slovene Lands, the Spanish Netherlands and much of Germany and Italy, were staunch defenders of the Roman Catholic Church. Some historians believe that the era of the Reformation came to a close when Roman Catholic France allied itself with Protestant states against the Habsburg dynasty. For the first time since the days of Martin Luther, political and national convictions again outweighed religious convictions in Europe.

Two main tenets of the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War, were:

- All parties would now recognise the Peace of Augsburg of 1555, by which each prince would have the right to determine the religion of his own state, the options being Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, and now Calvinism (the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*).
- Christians living in principalities where their denomination was not the established church were guaranteed the right to practice their faith in public during allotted hours and in private at their will.

The treaty also effectively ended the Papacy's pan-European political power. Pope Innocent X declared the treaty "null, void, invalid, iniquitous, unjust, damnable, reprobate, inane, empty of meaning and effect for all times" in his bull *Zelo Domus Dei*. European sovereigns, Roman Catholic and Protestant alike, ignored his verdict.

Scholars taking a "realist" perspective on wars and diplomacy have emphasized the Peace of Westphalia (1648) as a dividing line. It ended the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), where religion and ideology had been powerful motivating forces for warfare. Westphalia, in the realist view, ushered in a new international system of sovereign states of roughly equal strength, dedicated not to ideology or religion but to enhance status, and territorial gains. The Catholic Church, for example, no longer devoted its energies to the very difficult task of reclaiming dioceses lost to Protestantism, but to build large-scale missions in overseas colonial possessions that could convert the natives by the thousands using devoted members of society such as the Jesuits. According to Hamish Scott, the realist model assumes that "foreign policies were guided entirely by "Realpolitik," by the resulting struggle for resources and, eventually, by the search for what became known as a 'balance of power.'

Diplomacy before 1700 was not well developed, and chances to avoid wars were too often squandered. In England, for example, King Charles-II paid little attention to diplomacy, which proved disastrous. During the Dutch war of 1665-67, England had no diplomats stationed in Denmark or Sweden. When King Charles realized he needed them as allies, he sent special missions that were uninformed about local political, military, and diplomatic situations, and were ignorant of personalities and political factionalism. Ignorance produced a series of blunders that ruined their efforts to find allies. King Louis XIV of France, by contrast, developed the most sophisticated diplomatic service, with permanent ambassadors and lesser ministers in major and minor capitals, all preparing steady streams of information and advice to Paris. Diplomacy became a career that proved highly attractive to rich senior aristocrats who enjoyed very high society at royal courts, especially because they carried the status of the most powerful nation in Europe. Increasingly, other nations copied the French model; French became the language of diplomacy, replacing Latin. By 1700, the British and the Dutch, with small land armies, large navies, and large treasuries, used astute diplomacy to build alliances, subsidizing as needed land powers to fight on their side, or as in the case of the Hessians, hiring regiments of soldiers from mercenary princes in small countries. The balance of power was very delicately calculated, so that winning a battle here was worth the slice of territory there, with no regard to the wishes of the inhabitants. Important peace making conferences at Utrecht (1713), Vienna (1738), Aix-la-Chapelle (1748) and Paris (1763) had a cheerful, cynical, game-like atmosphere in which professional diplomats cashed in victories like casino chips in exchange for territory.

2.5 MAJOR STATES

2.5.1 Holy Roman Empire

In 1512, the Holy Roman Empire changed its name to Holy Roman Empire of the German nation. The Habsburg House of Austria held the position of Holy Roman Emperors since the mid-1400s and for the entire early modern period. Despite the lack of a centralized political structure in a period in which national monarchies were emerging, the Habsburg Emperors of the early modern period came close to form a universal monarchy in Western Europe.

The Habsburgs expanded their control within and outside the Holy Roman Empire as a result of the dynastic policy pursued by Maximilian-I, Holy Roman Emperor. Maximilian-I married Mary of Burgundy, thus bringing the Burgundian Netherlands into the Habsburg inheritance. Their son, Philip the Handsome, married Joanna the Mad of Spain (daughter of Ferdinand-II of Aragon and Isabella of Castile). Charles-V, Holy Roman Emperor (son of Philip and Joanna) inherited the Habsburg Netherlands in 1506, Habsburg Spain and its territories in 1516, and Habsburg Austria in 1519.

The main opponents of the Habsburg Empire were the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of France. The Habsburgs clashed with France in a series of Italian wars. The Battle of Pavia (1525) initiated the Habsburg primacy in Italy and the replacement of France as the main European power. Nevertheless, religious wars forced Charles-V to abdicate in 1556 and divide the Habsburg possessions between Spain and Austria. The next Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand-I completed the Council of Trent and maintained Germany at peace until the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). The Habsburgs controlled the elective monarchies of Hungary and Bohemia as well, and eventually turned these states into hereditary domains.

2.5.2 Spain

In 1492 the Catholic Monarchs of Castile and Aragon funded Christopher Columbus's plan to sail west to reach the Indies by crossing the Atlantic. He landed on a continent uncharted by Europeans and seen as a new world, the Americas. To prevent conflict between Portugal and Castile (the crown under which Columbus made the voyage), the Treaty of Tordesillas was signed dividing the world into two regions of exploration, where each had exclusive rights to claim newly discovered lands. The structure of the Spanish Empire was established under the Spanish Habsburgs (1516–1700) and under the Spanish Bourbon monarchs, the empire was brought under greater crown control and increased its revenues from the Indies. The crown's authority in The Indies was enlarged by the papal grant of powers of patronage, giving it power in the religious sphere

Under Philip-II of Spain, Spain, rather than the Habsburg empire, was identified as a more powerful nation than France and England globally. Furthermore, despite

attacks from other European states, Spain retained its position of dominance with apparent ease. Spain controlled the Netherlands until the Dutch revolt, and important states in southern Italy. The Spanish claims to Naples and Sicily dated back to the 15th century, but had been marred by rival claims until the mid-16th century and the rule of Philip-II. There would be no Italian revolts against Spanish rule until 1647. The death of the Ottoman emperor Suleiman the Magnificent in 1566 and the naval victory over the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 cemented the status of Spain as a superpower in Europe and the world. The Spanish Empire comprised territories and colonies of the Spanish Monarch in the Americas, Asia (Spanish Philippines), Europe and some territories in Africa and Oceania.

2.5.3 France

The Ancien Régime (French for "old regime") was the political and social system of the Kingdom of France from about 1450 until the French Revolution that started in 1789. The Ancien Régime was ruled by the late Valois and Bourbon dynasties. Much of the medieval political centralization of France had been lost in the Hundred Years' War, and the Valois Dynasty's attempts at re-establishing control over the scattered political centres of the country were hindered by the Huguenot Wars (or Wars of Religion). Much of the reigns of Henry-IV, Louis-XIII and the early years of Louis-XIV were focused on administrative centralisation. Despite, however, the notion of "absolute monarchy" (typified by the king's right to issue *lettres de cachet*) and the efforts by the kings to create a centralized state, Ancien Régime France remained a country of systemic irregularities: administrative (including taxation), legal, judicial, and ecclesiastic divisions and prerogatives frequently overlapped, while the French nobility struggled to maintain their own rights in the matters of local government and justice, and powerful internal conflicts (like the Fronde) protested against this centralization.

The need for centralization in this period was directly linked to the question of royal finances and the ability to wage war. The internal conflicts and dynastic crises of the 16th and 17th centuries (the Huguenot Wars between Catholics and Protestants and the Habsburg's internal family conflict) and the territorial expansion of France in the 17th century demanded great sums which needed to be raised through taxes, such as the land tax (*taille*) and the tax on salt (*gabelle*) and by contributions of men and service from the nobility. The key to this centralization was the replacing of personal patronage systems organized around the king and other nobles by institutional systems around the state. The creation of *intendants*—representatives of royal power in the provinces—did much to undermine local control by regional nobles. The same was true of the greater reliance shown by the royal court on the "noblesse de robe" as judges and royal counsellors. The creation of regional parliaments had initially the same goal of facilitating the introduction of royal power into newly assimilated territories, but as the parliaments gained in self-assurance, they began to be sources of disunity.

2.5.4 England

This period refers to England 1558–1603. The Elizabethan Era is the period associated with the reign of Queen Elizabeth-I (1558–1603) and was a golden age in English cultural history. It was the height of the English Renaissance, and saw the flowering of English literature and poetry. This was also the time during which Elizabethan theatre grew. William Shakespeare, among others, composed highly innovative and powerful plays. It was an age of expansion and exploration abroad. At home the Protestant Reformation was established and successfully defended against the Catholic powers of Spain and France.

The Jacobean era was the reign James-I of England (1603–1625). Overseas exploration and establishment of trading factories sped up, with the first permanent settlements in North America at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607, in Newfoundland in 1610, and at Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts in 1620. One king now ruled England and Scotland; the latter was fully absorbed by the Acts of Union 1707.

The tumultuous Caroline era was the reign of King Charles-I (1625–1645), followed by his beheading by Oliver Cromwell's regime in 1649. The Caroline era was dominated by the growing religious, political, and social conflict between the King and his supporters, termed the Royalist party, and the Puritan opposition that evolved in response to particular aspects of Charles' rule. The colonization of North America continued apace, with new colonies in Maryland (1634), Connecticut (1635), and Rhode Island (1636).

2.5.5 Papacy

The papacy continued to exercise significant diplomatic influence during the early modern period. The Popes were frequently assembling Holy Leagues to assert Catholic supremacy in Europe. During the Renaissance, Julius-II and Paul-III were largely involved in the Italian Wars and worked to preserve their primacy among the Italian princes. During the counter-reformation, the Papacy supported catholic powers and factions all over Europe. Pope Pius V assembled the Catholic coalition that won the Battle of Lepanto against the Turks. Pope Sixtus V sided with the catholics during the French wars of religion. Worldwide religious missions, such as the Jesuit China mission, were established by Pope Gregory-XIII. Gregory-XIII is also responsible for the establishment of the Gregorian calendar. Following the Peace of Westphalia and the birth of nation-states, Papal claims to universal authority came effectively to an end.

Check Your Progress

1. Write a note on consequences of the Protestant Reformation.

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2. Discuss in brief about the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648).

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3. Give an account on the Holy Roman Empire.

2.6 LET US SUM UP

The early modern period was characterised by profound changes in many realms of human endeavour. Among the most important include the development of science as a formalised practice, increasingly rapid technological progress, and the establishment of secularized civic politics, law courts and the nation state. Capitalist economies began to develop in a nascent form, first in the northern Italian republics such as Genoa and Venice as well as in the cities of the Low Countries, and later in France, Germany and England. The early modern period also saw the rise and dominance of the economic theory of mercantilism. As such, the early modern period is often associated with the decline and eventual disappearance (at least in Western Europe) of feudalism and serfdom. The Protestant Reformation greatly altered the religious balance of Christendom, creating a formidable new opposition to the dominance of the Catholic Church, especially in Northern Europe. The early modern period also witnessed the circumnavigation of the Earth and the establishment of regular European contact with the Americas and South and East Asia. The ensuing rise of global systems of international economic, cultural and intellectual exchange played an important role in the development of capitalism and represents the earliest phase of globalization.

2.7 KEY WORDS

Christendom : the worldwide body or society of Christians.

Parliament : a legislative body of government.

Régime : a government, especially an authoritarian one.

2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress

1. See Sub-Section 2.3.2
2. See Sub-Section 2.4.1
3. See Sub-Section 2.5.1

UNIT 3 : PARLIAMENTARY MONARCHY

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Elizabeth-I and English Patriotism
- 3.3 The First Stuarts and Catholicism
- 3.4 Charles-I and the Power to Tax
- 3.5 Cromwell and the Roundheads
- 3.6 The English Protectorate
- 3.7 Restoration of the Stuarts
- 3.8 The Glorious Revolution
- 3.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.10 Key Words
- 3.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to;

- identify some of the highlights from Queen Elizabeth-I's reign,
- describe the tensions between the Stuart kings and Parliament over religion,
- analyze why the power to determine taxation was so important,
- explain how Cromwell rose to power,
- describe the English Protectorate, along with its successes and failures,
- evaluate why the Stuarts were brought back and restored to the English throne, and
- analyze the significant changes the Glorious Revolution made to English government.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A parliamentary monarchy is a form of monarchy in which the sovereign exercises authority in accordance with a written or unwritten constitution. Parliamentary monarchy differs from absolute monarchy (in which a monarch holds absolute power) in that parliamentary monarchs are bound to exercise their powers and authorities within the limits prescribed within an established legal framework. Parliamentary monarchies range from countries such as Liechtenstein, Monaco, Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain, where the constitution grants substantial discretionary powers to the sovereign, to countries such as the United Kingdom, Spain, Belgium, Sweden and Japan, where the monarch retains significantly less personal discretion in the exercise of their authority.

Parliamentary monarchy may refer to a system in which the monarch acts as a non-party political head of state under the constitution, whether written or unwritten. While most monarchs may hold formal authority and the government may legally operate in the monarch's name, in the form typical in Europe the monarch no longer personally sets public policy or chooses political leaders. Political scientist Vernon Bogdanor, paraphrasing Thomas Macaulay, has defined a parliamentary monarch as "A sovereign who reigns but does not rule".

In addition to acting as a visible symbol of national unity, a parliamentary monarch may hold formal powers such as dissolving parliament or giving royal assent to legislation. However, the exercise of such powers may largely be exercised strictly in accordance with either written constitutional principles or unwritten constitutional conventions, rather than any personal political preference imposed by the sovereign. In *The English Constitution*, British political theorist Walter Bagehot identified three main political rights which a parliamentary monarch may freely exercise: the right to be consulted, the right to encourage, and the right to warn. Many parliamentary monarchies still retain significant authorities or political influence, however, such as through certain reserve powers and who may also play an important political role.

The United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms are all parliamentary monarchies in the Westminster system of constitutional governance. Two parliamentary monarchies – Malaysia and Cambodia – are elective monarchies, wherein the ruler is periodically selected by a small electoral college.

Strongly limited parliamentary monarchies may sometimes be referred to as crowned republics by certain commentators.

3.2 ELIZABETH-I AND ENGLISH PATRIOTISM

The reign of Elizabeth I was marked by the restoration of the Protestant Church of England and competition with a powerful Spain, both of which fueled a sense of modern English national identity.

Elizabeth I (1533–1603) was Queen of England and Ireland from 1558 until her death in 1603. She was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, his second wife, who was executed two and a half years after Elizabeth's birth. Anne's marriage to Henry VIII was annulled and Elizabeth was declared illegitimate. In 1558, Elizabeth succeeded her Roman Catholic half-sister, Mary. She never married nor had children and thus was the last monarch of the Tudor dynasty.

In 1554, Queen Mary of England married Philip, who only two years later began to rule Spain as Philip II. Under the terms of the Act for the Marriage, Philip was to enjoy Mary I's titles and honours for as long as their marriage should last, and was to co-reign with his wife. Although Elizabeth initially demonstrated solidarity with her sister, the two were sharply divided along religious lines. Mary, a devout Catholic, was determined to crush the Protestant faith, in which Elizabeth had been educated. After Mary married Philip, who saw the protection of Catholicism in Europe as his life's mission, Mary's popularity ebbed away, and many looked to Elizabeth as a focus for their opposition to Mary's religious policies. In 1555, Elizabeth was recalled to court to attend the final stages of Mary's apparent pregnancy. When it became clear that Mary was not pregnant, no one believed any longer that she could have a child. Elizabeth's succession seemed assured.

King Philip acknowledged the new political reality and cultivated his sister-in-law. She was a better ally than the chief alternative, Mary, Queen of Scots, who had grown up in France and was betrothed to the Dauphin of France. When his wife fell ill in 1558, Philip consulted with Elizabeth. By October 1558, Elizabeth was making plans for her government. On November 6, Mary recognized Elizabeth as her heir. On November 17, Mary died and Elizabeth succeeded to the throne.

In terms of religious matters, Elizabeth was pragmatic. She and her advisers recognized the threat of a Catholic crusade against England. Elizabeth therefore sought a Protestant solution that would not offend Catholics too greatly while addressing the desires of English Protestants, but she would not tolerate the more radical Puritans, who were pushing for far-reaching reforms. As a result, the parliament of 1559 started to legislate for a church based on the Protestant settlement of Edward VI, with the monarch as its head, but with many Catholic elements. Eventually, Elizabeth was forced to accept the title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England rather than the more contentious title of Supreme Head, which many thought unacceptable for a woman to bear. The new Act of Supremacy became law in 1559. All public officials were to swear an oath of loyalty to the monarch as the supreme governor or risk disqualification from office. The heresy laws were repealed to avoid a repeat of the persecution of dissenters practiced by Mary. At the same time, a new Act of Uniformity was passed, which made attendance at church and the use of an adapted version of the 1552 Book of Common Prayer compulsory, though penalties for those who failed to conform were not extreme.

Elizabeth's foreign policy was largely defensive. The exception was the English occupation of Le Havre from October 1562 to June 1563, which ended in failure when Elizabeth's Huguenot (Protestant) allies joined with the Catholics to retake the port. After the occupation and loss of Le Havre, Elizabeth avoided military expeditions on the continent until 1585, when she sent an English army to aid the Protestant Dutch rebels against Philip II. In December 1584, an alliance between Philip II and the French Catholic League undermined the ability of Henry III of France to counter Spanish domination of the Netherlands. It also extended Spanish influence along the channel coast of France, where the Catholic League was strong, and exposed England to invasion. The siege of Antwerp in the summer of 1585 by the Duke of Parma necessitated some reaction on the part of the English and the Dutch. The outcome was the Treaty of Nonsuch of August 1585, in which Elizabeth promised military support to the Dutch. The treaty marked the beginning of the Anglo-Spanish War, which lasted until the Treaty of London in 1604.

After Mary's death, Philip II of Spain had no wish to sever his ties with England, and sent a proposal of marriage to Elizabeth, but was denied. For many years, Philip maintained peace with England and even defended Elizabeth from the pope's threat of excommunication. This was a measure taken to preserve a European balance of power. Ultimately, Elizabeth allied England with the Protestant rebels in the Netherlands (which at the time fought for independence from Spain). Further, English ships began a policy of piracy against Spanish trade and threatened to plunder the great Spanish treasure ships coming from the new world. However, the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1587 ended Philip's hopes of placing a Catholic on the English throne. He turned instead to more direct plans to invade England, with vague plans to return the country to Catholicism. In 1588 he sent a fleet, the Spanish Armada, across the English Channel. The Spanish were forced into a retreat, and the overwhelming majority of the Armada was destroyed by the harsh weather.

Elizabeth also continued to maintain the diplomatic relations with the Tsardom of Russia originally established by her deceased brother. During her rule, trade and diplomatic relations developed between England and the Barbary states as well. England established a trading relationship with Morocco in opposition to Spain, selling armor, ammunition, timber, and metal in exchange for Moroccan sugar, in spite of a papal ban. Diplomatic relations were also established with the Ottoman Empire with the chartering of the Levant Company and the dispatch of the first English ambassador to the Porte, William Harborne, in 1578.

After the travels of Christopher Columbus electrified all of western Europe, England joined in the colonization of the New World. In 1562, Elizabeth sent privateers Hawkins and Drake to seize booty from Spanish and Portuguese ships off the coast of West Africa. Spain was well established in the Americas, while Portugal, in union with Spain from 1580, had an ambitious global empire in Africa, Asia, and South

America; France was exploring North America. England was stimulated to create its own colonies, with an emphasis on the West Indies rather than in North America. From 1577 to 1580, Sir Francis Drake circumnavigated the globe. Combined with his daring raids against the Spanish and his great victory over them at Cadiz in 1587, he became a famous hero, but England did not follow up on his claims. In 1583, Humphrey Gilbert sailed to Newfoundland, taking possession of the harbour of St. John's together with all land within two hundred leagues to the north and south of it. In 1584, the queen granted Sir Walter Raleigh a charter for the colonization of Virginia; it was named in her honour. Raleigh sent others to found the Roanoke Colony (it remains a mystery why the settlers there all disappeared). In 1600, the queen chartered the East India Company. It established trading posts that in later centuries evolved into British India, on the coasts of what is now India and Bangladesh. Larger-scale colonization began shortly after Elizabeth's death.

Elizabeth established an English church that helped shape a national identity and remains in place today. Though she followed a largely defensive foreign policy, her reign raised England's status abroad. Under Elizabeth, the nation gained a new self-confidence and sense of sovereignty, as Christendom fragmented. She was the first Tudor to recognize that a monarch ruled by popular consent. She therefore always worked with parliament and advisers she could trust to tell her the truth—a style of government that her Stuart successors failed to follow. The symbol of Britannia was first used in 1572, and often thereafter, to mark the Elizabethan age as a renaissance that inspired national pride through classical ideals, international expansion, and naval triumph over the Spanish.

3.3 THE FIRST STUARTS AND CATHOLICISM

Believing that their power was God-given right, James I and his son and successor, Charles I of England, reigned England in the atmosphere of repeated escalating conflicts with the English Parliament.

The separation of the Church of England (or Anglican Church) from Rome under Henry VIII brought England alongside a broad Reformation movement, but the English Reformation differed from its European counterparts. Based on Henry VIII's desire for an annulment of his marriage, it was at the outset more of a political affair than a theological dispute. The break with Rome was effected by a series of acts of Parliament, but Catholic Mary I restored papal jurisdiction in 1553. However, Mary's successor, Elizabeth I, restored the Church of England and reasserted the royal supremacy in 1559. After she died without an heir, James VI, her cousin and King of Scots, succeeded to the throne of England as James I in 1603, thus uniting Scotland and England under one monarch (the Union of the Crowns). He was the first of the Stuart dynasty to rule Scotland and England. He and his son and successor, Charles I of England, reigned England in the atmosphere of repeated escalating conflicts with the English Parliament.

James developed his political philosophy of the relationship between monarch and parliament in Scotland, and never reconciled himself to the independent stance of the English Parliament and its unwillingness to bow readily to his policies. The crucial source of concern was that the king and Parliament adhered to two mutually exclusive views about the nature of their relationship. James I believed that he owed his superior authority to God-given right, while Parliament believed the king ruled by contract (an unwritten one, yet fully binding) and that its own rights were equal to those of the king.

On the eve of the state opening of the parliamentary session on November 5, 1605, a soldier called Guy Fawkes was discovered in the cellars of the parliament buildings guarding about twenty barrels of gunpowder with which he intended to blow up Parliament House the following day. A Catholic conspiracy led by a disaffected gentleman called Robert Catesby, the Gunpowder Plot, as it quickly became known, had in fact been discovered in advance of Fawkes's arrest and deliberately allowed to mature in order to catch the culprits red-handed and the plotters unawares.

By the 1620s, events on the continent had stirred up anti-Catholic feeling to a new pitch. A conflict had broken out between the Catholic Holy Roman Empire and the Protestant Bohemians, who had deposed the emperor as their king and elected James's son-in-law, Frederick V, Elector Palatine, in his place, triggering the Thirty Years' War. James reluctantly summoned Parliament as the only means to raise the funds necessary to assist his daughter Elizabeth and Frederick, who had been ousted from Prague by Emperor Ferdinand II in 1620. The Commons on the one hand granted subsidies inadequate to finance serious military operations in aid of Frederick, and on the other called for a war directly against Spain. In November 1621, led by Sir Edward Coke, they framed a petition asking not only for a war with Spain but also for Prince Charles to marry a Protestant, and for enforcement of the anti-Catholic laws. James flatly told them not to interfere in matters of royal prerogative and dissolved Parliament.

The failed attempt to marry Prince Charles with the Catholic Spanish Infanta Maria (known as the Spanish match), which both the Parliament and the public strongly opposed, was followed by even stronger anti-Catholic sentiment in the Commons that was finally echoed in court. The outcome of the Parliament of 1624 was ambiguous; James still refused to declare war, but Charles believed the Commons had committed themselves to financing a war against Spain, a stance which was to contribute to his problems with Parliament in his own reign.

With the failure of the Spanish match, Charles married French princess Henrietta Maria. Many members of the Commons were opposed to the king's marriage to a Roman Catholic. Although he told Parliament that he would not relax religious restrictions, Charles promised to do exactly that in a secret marriage treaty with Louis XIII of France. Moreover, the treaty placed under French command an English naval force that would be used to suppress the Protestant Huguenots at La Rochelle.

Charles was crowned in 1626 at Westminster Abbey without his wife at his side because she refused to participate in a Protestant religious ceremony.

Domestic quarrels between Charles and Henrietta Maria were souring the early years of their marriage. Despite Charles's agreement to provide the French with English ships, in 1627 he launched an attack on the French coast to defend the Huguenots at La Rochelle. The action, led by Buckingham (James and Charles' close collaborator; hated by Parliament), was ultimately unsuccessful. After Buckingham was assassinated in 1628, Charles's relationship with his Catholic wife dramatically improved.

Although the death of Buckingham effectively ended the war with Spain and eliminated his leadership as an issue, it did not end the conflicts between Charles and Parliament. In January 1629, Charles opened the second session of the English Parliament. Members of the House of Commons began to voice opposition to Charles's policies. Many MPs viewed the imposition of taxes as a breach of the Petition of Right. When Charles ordered a parliamentary adjournment on March 2, members held the Speaker down in his chair so that the ending of the session could be delayed long enough for various resolutions, including Anti-Catholic and tax-regulating laws. The provocation was too much for Charles, who dissolved Parliament. Shortly after the prorogation, without the means in the foreseeable future to raise funds from Parliament for a European war, Charles made peace with France and Spain. The following eleven years, during which Charles ruled England without a Parliament, are referred to as the "personal rule" or the "eleven years' tyranny."

The Long Parliament, which assembled in the aftermath of the personal rule, started in 1640 and quickly began proceedings to impeach the king's leading counsellors for high treason. To prevent the king from dissolving it at will, Parliament passed the Triennial Act, which required Parliament to be summoned at least once every three years, and permitted the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal and twelve peers to summon Parliament if the king failed to do so.

The escalating conflict between the king and Parliament resulted in what is known as the English Civil War (1642–1651). It was a series of armed conflicts and political machinations between Parliamentarians ("Roundheads") and Royalists ("Cavaliers") over, principally, the manner of its government. The first (1642–1646) and second (1648–1649) wars pitted the supporters of Charles against the supporters of the Long Parliament, while the third (1649–1651) saw fighting between supporters of King Charles II and supporters of the Rump Parliament. The war ended with the Parliamentarian victory at the Battle of Worcester on September 3, 1651.

The overall outcome of the war was threefold: the trial and execution of Charles I; the exile of his son, Charles II; and the replacement of English monarchy with, at first, the Commonwealth of England (1649–1653), and then the Protectorate (1653–1659) under Oliver Cromwell's personal rule. The monopoly of the Church of

England on Christian worship in England ended with the victors consolidating the established Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. Constitutionally, the wars established the precedent that an English monarch cannot govern without Parliament's consent, although the idea of Parliament as the ruling power of England was legally established as part of the Glorious Revolution in 1688.

3.4 CHARLES-I AND THE POWER TO TAX

Charles-I's attempt to impose taxes not authorized by Parliament contributed to the ongoing conflict between the king and Parliament and eventually resulted in the passing of the 1628 Petition of Right. In 1625, King James I of England died and was succeeded by his son, who became Charles I. Along with the throne, Charles inherited the Thirty Years' War, in which Christian IV of Denmark and Frederick V, Elector Palatine, who was married to Charles's sister Elizabeth, were attempting to take back their hereditary lands and titles from the Habsburg Monarchy. James had caused significant financial problems with his attempts to support Christian and Frederick, and it was expected that Charles would be more amenable to prosecuting the war responsibly. After he summoned a new Parliament to meet in April 1625, it became clear that he was not. He demanded over £700,000 to assist in prosecuting the war. The House of Commons refused and instead passed two bills granting him only £112,000. In addition, rather than renewing the customs due from Tonnage and Poundage for the entire life of the monarch, which was traditional, the Commons only voted them in for one year. Because of this, the House of Lords rejected the bill, leaving Charles without any money to provide to the war effort.

After the Commons continued to refuse to provide money and began investigating the Duke of Buckingham, Charles's favourite, Charles dissolved Parliament. By 1627, with England still at war, Charles decided to raise "forced loans," or taxes not authorized by Parliament. Anyone who refused to pay would be imprisoned without trial, and if they resisted, would be sent before the Privy Council. Although the judiciary initially refused to endorse these loans, they succumbed to pressure. While Charles continued to demand the loans, more and more wealthy landowners refused to pay, reducing the income from the loans and necessitating a new Parliament being called in 1627.

To cope with the ongoing war situation, Charles had introduced martial law to large swathes of the country, and in 1627 to the entire nation. Crucially, martial law as then understood was not a form of substantive law, but instead a suspension of the rule of law. It was the replacement of normal statutes with a law based on the whims of the local military commander. However, Charles decided that the only way to prosecute the war was to again ask Parliament for money, and Parliament assembled in 1628. As a result, a series of Parliamentary declarations known as the *Resolutions* were prepared after tense debates. They held that imprisonment was illegal, except under law; *habeas corpus* should be granted to anyone, whether they are imprisoned by the king or the Privy Council; defendants could not be remanded

in custody until the crime they were charged with was shown; and non-Parliamentary taxation such as the forced loans was illegal (the first three later became the foundations of the Habeas Corpus Act 1679). The *Resolutions* were unanimously accepted by the Commons in April, but they met a mixed reception at the House of Lords, and Charles refused to accept them.

The conflict between the king and Parliament escalated. A number of possible alternatives to the *Resolutions* were debated, but finally Sir Edward Coke made a speech suggesting that the Commons join with the House of Lords and pass their four resolutions as a petition of right (although he was not the first to do so). The idea of a petition of right was an established element of Parliamentary procedure, and in addition, had not been expressly prohibited by Charles. A committee produced a petition containing the same elements as the *Resolutions*, covering discretionary imprisonment, non-Parliamentary taxation, martial law, and forced billeting. The Commons accepted the recommendations on May 8, and after a long debate that attempted to accommodate the hostile king, the House of Lords unanimously voted to join with the Commons on the Petition of Right, while passing their own resolution, assuring the king of their loyalty.

Following the acceptance of the Petition by the House of Lords, Charles sent a message to the Commons “forbidding them to meddle with affairs of state,” which produced a furious debate. On June 7, Charles capitulated and accepted the Petition. After setting out a list of individual grievances and statutes that had been broken, the 1628 Petition of Right declares that Englishmen have various “rights and liberties,” and provides that no person should be forced to provide a gift, loan, or tax without an Act of Parliament, that no free individual should be imprisoned or detained unless a cause has been shown, and that soldiers or members of the Royal Navy should not be billeted in private houses without the free consent of the owner. It also restricts the use of martial law except in war or direct rebellion and prohibited the formation of commissions.

The Petition of Right, a major English constitutional document that sets out specific liberties of the subject that the king is prohibited from infringing. Drafted by a committee headed by Sir Edward Coke, it was passed and ratified in 1628.

3.5 CROMWELL AND THE ROUNDHEADS

The escalating conflict between Charles I of England and the English Parliament resulted in the English Civil War, in the aftermath of which monarchy disappeared for over a decade and Oliver Cromwell ruled as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Elizabeth I’s death in 1603 resulted in the accession of her first cousin twice-removed King James VI of Scotland to the English throne as James I of England, creating the first personal union of the Scottish and English kingdoms. As King of Scots, James had become accustomed to Scotland’s weak parliamentary tradition,

and the new King of England was genuinely affronted by the constraints the English Parliament attempted to place on him. Despite tensions between the King and Parliament, James's peaceful disposition contributed to relative peace in both England and Scotland. However, his son and successor, Charles I of England, did not share his father's personality, and engaged in even more tense conflicts with Parliament. Charles's belief, inherited from his father, that the power of the crown is God-given and that the king does not have to respect the position of the English Parliament, shaped his reign and led to a political crisis that in the end would cost him his own life.

Having dissolved Parliament in 1627 after it did not meet the king's requirements and threatened his political allies, but unable to raise money without it, Charles assembled a new one in 1628. The new Parliament drew up the Petition of Right, and Charles accepted it as a concession in order to obtain his subsidy. The Petition did not grant him the right of tonnage and poundage, which Charles had been collecting without parliamentary authorization since 1625. Charles I avoided calling a Parliament for the next decade, a period known as the "personal rule" or the "eleven years' tyranny." During this period, Charles's lack of money determined policies. First and foremost, to avoid Parliament, the king needed to avoid war. Charles made peace with France and Spain, effectively ending England's involvement in the Thirty Years' War.

Charles finally bowed to pressure and summoned another English Parliament in November 1640. Known as the Long Parliament, it proved even more hostile to Charles than its predecessor, and passed a law that stated that a new Parliament should convene at least once every three years—without the king's summons, if necessary. Other laws passed by the Parliament made it illegal for the king to impose taxes without parliamentary consent and later gave Parliament control over the king's ministers. Finally, the Parliament passed a law forbidding the king to dissolve it without its consent, even if the three years were up.

Charles and his supporters continued to resent Parliament's demands, while Parliamentarians continued to suspect Charles of wanting to impose episcopalianism and unfettered royal rule by military force. Within months, the Irish Catholics, fearing a resurgence of Protestant power, struck first, and all of Ireland soon descended into chaos. In early January 1642, accompanied by 400 soldiers, Charles attempted to arrest five members of the House of Commons on a charge of treason, but failed to do so. A few days after this failure, fearing for the safety of his family and retinue, Charles left the London area for the north of the country. Further negotiations by frequent correspondence between the king and the Long Parliament proved fruitless. As the summer progressed, cities and towns declared their sympathies for one faction or the other.

What followed is known as the English Civil War (1642–1651), which developed into a series of armed conflicts and political machinations between Parliamentarians

("Roundheads") and Royalists ("Cavaliers"). The first (1642–1646) and second (1648–1649) wars pitted the supporters of King Charles I against the supporters of the Long Parliament, while the third (1649–1651) saw fighting between supporters of King Charles II (Charles I's son) and supporters of the Rump Parliament. The war ended with the Parliamentary victory at the Battle of Worcester on September 3, 1651.

The overall outcome of the war was threefold: the trial and execution of Charles I, the exile of Charles II, and the replacement of English monarchy with, at first, the Commonwealth of England (1649–1653), and then the Protectorate (1653–1659) under Oliver Cromwell's personal rule. The monopoly of the Church of England on Christian worship in England ended with the victors consolidating the established Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. Constitutionally, the wars established the precedent that an English monarch cannot govern without Parliament's consent, although the idea of Parliament as the ruling power of England was legally established as part of the Glorious Revolution in 1688.

Oliver Cromwell was relatively obscure for the first forty years of his life. He was an intensely religious man (an Independent Puritan) who entered the English Civil War on the side of the "Roundheads," or Parliamentarians. Nicknamed "Old Ironsides," he was quickly promoted from leading a single cavalry troop to being one of the principal commanders of the New Model Army, playing an important role in the defeat of the royalist forces. Cromwell was one of the signatories of King Charles I's death warrant in 1649, and he dominated the short-lived Commonwealth of England as a member of the Rump Parliament (1649–1653). He was selected to take command of the English campaign in Ireland in 1649–1650. His forces defeated the Confederate and Royalist coalition in Ireland and occupied the country, bringing an end to the Irish Confederate Wars. During this period, a series of Penal Laws were passed against Roman Catholics (a significant minority in England and Scotland but the vast majority in Ireland), and a substantial amount of their land was confiscated. Cromwell also led a campaign against the Scottish army between 1650 and 1651.

In April 1653, he dismissed the Rump Parliament by force, setting up a short-lived nominated assembly known as Barebone's Parliament, before being invited by his fellow leaders to rule as Lord Protector of England (which included Wales at the time), Scotland, and Ireland from December 1653. As a ruler, he executed an aggressive and effective foreign policy. He died from natural causes in 1658 and the Royalists returned to power in 1660, and they had his corpse dug up, hung in chains, and beheaded.

Cromwell is one of the most controversial figures in the history of the British Isles, considered a regicidal dictator, a military dictator, and a hero of liberty. However, his measures against Catholics in Scotland and Ireland have been characterized as genocidal or near-genocidal, and in Ireland his record is harshly criticized.

3.6 THE ENGLISH PROTECTORATE

Despite the revolutionary nature of the government during the Protectorate, Cromwell's regime was marked by an aggressive foreign policy, no drastic reforms at home, and difficult relations with Parliament, which in the end made it increasingly similar to monarchy.

The Commonwealth was the period when England, later along with Ireland and Scotland, was ruled as a republic following the end of the Second English Civil War and the trial and execution of Charles I (1649). The republic's existence was declared by the Rump Parliament on May 19, 1649. Power in the early Commonwealth was vested primarily in the Parliament and a Council of State. During this period, fighting continued, particularly in Ireland and Scotland, between the parliamentary forces and those opposed to them, as part of what is now referred to as the Third English Civil War.

In 1653, after the forcible dissolution of the Rump Parliament, Oliver Cromwell was declared Lord Protector of a united Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland under the terms of the Instrument of Government, inaugurating the period now usually known as the Protectorate. The term "Commonwealth" is sometimes used for the whole of 1649 to 1660—a period referred to by monarchists as the Interregnum—although for other historians, the use of the term is limited to the years prior to Cromwell's formal assumption of power in 1653.

The Protectorate was the period during the Commonwealth when England (which at that time included Wales), Ireland, and Scotland were governed by a Lord Protector. The Protectorate began in 1653 when, following the dissolution of the Rump Parliament and then Barebone's Parliament, Oliver Cromwell was appointed Lord Protector of the Commonwealth under the terms of the Instrument of Government.

Cromwell had two key objectives as Lord Protector. The first was "healing and settling" the nation after the chaos of the civil wars and the regicide. The social priorities did not, despite the revolutionary nature of the government, include any meaningful attempt to reform the social order. He was also careful in the way he approached overseas colonies. England's American colonies in this period consisted of the New England Confederation, the Providence Plantation, the Virginia Colony, and the Maryland Colony. Cromwell soon secured the submission of these, but largely left them to their own affairs. His second objective was spiritual and moral reform. As a very religious man (Independent Puritan), he aimed to restore liberty of conscience and promote both outward and inward godliness throughout England. The latter translated into rigid religious laws (e.g., compulsory church attendance).

The first Protectorate parliament met in September 1654, and after some initial gestures approving appointments previously made by Cromwell, began to work on a moderate program of constitutional reform. Rather than opposing Parliament's bill,

Cromwell dissolved them in January 1655. After a royalist uprising led by Sir John Penruddock, Cromwell divided England into military districts ruled by Army Major-Generals who answered only to him. The fifteen major generals and deputy major generals—called “godly governors”—were central not only to national security, but also to Cromwell’s moral crusade. However, the major-generals lasted less than a year. Cromwell’s failure to support his men, by sacrificing them to his opponents, caused their demise. Their activities between November 1655 and September 1656 had, nonetheless, reopened the wounds of the 1640s and deepened antipathies to the regime.

During this period Cromwell also faced challenges in foreign policy. The First Anglo-Dutch War, which had broken out in 1652, against the Dutch Republic, was eventually won in 1654. Having negotiated peace with the Dutch, Cromwell proceeded to engage the Spanish in warfare. This involved secret preparations for an attack on the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean and resulted in the invasion of Jamaica, which then became an English colony. The Lord Protector also became aware of the contribution the Jewish community made to the economic success of Holland, then England’s leading commercial rival. This led to his encouraging Jews to return to England, 350 years after their banishment by Edward I, in the hope that they would help speed up the recovery of the country after the disruption of the English Civil War.

In 1657, Oliver Cromwell rejected the offer of the Crown presented to him by Parliament and was ceremonially re-installed as Lord Protector, this time with greater powers than had previously been granted him under this title. Most notably, however, the office of Lord Protector was still not to become hereditary, though Cromwell was now able to nominate his own successor. Cromwell’s new rights and powers were laid out in the Humble Petition and Advice, a legislative instrument that replaced the Instrument of Government. Despite failing to restore the Crown, this new constitution did set up many of the vestiges of the ancient constitution, including a house of life peers (in place of the House of Lords). In the Humble Petition it was called the “Other House,” as the Commons could not agree on a suitable name. Furthermore, Oliver Cromwell increasingly took on more of the trappings of monarchy.

Cromwell died of natural causes in 1658, and his son Richard succeeded as Lord Protector. Richard sought to expand the basis for the Protectorate beyond the army to civilians. He summoned a Parliament in 1659. However, the republicans assessed his father’s rule as “a period of tyranny and economic depression” and attacked the increasingly monarchy-like character of the Protectorate. Richard was unable to manage the Parliament and control the army. In May, a Committee of Safety was formed on the authority of the Rump Parliament, displacing the Protector’s Council of State, and was in turn replaced by a new Council of State. A year later monarchy was restored.

Cromwell is one of the most controversial figures in the history of the British Isles, considered a regicidal dictator or a military dictator by some and a hero of liberty by others. His measures against Catholics in Scotland and Ireland have been characterized as genocidal or near-genocidal, and in Ireland his record is harshly criticized. Following the Irish Rebellion of 1641, most of Ireland came under the control of the Irish Catholic Confederation. In early 1649, the Confederates allied with the English Royalists, who had been defeated by the Parliamentarians in the English Civil War. By May 1652, Cromwell's Parliamentarian army had defeated the Confederate and Royalist coalition in Ireland and occupied the country—bringing an end to the Irish Confederate Wars (or Eleven Years' War). However, guerrilla warfare continued for another year. Cromwell passed a series of Penal Laws against Roman Catholics (the vast majority of the population) and confiscated large amounts of their land. The extent to which Cromwell, who was in direct command for the first year of the campaign, was responsible for brutal atrocities in Ireland is debated to this day.

3.7 RESTORATION OF THE STUARTS

Over a decade after Charles I's 1649 execution and Charles II's 1651 escape to mainland Europe, the Stuarts were restored to the English throne by Royalists in the aftermath of the slow fall of the Protectorate. Richard Cromwell (1626–1712) was Lord Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland after Oliver Cromwell's death in 1658. Richard lacked his father's authority. He attempted to mediate between the army and civil society and allowed a Parliament that contained a large number of disaffected Presbyterians and Royalists. His main weakness was that he did not have the confidence of the army. He summoned a Parliament in 1659, but the republicans assessed Oliver's rule to be "a period of tyranny and economic depression" and attacked the increasingly monarchy-like nature of the Protectorate. Richard proved unable to manage the Parliament and control the army. On May 7, a Committee of Safety was formed on the authority of the Rump Parliament, displacing the Protector's Council of State, and was in turn replaced by a new Council of State on May 19.

In 1660, Richard Cromwell left for France and later travelled around Europe, visiting various European courts. In 1680 or 1681, he returned to England and lodged with the merchant Thomas Pengelly in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, living off the income from his estate in Hursley. He died in 1712 at the age of 85.

Charles Fleetwood was appointed a member of the Committee of Safety and of the Council of State, and one of the seven commissioners for the army. On June 9, 1659, he was nominated lord-general (commander-in-chief) of the army. However, his leadership was undermined in Parliament. A royalist uprising was planned for August 1, 1659, and although it never happened, Sir George Booth gained control of Cheshire. Booth held Cheshire until the end of August, when he was defeated by General John Lambert. On October 26, a Committee of Safety was appointed, of

which Fleetwood and Lambert were members. Lambert was appointed major-general of all the forces in England and Scotland, with Fleetwood being general. The Committee of Safety sent Lambert with a large force to meet George Monck, who was in command of the English forces in Scotland, and either negotiate with him or force him to come to terms.

It was into this atmosphere that Monck, the governor of Scotland under the Cromwells, marched south with his army from Scotland. Lambert's army began to desert him, and he returned to London almost alone, though he marched unopposed. The Presbyterian members, excluded in Pride's Purge of 1648, were recalled, and on December 24 the army restored the Long Parliament. Fleetwood was deprived of his command and ordered to appear before Parliament to answer for his conduct. In March 1660, Lambert was sent to the Tower of London, from which he escaped a month later. He tried to rekindle the civil war in favor of the Commonwealth, but he was recaptured by Colonel Richard Ingoldsby, a participant in the regicide of Charles I, who hoped to win a pardon by handing Lambert over to the new regime. Lambert was incarcerated and died in custody in 1684; Ingoldsby was, indeed, pardoned.

On April 4, 1660, Charles II issued the Declaration of Breda, in which he made several promises in relation to the reclamation of the crown of England. Monck organized the Convention Parliament; on May 8, it proclaimed that King Charles II had been the lawful monarch since the execution of Charles I on January 30, 1649. Charles entered London on May 29, his birthday. To celebrate his Majesty's Return to his Parliament, May 29 was made a public holiday, popularly known as Oak Apple Day. He was crowned at Westminster Abbey on April 23, 1661. The Cavalier Parliament convened for the first time in May 1661, and it would endure for over seventeen years. Like its predecessor, it was overwhelmingly Royalist. It is also known as the Pensionary Parliament for the many pensions it granted to adherents of the king. Many Royalist exiles returned and were rewarded. The Indemnity and Oblivion Act, which became law in August 1660, pardoned all past treason against the crown, but specifically excluded those involved in the trial and execution of Charles I. Thirty-one of the fifty-nine commissioners (judges) who had signed the death warrant in 1649 were living. In the ensuing trials, twelve were condemned to death. In October 1660, ten were publicly hanged, drawn, and quartered. Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton, Judge Thomas Pride, and Judge John Bradshaw were posthumously attainted for high treason. In January 1661, the corpses of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw were exhumed and hanged in chains at Tyburn.

3.8 THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

The Glorious Revolution was the overthrow of King James II of England by a union of English Parliamentarians with the Dutch stadtholder William of Orange and his wife Mary that resulted in the eventual regulation of the respective powers of Parliament and the Crown in England.

James-II of England (VII of Scotland) was the second surviving son of Charles I; he ascended the throne upon the death of his brother, Charles II, in 1685. During his short reign, James became directly involved in the political battles between Catholicism and Protestantism and between the Divine Right of Kings and the political rights of the Parliament of England. James's greatest political problem was his Catholicism, which left him alienated from both parties in England. However, the facts that he had no son and his daughters were Protestants were a "saving grace." James's attempt to relax the Penal Laws alienated Tories, his natural supporters, because they viewed this as tantamount to disestablishment of the Church of England. Abandoning the Tories, James looked to form a "King's party" as a counterweight to the Anglican Tories, so in 1687 he supported the policy of religious toleration and issued the Declaration of Indulgence. By allying himself with the Catholics, Dissenters, and Nonconformists, James hoped to build a coalition that would advance Catholic emancipation. Matters came to a head in June 1688, when the king had a son, James. Until then, the throne would have passed to his daughter Mary, a Protestant. The prospect of a Catholic dynasty in the kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland was now likely.

Mary and her husband, her cousin William Henry of Orange, were both Protestants and grandchildren of Charles I of England. William was also stadtholder of the main provinces of the Dutch Republic. He had already acquired the reputation of being the main champion of the Protestant cause against Catholicism and French absolutism. In the developing English crisis, he saw an opportunity to prevent an Anglo-French alliance and bring England to the anti-French side by carrying out a military intervention directed against James. This suited the desires of several English politicians who intended to depose James. It is still a matter of controversy whether the initiative for the conspiracy was taken by the English or by the stadtholder and his wife.

On June 30, 1688, a group of seven Protestant nobles invited the Prince of Orange to come to England with an army. By September, it became clear that William would invade England. William arrived on November 5. James refused a French offer to send an expeditionary force, fearing that it would cost him domestic support. He tried to bring the Tories to his side by making concessions, but failed because he still refused to endorse the Test Act. His forward forces had gathered at Salisbury, and James went to join them on November 19 with his main force, having a total strength of about 19,000. Amid anti-Catholic rioting in London, it rapidly became apparent that the troops were not eager to fight, and the loyalty of many of James's commanders was doubtful.

Meanwhile, on November 18, Plymouth had surrendered to William, and on November 21, William began to advance. In December, William's forces met with the king's commissioners to negotiate. James offered free elections and a general amnesty for the rebels. In reality, by that point he was simply playing for time,

having already decided to flee the country. James was received in France by his cousin and ally, Louis XIV, who offered him a palace and a pension.

The status of William and Mary in England was unclear while James, though now in France, still had many supporters in the country. In order to avoid James's return to the throne, and facing opposition in Parliament, William let it be known that he was happy for Mary to be queen in name and for preference in the succession given to Princess Anne's (Mary's sister) children over any of William's. Anne declared that she would temporarily waive her right to the crown should Mary die before William, and Mary refused to be made queen without William as king. The Lords accepted the words "abdication" and "vacancy" and Lord Winchester's motion to appoint William and Mary monarchs. The decision was made in light of a great fear that the situation might deteriorate into a civil war. Although their succession to the English throne was relatively peaceful, much blood would be shed before William's authority was accepted in Ireland and Scotland.

William and Mary were co-regents over the Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Parliament offered William and Mary a co-regency, at the couple's behest. After Mary died in 1694, William ruled alone until his death in 1702. William and Mary were childless and were ultimately succeeded by Mary's younger sister, Anne.

The proposal to draw up a statement of rights and liberties and James's invasion of them was first made in January in the Commons, but what would become the Bill of Rights did not pass until December 1689. The Bill was a restatement in statutory form of The Declaration of Rights presented by the Convention Parliament to William and Mary in February 1689, inviting them to become joint sovereigns of England. The Bill of Rights lay down limits on the powers of the monarch and set out the rights of Parliament, including the requirement for regular parliaments, free elections, and freedom of speech in Parliament. It set out certain rights of individuals, including the prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment, and re-established the liberty of Protestants to have arms for their defense within the rule of law. Furthermore, the Bill of Rights described and condemned several misdeeds of James II of England. These ideas reflected those of the political thinker John Locke, and they quickly became popular in England. It also set out—or, in the view of its drafters, restated—certain constitutional requirements of the Crown to seek the consent of the people, as represented in Parliament.

Check Your Progress

1. Write a note on the reign of Elizabeth-I.

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2. Give an account on the English Protectorate.

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3. Discuss about the Glorious Revolution.

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3.9 LET US SUM UP

Some historians have argued that the passage of the Petition of Right marks the founding of the United Kingdom's modern Parliamentary Monarchy. The Petition of Right also marked a substantial cooperative work between individual parliamentarians and between the Commons and Lords, something that had previously been lacking and that in the end led to the formation of political parties. Within what is now the Commonwealth of Nations, the Petition was also heavily influential. It remains in force in both New Zealand and Australia, as well as the United Kingdom itself. The Petition also profoundly influenced the rights contained by the Constitution of the United States. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 is considered by some as one of the most important events in the long evolution of the respective powers of Parliament and the Crown in England. The passage of the Bill of Rights stamped out once and for all any possibility of a Catholic monarchy and ended moves towards absolute monarchy in the British kingdoms by circumscribing the monarch's powers. These powers were greatly restricted. He or she could no longer suspend laws, levy taxes, make royal appointments, or maintain a standing army during peacetime without Parliament's permission. Since 1689, government under a system of Parliamentary Monarchy in England, and later the United Kingdom, has been uninterrupted. Also since then, Parliament's power has steadily increased while the Crown's has steadily declined.

3.10 KEY WORDS

Cavaliers: A name first used by Roundheads as a term of abuse for the wealthier male Royalist supporters of King Charles I and his son Charles II of England during the English Civil War, the Interregnum, and the Restoration (1642–c. 1679). It was later adopted by the Royalists themselves.

Convention Parliament: A parliament in English history which, owing to an abeyance of the Crown, assembled without formal summons by the sovereign. Its 1660 assembly followed the Long Parliament that had finally voted for its own dissolution in March of that year. Elected as a “free parliament,” i.e., with no oath of allegiance to the Commonwealth or to the monarchy, it was predominantly Royalist in its membership.

Interregnum: The period between the execution of Charles I on January 30, 1649, and the arrival of his son Charles II in London on May 29, 1660, which marked the start of the Restoration. During the Interregnum England was under various forms of republican government as the Commonwealth of England.

Petition of Right: A major English constitutional document that sets out specific liberties of the subjects that the king is prohibited from infringing. Passed in 1628, it contains restrictions on non-Parliamentary taxation, forced billeting of soldiers, imprisonment without cause, and the use of martial law.

Roundheads: The name given to the supporters of the Parliament of England during the English Civil War. Also known as Parliamentarians, they fought against Charles I of England and his supporters, the Cavaliers or Royalists, who claimed rule by absolute monarchy and the divine right of kings. Their goal was to give the Parliament supreme control over executive administration.

Stadtholder: In the Low Countries, a medieval function that during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries developed into a rare type of de facto hereditary head of state of the thus crowned republic of the Netherlands. Additionally, this position was tasked with maintaining peace and provincial order in the early Dutch Republic.

3.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress

1. See Section 3.2
2. See Section 3.6
3. See Section 3.8

UNIT 4 : PATTERNS OF ABSOLUTISM IN EUROPE

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Features of Absolute Rule
- 4.3 Major Forms of Absolutism
 - 4.3.1 France
 - 4.3.2 England
 - 4.3.3 Prussia
 - 4.3.4 Spain
- 4.4 Variations on the Absolutist Theme
 - 4.4.1 Sweden
 - 4.4.2 Denmark
 - 4.4.3 Holland
 - 4.4.4 Russia
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 Key Words
- 4.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to know about

- characteristics of absolutism,
- different major forms of absolutism prevailed during 17th and 18th century, and
- impact of absolutism.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Absolutism is a term used by historians to describe a form of monarchical power that is unlimited by any other institution, such as the church, parliament, or social elites. The absolute monarch exercises ultimate authority over the state and his subjects, as both head of state and head of government. In an absolute monarchy there is no constitution or legal restriction on the monarch's power, there were no checks and balances on their power, and there were no other governing bodies they shared the power with. These monarchs also ruled by divine right or the belief that their power came from God. To oppose them was to oppose God. Absolute monarchy is normally hereditary or

passed on through marriage. The term Absolutism is typically used in combination with some European monarchs during the transition from Feudalism to early Capitalism, and monarchs described as absolute can especially be found in the 17th century through the 18th century. The Age of Absolutism is usually thought to begin with the reign of Louis XIV (1643–1715) and ends with the French Revolution (1789).

4.2 FEATURES OF ABSOLUTE RULE

In order to achieve eagerly awaited stability after long years of war, absolutists made sure that the key elements of national government would be solely placed into the hands of the monarch- the armed forces, tax collection, and the judicial system. These were powers normally enjoyed by the local nobility in their territories; the national administration of these functions, however, required the formation of a nationwide bureaucracy whose officials were answerable to the king alone. Consequently, this new type of bureaucracy had to make a stand against the most powerful institutional forces opposed to the king- the nobility, the church, legislative bodies (parliaments), and regions which had been autonomous until then. In order to centralize the administration of the state, the absolute ruler had to – some way or other – take political authority out of the hands of the nobles who had no desire whatever to give that authority up. On the whole, European kings were successful in crushing any kind of aristocratic resistance, with the exception of the Stuarts in England who were defeated in their campaign for absolute rule and the Polish kings who had to accept a nobles’ democracy. Apart from the rise of professional bureaucracies, absolute states featured a national legislation, a national jurisdiction, a large, standing military under the direct control of the king, and a national tax collection mechanism in which taxes went straight to the national government (*i.e.* the king’s treasury) rather than passing through the hands of the local nobility. Absolute monarchs spent exorbitant sums on warfare and extravagant buildings, such as the Palace of Versailles, for themselves and the nobility. They often required the nobles to live at court for some time, while state officials ruled their lands in their absence. Behind this was the idea to reduce the effective power of the nobility by making them become reliant upon the munificence of the monarch.

4.3 MAJOR FORMS OF ABSOLUTISM

4.3.1 France

Certain assumptions influenced the way in which the French state developed. The sovereign held power from God. He ruled in accordance with divine and natural justice and had an obligation to preserve the customary rights and liberties of his subjects. The diversity of laws and taxes meant that royal authority rested on a set of quasi-contractual relationships with the orders and bodies of the realm. Pervading all was a legalistic concern for form, precedence, and the customs that, according to the

French jurist Guy Coquille, were the true civil laws. The efforts of successive ministers to create the semblance of a unitary state came less from dogma than from the need to overcome obstacles to government and taxation. Absolutism was never a complete system to match the philosophy and rhetoric that set the king above the law, subject only to God, whom he represented on earth. For 60 years after the Fronde there was no serious challenge to the authority of the crown from either nobles or parliament. The idea of divine right, eloquently propounded by Bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet and embodied in the palace and system of Versailles, may have strengthened the political consensus, but it did little to assist royal agents trying to please both Versailles and their own communities. Absolutism on the ground amounted to a series of running battles for political control. In the front line were the intendants (administrative officials), first used extensively by Richelieu, then, after their abolition during the Fronde, more systematically and with ever-widening responsibilities, by Louis XIV and his successors until 1789.

Throughout the ancient régime the absolutist ideal was flawed, its evolution stunted through persisting contradictions. The fiscal demands of the crown were incompatible with the constant need to stimulate trade and manufacturing enterprise; and only a resolute minister operating in peacetime, such as Colbert in the 1660s and Philibert Orry in the 1730s, could hope to achieve significant reforms. There was tension between the Roman Catholic ideal of uniformity and pragmatic views of the state's interest. In 1685 Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, a harsh if logical resolution of the question. It was what his Catholic subjects expected of him, but it proved damaging to the economy and to France's reputation. A further contradiction lay between measures to overcome the hostility of the nobles to the aggrandizement of the state and the need not to compromise state authority by conceding too much. Richelieu's actions, including the execution of the duke de Montmorency for treason (1632), taught the lesson that no subject was beyond the reach of the law. Louis XIV's brilliant court drew the magnates to Versailles, where social eminence, patronage, and pensions compensated for loss of the power for which they had contended during the Fronde. It merely fortified the regime of privilege that defied fundamental reform to the end. There was another side to the politically advantageous sale of office. Capital was diverted that might better have been employed in business, and there was a vested interest in the status quo. For the mass of the nobility the enlargement of the army, quadrupled in the 17th century, provided an honourable career, but it also encouraged militarism and tempted the king and ministers to neglect the interests of the navy, commerce, and the colonies. When France intervened in the War of the Austrian Succession in 1741, the economic consequences undermined the regime. The achievements of the Bourbon government, with able ministers working in small, flexible councils, were impressive, even when undermined by weak kings such as Louis-XV (1715–74) and Louis-XVI (1774–92). In the 18th century, France acquired a fine network of roads, new harbours were built, and trade expanded; a lively culture was promoted by a prosperous bourgeoisie. It is an irony that the country that nurtured the philosophes

was the least affected by the reforms they proposed, but it would have been a remarkable king who could have ruled with the courage and wisdom to enable his servants to overcome obstacles to government that were inherent in the system.

4.3.2 England

The Marquês de Pombal was inspired by what he had seen in London, and it was in Great Britain (as it became after the Act of Union with Scotland in 1707) that the entrepreneurial spirit was least restricted and most influential in government and society. By the accession of James I in 1603, there had already been a significant divergence from the Continental pattern. The 17th century saw recurring conflict between the crown—more absolute in language than in action—and Parliament. Elected on a narrow, uneven suffrage, it represented privileged interests rather than individuals; it was much concerned with legal precedents and rights. Charles I tried to rule without Parliament from 1629 to 1639, but he alienated powerful interests and, by trying to impose the Anglican prayer book on Scotland, blundered into a civil war that resulted in his overthrow and subsequent execution (1649). Experiments in parliamentary rule culminated in the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell; after his death (1658), Charles II was restored (1660) on financial terms intended to restrict his freedom of maneuver. After a crisis (1678–81) in which the Whigs, led by Lord Shaftesbury, exploited popular prejudice against Roman Catholicism and France to check his absolutist tendency, he recovered the initiative. However, the brief reign of James II (1685–88) justified the fears of those who had sought to exclude him. Policies designed to relieve Roman Catholics antagonized the leaders of the monarchist Anglican church as well as the families who thought that they had the right to manage the state. The Glorious Revolution brought the Dutch stadtholder to the throne as William III (1689–1702). The intense political struggle left a fund of theory and experience on which 18th-century statesmen could draw. There was, however, no written constitution and only a few statutory limitations. Monarchy retained the power to appoint ministers, make foreign policy, and to manage and direct the army. The Bill of Rights (1689) effectively abolished the suspending and dispensing powers, but William III pursued his European policy with an enlarged army, funded by a new land tax and by loans. Conflict grew between the Whigs and Tories, intensified by the controversy over “Marlborough’s war” in the reign of Queen Anne (1702–14). The Triennial Act (1694) ensured elections every three years, and the Act of Settlement (1701) sealed the supremacy of the common law by limiting the king’s power to dismiss judges. The accession of George I in 1714 did not lead immediately to stability. The union with Scotland (1707) had created strains; and Jacobitism remained a threat after the defeat of James Edward Stuart’s rising of 1715—until the defeat of his son Charles Edward at Culloden in 1746, it was a focus for the discontented. But investors in government funds had a growing stake in the survival of the dynasty.

When George I gave up attending Cabinet meetings, he cleared the way for the Privy Council’s displacement by the small cabinet council, and the evolution, in the person

of Robert Walpole, first lord of the Treasury from 1721 to 1742, of a “prime minister.” Relations between minister and king amounted to a dialogue between the concepts of ministerial responsibility and royal prerogative. Ministers exercised powers legally vested in the monarch; they also were accountable to Parliament. Yet the king could still appoint and dismiss them. Inevitably tensions resulted. The prime minister’s right to select fellow ministers did not go unchallenged, but the reluctance of both George I and George II to master the intricacies of patronage, and the skill of Walpole and Newcastle in political management, ensured that the shift in the balance of power in 1688 was irreversible. A centralized legislature coexisted with a decentralized administration. The theme of centre versus provinces, characteristic of other countries, took on a new form as court patronage became the prime element in political management. Most legislation was concerned not with legal or moral principles but with administrative details. Policy tended to emerge from agreement between king and ministers. The royal veto on legislation was never employed after 1708, no government lost a general election, and nearly every Parliament lasted its full term. Locke’s dictum that government has no other end but the preservation of property was an apt text for the British ancient régime, which was dominated by the church and the aristocracy. Even those 200,000 Englishmen who had the vote could be disfranchised by the common practice of an arranged election. In 1747 only three county and 62 borough elections were contested. The tone was set by the Septennial Act (1716), which doubled the life of Parliaments and the value of patronage.

4.3.3 Prussia

Frederick II had inherited a style of absolute government that owed much to the peculiar circumstances of Brandenburg-Prussia as it emerged from the Thirty Years’ War. Lacking natural frontiers and war-ravaged when Frederick William inherited the electorate in 1640, Brandenburg had little more than the prestige of the ancient house of Hohenzollern. The diplomacy of Jules Cardinal Mazarin contributed to the acquisition (1648) of East Pomerania, Magdeburg, and Minden, and war between Sweden and Poland brought sovereignty over East Prussia, formerly held as a fief from Poland. A deal with the Junkers at the Recess of 1653, which secured a regular subsidy in return for a guarantee of their social rights, was the foundation of an increasingly absolute rule. He overcame by force the resistance of the diet of Prussia in 1660: as he became more secure economically, militarily, and bureaucratically, he depended less on his diets. So was established the Prussian model: an aristocracy of service and a bureaucracy harnessed to military needs. The Great Elector’s son became King Frederick I of Prussia when he pledged support to the emperor’s cause (1701). His son, Frederick William (1713–40), completed the centralization of authority and created an army sustained by careful stewardship of the economy. Personally directing a larger army in wars of aggression and survival, Frederick the Great (1740–86) came close to ruining his state; its survival testifies to the success of his father. Of course Frederick left his own impress on government. He should not be judged by his essays in enlightened philosophy or even by new mechanisms of

government, but by the spirit he inspired. He lived out his precept that the sovereign should be the first servant of the state. All was ordered so as to eliminate obstacles to the executive will. Much was achieved: the restoration of Prussia and the establishment of an industrial base, in particular the exploitation of the new Silesian resources. Legal rights and freedom of thought were secure so long as they did not conflict with the interest of the state. A monument to his reign, completed five years after his death in 1786, was the *Allgemeine Landrecht*, the greatest codification of German law. Perhaps his greatest civil achievement was the stability that made such a striking contrast with the turbulence in Habsburg lands under Joseph II.

4.3.4 Spain

The Iberian Peninsula provides further illustration of the absolutist theme. Historians do not agree about the nature or precise extent of Spain's decline, but there is agreement that it did occur, that it was most pronounced at mid-century, and that its causes may be traced not only to the reign of Philip II (1556–98), the overextended champion of Roman Catholic and Spanish hegemony, but also to the social and political structure of the Spanish states of Castile, Aragon, Portugal, Milan, Naples, the Netherlands, and Franche-Comté. The constitutions of these states reflected the personal nature of the original union of crowns (1479) and of subsequent acquisitions. Castile received the largest share of the prosperity that came with silver bullion from the New World but suffered the worst consequences when Mexico and Peru became self-sufficient. Bullion imports fell sharply; trade with the rest of Europe was severely imbalanced; and the weight of taxation fell largely on Castile. The effort of Philip IV's chief minister, the count de Olivares, to ensure greater equality of contribution through the union of arms was one factor in the revolts of Catalonia and Portugal (1640). In 1659 Spain had to cede Roussillon, Cerdagne, and Artois to France; and in 1667–68 the Flemish forts could put up no fight against the invading French. Despite a partial recovery in the 1680s under the intelligent direction of the duke de Medinaceli and Manuel Oropesa, Spain was the object of humiliating partition treaties. In 1700 Charles II had bequeathed the entire inheritance to Philip of Anjou, Louis XIV's grandson. A foundation for recovery was laid early in the reign of Philip V, when outlying provinces lost their privileges and acquired a tax system based on ability to pay and a Frenchstyle intendente to enforce it. The pace of reform accelerated with the accession of Charles III in 1759. He was no radical, but he backed ministers who were, such as the count de Floridablanca and the count de Campomanes. A national bank, agricultural improvements, and new roads, factories, and hospitals witnessed to the efforts of this benevolent autocrat to overcome the Spanish habit of condemning everything new.

4.4 VARIATIONS ON THE ABSOLUTIST THEME

4.4.1 Sweden

In Sweden the Konungaförsäkran (“King’s Assurance”), which was imposed at the accession of the young Gustav II Adolf in 1611 and which formally made him dependent for all important decisions on the Råd (council) and Riksdag (diet), was no hindrance to him and his chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna, in executing a bold foreign policy and important domestic reforms. Queen Christina, a minor until 1644, experienced a constitutional crisis (1650) in the aftermath of the Thirty Years’ War, from which Sweden had gained German lands, notably West Pomerania and Bremen. She extricated herself with finesse, then abdicated (1654). Charles X sought a military solution to the threat of encirclement by invading Poland and, more successfully, Denmark, but he left the kingdom to his four-year-old son (1660) with problems of political authority unresolved. When he came of age, Charles XI won respect for his courage in war and established an absolutism beyond doubt or precedent by persuading the Riksdag to accept an extreme definition of his powers (1680). Then he carried out the drastic recovery of alienated royal lands. With novel powers went military strength based on a corps of farmer-soldiers from the recovered land. Tempting authority awaited Charles XII (1697–1718), but there was also a menacing coalition. Perhaps decline was inevitable, for Sweden’s greatness had been a tour de force, but Charles XII’s onslaughts on Poland and Russia risked the state as well as the army which he commanded so brilliantly. Even after the Russian victory at Poltava (1709) and Charles’s exile in Turkey, Sweden’s resistance testified to the soundness of government. When Charles died fighting in Norway, Sweden had lost its place in Germany and a third of its adult population. An aristocratic reaction led to a period of limited monarchy. Decisions were made by committees of the Riksdag, influenced by party struggle, like that of the Hats and Caps at mid-century. Gustav III carried out a coup in 1774 that restored greater power to the sovereign, but there was no break in two great traditions: conscientious sovereign and responsible nobility.

4.4.2 Denmark

Denmark also had turned in the absolutist direction. Enforced withdrawal from the Thirty Years’ War (in 1629) may not have been a disaster for Denmark, but the loss of the Scanian provinces to Sweden (1658) was—loss of control of the Sound was a standing temptation to go to war again. Events in Denmark exemplify on a small scale what was happening throughout Europe when princes built from war’s wreckage, exploiting the yearning for direction and benefiting from the decay of a society that no longer provided good order. The smaller the country, the stronger the ruler’s prospect of asserting his will. As if responding to Hobbes’s formula for absolute monarchy, the estates declared King Frederick III supreme head on earth, elevated above all human laws (1661). Reforms followed under the statesmen

Hannibal Sehested and Peter Schumacker: a new code of law was promulgated; mercantilist measures fostered trade; and Copenhagen flourished. Danes accepted with docility the autocratic rule of the house of Oldenburg, but the peasantry suffered from the spread of a German style of landownership. Frederick IV cared much about their souls, and his son Christian VI provided for their schooling, but a decree of 1733 tied peasants to their estates from the age of 14 to 36. Frederick V was fortunate to have capable ministers, notably Andreas Bernstorff, who was mainly responsible for the acquisition of long-disputed Schleswig and Holstein. His son Christian VII ruled until 1808; yet his reign is best known for his confinement under Johan Struensee and for the latter's liberal reforms. In the two years before his downfall in 1772, more than 1,000 laws were passed, including measures that have left their mark on Danish society to this day. The episode showed the perils as well as benefits of enlightened absolutism when a king or his subject acquired the power to do as he pleased.

4.4.3 Holland

The English ambassador Sir George Downing in 1664 described the constitution of the United Provinces as "such a shattered and divided thing." Louis XIV assumed wrongly, in 1672, that the mercantile republic would prove no match for his armies. Experience had taught the English to respect Dutch naval strength as much as they envied its commercial wealth. Foreign attitudes were ambivalent because this small state was not only the newest but also the richest per capita and quite different from any other. The nation of seamen and merchants was also the nation of Rembrandt, Huygens, and Spinoza; culture and the trading empire were inseparable. After 1572 the Dutch proved that they could hold their own in war. Criticism of the structure of government seems therefore to be wide of the mark. In the development of Amsterdam, private enterprise and civic regulation coexisted in creative harmony; so too the state was effective without impinging on the quality of individual lives. The federal republic, so the Dutch believed, guarded religion, lands, and liberties. The price was paid by the Spanish southern provinces, which were drained of vitality by emigration to the north, and by the decay of the trade and manufacturing that had given Antwerp a commanding financial position.

The constitution of the United Provinces reflected its Burgundian antecedents in civic pride and its concern for form and precedence. Sovereignty lay with the seven provinces separately; in each the States ruled, and in the States the representatives of the towns were dominant. Since action required a unanimous vote, issues were commonly referred back to town corporations. Only in Friesland did peasants have a voice. The States-General dealt with diplomatic and military measures and with taxes. Its members were ambassadors, closely tied by their instructions. Like contemporary Poles and Germans, the Dutch were separatists at heart, but what was lacking in those countries existed in the United Provinces—one province to lead the rest. Holland assumed, and because of its wealth the rest could not deny, that right. War was again the crucial factor.

One side of the balance was represented by the house of Orange. Maurice of Nassau (1584–1625) and Frederick Henry (1625–47) controlled policy and military campaigns through their virtual monopoly of the office of stadtholder in separate provinces. Monarchs without title, they intermarried with the Protestant dynasties: William III, the grandson of Charles I of England and great-grandson of Henry IV of France, married Mary Stuart and became, with her, joint sovereign of England in 1689. The other side, vigilant for peace, trade, and lower taxes, was represented at its best by Johan de Witt, pensionary of Holland (1653–72). He was murdered during the French invasion of 1672, which brought William III to power. Enlightened oligarchy had little appeal for the poor or tolerance for the Calvinist clergy. Such violence exposed underlying tensions. In 1619 the veteran statesman Johann van Oldenbarneveldt was executed, as much because of the political implications of his liberal stance as for his Arminian views. Holland's open society depended on the commercial values of a magistracy versed in finance and state policy. In 1650 the young stadtholder William II attempted a coup against Amsterdam, the outcome of which was uncertain. His sudden death settled the issue in favour of a period of rule without stadtholders. In 1689 William III's elevation led to consolidation of the republican regime. In 1747, William IV enjoyed popular support for a program of civic reform. As stadtholder of all seven provinces he had concentrated powers, but little was achieved. Not until 1815 was the logical conclusion reached with the establishment of William I as king.

4.4.4 Russia

Successive elective kings of Poland failed to overcome the inherent weaknesses of the state, and the belated reforms of Stanisław II served only to provoke the final dismemberments of 1793 and 1795. Russia was a prime beneficiary, having long shown that vast size was not incompatible with strong rule. Such an outcome would not have seemed probable in 1648, when revolt in the Ukraine led to Russian "protection" and the beginning of that process of expansion which was to create an empire. The open character of Russia's boundless lands militated against two processes characteristic of Western society—the growth of cherished rights in distinct, rooted communities and that of central authority, adept in the techniques of government. The validity of the state depended on its ability to make the peasant cultivate the soil. If the nobility were to serve the state, they must be served on the land. Serfdom was a logical development in a society that knew nothing of rights. The feudal concept of fealty, the validity of contract, and the idea of liberty as the creation of law were unknown. German immigrants found no provincial estates, municipal corporations, or craft guilds. Merchants were state functionaries. Absolutism was implicit in the physical conditions and early evolution of Russian society. It could only become a force for building a state comparable to those of the West under a ruler strong enough to challenge traditional ways. This was to be the role of Alexis I (1645–76) and then, more violently, of Peter I (1689–1725).

When the Romanov dynasty emerged in 1613 with Tsar Michael, the formula for continued power was similar to that of the Great Elector in Brandenburg: the common interest of ruler and gentry enabled Alexis to dispense with the zemsky sobor. The great code of 1649 affirmed the rights of the state over a society that was to be frozen in its existing shape. The tsars were haunted by the fear that the state would disintegrate. The acquisition of the Ukraine led directly to the revolt of Stenka Razin (1670), which flared up because of the discontent of the serfs. The Russian people had been driven underground; their passivity could not be assumed. There was also a threatening religious dimension in the shape of the Old Believers. Rallying in reaction to the minor reforms of the patriarch Nikon, they came to express a general attachment to old Russia. This was as dangerous to the state when it inspired passive resistance to change as when it provoked revolt, such as that of the streltsy, the privileged household troops, whom Peter purged in 1698. Peter's reforms of Russian government must be set against the military weakness revealed by the Swedish victory at Narva (1700), the grotesque disorder of government as exercised by more than 40 councils, the lack of an educated class of potential bureaucrats, and a primitive economy untouched by Western technology. His domestic policies can then be seen as expedients informed by a patchy vision of Western methods and manners. Catherine II studied his papers and said, "He did not know what laws were necessary for the state." Yet, without Peter's relentless drive to create a military power based on compulsory service, Catherine might have been in no position to carry out any reforms herself. His Table of Ranks (1722) graded society in three categories—court, government, and army. The first eight military grades, all commissioned officers, automatically became gentry. Obligatory service was modified by later rulers and abolished by Peter III (1762). By then the army had sufficient attraction: the officer caste was secure.

Meanwhile, the bureaucracy exemplified the style of a military police. The uniformed official, rule book in hand, was typical of St. Petersburg government until 1917. Peter's new capital, an outrageous defiance of Muscovite tradition, symbolized the chasm that separated the Westernized elite from the illiterate masses. It housed the senate, set up in 1711, and the nine colleges that replaced the 40 councils. There also was the oberprokuror, responsible for the Most Holy Synod, which exercised authority over the church in place of the patriarch. Peter could control the institution; to touch the souls or change the manners of his people was another matter. A Russian was reluctant to lose his beard because God had a beard; a townsman could be executed for leaving his ward; a nobleman could not marry without producing a certificate to show that he could read. With a punitive tax, Peter might persuade Russians to shave and adopt Western breeches and jacket, but he could not trust the free spirit that he admired in England nor expect market, capital, or skills to grow by themselves. So a stream of edicts commanded and explained. State action could be effective—iron foundries, utilizing Russia's greatest natural resource, timber, contributed to the country's favourable trade balance—but nearly all Peter's schools collapsed after his death, and his navy rotted at its moorings.

After Peter there were six rulers in 37 years. Two of the predecessors of Catherine II (1762–95) had been deposed—one of them, her husband Peter III, with her connivance. Along with the instability exemplified by the palace coup of 1741, when the guards regiments brought Elizabeth to the throne, went an aristocratic reaction against centralist government, particularly loathsome as exercised under Anna (1730–40). Elizabeth’s tendency to delegate power to favoured grandees encouraged aristocratic pretension, though it did lead to some enlightened measures. With the accession of the German-born Catherine, Russians encountered the Enlightenment as a set of ideas and a program of reforms. Since the latter were mostly shelved, questions arise about the sincerity of the royal author of the Nakaz, instructions for the members of the Legislative Commission (1767–68). If Catherine still hoped that enlightened reforms, even the abolition of serfdom, were possible after the Commission’s muddle, the revolt of Yemelyan Pugachov (1773–75) brought her back to the fundamental questions of security. His challenge to the autocracy was countered by military might, but not before 3,000,000 peasants had become involved and 3,000 officials and gentry had been murdered. The underlying problem remained. The tired soil of old Russia would not long be able to feed the growing population. Trapped between the low yield of agriculture and their rising debts, the gentry wanted to increase dues. The drive for new lands, culminating in the acquisition of Crimea (1783), increased the difficulties of control. Empirical and authoritarian, Catherine sought to strengthen government while giving the gentry a share and a voice. The Great Reform of 1775 divided the country into 50 guberni. The dvoriane were allowed some high posts, by election, on the boards set up to manage local schools and hospitals. They were allowed to meet in assembly. It was more than most French nobles could do: indeed, French demands for assemblies were a prelude to revolution. But as in the case of towns, by the Municipal Reform (1785), she gave only the appearance of self-government. Governors were left with almost unbounded powers. Like Frederick the Great, Catherine disappointed the philosophes, but the development of Russia took place within a framework of order. European events in the last years of Catherine’s life and Russian history, before and since, testify to the magnitude of her achievement.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the features of Absolutism.

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2. Write a note on form of absolutism in Prussia.

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