

The Road to Constitutionalism

As political power continued to centralize in Spain and France with the development of absolutism, England and the Dutch Republic appeared to be anomalies in the degree to which royal power was limited.

Big events to come:

1. English Civil War (during the Thirty Years' War)
2. Cromwell's Puritan Republic
3. Restoration of the Monarchy
4. Glorious Revolution of 1688

James I

1603: James VI of Scotland succeeds Elizabeth I of England; becomes **James I of England**.

James I was the first Stuart monarch and he believed in the theory of divine right, which led to *rapidly deteriorating relations with Parliament*.

Disagreements between James I and Parliament over his pro-Spanish and pro-Catholic foreign policy also intensified.

Charles I

1625: Charles I succeeds to the throne.

Religious divisions run deep: Protestant vs. Catholic, Anglican vs. Puritan, Puritans vs. Arminians.

Charles I embraced **Arminianism**, which led Puritans (Calvinists) to assume the worst about him. Because Charles I also believed in divine right theory and had absolutist tendencies, the religious division took on a political dimension as well.

Charles I levied a tax on landowners without Parliament's consent and tensions increased.

Petition of Right

1628: Parliament forces Charles I to accept the **Petition of Right** in exchange for new tax revenue.

The Petition of Right imposed limits on the king's power to raise tax revenue without the consent of Parliament or imprison individuals without due process. *Attempt to establish parliamentary sovereignty.*

Charles I disbanded Parliament and did not reconvene it for 11 years.

He proceeded to raise taxes on coastal cities, seize land from Scottish nobles, and impose Anglican beliefs on the Scottish Presbyterian Church.

1639: Scotland rebels and Charles I reconvenes Parliament.

English Civil War

Charles I requests money from Parliament to defeat the Scottish rebellion, but Parliament refused to grant the money unless the king agreed to consider a formal “list of grievances” produced by Parliament.

1640: Charles I dissolved this “**Short Parliament**” after only two months creating a constitutional crisis.

The Puritans within Parliament considered themselves the defenders of English liberties established under the Magna Carta in 1215 and as a necessary check and balance on royal power.

Rival factions arose: **Country** (Parliament) vs. **Court** (King)

English Civil War

The **Country** faction tended to be wealthy gentry, Puritans, and those who supported Parliament's power.

The **Crown** faction tended to be landed nobility, Anglicans, and those willing to tolerate slides toward absolutism.

Charles I reconvened Parliament again in need of military funds. Meanwhile, the English army suffered a defeat in Scotland and Irish peasants rose up against their Protestant landlords.

1641: Parliament passes the **Grand Remonstrance** calling for religious and political reforms.

English Civil War

1642: Charles I attempts a coup against Parliament by trying to arrest the Puritan leaders of the House of Commons.

The plan fails because the leaders of Parliament went into hiding. Charles I then flees London due to widespread support for Parliament. In exile, he raises an army to restore his rule.

The **Roundheads** (Parliament's soldiers) began fighting against the **Cavaliers** (King's soldiers).

Unlike the American Civil War, there wasn't that much fighting and many people remained neutral during the conflict.

English Civil War

1643: Parliament (Puritans) forms an alliance with Scotland (Presbyterians) and wins a major battle against Charles I's Cavaliers in 1644.

Oliver Cromwell, leader of the army, became the new leader of Parliament. He combine various militias into the **New Model Army**.

Cromwell was a religious zealot convinced of his own “election” and Roundhead soldiers won the support of the English people for not plundering for supplies.

Parliament divided into factions: **Presbyterians** (moderate Puritans) and **Independents** (militant Puritans)

English Civil War

1645: The New Model Army essentially defeats the king's forces and the Scottish army returns to Scotland. Charles I surrenders.

Meanwhile, the rank and file of the New Model Army is inspired the political ideas of the “**Levellers**” and the idea that small property owners should gain the right to vote.

The Independents, fearful that the Presbyterians were conspiring with Scotland to help Charles I regain the throne, purged Parliament of all moderates.

The “**Rump Parliament**” consisted of one-fifth of the original members and was dominated by the Independents.

Puritan Republic

1649: The Rump Parliament convicted Charles I of treason, executed him, and abolished the monarchy.

The Rump Parliament then abolished the House of Lords and the Church of England and established a **Puritan Republic** led by Oliver Cromwell.

Cromwell's army defeated rebellions in Ireland and Scotland in the 1650s.

The Rump Parliament was dissolved in 1653 and England became a **military dictatorship** as Cromwell took the title "**Lord Protector.**"

Puritan Republic

Cromwell denied religious toleration to Anglicans and Catholics.

Like Charles I before him, Cromwell was forced to reconvene Parliament when he needed money to fight a war against Spain.

The Parliament drafted a new constitution and offered to make Cromwell king, but he declined.

1658: Cromwell died and was succeeded by his son Richard. The wealthy nobles of England became convinced that restoring the Stuart monarchy was the best path forward.

1660: Charles I's son is invited to assume the throne as **Charles II**.

Restoration

The Restoration of the monarchy brought with it the restoration of the House of Lords and Church of England.

The New Model Army was disbanded and the Puritanical aspects of the republic were abandoned.

1660s: Due to Charles II's Catholic sympathies, Parliament passed the **Clarendon Code** and **Test Act** to marginalize dissenters and non-Anglicans from positions of power.

Conspiracy theories circulated that Catholics were plotting to assassinate Charles II so that his Catholic brother James II could become king. Regardless, James was the heir to the throne.

Exclusionary Crisis

1670s: Rival parliamentary factions emerge over what to do about the succession of James during the “**exclusionary crisis.**”

The pro-monarchy Court faction of civil war becomes the **Tories**, while the pro-Parliament Country faction becomes the **Whigs**.

The Tories supported James becoming king as long as his heirs were Protestant, while the Whigs rejected the idea of a Catholic king.

1685: James II becomes king, favors Catholicism, and produces a Catholic male heir.

Glorious Revolution

1688: Powerful Tories and Whigs unite to offer the crown to **Mary**, James's Protestant daughter from a previous marriage, who is married to **William of Orange** in the Dutch Republic.

As William “invaded” England, James II fled the country and Parliament declared the throne vacant by abdication.

William and Mary were offered the crown on the condition that they formally accept the **Bill of Rights of 1689**.

With the Bill of Rights Parliament was officially a co-sovereign with the monarchy because the crown formally acknowledged Parliamentary power over taxes and the military (separation of powers).

Golden Age of the Dutch Republic

Gained initial independence from Philip II of Spain during the “religious wars” of the late 16th century by forming the **Union of Utrecht**.

Gained formal independence with **Treaty of Westphalia** in 1648.

Holland, dominated by the **House of Orange**, was the most powerful province. The princes of the House of Orange served as *stadholders* of the Dutch Republic.

The Dutch Republic, like the city-states of Renaissance Italy, was more an oligarchy than a real republic.

Golden Age of the Dutch Republic

Trade, manufacturing, shipbuilding, and finance were the basis of a strong urban economy and society.

Amsterdam became a center of the **Commercial Revolution** in capital investment and the rise of **joint-stock companies**.

Amsterdam competed with London as the financial capital of Europe and the **Dutch East India Company** rivaled the English company of the same name.

Dutch banks would continue to finance European trade well after the political and economic decline of the Netherlands as a whole (John Adams will come asking for a loan during the American Revolution!).

Golden Age of the Dutch Republic

Unlike England, where religious divisions led to civil war, the Dutch Republic remained a haven of religious **toleration** and **pluralism**.

Amsterdam became a safe haven for persecuted Jews fleeing the German territories and Spain.

The official church was the **Dutch Reformed Church**, which was Calvinist in its theology.

Dutch painting reflected the republic's commercial wealth and tolerance of diversity. Wealthy Amsterdam merchants became patrons of famous artists such as **Rembrandt** and **Vermeer**.

Golden Age of the Dutch Republic

Louis XIV of France invaded the Dutch Republic in 1672, but the Dutch successfully defended the republic.

After William of Orange became the William III of England in 1688 the Dutch Republic allied with England and Sweden against France in military matters.

However, Commercial competition with England, Sweden, and France gradually led to the republic's economic decline and loss of cultural prestige.

Triumph of Absolutism

While England and the Netherlands rejected absolutism, the sovereigns of France, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Sweden became absolute rulers. The exception to this trend towards absolutism in Central and Eastern Europe was Poland.

The desire for absolutism was rooted in the chaos, violence, and instability of the “religious wars” of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Political theorists such as **Jean Bodin**, **Jacques Bossuet**, and **Thomas Hobbes** promoted absolutism as the solution to the chaos of repeated civil wars.

Triumph of Absolutism

Rulers cultivated absolute power, somewhat counterintuitively, by forging close relationships with the nobles.

Increasingly, “Tables of ranks” were created that divided noble families into distinct grades of nobility with various levels of importance and prestige, which depended on their proximity to and loyalty towards the ruler.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the gradual centralization of power gave the nobles more power to reduce the freedom of peasants who lived and worked on their estates.

Triumph of Diplomacy

After the Thirty Years' War, the major powers of Europe became more invested in diplomacy and **balance of power** politics.

The rise of Louis XIV reinforced the desire to maintain a balance of power within Europe.

Hugo **Grotius** and Samuel von **Pufendorf** laid the foundations for international law and modern diplomacy.

With the decline of Spain, the Dutch Republic, and Sweden, the major powers of Europe by the late 17th century included:

Great Britain, France, Prussia, Austria, and Russia

New Powers in Central and Eastern Europe

1. Habsburg Dynasty of Austria

2. Hohenzollern Dynasty of Prussia

3. Romanov Dynasty of Russia

1. **Habsburg Dynasty of Austria:** The empire was made up of Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary. Political unity was difficult due to the diversity in language, culture, and religion. **Leopold I** took control of Hungary by defeating the Ottoman Empire (Turks) in 1699.

2. Hohenzollern Dynasty of Prussia:

Frederick William the Elector united the far-flung Hohenzollern territories through a royal bureaucracy and strong army. He demanded obedience from the nobles, or *Junkers*; and the Junkers demanded obedience from their peasants. Frederick William's son became the first King of Prussia.

Frederick William I of Prussia, grandson of Frederick William the Elector, reorganized the royal bureaucracy to reflect military values: impersonal, mechanical, and unquestioning loyalty to the king. He doubled the size of the military to 80,000 in 1740, which was the third-largest army in Europe. The military became a symbol of power rather than an instrument to be used. Military expenditures accounted for half of Prussia's budget.

3. Romanov Dynasty of Russia:

The duchy of Muscovy, ruled by **Ivan IV**, competed with Poland for power. Ivan IV was the crowned first tsar of Russia in 1547 and earned the nickname “the terrible” for his severe violence.

After Ivan IV died, the “Time of Troubles” (1598-1613) was a period of anarchy that allowed Poland to invade Moscow in 1605.

In 1613, the nobles elected the first tsar from the Romanov family. The Romanovs successfully restored order and regained land lost to Poland.

Peter I (reign 1682-1725) sought to consolidate power like Louis XIV in France. He wanted to secure the power of the tsar from the *boyars* (nobility) and increase the size of the military.

In 1697, Peter traveled to Western Europe to observe their shipping, manufacturing, and military technology. He returned to Russia with the intention of “Westernizing” his own country.

Peter the Great’s most important action was the creation of a navy and acquirement of warm-water ports. He also moved the capital to St. Petersburg, a new city whose architecture was “Western.”