The Rise of Absolutism & Constitutionalism

Part 1 -- As Political Systems
Part 2 -- Within England and France
Part 1: Absolutism and Constitutionalism as political systems

Essential Question:
1) What are the foundational principles of absolutism and constitutionalism as political systems?
Time Period?

ca 1589 – 1725

Essentially, remember:

THE 17\textsuperscript{TH} CENTURY
Contextual Basics

A. Time
   1. 1600’s-1700’s
   2. Age of Exploration
   3. Leftovers of Protestant Reformation and a keen interest in religion.

B. Key ideas (Absolutism)
The kings are trying to break with the feudal system, which was good for local gov’t. but bad for a developing nation. Kings are looking to gather money and break away from the power of the nobility.
   1. nobles=warrior class, thus kings must find a source of revenue to build their own army.
      a. peasants with pike and longbow.
      b. expensive, so revenues must be found.
      c. use army as a pawn, the implied threat of force.

C. Key ideas (Constitutionalism)
Nobles and Merchant class look to weaken the power of the kings, thus they come together to check power of government.
The Big Idea:

In whose hands does SOVEREIGNTY lie?
2 different answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABSOLUTISM</th>
<th>CONSTITUTIONALISM</th>
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<tr>
<td>monarch has absolute authority over gov’t. &amp; people</td>
<td>balance b/t authority of gov’t. &amp; people’s rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>based on <em>divine right</em></td>
<td>constitution (written or unwritten)</td>
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<tr>
<td>≠ totalitarianism</td>
<td>monarchical or republican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France, Spain, Austria, Prussia, Russia</td>
<td>≠ democracy</td>
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<td>England, Dutch Republic</td>
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Monarch develops close relationship with middle class—security and stability for control of national affairs. Towns a source of wealth.

Woo the nobility with privileges.

*no middle class to work with so monarchs work with nobility to develop absolute rule.

*nobles control serfs/local affairs
*monarch controls national policy.
And then there is England...

Nobles and merchants work together to limit the power of the king through the use of a PARLIAMENT.

ENGLAND GOES ITS OWN WAY AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPS.
Why the 17th c.? Context?

Crises!

Response: Seek to restore order

2 solutions: absolutism constitutionalism
Common Obstacles

1. Religion/Social-Cultural Issues
2. Lack of communication between parliament and the monarch
3. small bureaucracies
4. cultural/linguistic differences
5. competition for power (ex. nobles)
Common Achievements

1. greater taxation
2. growth in armies
3. larger, more efficient bureaucracies
4. increased ability to compel subjects’ obedience
Primary Features of an Absolute Monarch

• 1\textsuperscript{st} – Centralized Political Power
• 2\textsuperscript{nd} – A Pacified Nobility
• 3\textsuperscript{rd} – Increased Revenue
• 4\textsuperscript{th} – A New Army

» Look for these themes within a specific nation
Part 1: Absolutism and Constitutionalism as political systems

Essential Question:
1) What are the foundational principles of absolutism and constitutionalism as political systems?
Part 2: Absolutism and Constitutionalism Within England and France

*Essential Questions:*

1) By the end of the 17th Century, England and France had different systems of government with different religious policies. What were the main differences? Similarities?

2) Why did each nation develop as it did? How much did the particular personalities of the rules of each nation determine the manner in which their political institutions emerged?
Part 2:
Absolutism and Constitutionalism Within England and France

How to remember the bigger idea:

England in 1600 ---- A strong monarchical state with limited power in the hands of Parliament and very strong Queen (remember Elizabeth I died in 1603).

France in 1600 ---- A nation recovering from the French Wars of Religion (aka the War of the Three Henries). A weak monarch, a limited parliamentary system, and an unstable view on governance.

England in 1700 -- A Parliamentary monarchy. A strong Parliament with limited government and strong constitutional liberties. The monarch is simply the head of state.

France in 1700 -- An Absolute monarchy, where the monarch is the State. No national institution like a parliament and government was completely centralized within the monarchy itself.
The two most important political figures from the period of absolutism are:

**Louis XIV of France (1638 - 1715)**

**Charles I of England (1600 - 1649)**
Foundations in France
1560’s-1610
A. Period of Religious strife.
  1. War of the Three Henry’s between monarchy, Catholics (Guise) and Huguenots (Navarre.)
  2. Henry of Navarre wins (Paris is Worth a Mass) and builds absolutist state.
Politics:
-defines his view of a POLITIQUE-religion is secondary, enough war.
  ● Edict of Nantes
  ● Works around Estates General
Economics: Mercantilism
  ● key is to improve trade both at home and abroad. Raise revenue. Gov’t. intervention to control econ.

Jean Bodin: political theory of sovereignty. In every society there should be one person or power who is strong enough to make laws for all.
Bishop Bousset: Divine Right of Kings, religious foundation of Absolutism
Cardinal Richelieu
Manage France during the Thirty Years War - keep Germany disunited.

Cardinal Mazarin
Building absolutism leads to rebellion of nobles FRONDE.
Affects Louis XVI as he was put on the run.
Will work to control nobles.

Royal Absolutism
Tools of the Absolute Monarch in the 17th Century…

1. Theory: Divine Right of Kings
2. Control of finances, but nobles are tax free. Tax burden falls on those least able to pay.
3. Centralized council carrying out kings wishes.
4. Royal officers who enforce kings will. Intendants from Middle Class.
5. Standing Army paid by king. Government has a monopoly on war making power.
6. Sovereignty “Le etat c est moi!”
7. Control of religion Revoke Edict of Nantes
Versailles

Chief Architects: Jules Hardouin-Marsart & Robert de Cotte
Constitutionalism

Backgrounds
1. Absolutism fails. Mainly for religious and poor statecraft reasons.
   a. people want to participate in government.
   b. a culture that values Liberty.
   c. noble culture that allows people to work for money.
   d. nobles willing to pay taxes as long as they have a “say” in government.

2. Historical reasons
   a. Magna Carta-precedent laid down that king must ask Parliament for tax revenue.
   b. geography puts England away from many of the turmoils that rack the continent.
      smaller population=one parliament.
   c. War of the Roses-noble families weaken each other, Parliament strengthened.
      Tudors emerge due to Parliament.

Enter the Stuarts (James I, Charles I, Charles II, James II) who are from Scotland and who want to rule absolutely. THEY DON’T RESPECT THE ENGLISH WAY.
England – James I (1566-1625)

- Elizabeth dies (1603) as last of the Tudor line.
- Throne goes to James VI of Scotland/James I of England. (son of Mary, queen of Scots and Lord Darnley)
- James believed he was absolute and divinely ordained
- James alienated the Puritans
  - Episcopal system vs. the Presbyterian model
  - House of Commons dominated by Puritans
England – Charles I (1625-1649)

- Charles decided to rule without Parliament in 1629
- violated the Petition of Right, newly passed in Parliament
- Charles violated it by levying a tax called Ship Money on coastal towns, supposedly used for "defense."
- Religion was also a problem
  - he married a Catholic, Henrietta Maria of France
  - tried to force Scotland to adopt Anglican Book of Common Prayer in Scottish Presbyterian Church.
  - Scots rebelled due to religious oppression and Charles had to call Parliament in 1637 to get money to quell rebellion.
England – Civil Conflict Erupts!

- 2 warring camps in Parliament
- Royalist **Cavaliers** wanted to stop reforms there
- Radical **Roundheads** under **John Pym** and **Oliver Cromwell** wanted more reforms.
- Charles tried to exploit differences by arresting some radicals, and civil war erupted by 1642

- Oliver Cromwell starts **New Model Army** of Puritans to fight king’s forces.
  - used all the latest military tactics
  - Defeated Charles I’s forces to end first phase of war in 1645
  - Expected Charles to give in to Constitutional Monarchy
  - Religious conflict splintered the revolutionaries – Puritans vs. Presbyterians
  - Charles sought to exploit the situation by getting help from the Scots in putting down revolutionaries.
  - Cromwell would have none of it and captured Charles, purged Parliament of Presbyterians, tried Charles and had him beheaded in 1649.
II. Revolt of Parliament, failure of Charles I and enter Oliver Cromwell
a. **Parliament challenges absolutist** tendencies of Stuarts.
b. War with Cromwell emerging with New Model Army – Puritans.
c. The Protectorate “Dictatorship” of Cromwell
d. Results in a softer attitude toward kings.

III. Restoration
a. Charles II and James II try to revert to absolutist tendencies (think this is at the time of Louis XIV.)
b. **Catholic tendencies**
c. Leads to the **Glorious Revolution (1688)**

IV. Glorious Revolution and effects
a. William of Orange becomes king (England to balance of power vs. Louis XIV)
b. Rule of Parliament established with **English Bill of Rights 1689**

V. 1700’s
a. Hanoverians (Georges I, II, III)
   German rulers who are dependent on Parliament to show them around.
   Prime Minister develops almost by accident as a result of this relationship.
   Walpole the first prime minister.
The Glorious Revolution

It is both certain and evident to all men, that the public peace and happiness of any state or kingdom cannot be preserved, where the Laws, Liberties, and Customs, established by the lawful authority in it, are openly transgressed and annulled; more especially where the alteration of Religion is endeavoured, and that a religion, which is contrary to law, is endeavoured to be introduced; upon which those who are most immediately concerned in it are indispensably bound to endeavour to preserve and maintain the established Laws, Liberties and customs, and, above all, the Religion and Worship of God, that is established among them; and to take such an effectual care, that the inhabitants of the said state or kingdom may neither be deprived of their Religion, nor of their Civil Rights.

—William of Orange.[47]
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