

History of English Language and Literature
Professor Doctor Merin Simi Raj
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology Madras
Lecture No 8
The Caroline Period or The Age of Milton and The Interregnum

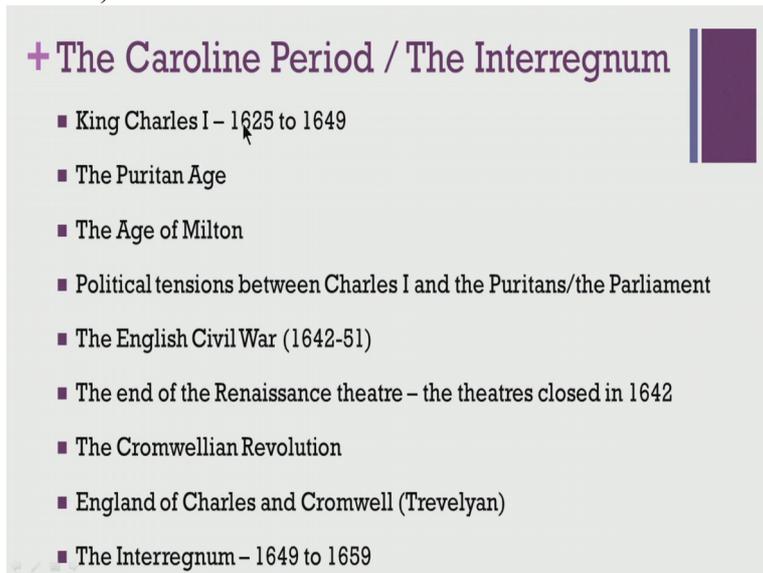
(Refer Slide Time 00:18)



Hello everyone. Welcome to today's session of the course, The History of English Language and Literature. Today's lecture is titled The Caroline Period or The Age of Milton and The Interregnum. So we begin to see the last leg of English Renaissance in this lecture and we also note that more than the literary and non-literary events, it is the political and religious events that dominate this period. And we also see the end of English Renaissance.

So in that sense it becomes very important to take a look at the socio-economic and political background as well. As we have been doing in the previous lectures, we will be giving a detailed background of the political turn of events which led to certain kinds of implications and certain kinds of eventualities in terms of art and

(Refer Slide Time 01:03)



+ The Caroline Period / The Interregnum

- King Charles I – 1625 to 1649
- The Puritan Age
- The Age of Milton
- Political tensions between Charles I and the Puritans/the Parliament
- The English Civil War (1642-51)
- The end of the Renaissance theatre – the theatres closed in 1642
- The Cromwellian Revolution
- England of Charles and Cromwell (Trevelyan)
- The Interregnum – 1649 to 1659

literature. So here we go, beginning to see what the Caroline period or the The Interregnum means.

This was the period of King Charles the First who ruled from 1625 to 1649 after his father James the First. And this Age particularly has many kinds of definitions and it can be described in multiple ways, in social terms, in literary terms and also in political and economic terms. This was the age of Puritanism and this was also the Age of Milton in terms of literature and this Age was dominated by the political tensions between the King Charles the First and the Puritans who also comprised of the Parliament. This was also the period of English Civil War which lasted from 1642 to 51 and around this period we also see the end of Renaissance theater and also this marked the death nail of Elizabethan and Jacobean theater. Theaters were closed in 1642 with the beginning of the Civil War. We also see the Cromwellian Revolution that follows and Trevelyan rightly describes this period as the England of Charles and Cromwell. And we also see The Interregnum, the period that follows was known as The Interregnum from 1649 to 1659. So this was a quite a turbulent period and we also begin to see that many of these political

(Refer Slide Time 02:27)



and socio-religious events of this time, it had a lasting implication not just under literary phases of England but also underway the state itself began to be conceived and constructed in the following decades and centuries. But in spite of all these events and in spite of the turbulence and difficulty of these times we also see that England continues its colonial expansion and it continues in a rather uninterrupted mode and this is quite significant to note because we do not find the growth of colonialism getting hampered either by the internal or external factors.

With this let's move on and look at some of the prominent figures and some of the prominent groups that feature during this period. For this

(Refer Slide Time 03:14)

+ Charles I (1600-1649)

- The only English King to be beheaded – belief in the divine right of kingship and absolutist monarchy
- The second son of James I
- Becomes the heir apparent on the death of his elder brother Henry Frederick in 1612 – at the age of 12
- George Villiers, Earl of Buckingham – Charles' closest advisor
- 27 March 1625 – crowned King
- May 1625 - Marriage to Henrietta Maria of France – Roman Catholic faith – made the Protestant England unhappy

it is first important to look at who Charles the First was. He lived from 1600 to 1649 and he has gone down in history as the only English king who was beheaded. And what led to his downfall was his own belief in the divine right of kingship and also his stubborn insistence on absolutist monarchy. And in that sense the downfall was his own making. And all of these beliefs in the inherent rights, divine rights granted to the kings, he had got it from his father who also was a staunch believer of absolutist monarchy. He was the second son of James the First; however he was not the first choice for the heir apparent. He becomes heir apparent only after the death of his elder brother Henry Frederick in 1612. He caught a mysterious fever and he succumbed to death and so at the age of 12, Charles the First becomes the heir apparent of England, Ireland and Scotland put together. Until that time it is said that he was considered as a very weak

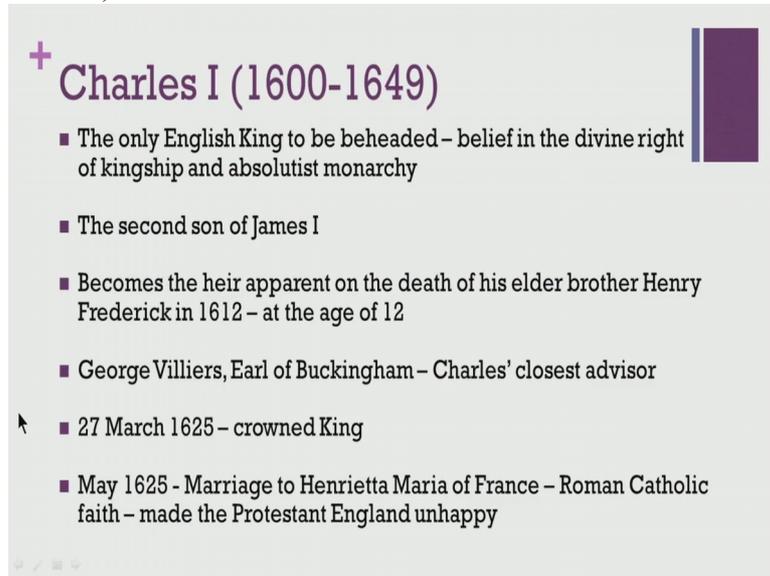
(Refer Slide Time 04:19)



prince and James the First was not even sure whether he would make it to adulthood. So since he could not, since the family thought that he may not be able to survive the travel from Scotland to England for a very long time until he was 12, until he becomes the heir apparent, he was raised in Scotland. And it is also said that when he moved to London, he was a very shy kid and he also did not know how to, he did not know the ways of the world and he was also considered as a quiet, weak and it is said he worked quite a lot in order to improve himself in terms of his personality as well as his physique.

And also George Villiers who was the Earl of Buckingham and initially was James' close friend and later who becomes Charles' closest advisor, he played a huge role in preparing Charles the First to assume the, to assume kingship at a later point. And this is this interesting

(Refer Slide Time 05:15)



+ Charles I (1600-1649)

- The only English King to be beheaded – belief in the divine right of kingship and absolutist monarchy
- The second son of James I
- Becomes the heir apparent on the death of his elder brother Henry Frederick in 1612 – at the age of 12
- George Villiers, Earl of Buckingham – Charles' closest advisor
- 27 March 1625 – crowned King
- May 1625 - Marriage to Henrietta Maria of France – Roman Catholic faith – made the Protestant England unhappy

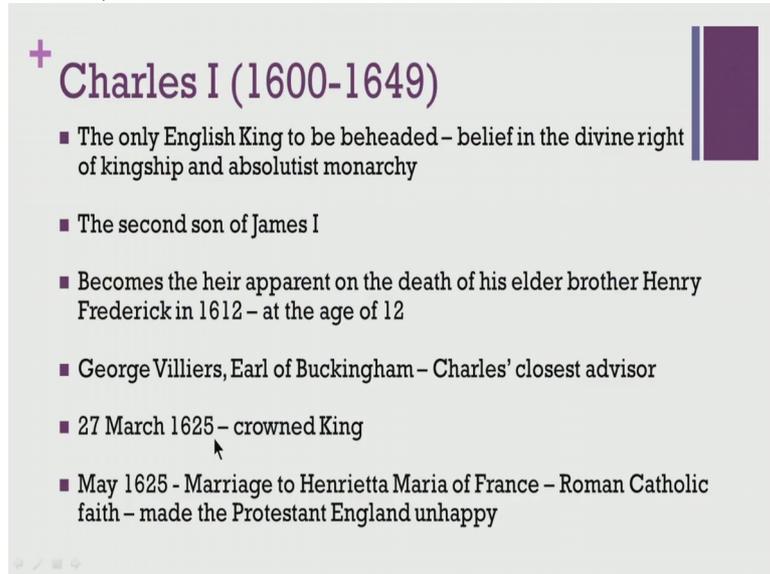
information about George Villiers, Earl of Buckingham. He was considered as a very close friend of James the First and there was also a lot of rumors about homosexual relationship between James the First and George Villiers. It was James the First who made George Villiers the Earl of Buckingham and there was this gossip in London during those times about their relationship and people used to whisper that Queen Elizabeth was a king and now King James

(Refer Slide Time 05:44)



is a queen. So in spite of that, George Villiers powers grew enormously and we do find him continuing

(Refer Slide Time 05:51)



+ Charles I (1600-1649)

- The only English King to be beheaded – belief in the divine right of kingship and absolutist monarchy
- The second son of James I
- Becomes the heir apparent on the death of his elder brother Henry Frederick in 1612 – at the age of 12
- George Villiers, Earl of Buckingham – Charles' closest advisor
- 27 March 1625 – crowned King
- May 1625 - Marriage to Henrietta Maria of France – Roman Catholic faith – made the Protestant England unhappy

as Charles' closest advisor when he was crowned King 27th March 1625.

And once he becomes king, we do not find him lingering back in anything. He is no longer the shy kid who arrived in London at the age of 12, and by May 1625, this is marriage alliance that happens with Henrietta Maria of France. She was also Roman Catholic. So this was perhaps the beginning of on-going struggle between Charles the First and the English people because England was predominantly a Protestant state by then. And they were increasingly enraged by Charles First alliance with Henrietta Maria of France who was of the Roman Catholic faith. So Protestant England was unhappy right from the beginning of Charles the First rule. And this

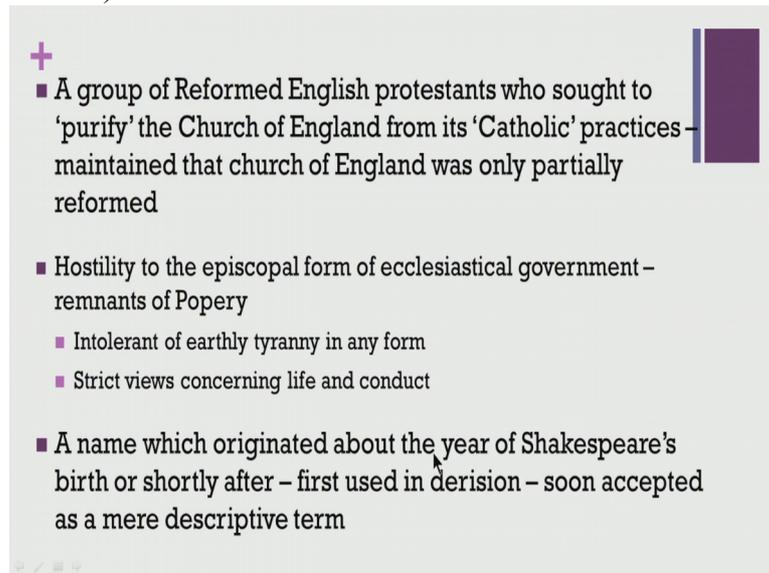
(Refer Slide Time 06:38)



was just it. There is a long struggle that ensues, the detail of which we will be taking a look at shortly.

And now we need to look at who the Puritans were. The Puritans were the ones who began to be forged as a community from the Reformation period onwards. And they were the ones who were dissatisfied with the religious settlement accomplished in England. And they also maintained that though the Church of England had managed to break away from the Church of Rome they maintained that the Church of England did not differ sufficiently enough from the Church of Rome, in that sense they were the true descendents of Wycliffe. They claimed themselves to be the true descendents of Wycliff and the Lollards. Lollards were the staunch believers in whatever Wycliff proclaimed and initially this term was used quite derogatively and later on it became descriptive term itself. And they were also influenced by John Calvin of Geneva.

(Refer Slide Time 07:32)



- A group of Reformed English protestants who sought to 'purify' the Church of England from its 'Catholic' practices – maintained that church of England was only partially reformed
- Hostility to the episcopal form of ecclesiastical government – remnants of Popery
 - Intolerant of earthly tyranny in any form
 - Strict views concerning life and conduct
- A name which originated about the year of Shakespeare's birth or shortly after – first used in derision – soon accepted as a mere descriptive term

So in that sense they were a group of reformed English Protestants who sought to purify the Church of England from its Catholic practices. And they also maintained that the Church of England was only partially reformed that it was retaining some of the Catholic practices which were hindering the true practice of Protestant faith. And they also had showed a lot of hostility to the Episcopal form of ecclesiastical government which was in place in England with the Protestant Reformation and they also thought that this was the remnant of Popery which was part of Roman Catholic Church. So in that sense they were increasingly intolerant of earthly tyranny in any form and they also had very strict views concerning life and conduct. So it also made them highly unpopular during those times.

And regarding the term the Puritans, initially the term was used in derision and it is said that the term came to be used around perhaps mid 1560s about the year of Shakespeare's birth or shortly after. But however this term was soon after accepted as a mere descriptive term without any derogatory reference.

(Refer Slide Time 08:37)

+ However,

- “the spirit when it was introduced was fine and noble, but it was hard and stern”
- “we admire the Puritan's integrity and uprightness; but we deplore his fanaticism, his moroseness, and the narrowness of his outlook and sympathies. He was an intense and God-fearing, but illiberal and unreasonable man . . .his was a one-sided and unwholesome view of the world, for in his pre-occupation with the moral and spiritual things he generally neglected and often expressly denounced, the science and art, the knowledge and the beauty, which gave value to the secular life. . . Puritanism destroyed humane culture, and sought to confine literature within the circumscribed field of its own particular interests” (Hudson)

Though initially the group began with a lot of intentions eventually we find they become, their tenets become not that acceptable. Hudson has got a few interesting descriptions and observations about them.

Hudson, the historian claims that the spirit when it was introduced was fine and noble but it was hard and stern. Allow me to read a passage from Hudson. We admire the Puritans integrity and uprightness but we deplore his fanaticism, his moroseness and the narrowness of his outlook and sympathies. He was an intense and God-fearing but illiberal and unreasonable man. His was a one-sided and unwholesome view of the world, for in his pre-occupation with moral and spiritual things he generally neglected, and often expressly denounced the science and the art, the knowledge and the beauty, which give value to the secular life. Puritanism destroyed humane culture, and sought to confine literature within the circumscribed field of its own particular interests.

(Refer Slide Time 09:41)



So this gives us a short summary of what Puritans did to the socio-political and religious affairs of the times and also it shows how it adversely affected the progress of art and literature during those times.

(Refer Slide Time 09:54)

+ Who supports who?

- Royalists – the strongest where least socio-economic changes were felt in the last 100 years
 - Cavaliers
 - The King and the Church – best loved in rural regions, areas least connected with overseas commerce
 - North, West
- Parliamentary and Puritan sympathies – in areas with great economic changes
 - Roundheads
 - London trading companies, manufacturing towns and districts
 - South, East

Before we go on to take a look at the long struggle

(Refer Slide Time 09:57)



between the King and the Parliament we also need to take a look at the two factions that had formed in England during the reign of Charles the First. So there were

(Refer Slide Time 10:06)

+ Who supports who?

- Royalists – the strongest where least socio-economic changes were felt in the last 100 years
 - Cavaliers
 - The King and the Church – best loved in rural regions, areas least connected with overseas commerce
 - North, West
- Parliamentary and Puritan sympathies – in areas with great economic changes
 - Roundheads
 - London trading companies, manufacturing towns and districts
 - South, East

two predominant groups, the Royalists and another group which supported the Parliament and the Puritans.

The Royalists were the strongest where least socio-economic changes had taken place in the last one century, in the last 100 years. So they also had the nickname Cavaliers because they primarily, they always mounted horses and also they were seen as foreigners and bullies. And other supporters included the Church which also thought the King would help restore a particular kind of staunch belief system and they were also, the royalists and the king were

best loved in rural regions and the areas which were least connected by commerce. So in that sense the northern part and western part of England supported the Royalists and the King.

And another section which was dominated by the Parliamentarians and the Puritans, they dominated in the areas which had great connection with economic changes and commercial trade and other kinds of these things happening. They were known as the, nicknamed as the Roundheads because most of them had shaved head and they were seen as low-bred and also uncouth and not so sophisticated like the Royalists. And these were the group of people who also enlisted the support of the London trading companies, the manufacturing towns and districts and they also dominated in the richer areas of England mostly in the Southern and the Eastern part.

So we also begin to see that though the Royalists were considered as more powerful in terms of their nobility

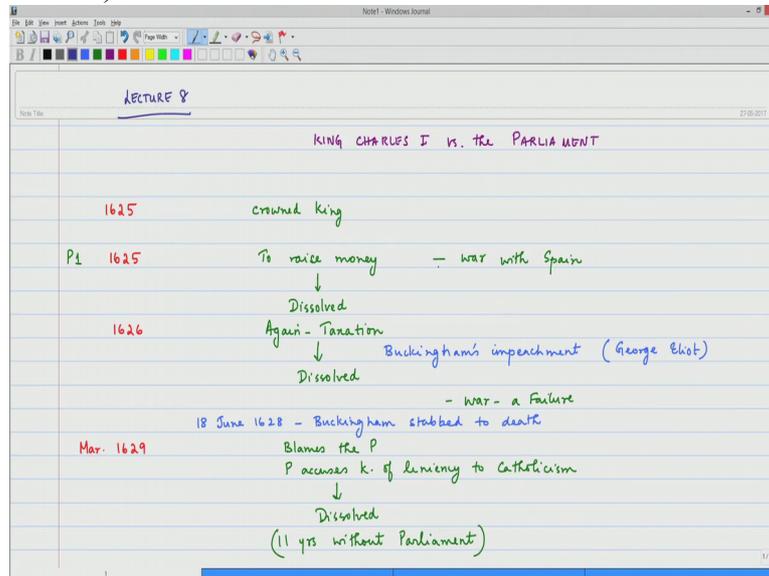
(Refer Slide Time 11:46)



in terms of the kind of powers they enjoyed because the Church and the Royalists were together. The parliamentary and the Puritan sympathizers, they were the ones who controlled economy of the nation. They were the ones who ran the trading companies. They were the ones who managed the finance and the colonial expansive activities could not have been possible without the support of the Parliamentary and Puritan sympathizers. So in that sense they began to see a very strong division or tussle over here. And also we begin to note that the

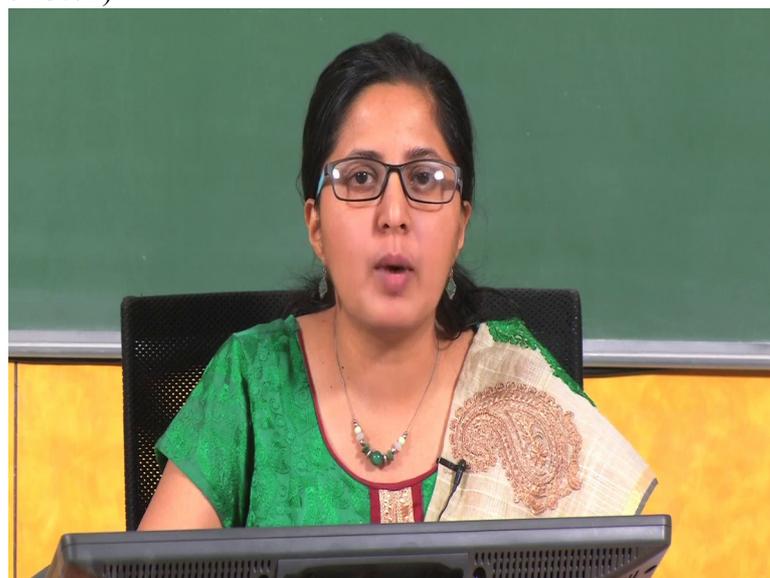
Royalists cannot function if they do not get enough money through the Parliament supporters and through the traders and the people who were running the commerce.

(Refer Slide Time 12:29)



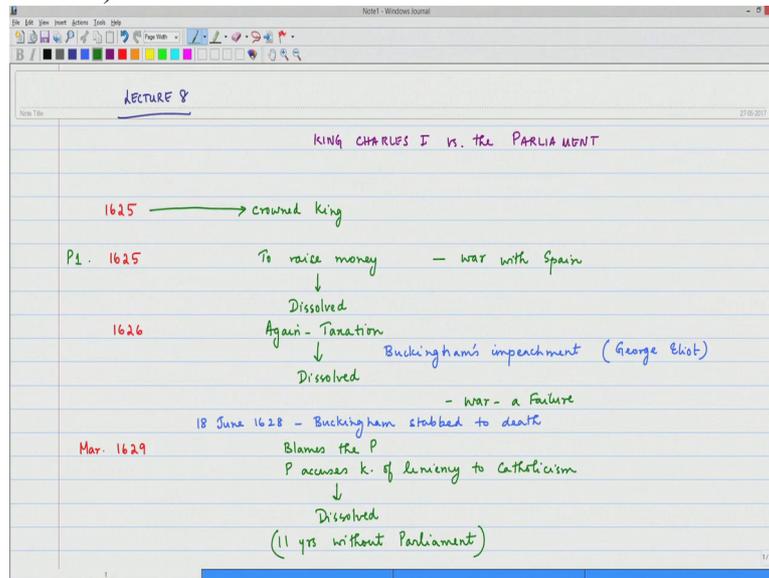
So with this we begin to take a look at the long struggle between Charles the First and Parliament. In 1625, Charles the First is crowned as the King of England, Scotland and Ireland. And in 1625 itself in the same year, begins to, his colonial ambitions begun to run very high and he thinks of waging a war with Spain. If you remember James the First, his father, he had already made peace with Spain as soon as he had assumed power. So this was not seen

(Refer Slide Time 13:02)



as the wise move by most of the, by members of the Parliament and the common people were also not ready to get into another kind of war because that also meant heavy taxation. But however with the support of the Earl of Buckingham who is also Charles the First's advisor Charles decides to go ahead with his plans to annex

(Refer Slide Time 13:24)



Spain and he also calls the Parliament for the first time, let us call it P 1, the first Parliamentary meeting happens in 1625. He summons the Parliament to raise money. If you remember most of the commercialists of that time and most of the

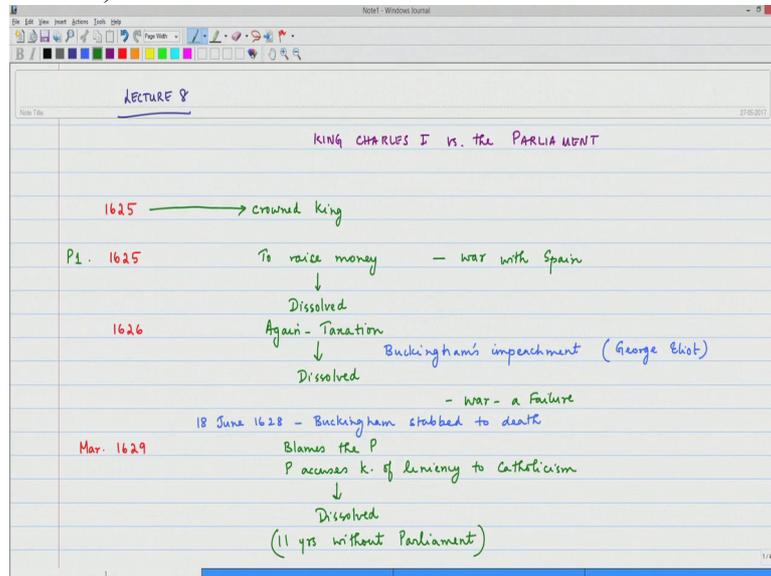
(Refer Slide Time 13:40)



wealthy rich tradesmen and company owners of the time, they belonged to the supporters of the Parliament and so it was very important to enlist the Parliament support in order to tax the

common people or raise the money because they was no other way through which the Court could raise money from the commoners at that point of time. So Parliament is

(Refer Slide Time 14:03)



summoned for the first time under Charles' the First rule in 1625 in order to raise money for waging the war with Spain. But however The Parliament does not agree to this proposal by Charles the First and Charles the First resorts to his, and here we find Charles the First dissolving the Parliament for the first time.

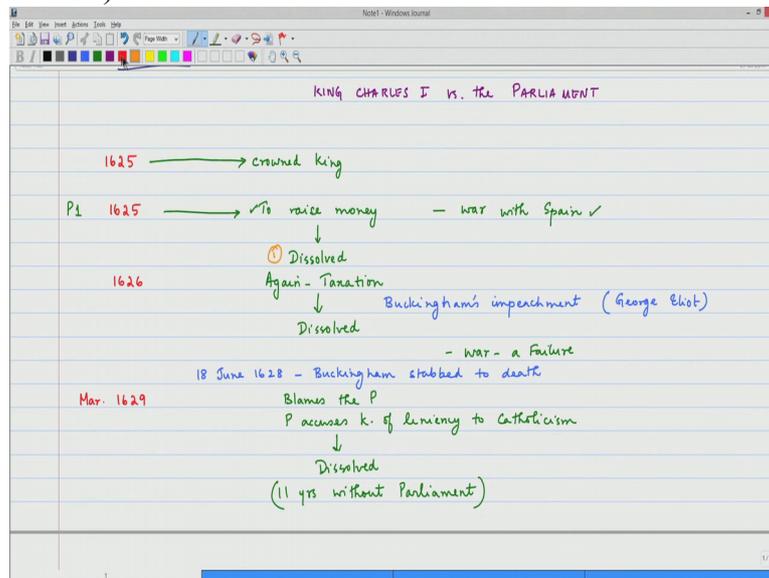
And this was no big deal in England at that time. It was not as if the kings had not dissolved the Parliament at all. There were many other kings who dissolved

(Refer Slide Time 14:35)



the Parliament and the Parliament was summoned time and again as well. So it was not considered big deal to dissolve the Parliament. And in even 1675, he had dissolved the Parliament, he realizes there is no other way to raise money and he still went on attacking Spain.

(Refer Slide Time 14:52)



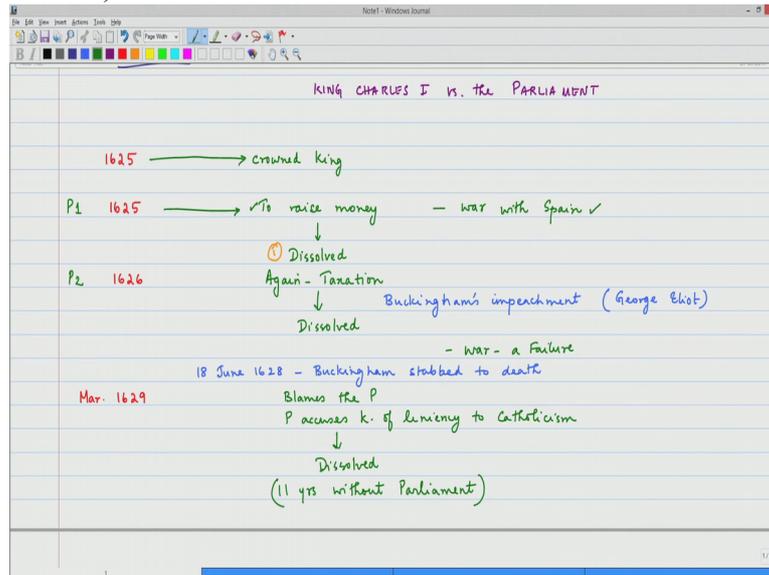
So he summons another meet which we shall call as P 2. So there is the second Parliamentary meet that happens. And again the issue of taxation is brought it and we also need to keep in mind that

(Refer Slide Time 15:05)



Charles First was a staunch believer of the Divine Right of Kings and he also thought that he had the divine right to assert himself and his ambitions on the Parliament and the commoners. So he failed to see the rationale in not going for war and he continues to

(Refer Slide Time 15:21)



insist on getting more taxes.

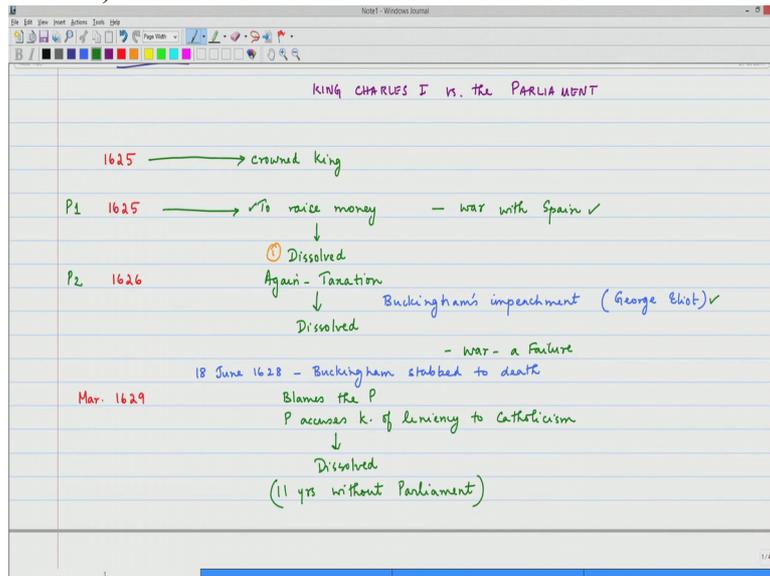
But at this point of time there is also the emergence of this particular figure George Eliot who asks, who demands for Buckingham's impeachment in order to raise more taxes. And because they also, they all knew that George Villiers or the Earl of Buckingham was, had become a profound influence on Charles the First and

(Refer Slide Time 15:45)



there were ongoing allegations against Buckingham's influence in all of these decisions and the

(Refer Slide Time 15:51)



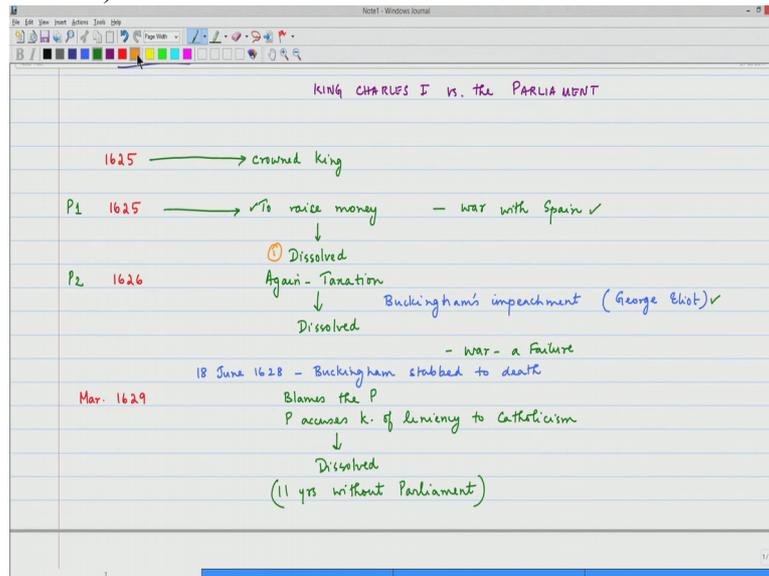
policies of the state. So Charles the First obviously does not agree to the impeachment of Buckingham

(Refer Slide Time 15:58)



and he also fails to restore the confidence of the

(Refer Slide Time 16:02)



Parliament and we find him dissolving the Parliament for the second time.

And nevertheless somehow, and somehow Charles the First summons an army. He also gathers enough resources and he makes this

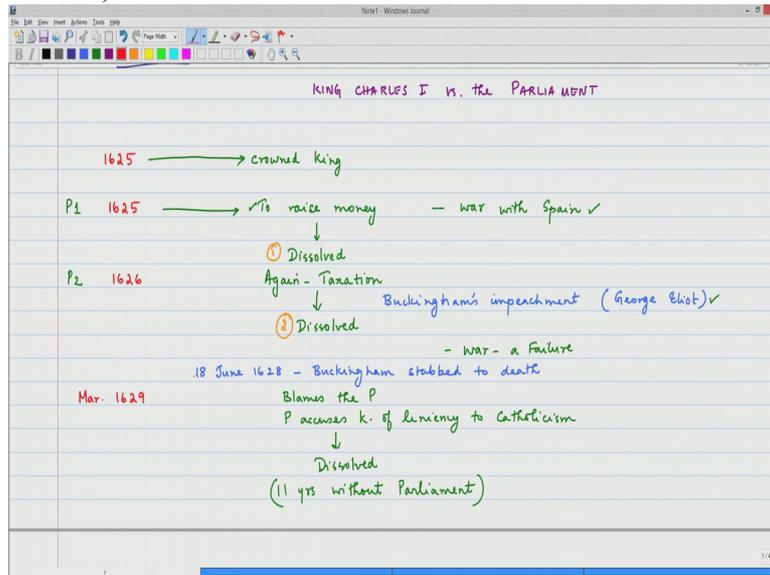
(Refer Slide Time 16:23)



War Trip to Spain but it was a huge failure. In today's terms it could be considered as a multi-million pound worth fiasco. So this was a huge blow on Charles First reign even as he has begun his term as the king and when he came back to England, he was met with an enraged public and an enraged Parliament but he was too arrogant and too short-sighted to see where this was all leading to.

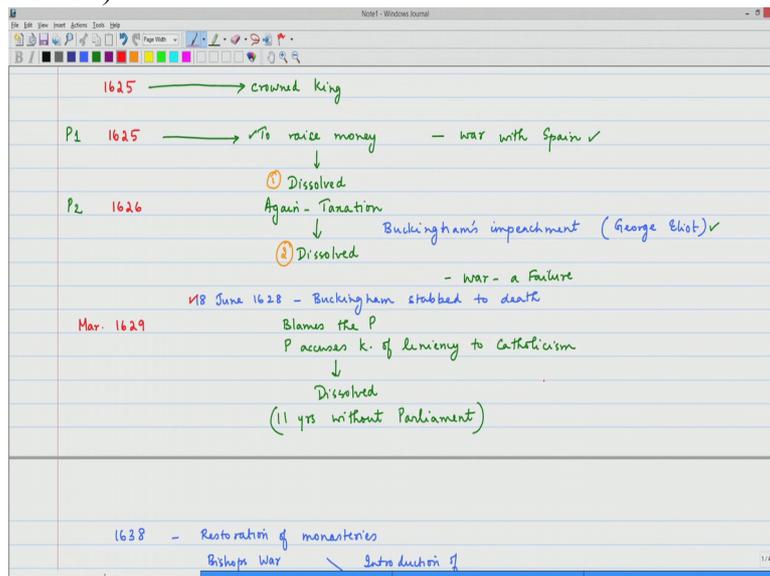
And also another important blow on Charles First reign

(Refer Slide Time 16:57)



was that on eighteenth June 1628, we find Buckingham getting stabbed to death. So this was a fatal blow to Charles First reign and also to his forthcoming plans.

(Refer Slide Time 17:10)



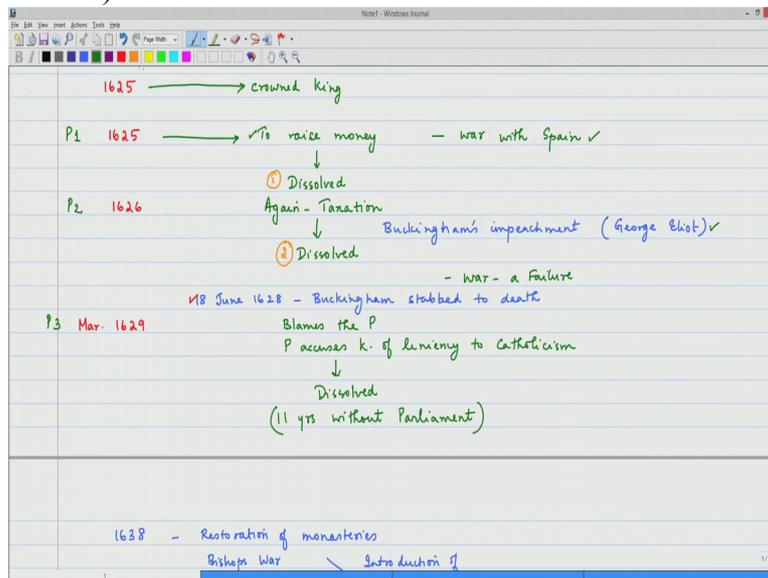
And by March 1629 we find him summoning the Parliament again. We find the third time the Parliament getting summoned, and he also blames the Parliament and particularly George Eliot for stabbing Buckingham to death because he was quite shaken,

(Refer Slide Time 17:31)



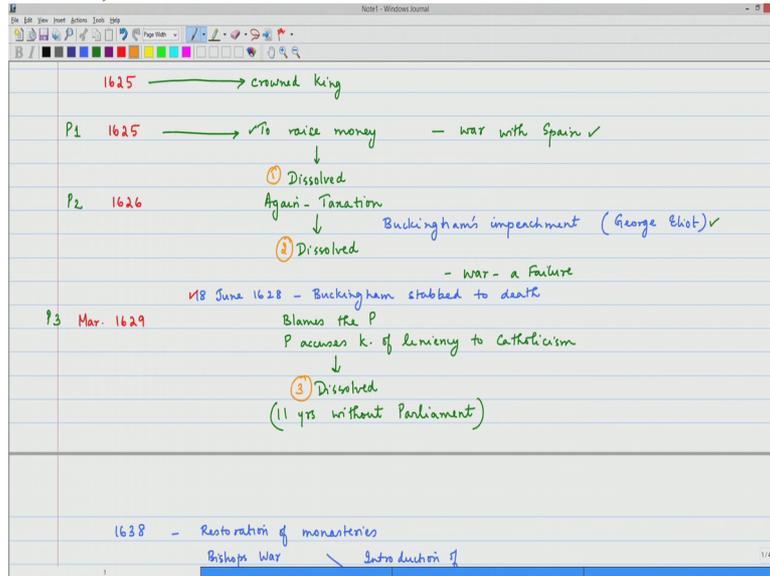
Charles the First was quite shaken with this death that had happened and the Parliament in turn accused Charles the First of being too lenient towards Catholicism. If you remember the Catholic marriage had already shaken their trust in Charles the First religious

(Refer Slide Time 17:47)



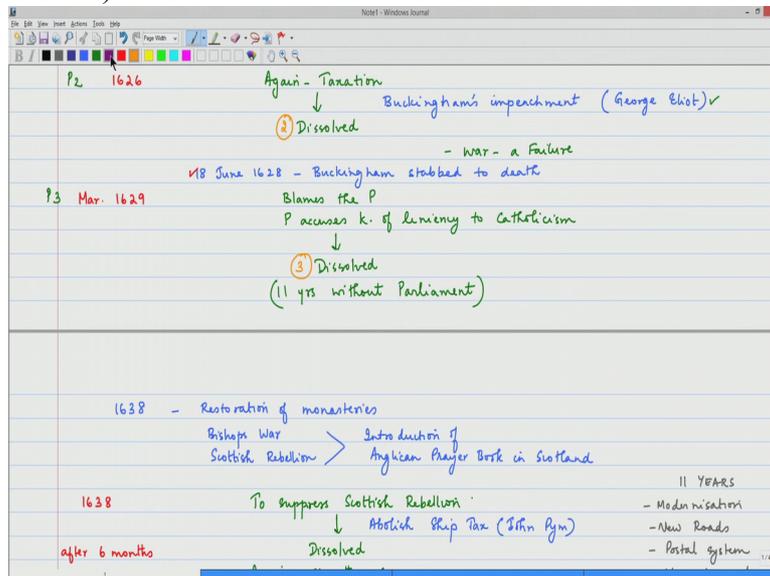
tendencies. And this almost enrages the King again and we find him dissolving the Parliament for the third time.

(Refer Slide Time 17:58)



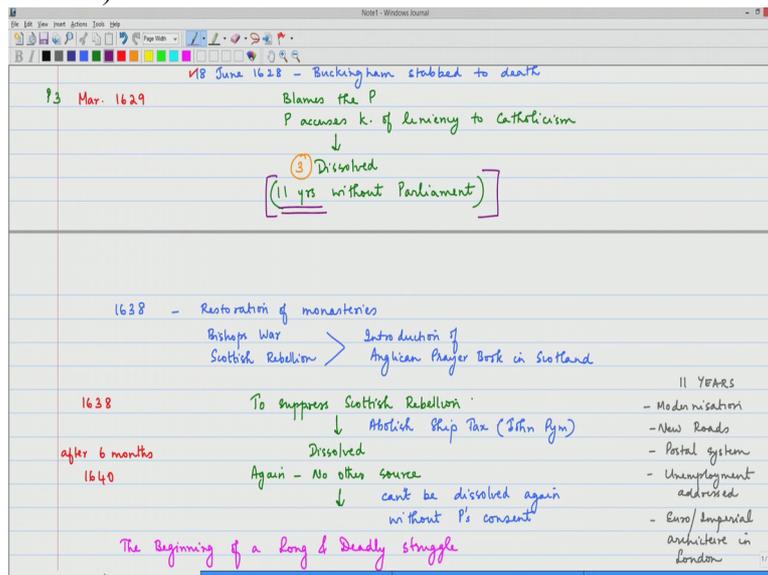
And meanwhile, Charles also achieves another thing. He also manages to trap George Eliot in some case and he is also sent to Tower. In that sense he also thinks that he has managed to silence the members of Parliament to a large extent because he was not the kind who could tolerate any kind of negotiation or any kind of discussion with the commoners. And with this

(Refer Slide Time 18:22)



we enter a new particular phase in the history of England. So meanwhile while he was ruling

(Refer Slide Time 18:28)



England without a Parliament, it was not a very non-turbulent period for him. Charles the First assumed that he was doing a lot of things for England and for instance in 1638 he takes upon himself this mission on the Restoration of monarchies.

If we recall the history during Henry Eight's rule he had destroyed a lot of Catholic monasteries because he wanted to wipe of Catholicism and bring in Protestant faith. So

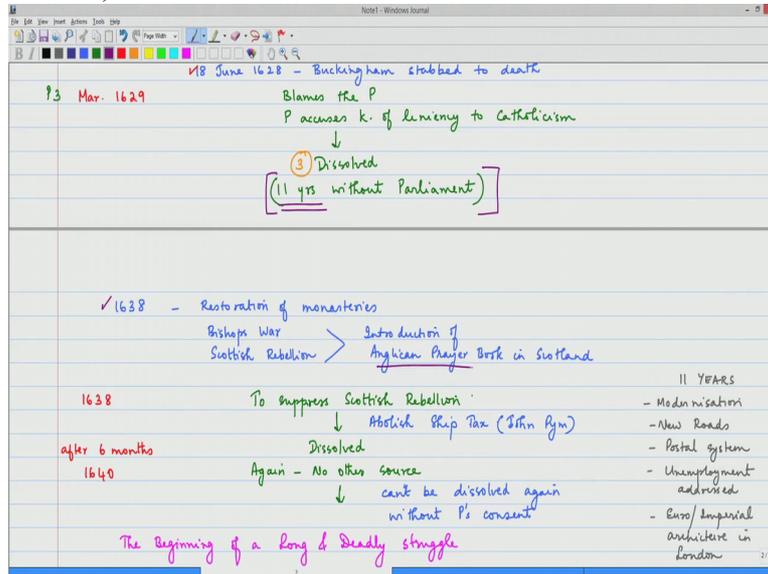
(Refer Slide Time 18:56)



Charles the First wanted to restore all these monasteries and also he enlisted the support of Archbishop of Canterbury and this was not taken very kindly by, by the English people because they did not want to go back to Catholicism in any way.

But the Archbishop of Canterbury, he also had a religious agenda in supporting Charles. He thought that this is perhaps the right opportunity to bring together the congregations of, the religious congregations of England and Scotland together. And keeping this intention

(Refer Slide Time 19:26)



in mind he also tried to introduce the Anglican Prayer Book in Scotland. But this was not taken very kindly by the Scottish people and soon after this, we find the Scotch erupting in rebellion. There are riots in churches;

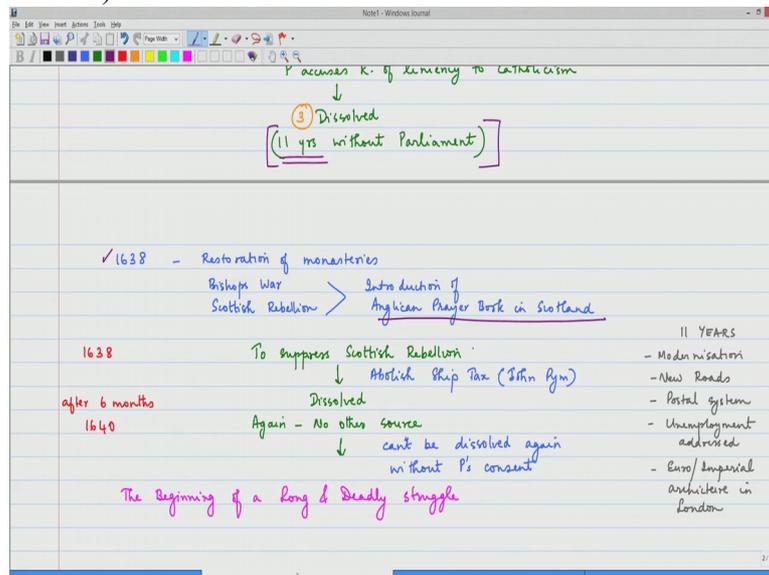
(Refer Slide Time 19:41)



there is also the Bishop's war that follows. Since it is not entirely connected to our topic of discussion we shall quickly skip that.

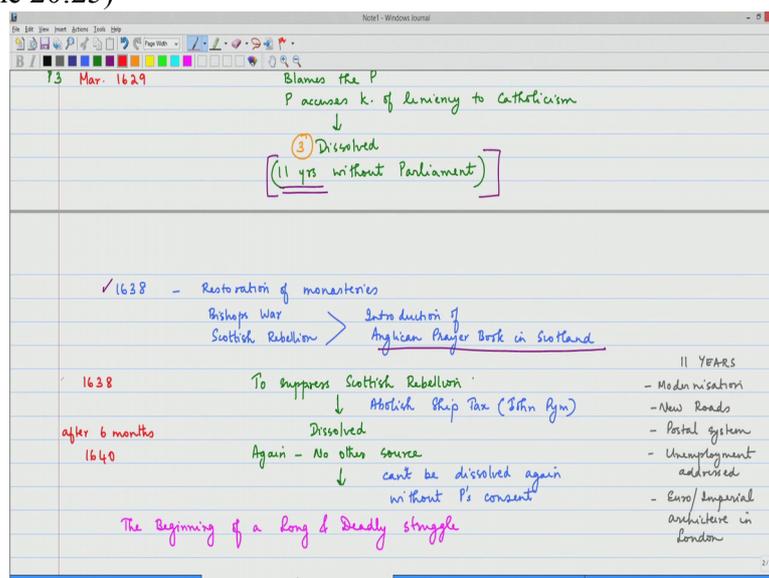
But this is again not seen very kindly by King Charles and he is also advised by his new advisor who is the Earl of Strafford after the death of Buckingham. He is also advised by the Earl of Strafford that he, Charles would be doing a mistake if he does not suppress this Scottish rebellion right away. So in 1638,

(Refer Slide Time 20:11)



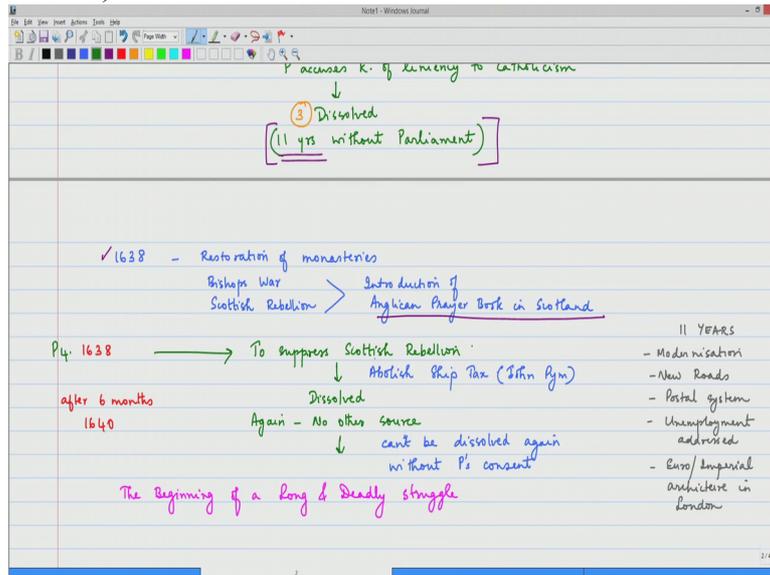
he decides to suppress the Scottish rebellion and he also realizes that in order to do this, he also needed finances and that also meant yrs summoning the Parliament again because only the Parliament could help him

(Refer Slide Time 20:25)



raise the funds. So here we find him summoning the Parliament, so here we find him summoning the Parliament for the fourth time in 1638 in order to again get more funds to suppress the Scottish

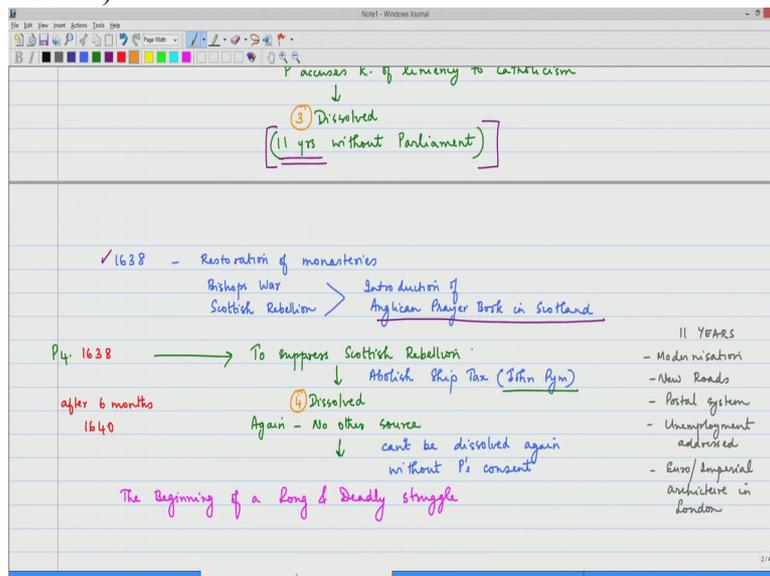
(Refer Slide Time 20:41)



rebellion.

But this time in the place of George Eliot, another important parliamentarian had come into prominence, John Pym and John Pym demanded the abolishment of ship tax which was quite heavy during that time because he, Charles wanted this money to support his naval expeditions. And Charles obviously says no to this proposal as well and he also dissolves the Parliament. He also dissolves the Parliament again for the fourth time.

(Refer Slide Time 21:13)



And what had given Charles the courage to summon the Parliament and ask for money again? And this leads to take a look at what had been happening in those eleven years when Charles the First was ruling without a Parliament.

During those 11 years we find London in particular making lot of strides in modernization. There are also new roads which were built in London and also the rest of England. And we also find Charles coming up with a postal service system in England and he also begins to address the unemployment issues which also endeared him for a short while to the commoners. And his major contribution in terms of architecture was the introduction of European and Imperial style of

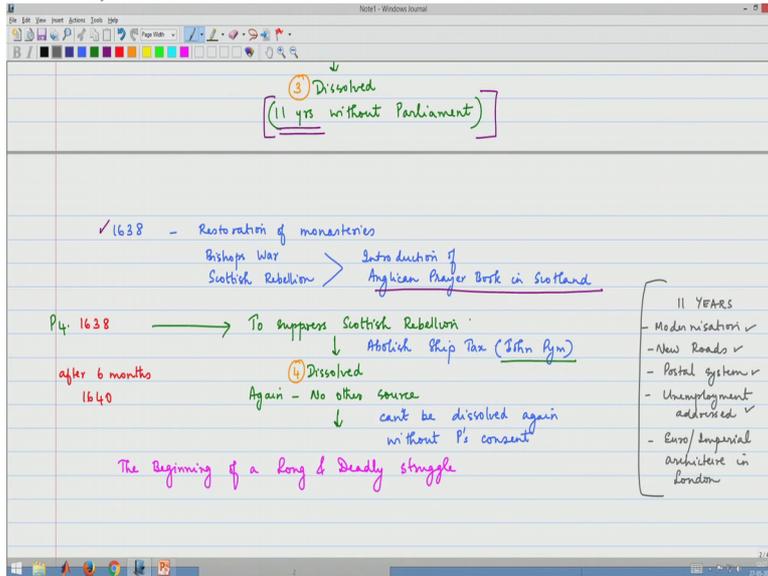
(Refer Slide Time 21:57)



architecture in the city of London. He also beautified his palace and his other residences in the similar way. But however though, some of those things were seen as benign and generous by a certain groups of people, in general the extravaganza was not acceptable to the English public. Parliament also felt that he was being quite reckless in spending with the money of the common people's tax.

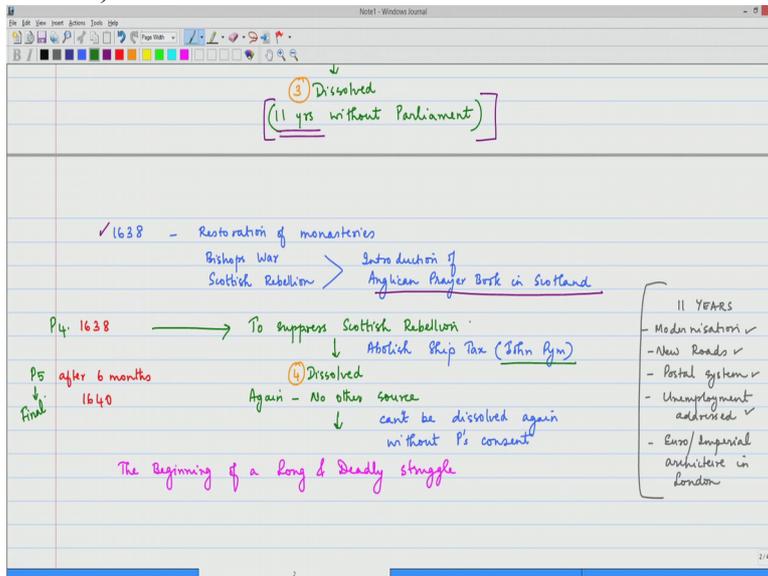
So even after the fourth meet we do not find the Parliament and the King able to re-negotiate with each other. Though Charles had dissolved the Parliament for the fourth time,

(Refer Slide Time 22:33)



he realizes that there is no other way for him to gain resources without the support of the Parliament. So again for the fifth and final time, the Parliament is summoned. This is the final summoning of the Parliament under

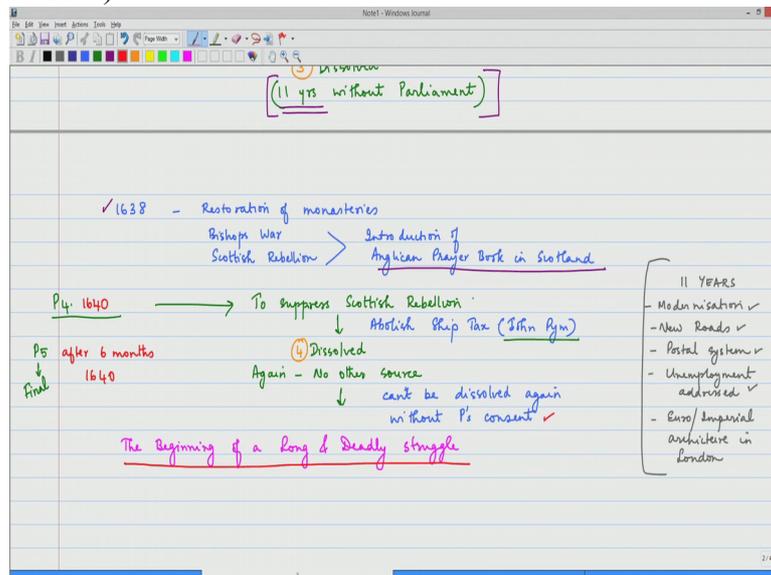
(Refer Slide Time 22:49)



Charles rule and this happened six months after the, after the fourth meeting. This is in 1640 and this happens after 6 months after the first meet in 1640 and we also find that the fifth and final meet happens after the six months after the previous meet in 1640 itself because there was no other way in which Charles could enlist the support of the London companies and also gain more finances.

And at this time the Parliament also forces him to come to terms to the fact that the Parliament cannot be dissolved again against the parliamentarians' consent. And this marks the significant shift in the kind of relationships, the kind of relationship between the King and the Parliament and it also marks the beginning of the long and deadly struggle

(Refer Slide Time 23:41)



between kings and Parliament in England in general. And this was not, it is not as if it is very decisive kind of a shift but we also begin to see that there was the possibilities of negotiation, the possibilities of bargaining was coming down

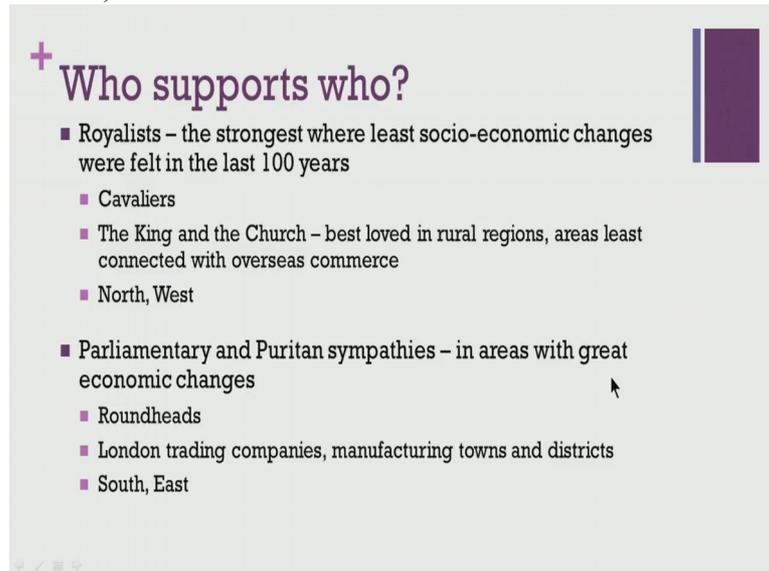
(Refer Slide Time 23:59)



drastically.

Significant point to be noted at this point is that the Parliament never wanted to take down the King's or Charles entirely. They only wanted to bring in a balance of power but since Charles believed in the divine right of kingship and also in absolutist monarchy it was very difficult to negotiate with him. And this was quite important because the later kings, we begin to see that they do not display this kind of blind faith in royal absolutism or in other divine right of kingship.

(Refer Slide Time 24:34)



+ Who supports who?

- Royalists – the strongest where least socio-economic changes were felt in the last 100 years
 - Cavaliers
 - The King and the Church – best loved in rural regions, areas least connected with overseas commerce
 - North, West
- Parliamentary and Puritan sympathies – in areas with great economic changes
 - Roundheads
 - London trading companies, manufacturing towns and districts
 - South, East

So the beginning of this long struggle between Charles and the Parliament, it led to the eventual thing which had to happen, the English Civil War and we also saw how two

(Refer Slide Time 24:45)



different factions had already been formed due to the various other socio-political reasons.

So with this we begin to wind up today's lecture and in the next session, we will begin to see how the English Civil War and the Cromwellian Revolution that followed, it changed the history of not just the politics and religion of the times but also the literature of the period. And that's all we have for today's session. Thank you for listening and look forward to see you in the next session.