

I. Economic and Social Crises

A. From 1560 to 1650, Europe experienced economic and social crises. One economic problem was **inflation**—rising prices—due to the influx of gold from the Americas and increased demand for land and food as the population grew.

B. By 1600, an economic slowdown had hit Europe. For example, Spain's economy seriously fell by the 1640s because New World mines were producing less silver, pirates grabbed much of what was bound for Spain, and the loss of Muslim and Jewish merchants and artisans.

C. By 1620, population began to decline, especially in central and southern Europe. Warfare, plague, and famine all contributed to the population decline and general social tension.

II. The Witchcraft Trials

A. A belief in **witchcraft**, or magic, had been part of traditional village life for centuries. The zeal behind the Inquisition was soon focused on witchcraft, and many people in Europe were seized by a hysteria about the matter.

B. Perhaps more than one hundred thousand people were charged with witchcraft. Most often common people were accused. More than 75 percent of the accused were women, mostly single, widowed, or over 50.

C. Accused witches were tortured and usually confessed to such things as swearing allegiance to the devil, casting spells, and attending revels at night called sabbats.

D. By 1650, the witchcraft hysteria had lessened. As governments strengthened after the period of crises, they were not tolerant of having witch trials disrupt society. Also, attitudes were changing: many people found it unreasonable to believe in a world haunted by evil spirits.

III. The Thirty Years' War

A. Religious disputes continued in Germany after the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 principally because the peace settlement did not recognize Calvinism, which spread throughout Europe.

B. Religion, politics, and territory all played a role in the Thirty Years' War, called the "last of the religious wars." The war began in the **Holy Roman Empire** in 1618 as a fight between the Hapsburg Holy Roman emperors and Protestant nobles in **Bohemia** who rebelled against the Hapsburgs. All major European countries but England became involved.

C. Most important was the struggle between France, on the one hand, and Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, on the other hand, for European leadership.

D. The battles took place on German soil, and Germany was plundered and destroyed for 30 years. The Peace of Westphalia ended the war in 1648. Some countries gained new territories, and France emerged as the dominant nation in Europe.

E. The Peace of Westphalia said all German states could determine their own religion. The states that made up the Holy Roman Empire became independent. The Holy Roman Empire died and Germany would not reunite for two hundred years.

F. The Thirty Years' War was Europe's most destructive ever. The flintlock musket, soon fitted with a bayonet, was a new, accurate weapon that could be reloaded faster than earlier firearms. Increased use of firearms and greater mobility on the battlefield meant armies had to be better disciplined and trained. Governments began to support standing armies. By 1700, France had a standing army of four hundred thousand.

IV. Revolutions in England

A. The seventeenth century saw England's civil war, the English Revolution. In essence, it was a struggle between Parliament and the king to determine the power of each in governing England.

B. The Tudor dynasty ended with Elizabeth's death in 1603. The Stuart king of Scotland, **James I**, ascended to the throne. He believed in the **divine right of kings**—that kings receive their power from God and are responsible only to God. Parliament wanted an equal role in ruling, however.

C. Religion was an issue as well. **Puritans** (one group of English Calvinists) disagreed with the king's defense of the Church of England, wanting it to be more Protestant. Many Puritans served in the House of Commons, the lower house of Parliament, which gave them power.

D. Conflict came to a head under the reign of James I's son, **Charles I**, who also believed in the divine right of kings. In 1628, Parliament passed a petition prohibiting passing taxes without Parliament's consent. At first the king agreed, but later he changed his mind. Charles I also tried to add ritual to the Protestant service, which to the Puritans seemed a return to Catholicism. Thousands of Puritans went to America rather than adhere to Charles I's religious policies.

E. Civil war broke out in 1642 between supporters of the king (**Cavaliers** or Royalists) and those of Parliament (**Roundheads**). Parliament won, principally because of the New Model Army of its leader and military genius, **Oliver Cromwell**. His army was made up chiefly of extreme Puritans known as the Independents. They believed they were doing battle for God.

F. Cromwell purged Parliament of anyone who had not supported him and executed Charles I in 1649. The execution of the king horrified much of Europe. Parliament abolished the monarchy and the House of Lords, and declared a republic, or **commonwealth**.

G. Cromwell soon dismissed Parliament and set up a military dictatorship. He ruled until his death in 1658. Parliament then restored the monarchy, and Charles II took the throne. Under the restored Stuart monarchy, Parliament kept much of the power it had gained. It restored the Church of England as the state religion and restricted some rights of Catholics and Puritans.

H. In 1685, **James II** became king. He was a devout Catholic. James named Catholics to high positions in the government, armed forces, and universities. Conflict over religion again brewed.

I. Parliament did not want James II's Catholic son to assume the throne. A group of English nobleman invited the Dutch leader, William of Orange, husband of James's daughter Mary, to invade England. William and Mary raised an army and marched to England. James and his family fled, so with almost no violence, England underwent its "Glorious Revolution." The issue was who would be monarch.

J. William and Mary accepted the throne in 1689 along with a Bill of Rights, which set forth Parliament's right to make laws and levy taxes. As well, standing armies could be raised only with Parliament's consent. The rights of citizens to bear arms and to a jury trial were also part of the document. The Bill of Rights helped create a government based on the rule of law and a freely elected Parliament. It laid the ground for a limited, or constitutional, monarchy.

K. The Toleration Act of 1689 gave Puritans, not Catholics, the right of free public worship. Few English citizens were persecuted for religion ever again, however. By deposing one king and establishing another, Parliament had destroyed the divine right theory of kingship.