

## Study Material

### HISA Semester 4 CC- 8

# THE STUARTS

## (FROM THE ACCESSION OF JAMES I TILL THE OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR)

### ➤ JAMES I (1603-1625)

- James was a stranger to England and English institutions.
- Members of the Parliament were not lacking in loyalty to the Crown but they knew that their privileges – which they regarded as synonymous with the liberties of all Englishmen – might mean nothing to a foreigner.
- James's insistence on his divine right to rule and on the limitless authority associated with his exalted position alarmed the Commons.
- Elizabeth had died in debt, but James never appreciated the need of economy.
- James's personal extravagance, combined with the continuing price rise, plunged the Crown deeper and deeper into debt.
- Both Puritans and Catholics expected 'fairer' treatment from the new monarch but were disappointed.

## ➤ CHARLES I (1625-1649)

- Like his father, Charles too had a profound respect for his own position. He believed that kings were directly responsible to God alone for their actions and the prerogatives of the Crown could not be taken away by human means.
- Roger Lockyer "...for him politics were an aspect of morality:" He put an end to the sale of titles and cut down the tasteless extravagance at the Court.
- By long tradition, Parliament voted the King the Custom duties – Tonnage and Poundage for life, but in 1625, the Commons made the grant for one year only. Charles was deeply offended.
- Charles wanted the Parliament to sanction money for his war efforts, but the Parliament refused.
- Charles ordered a forced loan should be raised by collecting from the people what they would have paid if the Parliamentary subsidies had been voted.
- The loan brought in nearly a quarter of a million pounds, but aroused widespread resentment. So did the demand that coastal towns should provide ships for royal service for free.
- The Parliament was reconvened in 1628. The King accepted the Bill of Rights which upheld privileges of the Parliament and expected members to show their goodwill by voting him Tonnage and Poundage which did not happen.
- **ELEVEN YEARS PERSONAL RULE / TYRANNY: (1629-1640)**
  - The Parliament was adjourned in 1629 and for the next 11 years Charles ruled England without a Parliament.

- Roger Lockyer “There is no reason to suppose that he never intended to summon it again, but he wanted time to show how beneficial royal government could be when it was given a chance to operate freely.”
- William Laud, an Armenian was made the Archbishop of Canterbury - it marked the ascendancy of the Arminians. Certain steps taken by Laud angered the Puritans.
- Sir Thomas Wentworth (Lord President of the Council of the North) and the policy of ‘Thorough’ generated resentment among the peers and the gentry who regarded any attempt at central control as tyranny.
- Charles’s personal rule alienated both the property owners and the puritans.
- Collection of Ship Money resulted in widespread resentment. It was pointed out that in the normal course of affairs, the King had to raise money only through Parliament.
- The result of the collection of Ship Money and similar other measures was that the Crown’s annual income greatly increased and sometimes exceeded its expenditure.
- Roger Lockyer “In the 1630’s England seemed to be on the surface, a happy and prosperous country, particularly when compared with the war-torn Continent.”

- **THE APPROACH TO CIVIL WAR**

- In 1636, the King ordered a new service-book for use in the Scottish churches which caused an uproar and an armed confrontation seemed inevitable.

- Wentworth advised the King to summon the Parliament for he felt that the traditional enmity between England and Scotland would rouse members in defence of their native land.
- The English Parliament met in April 1640. John Pym, who had emerged as the leader of the Parliament insisted that the grievances of the Parliament should first be addressed and then they would vote for the subsidies which the King wanted. The King was alarmed, particularly because it was rumoured that Pym and some other members of the Parliament were in touch with the Scots and he dissolved the Parliament.
- Meanwhile, the Convocation (a clerical assembly) voted £ 20,000 a year for the cause of the King and the Church.
- The Convocation also defined the doctrines of the Anglican Church (Church of England) in an extremely Arminian manner. The puritans turned against the King.
- Throughout the country, there was a general reluctance to provide men and money for the King's service. The Scots could easily cross the border and occupy the northern counties without meeting any effective resistance and Charles had to agree to a truce.
- The King was in a desperate condition and had to summon the Parliament to settle the affairs of the Kingdom.
- On 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1640 members of both Houses assembled in London.
- Wentworth was tried and executed by the Parliament on charges of subverting the fundamental laws of the kingdom.
- The Commons were acting as defenders of the common law against absolute prerogative.

- Bills were passed abolishing the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission and declaring Ship Money illegal. Another Bill made a temporary grant of Tonnage and Poundage but declared that the earlier collection of these taxes by the King has been illegal.
- The King could not get rid of the Parliament even though he had made peace with the Scots, because he had given his assent to a Bill forbidding the dissolution of the two Houses without their own consent.
- Meanwhile, there was a rebellion in Ireland which demanded immediate attention. The head of the armed forces was the King. Pym, who did not trust the King, proposed that the King should choose only such men (to assist him on the battlefield) who were approved by the Parliament. He also drew up a long list of grievances against the King and presented these to the House as the Grand Remonstrance.
- The King was urged to take immediate action by his close aides and the Queen who reminded him that the Militia Bill was aimed at taking away control of the army from the hands of the King.
- The King was also alarmed by the fact that the local government of London had passed into the hands of the radicals.
- There were a group of moderates within the House, who were led by Edward Hyde, but the radicals under Pym were in majority.
- Pym took advantage of the fear aroused by the catholic rebellion in Ireland and suggested that the Queen, who was herself a Catholic might be in league with them.
- Charles prepared to bring about a *coup d'état*. He declared that five members of the House of Commons, including Pym had subverted the

fundamental laws by trying to destroy his rightful prerogatives and by helping his Scottish enemies. He marched into the House of Commons to arrest them, but they had fled. Charles's attempt had failed.

- The King decided to leave London and attempts at negotiation and agreement were not successful.
- On 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1642 Charles raised his standard at Nottingham which marked the beginning of armed conflict.

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