

The Trial of Charles I - II

Lead: During his reign King Charles of England dissipated the affection of the people and the loyalty of Parliament. He paid for it with his life.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Charles was not the ideal monarch. He was a shy man, whose personal insecurities were intensified by the physical impediment of a stutter when he spoke. He had a view of the monarchy that was increasingly

out of sync with his people. He wanted to be like the rest of Europe's royalty which was acquiring more and more power. Charles had the misfortune of being King at time when the English ruling class wanted to share power with their King. Parliament, particularly the House of Commons, after 1625 began demanding the King respect the rights of that body, consult with it on a regular basis, and stop collecting taxes without Parliamentary sanction. Thus, as the years passed Charles became more isolated from the people he most needed to help him govern the country. So acrimonious had relations between King and Parliament grown, that in 1629 he sent them home and

for eleven years, during the so-called period of personal rule, he did not call them back.

The King probably could have continued to govern without Parliament had he not enflamed already serious religious divisions in the country. The Puritans were a relatively small, but highly influential segment of the Church of England. Since Elizabeth's reign the Puritans had sought to bring further reform to the Church: simplifying worship, bettering national morality, giving more control to the local churches and removing all remaining vestiges of Roman Catholicism in England. With some justification, Puritans felt that

Charles and his Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, were hostile to them. Some in the 1630s left for Massachusetts Bay and a new life in America, most remained and took up common cause with those who felt Charles was an increasing threat to English liberties. Next time: three wars and a royal martyr.

**At the University of Richmond,
this is Dan Roberts**

Resources

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