

Absolutism

A political system in which a ruler holds total power

Absolutism in seventeenth century Europe was tied to: the divine right of kings.

The divine right of kings is a belief that rulers get their power to rule from God and were responsible to no one but God.

Absolute monarchs had tremendous powers and had the ability to make laws, levy taxes, administer justice, control the state's officials, and determine foreign policy.

Absolute monarchy

- A monarch holds complete control of a country.

Louis XIV (1638-1714)

- One of the most powerful absolute monarchs in history.
- Many European leaders

Louis XIV (1638-1714)

-Arguably the most powerful absolute monarch of all time. Louis learned at a young age that he wanted to be an absolute monarch.

-Cardinal Richelieu: royal minister who ruled during the childhood of Louis XIII. Persecuted Huguenots and set up spy network to catch nobles plotting against the king.

-Cardinal Mazzarin: Ruled during the childhood of Louis XIV. Crushed an uprising by the nobles who were alarmed by the growing power of the monarchy.

Louis XIV took total control of France at the age of 23, after the death of Mazzarin. Louis knew that the greatest threat to his power was the nobility, so he took the following steps:

1. Removed the nobility from the Royal council.

2. Built the palace of Versailles to house himself, and the chief offices of state who were under his total control.

3. Required the nobility to live at Versailles in order to get political favors. These nobles were distracted by extravagant parties, protocol, and plenty of alcohol.

Louis referred to himself as the Sun King.

- I am the center of the universe.

- Louis XIV fought 4 expensive wars during his reign that did not result in

the acquisition of
new land.
acquisition- thanks Grace.

- The wars
and the excess
of Louis' court
cause severe
\$ problems down
the road.

Absolutism in England

Queen Elizabeth died with no heirs so the throne went to James VI of Scotland who became James I of England. (This begins the Stuart dynasty).

James I was the great grandson of Henry VII who was the King of England and Lord of Ireland. This makes James I the legitimate monarch of all three countries.

James I believed in the divine right of kings which was a concern to the English who had a history of sharing power with the king.

-The English had concerns about James' support of the Church of England (Anglican), because many English citizens had become Puritan (Calvinists in England).

-His support of Protestants in the Thirty Years War helps people to accept his rule.

-Thirty Years War: A conflict involving the 300+ German states between Catholics and Protestants. (Key outcomes: France emerges as a dominant power. Prussia emerges as a powerful German state).

Charles I (1625-1649)

--Parliament did not trust Charles I due to his pro-Catholic leanings and they refused to raise money for him in the 30 years war.

Charles I forces subjects to pay taxes for this effort without the consent of Parliament.

-Those who did not pay were forced to serve in the army or were sent to jail.

Petition of Right (1628)

-Parliament agrees to raise taxes if Charles would pass this.

1. No taxation without the consent of Parliament.
2. No imprisonment of freemen without a proper trial.
3. No military trial of civilians during times of peace.
4. Troops can not be housed in citizen's houses.

1629- Charles levies taxes without the consent of Parliament. After Parliament complains, Charles I dismisses it for 11 years.

Oliver Cromwell comes to power by:

A town councilor who was sent to Parliament by the people of his town when summoned by Charles I.

Gains power by joining religious committees in Parliament. (He was a Puritan.)

-Thought the monarch was not right for closeness to God.

Due to the Irish revolt, Parliament decides to raise an army. However, the issue becomes who would control this army. The king didn't trust Parliament. Parliament did not trust the king.

- War breaks out when the king tries to forcibly disband Parliament.

- Parliament wins the first war. Cromwell emerges as a very capable military leader.

- Unhappy, King Charles breaks free from house arrest and rebels with the help of supportive nobles.

- This leads to the execution of Charles I in January 25, 1649.

Causes of the English Civil War

1. King forcibly disbands Parliament.
2. Army needed for revolt in Ireland.
Parliament did not trust the king with the control of this army. Feared he would use it to disband Parliament and consolidate power.
3. The continual refusal of Charles I to share power with Parliament. He was ignoring four hundred years of precedent.

Cromwell uses the military to disband two Parliaments including a "Parliament of Saints" which failed and he becomes Lord Protector of England. (A dictator by default.)

-Shortly after his death, the monarchy is restored...

The Navigation Act of 1651: Proclaimed that only English ships could be used to import/export good from England.

This helped England to become the dominant naval power in the world.

Charles II

-shortly after Cromwell's death, the monarchy is restored in England. This is known as "The Restoration."

The Habeas Corpus Act (1679)

-Gave judges the authority to grant a writ of habeas corpus, which protected a person's rights.

1. An arrested individual must be brought before a judge and be told why he was arrested. (We call this arraignment today).

2. If the arrest is legal then a "reasonable" trial date is set

3. If arrest is illegal, the person is let free.

The Glorious Revolution

James II takes the throne and tries to bring Catholicism back to England.

He wanted Parliament to reverse the Test Act, which banned Catholics from office. When they refused he disbanded Parliament.

Fearing a Catholic son, and a succession of Catholic monarchs, Parliament invited William III of Orange (Netherlands) to invade and rule with his wife Mary (James II's daughter.)

This was a "bloodless" exchange of power and showed the Parliament was more powerful than the monarchy in England.

The Glorious Revolution refers to a time in which Parliament "bloodlessly" changed their monarch. This was a clear sign that Parliament had more power than the monarch of England.

English Bill of Rights

-William and Mary (co-regents) pass this law which guaranteed civil liberties and limited the power of the monarch by stating that the king would rule with the consent of Parliament and be subjected to the laws of Parliament.

- freedom from cruel and unusual punishment.
- right to petition the government without fear of retribution.
- right to bear arms.

Overall,

Parliament established a system in which the monarch would accept certain limitations and share power with Parliament.

Legal protection was given to the people guaranteeing them certain rights.



