

Charles I's Personal Rule

Enquiry: Why did the Civil War break out in 1642?

KS3 History - Lesson 2 of 6

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Kings and parliaments

Since the late medieval period English monarchs and parliaments had worked together to rule England. Parliaments played an important role in providing monarchs with money. This was because it was parliament that debated and voted on whether new taxes should be introduced. Usually, when a new monarch came to the throne, parliament would automatically vote to give the new king or queen money from traditional taxes like **custom duties**. When Charles I came to the throne, however, parliament was not sure if they could trust him. So, parliament voted to give Charles money from the customs duties for just one year rather than for his full reign.



Charles vs Parliament

Why did parliament not automatically give Charles the money from the traditional customs duty tax? Parliament believed that by doing this it would force Charles to call parliament at least once a year. So parliament hoped that they could make Charles work closely with them.

Parliament and Charles' relationship deteriorated further due to defeats in the Thirty Years War. Then when Buckingham was assassinated his death was met with little sympathy from parliament. Charles decided he no longer wanted to work with parliament. In 1629 Charles dissolved parliament and began his **personal rule**.



Ship Money

Once Charles I dissolved parliament, he knew he needed to find new ways to raise money. Ship Money was traditionally a tax for all coastal counties to pay to fund the navy. It was believed coastal counties should pay as they were the one that benefited from the navy's protection against **piracy**. In 1635 Charles decided that all of England benefited from the navy and so everyone should pay ship money. Charles' popularity sunk due to this and in 1637, John Hampden took the case to court arguing that the King could not raise his own tax as this was the job of parliament. Hampden eventually lost his case as it was agreed that the King's word was law and he could not be punished.



Laud's Reforms

William Laud, the **Archbishop of Canterbury** set out his reforms to the Church in 1633. Although Laud was a protestant, he agreed with the Catholic idea that churches should be buildings of beauty. Laud wanted all churches to be well decorated with stained glass windows, crosses, and candles. He also wanted priests to show off their authority by wearing vestments, like Catholic priests wore. The Puritans in England were outraged and protested Laud's reforms. Laud saw to it that any outspoken puritan was severely punished. In 1637, William Prynne, Henry Burton, and John Bastwick, were publicly **mutilated** as an executioner hacked off their ears. This punishment was designed to act as a warning to other puritans to stop protesting.



Glossary

Customs Duties – Taxes on goods coming in and out of the country

Piracy – Where ships are attacked and robbed at sea

Archbishop of Canterbury – Highest position within the Church of England.

Mutilated – Cause a violent or disfiguring injury.



Comprehension Questions

1. Which two events worsened the relationship between king and parliament?
2. What change did Charles I make to ship money?
3. Why did John Hampden lose his court case against Charles I?
4. Why were puritans so outraged by Laud's reforms?
5. Why were protests against Laud's reforms punished so harshly?

