A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND

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The Iberians

Early maps show a world in which Britain is a remote outpost, a shapeless cluster of islands thrust out into the encircling ocean. But in some of these maps a significant tilt brings their Southwestern coast close to the North of Spain, reminding us that earlier still, centuries before the making of any maps that have survived, Britain lay not outside the world but on a regular and frequented trade route which linked Mediterranean civilization with the amber-bearing North. It was by this long sea route and not across the Dover Straits or the Channel that civilization first reached these shores.

In Cornwall, in Ireland and a long the coast of Wales and Scotland cluster the monuments left Iberian at Megalithic men who reached and peopled Britain between 3000 and 2000 B.C. A final group of such monuments in Sutherland, the last point at which their ships touched land before pushing across the North Sea to Scandinavia, makes the route and its objective abundantly clear. At this time the land subsidence which had begun a thousand or so years earlier was still going on, and the apparently shorter and safer route up Channel and along the European coast was closed, if not by a land bridge joining Britain to the continent, then by straits that were narrow, shifting, shoaling and swept by rapid tides. This is perhaps the first reason for the settlement of Iberian man in Britain.

Though little is certainly known about these Iberians of the New Stone Age, a good deal may be inferred with reasonable safety, since they have left their mark clearly upon the face of the land; Further, their stock is one of the main contributors to the present population of the British Isles, especially in Ireland, Wales and the West of England. A small, dark, long-headed race, they settled especially on the chalk downs that radiate from Salisbury Plain. bellow the ridges of these hills run their trackways, like the Icknield Way and the Pilgrim' s Way, which are our oldest and most historic roads. On the dawns and along the trackways lie the long barrows, the great cart works such as crown Cissbury and Dolebury, and the stone circles of which Avebury is the grandest and Stonehenge the best known. It is from these monuments and from the downland terraces formed by their agriculture that we can guess what manner of people these were.

The size and splendour of their monuments speak of a numerous and well-organized people. Thousands must have worked together to raise the great earthworks, and the trackways Link settlement to settlement in an orderly fashion. So, the Icknield Way joins the industrial centre of Grimes Graves, sire of a large scale flint knapping on the Brecklands of Norfolk, with the religious centre at Avebury. The down land terraces indicate an intensive agriculture carried on with hoe and spade. The whole lay-out of Iberian civilization points to a certain specialisation and division of labour which enabled the Norfolk people, for example, to mine and work flints that were traded all over the country.

More direct evidence of the social structure of the Iberians is the long barrow. Often over 200 feet in length, these barrows were burial places and prove the existence of sharply marked class divisions. On the one hand there must have been chiefs or nobles, people important enough to demand such elaborate funeral arrangements, and on the other, an abundance of the men whose cheap, possibly servile labour, was available for such works. If it could be definitely established tat the huge pyramidal mounds at Silbury and

Marlborough were also barrows it would be reasonable to infer also the existence of something in the nature of kingship.

Finally, there is some evidence that Iberian culture was mainly unwarlike. Few finds that can be classed as weapons have been unearthed of an earlier date than the first Celtic invasions in the Late Bronze Age, and there is little reason to think that the Down land earthworks were built as fortresses.

The diffusion of certain types of implements and utensils shows that a considerable trade went on along the trackways and by sea between Britain and Spain and even to the Mediterranean. Whether metals, other than gold which was mined in Ireland, were known is uncertain, since it is becoming increasingly difficult to draw any clear line between New Stone and Early Bronze Ages. Soon after 2000 B. a new race of Alpine stock entered the country, this time from the South-east and East. From their characteristic pottery they are known as the Beaker Folk. This race was certainly familiar with the use and working of bronze. The two peoples were closely related in culture, and the new-comers spread along the East coast, through East Anglia and up the Thames Valley. Iberian and Alpine met and fused in the Wiltshire area which is the focus of all pre-Celtic civilization in Britain, and it is probably this fusion that produced Stonehenge sometime before 1000 B.C. Tin, topper and lead were mined in Cornwall and Wales and probably exported in considerable bulk during this period.

Although a respectable level of civilization was reached in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages it was spread over only a small part of Britain. The mountain areas of the West and North were, as now, thinly peopled. More remarkably, much of the lowland area which *today* affords the richest agricultural land was also untouched. These areas were then covered by forests of oak and ash, with a thick, impenetrable underscrub. Such forests, on heavy, wet, clay soil were an absolute barrier to men equipped only with stone or even bronze implements, and, in fact, they were not seriously attacked till the Roman occupation and not finally cleared till the Saxon period. Prehistoric man kept to the dry chalk uplands, not because they were the richest but because they were the best he could occupy with the tools at his disposal, and it is not until the advent of the great iron axe that the richer but more heavily timbered lowlands were conquered.

The Celtic Tribes

Soon after 700 B.C., the first wave of Celtic invaders entered Britain, coming probably from the Upper Rhineland. These invasions were part of a widespread westward movement of tall, fair-haired, warlike tribes which overran the Mediterranean civilization much as the later Teutons were to overrun the Roman Empire. The movement began in the second millennium B.C**,** when barbarian tribes had learnt the use of bronze from the Mediterranean peoples and turned their knowledge to the production of weapons far superior to those of their teachers. In Britain the most striking sign of this is the appearance of the leaf-shaped sword, replacing the less effective knives and daggers of the Early and Middle Bronze Ages.

An early part of this movement was the penetration of the Aegean area by the Greek tribes, but the Celts proper spread as far abroad as Spain and Asia Minor. About 390 B.C. Celtic tribes sacked Rome and set up a kingdom in the fertile plain of Lombardy. The character of these invasions can be learnt from Caesar' s account of his war with the Helvetii, who attempted to march across Gaul to escape attacks from the German tribes across the Rhine. They were movements of large tribes, composed of free warriors under

tribal chiefs, accompanied by considerable numbers of women and children, they were, that is to say, national migrations rather than the raids of military bands, and their object was not so much plunder as conquest and settlement.

In Britain the first Celtic invaders were the Goidels or Gaels. These were followed about two centuries later by the Brythons, *a* branch of the Celts who had learned the use of iron, and who drove their bronze-using kinsmen out of the South and East and into Wales, Scotland, Ireland and the hilly Pennine and Devon areas. A third wave of invaders, Belgae from Northern Gaul, containing probably a considerable Teutonic element, arrived about 100 B.C. and occupied the greater part of what are now known as the Home Counties.

The Celtic conquerors blended with their Iberian predecessors to varying extents in different parts of .the country. While in the West the dominant strain is Iberian, the Celts were able to impose their tribal organization, modified to some extent by the fact of conquest, throughout the whole of the British Isles.

It is necessary at this point to describe the main characteristics of this organization, since the whole history of the next thousand years may best be understood in terms of the gradual weakening and break up of tribal society and is eventual replacement by feudalism. From this point of view the Roman occupation must be regarded as an interruption except in so far as it weakened Celtic tribal structure. This was especially the case in those parts of the country that were first reached by each subsequent invader.

The structure of tribal society has its roots in an even earlier age than the one we are discussing. During the greater part of the Stone Age —a vast period beginning with the emergence of Man himself— the productive system of society was a primitive communism. The food that was gathered for the social group, the animals that were hunted, the fish that was caught, were jointly produced and jointly consumed. The social group that carried on these common pursuits was a family group of a special kind. At the time of the Iberians the basic group of the kindred was probably a family group uniting the descendants of common great-grandparents. The size of the excavated settlements found in South and South-west England and dated to this period, confirms this estimate.

This early society was not, however, composed of small kinship groups with no economic and social relationships between each other. There were in fact very important relationships which united them to make up the larger groupings we call clans and tribes. The first way in which these groups co-operated was by the exchange of goods, primarily of food. On an analogy with Australian societies of modern times, it may be suggested that this exchange was based on a primitive division of labour by which certain groups specialized in certain products of the hunt. Another extremely important form of inter-kindred cooperation was in the exchange of mates. It was normal for a kinship group to find its husbands or wives outside the group, most likely in such other groups as were associated with it by the exchange of food as described above.

The kin was, in fact, a group of tremendous social cohesion. A man without kin was like a fish without water) helpless, doomed. Not only did a man's kin form the only possible framework of his economic life, but it protected him from the hazards of violent primitive existence. Should he kill or injure a man of another kin, his own kin either paid compensation (English wergild, Welsh galanas), or supported him in the blood-feud it the injured kin would not accept compensation. Should he slay a man of his own kin he was outlawed. This vital role of the kin is also of very long duration. For instance, in England, the kindred were still an organization with a considerable amount of vitality on the eve of

the Norman Conquest. In Wales, Scotland and Ireland it was important until comparatively modern times.

Many other institutions of tribal society were, like the kin of lasting vitality, and persisted long after primitive communism had been replaced as the basic form of economic organization and class relationship by slavery or feudalism. The village communities which were only finally swept away by capitalism's industrial revolution, represent, in their many communal activities, the primitive communism of many centuries before. The limitations of the free disposal of landed property in the shape of Various laws of inheritance, represent the lingering rights of the kin. Many of the rights of the medieval English kings were derived, not from their actual position, as leader of the feudal baronage, but from their previous position as leader of the tribe in war. Heraldry is a relic of the totemism of tribal society. And the most vital elements of European literature in the Middle Ages were inherited from the tribal epics and sagas of the Greek, Germanic and Celtic worlds.

The basic unit, then, of the Celtic tribe was the kinship group and these groups were in turn combined to form larger groups also based upon real or supposed kinship, rising to the tribe and the nation. But it was upon• the kinship group that the economic life of the Celts centered. They practiced a mixed agriculture and were the first to introduce the plough into this country. The Celtic plough was a small, light affair, and it was necessary to plough their fields twice so that the furrows crossed. Hence the square pattern of Celtic field systems based on the heavy plough. The holding of the Celtic kinship group, the gwely, was the joint property of the group and was divided among its adult males, each of whom assisted in the communal ploughing and in the harvest. The important point is that though the gwely might be almost infinitely subdivided it remained the laws, Welsh and Anglo-Saxon property of the whole family and ,was carefully preserved as an economic unit. At the same time, when the pressure of population became acute, a part of the family would split off and form a new gwely elsewhere. This was easy, because there was no lack of land, though there might be a shortage of cleared land.

The agriculture of the Celts was in some ways crude, and their ploughing was often no more than a scratching of the surface. Still, their better use of metals and the technical advance of the plough enabled them to occupy new areas. At the very close of the Celtic period the Belgae introduced a revolutionary innovation, the heavy plough drawn by four or eight oxen. Though the wet oak forests still remained uncleared, it was this period which saw the beginning of that valleyward movement of settlements that has now left Salisbury Plain, the Downs and the Norfolk Brecklands as almost unpeopled sheep walks.

While Celtic tribal society cannot be described as classless, its class divisions were not sharply marked or of decisive importance. The difference between chief and free tribesman was one of degree rather than of kind, and such class divisions as existed seem to have been mainly the result of the subjection of a native population. It is unlikely that this took the form of slavery except under special circumstances. The technique of production was still too crude for slavery to be economically possible. Welsh law gives us the impression that the two peoples lived side by side in free and unfree hamlets and gwelys. The native population of the unfree gwelys was not apparently exploited by the mass of the free cultivators, but directly by the chiefs and the landlords who grew up after the settlements had taken place. It was undoubtedly their ability to exploit the labour of this large semi-servile class that formed the basis of the growing power of the chiefs, and which marked them off ever more sharply from the generality of the free tribesmen.

The coming of the Belgae opens a new and important stage in the development of Celtic Britain. As compared with the Goidels and Brythons they practised a more extensive agriculture, and the South-east of Britain soon became, what Caesar noted it as being, a corn growing country. At the same time towns began to spring up, as at St. Albans and Colchester. These towns, if nothing better than large stockaded villages, were a marked contrast to the open hamlets and isolated homesteads of the earlier invaders. The Belgae kept up a close relation with Gaul, and a regular, if not extensive trade developed. With this came the earliest native coined money. The Brythons had employed iron bars, rather lii e half-finished swords in appearance, but now gold coins were struck in imitation of the Macedonian staters brought by merchants from the continent. It is curious to observe these 'coins becoming progressively more crude with each new minting, but it is also worth noting that few gold coins were struck in England between the end of the Roman occupation and the reign of Edward III, With the growth of agriculture, trade and towns, powerful chiefs began to claim kingship over wide areas, and at the time of Caesar's invasion in 55 B.C. all South-east Britain was in theory subject to a certain Cassivellaunus whose capital was probably Colchester.

3. Roman Britain

It was the close relation of Britain to Gaul which first attracted the notice of the Romans. Having conquered Gaul, Caesar soon heard tales of the pearls and corn in 'which the island was reputed to be rich. At the same time the export of tin from Cornwall, which had begun possibly as early as 2000 B. C. **,** still continued. Caesar's invasions were, however, dictated by strategical rather than by economic motives. Britain was a center from which Gallic resistance to Roman power was maintained, British warriors crossed the Channel to help their Gaulish kinsmen, and rebels from Gaul found a refuge and encouragement among the British tribes. It is unlikely that the conquest of Britain was contemplated at this time, but some sort of punitive expedition was necessary before the Roman occupation of Gaul could be regarded as assured. Roman Imperialism, based upon the predatory exploitation of the provinces, needed a constant forward movement to prevent a decline at the center, now becoming increasingly parasitic. But in 55 B. C. Gaul was newly conquered and assimilation and plunder by Rome's merchant and usurer capitalists had hardly begun. It was not till nearly a century later that Rome was ready to digest the new province of Britain. We shall see later that the inability to continue this process of absorption in the face of increasing resistance led directly to the decline of the Roman Empire.

In any case, Caesar's two invasions were little more than reconnaissance in force. The first was made in the summer of 55 B. C. with two legions and a body of cavalry, making a total of perhaps 10, 000 men. Some successes were gained but the opposition was strong and in the following year an army of about 25, 000 was landed. The Thames was crossed and the capital of Cassivellaunus stormed. Caesar then departed, taking hostages and securing a promise to pay tribute. There is no evidence that this promise was ever fulfilled.

In the ninety years between these raids and the invasion of **A.D. 43,** in which the actual conquest of Britain began, many changes took place. Excavations prove that during this period a thorough economic penetration of South-east Britain went on.

Trade became considerable, corn and hides being exchanged for pottery and a variety of luxury articles. Traders and colonists settled in large numbers and the growth of towns was so considerable that in A.D. 50, only seven years after the invasion of Claudius, St. Albans or Verulamium was granted the full status of a Roman municipium with civic self-government and the rights of Roman citizenship for its inhabitants. The British upper classes began to imitate Roman ways and even to build crude imitations of the Roman stone villa .

When Boadicea led the Iceni in revolt in A.D. 60 and sacked Verulamium, Colchester and London, the loss of life in these three cities **was** estimated by a Roman historian, possibly with some exaggeration, at 70, 000. This revolt was the most serious opposition that the Romans encountered in Southern Britain, and there is no doubt that the ease with which the country was conquered was mainly due to the economic penetration of the preceding century and the consequent disintegration of the Celtic tribal organization.

The Roman occupation of Britain lasted nearly 400 years, and sets the historian two important and closely related problems: how thorough was the process of Romanisation? And how enduring were its results?

Roman Britain divided itself into two parts: the civil or lowland district and the upland or military. Wales and the whole area North and West of the Peak District up to the Roman Wall which ran from the mouth of the Tyne to Carlisle composed the latter. North of the Wall the occupation was never more than occasional and haphazard. About the character Of the occupation of these military districts there can be no doubt. A network of roads, strung with military blockhouses, covered the whole area. North of York and West of Chester and Caerleon there are no civil towns of any importance. Three Legions were stationed here: one at York, one at Chester and one at Caerleon. The Wall was heavily garrisoned by auxiliary troops. In all a permanent garrison of some 40, 000 men was maintained in the province.

The native population of the military districts were little affected by the occupation except perhaps along the Wall and around the main stations. They revolted frequently till about A. D. 200, and there is no reason to suppose that their economic or tribal organization was seriously interfered with, since it reappears intact centuries later in the earliest Welsh laws. The whole area was poor, bleak and hilly, and, except for some minerals that were worked in Wales, it had little to attract the greed of the conquerors.

In the civil districts the situation was different. Britain was valued largely as a producer of grain, and annual shipments were made to Gaul until about A.D. 360, when their sudden ceasing is one of the most ominous signs of the decay of Roman power.

Scores of towns grew up along the Roman roads. Five of these ranked as municipia: Verulamium, Colchester, York, Lincoln and Gloucester. London, which for some obscure reason never acquired municipal rank was larger than any of these and became the most important trading centre in Northern Europe. Between the towns were the villas, country houses of the Roman or British magnates. These villas were not mere pleasure resorts, but the centres of agricultural estates. The British upper classes became completely Romanised and were transformed from Celtic tribal chiefs into Roman landowners and officials.

So much is clear: what is and must be uncertain is how far Roman customs and the Latin language and the Roman mode of production affected the mass of the people outside the towns. Roman agriculture was based on the large estate, and this was cultivated largely by semi-servile colony who were allowed to cultivate patches of land in return for fixed rents or services. This system became common at the end of the Roman period when

depopulation and the inability to open up any new sources for the supply of slaves produced acute labour problems; Almost certainty it was common in Britain and was found alongside of Celtic tribal agriculture even in the most settled regions.

During the Roman occupation large forest areas were opened up. Along the rivers and roads, and on the edges of the forest belts, clearings were made, and the demand for fuel to supply the elaborate central heating apparatus of the villas must have been a powerful factor in this process. We must conclude that the energy and method of the Romans radically transformed the whole of the civil districts and that the lives of all the people were molded towards the Roman pattern. There is not the slightest evidence that any national feeling existed-or that the inhabitants thought of themselves as Britons as opposed to Roman provincials.

Yet the permanent effects of Roman rule were astonishingly meager. The roads remained. The towns remained but were laid waste ant there is no certain evidence that any Roman town was continuously inhabited after the Anglo-Saxon inroads. It is possible that the economic structure of the villa contributed something to the makeup of the English township and the feudal manor. And, finally, Christianity, introduced by the legions, remained the religion of those parts of Britain which escaped the English conquest, penetrated thence to Ireland' where it acquired

The Roman Twilight

The destruction of the Roman Empire was due to a unique combination of internal and external causes, some of the former especially being very deep rooted and slow in taking effect. Even at the height of its power, the Empire was suffering from profound maladies and it was when the measures .which served to alleviate these could no longer be applied that a steady process of disintegration set in.

Italy was originally a land of small peasant cultivators, and her towns no more than trading centres supplying their needs. From the time of the wars between Rome and Carthage (264-200 B. C.) these peasant holdings were destroyed and replaced by huge farms worked by slave gangs. The Italian peasant was driven from the land, just as the English peasant was in the period between the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Centuries. But while in England the destruction of peasant agriculture was accompanied by the growth of capitalist industry in the towns this was not the case in Italy. Industry remained at a low level of development and was carried on almost entirely by slave labour. The result was the rapid development of merchant and usurer s capital without a corresponding industrial basis. Consequently, and especially in Rome itself, there came into being a huge parasitical proletariat, with citizen rights but no settled means of livelihood. The wholesale corruption of this mob by the merchants and tax farmers who replaced the old aristocracy at the close of the Republic, involved a continuous forward movement so as to provide the series of provinces from whose plunder alone both proletariat and capitalists could exist.

These provinces were also needed to provide reinforcements for the slave army on which the whole Roman economy depended. Slave production is always wasteful and the Roman slave army always failed to reproduce itself, this failure producing a recurrent depopulation both in the provinces and at the centre. When the conquests reached the point at which it was a military impossibility to hold and assimilate fresh territories, decline was

inevitable, though it was in part and for a time masked by improved methods of exploitation such as the substitution of a type of serfdom for the earlier chattel slavery. The political organisation of the Roman Empire in the form of a military dictatorship added to these weaknesses by the constant strife between rival provincial generals attempting to use their legions to secure the Imperial crown. Britain, as an outlying ‘and isolated province, suffered especially from this, being periodically drained of man power to support the claims of such adventurers as Maximus (383) and Constantine (407).

For long the Empire persisted rather because of the absence of any outside force powerful enough to attack it than from its own strength. In the Fourth Century A. D. a series of westward migratory movements across the steppes of Asia and Europe forced the German tribes nearest to the Roman frontiers into motion. The whole sequence is obscure but at its heart we can trace the westward migration of the Huns, a Mongol tribe from Central Asia, probably the result of climatic changes turning their grazing lands into desert. At first these German tribes were allowed and even encouraged to enter the Empire, where they were absorbed and partially Romanised. Gradually, as the pressure increased, the hold of the central government on outlying provinces was relinquished and one by one they were overrun by barbarian tribes who set up independent kingdoms of varying character-some largely Roman in culture and language, others almost wholly barbarian.

Britain, as the most remote and among the most exposed of the provinces, was among the earliest to fall away and lost most completely its Roman character.

The first attacks came not from German tribes across the North Sea but from the unconquered Goidelic Celts of Scotland and Ireland. This is in itself a sign of Roman decline, since in earlier times such attackers had been beaten off without much difficulty. After a period of peace from 250 to 350, a series of inroads swept Britain right up to the walls of London. The villas were burnt and pillaged, and, after about 360, were rarely rebuilt. The walled towns held out longer, but no coins later than 420 are found, for example, in Silchester, where a rude stone found in the forum bearing an Ogham inscription shows that Celtic tribalism was reasserting itself even before the Anglo—Saxon invasions.

Even after the first invasions there was a partial recovery but in 407 two events ended the long period of Roman occupation. One was the departure of Constantine, with the bulk of the troops stationed in Britain, in an attempt to secure the Imperial purple. The other was the crossing of the Rhine into Gaul of a host of German tribesmen which cut Britain off from the Roman world and prevented the return of replacement or the departed legions.

The year 407 is usually said to mark the “departure of the Romans,” and, in a sense, this is so. But there was no deliberate plan add new provinces to the one he already held, and the failure of his legions to return may be almost described as accidental. Yet **it** was at this date that the regular arrival of new Imperial governors and officials ceased. The people of South and East Britain, with their tribal organization destroyed and their new civilization already seriously weakened, were left to improvise their tribal organization destroyed and their new civilization already seriously weakened, were left to improvise their own government and defense against their never conquered kinsmen of the more remote parts of the islands.

When a new enemy, the Anglian and Saxon tribes from the German coast who had already made themselves feared as daring raiders, appeared about 450 as intending conquerors and settlers they found much of the work of the Romans undone already. The richest and most civilized part of the island, in which their landings were made, had been

laid waste before their arrival. Centralized government had disappeared and in its place was a welter of petty principalities under the control of local landlords or magnates at the head of armed bands that were almost as ruinous to the people as the enemies from whom they claimed to provide protection. It was largely for this reason that the traces of Roman rule in Britain are so few and the English conquest so complete.

The Growth of Feudalism

The English Conquest

The period between the year 407 when Constantine led away the legions and 597 when Augustine landed in Kent, bringing not only Christianity, but also renewed contact with the mainstream of European events, is an almost complete blank. No written records survive except the melancholy treatise of the monk Gildas "concerning the ruin of Britain," and tough he wrote as early as 560 Gildas is very remotely concerned with history. The traditions of the Invaders themselves, committed to writing much later by Bede (about 731) and In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (begun shortly before 900), are confused, scanty and frequently misleading. Even the evidence of archaeology is slight, for the low level of civilization of the Invaders has left us few traces of their early settlements except the meager content of their burial places. Yet it is from this evidence, supplemented by the written records and a critical use of historical geography, that a provisional account of the course and character of the invasions must be drawn together.

The bulk of the invaders came from among the most backward and primitive of the German tribes, living on the coast around the mouth of the Elbe and in the south of Denmark. These tribes, the Angles and Saxons, were closely akin in speech and customs, so that it is even doubtful if any real distinction can be drawn between them. The third group of invaders, called traditionally Jutes, were probably a Frankish tribe from the lower Rhineland. It was among these tribes that the Roman. were accustomed to enlist auxiliary troops **in** the last days of the Empire, and the burial places of Kent and the Isle of Wight, where the Jutes settled, give evidence of a people at a higher cultural level than the other invaders, and suggest some contact, **if** only at second hand, with Roman civilization. There is thus every reason to accept the tradition that the Jutes were invited to enter the country as allies by a Briti$_s$h chief and afterwards ousted their hosts. It is in Kent alone that faint signs of continuity with the settlements and agriculture of the Romans can be discerned. Kent has, indeed, a social history quite different from that of the rest of England, pat sing directly from small scale individual peasant agriculture to capitalist agriculture.

In general the social organization of the invaders was still tribal, resembling that of the Celts as described in the first chapter**.** It will he convenient henceforth to give to the invaders as a whole the name English though, of course, the word does not come into use for some centuries. The English were an agricultural rather than a pastoral people, and even before they entered Britain their tribal organization was rapidly disintegrating. Vast migratory movements were sweeping over Europe, scattering and mixing together the settlements of kindred. By the Fourth Century the institution of kingship was well established in Germany. There was emerging also a class of professional warriors, distinct from and ranking higher tan the peasants, who were becoming increasingly content to till the soil as long as they were allowed to do so in peace. The kinship group was losing its importance, on the one side to the war hand collected round a chief and bound to him by a personal. tie, and on the other to the purely local unit of the village.

The rate of disintegration was immensely increased by the invasions themselves. The first raids on the coast of Britain were probably the work of small war bands, and their effect would be to increase the wealth and prestige of the warrior class as compared with the homekeeping cultivator. In the Fifth Century the raids were replaced by something approaching national migrations. While in some cases small independent settlements may have been made along the coast it is now believed that the main invasion was the work of one or possibly two great war hosts like that of the Danes which came near to conquering England in 871. Such a host would be composed of both warriors and cultivators, and, probably, a considerable number of women and children, as the Danish host often was. More cultivators and their families probably followed, but in any case the spearhead of the invasion was formed by the warriors with their superior equipment and training.

The settlements formed after the invasion represent in their variety the mixed and transitional character of the host. Here a kinship group would settle and divide the land in a rough equality. In another place a warrior would settle with a group of dependents, in a third a number of Britons might survive and be forced into slavery (often those who survived were precisely those who were already slaves). The main result of the invasion, with its involved movements and incessant warfare, was to mix and remix conqueror and conquered in an infinite variety of combinations and to strengthen the military organization just as it weakened that of kinship. The same causes greatly increased the authority of the kings, and at the close of the period they emerge with a claim, shadowy as yet and much hedged about with the restrictions of folkright, to be sole and ultimate owners of the land.

The details of the conquest are now hopelessly lost, yet it is possible to reconstruct the main outlines and even to give a few approximate dates. The Jutes have already been mentioned. The traditional and probably correct date of their advent is about 450. Of the Angles nothing is known for certain till we find them in possession of the North-east coast and much of the Midlands by the end of the century. We can guess that the point of arrival was probably H umber mouth, and that the Trent and Ouse were their pathways into the interior.

Somewhere between these dates the host of the Saxons entered the country by way of the Wash. Sailing up the Great Ouse in their long, shallow-draught boats they passed through the Yen Country and disembarked somewhere near Cambridge. Thence they moved South-west along the Icknield Way and burst into the H East Midlands and the Thames Valley. Gildas, in words that seem to choke with horror, describes the devastation that followed. For a number of years the country was harried from end to end. Whatever had survived of Roman civilization was blotted out, and the Britons were killed, enslaved or driven into the west.

About 500 there was a pause, possibly when the cultivators began to parcel out the land and leave the warriors to carry on the fighting alone. Gildas speaks of a certain Ambrosius Aurelianus, the one reasonably probable name in a period of extraordinary obscurity, who rallied the scattered Britons and led them to success in a series of encounters. The last of these, Mount Badon, Gildas places in the year of his own birth, probably about 516. At the same or a slightly later period, there was a mass migration into Armorica on such a scale as to give that country its present name of Brittany and the Celtic character that it has retained to this day.

Later in the Sixth Century the advance of the English was resumed. A victory at Deorham in Gloucestershire brought the Saxons to the Bristol Channel. In 613 a battle at Chester gave the Mercians access to the Irish Sea. The Britons were now cut off into three

sections, penned into the mountain regions of Devon and Cornwall (West Wales), Wales proper and Cumberland (Strathclyde). There their reduction was only a matter of time, though Wales held out till well into the Middle Ages.

By this time the English had settled down into a number of small kingdoms whose boundaries advanced and receded constantly with the fortunes of the never-ending wars. These wars, as no doubt the initial invasion, were greatly facilitated by the still undestroyed network of Roman roads. Some of these kingdoms survive in the names of modern English shires; others vanished so utterly that we hardly know their names. By the end of the sixteenth century, seven emerge. In the north, Northumbria stretched from the Forth to the Humber. Its two parts, Deira corresponding to Yorkshire and Bernicia lying between Tees and Fort, appear at times as separate kingdoms. East Anglia covered Norfolk, Suffolk and part of Cambridgeshire.

Essex, Kent and Sussex correspond roughly to the modern counties bearing the same names. Wessex lay south of the possession of the North-east coast and much of the Midlands by the end of the century. We can guess that the point of arrival was probably Humber Mont, and that the Trent and Ouse were their pathways into the interior.

Somewhere between these dates the host of the Saxons entered the country by way of the Wash. Sailing up the Great Ouse in their long, shallow-draught boats they passed through the Yen Country and disembarked somewhere near Cambridge. Thence they moved South-west along the Icknield Way and burst into the East Midlands and the Thames Valley. Gildas, in words that seem to choke with horror, describes the devastation that followed. For a number of years the country was harried from end to end. Whatever had survived of Roman civiliaation was blotted out, and the Britons were killed, enslaved or driven into the west.

About 500 there was a pause, possibly when the cultivators began to parcel out the land and leave the warriors to carry on the fighting alone. Gildas speaks of a certain Ambrosius Aurelianus, the one reasonably probable name in a period of extraordinary obscurity, who rallied the scattered Britons and led them to success in a series of encounters. The last of these, Mount Badon, Gildas places in the year of his own birth, probably about 516. At the same or a slightly later period, there was a mass migration into Armorica on such a scale as to give that country its present name of Brittany and the Celtic character that it has retained to this day.

Later in the Sixth Century the advance of the English was resumed. *A* victory at Deorham in Gloucestershire brought the Saxons to the Bristol Channel. In 613 a battle at Chester gave the Mercians access to the lrish Sea. The Britons were now cut off into three sections, penned into the mountain regions of Devon and Cornwall (West Wales), Wales proper and Cumberland (Strathclyde). There their reduction was onljr a matter of time, though Wales held out till well into the Middle Ages.

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bearing the same names. Wessex lay south of the Thames and west of Sussex wit a western frontier being pushed slowly into Somerset. Mercia occupied most of the Midland shires, but the Cotswold region was for long debatable ground between Mercia and Wessex.

The relation of the English to the conquered native population has been a favourite subject for dispute among historians. It has been maintained, on the one hand, that the Britons were all but exterminated, and on the other that a quite small body of conquering English settled among masses of natives. No finality has ever been reached, but certain pointers may be noted. First, there was a catastrophic fall in the total population. The towns were destroyed without exception and long remained uninhabited. London may be a partial exception, for though there is no evidence that it was continuously occupied its position at the heart of the system of roads made it the inevitable focus for trade the moment it began again, and it reappears early as a place of some importance. Apart from the destruction of the towns, the area of cultivation was greatly diminished. Most of the forest land cleared by the Romans was abandoned, and the early English settlements are strung along the rivers and cluster in one or two specially favored areas like Kent and the Thames Valley. It is reasonable to suppose that the displacement of the British rural population either by slaughter or migration must have been correspondingly great.

Secondly, the evidence of language is opposed to the view tat the invaders settled down as a small minority. In Gaul, where the Franks Were in such a position, It was the language of the conquered which prevailed. In England, Celtic words and place names are few except in the West. The analogy of the Danish invasions shows that it is possible for invaders from overseas to settle in such numbers as to form their own self-contained communities, Yet there is equally no reason to suppose that the Britons were wiped out even In the East where the English settled in the greatest numbers. Early English laws make provision for Welshmen living alongside their conquerors quite as a matter of course. And in Suffolk today, after two thousand years and Roman, English, Danish and Norman invasions, the shepherd calling to his sheep still uses the Welsh word for “Come here.” Many of the English brought their womenfolk, but these were certainly far fewer than the men and much Intermarriage must have taken place from the start.

Perhaps it is most reasonable to conclude that in the East, at any rate, the bulk of the population was English, and that such Britons as survived in these parts were enslaved. The further west we go the greater become — the proportion of fl riton. in to population. Wessex law even allowed for the existence of Welsh landowners who have their own place in society and a wergild half that of their English counterparts. For the most part, however, the Britons who survived would be those of the lower classes, and villagers rather than town dwellers. This was just the section that was the least Romanized and between whom and the English the narrowest cultural gap existed.

Christianity

Though the Welsh held tenaciously to the Christianity that they had learned during Roman occupation, it was not from Wales that the conversion of the English came. The mutual hatred between conquerors and conquered was too bitter to allow of normal intercourse, and the Welsh attitude was that the English were no more than a punishment sent upon them by God on account of their sins. It was from Rome, and a little later from Ireland by way of Iona, that Christianity reached England. The Seventh Century is taken up

with this conversion, with the clash between the rival sects and with the final triumph of the Roman type of Christianity.

Augustine, who landed in Kent in 597, was sent by Pope Gregory the Great under whom a marked religious revival, accompanied by much missionary enthusiasm was taking place. He found Ethelbert of Kent married to a Christian wife and more than half ready to accept baptism. The conversion of Kent was followed by that of *Essex* and East Anglia. In 625 Edwin of Northumbria married a Kentish princess and northward with her Journeyed Paulinus the first Bishop of York. More speedy conversions were recorded, and after the baptism of Edwin we read that Paulinus spent twenty-six consecutive days immersing converts in the River Glen. Similar mass rites followed in the Swale and Trent.

The new religion had a resounding but hollow victory. It made little real impression on the masses and when Edwin was defeated and hilled at Heathfield by the Mercian king Panda in 633, the reversion of Northumbria was even more rapid than its conversion had been. Religion was still and for long a matter upon which kings decided from policy or conviction and the people followed.

The next year a next king, Oswald, was crowned in Northumbria, Mo had boon brought up by lb. Irish monks of Tons, and with him came Aidan who founded the great monastery of Llndisfarne the real cradle of Christianity in Northern England, and set out in turn upon the task of converting the Northumbrians. The Celtic type of Christianity with its simple piety, its absence of centralization struck home much more deeply to the rough farmer-soldiers of the North. A Northumbrian poet of the next century writes of Christ as:

"The young hero
That was God Almighty,
Strong and brave."

and early Northumbrian Christianity was a unique blend of the heroic paganism of the past with the milder but still heroic faith of the Irish Christians. The result was very different from the religion of fear and organization, which had come from Rome and continued to make slow head-way in the South of England. When Oswald was defeated and killed by Penda in 642 Northwnbria remained Christian and the conversion of Mercia followed within twenty years. Meanwhile Wessex also was slowly adopting the new faith, and only Sussex, isolated behind the Romney marshes and the vast forest of the Andredesweald, remained heathen.

In 664 Roman and Celtic Christians met at Whitby to decide their points of difference. Much more was involved than the trivialities that appeared on the surface: issues such as the date of keeping Easter and the exact shape of the priestly tonsure. Celtic Christianity as it developed in unconquered Ireland had adapted itself to the tribal mould. Its organization took the form of monasteries that were no more than groups of hermits living together in a cluster of huts. It held little Land and that still remained the property of the group as a whole. It never had any local or parish organization, and its bishops were only wandering missionaries with the vaguest supremacy over their fellows.

Roman Christianity inherited all that remained of Roman discipline and centralization, Roman law with its precise definition of property and its recognition of slavery, and a carefully graded ecclesiastical hierarchy. Further, it was already committed to an elaborate territorial organization of bishoprics and parishes. The nearest Roman Christian country, and the one with the greatest influence over m2ngland,. was France, and it was here that

feudalism had made its greatest advances. The victory of Rome at the Synod of Whitby was therefore a victory for feudalism and all that feudalism involved.

All the qualities, good and bad, of Roman Christianity are summed up in Wilfred, who first came to the front at Whitby and was afterwards Archbishop of York. A bustling, diplomatic man, jealous of the authority of his Church and of his own authority because he was its representative, he is the first of the great clerical statesmen who loom so large for centuries to come. He intrigued incessantly, built churches, lectured kings and accumulated the great treasure that he commanded to be laid out before him in his deathbed. Nothing could be more unlike the ascetic Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, living for weeks together on a handful of raw onions or standing all day up to his neck in sea water to pray, but it was Wilfred's religion and not Cuthbert's to which the future belonged.

Because the priests of the new religion were the only literate class they became a permanent bureaucracy, easily imposing their ideas upon the slower-witted kings and thanes. In no way was this more so than in the matter of property. Accustomed to written charter and to testament by will, they soon began to undermine the already weakened communal rights. We can trace the process in the institution of bookland growing up alongside of folkland. The latter, as its name implies, is land held under customary or folk rights. Even though not common property, no individual could claim absolute ownership of it, and only had possession within the framework of the township. Bookland was land granted to a lord by book or charter. It strengthened his position in two ways: economically because he could have for himself various services which folkland (that is to say, all other land) owed to the king: legally, because he acquired and unusually firm claim to the land, only challengeable in the royal court or 'Witan.' On the other hand, the rights of the kin were still considerable. A law of Alfred says that Bookland must not pass outside the kindred of the inheritor if this was forbidden by those "Who at first acquired it" and "those who gave it to him." The first charters were made out in favor of Church bodies, but once their advantages were realized they were increasingly sought after and obtained by the magnates.

All kinds of devices, from the invocation of the terrors of Hell to plain forgery, were adopted by the Church to secure land. With each stage in the increase in the landed endowments of the Church, went a consolidation of the growing power of the great landowners and of the domination which they exercised over the machinery of the State. The Bishop and his retainers, or a monastic body, represented a large group of men who must be maintained in that state to which it had pleased God to call them, and it was natural and inevitable that they should turn to the peasantry and organize them on manorial lines to achieve this end. In this matter the lay landlord was by no means slow to follow and the endowment of the Church went hand in hand with the subjection of the cultivator.

On the other hand in its creation of a literate class, its encouragement of trade and closer contact with Europe, and, internally, by the consolidating and centralizing tendency of an institution covering the whole country, the Church was a strong progressive force. The two centuries between the adoption of Christianity and the coming of the Northmen, were a time of slow but solid material advance. Once more stone begins to be used for building, and if this stone was obtained mainly from the ruinous towns and villas of Roman times, and even from the roads, this was mainly because of the poverty of the more advanced parts of England in suitable building stone. Wilfred's great church at Hexham, for example, was constructed of stone taken from the Wall. The houses of the laity, even of thanes and kings, were still of timber. If rough, these houses were often spacious and well proportioned, and

if they were poor as compared with the castles and manors of the upper classes after the Norman conquest the house of the Saxon peasant was probably far superior to the mud and wattle hut of the feudal serf built in a time when timber was growing less plentiful. Metal working and the illumination of manuscripts reached a high level, and a remarkable standard of learning was to be found in the best of the monasteries, especially in those of Northumbria. It was in one of these, Jarrow, that Bede, the most learned man in the Europe of his day, and the first and one of the greatest of English historians, lived and worked.

The political history of the age is that of a series of struggles in which first Kent, then Northumbria and Mercia and finally Wessex took the lead. The fluctuations of these struggles depended in great part upon the individual capacity of the kings.

Ethelbert of Kent, Edwin and 0 swy of Northumbria, Penda and Offa of Mercia and Egbert of Wessex all had a big share in the temporary success of their kingdoms. Yet we can trace, if only faintly, general causes at work.

Kent's early supremacy was due to the initial cultural superiority of its Frankish invaders and its continuous contact with Europe. Its decline was due to its small area and to its failure to secure control of London and the lower Thames Valley. Ncvrthumbria's period of greatness coincides with its permeation by the advanced culture introduced by the Celtic Church, and can also perhaps be connected with the warlike character retained by its people on the bleak Northern moors. Its decline was the result of a too ambitious attempt to expand simultaneously north into Scotland and south into Mercia. It suffered also from the imperfect fusion of its two constituent parts, Deira and Bernicia, and from their internal feuds.

The reasons for the rise of Mercia are more obscure, but possibly the growth of a large and prosperous population in the rich Midland plains and the experience of war gained against the Welsh were the most important. Its weakness was the absence of good natural frontiers which laid it open to attack from all sides and exposed it to constant warfare. By contrast, Wessex

as a country with good frontiers, and a hinterland in the Southwest large enough to allow room for expansion but not enough to be a menace. It had considerable areas of fertile land, and, by the end of the Eighth Century, was beginning to establish valuable contacts with the Frankisl Empire of Charlemagne, just rising to its full power across the Channel.

Soon after 800 Wessex under Egbert began to draw away from its rivals, but the issue was still in doubt when the invasions of the Northmen gave a new turn to events. The full force of these invasions fell first upon Mercia and Northumbria, which were soon overrun, leaving Wessex free from its ancient rivals but face to face with a new and more formidable enemy.

Feudal England

I. The Conquest

At Senlac' William had broken the power of the Godwinsons and laid all England south of the Thames open to invasion. The Midlands and North were still unconquered, and London once more formed the central point round which resistance was gathering and towards which Edwin and Morcar, the Earls of Mercia and Northumbria, were slowly moving. William's army was too small to make a direct as sanlt on London Instead, he carried out a brilliant outflanking march, crossed the Thames higher up, devastating the

countryside as he advanced, and finally cutting the city off from the North and so from all hope of reinforcements.

London surrendered, a hastily summoned meeting of the Witan proclaimed William king, and on Christmas Day he was crowned at Westminster. All the land of those who had given support to Harold or fought at Senlac was confiscated and divided among William's Norman followers. The rest of England, having acknowledged William as king, was left undisturbed. By 1069 William was ready for the next stage in the conquest, Mercia and Northumbria were $_{5}$oaded into revolt, and received the support of the King of Denmark.

After a campaign that showed William's military genius at its best, this combination was defeated. The conqueror set to work, with a cold ferocity far more terrible than the fury of the Northmen, to make a repetition of the rising impossible. The greater part of Yorkshire and Durham was laid waste and remained almost unpeopled for a generation. It was not till the Pennine slopes were turned into great sheep farms by the Cistercian monks in the Twelfth Century that the region really recovered. Above the burnt villages of the North rose the great

castle of Durham to assure the permanency of the new order.

The completion of the conquest was followed by a fresh confiscation of lands and a new division among the Normans.

It is at this point that we can say that feudalism is fully established in England. We have seen how the economic basis of feudalism was evolved out of the English township, and how political organization was taking on feudal form even before the Conquest. Now the fashioning of a political superstructure to match the economic basis was completed with a rigid and dogmatic uniformity by the Normans. Within a few years the whole of the land of the country passed out of the hands of its old owners and into the hand of the Conqueror.

The essential political feature of feudalism was the downward delegation of power, and all power was based upon the ownership of land. The King was the sole and ultimate owner of all the land, and granted it to his tenants-in-chief in return for military and other services and for the payment of certain customary dues. With the land was granted also the political right of governing its cultivators: the right to hold courts of justice, to levy taxes and to exact services. So far as the King was concerned the most important duty of his vassals was to follow him in war and so the whole country was divided up into areas, known as Knight's fees, corresponding roughly to the older thane holdings, each of which was bound to provide and equip one heavy armed cavalryman for the army.

Just because England was conquered within a few years and the political institutions of feudalism deliberately imposed from above, the system here reached a higher regularity and completeness than in most other countries. Elsewhere the King's ownership of all the land was a fiction. Here it was a fact, and the King granted land to his vassals on his own terms, terms extremely favorable to himself. As the Chronicle says:

"The King gave his land as dearly for rent as he possibly could; ten came some other and bade more than the other had before given, and the King let it to the man who had bidden him more. And he recked not how very sinfully the reeve got it from the poor men, nor how many iniquities they did; but the more tat was said about right law, the more illegalities were done.

Feudalism was always in theory a contract between king and vassal, but in England this contract was more a reality than it was elsewhere.

The very completeness with which feudalism was imposed in England created immediately the possibility of a State organisation transcending the feudal system. This

State organisation was built around William's power as the military leader of a victorious army and around the pre-Conquest shire organisation of the Saxons. William was able to grant land to his followers in scattered holdings. He was, in fact, forced to do this, since .the country was conquered piecemeal, and as each new area came under control he granted what his followers regarded as an instalment of the reward that was due to them. For this reason there was no baron in England, however much land he might hold in all, who was able to concentrate very large forces in any one area. Further, the Crown retained enough land in its own possession to ensure that the King was far stronger than any baron or any likely combination of barons. Apart from his hundreds of manors, William claimed all the forest lands, estimated at the time to comprise one-third of the country. It is unlikely that he did this merely because "he loved the tall deer as if he had been their father." More probably he sensed the huge possibilities of development in these still unexploited tracts.

With the exception of Chester and Shrewsbury, which were border earldoms planned to hold the Welsh in check, and the County of Durham under its Prince Bishop which served the same purpose against the S cots, no great principalities whose holders might become semi-independent princes as many of the French feudal nobles had done, were allowed to arise in England. Consequently, the sheriff, the representative of the central government in each county, remained stronger than any baron in his territory. And, since it was not necessary to strengthen the sheriffs unduly to enable them to control the local nobility, there was no danger of the sheriffs in their turn making themselves independent of the Crown.

England had, therefore, a development that was unique in European history. From the start the power of the State was greater and the power of the feudal nobility less. Private war between nobles was the exception rather than the rule, and private armies and castles were jealously watched by the Crown and prohibited as far as possible. The agents of the Crown were certainly oppressive, and the exploitation of the villain masses was severe. But these exactions of the Crown were to some extent fixed and regular, and a limit was set to the much more oppressive exactions of the feudal lords.

There is, indeed, some evidence that the English regarded the power of the Crown as a protection against their own immediate superiors. When in 1075 there was a revolt of the barons who were disappointed at the restrictions placed upon them, William was able to call out the fyrd to suppress it. The harshness of the conquest was soon forgotten by a peasantry who had been accustomed to conquest and pillage during the long Danish invasions, and who regarded William's severe but firm rule as preferable to an anarchy in which they were always the worst sufferers. In practice it was obviously of much greater importance to the cultivator that he had a, foreign Lord in the Manor than a foreign King at Westminster. Thus, while it is true that the primary antagonism in feudal society was that of the peasants as a whole against all their exploiters, who included both King and Barons, and the interest of King and Barons therefore generally 2::nctded, there were times when the King was able to make use of the peasantry in a crisis when his position was threatened by a Baronial rising. In the reign of Henry I, when such a baronial rising attempted to place his brother Robert. *Duke* of Normandy, on the throne, Henry was able to invade Normandy with an army containing considerable Saxon elements which defeated Robert and his feudal forces at the Battle of Tenchebray in 1106.

The century and a half between the Conquest and Magna Carta was the period during which feudalism existed in its most complete form in England. Yet it would be a mistake to imagine that at any time during these years things stood still. The common conception of

the Middle Ages as a period of stability, or of barely perceptible change, is very wide of the mark, for not only every century but each successive generation had its specific characteristics, its important departures and developments. It is quite impossible to put one's finger on any date and to say, ~ this moment feudalism in England exists perfectly and completely."

Throughout the period there was a constant struggle between the centralizing power of the Crown and the feudal tendency towards regionalism. While the main trend was always towards increased central authority, this authority developed within the homework of feudal institutions which limited and conditioned it. Some of the forces at work were general forces common to all Europe, others sprang from the special conditions created by the survival of pre-feudal Saxon institutions, and others again from the geographical situation of the country. We have now to trace the progress of this~ struggle in the history of the time and to observe the growth of new combinations of class forces both locally and nationally.

State: Baron: Church

The Conqueror's two sons, William II and Henry I, continued to strengthen the power of the State at the expense of the feudal nobles. Henry, who was remarkable among the kings of his time in, that he could read and write, and so knew how to value and make good use of a literate bureaucracy, was responsible for a number of changes. He began his reign with an attempt to conciliate the Saxons by compiling and reaffirming the old laws that were by now being quite mistakenly attributed to Edward the Confessor. These laws he combined as far as possible with newer conceptions introduced by Norman feudalism.

Henry developed a process which was in time to take the administration of justice out of the hands of private individuals and make it solely the affair of the State. In earlier times a crime had been first of all an offence against the victim or his family, and was therefore to be settled by suitable payment to the sufferers. Now crime came more and more to be regarded as an offence against the King's peace for which it was the right and duty of the State to exact punishment. The conception of the King's peace, which emerged in later Anglo-Saxon times, grew stronger with each addition to the power of the State.

Travelling judges were sent out to bold courts, and a new form of procedure was employed —the use of a jury. In its early form the jury was a selected body of men who were obliged on oath to 'present' for trial all the people in their district who were believed to have committed crimes. They were not chosen for their real or supposed impartiality but because they were believed to know the facts already. Trial by jury was not thought of as a right of the individual but as the special privilege of the King. It was a new form of judicial machinery devised to attract cases into the royal courts and no one else was entitled to make use of this machinery without paying for it. The State's interest in administering justice was mainly financial: "There's big money in justice" would be a rough translation of a legal maxim current at the time. The Crown wished to attract cases to its own courts for the sake of the fines to be levied, and if the growth of the King's courts did weaken the power of the nobility this was rather the result of accident than of design.

Almost all of Henry's innovations had a financial object, and one of the most important was the establishment of a special department, the Exchequer, to deal with the collection of revenue. Much of the King's income came from the Crown manors, the rest from the geld and the various feudal dues and tallages. All these were collected by the sheriff in each

county and paid over to the Exchequer. The Exchequer was a special development of the Curia Regis, a body composed of officials, through which the day-to-day work of government was carried on. The Curia Regis met constantly, whereas the King's Council. a feudal body consisting of the tenants-in-chief, or as many of them as the king thought fit to consult, was summoned only a few times a year. Quite early the Council began to split up into departments. The Council itself assembling all the chief nobles and Church dignitaries, was the origin of Parliament. A smaller body which could be consulted from day to day grew into the Privy Council and indirectly into the modern Cabinet. The king's Court thus subdivided, grew into the King's Bench, the Exchequer, and other courts. These developments mostly lie far ahead and are noted here for convenience. At the time they were not thought of as separate bodies but as different forms that the Council might take for doing particular jobs, and all in theory remained equally the King's Council. What is important is that it was out of this feudal body that a permanent bureaucracy evolved to carry out the work of the central government.

On Henry's death these developments were checked because he left only a daughter, Matilda, to succeed him. A powerful group of barons refused to recognize her and supported Stephen of Blois, Henry's nephew. Twenty years of war followed, neither side being able to win a complete victory It was a time that left a lasting impression on the minds of the people. All the worst tendencies of feudalism, which had been suppressed under the Norman kings, now had free play. Private wars and private castles sprang up everywhere. Hundreds of local tyrants massacred, tortured and plundered the unfortunate peasantry and chaos rei8ned everywhere. "Never were martyrs tormented as these were," writes a chronicler who recorded the wretchedness of the times.

Yet what is significant about the events of Stephen's reign is not its misery but its uniqueness, the fact that such conditions, normal in many parts of Europe, only arose in England under the special circumstances of a disputed succession and a crown too weak to enforce order. This taste of the evils of unrestrained feudal anarchy was sharp enough to make the masses welcome a renewed attempt of the Crown to diminish the power of the nobles but not long enough for disorder to win a permanent hold. In 1153 the two parties met at Wallingford and a compromise was reached, Stephen was to reign during his life and Matilda's son, Henry of Anjou, was to succeed him.

In the next year Stephen died. Henry, adding England and Normandy to his own large domains, became unquestionably the most powerful monarch in Western Europe. Though in theory his continental possessions, the larger and richer half of France, were held from the French king on a feudal tenure, he was in fact their absolute ruler. He began at once to break down the power which the barons had acquired during the previous reign. Hundreds of castles were destroyed, and in their place began to be built the unfortified manor houses that were the characteristic dwelling places of the upper classes in England throughout the remainder of the Middle Ages.

The State machinery which Henry I had set up was overhauled and extended. More and more powers were given to the travelling commissioners who represented the King in all parts of the country, and Henry himself travelled unceasingly over his domains. These travels were in part necessary because much of the royal revenue was still paid in the form of corn, meat and other produce of the Crown estates. In a time when land transport was slow and costly, the only way in which this produce could be used was for the King and his court to go from manor to manor and consume it on the spot.

Increased use was made of the sheriffs as permanent representatives of the Crown. At the same time they were kept under the closest control and some sort of limits were put to their habits of enriching themselves by the double process of fleecing the population of the shires and defrauding the Crown of the payments that were due to it. In 1170 a general purge, the so-called 'Inquest of Sheriffs' was held and more than half were dismissed and replaced by others more closely connected with the royal exchequer. The interest of the Crown was to discourage unauthorized exactions so that its own revenue could be as large as possible, Almost every reform of this age has as its object the increasing and better collection of the King's dues.

Apart from the barons, the increasing power of the State had to meet the claims of the Church to be recognized as an independent, international organization transcending all national limits. The struggle between Church and State in England was only a part of a battle that extended all over Europe with varying results. In Germany, the Emperor Henry IV was forced to make a humble submission to Pope Gregory VII at Canossa in 1077, while in France the substance of victory rested wit the Crown. The dispute turned on the dual character of the Church and its officers. On the one hand, bishops and abbots were feudal lords with vast lands and revenues. On the other hand, they were representatives of a power with an international organization and headquarters at Rome, The crown wished to appoint and control them as feudal magnates: the Papacy claimed to appoint and control them as its representatives. The situation was complicated because the bureaucracy on which the Crown depended was almost entirely composed of churchmen, and, in general, the Church supported the State against the barons while pushing its own claim to independence. Later, the success of the baronial revolt against John was largely due to the exceptional support which the rebels received from the Church.

Under William I an uneasy equilibrium was maintained, but in the next reign a long battle over Investitures —the right to appoint the leading officials of the Church— opened. Not till 1106 was a compromise reached, by which the Crown won the right to choose the new bishops, who were then elected by their cathedral chapters, formally invested by the Pop, and finally did homage to the King as feudal vassals. In substance this was a victory for the Crown.

Under Henry II the struggle took a new form. While the Crown was attempting to bring more and more cases within the scope of its own courts, the Church claimed the right to try all clerics in special ecclesiastical courts. These courts operated under the Canon Law and inflicted penalties much lighter than those of the ordinary courts. It must be remembered tat clerics included not only priests but also a much larger number of people in minor orders, a class so large and important that It came to be assumed that any man who could read was a cleric and was entitled to be tried under Canon Law. The central figure of the struggle was Thomas Becket. who sums up in his personality and career the curious dual position of the Church In his age. The son of a rich London merchant, he entered the King's service and became Chancellor, working with great energy to implement Henry's centralizing reforms. When Henry wished to extend these to the Church he made Becket Archbishop of Canterbury, expecting him to carry out his plans. Becket had other ideas and opposed the King as vigorously as he had before worked with him.

After a long struggle Henry was rash enough to allow some of his followers to murder the Archbishop. The scandal that followed, probably deliberately worked up by the Church, was so great that Henry was forced to drop his plans and to allow the Church courts to continue to deal with all criminal charges against clerics. The practice of 'benefit of clergy'

went on right up to the Reformation. Becket's murder had one curious and unexpected result. He was canonized and his tomb became the most popular of all resorts for pilgrims. Two centuries later, the first great classic of the English language, made possible by the fusion of Saxon with Norman French, was written. It was the Canterbury Tales, and recorded the conversation and pastimes of a group of typical pilgrims riding to the shrine of St. Thomas.

Yet the victory of the Church was not complete. The State had to surrender criminal cases: civil cases it retained. And during this period there grew up what came to be called the Common Law, a body of law holding good throughout the land and overriding all local laws and customs. This Common Law was based in criminal cases on the principles and practice of the Anglo-Saxon law of the pre-conquest days. In suits dealing with land tenure and property rights a complicated system of case made Common Law developed after the Conquest. Because of the strength of the Common Law, Roman Law, which became the bases of most European codes, was never acclimatized into England. As a result the ecclesiastical Canon Law, based on Roman principles, was isolated and weakened and remained alien to the main tendency of legal development. Here we meet another of the puzzling crosscurrents characteristic of the class relations of the feudal period. Whereas the Church supported in the main the centralizing designs of the Crown against the baron s, the latter were opposed to the power of the Church courts. These courts took cases away from the local feudal jurisdiction just as much as from the Crown courts, and the barons were suspicious of any attempt on the part of the Church to introduce Roman Law because of the support which it gave to State absolutism. Reasons of this kind explain the unstable alliances and constant shifting of support which mark the tree-cornered antagonism of Crown. barons and Church in the Middle Age.

Foreign Relations.

After the Norman Conquest the Kings of England continued to be Dukes of Normandy and even used England as a base from which to extend their domains in France. In the same way, the

large section of William's followers who were also feudal lords in Normandy continued to hold their estates in both sides of the Channel. For at least a century and a half the ruling class in England was a foreign ruling class, or, from another point of view, a class with a double nationality. Until at least the end of the Thirteenth Century French was its normal language, and when Chaucer, writing his Canterbury Tales as late as 1380, mildly satirizes the Prioress who spoke French.

"…full faire and fetisly

After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,"

we are not intended to conclude that the French of Stratford ate Bowe was not still tolerably good.

The bi-national character of kings and barons, the fact that at first they were even more at home in France than in England, determined the main direction of foreign relations. It was no more than a matter of routine for the kings and those of the barons who had interests across the Channel to spend half their summers campaigning in France. At first England was valued, probably, more for the men and treasures it could provide for these adventures than for any other reason.

Of far greater importance than these wars, which had few permanent results and whose details are now forgotten, were the new economic links forged, the new fields of trade and articles of merchandise, the new crafts introduced by foreign artisans. Not all those who

followed the Conqueror were soldiers. Many were traders who were drawn as if by a magnet to London as the inevitable center of the commerce of Northern Europe. London's growth has been referred to already, and its pre-eminence was now assured. It was the depot for all the trade of the rich English lowlands. It lay opposite the mouth of the Rhine, main highway for trade between the Mediterranean and the North. It had already close trading connections with Scandinavia and the Baltic.. By the time of Ethelred 'men of the Emperor', merchants from the Rhineland probably, had a permanent settlement there. Others from the Hanse towns of North Germany and the Baltic followed.

Now a new influx, this time of Normans and Flemings, arrived, attracted, as a contemporary writer expressly says, "inasmuch as it was fitter for their trading and better stored with the merchandise in which they were wont to traffic."

Apart from London, a lively trade across the Channel from the ports of the South coast and from such places as Lynn, Boston and Ipswich to Flanders and the Baltic grew *up*. If the volume of this trade was small by present day standards, it included a number of absolutely vital commodities such as iron, salt and cloth. Little iron was mined and smelted in England

till the Fifteenth Century, the bulk of what was used coming from Sweden and the north of Spain. At a time when the general price level was about one-twentieth of that of today wrought iron cost as much as £ 14 a ton. The dearness of iron was one of the greatest handicaps to agricultural progress and it was used with the utmost economy in farm implements. Harrows, for example, were almost always of wood, and in the plough only the share and coulter were made of iron. Wool and cloth were also disproportionately dear. Readers of the ballad The Old Cloak will remember that the Goodman speaks of his cloak as a lifelong possession, and garments were often handed down by will from generation to generation. Only the roughest kind of homespun was made in England, the finer cloths being imported from Flanders. Salt too, though a little was obtained from the brine pans around the coast, was mostly imported from the South-west of France.

With the Norman Conquest the list of imports was considerably increased. Wine from Gascony, a greater quantity and variety of fine cloths, spices from the East, and, most surprisingly, so bulky a commodity as building stone, begin to feature prominently. Many of the Norman castles and churches around the coast and on navigable rivers were built from stone quarried round Caen. Exports, according to a list given by Henry of Huntingdon, a writer of the middle of the Twelfth Century, included wool, lead, tin and cattle. The rule of the English kings on both sides of the Channel made travel relatively safe for merchants over a wide area and discouraged piracy in the Narrow Seas.

Besides the merchants, skilled artisans also began to enter England. The Normans were skilled builders in stone, and must have needed many foreign masons to raise their churches and castles. William!, who had married the daughter of the Count of Flanders, encouraged the settlement of Flemish weavers. These settlements began immediately after, if not in some cases before, the Conquest. We find, for example, that the Suffolk village of Flempton appears in Domesday as Flemingtuna. The parish church of this village is still dedicated to Saint Catherine whose fortuitous connection with the wheel made her the patron saint of textile workers. The Flemings were scattered widely over the country till Henry I forced a great many of them to settle in South Wales.

It is in connection with these weavers that we can detect the first faint signs of what looks like a class struggle in the towns. The gilds of merchants that were beginning to grow

up in the Twelfth Century often made regulations to prevent the weavers from securing the rights of burgesses. It seems clear that the merchants were attempting to keep the weavers in a dependent position as artisans, and not, as was once suggested, that there was merely opposition from established inhabitants of the towns to intruders from outside.

As trade grew, the center of gravity shifted, and England grew more important to kings and barons than Normandy or Anjou. And as his English estates became more and more the canter of his interest the baron began to be unwilling to spend his summers following the King in his French campaigns. A feudal army was in any case only bound to serve in the field for forty days in any year. This might do for a war between two neighboring European States or baronies, but was far too short for an expedition from England to France. To meet this difficulty Henry II began to allow and even encourage his barons to make a payment called scutage as a substitute for personal service in the field. The proceeds were used to hire troops for the duration of a campaign.

Scutage is an indication of the extent to which money payments were now replacing many of the older dues in kind or services which had still survived in the Eleventh Century. At the same time there was a marked tendency for landlords in turn to seek to transform parts of their demesnes into tenements held for rent, and even to 'commute' labour services owed by their villains on the same conditions. Money was becoming a normal and increasing requirement, partly as exchange became more normal and partly with the beginning of a century and a half of rising prices which dates from the middle of the Twelfth Century.

In this development money passed increasingly into normal use, a certain par: was played by the series of wars known generally as tie Crusades which began in 1096.

The Crusades were wars of a transitional character, mingling some of the features of the expeditions of the Northmen in search of plunder and lands with others characteristic of the later wars of trade and dynastic conquest. At first, especially, they were undertaken not by kings but by barons who wished to carve out new fiefs richer and more independent than those they already held. In these early Crusades the barons of the regions conquered in France and Italy by the Northmen were the most active. The regular armies were in some cases preceded by hordes of land-hungry peasants who straggled across Europe plundering and being attacked till they perished miserably.

At the same time, the Crusades were a counter-attack against a new invasion of Moslems who threatened to cut the trade routes to the East and even menaced Constantinople. A religious motive was added by setting the Holy Places at Jerusalem as the objective, but Palestine was then, as now, the strategical key to the Levant. In any case, the Moslem invasion had put a stop to the stream of pilgrims going to Jerusalem, and these pilgrimages were a highly organized business, as vital to some parts of the Mediterranean as the tourist trade is to modern Switzerland. The Papacy took the lead in organizing the Crusades as a method of increasing its political power.

England took little part in the earlier Crusades in which Jerusalem was captured and a 'Latin Kingdom' set up there. The reason was, first, that the English barons were busy establishing themselves in their newly won domains, and, later, because Wales and Ireland afforded the more adventurous and land-hungry type of baron such as formed the core of the crusading armies a similar but more promising outlet nearer home.

In the Third Crusade, whose occasion was the recapture of Jerusalem by the armies of Saladin, the kings of Europe first took a direct share. Prominent among these kings were Philip of France and Richard I of England. For the first time in history English ships

entered the Mediterranean, and the adoption of St. George by Richard, as his patron saint was at once a symbol and a direct result of his alliance with the rising maritime republic of Genoa. The Crusade itself was a failure, immensely costly in lives and treasure, and Richard, having spent one fortune in preparing his expedition, had to raise a second to ransom himself from the Emperor of Germany by whom he was captured while returning. Nevertheless, it led to the establishment of direct and permanent connections between England and the trading cities of Italy, that is, to her entry into world as opposed to local trade.

In England itself one of the first results of the Crusade was a pogrom directed against the Jews. They had come into the country soon after the Conquest, and were regarded as the special property of the King. They were barred from all ordinary trade and industry, and as moneylenders, were used by the Crown as a kind of sponge to gather up wealth from their neighbors and then be squeezed by the royal treasury. Zn tie way the exactions of the Crown were concealed and the anger they aroused turned upon the Jews instead of their master. Whenever the protection of the Crown was relaxed, as in 1189. they were exposed to massacre and pillage.

To equip so large a force as accompanied Richard on the Crusade exceptional sums of ready money were needed., They were raised in various ways, but above all by the sale of charters to the towns. At the time of the Conquest these towns, except London, were no more than overgrown villages under the rule either of the Crown or of some feudal lord or abbey. Still depending upon the cultivation of their common fields, they differed from the surrounding countryside mainly because of the rather freer conditions on which land within them tended to be held. Nevertheless they were subject to a variety of vents and taxes which were frequently both arbitrary and oppressive. As they grew they began to make bargain. with their lords, undertaking to pay a lump sum, or, more often, a yearly, ‘farm’ to be quit of their obligations. This involved the grant of a charter and the creation ole corporate body collectively responsible for the payment of the farm. As the Merchant Gilds grew up they tended to coincide with the town corporation and often the two became indistinguishable.

Henry II had granted such charters, albeit rather sparingly. Richard’s need of money led him to extend the practice, and ‘the urgency of this need made it possible for the town to drive bargains very favorable to themselves. In any case, at a time ‘when trade and towns were growing, a payment that was fixed in amount, and so grew lighter in proportion as the wealth of the town Increased, was a certain gain to the citizens. Once more we can observe the growth of a money economy within the feudal framework.

The rise of corporate towns, ‘communes.’ freed from the system of personal relations and services, led to the formation of new classes ready to enter the political field. Richard’s short reign was thus a time of important developments. It was also a time when the bureaucratic machinery elaborated by Henry II was tested out in the absence of the King himself. Under the guardianship of the Justiciar, Hubert Walter, these institutions proved their vitality when an attempt by Richard’s brother John to revolt was easily crushed. This revolt was the last occasion in English history in which any feudal magnate ever attempted to establish an authority opposed to and independent of that of the State.

5. The Great Charter

Though the period between the Conquest and 1200 was one of growing State power and of the growth of the power of the King as head of the State, this growth remained within the

conditions imposed upon it by the character of feudalism. No king aimed at autocratic authority or hoped to override the imperfectly defined but generally appreciated limits of the feudal contract in which the existing balance of class forces was embodied. It was recognized that the King had certain rights and duties —the duty of keeping the peace, of leading the army in war, of securing his vassals in the possession of their fiefs. and the right to levy certain dues, to exact certain military and other services from his vassals and to receive their homage as the ultimate owner of the land. In the same way the vassal had his corresponding rights and duties.

In particular, the dues that he paid were confined to specified occasions and amounts, and upon his death his fief must be allowed to pass to his heir after the payment of a customary fine.

Second only to these ‘rights were those of holding a court for his tenants, these courts being an important source of income. Though, as we have seen, the royal courts had been extending their scope at the expense of private jurisdictions this had been done with discretion and rather by providing machinery that was obviously more efficient than by compulsion.

In the last resort the barons retained the right of rebellion. If the feudal contract was shamelessly violated by the King and all redress failed, the baron was entitled to renounce his allegiance and to enforce his rights by war. This was always a desperate expedient, and in England, where the power of the Crown was greatest and that of the barons least, it was almost hopeless. Even the strongest combination of barons had failed to defeat the Crown when, as in 1095 and in 1106, it had the support of other classes and sections of the population.

John, ablest and most unscrupulous of the Angevin kings, did make the attempt to pass beyond die powers which the Crown could claim without a violation of the feudal contract. He levied excessive fines and aids in ways and on occasions not authorized by custom; he confiscated the estates of his vassals without a judgment in court; he arbitrarily called up cases from the baronial courts to his own royal courts. In short, he showed no respect for law or custom. His administrative machinery directly threatened baronial rights, and indeed the rights of all free men, of all, that is, who were concerned with keeping in effective working order the feudal state, one of whose main objects, it must never be forgotten, was to keep in their place the mass of serfs and cottagers. Nor were his innovations confined to the barons. The Church was similarly treated, and the towns, which during the two previous generations had been growing increasingly conscious of their corporate rights, were made to pay all kinds of new taxes and dues.

The result was the complete isolation of the Crown from those sections that had previously been its strongest supporters. John was peculiarly unfortunate in that his attack on the Church was made when it was at one of its periods of exceptional strength under a superb political tactician, Pope Innocent III.

Even so, it is possible that he might have been successful but for the failure of his foreign policy. A dispute over the succession with his nephew Arthur led him into a long war with France. One by one he lost the provinces his father had held, including the dukedom of Normandy. The loss of Normandy meant for many of the English barons the loss of huge ancestral estates. In their eyes John had failed in his first duty, that of guarding the fiefs of his vassals.

At The same time the loss of their foreign possessions made them more anxious to preserve those still held in England.

At this moment, having lost the support of the barons, John became involved in a direct dispute with Innocent III over the filling of the vacant Archbishopric of Canterbury. Ignoring the King's nominee, and contrary to the well-established custom, Innocent consecrated Stephen Langston, and to enforce the appointment placed England under an interdict. He followed this by declaring John excommunicated and deposed, and persuaded the kings of France and Scotland to make war on him. John organized a counter alliance which included Flanders and the Emperor. His forces were crushed at the Battle of Bouvines in 1214 and the English barons refused to fight. Even a last minute submission to Innocent failed to win back the support of the Church in England, and Langston continued to act as the brain of the baronial revolt.

John stood alone. It was not even possible for him to call out the fyrd, which in the past had been the trump card of the Crown in its struggles with the nobility. This fact in itself indicates that the movement against John was to some extent of a popular character. Unwillingly he submitted, and at Runnymede on June 15th, 1215, he accepted the programme of demands embodied by the barons in Magna Carta.

Magna Carta has been rightly regarded as a turning point in English history, but almost always for wrong reasons. It was not a 'constitutional' document. It did not embody the principle of no taxation without representation. It did not guarantee parliamentary government, since parliament did not then exist. It did not establish the right to trial by jury, since, in fact, the jury was a piece of royal machinery to which the barons had the strongest objections.

What it did do was to set out in detail the ways in which John had gone beyond his rights as a feudal overlord and to demand that his unlawful practices should stop. It marked the alliance between the barons and the citizens of London by insisting on the freedom of merchants from arbitrary taxation. In other ways, as in its attempts to curtail the power of the royal courts, the Charter was reactionary. And, while its most famous clause declared that "No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned or disseised or exiled or in any way destroyed, nor will we go upon him or send upon him except by the lawful judgment of Us peers and the law of the land, "the second word excluded from any possible benefit the overwhelming mass of the people who were still in villeinage. Later, as villeinage declined, this clause took a new meaning and importance.

More important than all the specific points of grievance was the clause setting up a permanent committee of twenty-four barons to see that John's promises were kept. This was a real attempt to create machinery that would make it unnecessary to resort to an open revolt that could only succeed under such unique circumstances as those of 1215, or, at the worst, to ensure that a revolt would begin in a way as favorable as possible for the barons. This particular device did not work very well, but **it** did open a new avenue along which the barons could conduct a political struggle as a class rather than as individuals. It also prepared the way for the entry of new classes on to the political field. It led to the development of Parliament as the instrument through which first the nobles and afterwards the bourgeoisie defended their interests.

The moment the barons dispersed, John denounced the Charter and gathered an army. The barons replied by declaring him deposed and offering the crown to Louis, son of the King of France. A civil war followed which was interrupted by the death of John in October 1216. His son Henry was only nine, and the supporters of Louis quickly deserted to the young prince. He was crowned, and government was carried on in his name by a group of barons led by William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, and Hubert de Burgh. During

this long minority the principles of the Charter came to be accepted as the basis of the law. In the following centuries Magna Carta was solemnly reaffirmed by every king from Henry III to Henry VI.

Its subsequent history is curious and falls into three chapters. As feudalism declined **it** ceased to have any clear practical application and passed out of memory. The Tudor bourgeoisie were too closely allied to the monarchy to wish to place any check upon it, while the power of the nobles was broken in the Wars of the Roses. Shakespeare, writing his play King John, never mentions Magna Carta and quite possibly had never heard of it.

When the bourgeoisie entered their revolutionary period under the Stuarts the Charter was rediscovered, and, being framed in technical feudal language, was completely misinterpreted and used as a basis for the claims of Parliament. This view of the Charter as the cornerstone of democratic rights persisted through the greater part of the Nineteenth Century. It is only within the last fifty or sixty years that historians have examined it critically as a feudal document and discovered its real meaning and importance.

Just because-it marks the highest point of feudal development and expressed most precisely the nature of feudal class relations, Magna Carta marks also the passing of society beyond those relations. It is both a culmination and a point of departure. In securing the Charter the barons won their greatest victory but only at the price of acting in a way which was not strictly feudal, of forming new kinds of combinations both among themselves and with other classes.

The Decline of Feudalism

Trade and Towns

The Thirteenth Century in England is marked by a general transformation of feudalism, leading ultimately to its decline and the growth of a capitalist agriculture. But the immediate effects were not altogether those which might at first sight have been expected. In the Twelfth Century there had been a certain development of the process known as ‘commutation,’ in which labour services are partly or entirely replaced by money payments. With the increasing use of money already noted’ a reverse process set in, especially in the more accessible and prosperous regions and on the estates of the monasteries and great lords. Here the increased use of money and the steady rise in prices made it more profitable to extend the direct cultivation of the demesne with serf labour, and to sell the wool, meat, hides or corn so produced, than to accept a fixed money payment whose real value tended constantly to decline. The result was that during the Thirteenth Century many lords on whose estates services had previously been commuted now reimposed them, often adding new burdens and always resisting any demand for new commutations. It is only in the remote areas, far from the main markets and trade routes, that we occasionally find commutations taking place during this time.

By the fourteenth Century a new turn can be noticed. The very increase in agricultural production for the market, more rapid than the increase in the production of manufactured goods, led to a relative fall in agricultural prices. Once more the landowners reversed their policy. A new drive towards commutation were no longer so strongly resisted, and with this went an increased use of wage-labour on the land. This in time led to the decline of villeinage and the breakup of the manor. At the same time, the large-scale production of wool for the Flemish market led to the development of trade on an international scale and of merchant capital. In the field of politics we have seen how the State assumed by degrees

the functions of the feudal nobility —the administration of justice in the baronial fiefs, the protection cultivators and at the service in the feudal host in time of war, As the barons shed these functions they were gradually transformed into landowners in the modern sense, drawing an income from their estates and tending to look to the Court and capital as the natural sphere of their political activities.

In the last chapter mention was made of the growth of towns, and the methods by which they secured charters freeing them from burdensome feudal obligations. Such charters were most easily had from the King, to whom money was always more useful than the accustomed feudal services, less easily from the nobles and with great difficulty from the great abbeys tinder whose walls towns had grown up in many places. The histories of such towns —St. Albans, Bury St. Edmunds and Reading— are punctuated with bitter conflicts, sometimes amounting to armed risings of the townsmen, as at Bury in 1327. Here the townsfolk, supported by the villains of the surrounding villages, stormed the abbey and set up a commune that lasted six months before it was suppressed. It is noteworthy that after the rising no fewer than thirty-two parish priests were convicted as ringleaders.

By the end of the Thirteenth Century almost all towns of any size, except a few under monastic rule, had won a certain measure of self-government. After gaining freedom from feudal exactions, the main object of any town was to keep its trade in the hands of its own burgesses, on the principle that only those who paid their share towards the freedom of the town had the right to share in its privi1eges. This object was attained through the organization of the burgesses in the Merchant Gild. These gilds, which included all the traders in any given town (at first no clear division existed between the trader who bought and sold and the craftsman who made the goods, both functions being normally performed by the same person) were rigidly exclusive and their regulations were enforced by fines and, in extreme cases, by expulsion.

As the towns grew in size Craft Gilds came into being, in addition to, and sometimes in opposition to, the Merchant Gilds. These included only the men of some particular craft; smiths, saddlers, bakers or tailors. They aimed at regulating the whole of industry, laying down rules as to price, quality, conditions of work, and so on. They were composed of master craftsmen, each working in his own home, usually with one or more apprentices and sometimes with journeymen or wage laborers. The latter were men who had served their period of apprenticeship but had not yet been able to become master craftsmen.

At first the journeymen do not appear to have constituted a separate class, but were men who might expect to become masters themselves. Towards the end of the Thirteenth Century, however, clearer class divisions begin to appear The number of journeymen increased, and many of them remained wage earners all their lives. By imposing high entrance fees and by other devices the gilds became mare exclusive and harder to enter. As a result, separate gilds of the journeymen, the so-called Yeomen Gilds, began to arise.

These gilds, like the first trade unions, were discouraged and often forced to work secretly. Consequently we only hear of them casually, when their members appear in court or in such cases as that when the London Gild of Cordwainers (leather workers) declared in 1303 that “it is forbidden that the servant workmen in cordwaining or other shall hold any meeting to make provisions that may be to the prejudice of the trade.

In 1387, again “John Clerk, Henry Duntone and John Hychene, serving men of the said trade of cordwainers. . . brought together a great congregation of men like unto themselves, and did conspire and confederate to hold together,” and were committed by the Mayor and Aldermen to Newgate prison “until they should have been better advised what further ought

to be done with them". Similar records of strikes or combinations exist for other trades and towns, as in the case of the London saddlers, 1396, weavers, 1362, and the Coventry bakers in 1494.

Beside the skilled craftsmen, covered by the gild organization, larger towns soon attracted a floating population of escaped serfs and others who formed a submerged class of unskilled and irregularly employed laborers. In London this section was especially large, and, while the conditions of skilled workers may have been fairly satisfactory, the medieval slum population lived in depths of filth and poverty that can hardly be imagined.

One later development must be noted which accentuated the class differentiations in the towns. This was the growth of gilds of merchants and dealers who dominated the productive crafts. Thus, by the end of the Fourteenth Century, the London Drapers control the fullers, shearmen and weavers, and of the twelve great gilds from which alone the Mayor could be chosen, only two, the weavers and the goldsmiths, were productive. The same thing took place more slowly and to a less extent in the other towns, and serves to remind us that it was in the form of merchant capital that the first great accumulation of bourgeois property took place.

The first and most important field that merchant capital found for its operations in England was the wool trade. From quite early times wool was exported from this country to be woven in Ghent, Bruges, Ypres and other towns in Flanders. By the Thirteenth Century this trade had grown to large proportions, easily exceeding in bulk and value all other exports combined. In some respects England assumed a position with regard to Flanders comparable to that of Australia and the West Riding today.

There were, however, important differences. England was not politically dependent upon Flanders as countries producing raw materials usually are upon industrial countries. This was partly due to the internal situation in Flanders, politically weakened by the constant struggles between the merchants, the handicraft weavers, the counts of Flanders and the kings of France, struggles which kept Flanders divided and, in the Fourteenth Century, had important consequences in English history.'

More important was the monopoly position of England as a wool growing country. Throughout the Middle Ages no other country. Throughout the Middle Ages no other country produced a regular surplus of wool for export, and, on more than one occasion, the prohibition of the export of wool produced an instant and devastating economic crisis in Flanders. The English monopoly was the result of the early suppression of private war, noted already as one of the results of the peculiar strength here of the crown as against the barons. Sheep are of all kinds of property the easiest to lift and the hardest to protect, and only under circumstances of internal peace not normal in the Middle Ages was sheep farming on a large scale profitable.

As early as the Twelfth Century the Cistercian monks had established huge sheep farms on the dry eastern slopes of the Pennines. The Cistercians were not only large scale-farmers, but financiers as well, and through their hands and those of the Lombard and Florentine merchants who acted as their agents was passed much of the revenue which the Popes drew from England, a revenue stated in Parliament in the reign of Edward III to be five times that of the Crown. Much of this revenue was collected in the form of wool rather than of currency.

Besides Yorkshire, the Cotswolds, the Chilterns, Hereford and the uplands of Lincoln shire were important wool growing areas by the Thirteenth Century if not earlier. At first

the bulk of the export trade was in the hands of Italian and Flemish merchants. The former, especially, coming from cities where banking had already made great progress, were able to conduct financial operations on a scale unknown in Northern Europe. It was because the Lombards were able to finance him more efficiently than the Jews that the latter were expelled from England by Edward I in 1290. This action, often represented as a piece of disinterested patriotism, was in fact the result of the intrigues of a rival group of moneylenders who could offer the King better terms.

With the growth of the trade English exporters began to challenge their foreign rivals. Export figures for 1273, incomplete but probably reliable enough, show that more than half the trade was in English hands. The establishment of theWool Staple marks this stage in the growth of English merchant capital. The idea of the Staple was to concentrate all wool exports in one place or a few places, both to protect the trader from pirates and to make the collection of taxes easy. First various towns in Flanders were selected, then in 1353, a number of English towns. Finally in 1362, the Staple was fixed in Calais, which had been captured during the Hundred Years'

War. From the start the Staple was controlled by native merchants.

The growth of trade on a national scale involved the loss of many of their exclusive privileges by the chartered towns. Both Edward I and Edward III encouraged alien merchants and gave them concessions that led to conflicts with the burgesses of the towns. Attempts were made to imp rove roads and harbors and to allow trade to flow freely and safely from one part of the kingdom to another. How imperfect was even the relative peace of England at this time is strikingly illustrated by a clause in the Statute of Winchester (128) which orders that all highways should be cleared "so that there be neither dyke nor bush, whereby a man may lurk to do hurt, within two hundred foot of the one side and two hundred foot of the other."

Another factor that helped to break down local exclusiveness was the trade done at fairs. These fairs were to some extent outside the control of the Merchant Gilds, and the more important of them attracted traders from all over Europe. They had their own legal code 'Law Merchant,' an important matter when every country and every district had its own peculiar customs. Law Merchant was an international code so that traders from all parts were familiar with the rights and obligations it enforced. It was for the purpose of international trade, too, that a gold coinage was introduced alongside silver. The first gold coins (florins) were struck at Florence in 1252. In England gold florins and nobles were issued three years before the capture of Calais in 1347. The greater compactness of gold gave it an obvious advantage, but it was some centuries before gold coins were in common internal use in England.

The decline of feudalism and the growth of trade led to changes in the character of taxation that had most important consequences. In Norman times the King was expected to 'live of his own' like any baron. Only under exceptional circumstances was it customary to raise special taxes and these taxes were at first taxes on land. With the growth of towns taxes were imposed on other forms of property, thus giving other classes besides the barons a direct interest in affairs of State. The property tax, originally based on a rough assessment, soon became fixed in amount and in its usual form of 'a Tenth and a Fifteenth' produced on an average about £40,000.

During the reign of Henry III the sharp rise in prices made the ordinary revenue of the Crown increasingly insufficient, especially as the State tended to do more and more things previously done by the barons. From this time the use made of the estate of the Crown

began to be an important political issue. All classes had a direct interest in preserving the Crown lands intact, since if they were alienated the burden of taxation would be heavier. It is significant that all the kings who met with specially strong opposition —Henry III, Edward II, Richard II and Henry VI— were kings under whom the Crown lands were recklessly disposed of.

Under these circumstances the fusing of the baronial opposition to some aspects of Crown policy, which had led to the granting of Magna Carta, and the opposition of the rising merchants of the towns became inevitable since they had frequently a common ground for complaint if more rarely a community of positive interests. The medium through which this new opposition expressed itself was Parliament. But while this is so, the Crown itself frequently made use of the town merchants as a supplement to the barons and in this sense their growth to political importance can be regarded as a byproduct of the struggle between king and nobles, a struggle between two evenly matched powers both anxious to secure an ally. It is at any rate to this clash of classes that we must look for the origin and development of Parliament.

2. Parliamentary Origins

During the minority of Henry III the baronial party which had triumphed at Runnymede administered affairs in the King's name. William Marshall, de Burgh and Archbishop Langston appear to have been men of some ability, and under them, and in the absence of opposition, the barons held together and the importance of the Great Council as the core of the State apparatus increased. The barons had a training in administration which enabled them to act as a class, to aim at collective control of the State instead of at individual power in their several fiefs.

When Henry came of age and attempted to take personal control the struggle was resumed. His incompetence was balanced by a vanity that prevented him from realizing his limitations, and his extravagance combined with the rising prices to force him to make constant demands for money. He was personally much influenced by his French wife's foreign friends to whom he gave lands that the barons thought should have been kept and positions that they thought should have gone to themselves. Henry was priest-ridden as no king since Edward the Confessor had been, and it was during his reign that England became the main source of revenue for the Popes: this revenue was obtained partly by direct taxation and partly by allowing the Popes to sell Church offices to whoever —English or foreign— would give the best price for them.

The result was that while Henry was constantly making demands for money the administration of the State grew less efficient. Trade was interfered with and not only the barons but also the lesser landowners and the merchants were once again united in opposition. At first this opposition took the traditional baronial form.

When Henry allowed himself to be persuaded by the Pope in 1257 to accept the Kingdom of Sicily for his son Edmund, and asked the Council to provide the money necessary to conquer the island from the Hohenstauffens who were in occupation, opposition came to a head. The barons refused the money and a Council at Oxford set up an elaborate system of committees responsible to the Council itself for the detailed carrying on of the government. They also demanded the right to appoint the Justiciar, Chancellor and other officers as well as the sheriffs 6f the counties. It was at about this date that the Council began to be known as Parliament.

After three years the weakness of the purely baronial movement became obvious. The barons were always liable to be split by personal feuds and the conflict of interest felt by each of the body between the new class loyalty and the old and still powerful desire to work for the strengthening of his own fief. As a result the King was able to win over a section and to begin a civil war. Those of the barons who remained in opposition under Simon de Montfort were forced to rely on the support of other classes, and when, in 1264. Simon defeated Henry at Lewes a whole wing of his army was drawn from the citizens of London.

After Lewes the desertions from the baronial ranks went on, and the movement began as a result to assume a really popular character. It included the town merchants, the lesser landowners, those of the clergy who were opposed to the growing power of the Papacy and the students of Oxford, who, drawn mostly from the middle and lower middle classes, were throughout the Middle Ages strongly radical in temper. It was under these circumstances that de Montfort summoned to his Parliament of 1265 representatives of the burgesses of the chartered towns as well as two knights from each shire.

De Montfort's Parliament, though called together in accordance with strictly legal forms, has nevertheless been correctly described as a revolutionary party' assembly. It contained only five earls and seventeen barons, and the burgesses were clearly intended as a makeweight against the barons who had deserted. Yet if this Parliament of 1265 was a revolutionary body, it was also in line with the developments of preceding decades, themselves the outcome of the changing class structure of England.

The decline of feudalism had created a growing differentiation between the great barons and the lesser landowners or knights. While the former retained bands of armed followers and looked to war and politics as their natural activity, the latter were growing content to live on their estates and make the largest possible income from them. While the great lords were still depending on serf labour for the cultivation of their demesnes the knights were already making extensive use of wage labour. The wool trade, by providing them with a product easily and profitably marketable, confirmed them in this course, and in the Thirteenth Century we can trace already the beginnings of the English squirearchy which dominated the countryside for five centuries.

These knights were early drawn into local government through the shire courts, and in 1254 representative knights of the shire were formally summoned to the Council, though only to report decisions already arrived at in the shire courts. Knights were summoned 'several times between 1254 and 1265 for various purposes. No very theoretically startling change was involved, therefore, in de Montfort's action, but in practice the character and balance of the Council was changed and it can no longer be regarded as a merely feudal body.

In the next year de Montfort was defeated by Henry's son Edward, after a brilliant campaign **in** the Severn valley, and died at the Battle of Evesham. Edward found it wiser to adopt many of the changes which the rebels had demanded and in his reign Parliament assumed permanently the form which de Montfort had given it. There is no evidence that at first the knights and burgesses took any active part in the proceedings. They were there mainly to agree to the taxes which the King wanted, to help by giving the information needed to draw up assessments and to go home and see that the shires and towns raised the money. They were also the bearers of petitions from their localities and helped the Government to check up on the doings of local officials.

Like the jury, Parliament was a royal convenience rather than a right of the subject. The expense of attending or of being represented was avoided when possible both by

individuals who had to be forced to go and by towns which often petitioned not to be forced to send representatives. Parliament was developed as a tax collecting apparatus, and, if it became a focus for opposition, this was quite outside the purpose of 'the Crown.

Between 1265 and 1295 various experiments were made, and it was not till a new crisis took place in the latter year that the next big advance was made. In 1295 Edward was seriously involved in wars France and Scotland and with the task of holding down the recently conquered Welsh. He therefore summoned what is known as the 'Model Parliament' because it contained all the elements which were to become recognized as necessary to make a full assembly. This Model Parliament made a large grant of money with some reluctance, but in the two following years more was needed. Edward levied a heavy property tax, tolls on wool exports and seized some of the property of the Church.

These levies were strongly resisted, and in 1297 the 'Confirmation of the Charter' was secured. Edward promised, in effect, that no new taxes would be raised in future without the consent of Parliament. The opposition was still largely of the traditional baronial type, but what is important is the new Parliamentary forms which this opposition was beginning to take. The same thing is true of the next reign. Edward II alienated the barons by the failure of his Bannockburn campaign in 1314 and by his grants of Crown lands to personal friends, commoners who were raised by these gifts to a position of equality with the older nobility. In 1327 Edward was deposed after a rising of the barons but this deposition was carried through in a regular Parliamentary manner, establishing a precedent which was to be of great importance.

It was the continued need of Edward III for money to carry on the Hundred Years' War that led to further developments of Parliamentary control over taxation. In the years between 1339 and 1344 grants were actually refused until after grievances had been dealt with. The advance was due more to the King's necessity than to the strength of Parliament; it seemed to Edward more important to continue the war in France than to quarrel with Parliament over what on the surface seemed minor questions. Consequently he agreed to allow Parliament to elect treasurers to supervise the expenditure of the money voted and to examine the royal accounts. This was in substance a recognition of the right of Parliament not only to withhold supplies, but, more vaguely, to exercise an indirect control over the way the money was spent and hence over police.

It would be easy to exaggerate the importance of these precedents. Such parliamentary control was only nominal except in moments when the Crown was especially weak. But nevertheless precedents were established which enabled Parliament to take up a strong position on the field on which important class battles were to be fought in centuries to come.

It was during the same period that the final steps were taken which gave Parliament its modern form. At first all sections sat together as one body, and, inevitably, the proceedings were dominated by the great barons. Then came a period of experiment. Sometimes there were three 'Houses' —Barons, Clergy and Commons. Sometimes the burgesses sat alone to legislate on matters concerning trade, as at the 'Parliament' of Acton Burnel in 1283. Sometimes the knights of the shire sat with the barons, sometimes with the burgesses. Then the clergy ceased to sit in Parliament and formed their own Convocation and the division into Lords and Commons took place on the lines which exist today. In this division the knights of the shire

— representing the smaller landowners— took their places in the commons with the representatives of the town merchants.

This grouping, found only in England, was an exact reflection of the unique distribution of class forces in this country towards the close of the Middle Ages. The prohibition of private war and the growth of the wool trade, as has already been pointed out, caused a sharp differentiation between the greater and lesser landowners. The latter, mainly interested in drawing an income from land, had begun to rear sheep on a large scale. They had a far greater community of interest with the merchants who also prospered from this trade than with the great barons whose outlook was still largely military. At the same time they formed a link between merchants and barons which enabled all three classes to act together from time to time.

This alliance between the merchants and the squires is the key to the growth of parliamentary power. It enabled the former to develop their strength under the wing of an already established class and it enabled the House of Commons to act at times as an independent body without the Lords.

While in most parts of Europe the representative bodies which grew up about this time declined and in many cases disappeared with the decline of feudalism, in England the decline of feudalism only strengthened the position of the Commons as the non-feudal part of Parliament.

In the late Fourteenth and the Fifteenth Centuries the nominal power of Parliament was considerable, Yet it would be a mistake to overestimate its strength or that of the merchant class. If Parliament was allowed to acquire many powers it was because it was still normally led by the Lords. The decay of feudalism, while creating the class of squires, also concentrated power in the hands of a very small number of powerful noble families, mostly related to the Crown and fighting bitterly for supremacy among themselves. They saw in Parliament a convenient means through which to dominate the State machine, and its wide powers were in practice often exercised by the ruling clique of nobles. The whole period was one of transition, of a delicate balance of class forces, and Parliament became at the same time a reflection and a battleground of these forces.

The End of the Middle Ages

A Century of Paradox

The Fifteenth Century was an age of violent contrasts which are reflected in the diverse and contradictory views expressed about it by historians. To some it has appeared a period of general decline, of ruined towns and political chaos. Others have pointed to the real increase of prosperity of the mass of the people, to the growth of trade and industry and to the development of parliamentary institutions in the period from 1399 to 1450. The key to the proper understanding of the age is that both views are correct but neither complete, that while feudal relations and the feudal mode of production were decaying, bourgeois relations and the bourgeois mode of production were developing rapidly.

The decline of feudalism did not only affect the baronage and agriculture, it affected also the towns and the gild organization. The Black Death and the heavy)i taxation entailed by the Hundred Years' War dealt a heavy blow at the chartered towns. Contemporary records are full of the complaint of their decay, of ruined houses and streets unpaved, of harbors silted up and of population in decline. Even allowing for some exaggeration these records cannot be wholly disregarded. In 1433 Parliament allowed a rebate of £4,000 when voting a tenth and a fifteenth "in release and discharge of the poor towns, cities and burghs, desolate, wasted or destroyed or over greatly impoverished or else to the said tax greatly

overcharged" and such remissions are common. An important exception to this decline was the continued progress of London and a few great ports like Bristol. The most profitable branches of foreign trade became increasingly concentrated in the hands of the organization known as the Merchant Adventurers, who were able to squeeze out competitors and to canalize trade into a few places. The growth, especially, of London became one of the reasons for the decline of lesser trade centers.

There is evidence, too, that the raids of pirates were more frequent as a result of the continued wars and there are many cases of towns as important as Southampton and Sandwich being stormed and burned by such raiders. Inside the towns the gilds were growing more exclusive and the apprenticeship system was ceasing to be a normal stage in the development of a craftsman and was being used to keep the gilds in the hands of a select minority. Under Henry IV it became illegal for any but freeholders with twenty shillings a year to apprentice their children.

The heavy burden of taxation and the rigid gild restrictions in the chartered towns had the effect of driving industry outside them into the village, and suburbs. The weaving industry in particular, growing rapidly at this time, developed outside the towns and outside the gild organization. An important part was played by one of the main technical innovations of the Middle Ages, the application of water power to fulling —an essential process whereby cloth was' cleaned and thickened. As this became common practice towards the end of the Fourteenth Century, fulling mills began to be set up in new centers higher in the valleys, where a better water force could be obtained.

Probably, too, this was a means of evading craft opposition to the new method. Gradually weavers were attracted to the areas where the fulling mills were being worked.

For all these reasons then, while many of the older towns were in a state of decay, new centers of production were springing up in vi11age~, some of which in time became themselves towns, but with a new capitalist or semi-capitalist production, as industry was finding a new freedom. The medieval restrictions on usury were by now plainly outmoded and were generally disregarded.

Equally marked were the contrasts in the countryside. The nobles, who were losing those social functions that had been their justification in the earlier Middle Ages, had acquired in the French wars settled habits of violence. They were evolving on the one hand into modern landowners and on the other into gangster chiefs, each with his band of armed retainers, drawn from unemployed soldiers and those of the lesser gentry who had been unable to adapt themselves to the changed conditions, men who regarded work as beneath their dignity and whose job was to terrorize weaker neighbors. In earlier times the nobles had their own courts of law. Now they used their armed followers to overawe and defy the local courts. Great nobles undertook to protect their followers from justice, and this practice, known as maintenance, became a permanent scandal. Nobody from Parliament down to the obscurest bench of magistrates was secure from the menace of these bands, whose open intimidation prevented verdicts being given against the interests of their employers. When a suit brought two such nobles into conflict the proceedings often ended in a pitched battle.

The fundamental cause of this political gangsterism was the decay of the great estates as economic units. Agricultural prices were falling and a corresponding fall in rents prevented the lords from restoring their position at the expense of their tenants. For a time war plunder and the profits of war contracting gave them a partial solution, but with the ending of the Hundred years' War the only means left by which many great lords could increase

their income was sheer brigandage. The result was the use of estates as a base for the creation of new private armies, and it is in this background of the economic decline of the great estates that we shall best understand the Wars of the Roses.

The situation is vividly portrayed in the Paston Letters, with their mixture of hard business sense and gangster politics. The same men who are growing rich by sheep farming are seen carrying out armed raids against their neighbors and using every device known to the lawyer to trick these neighbors out of their estates. One of the most characteristic features of the age, and one which marks it off sharply from the age ok high feudalism was the wholesale perversion of the law by the ruling class for the ends of lawlessness rather than the open disregard of law.

As they shed their social functions the new nobility developed a fantastic if superficial refinement of manners, an elaborate mask of pseudo-feudal behavior hiding the reality of decay. Clothing and Armour became increasingly ostentatious., gold and silver were made into plate and ornaments as the lords vied with each other to produce the most magnificent effect at court. Heraldry, the tournament, the elaboration of the code of chivalry reached their highest pitch just at the time when they were losing all relation to the business of war. This extravagance was at bottom the result of the gradual displacement of land by money as the prevailing form of property. While tenacious of their land and as eager as ever to add to their estates, the nobility were mere children where money was concerned as compared with the great merchants. The extravagance of the age enabled many of these merchants to secure a financial hold upon the nobility through usury, and some were able themselves to enter the ranks of the nobles. The de la Pole family, for example, were originally Hull merchants.

Both merchants and nobility were far more literate than their ancestors had been. Humphrey Duke of Gloucester collected one of the greatest libraries of the time, and the Earl of Worcester, famous even in the Wars of the Roses for his brutality, was equally noted for his culture and scholarship. It was this new literate class, coming into existence all over Europe that provided the conditions necessary for the invention of printing. The former literate class, the clergy, was self-sufficing in the production of books, the copying of manuscripts being one of the main occupations of monastic life. The lay reading public of the Fifteenth Century, besides being much larger, was composed of people who were far too busy to produce their own books and the professional copyists were too slow and too few to keep pace with the steadily increasing demand.

The first books produced by Caxton in England were mainly of a leisure type to suit the needs of this new public. His first book was the Histories of Troye; and The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers (1477, the first book printed in England), Malory's Morte d'Arthur and Chaucer s poems, were all of this class. In the next generation the bourgeoisie began to use the press as a weapon, and during the Protestant Reformation a torrent of religious and political polemical works appeared, spreading the ideas of the reformers among a far wider circle than would have otherwise been reached.

The disorder and internal feuds of the Fifteenth Century seem to have been curiously limited in their scope. While the nobles and their followers fought among themselves the rest of the nation was but little disturbed, even at the height of the Wars of the Roses. The Chief Justice Fortescue, writing in exile after the Battle of Towton, compares the general insecurity and misery in France with England, "where no man sojourneth in another man's house without the love and leave of the good man," Perhaps, as exiles will, he exaggerates the happiness of the land he was forced to leave, hut it is clear that the wars which bulk so

large in the history of the time were the work and the concern of a very small minority of professional fighters.

Out of the decline of the great estates there arose a very considerable body of substantial and prosperous peasant cultivators. Some of these were working on a small scale, but a considerable proportion were substantial yeomen —what we might now call a 'kulak' class —who, with smaller overheads and no social position to keep up, could make a good living where their 'betters' would have failed. These tenants of a new type were able to drive a hard bargain with the landowners and to pass on to them the fall in the price of their produce by securing lower rents. They might be considerable employers of wage labour, and it is clear that a process was already beginning by which the small cultivator was becoming a yeoman farmer, or, much more often, a wage earner. Nevertheless, there was probably at this time a larger proportion of peasant farmers, cultivating the land either as freeholders or as tenants, than at any other time in English history.

The laborers, benefiting from falling food prices, enjoyed wages that were relatively high. Under the Statute of Laborers they were fixed at threepence or fourpence a day, and the wages actually paid may have been even higher, though there is no means of telling how regular was the employment obtainable at these rates. A man hired by the year received 2Os. 8d. in addition to his food and lodgings and a woman was paid 14s. Both the laborers and the peasant farmers were taking up spinning and weaving as domestic industries, and it is probably this at least as much as the condition of agriculture that made the age one of greater prosperity for tern tan tome which preceded and followed it.

Thus, both the chaos and the prosperity of the Fifteenth Century were equally real and arose from a common cause, the transition from feudal to bourgeois society. The temporary growth of peasant agriculture was the result of the decline of the manorial organization, taking place in a period when the accumulation reached the necessary level, as it did in the next century, the extinction of the peasant farmer was inevitable. With the increase of the wool industry and of merchant and usurers' capital this accumulation was going on rapidly and began to make itself felt even before the close of the Fifteenth century.

In the same way, the anarchy of the period was due to the decline of feudalism and of the form of State power, which had developed out of feudalism. The bourgeoisie, tough becoming more numerous and wealthy, were not yet strong enough to form the basis for a powerful, bureaucratic monarchy, and the local administration was not strong enough to stand up to the great nobles, a few of whom were more powerful individually than any of the feudal barons had ever been in England. The internal wars that resulted had the effect of destroying the power of these nobles, who perished in an unsuccessful attempt to secure control of the State apparatus. The struggle left both Crown and bourgeoisie relatively and absolutely stronger than before and ready to form an alliance very much to their mutual advantage.

Parliament and the House of Lancaster

For some years alter the rising of 1381 the-government was carried on in Richard's name by the Council, that is, by the ruling clique of nobles grouped around John of Gaunt. But Gaunt's authority had been weakened by the evidence the rising had given of his universal unpopularity and by the intrigues of rival nobles. An opposition party soon began to gather round the King, challenging the supremacy of Gaunt. To a large extent the grouping was personal, composed of the King's friends and those who found themselves

shut out from the spoils of office. It included a number of the younger nobles like the Earl of Oxford and of recently ennobled families like that of Michael de la Pole, the Hull merchant. There was also an important cleavage among the London merchants. The drapers, that is those concerned with the wool and clothing trade, supported John of Gaunt while those dealing in foodstuffs supported the King. It is probable that the lines of this division were connected with the fact tat the royal party were opposed to the continuation of the continuation of the French War, in which the wool merchants were naturally the most interested.

Some years of struggle between the two parties culminated, in 1386, in the impeachment of the King's Chancellor, the Earl of Suffolk. Impeachment was a new procedure, in which the House of Commons acted as accusers and the House of Lords as judges. It was developed mainly as a method of limiting the royal power by attacking the King's servants and was a primitive method of securing the responsibility of Ministers to Parliament. The impeachment of Suffolk was followed by the setting up of a committee of control, the Lords Appellant, after the pattern that had become traditional with the barons in their conflicts

with the Crown. It differed from earlier attempts of the Kind by its close relation to Parliament, to which it was directly responsible for its actions.

For a short time the Lords Appellant were able to hold power, but in 1389 Richard executed a coup d'etat and assumed control, The period that follows is one of the most obscure in English history, both because the motives of the parties are quite unknown and because of the complicated cross-currents resulting from personal feuds and the shifting of allegiances from side to side. But it was a period in France and elsewhere of growing royal absolutism and there is reason to believe that Richard was working on a deliberate plan of establishing dictatorial power.

For the first years after his coup d'etat he was careful to conciliate the Commons and they in turn worked with him fairly harmoniously. The period is important because for the first time the House of Commons begins to appear as a political force independent of the great nobles. This alliance between King and Commons is easily understandable. The King had seized power in defiance of the bulk of the nobility and could not afford to lose the support of the lesser gentry as well. At the same time no Government of the period could exist without the financial backing of a strong party among the London merchants and Richard was able to secure for his friends the control of the City of London.

The position of the small landowners was also insecure. On one side they were menaced by the demands of the peasants and laborers, on the other by the growing power and violence of the great nobles who threatened to engulf them. On this basis an uneasy alliance was formed, in which both sides were aware of the extent to which the other depended upon them and determined to exploit the situation to the full.

An undercurrent of opposition to Richard soon developed as a result of his extravagance in dissipating the Crown estates and his ruthless suppression of all opposition. The banishment of Henry Bolingbroke, John of Gaunt's son, and the seizure of his estates when Gaunt died, alarmed even those nobles who had remained friendly or neutral. The merchants were alienated by the illegal taxation and by the failure of the Government to suppress piracy. In this situation Richard took a step which has never been adequately explained. He secured a packed Parliament by manipulating the elections, and, to make doubly sure, summoned it to meet at Shrewsbury away from a possible outbreak in London, and overawed it with an army of Welsh archers. From this Parliament he secured a vote of

taxes for life and persuaded it to transfer its powers to a committee under his personal control. For a year his power appeared to be absolute, but it rested on nothing but his Welsh mercenaries, and, when Henry Bolingbroke landed in 1399 to claim his forfeited estates, Richard found himself without supporters.

For the second time a king was deposed by Parliament after an armed seizure of power. This time Parliament went farther than in the case of Edward II. Then Edward's son had succeeded without question: now a new king was appointed by Parliament who was not by hereditary right the next in succession and whose title depended only on conquest and a parliamentary vote.

The new king, Henry IV, was thus committed to a policy of conciliating the gentry and the town middle class, and during his reign Parliament reached its highwater mark for the Middle Ages. If the support of the Commons was to be secured, some attempt had to be made to end the anarchy of the great nobles. But it was largely by their support that Henry had come to the throne and they expected in return an even greater license. As a result the King was faced in 1403 with a general revolt of the wild Marcher Lords of the North and West, led by the Earl of Northumberland and Mortimer, Earl of March, whose descent from Edward III was nearer than Henry's own. They were supported by the Scotch and by the Welsh, who had risen under Owen Glendower and enjoyed a generation of independence. It was only the mutual suspicions of these allies and their consequent military blunders that enabled Henry to defeat them in a battle at Shrewsbury.

For the rest of his reign he displayed a diplomatic ability in the avoidance of issues that prevented him from meeting serious opposition. He had added to the estates of the Crown those of the Duchy of Lancaster and so was able to avoid making excessive demands for money, demands that would certainly have been resisted. It became customary during this reign for the different taxes to be earmarked by Parliament for specific purposes. The Crown estates went for the upkeep of the royal household, tunnage and poundage, a tax on imports, to maintain the navy and the coast defenses which were considerably improved. The custom on wool was used for the defense of Calais and other taxes for the general defense of the kingdom.

Election to Parliament was now a privilege rather than a burden, and in the shires a struggle began to keep the control of the elections in the hands of the gentry. The rising class of free peasant farmers began to take an active part in the elections in the shire courts, and, in 1429, an Act was passed to limit the franchise. It states its object with a remarkable frankness. Whereas, it declares, elections "have now of late been made by very great and excessive number of people.. . of the which most part was by people of small substance, or of no value whereof every one of them pretended (i. e. claimed) a voice equivalent, as to such elections to be made, with the most worthy knights and esquires," in future the right to take part shall be confined to those who "shall have free (hold) tenement to the value of forty shillings by the year at the least above all charges. " The forty shilling freeholders continued to have a monopoly of the county franchise till the Reform Bill of 1832. In the towns there was no uniform franchise, each conducting elections according to its local custom. The Act of 1429 was followed in 1445 by another requiring that those who were elected to Parliament should be gentlemen by birth.

For long before this, elections had been rigged and Parliaments packed, but now, with the number of electors reduced and as the anarchy of the fifteenth Century grew more profound,

the manipulation of Parliament became the regular practice. The great lords came to Westminster with bands of retainers and Parliament degenerated into a mere instrument by carrying out the desires of the ruling group of the moment. The House of Commons had deprived itself of the mass basis that alone could have made resistance to such pressure possible.

The change is marked by the substitution of the Bill of Attainder for the older practice of Impeachment. By a Bill of Attainder the group controlling Parliament could have its enemies condemned and sentenced by legal enactment without any form of trial. Throughout the Wars of the Roses every turn of fortune was followed by a wholesale destruction of the defeated.

In these struggles Parliament became a cipher and lost almost all of its practical importance. Yet the fact that it was kept and manipulated and used as an instrument was a reflection of the place it had won. All over Europe similar bodies were in decay because there was no middle class powerful enough to keep them alive. In England the middle classes —gentry and merchants— were strong enough to be valued as allies by both sides. The very fact that Parliament proved pliable was an argument against reducing its powers and, at the end of the Fifteenth Century, these powers were if anything greater in theory than ever before. As a result Parliament was retained by the bourgeoisie as a weapon ready to hand whenever they were strong enough use it.

The New Monarchy and the Bourgeoisie

The Clothing Industry

It was during the political turmoil of the Fifteenth Century that England passed definitely from being a producer of wool to being a manufacturer of cloth. Though employing far fewer people than agriculture, the clothing industry became the decisive feature of English economic life, that which marked **it** off sharply from that of most other European countries and determined the direction and speed of its development. During the Middle Ages England was more rural than, for example, France. Its towns were smaller, never succeeded in winning so full a measure of self-government, never came into so sharp an opposition to the feudal lords or the mass of the peasantry. But rural England was more developed, its peasantry freer and less exploited. It was this evenness of development, this relative weakness of a specifically urban and so partially feudal production of manufactured goods, which made the development of a capitalist textile industry, inevitable in any case once a certain technical level had been reached, so easy and rapid.

This textile industry developed first in South-west England and in East Anglia, around Norwich and in the towns and villages of the Stour valley, where the tall perpendicular churches and the many-windowed houses of the rich clothiers remain as evidence of a peculiar and long departed prosperity. East Anglia had always stood in a special relation to Flanders facing it directly across the narrow sea. While the other parts of England had developed a large scale export of wool, East Anglia had exported little. Instead it shipped corn to feed the industrial population of Ghent and Bruges, where, as a poem written about 1436 says:

"A lie that groweth in Flaunderes greyn and sede May not a monet fynde hem mete and brede. What hat thenne Flaunderes, be Flemmynges leffe or lothe

But a lytelle madere and Flemmyshe clothe?

By drapynge of our wolle in substaunce

Lyvynge here (their) comons, this is here governaunce
Wyth out on to wych they may not lyve at ease
There moste hem sterve or wyth us most have peasse."

East Anglian agriculture was of a mixed character, sheep being reared as part of an arable tillage instead of on the large sheep walks of the exporting areas. Their wool was inferior in quality, that of Suffolk being ranked last of a list of forty-four brands drawn up in 1454**,** and valued at only 52s, the sack against 260 s. for the best Hereford wool. Norfolk wool was not even considered worth a place on the list. This wool was not of such quality as to be welcome abroad and so it was woven at home into coarse fabrics from an early period. Probably the fact that it was not produced for export or in bulk led to less effort being made here than elsewhere to improve the breed.

Geographically, East Anglia was the area into which Flemish craftsmen tended to settle, and, as we have seen, such settlements began immediately after the Norman Conquest. Gradually the new comers taught the natives their superior methods, and by the beginning of the Fifteenth Century great improvements had been made in the variety and quality of the cloths woven. Villages now quite obscure, like Kersey and Worsted, gave their names to cloths that were known all over the country and even began to compete with Flemish products in the European market.

At first exports were mainly in the form of half-finished cloth which went to Flanders to be sheared and dyed, the greater part of the profit remaining in Flemish hands. Their proverbial saying that they bought the fox's skin from the English for a groat and sold them the tail for a guelder was still almost as true as in the days when exports were confined to raw wool. This trade was at first carried on by the merchants of the Hanse towns who had been ousted from the wool export by the Merchants of the Staple but were able to gain control of this newer branch. But just as the Staplers had been able to challenge and defeat the Italians in the Fourteenth Century, a native body known as the Merchant Adventurers wrested the cloth export from the Hansards in the Fifteenth. Establishing a "factory" at Antwerp in 1407, they prospered in spite of the hostility both of the Flemish clothing towns and of the old-established Staplers who still used Calais as their headquarters.

Among their advantages was a free and uninterrupted access to the supply of raw materials, which they could buy cheaper than the Flemings who had to pay a heavy duty. When in 1434 Flanders prohibited the import of English cloth a retaliatory prohibition of the export of wool was far more damaging. After normal trade relations were re-established under Henry VII in 1496, by the treaty known as the 'Great Intercourse", the industry of Flanders continued to decline. In the Tudor period the Spanish invasion of the Netherlands and the fierce wars that followed completed the process, impelling a new wave of craftsmen to settle in England. Holland, which succeeded in winning its independence, was the less industrialized part of the Netherlands and became rather a commercial than an industrial rival in the Sixteenth Century.

The two-sided development is illustrated by figures showing the decline in wool exports alongside the increase in exports of cloth. In 1354 cloth exported was estimated at less than 5,000 pieces. In 1509 it was 80,000 pieces and in 1547, 120,000. On the other hand the duty on exported wool, which averaged about £ 68,O00 in the reign of Edward III, had fallen to £ 12,000 in 1448. This development in the export of cloth was by no means uninterrupted. In the Fourteenth and early Fifteenth Centuries exports increased rapidly, then war and unsettled political conditions led to a shrinkage in export markets and even

some absolute decline, and it was not till late in the Fifteenth Century that the advance was resumed. This middle period of decline was one of the main reasons for the growth of restriction and monopoly in the cloth export trade, as the dominant group of merchants tried to compensate for shrinking markets by securing a higher rate of profit in those still open.

Most important of all, the cloth industry developed almost from the start on capitalist lines. Once the production of cloth was carried out on large scale for the export market the small independent weaver fell inevitably under the control of the merchant who alone had the resources and the knowledge to tap this market. Wool growers had also long been accustomed to sell their clip in bulk. The minute division of labour and the large number of processes between wool and cloth made it almost impossible to organize the industry on a gild basis. The Norwich gilds appear to have made .persistent efforts to control the weavers of the surrounding villages but with little success.

The clothier, as the wool capitalist came to be called, began by selling yarn to the weavers and buying back the cloth from them. Soon the clothiers had every process under control. They bought raw wool, gave **it** out to the spinners, mostly women and children working in their cottages, collected it again, handed it on to the weavers, the dyers, the fullers and the shearmen, paying for each process at fixed piece rates in preference to selling and rebuying at each stage. A Statute of 1465 gives a detailed picture of the whole process and complains of the frauds perpetrated by the weavers in giving false weavers in giving false weight. This Statute is also notable as the first Truck Act, ordering that wages shall be paid in "true and lawful money" and not in "pins, girdles, and other unprofitable wares". The rate of profit was generally high and the accumulation of capital rapid. As the industry spread from East Anglia to Somerset, to the West Riding and to other parts of the country the clothiers began to form the nucleus of a capitalist class more enterprising, more unscrupulous anti more ready to express fresh channels of investments than the conservative gildsmen of the older towns.

Bristol, Hull and above all London became centers of far-reaching commercial activity and their great merchants began to rank with the nobility in wealth and influence.

A higher stage of concentration was reached when the c1othier~ began to collect a large number of artisans under a single roof and to carry out the whole industrial process there. This practice, vividly described in the-novels of the Norwich weaver Thomas Deloney (1543-1600), became fairly common in the earlier part of the Sixteenth Century and roused general protest from the weavers. Some of its evils are described in the preamble of an Act of 1555 which aimed at limiting it**.**

"For as much as the weavers of this realm have as well at this present Parliament as at diverse other times complained that the rich and wealthy clothiers do many ways oppress them some by setting up and keeping in their houses diverse looms, and keeping and maintaining them by journeymen and persons unskillful, to the decay of a great number. of weavers, their wives and households, some by engrossing of looms in to their hands and possession and letting them out at such unreasonable rents as the poor artificer are not able to maintain themselves, much less their wives, family and children, some also by giving much less wages and hire for the weaving and workmanship of cloth than in times past they did...." The Act went on to limit the number of looms that a clothier might keep in his house, and the development of the industry out of the domestic stage appears to have been checked. Probably the extra profit to be gained by this concentration was not sufficient to

drive the domestic weavers out of existence, while the machinery used was not so expensive as to enable the clothiers to secure a monopoly control.'

The rising rate of profit, the increase in commodity production and of international trade that were common to a greater or lesser extent through most of Europe at this time, created a serious currency crisis in the later part of the Fifteenth Century. There was a correspondingly increased demand for gold and silver money as the only satisfactory medium of exchange when credit was still in its infancy. Europe itself could not meet this demand. Small quantities of gold reached it from time to time, but more was exported, was lost in the wearing of coin or was mobilized as plate or jewelry. There was probably less gold in circulation about 1450 than during the Roman period. And while silver was mined, especially in Germany, the amount was not sufficient to meet the greatly increased demand.

A real famine of the precious metals, and especially of gold, the most convenient medium for international trade, began to act as a check to the continued increase of commerce. All European countries attempted, without the slightest success, to prevent the export of bullion, which in England was actually made a felony during the reign of Edward IV. It was the shortage of gold and the desire to find new sources of supply that gave the general impulse to the geographical discoveries which, in the Sixteenth Century, opened up vast new territories for European exploitation.

Columbus himself, who wrote that "Gold constitutes treasure, and he who possesses **it** has all he needs in his world

as also the mean a of rescuing souls from Purgatory and restoring them to the enjoyment of Paradise." was fully aware of the nature of his objective. His voyage was the signal for the commencement of the first, the greatest and, in its effects, the most far-reaching of the world's gold rushes.

The Discoveries

It was in 1492, seven years after Bosworth, that Columbus reached the West Indies. Six years later still Vasco da Gama cast anchor at Calicut after his voyage round the Cape of Good Hope. These events were the climax of a long series of changes and essays, transforming the relations between Europe and the East and beginning its relation with the continent of America.

During the Middle Ages trade between Europe and Asia was carried on along several routes. The most easterly was by way of Trebizond, up the Don and Volga and into the Baltic, with the Hanse towns at its northern extremities. A second was by way of the Persian Gulf, Bagdad and Aleppo and thence by sea to Constantinople, Venice and Genoa. A third was up the Red Sea and overland to the Nile, where Italian galleys awaited their cargoes at Alexandria. All these routes had one thing in common: they involved the transhipment of goods and their carriage overland on horse or camel back, in most cases for considerable distances. The sea voyages were purely coastal, and, in their Asiatic part, were carried out by Arab sailors and shipping. All goods were passed on from merchant to merchant along the route, each taking a substantial profit.

The high cost of land tranport made it unprofitable to carry any but the least bulky merchandise. So for Europe the East became 'gorgeous', a land yielding silks, spices and precious stones, an El dorado of incredible richness. And, in the main, the trade was a one way trade, since Europe had no commodities small enough in bulk to export and was

compelled to pay for goods in gold and silver, diminishing her already inadequate store of bullion. The Eastern trade was frowned upon by the statesmen as immoral, wasting treasure in return for luxuries, hut the merchants of Italy and the Hanse, who received goods by a continuation up the Rhine of the Mediterranean routes as well as through Russia, found it profitable. Each route was the jealously guarded monopoly of a city or group, which kept out all competitors, if necessary by armed force.

During the Fifteenth Century these routes were threatened by invading Mongols who over ran much of Russia and by Turks who drove the Arabs out of Asia Minor and in 1453 captured

Constantinople. The Egyptian route, though not cut, was threatened. The overland routes were not rendered impossible but the risk was much greater, freights rose and profits declined. Further, nation States were growing up, with strong central governments, which had no share in th$_5$ old routes and were anxious to develop routes of their. own and so destroy the trade monopoly of Venice and Genoa. These States included Spain and Portugal, created out of the struggle to expel the Moors, France, created out of the struggle with England, and, a little later, the Hapsburg monarchy which arose from the defense of Eastern Europe against the Turks. The new routes were all opened by State had not by private enterprise and could not, perhaps, have been developed at this time in any other way.

Finally, the Fifteenth Century had seen a great advance in the technique of ship building and of navigation. The typical merchant ship of the Middle Ages was a basin shaped affair with a single mast in the middle. It was quite incapable of sailing against the wind, and, in rough weather, was almost unmanageable. In England, at any rate, ships larger than 100 tons were seldom built before 1400. After this rapid progress was made. A list of ships used by the Government in 1439 for the transport of troops included eleven between 200 and 360 tons. Another similar list made in 1451 contains twenty-three ships of 200 to 400 tons. A little later William Canynge, a famous Bristol merchant, owned 2,853 tons of shipping, including one vessel of 900 tons.

Corresponding advances were made in seaworthiness. The Spanish and Portuguese developed the caravel for coastal trade in the Atlantic. It was a longer, narrower craft, with a high forecastle and three or four masts. The compass, known since the Twelfth Century, was perfected and came into general use, the astrolabe was adapted for the calculation of latitude and map makers were beginning to replace mythical cities and dragons with a certain measure of accuracy. It was at last technically possible to leave the coasts and to undertake transoceanic voyages.

The first attempts were made by Portugal, whose seamen, under Government control, began a systematic exploration of the coast of Africa. Cape Bojador was reached in 1434, Gambia in 1446, the Congo in 1484. When Vasco de Gama returned to Lisbon from India, with a cargo that is said to have repaid sixtyfold the cost of his voyage, the effect was shattering. Even under the most favorable circumstances imaginable the old routes with their high freights and the score of merchants who handled the goods in transit could never compete. The power of the Italian merchant towns was destroyed and the whole center of gravity of Europe shifted towards the Atlantic coast.

The Cape route was a Portuguese monopoly. Rivals had to find others and so Spain led the way to the West, discovering a new continent where a short cut to the Indies had been expected. The new continent proved to be rich in gold and silver beyond' anyone's dreams. From Mexico, from Chile, from Potosi came a river of bullion carried by treasure fleets,

that, even after pirates and shipwreck had taken heavy toll, still provided huge profits for the German, Italian and Flemish financiers, the Fuggers and Grimaldis, who equipped and insured them.

For in fact, neither Spain nor Portugal had sufficient capital resources to exploit their new possessions or to absorb the wealth they produced. The Spanish governments made attempts to keep their precious metals at home but they flooded irresistibly over Europe, sending prices soaring and stimulating the commerce of Spain's rivals. Of these, France, Holland and England became the most important.

Not strong enough as yet to challenge Spain and Portugal in the regions where they were established, English seamen were forced to seek ways of their own. In 1497 John Cabot, a Genoese sailor in English pay, sailed from Bristol, discovered Newfoundland and sailed along part of the North American coastline. Gradually the existence of a great land mass forming a barrier between Europe and the East was realized, and, since this bleak coast gave no promise of easy wealth such as the Spanish were finding further south, efforts were concentrated on finding a way round —that North-west Passage that remained the goal of English navigators for a century. The attempts failed, but has as byproducts the establishment of fur-trading stations in the Hudson Bay territory and of the fisheries in Newfoundland.

Failing to find a way here the English turned their attention to the North-east and in 1553 a group of London merchants formed one of the first joint-stock companies with a capital of £ 6,000 and sent Richard Chancellor and Hugh Willoughby in an expedition round the north of Norway. Willoughby was caught in the ice and perished but Chancellor reached Archangel and established regular trade relations with Moscow. A Russian Company was established and in 1557 a Russian ambassador reached London. Other important new fields of trade were Iceland and the Baltic, where the weakened Hanse towns were forced to share their long established monopoly.

The struggle to secure national monopoly of profitable areas and routes and to break up the monopoly of rival powers is the main characteristic of Sixteenth Century maritime policy. This is reflected in the~ dominant theory of the time, the so-called Mercantilism. The Mercantilists aimed at amassing in their own country the greatest possible amount of treasure. To this

end Navigation Acts attempted to confine trade to English ships so that the navy could be kept strong. Bounties were paid to exporters of corn since corn exports were held to .encourage agriculture and to bring in treasure, and home industries were protected with tariffs. This was the theory held by the Government and the bourgeoisie in England right up to the Industrial Revolution. So long as merchant capital was predominant **it** was natural to regard money as the measure of wealth and national prosperity. With the rise of industrial capital towards the end of the Eighteenth Century money came to be regarded rather as a commodity among other commodities and the wealth of a nation to be measured by the volume of its production of commodities of all kinds.

In the Sixteenth Century England's main export was, cloth and the two main objects of exploration, in accordance with the Mercantile theory, were the securing of gold and silver and the finding of new markets for English cloth. If Hakluyt was allowing imagination to run ahead of practical possibility when he wrote: "Because our chief desire is to find out ample vent of

our wollen cloth, the natural commodities of this our Realme, the fittest place which in all my readings and observations I find for that purpose are the manifold islands of Japan

and the regions of Tartars next adjoining," the century certainly saw a great increase in export trade and those regions which failed to provide a market for cloth were generally turned to some account by English merchants.

In the early part of the Sixteenth Century exports of unfinished cloth had steadily increased until 1550. After that date, mainly owing to disturbances in the Netherlands, a great trade depression had set in, providing the strongest incentive to find new markets for English cloth. The outlying parts of Europe, as well as Africa, Asia and America, were all considered as possible markets. But the failure of old markets and very slow rate of growth in new ones forced those with capital to invest to try their fortune in new industries. The result was that in the late Sixteenth Century England saw the beginning of what might be described as a little industrial revolution. To the desire for new exports was added the stimulus of an increasing home demand, and a tendency to make in England many things which had previously been imported.

In this time, apart from great advances in the finishing of cloth, in soap making, brewing, shipbuilding and glass making which had previously existed only on a small scale, a whole range of new industries sprang up. These included the production, on a factory scale, of such things as gunpowder, paper, saltpetre and sugar. What is perhaps more important is that both the scale of industry was increased and new technical processes were introduced and many of these industries demanded quite complicated water driven machinery. Many of them also, as brewing, soap boiling and salt making, required coal or coke in considerable quantities.

This resulted in a rapid increase in coal-mining, in which England took the lead of all Europe. Deep mining began, made possible by water driven pumps and improved ventilation methods. All this meant that the sinking of a coal mine, which had in the past been little more than scratching a hole in the ground, now became a complex operation demanding large capital resources. And with the rapid increase in coal output we find the beginning of the concentration of certain industries in the coal producing regions and a great stimulus to shipbuilding to provide the fleets of colliers needed to bring the coal from the pits to London and other centers.

It was due largely to the extent of this first Industrial Revolution of 1540-1640 that England was able to take the lead in the second Industrial Revolution after 1760. It was the success of the new industries which enabled England, especially after the end of the war with Spain, to become a great world trading state. The wealth they brought strengthened the middle classes for their coming struggle for power in the Revolution of the Seventeenth Century.

The quest for gold and silver involved England in a long war with Spain, which must be dealt with elsewhere. Bullion came into the country both as the result of hard competition for trade I'

and of looting from the Spanish and Portuguese fleets. It did not come fast enough for the new capitalists, who were constantly complaining of the lack of adequate capital. But enough came in to create new problems, great misery for the masses as well as great riches for the traders and industrialists. To the growth of the cloth trade, the establishment of new factory industries and the geographical discoveries as features of the economic life of Sixteenth Century England we must add a fourth, no less important, and having an even greater immediate effect on the lives of the people. This was the revolution in agriculture, leading to the creation of large scale unemployment and the beginning of a modern proletarian class.

The Tudor Monarchy

Henry VII, founder of the new monarchy was in the fullest sense a symbolic figure. Winning his kingdom by force of arms he consolidated it by the homespun qualities of thrift, cunning, diplomacy and double-dealing. A capable soldier, he hated and avoided wars because war cost money. A capable businessman, he administered and exploited his kingdom as scientifically and thoroughly as the new capitalist landowners did their estates. He was the living embodiment of all the virtues and vices of the thrusting bourgeoisie who prospered under the protection of the Tudor regime and to whose support it owed its stability.

He began his reign with the disadvantages of a strong opposition party, a title to the throne by no means strong and openly disputed, and the persistence of the general disorder which had characterized the whole period of the Wars of the Roses. But he had certain compensating advantages. The relative strength of the Crown and the nobility had been greatly altered to the advantage of the former, not only because of the physical extinction of many noble families in the wars and the passing of many peerages into the hands of minors, but because the wholesale confiscations of the lands of the .defeated had added immensely to the estate and income of the Crown.

Above all, Henry had the support of the merchants, the clothiers, the town artisans, of all those who valued security and teared above all things the resumption of civil war. It is important to note that this support came from what we may begin to call the rural bourgeoisie as well as from the middle class in the towns. With this support Henry was able to go forward steadily to destroy every possibility of opposition and to lay the foundations of a despotism that was to last a century. The Tudor monarchy rested on the fact that the bourgeoisie —the merchant classes of the towns and the more progressive of the lesser gentry in the country— was strong enough in the Sixteenth Century to keep in power any Government that promised them the elbow room to grow rich, but not yet strong enough to desire direct political power as they did in the Seventeenth.

Two main objects presented themselves to Henry. The first was to reduce the independent military power of the old nobility. The second was to accumulate such a treasure as would make him independent. How successful he was in the latter project is shown by the fact that in the twenty-four years of his reign he only had to summon seven parliaments, and only two of these in the last thirteen years. His first step against the nobles was a law prohibiting the keeping of retainers. This was backed by a royal monopoly of artillery, an arm which had been much improved in the latter part of the Fifteenth Century and was now capable of reducing almost any medieval fortress. He developed the judicial authority of the royal council, in what came to be called the Court of Star Chamber which had powers to deal summarily with offenders who were powerful enough to defy the local courts. The Councils of Wales and of the North carried this machinery right into the heart of the most disturbed parts of the country. These courts, being mainly used against the nobles, were generally popular and through their influence the ordinary local machinery of justice, which had almost broken down under the anarchy of the preceding decades, was gradually restored.

Besides weakening the old nobility Henry began to create a new nobility drawn from the upper middle classes and directly dependent upon the Crown. Such families as the

Cecils, Cavendishes, Russells, Bacons and Seymours were all new creations of the Tudors. A lawyer, Dudley, one of the instruments of Henry's financial policy, was the father of that Duke of Northumberland whom we have seen as the butcher of the Norfolk rebels.

To Dudley, as to the Chancellor, Archbishop Morton, was given much of the responsibility of collecting the money which Henry desired above all things. The most diverse methods were used parliaments were induced to vote taxes for wars that Henry never intended to fight, heavy fines were inflicted upon law-breaking nobles, old laws were revived, and forced loans and gifts made the merchant classes pay heavily for royal protection. By these means, and to the utmost economy, Henry left at his death some £2,000,000 —a vast sum equal to at least fifteen rears ordinary revenue at the time.

On only one direction was Henry prepared to spend with some 'freedom on the building of ships. As Bacon said, he "loved wealth and could not endure to have trade sick." The importance which he attached to the development of English shipping is shown by the infrequency with which he sold exemptions from the Navigation laws, though this would have been an easy source of revenue. The policy of giving bounties on the building of ships, begun by Henry VII, was continued throughout the Tudor period, developing into a fixed allowance of 5s. a ton on all new ships of 100 tons and over.

It was this meager, thin-faced, calculating man far more than his spectacular successors who established the Tudor monarchy on a firm basis and brought England into line with the general consolidation of centralized nation States going on throughout Europe. France, Spain and the looser grouping of South German States around the Hapsburgs were taking something like their modern shape. Wit their rise European politics, as distinct from feudal politics, may be said to begin. The new States, instead of being mainly concerned with preserving their internal stability, of checking the disruptive forces of the feudal nobles, began to struggle among themselves for European supremacy. And England, which in the Middle Ages had stood rather aloof in Europe, launching attacks now and then from the outside, became a part of Europe in a more intimate sense and involved in the complication of its political struggles.

The early years of the Sixteenth Century were full of confused wars, but in essence the battle lay between France and Spain, struggling for the control of the rich territories of Italy and Flanders. England was far inferior to either of these States in wealth and population and developed gradually a policy, the preservation of a balance of power, that has since become a fixed tradition among English politicians. The basis of this policy was to prevent any Power in Europe from becoming overwhelmingly strong by creating and maintaining two roughly even groups, by supporting first one and then the other and by never allowing either side to count with certainty upon the continued support of England.

The first and one of the most astute players of this game was Cardinal Wolsey, chief minister during the first half of the reign of Henry VIII. From 1509, when Henry came to the throne, England usually supported Spain and was at war with France. These wars had few outstanding events, but a by-product was the terrible defeat inflicted upon the Scots at Flodden in 1513. After the battle of Pavia (1525) which made Spain the master of Italy, the European situation changed. Spain, now united with the Hapsburgs, completely dominate Europe and it became clear that England, now unnecessary, was to have no share in the spoils of victory Wolsey and Henry therefore began to gravitate towards France, precipitating a political situation at home that determined the course and character of the Reformation in England.

Before tracing the course of the Reformation, however, something must be said of the nature of the machinery through which the Tudor monarchy governed.

Though relying on the bourgeoisie as their main supporters the Tudors made little use of Parliament. Parliaments were called from time to time to vote taxes or when they were needed for some special purpose such as legalizing the break with Rome, But they showed little independence, aroused little interest and the long intervals between their meetings were not resented. Nevertheless the constitutional forms were duly observed and just because the Tudors had nothing to fear from Parliament its theoretical powers even increased. Writing in 1589 Sir Thomas Smith declared:

"The most high and absolute power of the realm of England consisted in the Parliament ... The Parliament abrogateth the old laws, maketh new, giveth order for things past and for things hereafter to be followed, changeth rights and possessions of private men, legitimateth bastards, establisheth forms of religion ... condemneth or absolveth them whom the prince will put on trial. And to be short, all that ever the people of Rome might do either in centuriatis comitiis —or tributis, the same may be done by the Parliament of England which representeth

and hath the power of the whole realm, both head and body.

Parliament under the Tudors was, as it were, accumulating reserves of strength for the great struggles of the English Revolution. The direct power of the bourgeoisie was exercised much more forcibly by the citizens of London, whom the Tudors were always careful to flatter and conciliate. London, a great and turbulent city, was always a force to be reckoned with by a government that never possessed a substantial standing army.

The day to day work of government fell upon the royal counselors. The feudal Great Council fell into the background as Parliament developed and was not called after the reign of Henry VII. The working Council remained, sometimes as a small body of the king's chosen advisers and sometimes as an assembly of the greater barons. The right of the Crown to call such counselors as it chose was contested by the nobles, who claimed the right to be summoned, during the Fifteenth Century, but Henry VII established his right to choose his own counselors. He drew them from a wide body of government officials and excluded most of the magnates, keeping the exact composition of the Council *vague*. Under Henry VIII, first Wolsey and then Cromwell mere or less monopolised the King's confidence, but in 1540 a privy council was formally constituted, consisting of the chief government officials, resembling the modern Cabinet except that it was responsible not to Parliament but the King, who was not, however bound to consult it or to take its advice.

It developed a whole series of committees for special purposes, some settled at Westminster, some moving about the country. These bodies kept their fingers upon every detail of administration, so that the Council and its offshoots besides

forming a rudimentary Cabinet contained in itself the first elements of a bureaucracy.

Closely attached to the Council, which guided and controlled their work with minute care, were the Justices of the Peace. Drawn mainly from the lesser landowners, these Justices, who had existed at least from the time of Edward III, grew in power with the weakening of the nobility, who were not now able to act politically in opposition to the Crown. The Justices were powerful because they represented a rising class and because they had behind them the wholehearted support of the Council. They have been called the "Tudor maid of all work" and their functions were far wider than those which they exercise today. Besides holding the sessions they to fix wages, levy poor rate and administer the poor law, repair highways and regulate trade and industry. A stream of directives constantly

poured upon them from the council and they became virtually the executive part of the machine of government, an unpaid civil service with vast if ill defined powers and duties. The responsibilities placed upon the Justices added to the political weight of the squirearchy in the localities and gave them an experience which they soon learnt to use for their own ends.

By modern standards Tudor government was cheap government. There was no real standing army except for some troops garrisoned abroad or on the Scottish borders, and only a small paid bureaucracy. But by medieval standards it was costly enough and soon outran the old sources of revenue that had changed little since the Middle Ages. Henry VIII started with the immense accumulation of funds left by his father but soon spent it. The extravagance for which he is notorious was not merely a personal weakness, it had political motives. The kings of Europe in this period aimed at attracting the nobles to court, and, by turning them into courtiers, weakening them as political rivals. For this purpose a lavish expenditure was necessary and kings and nobles competed in display on an ever increasing scale. Where the feudal nobles had shown their importance by the size of their armed following, their descendants were judged by their dress and the style of their houses. Politically sound, this policy was very costly and Henry, always apt to develop political necessity to the point of mania, seemed to take a positive delight in squandering his resources. In addition, the wars to which the balance of power policy committed him proved expensive and brought no return. Finally, as the century went on, the influx of gold and silver from America began to increase prices without bringing any corresponding increase in revenue.

Henry soon faced a financial crisis. He could not reduce his expenditure and so had to find new sources of income. His first was the plunder of the monastic lands (1536-1539) but these were treated as income instead of as capital, and a large proportion had been sold in a few years. His last and most disastrous recourse was what is today politely termed inflation but was then called debasing the coin of the realm. Each debasement gave the Government a certain immediate profit, but was followed by a rise in prices which made the situation worse than ever before and necessitated a further debasement. In 1527.

By 1551, 3 oz. of silver and 9 oz. of base metal were coined into 72s. That is, the coinage was diminished to a seventh of its value in a single generation. Trade was thrown into confusion, prices rose rapidly and real wages fell. The new coinage

became a byword. Latimer, even when preaching before the King and Council in 1549, could not refrain from gibing openly at it:

“We have nowe a prety litle shilling in dede a very pretye one. I have but one, and the last daye I had put it away almost for an old grote, and so I trust some will take them. The fyneness of the silver I can not se. . .”

By the middle of the century the debasement had had its effect of plundering the mass of the people and was becoming increasingly inconvenient for the trading and landowning classes. One of the first acts of Elizabeth’s Government was to call in the whole coinage in 1560. It was paid for at approximately its silver value in new coins and the Government actually made a profit on the transaction. The effect was not to reduce prices but to stabilize them at the existing high level. This stabilization, coming at the end of the period of enclosures and of the plunder of the Church, marks a definite stage in the consolidation of the position of the bourgeoisie in England, at the opening of an era of armed struggle with Spain for the more intensive exploitation of the world market.

Origin of the English Revolution

The Struggle with Spain

In the struggle between England and Spain which occupied the last third of the Sixteenth Century both sides were on the offensive though both were anxious to avoid an open war if they could accomplish their ends by any other means. England, that is to say the English merchant class backed by the Government, was determined to break through the colonial monopoly that Spain had established in the West. This ambition was shared by other North European seapowers, especially the Dutch. The fortunes of English and Dutch were inseparably linked during this period, and the revolt of the Netherlands played a decisive part in the general struggle. It was only at the expense of Spain and Portugal that English and Dutch commerce could grow, since in Spanish and Portuguese hands lay all the areas outside Europe which seemed at that time to offer any possibility of profitable trading. And for both England and Holland, small countries with no hope of expanding by land and with prosperous and pushing merchant classes, such colonial expansion was a condition of national development.

On the other side, Philip's marriage to Mary Tudor had seemed for a moment to promise Spain that control over England which was a necessary condition for the success of Spanish plans for world empire. The accident of Mary's death had frustrated these plans and at first Philip hoped to recover the lost ground by a second marriage to Elizabeth. For as long as she dared Elizabeth allowed him to believe this possible, though she and her advisers were far too astute to repeat Mary's blunder. When Philip realized that his marriage plan had failed he began very slowly and dubiously to try other methods, diplomacy, intrigue and finally war.

Closely allied with Spain was the Papacy. The Church had reorganized its forces at the Council of Trent (1545-1563), had created in the Jesuits a body of highly trained and disciplined storm troops, had perfected the Inquisition as an instrument of repression and was working steadily and with apparently good prospects of success towards a counter-reformation which would stamp out heresy and restore the supremacy of the Pope throughout Europe. In the main the interest of the Papacy and the Spanish monarchy coincided, since the heretics were also the most determined opponents of Spanish power, and, although the allies quarrelled sometimes about the expenses of the campaign and the division of the spoils, they managed to work fairly closely together. Consequently, the struggle had also a religious character, was a struggle between Protestantism and the Counter-Reformation.

Thin struggle was complicated in every country by a minority problem. England contained a large number of Catholics who were always thought likely to rise in revolt. Spain had an interminable and never suppressed rising of her Protestant subjects in the Netherlands to deal with. France was even more unfortunate and a bitterly contested civil war between Catholics and the Protestant Huguenots, intensified by a dynastic conflict, made her a negligible factor in European politics during the whole of this period and completely upset the balance of power. A superficial observer looking at Europe in 1570 would have seen no possible rival to Spain, which controlled not only Southern Italy, Austria, Hungary and the Netherlands but also a vast colonial empire.

But in the Channel and the North Sea, with its headquarters at Dover, where it was unofficially encouraged by the English authorities, was a nondescript fleet, part Dutch, part English with a sprinkling of Huguenots who dominated the Straits and made raids in all directions upon Spanish and French shipping. Other raiders put out from the Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle, seizing Spanish merchant ships and even threatening the West Indies. In theory England and Spain were at peace but the English Government shared the plunder taken by these privateers and even at times lent them ships from the Royal Navy. When at last, in 1572, Philip demanded that the Channel fleet should be expelled from English harbors it was given time to gather its full strength for a sudden and brilliantly successful attack on the Dutch town of Brill. The capture of Brill was the signal for a general rising along the coast of Holland and the revival by the Netherlands of a war which the Spanish thought had been ended some years before. In this war the best generals and the best troops in Europe failed to overcome the resistance of the Dutch burghers and peasants so long as these were able to keep open a sea way by which trade and help from abroad could reach them.

In England meanwhile, Elizabeth and her ministers were facing the situation created by the unwelcome arrival of Mary Stuart in 1568. Almost at once the Catholic Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland had started a revolt in the North to free Mary, marry her to the Duke of Norfolk and place her on the throne. The rising was partly spontaneous and partly provoked deliberately by the Council. It collapsed at the first approach of a strong royal army and the ease with which it was suppressed is an index of the striking decline of the power of the semi feudal nobility of the North since the superficially similar Pilgrimage of Grace only thirty years before.

For eighteen years Mary was the center of a whole series of plots, all involving the assassination of Elizabeth. Just as the English Government encouraged the activities of the privateers on Spanish shipping and towns, the Spanish ambassador and the Jesuit priest who were sent in large numbers to reconvert England encouraged these plots. Elizabeth was, as often during her reign, in a position where every possible course of action was full of danger. Neither she nor Cecil, her chief minister, believed that it was possible as yet to challenge Spain in an open conflict, though such a conflict was clearly inevitable sooner or later. So long as Mary lived there would be plots, one of which would probably succeed. The assassination of Elizabeth would be almost certain to precipitate a civil war and give Philip the chance for which he was waiting. On the other hand, so long as both Mary and Elizabeth remained alive war was improbable. Philip was not anxious to go to war to make Mary queen since she was half French by blood and more than half French in outlook and would be more likely to govern England in the interests of France than of Spain. Also, so long as there was a possibility of removing Elizabeth by assassination, Philip preferred to wait.

Year after year passed, with each side looking for an opening. Philip sent help to the rebel Irish. Drake, Hawkins and other privateers grew bolder in their exploits. Jesuit priests preached sedition among the Catholic nobles and gentry and were hunted down and hanged. In 1577 Drake set out on his voyage round the world, to return with an immense cargo of booty. In 1580 a Spanish force landed in Ireland and was captured and massacred at Smerwick. Elizabeth sent just enough men and money to the Dutch to keep their revolt stirring but not so much as to commit herself beyond possibility of drawing back.

In 1584 Elizabeth had to face a new dilemma. William of Orange, the leader of the revolt in the Netherlands, was assassinated and the Dutch sent ambassadors asking for their

country to be incorporated with England. To agree meant open war. To refuse meant that in all probability the Dutch would submit to Spain and England would be left without an ally. As usual, Elizabeth delayed giving a definite answer as long as she could. When she finally decided to refuse she sent a stronger force of volunteers' than ever before, under the command of her favorite, the Earl of Leicester, to ensure the continuance of the war. In the autumn of the same year Drake harried the West Indies with a fleet of twenty-five ships.

As war became more and more certain the reasons for keeping Mary Stuart alive were correspondingly weakened. Walsingham, who represented the extreme Protestant section on Elizabeth's Council, advocating an alliance of all the Protestant forces of Europe, with England at their head, for open war on Spain, set to work to trap Mary into complicity in one of the plots to kill Elizabeth. As usual, Walsingham had a spy among the conspirators and their whole correspondence to and from Mary passed through his hands. By September, IS86, he had all the evidence he needed. The plot was exploded prematurely and in February, 1587, Mary was beheaded.

Mary bequeathed her claims to the English throne to Philip who had now every reason for embarking on a war tram which be alone would benefit. It was fought, however, under political conditions less favorable to Philip than if Mary had still been alive, since, while a large number .of moderate Catholics would have been prepared to fight to place Mary on the throne, only the small minority under Jesuit influence were likely to do as much for Philip. Another reason for war was the continued failure of Spain to subdue the Netherlands. The original plan had been to do this as the prelude to an attack on England: it had now become obvious that the Netherlands never would be conquered as long as they received English help.

The summer of 1587 was spent by Philip in gathering and fitting out a great fleet —the Armada— for the conquest of England. The plan of campaign was for the Armada to sail up the Channel to Dunkirk, where the Duke of Parma, Spanish commander in the Netherlands, had assembled an army. This army was to be convoyed across the Straits for a landing in the mouth of the Thames. It was an excellent plan on the assumption that no serious resistance was likely. The sailing of the Armada was delayed by a raid in which Drake destroyed a mass of shipping and stores in Cadiz, by the death of its commander and by the poor quality of its equipment which made it necessary to put in at Corunna to refit, but by the end of July, 1588, it had reached English waters.

The defeat of the Armada has often been regarded as something of a miracle: in fact, it would have been a veritable miracle if it had succeeded. From the time when the Persians were beaten at Salamis till the beginning of the Sixteenth Century naval warfare had not changed in principle. Ships were treated primarily as carriers of troops and the aim was always to grapple and board the ships of the enemy. This conception of naval war still dominated the Spanish, whose soldiers were then the best in the world. But in the generation before the Armada the English and Dutch had evolved a totally new method of war. They treated ships as floating batteries and their objective was to outsail their opponents and disable them from a distance by artillery fire. They built more maneuverable faster ships, capable of sailing into the wind and they mounted guns at the portholes instead of only on deck. Their ships were superior both in the volume and the direction of fire. The mere bulk of the Spanish galleons, packed as they were with troops, only made them the better targets for broadsides to which they had no power to make effective reply. Their superior numbers and tonnage meant exactly nothing in the conditions under which they

were forced to fight. The English superiority in technique can only be fully understood when seen as a result of the striking industrial development which had taken place in the preceding generation.

After a running battle lasting about a fortnight the Armada was hustled up the Channel. Stampeded out of Calais by fire ships, driven past Dunkirk and out into the North Sea. The damage done was limited only by the shortage of ammunition in the English fleet, and once in the North Sea the Armada could not work back down the Channel against the wind but was forced to sail round Scotland and Ireland, on whose coasts scores of ships were wrecked. The English lost no more than 100 men killed in the whole action.

After 1588 the offensive passed into the hands of the English who continued to raid the coast towns both of Spain and the West Indies and to attack enemy shipping. Two contending strategical theories arose. The first advocated the seeking out and destruction of the enemy's battle fleet, the second, and this view mainly prevailed, urged the plunder of his colonies and the cutting of his trade routes. This method of war, followed in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, laid the foundation of the British Empire in a series of wars whose burden was thrown chiefly upon England's continental allies. In 1589 Corunna was taken and sacked but an attempt on Lisbon failed. Fleets were sent to raid the West Indies in 1590, 1591 and 1595 while in 1596 a fresh raid on Cadiz did immense damage. At the same time the Spanish were beginning to adopt the new technique of shipbuilding and naval tactics and the struggle developed into a prolonged skirmishing in which neither side could secure any decisive success.

The war with Spain, especially in its earlier stages, was not only a national war but also the struggle of a class against its class enemies at home and abroad. It was carried on mainly by the English merchant class and its allies among the gentry, both against Spain as the center of the reactionary and feudal forces in Europe and against their allies in England, the Catholic section of the nobility. Nothing is more surprising than the depth and sincerity of the religious convictions of many of the English seamen of the Sixteenth Century. Their Protestantism was the religion of a class in arms. Out of the memories of the Marian persecution, kept alive by Foxe's Book of Martyrs, published in 1563 and the most popular book of its time, out of the activities of the Jesuits and the crucifies of the Inquisition the English bourgeoisie concocted a picture of Catholicism as the fountain of all evil and the enemy with which they were committed to grapple in a life and death struggle. Religious fanaticism reinforced commercial interest to give them an enemy who was not only fought but sincerely hated, and it was in fighting Spain that they came to a consciousness of their own strength.

Up to 1588 the English bourgeoisie were fighting for existence: after that they fought for power. For this reason the defeat of the Armada is a turning point in the internal history of England as well as in foreign affairs. It was the merchants, with their own ships and their own money, who had won the victory and they had won it almost in spite of the half-heartedness and ineptitude of the Crown and Council, whose enthusiasm diminished as the war assumed a more revolutionary character. The victory transformed the whole character of the class relations that had existed for a century. The bourgeoisie became aware of their strength and with the coming of this awareness the long alliance between them and the monarchy began to dissolve. It might still need their support but they no longer needed its protection. Even before the death of Elizabeth, Parliament began to show an independence previously unknown.

The war with Spain, therefore, can best be understood as the first phase in the English Revolution. First, because it was a defeat for feudal reaction in Europe and consolidated the victory of the Reformation in those areas where it had already triumphed. And, second, because the classes inside England which defeated Philip were exactly those which afterwards led the opposition to Charles. It was a striking fact that at the opening of the Civil War the whole Navy and every important seaport was found to be on the side of Parliament**.** It was in the war with Spain that these classes had been tempered and mobilized and had developed that sense of being a special people, 'the elect', which made their Puritanism so formidable as a political creed.

Crown and Parliament

Six years before the death of Elizabeth the long working agreement between Crown and Parliament was disturbed by an attack on the practice of granting monopolies. The subject of dispute is highly significant. Monopolies were grants to individuals or companies of the exclusive right to manufacture or sell some particular article, paper, for example, or soap. Sometimes they were given to reward or encourage invention but more often were sold to raise additional revenue or used as a cheap way of rewarding courtiers or servants who had a claim on the royal purse. So, the Earl of Essex was given the monopoly of the sale of sweet wines for ten years, and the refusal of the Queen to renew this monopoly in 1600 was more responsible than anything else for his crazy rebellion early in the next year. At this time of great and rapid technical advance a whole class was eager to use and profit by the new methods. The effect of monopolies was to prevent this, to secure the cream of the profits for a clique of courtiers and hangerson, and, in the long run, to arrest the whole development of industry. The struggle against monopolies was therefore part of the struggle for free capitalist development which was being strangled by an obsolete political regime.

These grants were defended on the ground of the Crown s right to make ordinances for the regulation of trade. The attack on them was in essence an affirmation of a new principle of the highest importance to the bourgeoisie, the principle of their freedom to buy and sell to their best advantage without interference. It was a claim totally at variance with the whole medieval conception of the national and local organization of trade. The question was raised in 1597 and an inquiry promised. When nothing was done a new and sharper attack was made in 1601. The Government at once saw that it would be wise to give way and the reign closed with the friendly relations between Crown and Parliament apparently undisturbed.

When James I came to the throne in 1603 the whole atmosphere seemed to change with a dramatic suddenness. While the change was at bottom the reflection of changed class relations, its sharpness can partly be attributed to personal causes. First, James was a foreigner, half Scottish, half French, brought up in a country filled with bitterly hostile factions and accustomed to maintain himself among them by the policy of complicated trickery he called kingcraft.

Scotland had no Parliament in the English sense and James had learnt to regard its one democratic institution, the Kira, as the chief enemy of royal power.

Second, the atmosphere of theological pedantry in which he had been reared made him over apt to theorize about his position, to demand explicitly as a divine right what the Tudors had been content to take quietly in the absence of explicit opposition. And he made

these demands in the most tactless and blundering way at a moment when even the Tudors would probably have had to make concessions.

Third, and perhaps most important, James came from a very poor country to one moderately rich and regarded the resources of his new kingdom as unbounded. In fact, they were far from it, since the national finances had remained medieval in character and were increasingly inadequate to the complexity of national organization. Elizabeth had been able to make ends meet on a revenue rarely higher than £400,000 a year only by the most extreme parsimony and by using the upper classes as an unpaid civil service. In the Sixteenth Century prices were still rising and James found a revenue of about £450,000 inadequate even in time of peace. Of this sum perhaps £300,000 came from the estate of the Crown and the recognized customs dues. The rest had to be cajoled from the merchants and landowners in the form of a parliamentary grant. In relation to the wealth of these classes taxation was very light, but the mere fact of their increasing wealth made them more and more reluctant to vote increased taxes except in exchange for substantial increases in political power. The situation created by the rise in prices was not generally understood and the inability of the Stuarts to balance their budgets was put down entirely to what were only contributory causes —their extravagance and bad management.

James' first Parliament set the tone that was to prevail for the next forty years. Only part of the money he demanded was voted and the Commons spent much time discussing his domestic and foreign policy. James ordered them to leave affairs of State to the King and Council who alone were qualified to understand them. "As to dispute what God may do is blasphemy," he declared, "so it is sedition in subjects to dispute what a king may do in height of his power. I will not be content that my power be disputed on." Parliament replied by affirming its right "to debate freely all matters which properly concern the subject and his right or state," and was dissolved in 1611.

From 1611 to 1621 only one Parliament was called, the 'Addled Parliament' of 1614. It at once began to criticize the policy of the Government and was dismissed before any business had been transacted. During this period James tried a variety of expedients to balance his budget. They included forced loans, new customs duties and sale of titles. So long as peace was maintained these sources of revenue were just sufficient to stave off a crisis. After the death of Cecil, son of Elizabeth's chief minister, in 1612, James began to fall more and more under the influence of Spain and for some years the Spanish ambassador, Gondomar, was the real power behind the Government. In 1620 the Thirty Years' War in Germany created new difficulties. The Elector of the Rhenish Palatinate, one of the leading Protestant princes and son-in-law to James, had accepted the crown of Bohemia, whose people were in revolt against the Emperor. The Elector was quickly driven out of Bohemia and his own Palatinate and appealed to his father-in-law. James was anxious to help and the Puritan City of London was eager for war. James, however, preferred to attempt to restore his son-in-law to his dominions by negotiation with Spain, proposing a Spanish marriage for his son Charles and the toleration of the English Catholics as a return for the evacuation of the Rhineland by the Emperor's troops.

Such negotiations could only succeed if backed by a show of force and James was compelled to summon a Parliament in 1621. He asked for £500,000. Parliament voted about £150,000, demanded war against Spain and impeached the Lord Chancellor, Francis Bacon, on a charge of corruption. In the next session James asked for £900,000 and was voted only £70,000 while the Commons openly attacked the proposed Spanish marriage. In January, 1622, Parliament was dissolved.

At this time the Council was completely dominated by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, whose only qualifications for governing were his immense vanity and his personal attractiveness to James. Completely ignorant of European politics he did not realise that the Spanish were bluffing and had no intention of making any real concessions. When he did come to realise this after a visit to Madrid, he swung violently towards a war policy, regardless of the fact that the navy was completely decayed and that there was no army or any means of creating one. The Commons were equally ill informed; and when a new Parliament met in 1624 it was enthusiastic for war and voted the large sum of £300,000 —nearly half of what was demanded.

The war that followed was a fiasco and Buckingham quickly lost his sudden and temporary popularity. Wretched armies of untrained conscripts, drawn from the slum population or the rural unemployed, were sent abroad to be butchered or to die of fever. The decayed and ill-appointed ships failed repeatedly to reproduce the naval exploits of the previous generation. Cut of sheer incapacity Buckingham soon involved the country in a second and even more pointless war with France. When he was stabbed in 1628 by a dismissed officer the people of London celebrated his death in the streets like a victory, and, after a final defeat at La Rochelle, Charles made peace with Spain, France and the Emperor as speedily and unostentatiously as possible.

Meanwhile the struggle with Parliament had continued after the death of James in 1625. The first Parliament of the new reign, meeting in June, 1625, refused to vote money for the war they had demanded a year earlier unless Buckingham was removed from control. The baronial opposition of the Middle Ages had sometimes enforced the removal of ministers they disliked, but no such attempt had been made for over a hundred years and from the Commons such a demand was quite new. Parliament was dissolved in August but Charles still needed money and had to call a new Parliament in February of the next year.

In spite of attempts to pack it, the new Parliament was as stubborn as the old one had been and began at once to prepare for the impeachment of Buckingham. In a few months it too was dissolved. In place of the unvoted taxes the Government raised a forced loan, systematically levied like a regular subsidy. Those who refuse to pay were imprisoned or pressed into the Army. War was still going on and detachments of untrained and undisciplined soldiers were scattered over the country. Often unpaid and billeted in private houses for the sake of economy, they became a terror to their unwilling hosts who found, that complaints of robbery and violence often went unheeded at military tribunals to which troops were answerable.

The forced loan was not a success and in 1628 Charles was compelled for the third time to call a Parliament. It met in an even more uncompromising mood than its predecessors and with a clearer idea of the political demands it intended to make. A contemporary noted of this Parliament, probably justly, that the House of Commons was able to buy up the Lords three times over. In the Fifteenth Century the Commons had been content to follow the lead of the Upper House but their wealth and social standing and that of the classes they represented were now such that it was they who took the leading role. The Lords at this time hardly existed as an independent force, acting only as an intermediate body inclining by turns towards King and Commons.

Under the leadership of a Cornish squire, Sir John Eliot, the Commons at once formulated their demands in the document known as the Petition of Right. It avoided all attempt to theorise, confining itself to four specific points. Two, the billeting of soldiers and the abuse of martial law, were of mainly immediate importance. The others were wider in

scope. The Petition demanded that the practice of keeping arrested persons in prison "without being charged with anything to which they might make answer to the law" should cease and that "no man hereafter be compelled to make or yield any gift, loan, benevolence, tax or such alike charge, without common consent by Act of Parliament."

Most of the things complained of in the Petition had been done without question by the Crown for many generations. The important point was that they had been formulated and forbidden just at the time when the Crown was claiming to do them by absolute, sovereign right. The Petition was in fact if not in form an answer to the royal attempt to establish a theoretical basis for a practical absolutism.

Diplomatically, the Commons had sweetened the pill with the promise of the large vote of five subsidies—about £ 350,000. After some characteristic haggling Charles assented to the Petition but when Parliament went on to demand the removal of Buckingham it was prorogued. In the interval before the next session Buckingham was murdered. Parliament met again in January 1629, and followed up the Petition of Right by granting Tunnage and Poundage for one year only instead of, as always before, for life. Indirect taxes at recognised and customary and traditional rates had always been regarded as part of the ordinary revenue of the Crown. This new move meant a far more strict Interpretation of the Petition of Right than Charles had anticipated and he indignantly rejected a claim that would have given the Commons complete financial control. He refused to accept the vote for one year and continued to collect the customs as before. In a tumultuous last session, with the Speaker held down in his chair by force, the Commons passed three resolutions, declaring that anyone who attempted to introduce Popery, who advised the levy of any tax not authorized by Parliament or who should "voluntarily yield to pay any such tax was an enemy of the kingdom and commonwealth and of the liberty of England.

Parliament was then dissolved, not to meet again for eleven years. Eliot and other leaders were thrown into prison, where Eliot died in 1632. The hatred of the King pursued him even after death, for when his son asked to be allowed to take away the -body for burial he was met with the reply: "Let Sir John Eliot be buried in the church of that parish where he died."

After the dissolution of Parliament the wars with France and Spain were quickly brought to an end and Charles and his advisers set to work to devise means of raising sufficient revenue to meet necessary expenses. In accordance with the final resolution passed by the Commons the London merchants at first refused to pay the unvoted customs duties. Such resistance could not be kept up indefinitely; and after business in London had been brought almost to a standstill for six months it died down. Perhaps the most unwise of all the financial expedients employed by the Council at this time was the revival of claims to land that had anciently been royal forest. Much of this land had been in private hands for generations but the occupiers were forced to pay heavy fines before their ownership was confirmed. Much of this land was held by powerful nobles and by offending them Charles left himself for a time without supporters except for the Catholics, the Court clique and a handful of High Church clergy.

Money was also raised by the sale of monopolies, by increasing the customs which, in any case, were rising with the expansion of trade, and, last of all, by the levy of ship money. It had long been a recognised obligation of the seaports to provide ships for the Navy. Now the development of naval war had made most ordinary merchant ships unsuitable for this purpose and a sum of money was demanded in place of actual tonnage. In 1634 ship money was collected from the coast towns and was actually used for the repair

of the Navy. So far there had been no opposition. In the next two years the levy was extended to inland places as well and it became obvious that it was intended to treat ship money as a regular tax bringing in about £ 200,000 a year. This would have made the Government permanently independent of Parliament and it was on these grounds that Hampden refused to pay in 1636. The trial that followed was important as a focus of opposition but Hampden's example was not widely followed and the levy was collected in each of the following years.

Apart from the protests of individuals there had been little open opposition to the Government during this period of arbitrary rule. During the whole time there was hardly so much as a riot throughout the whole country. The feudal conditions which had made armed rebellion a common resort in the Middle Ages had passed. The nobles were no longer served by bands of armed men. The former peasants had developed into separate classes – yeomen, tenant farmers and wage labourers—with different interests. Most of these had little direct concern in the political struggle and with the slowing down of enclosures there was less agrarian unrest of the kind that had led to Kett's rebellion. The merchants and landed gentry who led the opposition to the Crown were weak as individuals and needed the focus of Parliament and of a political party to unite them into concerted action. As yet, no such party existed, but there was already the nucleus of it, forced to work and organise in secret, and making preparations to take the fullest advantage of the day when the King would be obliged to summon a new Parliament.

The impetus for a renewal of the struggle had to come from the outside, from Scotland, where medieval conditions had persisted to a much greater extent and the prerequisites for a successful armed rising still existed. The dispute that blazed in Scotland at the close of 1637 was religious in character, the result of an attempt by Laud and the Anglicans to remodel the Scottish Kirk. To understand this dispute it is necessary to know something about the nature of Puritanism and about its relation to the political struggle of the Seventeenth Century.

The Puritans

The word Puritan, when James I came to the throne, had not acquired any very exact meaning but was applied loosely to a variety of things and people. It was, first, a tendency within the Established Church. Most Puritans were still inside this Church, from which they had few important theological differences and only wanted minor changes of ritual and discipline to enable them to stay there. To the left of these and far less numerous, was a group that wished to replace the Anglican State Church by a Presbyterian State Church on the model of the Scottish Kirk. Finally, there was a fringe of small sects who were the anarchists of religion, wishing to leave every congregation free to settle its own affairs, the fathers of the Quakers, Congregationalists and Baptists of later times.

In the main Puritanism was not so much a matter of theological dissent as of a peculiar attitude towards morals and behaviour, a different conception of Church discipline and of civil government. The political radicalism of the Puritan grew naturally from his relation to God and to society. He was one of the Lord's chosen people, the elect. In all his activities he was encompassed by the grace of God, so that every event from the greatest o the most trivial could be classed as a trial or a leading, mercy or a judgment. A lively faith in the doctrine of predestination divided him and his fellows from the vessels of wrath who composed the world. As God's chosen people the Puritans felt their triumph inevitable and their enemies to be God's enemies. Against any man, be he king or priest, who ventured to

lay burdens or chains upon them they felt entitled to fight with any weapon that the Lord put into their hands —and sometimes the Lord gave them very curious weapons indeed. All of which is really saving, in the Biblical language of the Seventeenth Century, that they were conscious of their mission as a historically progressive class engaged in a revolutionary struggle.

When such a temper was allied, as it often was, to considerable wealth, or when it became the common property of a large organised group like the citizens of London or the artisans of 'the East Anglian clothing towns, it was formidable indeed. Butler's malicious picture of the Puritans, drawn to amuse the victorious Cavaliers after the Restoration of 1660, is true to at least this extent that the Puritans who:

"Build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun"

were the possessors of a fighting religion.

Butler in this does not contradict Milton, whose 'true warfaring Christian' had no use for a fugitive and cloistered virtue.

It is perhaps worth remarking here that the Puritan did not as a rule (there was, of course, a small eccentric minority) speak through his nose or crop his hair. He did, however, tend to wear clothes of a sober colour and homely cut and to despise the vanities of the flesh. A description of Cromwell, making his first speech before the Long Parliament, sets the well-to-do provincial Puritan vividly before us.

> "I came one morning into the House well clad," writes Sir Philip Warwick, "and perceived a Gentleman speaking (whom I knew not) very ordinarily apparelled; for it was a plain clothsute, which seemed to have bin made by an ill country-taylor; his linen was plain and not very clean; and I remember a speck or two of blood upon his little band, which was not much larger than his collar; his stature was of a good size, his sword stuck close to his side, his countenance swoln and reddish, his voice sharp and untunable, and his eloquence full of fervor. . . And yet I lived to see this very gentleman (having a good taylor and more converse among good company) appeared of a great and majestick deportment and comely presence.

Cromwell was in many ways typical of the best kind of Puritan squire. Related to Henry VIII's minister, he belonged to a family that had grown rich on Church lands, yet he had a good reputation in his own country of Huntingdon as a defender of the rights of his poorer neighbours. Later, when many members of the Long Parliament, including the Speaker Lenthall, were involved in ugly scandals arising from the sale of the lands of expelled, he was among those whom even their enemies never even suspected of corruption. It is also interesting to remember that the speech described above was in defence of the republican Lilburne, later one of his stoutest opponents.

At the beginning of his reign James was presented with a petition from some hundreds of Puritan clergy of the Church of England asking for a moderate liberty to accept or reject certain minor points of ritual such as the wearing of the surplice and the use of the sign of the cross in baptism, for the encouragement of preaching and of the stricter observance of Sunday and the non-observance of saints' days. In 1604 a conference at Hampton Court, at which James presided in person, discussed the petition. Here the reason for James' opposition to Puritanism became plain; it was not theological —James himself was a Calvinist but political. "A Scottish Presbytery agreeth as well with monarchy as God and

the Devil," and "No Bishop no King," was his crystallisation of the issue. His bitter experience with the Kirk in Scotland had taught him to welcome a Church governed from above and subordinated to the State. The Scottish Kirk, organised from the bottom through a series of representative bodies, rising to an Assembly composed of ministers and delegates from congregations, was indeed the logical embodiment of the democratic spirit inherent in Puritanism and James was right in thinking that this was incompatible with royal absolutism.

His next step was to institute a purge of the Church, in which 300 clergy who refused to conform were deprived of their livings. It had the effect of weakening the Church by depriving it of a large proportion of that minority of its ministers who cared more for truth than for tithes and leaving it in the hands of place-seekers and of the small and isolated but influential group of High Anglican enthusiasts who gathered around Laud. Some cleavage was no doubt inevitable, but James and his advisers drew the line so far to the right that for a half a century the Established Church lost much of its popular appeal and the Crown forfeited the support of many who might otherwise have rallied to it when actual war arrived.

Laud, honest but quite out of touch with reality, tried to dragoon the Church into what to many people looked like Papistry at a time when Papistry was wildly unpopular. A rigorous censorship embracing both press and pulpit and backed by the Court of High Commission, a sort of ecclesiastical Star Chamber, was imposed. The claim of the clergy to regulate morals and behaviour, which had lapsed with the Reformation, was revived. The use of parish churches as places of meeting and business was prohibited and a strict uniformity of ritual was imposed. Between 1628 and 1640 some 20,000 Puritans emigrated to New England to escape from a land that seemed to them doomed to revert to Catholicism. Others were driven to form secret groups for private worship, groups that became centres of political disaffection. Others conformed outwardly, waiting for better times.

By 1637 Laud, apparently feeling that the situation in England was well in hand, began to turn his attention to Scotland. James would have known that to attempt to create in Scotland a counterpart of the Anglican Church was futile and dangerous but Charles shared the blank ignorance of Scotland and things Scottish then general in England. A new prayer book, based on the English one, was compiled and sent over the border but every attempt to use it met with riotous resistance. There warn a real fear, which spread south of the border, that the King I intended to resume Church land. —first in Scotland, then perhaps in England. The signing of the National Covenant for the defence of religion soon raised this resistance to the level of a national revolt and Charles was faced in the spring of 1638, with the necessity of reconquering Scotland by force of arms.

His financial position made it quite impossible to raise an adequate army. His one capable minister, Sir Thomas Wentworth, afterwards Earl of Strafford, could only advise the calling of a Parliament. Strafford had been out of England during most of the Eleven Years, acting as Governor of Ireland where he had put into practice on a smaller scale the system of absolute government at which Charles was aiming in England. By a combination of ruthless repression and the encouragement of trade and industry he had solved the problem of finance and managed to raise an efficient army. Now he had returned to England determined to apply his system there also.

In April, 1640, the Short Parliament met, to sit for just a fortnight. Instead of voting supplies it began under the leadership of Pym to organise a petition against the Scottish war

and was at once dissolved. An army of sorts was collected and marched north to find the Scots already in occupation of all Northumberland and far too strong to be attacked. Their army was stiffened by many old soldiers who had fought as volunteers in the Thirty Years' War and even Charles realised that his half trained and half mutinous troops could not attack it without certain disaster. A truce was made by which Charles promised to respect all Scottish political and religious liberties and to pay a large indemnity for the withdrawal of the Army from Northumberland. Pending its payment the Scots remained at Newcastle.

The discomfiture of Charles was completed by the exhaustion of his credit in the city. Without calling a Parliament to vote taxes that could be used as security he could borrow no more. The last serious attempt of the Crown to govern in opposition to the moneyed classes was ended. Once more tire writs went out for the summoning of a Parliament, in an atmosphere of extreme tension with Strafford planning the arrest of leading figures in the Commons and the occupation of London by an armed force, and some of the Parliamentary leaders engaged in secret negotiations with the Scots.

The meeting of the Long Parliament in November, 1640, was the signal for a renewal of the struggle between King and Commons on a higher plane than before. Events moved rapidly toward an armed conflict and the Parliament, though summoned with due legal form, soon became in fact a revolutionary tribunal. For two years the opposing forces faced each other, waiting for the inevitable break and manoeuvring to force each other into a false position. The English Revolution may be said to begin in November, 1640, with the impeachment of Strafford. In this and the preceding sections the events leading up to this, one of the decisive events in European history, have been traced in outline: it is time to pause and consider briefly the nature of the issues involved.

Fundamental Issues in the English Revolution

The Tudor absolutism had been one of a most peculiar kind—an absolutism by consent. The Tudors had never possessed a standing army, a police force or more than the barest skeleton of a bureaucracy. They had never commanded revenue that was more than sufficient for the most pressing immediate needs. Their rule was therefore of necessity based upon a temporary balance of class forces which gave them the consistent support of powerful and progressive classes, above all of the merchants and a decisive section of the landed gentry. The squires as Justices of the Peace were content to perform the work of a civil service. The moneyed interests were able to tide the Government over its most pressing financial crises. In particular the relations of Elizabeth's Government to the London goldsmiths, who were already beginning to do business as bankers, were friendly and intimate.

Such a balance was in its nature precarious, arising from the fact that in the Sixteenth Century the monarchy had a positive historical role to play in the destruction of the remnants of military feudalism. So long as it continued to do this, to put down disorder and establish stable government, there was no need for the middle class and the progressive gentry to raise the question of power; they could prosper within the framework of the old regime. In alliance with these classes the Tudors had destroyed the independent power of the Church and the nobility, and created the preconditions for the development of a capitalist economy.

But the monarchy was itself too much the product of feudalism and contained within itself too many feudal survivals to be able to carry the revolution to its completion. Once a certain point had been reached, and with a startling suddenness, its objective character

underwent a complete transformation, and it appeared as the main obstacle to the bourgeois revolution and the centre around which the forces of reaction gathered for the decisive struggle. In this connection the reversal of the attitude of the Catholics and Puritans to the Crown in the first decades of the Seventeenth Century becomes full of significance. It is now apparent that the bourgeoisie could no longer go forward in alliance with the Crown but only in opposition to it. To the men of the Seventeenth Century that was not, of course, obvious in so simple a way, but the necessity forced itself upon them in countless apparently unrelated dilemmas, driving them to decisions that in their totality constituted the forward movement of a whole class.

When, about 1600, the conditions creating the Tudor equilibrium came to an end, history offered, or seemed to offer, alternative paths and the one ultimately followed was not that which would have seemed most likely to a contemporary observer. The State machine which had served for the last century was growing increasingly inadequate to the complexity of national life. The question was, who would create and control the new kind of State apparatus that was needed? All over Europe feudalism was giving way to bureaucratic despotisms, of which France offered the most perfect example. The independent power of the feudal nobility had there been undermined without the rise of any other class capable of stepping into its place, while continuous wars had given the kings powerful standing armies.

The Stuarts, fully aware of this tendency abroad, were consciously determined to follow the example of the French kings. Parliament, also, if less fully aware of this danger, was determined to avert it. And certain peculiarities in the situation in England worked powerfully in their favour.

First, England was less continuously involved in foreign wars and her wars had been more often fought at sea so that the creation of a standing army, without which a true absolutism could not exist, had never been possible. Second, the fact that the Tudor monarchy was actually founded upon a genuine alliance in which each partner needed the support of the other had preserved and adapted the parliamentary forms which had been created in the Middle Ages under different conditions and had left the revenues of the Crown largely feudal in character and inadequate in amount. The middle classes had been prepared to do almost anything for the Tudors except pay heavy taxes. Parliament which had begun as a check on the theoretically absolute power of the feudal king to dispose of the property of his subjects had become in time the guardian of the absolute right of the individual to the enjoyment of his private property.

The belief in the sanctity of private property had grown in strength as the bourgeoisie grew tall in the Sixteenth Century. Only by a direct attack on it could the Stuarts create the new State apparatus needed for a thorough despotism and any such attack could not but lead directly to a decisive class battle. Here is the kernel of the whole conflict and the reason why the Stuart and their Parliament were always at odds over the question of taxation. The Crown claimed the right to levy such taxes as it thought necessary for the administration of the State. The Commons claimed the right to pay no more than they thought necessary for the same purpose. Essentially this was a demand for direct political power, since in practice they were only prepared to allow the Crown enough to govern in the way they wanted, and, if it refused, to allow it nothing at all.

The case for the King was clearly stated by Justice Finch during the trial of Hampden for his refusal to pay ship-money:

"Acts of Parliament to take away his Royal power in the defence of his kingdom are void, they are void Acts of Parliament to bind the King not to command his subjects, their persons and goods and I say their money too, for no Acts of Parliament make any difference." The divine right of kings was squarely opposed to, and finally broken upon, the divine right of private property.

While the Stuarts were fighting with a clearly envisaged objective and a fully developed theoretical position, the bourgeoisie were guided largely by instinct. Theoretical clarity came only, if at all, in the process of struggle but at first they were content with vague affirmations of the liberty of the subject and the conception of a fundamental law which stood above the Crown, a law which could not be set aside without doing violence to the constitution. No one in 1640 foresaw or could foresee the parliamentary monarchy which emerged finally from the compromises of 1660 and 1688.

Nor was it apparent that a minor revolution had been accomplished when the Long Parliament abolished the Star Chamber, the Court of High Commission and the other prerogative courts. All that was intended was to destroy bodies that had become instruments of royal tyranny. Yet what was done was to cut the main artery of the old State apparatus. Crown, Council, Prerogative Courts, Justice of the Peace had formed a living chain. Now the link between the central organ and the extremities was removed and neither Council nor Justices ever recovered anything like their old importance. A new State apparatus had to be created, not around a Council responsible to the King but around a Cabinet responsible to the bourgeoisie in Parliament and having a new and more adaptable system of finance and local government.

Again, few of the members of the Long Parliament in 1640 were republicans or dreamed of doing more than limiting the power of the Crown. Such republicans as there were at this time probably anticipated not a democratic republic but a plutocratic republic on the model of Holland, whose commercial prosperity made her the ideal State in the eyes of many of the merchant class. The radicalism that emerged at the close of the Civil War was still hidden among obscure and persecuted sects, spiritual heirs of the German Anabaptists, apocalyptic dreamers awaiting the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, The practical men, the Pyms, Vanes, Fairfaxes and Cromwells, were content to defend their earthly possessions and, at first, to see no more than one step ahead at a time. Their profound religious convictions were important here because they helped to give them confidence in the divine justice of their cause and the courage necessary to take each step as it appeared. In their own desires they saw the hand of the Lord of Battles**,** leading them as certainly as He led the Israelites trough the wilderness. It was perhaps largely the absence of theory and of clear objectives which cast the political movement and thought of the Seventeenth Century so often into religious forms,

In spite of all that has been said to the contrary it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the Civil War *was* a class struggle, *was* revolutionary and *was* progressive. A Royalist victory would have meant a dead hand imposed upon the development of the country, feudal forms devoid of real content ossified into a monarchical tyranny, the persistence of a less advanced form of social and political organization. We do not need to idealize the bourgeoisie of the Seventeenth Century, who had most of the faults common to their class in all ages, but it is possible to say that Just because they were the historically progressive class of their time, they could not fight for their own rights and liberties without also fighting for the rights and liberties of all Englishmen and of humanity as a whole.

The Civil War

From January to August 1642 the King at York and the commons in London were engaged in gathering their forces and securing the castles, arsenals and other strong points in the areas under their control. Open war was preceded in most parts by local conflicts. In August Charles moved south to Nottingham and made a formal declaration of war. His forces were still small and ill-disciplined, while Parliament, with the ample resources of London at its disposal, was able to equip a considerable army, strong in infantry, to which the London train bands contributed the best elements. A determined thrust in the last weeks of August would probably have finished the war at a single blow.

But the Earl of Essex, commanding the Parliamentary Army, a quiet, honest, slow-witted nobleman, failed to move. He was an essentially moderate man, believing implicitly that the war must end in a speedy compromise and as much afraid of decisive victory as of defeat. His attitude was an exact reflection of the temper of the Presbyterians who controlled affairs in the first years of the war, a temper that had disastrous military consequences and brought the Parliamentary cause to the verge of ruin.

Charles found recruiting poor in the Midlands and moved west into the Severn Valley where he soon gathered an army composed largely of Welsh infantry and cavalry drawn from the landowners of the western shires and their dependents. With this army he began a march on London, and on October 23rd encountered Essex at Edgehill. The drawn battle that followed revealed both the superiority of the royal horse and the steadiness of the London infantry. Charles was able to continue his advance on London, but was too weak to attack it in the face of the strong and well-equipped train bands which met him at Turnham Green. He retired to Oxford and there fixed the headquarters of his main army. The possession of London was clearly of decisive importance, and in the spring of 1643 a concerted advance was begun by three Royalist armies.

In the North the Earl of Newcastle drove Fairfax out of Yorkshire, laid siege to Hull and advanced into Lincoln. In the West, Hopton, perhaps the King's most capable all-round soldier, defeated Parliamentary armies at Lansdown Hill and Roundway Down, Bristol was captured in July and in August Charles began the siege of Gloucester. This converging advance on London was sound enough strategically: it failed because the Royalist armies were not disciplined enough to carry out such a movement. Both the northern and western Royalist forces were essentially local, ready to fight in their own shires but unwilling to engage in a long campaign far from home. Their uneasiness was increased by the existence of the unconquered strongholds of Hull, Plymouth and Gloucester, whose garrisons threatened their communications and might attack their estates. The farther the Royalist armies advanced the more frequent desertions became. Moreover, it was in Lincolnshire that they first came upon cavalry that could stand up to their own in open battle. They were the men of Cromwell's regiment, the germ of the New Model Army, yeomen farmers from the Eastern Counties who were the equals of Charles' gentlemen riders in courage and infinitely their superiors in discipline.

Nevertheless the situation seemed desperate in London during the summer of 1643 and a strong party in Parliament and in the City began to demand peace on almost any terms. The turning point of the whole war was, perhaps, the resistance and relief of Gloucester. A fiery crusade was preached in the City and a great force of militia, such as had never taken

the field before except for a few days at Turnham Green, marched out across England, fought their way to Gloucester in the teeth of Rupert's cavalry and raised the siege. On their return Journey they had rather the better of a fierce fight at Newbury and returned in triumph to London after a five weeks' campaign that had altered the whole face of the war. Such an episode was in its nature exceptional. The war was not yet won and could not be won except by the creation of a regular army of a new kind, and above all of a body of first rate horse.

Cavalry was the decisive arm in all Seventeenth Century wars. Cavalry tactics had been revolutionised by the Swedes during the Thirty Years' War, so that horsemen no longer charged in column, halting when within pistol range to exchange shots with their opponents and then, perhaps, drawing away, but in lines three or four deep, closing at top speed and holding their fire till they were actually engaged in the mêlée. Such were the tactics of Rupert's cavaliers and at first they carried all before them. But these tactics had their own disadvantages. Once a charge had been carried through the victors scattered in pursuit or rode for the enemy's camp to "kill the baggage." They could not carry out an order in the field and rarely were available of more than one charge. Cromwell mounted his men on slower but heavier horses and taught them to advance at a fair pace in line knee to knee, relying rather on the weight of their charge than upon mere impetus. They were trained to halt at command, to wheel, to fight either as a mass or in separate troops, forming a force at once solid and flexible. And they were well paid so that it was possible to prohibit looting without danger of mutiny or desertions.

Drawn from, and in many cases officered by, the yeomen farmers and more prosperous artisans, this cavalry set the tone for the whole Army. Under their influence the infantry, who were at first, except for some London regiments, mainly unwilling conscripts or unprincipled mercenaries, gradually acquired a determination and purpose which welded the whole of the New Model Army into a first-rate fighting machine and a formidable political instrument. The New Model was more than an army, it became a political party, the party of the Independents, the revolutionary lower middle class, just as the Presbyterians were the party of the upper middle class.

Soon the New Model created its own political machinery. Delegates, known as 'Agitators', were appointed by the rank and file to present their grievances and look after their interests. These delegates came to form regular soldiers' councils, and in the prayer meetings which were held at frequent intervals political and religious discussion were inextricably tangled. In these meetings, as was so usual in the Seventeenth Century, politics in fact took the form of religion and they were in practice extremely democratic institutions, the private being as free to speak his mind as the colonel since both were considered equally likely to be vehicles of divine inspiration. In these meetings and in more intimate discussion the Army worked out its theories of Church and State. The majority of the cavalry, and, in time, of the infantry as well, were Independents, wishing for each religious group or congregation to settle for itself the form of worship and discipline it preferred. For the first time the idea of religious toleration was powerfully voiced, toleration, that is, for all forms of worship except those of the Catholics and High Anglicans, which were excepted as politically irreconcilable with the revolution, and those of the Freethinkers and Unitarians, whose speculations threatened the ideological foundations of the new no less than the old order.

Such an army Cromwell and the Earl of Manchester were commissioned, on the strength of the former's successes in the spring, to raise in the Eastern Counties during the

late summer of 1643. In October they cleared Lincolnshire, relieved Hull and joined hands with the Northern Army of Fairfax. The immediate threat to London was now removed and at the same time the English Presbyterians secured powerful new allies by a treaty with the Scots. In return for a promise to establish Presbyterianism in England and to pay the expenses of the campaign a Scottish army 20,000 strong crossed the border early in 1644 and began to clear the Royalists from the northern shires. The Earl of Newcastle found himself caught between the Scots and Fairfax and Cromwell advancing from the South, and was closely besieged in York.

The fall of York would have meant the passing of the whole of the North into Parliamentary hands, and Rupert was sent from Oxford with a picked force to raise the siege. He swung through Lancashire, reducing some minor strongholds on the way, crossed the Pennines by the Aire Gap and succeeded in joining forces with Newcastle. In the battle that followed on Marston Moor Cromwell's new cavalry regiments met and routed the pick of the Royalist horse and then wheeled to surround the infantry in the centre. Newcastle's Whitecoats were annihilated and the victory was complete. For the first time in the war the Parliamentary Army had been successful in a pitched battle. Two Royalist armies had been destroyed, but the moral effect of the victory of Marston Moor was even more important: up to that time it had seemed that the King must win, now his ultimate defeat seemed probable. And, above all, Marston Moor was a victory for the Left, and for Cromwell and his 'Ironsides' of the Eastern Association.

The immediate military effect was somewhat offset by a disaster in the West. Essex had led the main Puritan Army on a blundering campaign into Devon and Cornwall. Every day's march carried him farther into the heart of the enemy's territory and in September he found himself cornered at Lostwithiel. The cavalry cut their way out, Essex abandoned his army and escaped by sea, but the whole of the troop had to surrender with their arms and stores.

The defeat was less serious for Parliament than Marston Moor had been for Charles for two reasons. First, their resources were so much greater that they had little difficulty in raising fresh forces. One of the permanent effects of the Civil War was the complete overhaul and modernisation of the system of national finance. The bourgeoisie were prepared to tax themselves through Parliament at a rate they would never have dreamed of under the monarchy, though they took care to pass as much as possible of the new taxation on to the lower classes. A far-reaching excise duty was placed upon most articles of consumption and the old property tax, that had ossified into the payment of so many' subsidies' of £70,000, raised on a traditional and now quite arbitrary assessment, was revised and new and more equitable assessments made. These taxes became the mainstay of the national budget, giving the State apparatus a new stability even in the heat of the struggle. Charles, with only the poorest parts of the country under his control, was unable to raise any regular taxes at all. The result was that as the war went on his armies became less and less disciplined and in some areas degenerated into a plundering rabble, while the Parliamentary forces, paid with fair regularity, grew more disciplined and were brought more disciplined and were brought more directly under central control.

Secondly, the Lostwithiel fiasco discredited the right wing and forced Parliament under pressure from the win-the-war party to reorganise its forces in such a way as to put increased power into the hands of the independent leaders who were pressing for the formation of a new, disciplined and centralised army. A fierce attack in Parliament on both Essex and Manchester led to the Self-Denying Ordinance, by which all members of both

Houses gave up their army commands and the whole army was centralised under the command of Fairfax. In this attack Cromwell played a leading part and secured from it the greatest advantage. As a member of Parliament he should have resigned but Fairfax-probably acting at Cromwell's suggestion-insisted that he was indispensable and must be allowed to remain as general of the horse and second in command of the whole Army. This gave him a unique position. Speaking in the Commons for the Army and in the Army for the Commons he was in a position to dominate both. Fairfax, who was a capable officer but no politician and quite unambitious, soon became no more than a figurehead. Cromwell's position as virtual commander of the Army was strengthened because the New Model was built around the nucleus of his own Army of the Eastern Counties and took its political complexion, rapidly in the cavalry and more slowly in the infantry.

With the change in leadership came a change in strategy. Cromwell had justly accused Manchester of being afraid of victory: "I showed him evidently how this could be done... but he obstinately refused; saying only, that if we were entirely to overthrow the King's army, he would still he King, and always have another army to keep up the war; while we, it we were beaten, should no longer be anything but rebels and traitors, executed and forfeited by the law. " The fact that this view was held by the Parliamentary leaders was the reason for the planlessness of their movements, since they had no clearly defined objective before them.

Cromwell altered all that, determined to meet and destroy the King's principal army. In the spring of 1645 the investment of Oxford began. To avoid being trapped in his headquarters Charles slipped out, intending either to attack the Scottish Army in the North and join hands with Montrose who was creating a diversion in their rear, or to meet reinforcements which were expected from Ireland. But the pressure on Oxford forced him to abandon his northward march and return through the Eastern Midlands. On the way he was met by Fairfax and Cromwell who had moved suddenly from Oxford. The two armies met at Naseby, near Northampton, on June 14th. The course of the battle was very like that of Marstor Moor. Rupert's cavalry on one wing swept away the force opposed to them but scattered wildly and played no further part in the day's fighting. Cromwell on the other wing, after a successful charge, wheeled round and caught the Royalist infantry in the rear, Charles escaped but his army was destroyed and the victors captured a mass of papers proving that the King was negotiating to secure the help of various foreign armies, besides the Irish, to defeat Parliament.

Though fighting went on for another year the issue was now certain. The operations, that remained amounted to little more than the rounding up of isolated detachments of Royalists and capturing a series of castles and fortified towns held by the King's supporters. The New Model Army proved adept at siege warfare and met with little resistance except in the West where Goring still commanded a large body of irregular troops.

It was in the West and South-west that the one mass organisation that arose out of the war flourished. This was what was known as the 'Clubmen', peasant defence forces banded together for the sole purpose of defending their property against raiders of either party. In the spring of 1645 the Clubmen became an organised force, thousands strong, entering into negotiation with both King and Parliament as an independent body. Essentially neutral, they were called into action most often against the Royalists, since these, unpaid and under the leadership of the ruffianly Goring, were most given to looting. When they found that the Parliamentary forces were prepared to pay their way and appeared able to restore peace

and security, the Clubmen helped them, in the last months of 1645 and the first of 1646, to make an end of the Royalist bands.

In April Charles fled from Oxford and surrendered to the Scots at Newcastle. So ended the first phase of the Revolution, the phase of armed struggle with the forces of reaction. In the next phase, the differences in the ranks of the Parliamentarians, which had centred upon the mode of conducting the revolution, developed into an open struggle to control its direction, in which the Presbyterians, the conservative bourgeoisie and the big landlords, were pitted against the Independents, the radical bourgeoisie, small gentry and petty producers with their organisation, the New Model Army. This struggle centred around, and gave significance to, the struggle for the possession of the King.

Regicide

Though Charles had been defeated he was still a king and remained a problem. Few men of any influence were Republicans, yet few believed that the King could be trusted. The problem therefore was to find means of restoring him to his throne under conditions which would make it impossible for him to renew the war or to enjoy any measure of real power. Charles had no intention of submitting to any such conditions. He explained his policy frankly enough to Digby, a member of his Council: "I do not despair of inducing the Presbyterians or the Independents to join me in exterminating the other; and then I shall be King again." For three years he faithfully followed this line of action, playing off Army against Commons and Scots against both till he had destroyed his credit and ruined his friends and made his execution both a political necessity and an act of justice.

For the first few months after the ending of hostilities the Commons appeared to be supreme. They took it for granted that the Army was in practice as well as in theory the mere instrument of a victorious Parliament. At the same time, the Commonwealth admiral, Blake, was rounding up the Royalist privateers and reducing their last strongholds In the Channel and Scilly Islands. With the success of these operations all possibility of internal resistance to the Commonwealth regime came to an end for the time being. The problem now was to consolidate and stabilize, to find a class basis broad enough to ensure its permanency and to allow the military dictatorship to transform itself into a genuinely popular government. Viewed from this angle the story of the nine years between 1651 and 1660 in one of persistent and heroic effort and of unrelieved failure.

The Commonwealth

The Army, returning victorious from Worcester in the autumn of 1651, found England and Holland on the verge of war. For over a generation English and Dutch traders had been at odds in the East Indies and the merchants of London had looked enviously at the vast trade of their rivals. In 1651 the Rump passed the Navigation Act, ordering all goods imported into England to be brought in English ships or the ships of the country where they were actually produced. This was an attempt to deprive the Dutch of some of their carrying trade, which they had obtained because of the number, size and efficiency of their ships and the perfection of their commercial organisation and which had made Holland a centre for the redistribution of commodities brought from all over the world. In itself the Navigation Act did not lead necessarily to war. Similar Acts had been passed before from the Fourteenth Century onwards, and neither then nor afterwards, apart from short occasional periods, had they been strenuously enforced.

The Rump was, however, determined on war and followed the Navigation Act by a series of provocations. When war came it was a trade war, the work of the merchants alone, and was disliked both by Cromwell and the Army as a whole. As it dragged on it became more and more unpopular in spite of some naval successes. It proved costly, making necessary increased taxation and seriously interfering with foreign trade which was just beginning to recover from the chaos of the Civil War and the ravages of the Royalist privateers.

For Holland the war was disastrous, as any war with England was bound to be, for the simple geographical reason that England lay right across all the trade routes upon whose maintenance the majority of the Dutch people depended for their livelihood. Starvation rather than the naval victories of Blake forced Holland to conclude a peace in 1654, a peace in which England gained nothing tangible which had not been obtainable before the war began.

In spite of some military successes, inevitable in view of the superiority of the new Army over its European contemporaries, the foreign policy of the Commonwealth was not as a whole either well-conceived or well executed. In part at least this was the result of certain contradictions in which England was involved.

On the one hand, Cromwell envisaged a policy based on the solidarity of the Protestant, that is, broadly, the progressive powers in the Europe of his time. But this was invalidated by the inescapable fact that Holland, the most important of these, was becoming England's most dangerous trade rival. And, secondly, the traditional policy of hostility towards the old Colonial rival, Spain, in itself partly an inheritance from the past of Puritanism helped to strengthen the position of France which was now becoming a much more dangerous rival and the leading Catholic state in Europe.

So long as England maintained a great standing army, with a strong garrison in Dunkirk, France as well as Spain could be held in check. The problem was, for how long could the English bourgeoisie as a whole be persuaded that this very expensive policy really served their interests? They were pleased, no doubt, to see the full power of the State placed behind the established merchant companies, to see Blake terrorizing the Mediterranean, to welcome the conquest of Jamaica: yet every penny spent in taxation for foreign policy and the maintenance of the army delayed the expansion of capitalism at home. This was certainly one consideration in preparing the bourgeoisie to accept the Restoration, the disbandment of the Army and a reduction of foreign commitments. It may well be that English capitalism, after its struggle to establish its position at home, needed a generation of recuperation before it could afford an expansionist foreign policy.

The foreign policy of the Commonwealth reacted unfavourably upon the stability of its position at home. With a revenue far larger than any English government had ever had before, it was constantly in financial difficulties and was forced to impose special taxes and to levy fines upon the estates of the Royalists which had not been confiscated. Since these included both the Cavalier Royalists of the First Civil War and the Presbyterian Royalists of the Second, the bulk of the landowning class was alienated, a fact which accounts in part for the violence of the reaction of 1660. The bitterness aroused by the first of these levies, made in 1652 to finance the Dutch was, intensified by the corruption with which it was carried out. The Rump soon became notorious for taking bribes and for the place-hunting of its members, and its unpopularity became a danger to the whole regime.

The Army demanded its dissolution: Cromwell, as often before, occupied a middle position and attempted to secure a compromise so long as this was possible. When the

Rump proposed to extend its life indefinitely by coopting only such new members as it approved, Cromwell could compromise no longer and the Rump was forcibly dissolved on April 20th, 1653. Its departure was the signal for a new turn towards the Left.

Under the influence, temporarily, of General Harrison and the Fifth Monarchy Men, and disgusted by the war policy of the merchants, Cromwell agreed to the calling of an Assembly of Nominees (known later as Barebones Parliament) consisting of 140 men chosen by the Independent ministers and congregations. It was a frankly party assembly, the rule of the Saints, of that sober and respectable Independent middle and lower middle class which, in the country districts, had not been deeply influenced by the Levellers and remained to the end the most constant force behind the Commonwealth. The assembly soon proved too revolutionary and radical in its measures for Cromwell and the Council, preferring to discuss such questions as the abolition of the Court of Chancery and of Tithes to the voting of supplies and the transaction of other immediately pressing Government business. After sitting five months it was dissolved in December, 1653, to make way for a new Parliament for which the right wing group of officers around Lambert had prepared a brand new paper Constitution —the Instrument of Government.

This constitution aimed ostensibly at securing a balance of power between Cromwell, now given the title of Lord Protector, the Council and Parliament. The latter included for the first time members from Scotland and Ireland and there was a redistribution of seats to give more members to the counties. Against this, the franchise was restricted to those who possessed the very high property qualification of £ 200 and by the disqualification of all who had taken part in the Civil Wars on the Royalist side. The new Parliament was thus anything but a popular or representative body, but this did not prevent it from refusing to play the part assigned to it, that of providing a constitutional cover for the group of high officers now controlling the Army. The Parliament of the Right proved just as intractable as the Parliament of the Left had been and was dissolved at the earliest possible moment in January 1655,

For nearly two years Cromwell abandoned all pretence of constitutional government as hopeless, all the more readily because of the discovery of a series of Royalist plots, one of which culminated in an actual rising at Salisbury. Charles in exile was, as the Commonwealth's spies knew, corresponding not only with the secret Royalist organization, "The Sealed Knot", but with the Presbyterians and even with the now demoralized remnant of the Levelers. The country was divided into eleven districts, each under the control of a major-general.

Strong measures were taken against the Royalists, and it is from this period that much of the repressive legislation traditionally associated with Puritan rule dates. It should, however, be noted that the major-generals were often merely enforcing legislation of the preceding decade or even earlier. What the gentry most resented was forcible interference with the J. Ps. in, running local government as best pleased them. Their experiences during the Commonwealth help to explain the deep hostility which the country gentry in England long felt towards standing armies. Cromwell's open military dictatorship was efficient but increasingly unpopular, especially when the war with Spain at the end of 1655 led to new taxation. In spite of this taxation, imposed as arbitrarily as in the time of Charles, a deficit of £ 800,000 and the poor credit of the Government made it necessary to call a new Parliament in September 1656.

A quarter of the members elected including both Royalists and Republicans were prevented from taking their seats, but this Parliament was even more markedly a body of

the Right than its predecessor. A revised Constitution, the Humble Petition and Advice, was drawn up which increased the powers both of Parliament and the Protector at the expense of that of the Council of State where the Generals were strongly entrenched. A new second chamber was created and Cromwell was offered the title of King. He refused, mainly because of the strong disapproval of the Generals who, on this occasion at least, certainly reflected the feelings of the rank and file of the Army. However inclined Cromwell may have been to go with Parliament at that moment he knew that it was upon the Army that his authority ultimately rested.

This move to the Right was not a success, although it gave the Government a temporary increase of stability. The old opponents of the Commonwealth were not conciliated by this apparent return to traditional institutions, while these very innovations, and above all the talk of a return to monarchy, alarmed and disgusted the Left, which, though it might differ from Cromwell on many points had yet supported him in the main as the alternative to a Stuart restoration. The Commonwealth rested on the uneasy support of two antagonistic groups, the merchants and the lower middle class, both of which together still formed only a small minority of the total population. Its efforts to find a basis acceptable to both consistently failed and both were in turn alienated by efforts to seek a backing in other classes. The last years of the Commonwealth were marked by a steady loss of mass support, an increasingly precarious balance of the Generals and the Army, only held together by the prestige of Cromwell. The solid mass of gentry was closing its ranks again, first to support Cromwell against the Left and after his death turning more ~and more towards Charles II.

The end of the Commonwealth, like its beginning, coincided with a prolonged period of famine, lasting from 1658 to 1661. In addition, the Spanish war was proving both costly and ruinous to trade. Shipping was seriously interfered with, the export of cloth declined and there was much unemployment among the weavers. The collection of taxes became more difficult and as a consequence the credit of the Government fell so that loans had to be negotiated on increasingly unfavorable terms. However popular the Spanish war may have been among the merchants at the beginning its effects soon turned them against both it and the Government. Neither Blake's victory at Santa Cruz nor the discomfort of a prolonged war.

This unrest was reflected in the second session of Parliament, where Cromwell's influence had been weakened by the transfer of many of his supporters to the newly constituted House of Lords. After a few weeks it was dissolved and for the last seven months of his life Cromwell returned once more to an open military rule. Vet he was unable to solve any of his problems, and, above all, that of finance. Although the national finances had been modernized by the Long Parliament they were still quite inadequate to maintain a large standing army. Yet without such an army the Commonwealth could not exist. Here lay the technically insoluble dilemma which made its fall ultimately inevitable.

Cromwell's death on September 3rd, 1658, exposed the whole weakness of the regime and brought it to an abrupt conclusion, but it was the economic stresses and political contradictions which have been outlined that gave his death its instantaneous and decisive effect. The urban middle classes had proved too weak by themselves to afford a permanent basis for a government and the Restoration of 1660 was in effect a recombination of class forces to establish a government more in harmony with the real distribution of strength. It was less a restoration of the monarchy than a new compromise between the landowner and the upper c1asses in the towns.

The American Revolution

The Seven Years' War ended with vast colonial conquests: it left also a vast National Debt and a burden of taxes so heavy that financiers believed the upward limit of taxation had been reached. As usual the bulk of the new taxation was placed upon articles of general consumption: beer, malt, spirits and an additional 5 per cent ad valorem on all goods paying customs duties. The Government decided, on the pretext that the war had been fought for the benefit of the colonies, and although the American colonies had in fact borne a considerable share in the

expenses of the campaigns In Canada, to impose taxes on the colonists intended to cover part of the cost of the Army and Navy still kept in America.

Grenville's Stamp Act of 1765 evoked immediate protests and was repealed in the following year, but a nominal tax was retained and the right of the English Parliament to tax the colonies was specifically insisted upon. The colonists, who had representative bodies of their own, raised the old slogan, "No taxation without representation." It was over this issue that the Revolution was ostensibly made. There were, however, other issues which went far deeper, though they made a less effective platform case and so remained in the background.

The economic organization of the Empire in the Eighteenth Century, embodied in the Navigation Acts, had as its object the utilisation of the trade and wealth of the colonies for the exclusive benefit of the English ruling class.

The most valuable products 0± the colonies, the tobacco of Virginia, the rice of the Carolinas, the sugar of the West Indies and the tar and timber of New England, priceless material for naval construction, might only be exported to England or Scotland, It must be added, however, that these goods received a preference in the home market. Equally, the colonies were forbidden to import manufactured goods from any foreign country and the development of colonial industry was checked where it might endanger an established home industry. Thus, although the smelting of iron reached some importance in New England early in the Eighteenth Century, the manufacture of iron and steel goods there was prohibited and the raw iron had to be shipped across the Atlantic to England, from which the Americans had to import manufactured iron goods for their own use.

The prohibition of direct trade between the American colonies and Europe was not a very serious matter: far more important was trade with the French and Spanish settlements in America itself. This trade was forbidden by al three countries, all of which subscribed to the mercantilist theories on which the Navigation Laws were based.

In practice it was quite impossible for such trade to be stopped and it was *carried on a* large scale, smuggling becoming one of the national employments of all the Americas. The Navigation Laws, indeed,, were only tolerable because they were not and never had been strictly enforced. But with the Stamp Act and the attempt to tax the colonists- went a general tightening up of the Navigation Laws, partly in the interests of home industry and partly for the sake of the additional revenue.

British warships began to hunt down smugglers, and it is probable that taxation was doubly resented because it was intended to maintain armed forces that were no longer needed to protect the colonists from the French but were used only to prevent them from carrying on what they regarded as their lawful occupation. If there had still been any danger from Canada the colonists might have been forced to submit to these innovations, but with

the fall of Quebec they no longer felt any need of British protection or any inclination to submit to British dictation. The Home Government could not have chosen a more unsuitable time to make their demands.

A great deal of ingenuity has been wasted by historians on both sides in trying to make out a good legal case. Such a case can easily be made but it is quite futile to pass judgment upon a revolution on legal grounds. The important thing is that the American bourgeoisie were growing up, and like the English bourgeoisie of the Seventeenth Century, ~were forced by the very **fart of their growth** to break the barriers standing in their way. Allowing for the complicating addition of a national question, the American Revolution and the English Revolution form an almost exact parallel, both in their objects and in the forces at work. The American Revolution had its upper class leadership and its lower middle class rank and file, its internal class struggle centred mainly around the agrarian question, a struggle not finally decided till the defeat of Andrew Jackson. The war was fought mainly by the small farmers, traders and artisans but its benefits went to the merchants and planters of whom Washington was a typical representative.

Because the-American Revolution was also a national war, the support it received in England was of a special character. The defenders of the colonists had to be prepared to be dubbed anti-English and disloyal. The Revolution coincides remarkably with the birth of English Radicalism and helped to create the conditions for the birth of a working class movement. Because the English bourgeoisie, their own Revolution accomplished, had begun to be reactionary, the way was opened for a new class to take the field and for a new revolution to be placed on the order of the day.

One group, indeed, led by Pitt, now Earl of Chatham, opposed the coercion of the Americans as intelligent imperialists on the ground that it must lead to the break-up of the Empire, but a powerful minority openly claimed for them the right to determine their own destiny. John Wilkes began his political life in the 1750' s as an imperialist of the Chatham school. At this time he seems to have had no other idea than to play the political game as it was played by all young gentlemen of ability and means. In the early years of the reign of George III, during his famous battles over General Warrants and the freedom of the press, he reached a position far to the left of any then existing political group, and, almost in spite of himself, became the recognised leader of the London masses and the City merchants.

For half a generation "Wilkes and Liberty" was the most popular of slogans; 1768. the year in which he was elected and 'unseated for the Country of Middlesex, was marked by unprecedented demonstrations and strikes. On May 10th soldiers fired into a large crowd, killing six and wounding many more. This 'massacre of St. George's Fields' only raised the agitation to new heights. At the same time as this agitation was going on, London was the scene of an unprecedented strike wave, in which weavers, merchant seamen, watermen, tailors, coal heavers and others were involved. Wilkes himself seems to have developed with the development of the mass movement.

Lord Mayor and Sheriff of London he acted as a popular tribune, his actions including the checking of profiteers in flour, a strong resistance to the pressing of Londoners into the armed forces and the improvement of prison conditions. Yet it is typical of his limitations that he always opposed any measure to interfere with the activities of the East India Company. His rich supporters were directly interested in the exploitation of India, about - which the masses were as yet completely ignorant and indifferent.

Wilkes and his followers took part in the General Election of 1774 as a definite political group with a programme that included shorter parliaments, the exclusion from Parliament

of pensioners and placemen, fair and equal representation and the defense of the popular rights in Great Britain, Ireland and America a programme which anticipated in some respects that of the Chartists. .About twelve seats were won, a remarkable achievement when it is remembered how few constituencies were broad enough to give any reflection of popular feeling.

As early as 1768 Wilkes had been in close contact with the leaders of the revolt in the American colonies, and as the struggle over taxation became more acute he became their principal spokesman inside and outside Parliament. A very large section of the merchants, particularly those who had trading connections with and even partners in America, were at this time strongly opposed to the action of the British Government. After the outbreak of war, when many of his wealthier supporters had deserted him to get Government contracts and many of the politically undeveloped workers had been caught up in the inevitable war fever, Wilkes continued and even strengthened his advocacy of what was now an unpopular cause. From 1779, the enthusiasm for the war began to diminish and he once more appeared likely to play an important part in politics.

In 1780, however, his active career was ended by the Gordon 'No Popery' Riots, a curious volcanic eruption of the London slum population, directed against a cause for which Wilkes had always fought and yet to a large extent the product of kt. earlier agitation. As a City magistrate, Wilkes helped to put down the riot, and in doing so snapped the chain that bound him to the London masses. His agitation dropped away and had no direct connection with the working class movement of the next decade or with the 'Left' group of aristocratic Whigs led by Charles James Fox, yet it can only be understood as one of the first heaving of a wave which soon swept over all Europe,

In Ireland the response to the American Revolution was far greater than in England. A force of 80,00Q Volunteers was raised in 1778, nominally to protect Ireland from invasion. The overwhelming majority of the Volunteers regarded themselves rather as an army of national liberation, and there is little doubt that at this time, when England's forces were fully occupied elsewhere, Ireland could have secured complete independence. But the aristocratic and middle class leaders of the Volunteers, having used them to obtain **free** trade and the legislative independence of the corrupt and oligarchic Dublin Parliament, disarmed and betrayed them. Wolfe Tone a few years later bitterly declared that: "The Revolution of 1782 was a Revolution which enabled Irishmen to sell at a much higher price their honour, their integrity, and the interests of their country; it was a Revolution which, while at one stroke in doubled the value of every borough-monger in the kingdom left three-fourths of our countrymen the slaves it found them, and the government of Ireland in the base and wicked, and contemptible hands of those who had spent their lives in degrading and plundering her. ... The power remained in the hands of our enemies."

So far as America Itself was concerned the Stamp Act was only the beginning of a ten years' dispute which culminated in an American ban on English goods, an attempt to secure their importation by force, the 'Boston Tea Party', the closing of the port of Boston as a reprisal and the outbreak of hostilities an Bunker Hill in 1775. The first years of the war saw a number of English successes. The colonists suffered from the same defects of discipline and organisation, which had handicapped the Puritans of the Seventeenth Century, and these were accentuated by the rivalries and disunity of the separate States. Like the Puritans they had' to create the instruments of struggle during the actual conduct of the war. They were helped in this by the brutal methods of the British forces, composed largely of German mercenaries aided by Red Indians.

But, in October- 1777, the Americans won their first great victory when General Burgoyne and 5,000 regulars were forced to surrender at Saratoga. This victory brought France, Spain and later Holland into the war against England, which, largely Owing to the way in which Prussia had been deserted at the Treaty of Paris, was forced for the first time to tight without a European ally. The Baltic lands on whom the Navy depended more since the revolt in America than ever for its supplies of timber, tar and hemp, formed a pact of armed neutrality directed against England.

For the first time in the century the Navy lost its command of the sea and it was largely the French blockade which led to the surrender of Cornwallis, British commander in America, at Yorktown in 1781. British supremacy in India was seriously threatened and it was only on account of some successes there and the naval victory of Rodney in the West Indies that the war could be brought to an end on reasonably favourable terms in 1783. The independence of America was recognised and Florida and Minorca were surrendered to Spain.

The victory of the American Revolution was a blow—to-the whole corrupt, borough-mongering, oligarchic system of the Eighteenth Century and was followed by an immediate and powerful reaction against it at home. The first effect of this was to bring the Whigs back to power for a short time, during which they made some efforts to check the political activities of the Crown and to remove some of the possibilities of parliamentary corruption.

The Whigs, however, were divided by conflict between William Pitt the younger, Chatham' s son, champion of the East India Company, and Fox and Shelburne, who sought support from the manufacturers. Both factions intrigued with George III and his Ministers, Lord North and Thurlow, and Pitt, with the assistance of the resources for corruption of the East India Company, was able to outmaneuver his rivals. Fox and North formed a coalition, which brought in a Bill to establish Parliamentary control over the Company, but this was thrown out as a result of the opposition of Pitt, who then formed a coalition with Thurlow which had the backing of George III.

When, in 1783, Pitt, soon to be leader of the reorganised Tory Party, became Prime Minister, and strengthened his position in an election won in 1784 by methods that even then were regarded as exceptionally discreditable, he still found it convenient to appear as a reformer and an enemy of corruption. Corruption had, however, become too powerful a vested interest for any change to be possible as long as the existing balance of class forces was preserved and within a few years the outbreak of the French Revolution had transformed most of the critics into defenders of the British constitution as a God-given and perfect masterpiece.

Any attempt at the slightest alteration of this masterpiece was branded as Jatobinism. This had the effect of reducing the advocates of reform in Parliament to a handful of Whigs sufficiently well connected to be able to ignore such accusations, but it had also the effect of making Parliamentary Reform a matter of passionate interest to the working masses.

War and Industry

The real history of the period between 1688 and the middle of the Eighteenth Century can be summed up in the three words: accumulation of capital. We have seen in the preceding sections of this chapter some of the ways in which this accumulation was *taking place firs*t through the growth of the National Debt and consequently of taxation,

concentrating great masses of capital in the hands of the small class able to provide—the State with finances for war. Second, in the rapid increase of trade, based primarily on the monopoly control of a colonial empire. And, third, in the direct plunder of India. In the next chapter another source of accumulation will be described, the final destruction of the class of yeomen and the establishment of agriculture on a fully capitalist basis.

On the surface the period seems devoid of startling changes. Society was relatively stable, there were no marked alterations in the relations between the various classes, no rebellions and few signs of open discontent among the mass of the people. It was an age of the unquestioned acceptance of recognised authority of the domination of squire and parson in the countryside, an age in which elegance was more prized than imagination and in which the word enthusiasm, carrying the implication of fanaticism, was always used in a disparaging sense. Only, beneath the surface, the streams of gold poured into the City, their level growing higher year by year, till the time when the flood burst out, transformed by some magic into mills—and mines and foundries, and covered the face of half England, burying the old life and ways for ever. To this flood men have given the name of the Industrial Revolution, which forms the subject of the next chapter.

In actual fact, of course, it did not happen in quite the sudden and dramatic way in which this description might suggest. What I have tried to convey is that here was a particularly striking example of the transition from a quantitative change —wars becoming more costly, the exploitation of the colonies more profitable, the capitalists becoming more rich— to a qualitative change —a change from a country predominantly agricultural to a country predominantly industrial, from an economy dominated by merchant capital to one dominated by industrial capital, from a country with class conflicts relatively masked and suppressed to one divided into classes violently and inevitably antagonistic.

With each accumulation of capital went increased possibilities for its profitable utilisation. The wars of the Eighteenth Century were almost all followed by the acquisition of new colonies: the colonies already established were growing rapidly in wealth and population. The American colonies had about 200,000 inhabitants in 1700 and between one and two million fifty years later. Between 1734 and 1773 the white population of the British West Indies rose from 36,000 to 58,000 and the slave population at least in proportion. The West Indies were, indeed, the most profitable of British possessions. In 1790 it was calculated that £ 70,000,000 was invested there against £18,000,000 in the Far East and that their trade with England was almost double the imports and exports of the East India Company. The richest West Indian planters, unlike the inhabitants of the American colonies, formed an integral part of the English bourgeoisie, which was why the American Revolution had no counterpart among them.

Such a continuous increase of colonial wealth and trade provided a constantly rising market for British goods, a market for which-the small scale, hand production methods of the home industry were hardly adequate. And the wars of the Eighteenth Century, large scale and long continued wars waged by professional armies, created not only a steady demand for British goods, but for goods of a special kind, for standardised goods.

Armies now wore regular uniforms and needed thousands of yards of cloth of a specified colour and quality, needed boots and buttons, needed muskets all capable of firing

bullets of a definitive calibre and bayonets all made to fix exactly on to these muskets. Not only the British armies had to be fed, clothed and equipped, but many of the armies of Britain's allies, who depended equally upon her subsidies and her industry to keep them in the fields.

It was this demand for ever-increasing quantities of standard goods. and not the genius & this or that inventor, which was the basic cause of the Industrial Revolution. In theory the technical inventions of Watt, Arkwright or Roebuck might have been made at any time, though of course they depend on the technical advances of the immediately preceding generations. In fact, they were made towards the end of the Eighteenth Century because the conditions of the time were forcing men to use their wits on the problem of mass production of commodities and because the accumulation of capital had reached a point where full use could be made of mass production methods.

The wars of this age gave golden opportunities to all those who had the capital or the credit to take up army contracts, and the floating of loans and the remittance of subsidies to Allied Powers were equally profitable. Like most other things in the Eighteenth Century these contracts were freely jobbed and bankers and army contractors formed a permanent and not too reputable section of all Eighteenth Century Parliaments. There warn a continuous interpenetration of the landed aristocracy and the banking and merchant classes. In every generation scores of City magnates acquired titles and bought landed estates, especially in the Home Counties. Often their descendants could hardly distinguished from th$_e$ families who had done their jobbing in the Seventeenth or even Sixteenth Centuries. Apart from the growing return to be obtained from capital invested in land, its possession gave a social status which could be obtained in ho other way. At the same time the landowners began to invest their profits in industry and commerce, while the younger Sons of landed families still often went into trade.

Such were the general conditions which led in England to the Industrial Revolution. In France the same series of events, under different circumstances, had quite different results. Prom the War of the Spanish Succession onward, France had been on the losing side. Even her victory in the American War brought no tangible benefit to offset its cost. One by one France was stripped of her colonies. Yet it was only as the centre of a great colonial Empire that the complicated and expensive bureaucratic and military organisations of the French State could justify themselves. Without colonies the State became top-heavy and was perpetually on the verge of bankruptcy.

At the same time the French bourgeoisie benefited, though to a less degree than their English rivals, from the general expansion of trade that followed the opening of the world to European exploitation and from the profits that even an unsuccessful war brings to this class. The result was a rising and ambitious capitalist class face to face with a discredited and bankrupt autocracy, an autocracy shored up with a certain number of institutions surviving from the age of feudalism. And below the French bourgeoisie were the overtaxed, exploited

Peasantry and artisans, of whom the latter at any rate saw as their main oppressors the aristocratic supporters of the Monarchy.

The same chain of events, in short, differing in their incidence and operation, produced both the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution in England, and with them, produced the modern world.

The French Revolution

Very few people in Europe realised that a new epoch was beginning when the French Estates-General met at Versailles on May 5th, 1789**.** For nearly a decade France had appeared to be declining into the position of a second Spain. Unbalanced budgets and a bankrupt treasury, an army and a navy incompetently lad and irregularly paid, a peasantry permanently overtaxed and

suffering from the famine caused by a series of ruinous harvests formed the

background to and the reason for the calling of an assembly that had not met since 1614.

Before long the Third Estate found itself in violent conflict with the Crown and the aristocracy and was forced along the path of revolutionary struggle. In this it received strong support from the peasantry and the lower classes in the towns. Chateaux were attacked and burnt and great estates broken up. On July 14th the people of Paris stormed the Bastille. In October they marched out to Versailles and brought the King back as a virtual prisoner to Paris. To foreign observers all these events appeared to confirm their first impression that France was sinking into anarchy and could be neglected as a European Power. Austria, Russia and Prussia:, relieved from anxiety in the West, turned to the congenial task of partitioning Poland. Only by degrees did they realise that a new power, and new menace against which the traditional defences were, of little avail, was arising out of the chaos.

It was in England that this realization first found expression. Here the power of the bourgeoisie had been consolidated in the revolutionary period a century earlier and here alone, therefore. the dominant sections of the bourgeoisie had no sympathy with the Revolution in France. Abroad it might in time set up a commercial and industrial rival: at home a new revolution could only raise questions better left alone and rouse classes which up to now had been successfully kept in subjection. As the Revolution in France became increasingly violent and popular their terror increased. ‘Jacobinism’ meant an attack on privilege and in England privilege was not so much aristocratic as bourgeois. While the Revolution divided every country in Europe into two camps the line of demarcation was drawn at one point in England and at another in all the other European countries. In the first the higher strata of the bourgeoisie were above and in the second below this line.

On the other hand British interests were not at first directly threatened for geographical reasons. Britain, therefore, was one of the last countries actually to join in the counter-revolutionary war, yet, once involved, she was the most determined in carrying it through.

Characteristically it was Burke, a former Whig, who sounded the alarm in his fantastic but eloquent Reflections on the French Revolution. The Reflections had an immense vogue among the ruling class both in England and abroad, and even in France, where they encouraged the nobility to an unwise resistance. The powerful “Trade Union of Crowned Heads” began to rally to the support of the French monarchy, and in 1791, the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia issued the Declaration of Pillnitz, in which they invited the powers of Europe to “employ in conjunction with their said Majesties the most efficacious means in their power to place the King of France in a position to establish in perfect

freedom the foundations of a monarchical government equally suited to the rights of Sovereigns and the prosperity of the French nation."

The Declaration was largely bluff but the French people had no means of knowing this and they were even more alarmed at the constant intrigues between the Emperor and the thousands of nobles (including the brothers of Louis XVI) who had left France and were now occupying themselves with counter-revolutionary conspiracy. The willingness of European sovereigns to intervene grew with the spread of revolutionary ideas among their own subjects. In England Tot Paine's Rights of Man created an even greater sensation than Burke' s Reflections to which it was a reply.

Yet it would be a mistake to regard the war of 1792 merely as an attack by the reactionary powers on revolutionary France. 'Liberty, equality, fraternity' was an explosive slogan with a un7iversal appeal that carried it easily across frontiers and the French regarded themselves as the pioneers of a general liberation. The idea of a revolutionary war gained ground rapidly among both the Girondists, the party of the upper middle class, and the Jacobins who represented the lower middle class and the artisans. Both parties were more than prepared to take up the challenge of Austria and Prussia and it was from the Girondists, who hoped to improve their position for their internal struggle against the Jacobins as well as to extend the revolution beyond the boundaries of France, that the actual declaration of war came. There can be little doubt, however, that war was by that time inevitable. It was preceded by a manifiesto in which the French Government promised assistance to all nations that should revolt against their oppressors. This was later explained as being meant only to apply "to those peoples who, after having acquired their liberty by conquest should demand the assistance of the republic."

After initial disasters the raw French armies poured into Belgium, which had been prepared to welcome them by revolt against Austrian rule that had only been suppressed a couple of years before. It was the conquest of Belgium and the denouncing of commercial treaties connected with that country that brought revolutionary France into direct conflict with British interests. Early in 1793 Britain entered the war, joining with Austria, Prussia, Spain and Piedmont to form the First Coalition.

Before war began the Radical and Republican agitation which arose in England as a reflection of the Revolution in France had been met with a pogrom and severe legal repression. Tory mobs, with the connivance of the magistrates, looted and burned the houses of Radicals and dissenters in Birmingham and elsewhere, Among the sufferers was the scientist Priestley. The Whig Party was soon split, the majority going over to Pitt and the reaction and only a handful under Fox persisting in their demands for reform. Small as it was, this group was of great historical importance because it formed The link between the Whigs of the Eighteenth Century and the Liberals of the Ninetenth Century and the nucleus around which the new forces entering the Liberal Party centred after Waterloo.

Fox and his followers were aristocrats: the period saw also the first definitely working class political organisation, the Corresponding Society. Its official programme was only Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments, but most of its members were republicans and disciples of Paine. Paine, who had fought for the Americans in the War of Independence and had helped to formulate both the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of the Rights of Man, was a passionate advocate of then novel idea that politics were the business of the whole mass of the common people and not only of a governing oligarchy. Government was only tolerable if it secured to the whole people "Life, Liberty and the

pursuit of happiness", and any government which failed by this test ought to be overthrown, if necessary by revolution. His clear and logical exposition of the principles of the French Revolution won a ready hearing among the intelligent working men from whose ranks the Corresponding Society drew its members.

The weakness of the movement lay in its limited character. It was confined mainly to London and towns like Norwich, and Nottingham whose skilled artisans and mechanics formed the upper stratum of the working class. It won little support as yet among the workers in the industrial towns of the North. These were full of misery and discontent but the dispossessed peasants and ruined domestic workers who crowded there were not yet capable of political thought or activity. Their protest took the form of desperate acts of violence and destruction, and on more than one-occasion the ruling classes were able to direct this violence against the Radicals as at Manchester and Bolton. It was only at the end, when the repression of Pitt was operating to crush the movement, that it began to make contacts with the new industrial proletariat and these contacts came too late to be immediately fruitful.

In 1794 Pitt suspended Habeas Corpus and rushed through laws to prohibit the holding of public meetings. The suspension of Habeas Corpus lasted for eightyears. Even before this The Rights of Man was banned and Paine only escaped trial by a flight to France. The rest of his life was spent there and in

America. The Corresponding Society and other Radical organisations were declared illegal and Thomas Hardy, a shoemaker, was put on trial for treason along with Home Tooke and other leaders of the Society. Their acquittal by a London jury, though a defeat for the Government, did not prevent the continuation of the repression or save the Corresponding Society

In the years that followed, although the open expression of Radical views was made impossible frequent strikes, bread riots and machine wrecking riots kept the Government in a state of terror. The whole country was covered with a network of barracks, built so as to prevent contact between the people and the soldiers, who had formerly been billeted in houses and inns. The industrial areas were treated almost as a conquered country in the hands of an army of occupation. Troops were freely used to suppress disorder, but even so were often found to be unreliable because of their sympathy with the crowds they were ordered to attack.

It was for this reason that a new body, the yeomanry, a mounted force drawn from the upper and middle classes, was created at the beginning of the French wars. Quite useless from a military point of view, the yeomanry was, and was intended to be. a class body with the suppression of 'Tacohinism' as its main object. This object they pursued with an enthusiasm and an unfailing brutality which earned them universal hatred.

In Scotland Radicalism developed more strongly and the repression was earlier and more severe. The Society of the Friends of the People included many of the middle class as well as workers and when it assembled a national Convention in Edinburgh in December 1792, 160 delegates represented eighty affiliated societies. In August 1793 one of its leaders, Thomas Muir, was brought before a packed jury and the notorious Justice Braxfield on a charge of sedition. The tone of the trial is indicated by Braxfield's remark to one of the jurors, "Come awa , and help us to hang ane o' thae damned scoundrels," and by Pitt's subsequent comment that the judges would be "highly culpable" if they did not use

their powers "for the present punishment of such daring delinquents and the suppression of doctrines so dangerous to the country. **"** Muir was sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. Later he was rescued from Botany Bay by an American ship and taken to France where he tried to persuade the Directory to invade Scotland.

After a number of similar trials the movement was forced into more definitely insurrectionary forms, but a body called the United Scotsmen and based on the Irish model remained small and was suppressed in 1798, together with the London Corresponding Society.

The anti-Jacobin fury of the Government and ruling class was all the keener because of the continued success of the French armies. From the middle of 1793 to the middle of 1794 —that is to the overthrow of the Jacobins on the '9th Thermidor' —was indeed the heroic age of the Revolution. After Thermidor power was assumed by the Directory, representing all the most disreputable sections of the bourgeoisie, the land speculators, currency crooks and fraudulent army contractors. Yet the Revolution left many permanent gains, above all the division of the great feudal estates and the smashing of all restraints on the development of trade and industry. The way lay open for the Code Napoleón, the perfect legal frame for bourgeois development. The settlement of the agrarian question gave a firm basis for any government that was opposed to the return of the Bourbons and the nobility.

Wolfe Tone remarked in 1796, "It is in the armies that the Republic exists." It was certainly the Revolution which created an army that had no equal in Europe. As Captain Liddell Hart says, it "inspired the citizen armies of France, and in compensation for the precise drill which it made impossible, gave rein instead to the tactical sense and initiative of the individual. These new tactics of fluidity had for their simple, yet vital pivot, the fact that the French now marched and fought at a quick step of 120 paces to the minute, while their opponents adhered to the orthodox 70 paces."

Further, the poverty of the young Republic made it impossible to provide the armies with the customary vast baggage trains and cumbersome equipment. The armies were forced to live upon the country they passed through and so to move constantly and rapidly, and to divide themselves into smaller, self-contained units.. By adopting strategical methods in keeping with the actual situation they were able to transform a weakness into a source of strength.

The line formation, then employed by all European armies, was found to depend too much on precise drill for its possibility and was abandoned for the column. With the column was developed a tactic of a covering cloud of sharpshooters who moved ahead of it to disorganise the enemy. Artillery also brought up in advance of the main body was used for the same purpose. Against the unwilling conscripts of the European despotism these tactics proved invincible.

It was in the exact recognition of the merits and limitations of the instrument in their hands that the military genius of Carnot and Napoleon lay. Instead of trying to force the French Army into the orthodox mould they took it for what it was and allowed it to attain its own perfection. Napoleon's greatest victories were almost all based on the rapidity of his movements before the actual battle and the weight and decision of the attack thrown at a carefully selected vital spot. It was only as the revolutionary impetus fadded that he lost his elasticity and came to depend on mere mass rather than on mass in motion. His methods finally hardened into a dogma as petrifying as the dogmas it originally displaced.

The French Navy never reached any great heights, partly because enthusiasm is no substitute for discipline on board ship and partly because the Norman and Breton fishing

ports from which the old navy had drawn most of its best recruits remained clerical and reactionary throughout the Revolution. From Howe's victory of the First of June in 1794 Britain maintained a naval superiority that was rarely challenged. At the beginning of the war Britain had 158 ships of the line to 80 possessed by France. By 1802 the numbers were 202 against 39 and after Trafalgar 250 against 19. At this time the combined fleets of France, Spain and Holland only totalled 92. The marked inferiority of the French Navy was itself a reason for concentrating almost all effort on land operations instead of wasting resources in a futile attempt to make up leeway on the sea.

The Napoleonic Wars

From the formation of the First Coalition in 1793 Britain took first place in the various combinations against France. Other powers changed sides or drifted in and out of the war, but with one short interval after the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 Britain remained continuously at war till the capture of Paris in 1814. The main source of her strength was the modern and capitalist economic organisation which enabled trade and industry to increase even under war conditions and vast sums of money to be raised without bankruptcy.

War finance was merely an extension of that practised throughout the Eighteenth Century: heavy and increasing taxation of the necessities of life, •a huge National Debt and subsidies totaling £ 50,000,000 to the European powers who were prepared to raise armies against Napoleon. It has been estimated that a labourer earning lOs. a week paid half of it in indirect taxes. Revenue increased steadily from £18,900,000 in 1792 to £71,900,000 in 1815, and in the same two years the interest on the National Debt was £ 9,470,000 and £30,458,000. Loans were raised at a heavy discount, and, for the' £334,000,000 added to the Debt during Pitt's administration alone, only about £200,000,000 was received in cash by the Government.

The effect of this war finance, besides reducing the real wages of the working masses and forcing up prices, was to reinforce the class of financiers and renters and to increase enormously the scope and volume of banking and credit operations. The new finance magnates so created became in due course landowners and pillars of the Tory Party. Peerages multiplied: in seventeen years Pitt created ninety-five English and seventy-seven Irish peers. "The ancient nobility and gentry wrote Cobbett in 1802, "have with very few exceptions been thrust out of all public employments. ... A race of merchants and manufacturers and bankers and loan jobbers and contractors usurped their place, ~ and, in 1804, "There always was among the creature and close adherents of Mr. Pitt a strange mixture of profligacy and cant: jobbers all the morning and Methodists in the afternoon."

Yet the wealth at Pitt's disposal could not prevent his coalitions from going down like ninepins before the armies of France. The First Coalition collapsed in 1795 after Flanders and Holland had been overrun and the Duke of York, possibly the most incompetent general ever to command a British army, was trounced at Dunkirk. The West Indies, always a vital concern of the City interests, absorbed the greater part of Britain's land forces. In three years, 80,000 men were lost there with no result. This expedition was in line with past practice, except that so large a body of inadequately equipped troops had not before been sent to a tropical climate. The conquest of Italy in 1797 drove Austria out of the war.

Britain was now as isolated as France had been in 1792. The war could probably have been ended but for the earliest and most fatal of Napoleon's strategic miscalculations. This

was his decision to strike at Britain through Egypt and the East instead of through Ireland, a decision which shows to what an extent revolutionary realism had given place to grandiose imperial schemes. Victory at this time, before the French Republic had finally hardened into a military dictatorship and before the demands which a prolonged war forced it to make upon the peoples of the occupied countries had forfeited their sympathy, might well have transformed the whole subsequent course of European history.

Ireland had been more affected by the French Revolution than, perhaps, any other country in Europe. Under the leadership of Wolfe Tone the United Irishmen had combined a demand for Irish independence with the Radical republicanism of Paine. Tone at least had a profound understanding of the relation of class to the national struggle. Rightly distrustful of the aristocracy and middle class after the betrayal of the Volunteers, he made his appeal to "that large and respectable class of the community —the men of no property". The United Irishmen quickly took the lead of the whole national movement and, for a time, succeeded in breaking down the hostility between Catholics and Protestants and combining both against England and its adherents in the Irish ruling class.

Preparations for revolt were pushed ahead, and in 1796 Tone went to France to persuade the Directory to send an expedition to Ireland to co-operate with the rebels there. He had to contend with the Eastern preoccupation already stirring in Napoleon's brain and though a force of 15,000 men was prepared, plans for the invasion were only half-hearted. When at the end of the year the fleet left Brest for the Munster coast a combination of bad weather and military blundering prevented a landing at Bantry Bay.

One chance was thus missed but a second presented itself in the summer of 1797. This time Holland was the base selected for an expedition and for more than a month the whole of the British North Sea fleet was paralysed by the Nore Mutiny. Through mismanagement the expedition was not ready till after the mutiny had been crushed[1] and news of it only reached the continent when it was all over. The cautious Dutch commanders then refused to sail and with the death of Hoche, the only French general who appreciated the importance of Ireland, hopes of effective intervention faded.

For two years the Irish had waited for help, and, now that it was apparent that no help was coming, the policy of the English authorities was to torment the peasants into a hopeless insurrection. Sir Ralph Abercrombie, the English commander in Ireland, himself declared that "every crime, every cruelty that could be committed by Cossacks or Calmucks had been committed here. **"** In March 1798 the Government was able, by help of an informer, to seize a number of the leaders, and the whole of Ireland was declared in a state of insurrection and placed under military law, The United Irishmen were faced with the alternative of rising without French help or of being destroyed piecemeal. At last May 22nd was fixed as the date for rebellion, but once again the arrest of leaders, including Lord Edward Fitzgerald, created confusion. Further, the adroit mixture of terror and appeal to class interest had won over many of the upper and middle class supporters of the rising, which, when it came, had an overwhelmingly peasant character.

In the South the effective risings were mainly in Wexford and Wicklow. In the North, under Protestant leadership, the men of Antrim and Down came out on June 7th. In both areas there were some initial successes of a limited character, but under all the circumstances the rebellion was hopeless. The rising was suppressed, after some hard fighting, with such brutality that the country was completely cowed and when a small French force did land in August they found that the rebellion was over and were unable to

rally any support before they were surrounded and forced to surrender. Tone was captured soon after in a naval engagement and committed suicide in prison. In 1803 a second insurrection led by Robert Emmet was crushed.

While the rebellion in Ireland was still going on Napoleon had sailed for Egypt. The destruction of his fleet at the Battle of the Nile (August 1798) cut his troops off from home and left them in a position from which no victories were likely to extricate them. With Napoleon out of the way Pitt was able to form a Second Coalition with Russia and Austria. A Russian army drove the French out of North Italy and the Bourbon king of Naples was able to effect a counter-revolution in the South with the aid of Nelson's fleet. In the autumn Napoleon slipped back to France, leaving his Army to its fate. By the coup d'etat of 18th Brumaire (November 9th) he overthrew the Directory and established himself as First Consul. His later decision to declare himself Emperor changed nothing but a name. The war now definitely entered its second phase.

In the beginning the French armies were welcomed as liberators by the middle and lower classes of the countries they conquered. To Italy, Switzerland, the Rhineland and the Low Countries they carried the bourgeois revolution. A recent biography of Marx describes the typical reaction in Trier: "The inhabitants at Trier received the French with enthusiasm. The Revolution released the peasants from the trammels of feudalism, gave the bourgeoisie the administrative and legal apparatus they required for their advancement, freed the intelligentsia from the tutelage of the priests. The men of Trier danced round the 'tree of freedom' just like the inhabitants of Mainz. They had their own Jacobin club. Many a respected citizen in the thirties still looked back with pride to his Jacobin past.

Much that was done in these years proved of permanent benefit, but presently the people of the occupied countries found that they were to be allowed, at best, a second class revolution, with their interests always subordinated to those of France. The price of liberation was heavy taxes and the conscription of their sons to fill the gaps in the ranks of the French Army. War was, or appeared to be, necessary for the continued internal stability of the Napoleonic regime yet war could only be carried on by the progressive exploitation of the 'liberated' territories and the longer war went on the more territory must be 'liberated' and exploited. In this way a contradiction was set up from which there was no escape. Further, the practice of living on the country, which the Army had begun from mere necessity and had turned into a source of military strength, was always a political weakness,

The result was that the very classes which had welcomed and been aroused to political maturity by the French were gradually alienated. Their history is that of Beethoven, who intended to dedicate his Heroic Symphony to Napoleon and then thought better of it. By breaking the shell of feudalism and ending the curious torpor that marked the Eighteenth Century in Europe the French created a bourgeois nationalism that turned inevitably against its creators.

Napoleon had many years of victory before him in 1799, however, and the reckoning was delayed by the incapacity of the monarchies, through whom the new nationalism was forced, however unwillingly, to express itself. A short and brilliant campaign reconquered Italy and the Second Coalition was smashed at Marengo in the last days of 1800. The years that followed, with Britain alone left in the war and no important land operations, were spent in drawing up the Code Napoleon hostilities to a close from 1802 to 1803. It left France in control of Holland and all the west bank of the Rhine.

When war was resumed Napoleon had as allies Spain and Holland. The French Army was camped at Boulogne ready for a descent on England if the French and Spanish fleets

could be serious has never been certainly determined. In March 1805 the Toulon fleet doubled back to join the Spanish in Cadiz. In October both fleets were destroyed at Trafalgar.

Before Trafalgar was fought, however, the scheme for the invasion of England was abandoned. By the promise of unheard-of subsidies Pitt had persuaded Austria and Russia to join in the Third Coalition and the French Army had been marched across Europe to meet the new enemy, It is myth that Trafa1gar saved England from invasion: what it did was to place her naval supremacy beyond question for the rest of the war.

On the day before Trafalgar Napoleon defeated an Austrian army at Ulm on the Danube. Soon after he entered Vienna, and on December 2nd overwhelmed both Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz, Pitt died in January, leaving the country to be governed by his jackals, Castlereagh, Sidmouth, Eldon and Perceval. In October the King of Prussia, who had characteristically refused to join the Third Coalition when his intervention might have been effective, was pushed into war by the rising national feeling in Germany and crushingly defeated at Jena. For six years neither Austria nor Prussia counted as European *Power* and after another defeat at Friedland in 1807 the Tsar of Russia made his peace. Napoleon now ruled over an Empire which included *No*rthern Italy, the East coast of the Adriatic, all the territory west of the Rhine with Holland and a **large** area of North Germany from Cologne to **Lubeck.** Spain, Naples, Poland and all Central and Southern Germany formed vassal states. It was upon Russia and Spain, the two remotest and least developed of the European Powers, that Napoleon was finally broken. Neither of these countries had a strong middle class such as had made the victory of the French easier elsewhere. For a time Napoleon and the Tsar Alexander combined to dominate Europe but Napoleon was not prepared to treat Alexander as an equal and the latter refused to be subordinate. Failing all else Napoleon tried to strike at England by imposing a European ban on her manufactured goods. England replied with a blockade, and though neither ban nor blockade were, completely effective, a strain was begun under which the alliance between France and Russia and the *other* North European countries crumbled away.

Before this happened, however, Portugal, for a century dominated by the British Government, refused to recognize Napoleon's 'Continental System'. A French army was therefore sent to prevent trade between Portugal and Britain. At the same time, Napoleon attempted to change his indirect control over Spain or a direct rule by making his brother Joseph king. This provoked an instantaneous and universal revolt. The Spanish proved to be the worst regular soldiers and the best guerillas in Europe: the armies were defeated wherever they showed themselves but the people's war went on and forced Napoleon to concentrate larger and larger forces in Spain.

In 1808 Sir Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington, was sent with a small army to defend Portugal and assist and encourage the Spanish insurrection. The French had now some 300,000 men in the Peninsula but were seldom able to concentrate more than about one-fifth against Wellington, the rest being engaged in small operations all over the country. Every attempt at a concentration left large areas open to the guerillas, so that the regular and irregular wars set up an interaction before which the French were helpless. The details of the six years' campaign, the advances, retreats and battles, are relatively unimportant. In 1811, when Napoleon had to draw away part of his forces for his Russian venture, Wellington was able to take the offensive and step by step the French were driven out of the Peninsula.

An army of nearly half a million —Poles, Italians and Germans as well as Frenchmen— was massed by Napoleon in 1811 for an attack on Russia. The march of the Grand Army to Moscow and its disastrous retreat set Europe once more ablaze. Germany rose against the defeated Emperor and at last the French found themselves opposed not to the conscript armies of kings but to nations in arms. Although he quickly collected a new army almost as large as the one he had lost, Napoleon was decisively beaten at Leipzig in October 1813. In spite of this he rejected an offer of peace that would have given him the Rhine as a frontier, and in April 1814 the allies entered Paris, the Bourbons were restored and Napoleon banished to Elba.

England, Russia, Austria and Prussia then settled down at the Congress of Vienna to fight over the spoils of victory. Their deliberations were interrupted in 1815 by the sudden return of Napoleon to France and the Hundred Days' Campaign which ended with his defeat at Waterloo.

The main features Congress of Vienna were of the settlement arrived at by the restoration of despotism and the triumph of what was called the 'principle of legitimacy'. This was only neglected when it happened to run counter to the interests of Austria, Russia or Prussia: thus Poland, Venice, Saxony and other small States were swallowed or dismembered by their more powerful neighbours.

Revolution was felt to be as much the enemy as France and the victory of reaction was sealed by thy Holly Alliance in which Austria, Russia and Prussia agreed to give each other mutual support against the horrors of insurgent democracy. The Holy Alliance was used to justify international action against risings in Italy, Germany and elsewhere. Yet neither Metternich nor Alexander could restore Europe to its sacred torpor or do more than delay for a little the process set on foot by the Revolution, and the Holy Alliance did not survive the upheavals of 1830.

In France the restoration of the Bourbons did not mean the restoration of aristocratic privilege in the villages or the supersession of the Code Napoleon. In Germany, though Prussia extended its power over the Rhineland, many of the social changes resulting from the French occupation went undisturbed. The patchwork of German States were drawn together into the German Confederation in which Austria and Prussia both participated and which inevitably became the theatre of a battle between them for the hegemony of Central Europe.

England's share in the plunder was taken mainly outside Europe. The foundations for a great extension of the Empire were laid, perhaps unwittingly, by the acquisition of a number of strategic key points: Malta, Mauritius, Ceylon, Heligoland and the Cape, then inhabited only by a few Dutch farmers and valued only as a stopping place on the way to India. The British bourgeoisie came out of the war ready to consolidate a world monopoly for the produce of their factories and to begin a period of hitherto unimagined advance. Yet the first result of the *peace was* a severe political and economic crisis.

Origins at the First World War

Imperialism

First something should be said of the extent of this expansion. In the earlier part of the Nineteenth Century attention was confined mainly to India. Then came the drive into the hinterland of Canada and Australia and the settlement at New Zealand, and lastly the

division of Africa and the Pacific islands among the European Powers. In 1860 the colonial possessions of Britain covered about 2,500,000 square miles with 145,000,000 inhabitants; in 1880 the area was 7,700,000 square miles *with 268,000,000* and in 1899 11,600,000 with 345,000,000. By this last date the division of the world among the great colonising Powers was almost completed.

The age of Imperialism had begun, and British economy had acquired a new basis. Instead of the old and now vanishing industrial monopoly by which Britain had enjoyed the position of workshop of the world, there was a narrower but more complete colonial monopoly, an extension of British State power over vast 'backward' regions of the earth and the deliberate use of this State power to secure exclusive rights not so much for the export of articles of consumption as of the means of production and at capital. We have traced this development in India, Egypt and elsewhere, and it is because of its importance that the connection between the colonies and British heavy industry has been stressed perhaps to the point of monotony.

The word Imperialism has so often been used loosely that Lenin's very exact definition may be profitably recalled. Irnperialism, in his view, is a stage of capitalist development which has the five following essential economic features:

"1. The concentration of production and capital, developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life"

"2. The merging of bank capital, with industrial capital and the creation on the basis of this 'finance capital' of a financial oligarchy."

"3. The export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities, becomes of particularly great importance.

"4. International monopoly combines of capitalists are formed. which divide up the world.

"5. The territorial division of the world by the greatest capitalist Powers is completed.

It should be added that Lenin dated the arrival of Imperialism as a world-wide-phenomenon at about 1900.

The key feature of Imperialism is monopoly, and in Britain monopoly developed strongly from the closing years of the Nineteenth Century. This was especially the case in the iron and steel industries, in shipping and ship building, in some new industries like the manufacture of chemicals, soap and margarine and in the case of the railways and banks. Thus, such firms as Armstrong Whitworth, Dorman, Long and Co. and Vickers *occupied a* dominating position in the heavy industries- The Anglo —American Atlantic Shipping Trust was formed by banker Morgan with a capital of £ 34,000,000. Levers and Brunner Mond held the germs of the great Unilever Combine and of I.C.I.

By about 1900 the scores of competing railway companies which had sprung up chaotically during the great period of rail construction had been reduced **to** about a dozen, and between these working agreements existed which paved the way for the further amalgamation into four large companies. In the same way, private banks were being absorbed into vast joint stock concerns with hundreds of branches all over the country. Barclays Bank was founded in this way in 1896 and soon a small number of such banks controlled all but an infinitesimal proportion of the business of the country. This was of the greatest importance at a time when transactions were more and more carried out on a credit basis.

The movement towards monopoly was less marked in the older export industries, especially textiles, and in coal mining except in South Wales. These industries remained relatively backward, with many small enterprises working with insufficient capital, out-of-date plant and methods which made it difficult for them to compete in mass production with the rival **industries of** Germany and the United States.

Almost as important a feature of **Imperialism as monopoly,** and one which in Britain came earlier, was the export of capital, in the form both of loans and investments. We have seen how this export worked out in practice in Egypt in the eighties, and at the same time similar developments **were taking** place in India, China, South America and in all the less industrialised parts of the world. The export of capital was linked with territorial expansion both as cause and effect. British investments provided excuses for annexation, and when a territory had been annexed British State power was used as a means of furthering the monopoly interests of the London bondlords.

Thus it was after 1900, when the division of the earth among the principal Powers was virtually complete, that the export of capital became most rapid. By 1900 the total amount of British investments abroad was about £2,000,000,000 from which a yearly income of £100,000,000 was drawn.

By the year 1914 both capital and income were approximately doubled. An enormous proportion of this sum was invested in railways. The economist Sir George Paish estimated that in 1909 British investments in foreign railways totalled not less than £1,700,000,000 and that the income from these investments was about £83,000;000. Roughly, British investments were divided in the proportion of six to five between the Empire (including Egypt) and the rest of the world. Outside the Empire, the largest investments were in South America and especially in the Argentine.

The interest on these investments, paid mainly in foodstuffs and raw materials, now far exceeded the profit derived from Britain's foreign trade. Britain became to an ever-increasing extent a parasitic usurer State and the interests of the bondholders became the determining factor in her foreign politics. There was a relative decline of industry, illustrated, for example, by the decrease in the proportion of the population employed in the basic industries from 25 per cent in 1851 to 15 per cent in 1901, with a corresponding increase in the proportion employed in distribution, commerce, domestic service and the luxury trades.

Large scale unemployment became a regular feature, and in the years before the *War* the number of unemployed was seldom much below a million. Another striking sign of decay was the growing frequency of cyclical crises,

One such crisis occurred in 1902-4, a second in 1908-9, while a third was developing rapidly in 1914 and was only cut short by the outbreak of war.

The concentration of capital meant not only an increase in the size of enterprises but also a vast increase in the number of purely passive shareholders. The typical capitalist was now no longer a factory owner running his own business and making a definite contribution of his own knowledge and energy to industry, but a shareholder drawing dividends and contributing nothing but his capital. In this way, the effective control of huge masses of capital came into the hands of a very small number of individuals whose actual holdings were relatively small. A network of interlocking dictatorships linked up all sorts of ostensibly independent concerns, and what was perhaps more important, led to an

interpenetration of finance capital with industrial capital which concentrated an increasing power in the hands of the bankers.

Another symptom of the parasitism of British capitalism in these years was the slow progress of British industry as compared with that of its principal rivals, Germany and the U.S.A. These three countries took different paths to Imperialism, though the final effect was similar in all cases.

While Britain began with territorial expansion and the export of capital and only passed on to the monopoly stage late and unevenly, the United States with a vast and fairly uniform hinterland in which to expand, began with the establishment of an internal monopoly (the Standard Oil Trust was organized as early as 1882) and only began to appear as a colonial power and an exporter of capital after the Spanish-American war of 1898.

Germany, with neither colonies nor hinterland, set out on an attack on the world market on the basis of a deliberate regimentation of home industry, and developed monopoly production to a considerable extent in the form of State Capitalism. Again, while in Britain, depending traditionally upon her export trade and needing to import quantities of food and raw materials, monopoly production developed out of free trade and competition leading to the gradual elimination of small and inefficient enterprises, in Germany and the U.S.A. it developed behind an elaborate screen of protective tariffs.

Britain was first on the scene but soon found herself outdistanced. The following tables show clearly what happened in

the key industries of coal and iron.

COAL PRODUCTION

	1860	1880	**1900**	**1913**
Britain	83. 3	149. 5	228. 8	292. 0 million tons
Germany	17.0	60.0	149.8	277.3
U.S.A.	15.4	71.6	244.6	517.04

IRON AND *STEEL* PRODUCTION

	1870-4 average.	1900-4 average.	1913
Britain	6.9	13.5	17.9
Germany	2.1	16.2	27.4
U.S.A.	2.3	29.8	30.0

The main reason for this relative decline was the existence of the British Empire and the opportunities it afforded the investment of capital at an unusually high rate dl profit. British industry was old-established and old-fashioned in many respects, and could only have beaten off its challengers by a thorough reconstruction. But while foreign investment offered its super-profits, there was no possibility of this reconstruction being undertaken. While the loss of the old Nineteenth Century industrial monopoly was inevitable, it is also true that the capital that might have been spent in developing British industry to meet the new conditions was used to a considerable extent in equipping potential rivals.

Beyond this, the early industrial development of Britain became itself a serious handicap. French, American and German industry had to develop in competition with already established British industries, and could only do so by greater efficiency and new technological methods. Where Britain had once led the world rid in technology, she now

began to be content to rely on her established position, and in field after field British industry became backward and conservative. There was a strong tendency to rely on out of date but still serviceable plant and methods rather than face the heavy capital expenditure involved in modernization. New industries abroad, on the other hand, naturally started with the most modern equipment available. So in engineering, Britain became during the Nineteenth Century, as she still remains, a good generation behind the U.S.A. in mass production methods, while in the production of synthetic dyes, though the original impetus came from a British invention in 1856, the initiative passed to Germany and this proved the basis for building up the great chemical industry there. A similar picture could be drawn for textiles, mining, and the other main industries: the over-all result was that Britain lost ground steadily to her-newer rivals in the markets of the world.

During the age of colonial expansion, that is, roughly up to 1900, Britain had been most frequently in conflict with France, the next most active colonizing Power. From that date the main rival became Germany, which, left well behind in the race for colonies, began to penetrate what the British bourgeoisie had long been accustomed to regard as their own markets. The United States, which had the making of an even more dangerous rival, did not fully enter the world politics till the war of 1914-18, though for about 1900 they began to make progress at the expense of British traders in South America. The reason for their late appearance was that they had not yet exhausted the possibilities of exploiting their own external resources and those of Mexico, Central America and the West Indies which had fallen within their sphere of influence.

The partitioning of the world had been completed, not without conflicts and the threat of more which failed to materialize, by 1900. Britain and France had secured the richest booty, both in Africa, Asia and Australasia. Germany and Italy, late comers, had to be content with small and less desirable pickings. In the Far East Russia and Japan eyed one another, preparing to do battle for Korea and Manchuria.

It was becoming clear that the existing division of spoils could not be permanent: it had been made on the basis of the relative strength of the European Powers far back in the Nineteenth Century and no longer corresponded to realities. This was true above all of the division as between Britain and Germany. In the period before the War, it was around certain backward but not strictly colonial areas that Anglo -German rivalry centred. Such were the Balkans, where the German share of trade increased from 18. 1 per cent to 29.2 per cent while that of Britain fell from 24 per cent to 14. 9 per cent, South America, where German trade rose from 16 per cent to 19 per cent while British trade fell from 31 per cent to 28 per cent, and the slowly decaying Turkish Empire. Even within the British Empire, Germany was gaining ground at the expense of Britain.

Since there were no longer any inappropriate territories of any importance left, the redivision of the world could only be effected by war, and war on a gigantic scale since this was a question in which all of the Great Powers were deeply concerned. It is in the zigzag path by which this war was reached that the main interest of the history of the years between 1900 and 1914 lies.

Triple Alliance, Triple Entente

British foreign policy during the greater part of the Nineteenth Century was, as we have seen, dictated primarily by a desire to avoid closer relations with other European Powers and to concentrate upon colonial aggression. We have now to trace the abandonment of this policy and the linking up of Britain with one of the two great groups into which Europe was

divided by 1914. The story of the formation of these groups goes back at least to 1870, when France was defeated by Prussia. It is a story of complicated and shameless intrigues, of alliances made and repudiated or undermined by other conflicting alliances, a tangle of secret treaties of which possibly all have not come to light even now. It cannot be told here in detail, but a few leading lines can be traced with a fair confidence.

The field was occupied by four main Powers —Germany, Russia, France and Austria-Hungary with Italy as a much less considerable fifth. After the Franco-Prussian War in which Germany annexed Alsace and Lorraine and exacted a heavy war indemnity, relations between these two Powers were almost uniformly hostile. The French Government was determined, at the first favorable opportunity upon a war of revenge. German policy, consequently, was directed towards keeping France isolated, since it was clear that she was no match for Germany without allies. The relations of the other Powers were much less straightforward.

The German Chancellor, Bismarck, wished to maintain an alliance with both Austria and Russia, and for a number of years did manage this feat. Even after the "Three Emperors Alliance lapsed in 1887, the connection between Germany and Russia was Kept up to three years longer by a secret *treaty* whose existence Bismarck's Austrian allies were unaware. The Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria was expanded into a Triple Alliance by the adhesion of Italy in 1882.

In the long run, however, it was not possible for Germany to preserve the alliance with both Austria and Russia, since these Powers were deeply committed to fundamentally opposed policies in South-eastern Europe. Even Bismarck would probably have found the task beyond him, and his fall was followed almost at once by a military alliance between France and Russia. The twenty years' isolation of France was thus ended, while Germany found in. Austria an ally more reliable and less independent than Russia was ever likely to be. The two Central Powers were drawn closer together by the menace of Russia, *which* they imagined, as everyone did before 1914, was more formidable than was really the case, giving too much weight to the vast manpower and too little to the corruption and inefficiency of the Russian State.

So far, Britain had remained outside either grouping, though some tentative efforts were made towards an Anglo-German agreement by both governments from about 1890. It is worth noting that the Tories were more disposed to consider an alliance with Germany than were the Liberals, probably because they were the party most directly connected with colonial enterprises and in this field had frequently encountered French opposition.

It was the last and most acute of these colonial conflicts which was indirectly responsible for the beginning of the Anglo- French entente. Their humiliation at Fashoda in 1899 convinced the French government that they were doomed to impotence so long as they were working in opposition to both Britain and Germany. They were forced to choose which they would have for an enemy, just as Germany had been forced to choose between Austria and Russia as allies. Then came the Boer War, revealing to the British Government its dangerous isolation and setting it to look around for an ally in Europe. The first approach was made to Germany, but Germany put too high a price upon her friendship. Negotiations broke off in a torrent of abuse from the press and politicians of both countries and the way was now clear for an alliance with France.

Characteristically, this was concluded over the body of a colonial victim. Morocco, in which prospectors were beginning to find indications of valuable minerals, was obviously ripe for conquest by some European Power. It was also a plum which no power would

willingly see go to another without some adequate compensation. So in 1904 France recognized the social interests of Britain in Egypt while Britain, in rater guarded but perfectly well understood language, promised France a free hand in Morocco. So much was stated: what was implied was that either country would give the other the fullest support against any third power which attempted to put in a claim to Egypt or Morocco.

This understanding came into play in 1911, when France having discovered or created the amount of disorder in Morocco necessary as an excuse, marched in and seized the capital, Fez.

Germany then demanded compensation in French Congo and backed her demand by sending gunboats to the Moroccan port of Agadir. The British government made it clear, through the mouth of the one-time pacifist, Lloyd George, that France would be supported, to' the point of war if necessary. War was indeed very close, but neither side was quite ready and a compromise was reached by which the French kept Morocco and Germany was allotted a much smaller slice of the Congo than had originally been claimed.

Even before the new Anglo-French entente had developed fully, relations with Germany had become more definitely hostile and this hostility found expression in a suicidal naval race. German naval construction began in earnest in 1895, and the challenge was instantly taken up. In 1904 the extreme jingo, Lord Fisher, was appointed First Sea Lord, and he commenced a complete rearrangement of naval forces aimed ostentatiously against Germany. The main fighting fleet was withdrawn from the Mediterranean and concentrated in the North Sea. In private

conversations, Fisher was actually urging that the German Navy should be surprised and destroyed ('Copenhagened' was the phrase used) in its home ports without even a declaration of war. When reports of this leaked out, they did little to convince Germany of the peaceful intentions of Britain.

World War: World Crisis

The First World War

Years before hostilities began, the rival military experts had prepared their plans of campaign. The Germans proposed to concentrate all their forces for a flanking march through Belgium, along and beyond the Meuse, and so to avoid the strong line of forts with which the Alsace-Lorraine border was defended. On this part of their front they decided to stand on the defensive, and, as the plan was originally drafted, even thought of retiring towards the Rhine. In the East, too, they were to be on the defensive, counting on the slowness of Russian mobilisation and allowing the Austrians to bear the brunt of the first encounters, The main army, after passing through Belgium, was to sweep round in a vast semi-circle, moving to the west and south of Paris and eventually coming into the rear of the French armies massed along the fortress line from Verdun to Belfort.

The French plan, viewed in retrospect, might seem to have been designed with the purpose of ensuring a German victory. Their General Staff had full warning of the German scheme, but a curious psychological blindness made them ignore it, because to admit it would have meant to revise their own plan, and this was based rather on political and sentimental than upon military considerations.

The frontier north of the Ardennes was left virtually unguarded, while a fierce, and it was hoped, decisive offensive was to be launched into Lorraine. The basis of this hope was an intense and almost mystical belief in the virtue of attack, and above all of French troops in attack, which permeated their military circles in the decade before 1914.

The French plan was tried in August 1914 with disastrous results: the German plan only failed because it was weakened before the outbreak of war and not persisted in after it By degrees the southern wing of the German Army was strengthened at the expense of the northern offensive wing. When the War began, the advance through Belgium was carried through according to time-table up to a point. Then Moltke, the German commander, attempted a sudden change of a plan, abandoning the sweep round Paris for an attempt to surround the French center pushed up into a salient at Verdun. To do this the direction of the advance had to be changed over a wide front, and it was this change, and the confusion resulting, which gave the opportunity for the successful counter-attack known as the Battle of the Maine. At the same time, the offensive had been weakened by the detachment of several divisions lo the Russian front, where, they arrived just too late to play any effective part in the victory of Tannenberg.

The Battle of the Maine, little more than a skirmish by the standards of slaughter set by later battles, was nevertheless the slaughter set by later battles, was nevertheless the turning point of the whole war. It made a quick German victory impossible and gave time for the great but slowly mobilized material resources of the British Empire to have their effect, and for the naval blockade to cut off the supply of necessary imports. Alter the Maine, the Western Front settled down to a vast and prolonged siege warfare, after a preliminary stage in which a series of attempted outflanking movements carried the line of battle up to the coast. For three years both sides made repeated and costly, but quite unsuccessful, efforts t_o break through this trench barrier by frontal attacks. New weapons, such as tanks and poison gas were used, but not on a large enough scale to be really effective. Such attempts were the Battles of Loos and Arras and in Champagne in 1915, of Verdun and the Somme in 1916 and of Ypres in 1917.

The Western Front was, however, only one of many theatres of war. In the East the Russians had some successes against Austrian armies, but their badly armed and led troops proved quite incapable of holding their own against the superior weapons and organization of the Germans and they suffered immense losses. The closing of the Baltic and Black Seas made it impossible for the British to supply any significant quantities of war materials and Russian heavy industry was unable to meet the strain of a large scale modern war. The key to the situation lay, therefore, in the Dardanelles. If they were forced Turkey would be driven out of the war, arms could be sent to Russia in exchange for the wheat of the Ukraine, and, in all probability, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania would have entered the war immediately on what would have been apparently the winning side. Incidentally, there would probably have been no Russian Revolution in 1917.

Until February or March, 1915, the Dardanelles lay wide open, but both British and French High Commands were so obsessed with the belief that they could break through in the West that they would not release the forces needed. When the decision was at last taken for an attack, the Turks were given full warning by a naval bombardment followed by a long pause. The landings that were made on the Gallipoli Peninsula on April 25th found the defenders just too strong, and, though points on the peninsula were held till December, repeated attempts to break through were driven back with ‘nary losses. By one of the strangest ironies of history, the Tsarist Government refused to co-operate, for the political reason that they wanted to take Constantinople for themselves and did not wish to see it captured if the British were to have a band in the 3peration. No doubt they remembered the remarkable British tendency not to relinquish territory once occupied, but by their passivity they sealed their own fate.

While these attempts were being made to open the way into the Black Sea, the Russian armies were being relentlessly pounded in Poland and Galicia, losing 750,000 prisoners and countless dead and wounded. In September, when the effects of these defeats had become clear and it was obvious that the attack on the Dardanelles had failed, Bulgaria joined the Central Powers and Serbia was overrun by a joint attack which opened direct communications between Germany and Turkey. Nineteen-fifteen closed with the balance considerably in Germany's favor: against a series of military successes there was little to be placed but the effects of the naval blockade, intensified by an unusually bad harvest.

It was as a counter to this blockade that Germany began the first submarine campaign towards the end of 1915. This was abandoned in April 1916 after protests from the U.S.A., but it had the unintended effect of making the American Government less inclined to object to the highhanded way in which the British blockade was enforced. It was the tightening of this blockade in 1916 that led to a renewed and much more successful submarine offensive in June, after the indecisive Battle of Jutland. In January 1917, 368,000 tons of shipping were sunk and in February it was announced that all ships, neutral or otherwise, might be attacked without warning.

This declaration provided the official ground for the entry of the U.S.A. into the War. A much more weighty reason was the fact that the Allies had been supplied with vast quantities of munitions and war materials of all kinds on credit and that it had become clear that if Germany were victorious, as seemed likely, these debts could never be collected.

War was declared on April 6th, 1917, but it was six months before an American army was ready to take any active part. Nevertheless it was obvious that more than ever it was essential for Germany to seek a quick decision. The effects of the blockade, however, had been somewhat lessened by the conquest of the wheat lands and oil wells of Romania in the autumn of 1916.

Almost at the same time at which America was entering the war, revolution began in Russia. The March Revolution was the work of two opposed forces temporarily combined: the masses who were tired of the pointless slaughter of the war and the bourgeoisie who wished to carry it on more efficiently than the corrupt Tsarist bureaucracy was able to do. The Revolutionary Government tried to drive the Army into another doomed unbroken front. Elsewhere the collapse was even more startling. Turkey, Bulgaria and Austria were driven to conclude an armistice and Germany was threatened with an invasion from the South which there were no forces available to meet.

Early in November revolution broke out in Germany. The sailors at Kiel, when ordered to put out into the North Sea, refused to sail and set up Soviets in the ports. Their envoys scattered widely over the country and everywhere the news of their success was the signal for revolt. In Berlin Liebknecht powerful influence was already stirring the people to action. On November 6th German delegates left Berlin to ask for an armistice: on the 9th the Kaiser abdicated and a Republic was set up with the right wing Social Democrat Ebert as President.

The terms of the Armistice were little better than an unconditional surrender but the majority of the German people undoubtedly believed that the peace would finally be made on the basis of President Wilson's famous 'Fourteen Points', a draft settlement which he had published in January as being in his opinion fair and reasonable. These 'Points' included the freedom of the seas, general disarmament, "an impartial adjustment of all colonial claims" and, by omission, they appeared to imply that there were to be no annexations or indemnities.

The enunciation of this programme, together with other statements of a similar character made since America's entry into the war, had had a great effect upon the peoples of the Allied nations. They did not know of the network of secret treaties and understandings — many of them mutually contradictory.... by which their governments had in anticipation divided the spoils. At a time when the fine phrases that had served to glorify the commencement of the war were wearing thin, Wilson's programme had come to invest the struggle with a new halo of idealism and had helped to revive the belief that the war was being fought in defense of justice and democracy. The ruling classes were quite prepared to encourage this belief. It received its deathblow when the wrangling at the Versailles Peace Conference brought into the light the real objectives, the openly imperialist aims of the bourgeoisie of the conquering Powers.

The home front

Like the fellow members of the Second International the British Labor Party surrendered to the government and the ruling class upon the outbreak of war, in 1910, when the danger of a war of the kind which broke out in 1914 was already apparent, the International and its Basle Congress had passed a resolution in which all the socialist parties affirmed that in the case of war it was "their duty to intervene in favor of its speedy termination and with all their powers to utilize the political and economic crisis created by the war to arouse the people and thereby to hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule." On the very eve of war the terms of this pledge were re-affirmed at a huge Trafalgar Square demonstration where Keir Hardie and Arthur Henderson were among the speakers. Similar demonstrations were held in many big towns.

But before the end of August the Labour Party had decided to support the Government's recruiting campaign, and, far from attempting to "arouse the people" the Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress decided:

"That an immediate effort be made to terminate all existing disputes, whether strikes or lock-outs, and wherever new points of difficulty arise during the war a serious attempt should be made by all concerned to reach an amicable settlement before resorting to strikes or lockouts.

These capitulations left the workers leaderless and bewildered and did perhaps more than anything else to convince them of the correctness of the official propaganda about the character of the war. Of all the European Socialist Parties only the Bolsheviks carried on the struggle against war on revolutionary lines. Elsewhere such opposition was confined to small groups and to individuals like Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in Germany, Connolly in Ireland and John McLean in Scotland. In England opposition to the war often took the peculiar form of pacifism.

The resolution quoted above was soon strengthened by direct agreement with the government for the prevention of strikes and by the surrender of Trade Union safeguards that had taken generations of struggle to secure. Compulsory arbitration was enforced and strikes were declared illegal in a number of industries. Under the Defense of the Realm Act (D.O. R.A.) a complete censorship was imposed which confined the Left press to propaganda of the most general kind and even then left it open to frequent attacks and suppression. Later when the Liberal Government was replaced by 'National' coalition, leading members of the Labour Party, including Henderson and Clynes, became members of these governments alongside of Churchill, Lloyd George, Carson and Bonar Law.

The surrender of the Trade Union machinery into the hands of the Government facilitated the making over of the whole economy of the country for war. Government

control was established over shipping and rai1way and over the raw materials most important for war purposes, such as cotton, iron and steel. A large measure of State capitalism accelerated the progress towards monopoly and the concentration of capital noted already as one of the features of Imperialism. Great trusts and combines, especially in the metal and chemical (i.e. explosives and poison gas) industries were fostered by the super-profits earned by the largest concerns. Capital was freely watered and a large proportion of the profits, in order to avoid taxation, ware used for the construction of new plant and factories which in many cases were of little use in time of peace.

Other factories were constructed by the Government and sold after the war to the combines for a fraction of the original cost.

The war thus gave industry an artificial prosperity which prepared the way for the great depression which followed. The transition from boom to slump was all the more acute because the industrial production of the war years was concentrated upon goods of no general utility and was based upon credit. Nearly £7,000,000,000 was added to the National Debt between 1914 and 1918, leaving a permanent burden upon industry which became relatively heavier as prices tell from the heights to which wartime inflation raised them. The general effect of the War was therefore to increase the concentration of British capitalism without increasing its efficiency or real strength.

During the first few months of the War strikes almost ceased, prices rose rapidly, while wages lagged far behind. There was considerable unemployment till recruiting and the needs of war industries had cancelled out the effects of the initial dislocation. In February new signs of life appeared in the great engineering center of the Clyde, under the leadership of the Shop Stewards' Movement which had taken the position left empty by the official Union Meadership. The wartime strikes were at first entirely unpolitical, that is, they were directed not against the War but against economic grievances. Later, when the struggle against conscription, which was introduced by installments between the autumn of 1915 and the spring of l916~ began, and, even more, after the Russian Revolution, they took on a more political character. From the start, however, many of the leaders Like McLean, were avowed revolutionaries and anti -militarists.

The February strikes on the Clyde won from the Government a wage advance of Id. an hour. They also inspired it to pass the Munitions Act, by which a number of industries were proclaimed as war industries and strikes in them made illegal. The Act was challenged successfully in July 1915 by 200,000 miners in South Wales who struck for a week and won a new agreement.

The Clyde continued to be the main center of agitation. The Shop Stewards had organized themselves into a body called the Clyde Workers' Committee which rapidly became the spokesman for the whole area. A rent strike, supported by well-timed industrial action, put an end to the worst exactions of the Glasgow landlords and forced the Government to pass Rent

Restriction Act. All through 1915 there were constant strikes which neither Government nor Union officials could prevent. Early in 1916, and largely owing to weaknesses within the Committee, the Government was able to intervene. The Committee's paper The Worker was suppressed, and the most active leaders of the agitation were deported to other areas or imprisoned, John MacLean receiving a sentence of three years. From this time Sheffield became the main storm center.

In November 10,000 men struck successfully to secure the release of a worker who had been conscripted into the Army. The greatest strike of all took place in May, 1917 when

250,000 engineers from almost every center in England ceased work in protest against the dilution of labour and a proposed extension of conscription. The Government arrested the strike leaders and the breaking away of some of the less strongly organized towns led to defeat after a struggle lasting two weeks.

By this time the news of the Russian Revolution had become known everywhere, and great mass meetings and demonstrations left no doubt as to the sympathy of the British workers. So strong was this that at a Convention held at Leeds in the beginning of June, 1,150 delegates were present representing every section of the Labour Movement. More remarkable still was the spectacle of MacDonald and Snowden taking a leading part in the proceedings and helping to pass resolution in favor of the setting up of workmen's and soldiers' councils (which people in Britain were just beginning to learn to call Soviets) all over the country. Another indication of the changed feelings of the people was Henderson's decision that the time had come when it was wise for him to resign from the War Cabinet. The reactionaries, who had been able to retain control at the Leeds Convention by a cleverly calculated shift to the Left, remained strong enough to prevent its decisions being carried out, and when the Bolsheviks seized power in November they adopted an openly hostile attitude to the new Soviet Republic. Among the rank and file support continued to grow, though it had little opportunity to take any practical form till after the Armistice. The Shop Stewards' Movement was, however, active in propaganda to secure support for the Bolshevik ***appeal*** for peace**.**

In 1919 there was widespread opposition to the action of Lloyd George's Government in sending an expedition to Archangel against the Bolsheviks. In many *cases* soldiers ordered to this new front mutinied and refused, and there were even mutinies among the troops already there. The formation of a national 'Hands off Russia' Committee forced the Government to withdraw its forces and cease from direct intervention. It continued to support with money and supplies the White armies who were fighting against the Soviet Government in many parts

This indirect t intervention reached its highest point when Poland was encouraged to invade Russia in 1920. The British workers replied by setting up Councils of Action, and the refusal of the London Dockers to load the S.S. Jolly George with munitions for Poland caught the imagination of the whole country and carried the agitation to its greatest heights. In August, when the Poles wore being driven back, Lloyd George threatened the Soviet Government with war unless their troops withdrew. Immediately this threat became known a special conference of the Labour Party and the T. U. C. met and decided in favor of a general strike t_0 *prevent* war. Lloyd George at once abandoned his attitude and advised the Poles to make peace.

In Ireland the reaction to the war was somewhat different. While Redmond and the bourgeois Nationalists supported England and turned themselves into recruiting agents, the left wing of the Volunteers and Conniv opposed the war and prepared for an armed rising. Thee were ready, if necessary, to seek German aid as the United Tradesmen had sought that of France. At the same time, Connolly had no illusions about German Imperialism, and his attitude was crystallized in the famous slogan: "We serve neither King nor Kaiser, but Ireland."

Within the Volunteers there were further differences, one section led by Pearse wishing to strike as early as possible and a second following McNeill preferring to remain passive in the hope of extorting concessions after the war. The differences reached such a pitch that when a rising was decided upon at Easter 1916, McNeill sent out a countermanding order

with the result that the rebel forces were completely disorganized. Even so, and although the rising was almost confined to Dublin, it took 20.000 troops a week to suppress it. Pearse, Connolly and most of the other leaders were taken prisoner and executed.

The crushing of the Easter Rising proved to be the beginning rater than the end of the rebellion in Ireland. During the next two years the Labour and National movements grew steadily. In 1918 an attempt to extend conscription to Ireland was defeated by a General Strike. The new movement developed, however, largely under the leadership of the Sinn Fein Party, a bourgeois Nationalist orcars2tion that was opposed to English rule but had taken no part in the 1916 rebellion. The Sinn 1cm leaders were careful to prevent any class or agrarian element from intruding itself into the guerilla war which lasted from 1.919 to 1921. For this reason a gap was made between the masses ~ the leadership of the rebellion and the way was opened for the Treaty of December 1921 by which the Free State was set up. The essence of the Treaty was that the dominant sections of the Irish bourgeoisie were granted certain, for them, valuable concessions by the English Government, and, in return, undertook the task of suppressing the genuine movement of revolt among the workers and peasants, which was showing signs of growing out of control and was as dangerous to them as to the English.

The end of the War came at a time when the situation was full of anxiety for the Government. Opposition to war and sympathy for the Russian Revolution were increasing. Tile Shop Stewards were perfecting a national organization. A serious naval mutiny was only just prevented by concessions, and, in September, the London police struck for higher wages. It was this general unrest, generally felt and much more serious than the surface reactions indicate, that impelled the Labour Party to prepare its first avowedly Socialist programme, Labour and the New Social Order. It was true that its Socialism was extremely vague and remote, but it served as a focus and at the same time for a distraction to the universal desire of the people for a different life.

No sooner was the War ended than a regular epidemic of mutinies broke out in the Army. The first began at Shoreham only two days after the Armistice and before long the revolt had spread to scores of camps in France and all over the South of England. The most determined units were hastily demobilized and the political inexperience of the leaders prevented the mutinies from having more than local success, but they caused the greatest alarm in the ranks of the Government.

No one sensed the changed atmosphere better than Lloyd George, with his almost uncanny capacity for gauging the temper of the masses. His appreciation of the danger of revolution is shown by a memorandum, drawn up a little later, in which he declared:

"Europe is filled with revolutionary ideas. A feeling not of depression, but of passion and revolt reigns in the breasts of the working class against the conditions that prevailed before the War. The whole existing system, political, social and economic, is regarded with distrust by the whole population of Europe.'

It was this sense of urgency which led him to seek a snap decision in the Khaki Election of 1918, held while the soldiers were still in the main unable to vote and thousands of the newly enfranchised electors were not yet on the register. He prepared a programme in which social demagogy (houses for all and a land fit for heroes) was blended with a more deliberately evil attempt to turn the existing unrest into hatred of Germany. Under these conditions an overwhelming success was inevitable, though the Labour Party polled two and a quarter million votes and returned fifty-seven Members. Lloyd George obtained his

majority, and, with it, what could be construed as a mandate for the crazy and disastrous Versailles settlement.

With the ending of the war and, above all, with the establishment of the first Socialist State in the Soviet Union, Britain, like the world as a whole, enters a new historical epoch.

The age of Imperialism begins to pass into the 4e of the general crisis of Capitalism and of the transition from capitalism to socialism. With the problem and events of this new epoch it would be impossible for this book to deal adequately without becoming quite different in scope and character, but I hope that, by giving some account of preceding events, it will have made some contribution to making them more understandable.