

CHAPTER 20

GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

Excerpted and adapted from M. Wiesner-Hanks, *Early Modern Europe 1450-1789*,
2nd edition (Cambridge, 2013) pp. 341-343;
J. Spielvogel, *Western Civilization since 1300*, 7th edition (Belmont, 2009) pp. 472-473.

The execution of Charles I by order of the Rump Parliament left Oliver Cromwell master of England, and under his guidance the army became the country's most powerful political institution. It forced through a constitution, called the Instrument of Government (1653), which made Parliament supreme, but gave Cromwell executive power by establishing him in the newly created office of "Lord Protector." Soon Cromwell declared that the state of emergency in which his country found itself necessitated him having even more power; he thus dissolved Parliament, proclaimed martial law, and ruled virtually as a military dictator, dividing the country into twelve districts ruled by major-generals. He was ruthless against a rebellion in Ireland, crushing it and further enhancing Irish hatred of the English; by 1659 Catholics owned less than ten percent of the land in Ireland and could not hold political office in their own overwhelmingly Catholic country. In England, Cromwell was tolerant of the various Protestant sects (but not of Catholics), granting them the right to worship freely; he even welcomed Jews back into the country after centuries of exclusion. Yet in practice he enforced measures supported by Puritans, such as closing theaters and forbidding sports, pastimes deemed sinful vanities by the most staunch Calvinists.

Within England, wide discussion of plans for change among radical groups (such as granting all men – even those who did not own property – the right to vote) made Cromwell more intent on maintaining order and control. He banned newspapers, hired innkeepers as spies, and ordered the postal system to open and read all letters. Such measures widened the opposition to his rule, and conspirators gathered around the young son of Charles I, also named Charles, who was then safely in France. Cromwell appointed his own son Richard as his successor, who soon became known as "Tumbledown Dick" due to his rapid fall from power. Indeed, after Cromwell's death in 1658 factions were divided about

what to do next, and Parliament eventually backed the restoration of the Stuart monarchy. Most people were weary from years of war, suspicion, and Puritanical gloom, and in 1660 Parliament called Charles back from France, proclaiming him King Charles II. As he entered London amid the acclaim of the people, Charles remarked sardonically: "I never knew that I was so popular in England." Along with the monarchy, the House of Lords, the Anglican Church with its hierarchy of bishops, and the courts of law were all restored. Religious dissent against the Anglican institution was repressed, and those who refused to receive communion in the Church of England could not vote, hold public office, attend university, or preach. Yet the restoration of the monarchy did not mean that the work of the English Revolution was entirely undone. Parliament kept much of the power it had won: its role in government was acknowledged and the necessity for its consent to impose taxation was accepted. Charles regained the right to summon Parliament only by agreeing to do so regularly, and he ruled through an elite group of advisors who were also leading members of Parliament.

In return for having its right to approve taxes assured, Parliament informally agreed to provide Charles with enough revenue to run the kingdom; however, it did not, and Charles turned to the wealthiest state in Europe to make up the difference: France. In a secret agreement with Louis XIV, Charles received a huge annual subsidy in return for support against the Dutch, and a promise that he would gradually return England to Catholicism; moreover, Charles had long been predisposed towards Catholicism thanks to his time spent in France during Cromwell's rule along with his marriage to a Portuguese princess. The treaty with France did not stay secret for long, and England was swept by anti-Catholic hysteria, made more powerful by the fact that Charles had no legitimate heirs, so that on his death the throne would pass to his openly Catholic brother James. Parliament's suspicions were seemingly confirmed in 1672 when Charles took the audacious step of issuing the Declaration of Indulgence, which suspended the laws that Parliament had passed against Catholics and Puritans. Parliament would have none of it and induced the king to suspend the declaration. Propelled by a strong anti-Catholic sentiment, Parliament then passed the Test Act of 1673, specifying that only Anglicans could hold military and civil offices.

Finally, a purportedly Catholic plot to assassinate King Charles and place his brother James on the throne, though soon exposed as imaginary, inflamed Parliament to attempt to pass a bill that would have definitively barred James from the throne as a professed Catholic. Although this bill never became law, the debate it generated created two political groups: the Whigs, who wanted to exclude James and establish a thoroughly Protestant king; and the Tories, who supported James (despite their disapproval of his Catholic faith) because they believed that Parliament should not tamper with the lawful succession to the throne. To foil the efforts of the Whig faction, Charles simply dismissed Parliament in 1681, relying on French subsidies to rule alone. When he died in 1685, his Catholic brother came to the throne as James II.

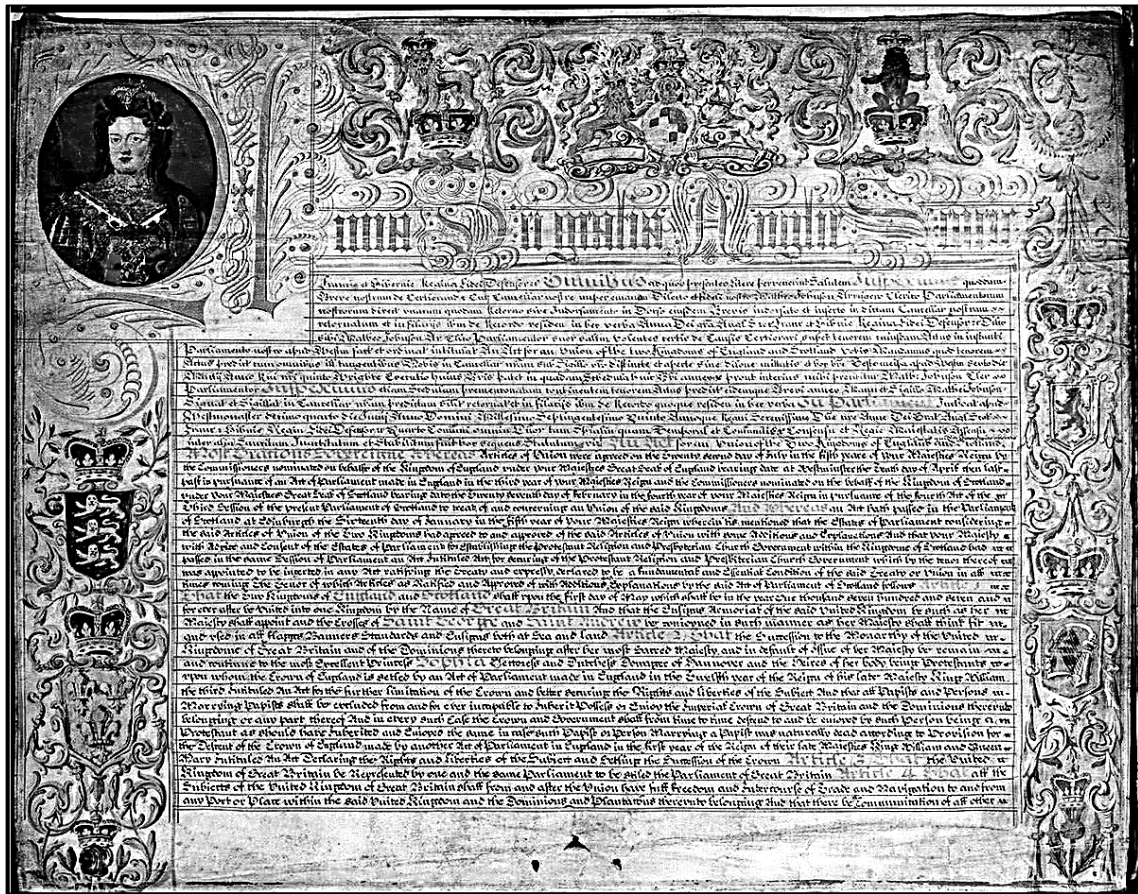
The accession of James II (1685-1688) virtually guaranteed a new constitutional crisis for England. An open and devout Catholic, his attempt to further Catholic interests made religion once more a primary cause of conflict between king and Parliament. Contrary to the Test Act, James named Catholics to high positions in the government, army, navy, and universities. In 1687, he issued a new Declaration of Indulgence, which suspended all laws barring Catholics from office. Parliamentary outcries against James's policies stopped short of rebellion because members knew that he was an old man and that his successors were his Protestant daughters Mary and Anne, born to his first wife. But James had remarried an Italian Catholic princess, and on 10 June 1688, a son was born to this second wife. Suddenly, the specter of a Catholic hereditary monarchy loomed large.

A group of seven prominent English noblemen then asked James's eldest daughter Mary if she would be willing to betray her father in return for the crown. She agreed, and Parliament soon invited William of Orange, Mary's husband, to invade England. Supported by Parliament, William and Mary raised an army and invaded England while James, his wife, and their infant son fled to France. With almost no bloodshed, England had embarked on a "Glorious Revolution," not over the issue of whether there would be a monarchy, but rather over who would be monarch, a Catholic or a Protestant.

The events of late 1688 set the Glorious Revolution in motion. The far more important part was the Revolution Settlement, which confirmed William and Mary as monarchs. In January 1689, Parliament asserted that James had tried to subvert the constitution “by breaking the original contract between king and people” and declared the throne of England vacant. It then offered the throne to William and Mary, who accepted it along with the provisions of a declaration of rights, later enacted into law as the Bill of Rights in 1689. The Bill of Rights affirmed Parliament’s right to make laws and levy taxes and made it impossible for kings to oppose or do without Parliament by stipulating that standing armies could be raised only with the consent of Parliament. Moreover, the elections and debates of Parliament had to be free, meaning that the king could not interfere. The rights of citizens to petition the sovereign, keep arms, have a trial by jury, and not be subject to excessive bail were also confirmed. Perhaps most importantly, Catholics were forever barred from the throne. The Bill of Rights thus fashioned a system of government based on the rule of law and a freely elected Parliament, thus laying the foundation for a staunchly Protestant constitutional monarchy. Finally, by deposing one king and establishing another, Parliament, a popularly elected body, had demolished the divine-right theory of kingship (William was, after all, king by grace of Parliament, not God) and confirmed its dominant position in English politics.

This coup, bloodless in England though not in Scotland and Ireland, assured the political power of the gentry, that wealthy two percent of the population perched socially between the tiny group of high nobles and the rest of the population. Despite the restoration of the House of Lords, the House of Commons was the most powerful half of Parliament, and the majority of members were gentry, along with merchants, lawyers, and professionals who often married into gentry families; this small elite controlled England’s policies and institutions into the twentieth century. William brought England into various continental alliances against the Catholic king of France, Louis XIV, and the expenses of war led to the establishment of a regular program for paying off the national debt, financed through the Bank of England, which was founded by order of Parliament in 1694. Other military campaigns were waged in Ireland, where the supporters of James II were eventually defeated, and a series of harsh penal laws were enacted against Catholics, further reducing Catholic

landholding. William also authorized a massacre of the leaders of one of the Scottish clans which opposed his rule, and the two countries were officially united in 1707 with the Union of Parliaments, which provided that Scotland would send members to the House of Lords and the House of Commons in London instead of having its own Parliament. Soon Scotland, England, and Ireland were declared the “United Kingdom of Great Britain.”



The Treaty of Union, composed in Latin and English, ratifying the Union of Parliaments, 1707

HOMEWORK QUESTIONS

- 1.) Why did Parliament fear the return of a Catholic dynasty?
- 2.) Why was the deposition of James II deemed a “glorious” revolution?

**** PRIMARY SOURCE ****

The English Bill of Rights (1689)

Excerpted from M. Kishlansky (ed.), *Readings in Western Civilization*, 8th edition,
vol. 2 (Boston, 2012) pp. 32-35.

*** Charles II (r. 1660-1685) died without producing an heir and converted to Catholicism on his deathbed. His brother, who himself had converted years earlier, succeed to the throne as James II (r. 1685-1688). He permitted Catholics to occupy high posts in the government, attempted to roll back legislation against Catholicism in England, challenged the beliefs of his Anglican clergy, and even had a Jesuit confessor. Moreover, James's second marriage to a Catholic princess produced a male heir in 1688, an heir who, unlike James's two daughters from his first marriage, would be raised as a Catholic and not as a Protestant. Fearful of a line of Catholic monarchs returning to the throne of England, Parliament invited William (r. 1689-1702) – Duke of Orange, staunch Protestant, and husband of James's first daughter Mary – to invade with a Dutch army and claim the throne for himself. James II subsequently fled to the continent and then raised an army in Ireland, but he never returned to England. As a condition of William's ascension to the throne, he and his wife were required to grant and acknowledge a Bill of Rights, published by Parliament in 1689 and reproduced below. ***

An act declaring the rights and liberties of the subject and settling the succession of the Crown:

Whereas the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons assembled at Westminster, lawfully, fully and freely representing all the estates of the people of this realm, did upon the thirteenth day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred eighty-eight present unto their Majesties, then called and known by the names and style of William and Mary, prince and princess of Orange, being present in their proper persons, a certain declaration in writing made by the said Lords and Commons in the words following, that is:

Whereas the late King James the Second, by the assistance of divers evil counsellors, judges and ministers employed by him, did endeavour to subvert and extirpate the Protestant religion and the laws and liberties of this kingdom;

By assuming and exercising a power of dispensing with and suspending of laws and the execution of laws without consent of Parliament;

By committing and prosecuting divers worthy prelates for humbly petitioning to be excused from concurring to the said assumed power;

By issuing and causing to be executed a commission under the great seal for erecting a court called the Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes [one which favored Catholic-leaning prelates];

By levying money for and to the use of the Crown by pretence of prerogative for other time and in other manner than the same was granted by Parliament;

By raising and keeping a standing army within this kingdom in time of peace without consent of Parliament, and quartering soldiers contrary to law;

By causing several good subjects being Protestants to be disarmed at the same time when papists were both armed and employed contrary to law;

By violating the freedom of election of members to serve in Parliament;

By prosecutions in the Court of King's Bench for matters and causes cognizable only in Parliament, and by divers other arbitrary and illegal courses;

And whereas of late years partial, corrupt and unqualified persons have been returned and served on juries in trials, and particularly divers jurors in trials for high treason which were not freeholders;

And excessive bail hath been required of persons committed in criminal cases to elude the benefit of the laws made for the liberty of the subjects;

And excessive fines have been imposed;

And illegal and cruel punishments inflicted;

And several grants and promises made of fines and forfeitures before any conviction or judgment against the persons upon whom the same were to be levied;

All which are utterly and directly contrary to the known laws and statutes and freedom of this realm.

And whereas the said late King James the Second having abdicated the government and the throne being thereby vacant, his Highness the prince of Orange (whom it hath pleased Almighty God to make the glorious instrument of delivering this kingdom from popery and arbitrary power) did (by the advice of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and divers principal persons of the Commons) cause letters to be written to the Lords Spiritual and Temporal being Protestants, and other letters to the several counties, cities, universities, boroughs and ports, for the choosing of such persons to represent them as were of right to be sent to Parliament, to meet and sit at Westminster upon the 22nd day of January in this year 1688, in order to such an establishment as that their religion, laws and liberties might not again be in danger of being subverted, upon which letters elections having been accordingly made;

And thereupon the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons, pursuant to their respective letters and elections, being now assembled in a full and free representative of this nation, taking into their most serious consideration the best means for attaining the ends aforesaid, do in the first place (as their ancestors in like case have usually done) for the vindicating and asserting their ancient rights and liberties declare:

That the pretended power of suspending the laws or the execution of laws by regal authority without consent of Parliament is illegal;

That the pretended power of dispensing with laws or the execution of laws by regal authority, as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal;

That the commission for erecting the late Court of Commissioners for Ecclesiastical Causes, and all other commissions and courts of like nature, are illegal and pernicious;

That levying money for or to the use of the Crown by pretence of prerogative, without grant of Parliament, for longer time, or in other manner than the same is or shall be granted, is illegal;

That it is the right of the subjects to petition the king, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal;

That the raising or keeping a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with consent of Parliament, is against law;

That the subjects which are Protestants may have arms for their defence suitable to their conditions and as allowed by law;

That election of members of Parliament ought to be free;

That the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament;

That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted;

That jurors ought to be duly impanelled and returned, and jurors which pass upon men in trials for high treason ought to be freeholders;

That all grants and promises of fines and forfeitures of particular persons before conviction are illegal and void;

And that for redress of all grievances, and for the amending, strengthening and preserving of the laws, Parliaments ought to be held frequently.

And they do claim, demand and insist upon all these premises as their undoubted rights and liberties, and that no declarations, judgments, doings or

proceedings to the prejudice of the people in any of the said premises ought in any wise to be drawn hereafter into consequence or example; to which demand of their rights they are particularly encouraged by the declaration of his Highness the prince of Orange as being the only means for obtaining a full redress and remedy therein. Having therefore an entire confidence that his said Highness the prince of Orange will perfect the deliverance so far advanced by him, and will still preserve them from the violation of their rights which they have here asserted, and from all other attempts upon their religion, rights and liberties, the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons assembled at Westminster do resolve that William and Mary, prince and princess of Orange, be and be declared king and queen of England and Ireland and the dominions thereunto belonging, to hold the crown and royal dignity of the said kingdoms and dominions to them, the said prince and princess, during their lives and the life of the survivor to them, and that the sole and full exercise of the regal power be only in and executed by the said prince of Orange in the names of the said prince and princess during their joint lives, and after their deceases the said crown and royal dignity of the same kingdoms and dominions to be to the heirs of the body of the said princess, and for default of such issue to the Princess Anne of Denmark and the heirs of her body, and for default of such issue to the heirs of the body of the said prince of Orange.

And the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons do pray the said prince and princess to accept the same accordingly.

And that the oaths hereafter mentioned must be taken by all persons [required to do so by the judgment of Parliament]:

I, N., do sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to their Majesties King William and Queen Mary. So help me God.

I, N., do swear that I do from my heart abhor, detest and abjure as impious and heretical this damnable doctrine and position: that princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope or any authority of the see of Rome may be deposed or murdered by their subjects or any other

whatsoever. And I do declare that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state or potentate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm. So help me God.

Upon which their said Majesties did accept the crown and royal dignity of the kingdoms of England and Ireland and the dominions thereunto belonging, according to the resolution and desire of the said Lords and Commons contained in the said declaration. And thereupon their Majesties were pleased that the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons, being the two Houses of Parliament, should continue to sit, and with their Majesties' royal concurrence make effectual provision for the settlement of the religion, laws and liberties of this kingdom, so that the same for the future might not be in danger again of being subverted, to which the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons did agree, and proceed to act accordingly.

Now in pursuance of the premises the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons in Parliament assembled, for the ratifying, confirming and establishing the said declaration and the articles, clauses, matters and things therein contained by the force of law made in due form by authority of Parliament, do pray that it may be declared and enacted that all the rights and liberties asserted and claimed in the said declaration are the true, ancient and indubitable rights and liberties of the people of this kingdom, and so shall be esteemed, allowed, adjudged, deemed and taken to be; and that all and every the particulars aforesaid shall be firmly and strictly holden and observed as they are expressed in the said declaration, and all officers and ministers whatsoever shall serve their Majesties and their successors according to the same in all time to come. And the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons, seriously considering how it hath pleased Almighty God in his marvelous providence and merciful goodness to this nation to provide and preserve their said Majesties' royal persons most happily to reign over us upon the throne of their ancestors, for which they render unto him from the bottom of their hearts their humblest thanks and praises, do truly, firmly, assuredly and in the sincerity of their hearts think, and do hereby recognize, acknowledge and declare, that King James the Second having abdicated the government, and their Majesties having accepted

the crown and royal dignity as aforesaid, their said Majesties did become, were, are and of right ought to be by the laws of this realm our sovereign liege lord and lady, king and queen of England and Ireland and the dominions thereunto belonging, in and to whose princely persons the royal state, crown and dignity of the said realms with all honors, styles, titles, regalities, prerogatives, powers, jurisdictions and authorities to the same belonging and appertaining are most fully, rightfully and entirely invested and incorporated, united and annexed.

And for preventing all questions and divisions in this realm by reason of any pretended titles to the crown, and for preserving a certainty in the succession thereof, in and upon which the unity, peace, tranquility and safety of this nation doth under God wholly consist and depend, the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons do beseech their Majesties that it may be enacted, established and declared, that the crown and regal government of the said kingdoms and dominions, with all and singular the premises thereunto belonging and appertaining, shall be and continue to their said Majesties and the survivor of them during their lives and the life of the survivor of them, and that the entire, perfect and full exercise of the regal power and government be only in and executed by his Majesty in the names of both their Majesties during their joint lives; and after their deceases the said crown and premises shall be and remain to the heirs of the body of her Majesty, and for default of such issue to her Royal Highness the Princess Anne of Denmark and the heirs of the body of his said Majesty; and thereunto the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons do in the name of all the people aforesaid most humbly and faithfully submit themselves, their heirs and posterities forever, and do faithfully promise that they will stand to, maintain and defend their said Majesties, and also the limitation and succession of the crown herein specified and contained, to the utmost of their powers with their lives and estates against all persons whatsoever that shall attempt anything to the contrary. And whereas it hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant kingdom to be governed by a popish prince, or by any king or queen marrying a papist, the said Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons do further pray that it may be enacted, that all and every person and persons that is, are or shall be reconciled to or shall hold communion with the see or Church of Rome, or shall profess the popish religion, or shall marry a papist, shall be excluded and

be forever incapable to inherit, possess or enjoy the crown and government of this realm and Ireland and the dominions thereunto belonging or any part of the same, or to have, use or exercise any regal power, authority or jurisdiction within the same ... and that every king and queen of this realm who at any time hereafter shall come to and succeed in the imperial crown of this kingdom shall on the first day of the meeting of the first Parliament next after his or her coming to the crown, sitting in his or her throne in the House of Peers in the presence of the Lords and Commons therein assembled, or at his or her coronation before such person or persons who shall administer the coronation oath to him or her at the time of his or her taking the said oath (whichever shall first happen), make, subscribe and audibly repeat the declaration mentioned in the statute made in the thirtieth year of the reign of King Charles the Second entitled, "An Act for the more effectual preserving the king's person and government by disabling papists from sitting in either House of Parliament." ...

HOMEWORK QUESTIONS:

- 1.) By drafting this Bill of Rights, how does the English Parliament present itself in relation to the country's King and Queen?
- 2.) What does this new Bill of Rights expressly prohibit?