

What events led to Magna Carta?

SYK paragraph

In May 1215 a group of barons declared civil war on John. They captured London and at Runnymede in June, John was forced to agree to the Magna Carta in an attempt to curb the power of the King and make him govern within the law. So how had the relationship between king, barons and Church deteriorated so badly?

SWYG paragraph

John succeeded to the throne in 1199 but was immediately faced with a number of serious problems. Amongst these was a disputed crown, an empty treasury, a war with France, an ambitious pope and an increasingly powerful group of barons who during the previous 45 years had become used to absent kings. In dealing with these issues John was going to come into conflict with the barons and Church.

Paragraph 1

In 1205 John quarrelled with Pope Innocent III about who should be archbishop of Canterbury. The Pope wanted Stephen Langton to be archbishop, but John swore he should never come to England. In 1208 the pope passed an interdict banning all church services and in 1209 excommunicated John. In 1213, under threat of an invasion by Philip II ordered by Innocent, John eventually gave in.

Paragraph 2

John's attempts to deal with Philip II of France backfired when Arthur his nephew disappeared, believed murdered on the orders of John. The outcry resulted in the devastating loss of Normandy to the French king in 1204.

Paragraph 3

John tried desperately hard to solve his financial crisis. He raised new and effective taxes and ensured that those who could pay did so! His over reliance on scutage and a tax of a thirteenth, led the barons to accuse him of being extortionate. His reprisals against non payers were ruthless. In 1212 John imposed taxes on the Barons in his attempts to regain his lost French lands.

Conclusion

John's eventual defeat by Philip II in 1214 at the Battle of Bouvines was the last straw for the barons who had now had enough of John and his unacceptable methods of ruling England. Civil war was now the only option left.