

# 5 Parliament Limits the English Monarchy

## TERMS & NAMES

- Charles I
- English Civil War
- Oliver Cromwell
- Restoration
- habeas corpus
- Glorious Revolution
- constitutional monarchy
- cabinet

### MAIN IDEA

Absolute rulers in England were overthrown, and Parliament gained power.

### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Many of the government reforms of this period contributed to the democratic tradition of the United States.

**SETTING THE STAGE** During her reign, Queen Elizabeth I of England had frequent conflicts with Parliament. Many of the arguments were over money, because the treasury did not have enough funds to pay the queen's expenses. By the time Elizabeth died in 1603, she left a huge debt for her successor to deal with. Parliament's financial power was one obstacle to English rulers' becoming absolute monarchs.

## Monarchs Clash with Parliament

Elizabeth had no child, and her nearest relative was her cousin, James Stuart. Already king of Scotland, James Stuart became King James I of England in 1603. Although England and Scotland were not united until 1707, they now shared a ruler.

### Background

James was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots—whom Elizabeth had executed for plotting against her.

## SPOTLIGHT ON

### King James Bible

James I was very interested in religion and scholarship. It bothered him that although there were many English translations of the Bible, none was as well-written as he wanted. Therefore, he sponsored a committee of Bible scholars to create a new, royally approved translation.

The new version of the Bible was first printed in 1611. The King James Bible is noted for the elegance and power of its language. It is still read by millions of English-speaking Protestants throughout the world.



**James's Problems** James inherited the unsettled issues of Elizabeth's reign. The key question was how much power Parliament would have in governing. James believed he had absolute authority to rule. He said in a speech, "Kings are justly called gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of divine power upon earth."

Elizabeth had also believed in her divine right to rule, but she was more tactful than James. She flattered Parliament to get her way. James thought it was beneath him to try to win Parliament's favor. His worst struggles with Parliament were over money. Parliament was reluctant to pay for James's expensive court and foreign wars.

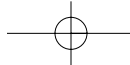
In addition, James offended the Puritan members of Parliament. Because James was a Calvinist, the Puritans hoped he would enact reforms to purify the English church of Catholic practices. However, James resented being told what to do. Except for agreeing to a new translation of the Bible, he refused to make Puritan reforms.

**Charles I Fights Parliament** In 1625, James I died. **Charles I**, his son, took the throne. Charles always needed money—in part because he was at war with both Spain and France. Several times when Parliament refused to give him funds, he dissolved it.

By 1628, Charles was forced to call Parliament again. This time it refused to grant him any money until he signed a document that is known as the Petition of Right. In this petition, the king agreed to four points:

- He would not imprison subjects without due cause.
- He would not levy taxes without Parliament's consent.
- He would not house soldiers in private homes.
- He would not impose martial law in peacetime.

After agreeing to the petition, Charles ignored it. Even so, the petition was important. It set forth the idea that the law was higher



### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

#### A. Making Inferences

Explain how the Petition of Right contradicted the idea of absolute monarchy.

than the king. This contradicted theories of absolute monarchy. In 1629, Charles dissolved Parliament and refused to call it back into session. To get money, he imposed all kinds of fees and fines on the English people. His popularity decreased year by year.

## English Civil War

Charles offended Puritans by upholding church ritual and a formal prayer book. In addition, in 1637, Charles tried to force the Presbyterian Scots to accept a version of the Anglican prayer book. He wanted both his kingdoms to follow one religion. The Scots rebelled, assembled a huge army, and threatened to invade England. To meet this danger, Charles needed money—money he could get only by calling Parliament into session. This gave Parliament a chance to oppose him.

**War Topples a King** During the autumn of 1641, Parliament passed laws to limit royal power. Furious, Charles tried to arrest Parliament's leaders in January 1642, but they escaped. Equally furious, a mob of Londoners raged outside the palace. Charles fled London and raised an army in the north of England, where people were loyal to him.

From 1642 to 1649, supporters and opponents of King Charles fought the **English Civil War**. Those who remained loyal to Charles were called Royalists or Cavaliers. On the other side were Puritan supporters of Parliament. Because these men wore their hair short over their ears, Cavaliers mockingly called them Roundheads.

At first neither side could gain a lasting advantage. However, by 1644 the Puritans found a general who could win—**Oliver Cromwell**. In 1646, Cromwell's New Model Army defeated the Cavaliers. By the following year, the Puritans held the king prisoner.

In 1649, Cromwell and the Puritans brought Charles to trial for treason. They found him guilty and sentenced him to death. The execution of Charles was revolutionary. Kings had often been overthrown, killed in battle, or put to death in secret. Never before had a reigning monarch faced a public trial and execution.

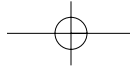


### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

#### B. Comparing

What did Cromwell's rule have in common with an absolute monarchy?

**Cromwell's Rule** Cromwell now held the reins of power. In 1649, he abolished the monarchy and the House of Lords. He established a commonwealth—a republican form of government. In 1653, Cromwell sent the remaining members of Parliament home. Cromwell's associate John Lambert drafted a constitution, the first written constitution of any modern European state. However, Cromwell eventually tore up the document and ruled as a military dictator.



Cromwell almost immediately had to put down a rebellion in Ireland. Henry VIII and his children had brought that country under English rule. In 1649 Cromwell landed on Irish shores with an army and crushed the uprising. The lands and homes of the Irish were taken from them and given to English soldiers. Fighting, plague, and famine killed an estimated 616,000 Irish.

**Puritan Morality** In England, Cromwell and the Puritans sought to reform society. They made laws that promoted Puritan morality and abolished activities they found sinful, such as going to the theater. In a speech, Cromwell explained his reasons for this:

#### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

I did hint to you my thoughts about the reformation of manners; and those abuses that are in this nation through disorder . . . should be much in your hearts. . . . I am confident our liberty and prosperity depends upon—reformation. To make it a shame to see men to be bold in sin and profaneness—and God will bless you. You will be a blessing to the nation.

OLIVER CROMWELL, speech of September 17, 1656

## SPOTLIGHT ON

### The London Fire

A disastrous fire broke out in London on September 2, 1666. It began in the house of the king's baker, near London Bridge. The flames, stirred by a strong east wind, leaped from building to building. People desperately tried to escape. The Thames River was crawling with boats filled with survivors and their belongings.

Samuel Pepys, a public official, wrote an eyewitness account of the fire in his diary:

It made me weep to see it. The churches, houses, and all on fire and flaming at once; and a horrid noise the flames made, and the cracking of houses at their ruin.

In the end, the fire destroyed St. Paul's Cathedral, 87 parish churches, and around 13,000 houses. It was the worst fire in London's history.

Although a strict Puritan, Cromwell favored religious toleration for all Christians except Catholics. He even welcomed back Jews, who had been expelled from England in 1290.

## Restoration and Revolution

Oliver Cromwell ruled until his death in 1658. Shortly afterward, the government he had established collapsed, and a new Parliament was selected. The English people were sick of military rule. In 1659, Parliament voted to ask the older son of Charles I to rule England.

**Charles II Reigns** When Prince Charles entered London in 1660, crowds shouted joyfully and bells rang. On this note of celebration, the reign of Charles II began. Because he restored the monarchy, the period of his rule is called the **Restoration**.

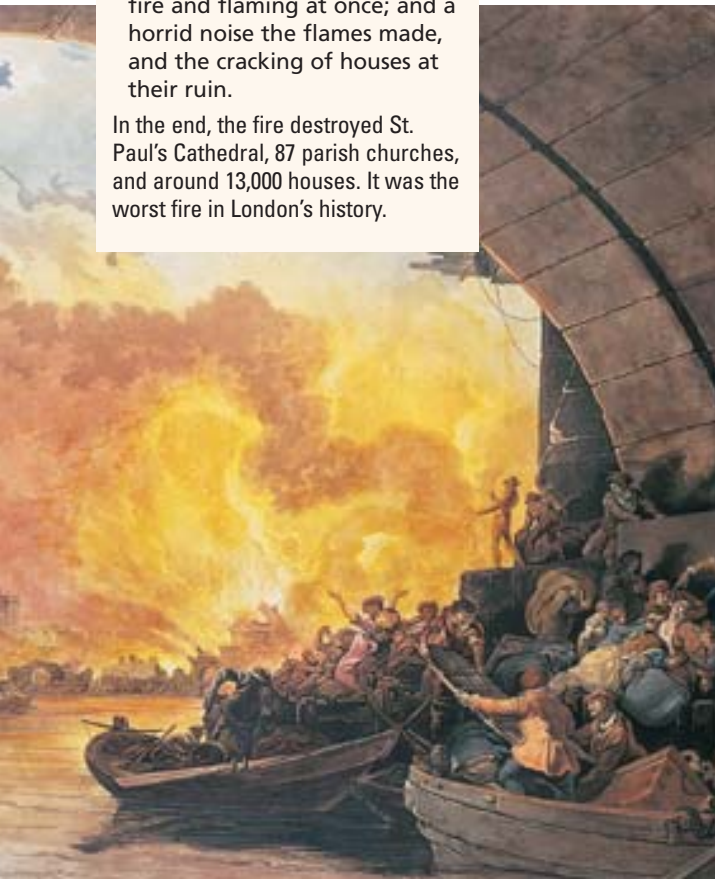
Charles also restored the theater, sporting events, and dancing, which the Puritans had banned. Theater, especially comedy, and the other arts flourished during the Restoration. For the first time, women appeared on the English stage to play female roles.

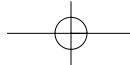
During Charles II's reign, Parliament passed an important guarantee of freedom, **habeas corpus**. This 1679 law gave every prisoner the right to obtain a writ or document ordering that the prisoner be brought before a judge. The judge would decide whether the prisoner should be tried or set free. Because of the Habeas Corpus Act, a monarch could not put someone in jail simply for opposing the ruler. Also, prisoners could not be held indefinitely without trials.

In addition, Parliament debated who should inherit Charles's throne. Because Charles had no legitimate child, his heir was his brother James, who was Catholic. A group called the Whigs opposed James, and a group called the Tories supported him. These two groups were the ancestors of England's first political parties.

#### Background

*Habeas corpus* comes from Latin words meaning "to have the body."





**James II and the Glorious Revolution** In 1685, Charles II died, and James II became king. James soon offended his subjects by flaunting his Catholicism. Violating English law, he appointed several Catholics to high office. When Parliament protested, James dissolved it. In 1688, James's second wife gave birth to a son. English Protestants became terrified at the prospect of a line of Catholic kings.

#### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

**C. Contrasting** How was the overthrow of James II different from the overthrow of Charles I?

James had an older daughter, Mary, who was Protestant. She was also the wife of William of Orange, a prince of the Netherlands. Seven members of Parliament invited William and Mary to overthrow James for the sake of Protestantism. When William led his army to London in 1688, James fled to France. This bloodless overthrow of King James II is called the **Glorious Revolution**.

## Political Changes

At their coronation, William and Mary vowed “to govern the people of this kingdom of England . . . according to the statutes in Parliament agreed on and the laws and customs of the same.” By doing so, William and Mary recognized Parliament as their partner in governing. England had become not an absolute monarchy but a **constitutional monarchy**, where laws limited the ruler's power.

#### Background

This revolution marked a shift in loyalties away from a monarch to the nation or national government. This indicates growing nationalism in England.

**Bill of Rights** To make clear the limits of royal power, Parliament drafted a Bill of Rights in 1689. This document listed many things that a ruler could not do:

- No suspending of Parliament's laws
- No levying of taxes without a specific grant from Parliament
- No interfering with freedom of speech in Parliament
- No penalty for a citizen who petitions the king about grievances

William and Mary officially consented to these and other limits on their royal power.

**Cabinet System Develops** After 1688, no British monarch could rule without consent of Parliament. At the same time, Parliament could not rule without the consent of the monarch. If the two disagreed, government came to a standstill.

During the 1700s, this potential problem was remedied by the development of a group of government ministers called the **cabinet**. These ministers acted in the ruler's name but in reality represented the major party of Parliament. Therefore, they became the link between the monarch and the majority in Parliament.

Over time, the cabinet became the center of power and policymaking. Under the cabinet system, the leader of the majority party in Parliament heads the cabinet and is called the prime minister. This system of English government continues today.

## CONNECT to TODAY

### U.S. Democracy

The United States adopted many of the government reforms and institutions that the English developed during this period. These include the following:

- the right to obtain habeas corpus—a document that prevents authorities from holding a person in jail without being charged
- a Bill of Rights, guaranteeing such rights as freedom of speech and freedom of worship
- a strong legislature and strong executive, which act as checks on each other
- a cabinet, made up of heads of executive departments, such as the Department of State
- two dominant political parties

## Section 5 Assessment

### 1. TERMS & NAMES

#### Identify

- Charles I
- English Civil War
- Oliver Cromwell
- Restoration
- habeas corpus
- Glorious Revolution
- constitutional monarchy
- cabinet

### 2. TAKING NOTES

On a chart like the one shown, list the causes of each monarch's conflicts with Parliament.

Monarch	Conflicts with Parliament
James I	
Charles I	
James II	

What patterns do you see in the causes of these conflicts?

### 3. EVALUATING DECISIONS

In your opinion, which decisions of Charles I made his conflict with Parliament worse? Explain.

#### THINK ABOUT

- decisions that lost him the support of Parliament
- decisions that lost him the support of his people

### 4. THEME ACTIVITY

**Revolution** Summarize the ideas from the English Civil War and Glorious Revolution concerning separation of powers, liberty, equality, democracy, popular sovereignty, human rights, constitutionalism, and nationalism.