



# Spontaneous European Modernization: Phase One

## *The Process of Change Begins*

**M**odernization challenges tradition and sets in motion patterns of cultural change that require the complete reintegration of a society's fundamental institutions. Tradition itself is a complex set of practices handed down from generation to generation that become unquestioned behaviors because traditional people believe them to be sacred. The cultural changes set in motion by modernization challenged these traditional behaviors and eroded their sacred underpinning through doubt. Once doubt took hold, modernization raised the questions that led a society to seek innovative and transformative solutions.

These transformative solutions then caused a reintegration of a modernizing society's basic institutions that reflected the realities of culture itself. Culture is a functional integration of those basic practices that make up a society's economy, status system, political design, and religious and intellectual beliefs. In the case of Europe, modernization began when tradition collapsed in the face of a series of simultaneous institutional changes. These changes included a reconfiguration of European society as a result of the new Atlantic trade routes opened by Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama, which fuelled economic growth that financed the contemporaneous changes caused by the Reformation, which then inspired religious and dynastic disputes

that in turn opened space for the redefinition of European political society. Finally, the combination of all these massive intersecting changes accelerated existing doubts that then raised questions that European tradition could not answer.

Europe's simultaneous institutional changes comprised an economic revolution that launched a global realignment of trade (1492–1763), while a military revolution (1495–1648) bestowed upon European monarchs a monopoly on coercion that ultimately granted them sovereignty. Meanwhile, the Reformation (1517–1648) released intense religious passions that culminated in the collapse of Catholic orthodoxy, which, in turn, fuelled religious warfare that reinforced changes already underway in the military and in politics. Also, with the breakdown of this religious orthodoxy, a new intellectual space opened for science, permitting sufficient freedom of inquiry to inspire a complete redefinition of Europeans' understanding of the universe (1543–1687). This radical redefinition of the universe launched by science, in turn, generated an intellectual response called the Enlightenment (1690–1789) that created yet another intellectual weapon called public opinion that accelerated political change. Each of these changes complemented the others and heightened their combined effect, allowing Europe to embark upon a process of spontane-

ous modernization that few understood at the time it occurred. Ultimately the significance of these combined changes became clear to later generations.

### **Simultaneous Revolutions: Phase I, New Trade Routes**

The old trade routes prior to 1492 relied on a complex system of exchanges that integrated ancient and medieval markets in Eurasia and Africa, which required trekking through numerous cultural zones, crossing an equally complex pattern of political borders, and using different vehicles to accommodate travel over land, on rivers, and across oceans and seas. During the Late Middle Ages (1300–1450), goods made their way from Europe to Yuan and Ming China (1260–1368 and 1368–1644, respectively) or to the Delhi Sultanate of India (1206–1526) and the subcontinent's fragmented set of subordinate Muslim states. Goods thus crossed countless frontiers and passed through numerous exchanges. Few products made it all the way from one end of this commercial system to the other, while each exchange along the way added the expense of an intermediate profit to the final price when the last sale was made.

Merchants in London or Novgorod, for example, might begin the commercial process by loading their cargoes aboard ships, sail the North or Baltic seas respectively, and make their way to Flanders or the northern German coast. There the cargo would be unloaded and sold to merchants in Bruges, Flanders, or Bremen in the Holy Roman Empire. Using the Bruges route as the first illustration of an old trade pattern, the English or Russian cargo might be sold in Flanders, and new merchandise purchased and sent on to Paris and then Chalons as it crossed France. From Chalons, after more intermediate sales, the merchandise would then cross the Alps into Milan and journey on to Genoa. Once in Genoa, the cargo would leave for Alexandria and the Red Sea. Since Alexandria was a Muslim city, new, Muslim merchants would handle the sale and transport the goods on oceangoing vessels as they set off for Calicut, India, while local political rulers along the route would impose heavy taxes. Arriving in India, the sales there would enable the sellers to purchase the spices

for which India was famous, and a return trip would be charted.

If merchants chose the Bremen route, the cargo, or merchandise purchased, would then make its way to Augsburg as these goods crossed the Holy Roman Empire. From Augsburg, the cargo would travel to Venice, where Italian merchants would load it onto ships and sail for Constantinople. In this city, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, the Eastern Roman Emperor would impose his share of taxes and then send the cargo on its way. From Constantinople, the merchandise would next sail for Tara on the Crimean coast and move up the Volga River to Sarai, the capital of the Golden Horde, a Mongol tribe. The Golden Horde had conquered Russia between 1237 and 1240 and imposed taxes on all the cargoes that crossed their domain. Once in Golden Horde territory, the cargo would then move on to Urgeni, Bukhara, and Samarkand. From Samarkand, the goods would cross into Yuan China, another Mongol realm. Once inside China, the goods would travel to Armand and on to Dadu, the Mongol name for Beijing. Later, after the fall of the Yuan in 1368, the cargo would move on to Nanjing, the capital of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644).

Yet another route would have been to land the cargo from London or Novgorod in Flanders. Then merchants would send it to Cologne, where it would make its way to Milan and Genoa and then on to Alexandria. Once in Alexandria, the goods would be shipped to Tyre on the Syrian coast, transported to Damascus, and then moved up to Aleppo, Turkey. From Aleppo, the merchandise would cross Turkey to Baghdad, journey to Meshed in Afghanistan and go onto Bukhara. From Bukhara, the goods would follow the route through Mongol territory into China described in the preceding paragraph.

Each trip along these complex routes incurred numerous expenses: first, the cost of labor involved in loading and unloading at each port or market; second, the necessity of transferring the cargo to vehicles that could cross land, travel on rivers, and sail across seas; and third, paying the various taxes imposed on the merchants as they cross different political borders. Added to the overall cost of trade was the final price of the items sold at the end of their trip; this price included all the additional profits derived from all the intermediate sales of the goods that started in London

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or Novgorod and made their way through so many markets on their way to China or India.

Beyond these costs, the necessity of shifting from overland travel to river and oceangoing vessels caused friction that reduced the total volume of goods moving through these different commercial mediums. Because each route required land travel and land travel imposed the highest degree of friction, it set an absolute limit on the total amount of cargo merchants could carry. Furthermore, moving from Catholic Europe into Muslim Turkey, Egypt, India, Persia, and Afghanistan, and on to Mongol Central Asia and China or to Ming China (restored to Chinese control) required numerous diplomatic gifts and bribes. Crossing so many religious and cultural frontiers required merchants to negotiate the underlying hostilities between these cultural zones and increased the expenses requisite to travel. Therefore, taken all together, the old trade routes made goods transported throughout Eurasia extremely expensive and confined this trade to luxury items only. These were items that only the rich could afford.

In contrast, the new trade routes opened by Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama reversed these expenses, simplified the transport of goods, eliminated the need to cross foreign borders, and completely redefined global exchanges. From Europe's perspective, the route discovered by Christopher Columbus opened two new continents and made available, through conquest, a vast new abundance of resources and precious metals that revolutionized European commerce. Meanwhile, Vasco da Gama's route around Africa eliminated the need to cross the European continent, the Mediterranean Sea, the Middle East, and Central Asia in order to reach India or China. Furthermore, the da Gama route also eliminated the need to travel across land, reduced friction, and increased the volume of trade. Finally, since both new trade routes utilized only oceangoing vessels, both eliminated political barriers to travel. Only foreign resistance in a port of call remained to restrict contact between cultures.

Thus, since these new trade routes made available to Europe every port in the world except those which were seasonally ice-bound, the only obstacle to trade lay in the reaction European sailors, soldiers, and merchants might receive when they arrived at their des-

tinuation. Also, such a sharp reduction in the foreign political obstacles to commerce, plus the equally sharp reduction in the expenses of transport, despite the loss of ships at sea, encouraged greater intercultural contact initiated by Europeans. Furthermore, the volume of goods carried by Europeans increased because of the reduced friction, giving them an

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unequaled competitive edge in global trade. Finally, as one might expect, a slow but steady realignment of worldwide exchanges toward Europe began.

### **Simultaneous Revolutions, Phase II: Biology and Europe**

While Europe's new trade routes provided an unobstructed pathway to the entire world, they also transferred pathogens and domesticated plants and animals to new geographic locations. The most dramatic of these transfers began when Columbus opened the route to the western hemisphere; this route breached the near absolute isolation of Native American cultures. Because of this breach, Native Americans suffered a demographic crisis because of the new diseases from Europe, which claimed the lives of an unprecedented number of human beings. In contrast, Europe received a new supply of plants and animals that supported a population explosion that, in turn, facilitated European migrations to the western hemisphere that launched imperial adventures.

Called the Columbian Exchange, this exchange of germs for food reshaped global population dynamics. The story of the diseases that devastated the western hemisphere, however, belongs in chapter 19 where the Europe-



an impact on the Americas is fully discussed. Here the issue is population dynamics in Europe. The reason why a discussion of European population dynamics is important in this location of the text is because growing human numbers in Europe supplied European kings with the surplus people needed to colonize the western hemisphere. At the same time, the increase in human numbers in Europe also created pressures at home that accelerated modernization.

Columbus' new trade routes provided new foods from the western hemisphere that caused a population explosion in Europe. These new foods included corn, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, peanuts, papayas, guavas, avocados, cacao, cassava, squash, and beans, while cod caught off the Labrador Shelf supplemented the protein available to Europeans. It takes time for new foods to work their way onto the menu in places where a traditional diet has long been in place; this slowness results from the resistance to change that tradition itself imposes. Yet, population pressures combined with the rising cost of living in Europe drove the poor of Europe to experiment with tastes they normally would have avoided. The steady inflationary pressures that raised the cost of a living for more than a century after 1500—historians call this a “price revolution”—were caused by the sudden influx of gold and silver into Europe from the Americas and Africa.

Rising food prices stimulated the introduction of new plants from abroad that Europeans began to cultivate. Once grown, these plants then encouraged changes in traditional European eating habits. Such changes in part reflected the forces of population pressure and inflation in breaking down centuries-old dietary practices. Simultaneously, people

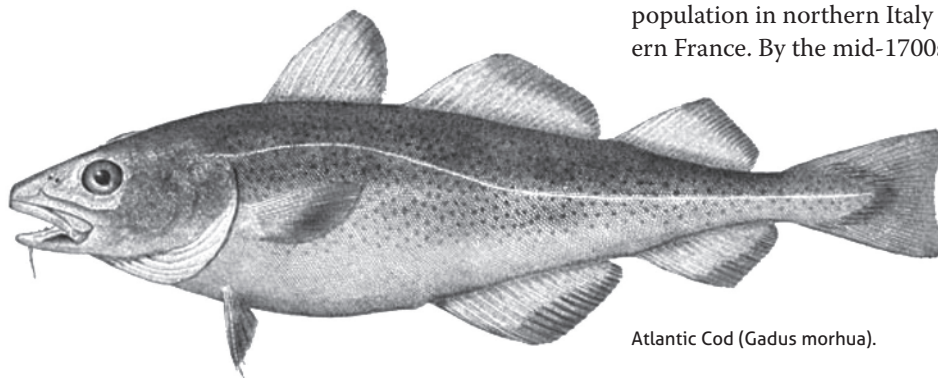
who would have normally suffered starvation because of the rising cost of living now found new foods available to eat.

Although cod was not new to the European diet, the lavish new supplies brought from the Newfoundland breeding grounds had a profound effect on Europe's calorie intake. Exploited for centuries by Basque whalers, these massive fisheries off the coast of northeastern Canada became known to the rest of the world after Jacques Cartier's voyage of 1534, under the flag of Francis I of France. Cod are enormously prolific fish; in the sixteenth century, they spawned in the waters off Newfoundland, generating one hundred thousand eggs per female, and would have flooded the high seas with their offspring if this fish were not a major portion of the European diet. This fishery went a long way to easing the pressures of inflation, as dried and pickled cod made the voyage to Europe and became part of the expanding population's diet.

In the meantime, the poorest people in Europe found that they had to experiment with new foods to stave off starvation as the cost of living rose. The introduction of corn (i.e., maize), potatoes, and tomatoes to Europe illustrates this point. The calories available in these new food sources dramatically changed the population dynamics of Europe.

Corn arrived in Europe when Columbus returned from the Americas. As a food source, corn provided numerous benefits, two of which were its extremely high yield (about three times more than wheat), and its ability to reduce the number of fallow fields during a growing season because of its deep roots. These deep roots penetrated the soil more thoroughly than those of wheat and took fewer nutrients from the land, allowing corn to flourish where wheat did not.

By the late 1600s, corn fed a growing population in northern Italy and southwestern France. By the mid-1700s, corn spread



Atlantic Cod (*Gadus morhua*).

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throughout Spain and Portugal. And by 1800, corn fed all of Europe. But corn did not travel to the rest of Europe directly from Spain. Rather, it followed a circuitous route before it became part of the European diet.

Corn went from Spain to southwestern France and then on to northern Italy. From there, the grain made its way into the Middle East to take root in Syria, the Lebanese coast, and Egypt. From the Middle East, corn then re-entered Europe, spreading into the Balkans and then throughout Central Europe, where the serfs cultivated the plant to supplement their diet. Since corn was new to all these areas, the plant went untaxed until the eighteenth century. Accordingly, European peasants had access to a food that they could eat without having to pay the fees associated with traditional cereal grains.

Also important, the potato and tomato made a strong impression on Europe in general, but on the Irish and Italians in particular. The potato first entered Europe through Spain and Italy in 1565. It next traveled to the Low Countries (today's Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg), where it arrived in 1587. One year later, the potato moved into the German territories. And by the end of the sixteenth century, it entered England and France.

The potato, however, took a long time to come into common use in Europe because it initially scared potential consumers. The potato belongs to the botanical family called Solanaceae, which contains several poisonous members; this fact scared Europeans. Nonetheless, the potato overcame these fears and became one of the most popular foods eaten in Europe.

The potato served Europe well thanks to its ability to grow in gardens instead of requiring fields, which could therefore be dedicated to wheat. Also, the potato grew spontaneously without much care, matured quickly, and generated a spectacular yield. The potato produced a harvest 10.6 times greater than wheat and 9.6 times greater than rye. The potato also withstood fluctuations in weather far more heartily than any of the grain cereals and was a reliable source of famine relief when the climate suddenly turned cold. By 1664, some authors in Europe spoke of the potato as an insurance policy against starvation should the regular European harvest fail.

The potato is most famously associated with the Irish; they began cultivating it as the principal staple of their diet long before the rest of Europe because they faced dire economic and political restrictions imposed on them by the English (see below). The rest of Europe gradually followed the Irish example as Europeans discovered the numerous advantages the potato offered. Keep in mind that Europe's inhabitants lived through a mini-ice age that lasted from 1300 to 1850. This cold snap devastated wheat and barley crops periodically after 1300 because a related shift in the Atlantic currents shortened the grow-

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ing season and caused summer storms. These storms hit just when the harvest was ripe for collecting and battered Europe cereal plants down in the fields, where they spoiled. Not only did these storms destroy a year's worth of labor, but they also eliminated nearly all the food for the next winter. The resulting hunger drove first the Irish and later the rest of Europe to ignore their fears about the potato and begin to cultivate it.

In contrast to the potato, the tomato entered Italy in the sixteenth century via Naples, where southern Italians began eating this American fruit. Southern Italians used the tomato because they could not afford the cream that wealthier northern Italians consumed in their sauces. Southern Italians substituted what they called "the golden apple" for cream, obtaining a key new ingredient in their cooking and substantially increasing their

caloric intake. Hence, tomatoes, like potatoes, sustained life in a specific location where starvation would have otherwise reduced human numbers. Once again the poor in one region developed a new diet before the rest of Europe caught on.

The combination of the rising cost of living plus the lower price of new crops from the Americas changed eating habits in Europe and sustained a growing population. From 1490 to 1590, Europeans began a recovery from the bubonic plague (1347–1352), which

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killed 40 percent of their population. In 1490, Europe was home to some 81 million people; this number grew to 100 million by 1590, a 23 percent increase. From 1600 to 1650, however, European numbers only rose to 109 million, a minor increase of 8.25 percent; this slowing of population growth resulted from another prolonged cold period, the destructive force of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), and a major economic recession. Then from 1650 to 1700, these numbers rose slightly again, growing to 120 million, or a 9 percent increase, again constrained by the continued poor climate and a slow economy. Finally, from 1700 to 1800, Europeans numbers increased to 190 million as they fully accepted all the new foods from the Americas. This sudden new growth spurt represented an increase of 36 percent. Hence, while Native Americans died by the millions (see chapter 18), Europeans increased by the millions. For Europe, this situation made migration to the western hemisphere an outlet for the population pressures caused by the new trade routes.

Also, rapid periodic population growth in any traditional culture strains the inherited occupational structure of that society while causing the price of necessities to rise. Since tradition resists change and population pressure demands it, the increased human

numbers in Europe drove Europeans to seek alternatives to their inherited practices. Hence, these pressures fuelled the simultaneous revolutions that modernized the economic, social, political, religious, and intellectual landscape of Europe.

## Simultaneous Revolutions: Phase III, Warfare, Politics, and Religion

While human numbers in Europe increased as Native American numbers fell, surplus Europeans who did not migrate to the western hemisphere to participate in the colonial side of the commercial revolution (1492–1763) witnessed the religious architecture of their continent buckle and collapse. As the Catholic Church splintered under reform pressures during the Reformation (1517–1648), religious disputes fuelled a series of wars from 1556 to 1684 that accelerated a political process already underway during the Late Middle Ages (1300–1450). This political process funneled military power into the hands of Europe's princes and kings by developing a link between chartered cities, commerce, taxation, knight-killing weapons, and mercenaries.

A chartered city was one that became a corporation within a king's domain and supplied him with taxes in compensation for his act of legal recognition. The king, in turn, used his new tax revenues to refine his military arsenal by purchasing knight-killing weapons such as the crossbow, which shot bolts that penetrated armor; the pike, which could be used to unhorse a knight and subject him to an infantry assault; and the longbow, whose arrows killed the knight's horse and exposed him to the pike. Coupled with these weapons were cannons and gunpowder, which could destroy a castle and expose a knight to the king's wrath.

Carried by mercenaries, or soldiers for hire, these weapons gave a king a monopoly on coercion within his realm so that he could tap into the resources of his domain to take on new political and commercial projects. Accordingly, the concentration of power in the hands of kings, plus the link between power and money, encouraged investments in overseas exploration, which led to the development of the new trade routes described above and fuelled the European conquests in the Americas, which in turn accelerated the commercial revolution. Finally, the intense religious warfare sparked by the Reformation pitted Catho-

lics against Protestants and not only helped to refine military practices and improve royal armies, but also undermined papal authority and removed the pope as a rival to the kings of European states.

The complex web of interwoven changes that linked the history of war to the rise of royal authority, which, in turn, supported the colonial efforts that spread European outposts all over the world, combined to create the concept of sovereignty. Sovereignty identified the king as the ultimate authority in the state and removed the pope from politics. Sovereignty also integrated the territory that lay under a king's domain, which became known as "the territorial state." The territorial state took its name from the incorporation of old feudal estates into a new, integrated political system that kings commanded—provided that they could find a way to finance their new governments.

Commerce, and the need to raise taxes to finance the state, required a king to intimidate, as well as cajole and recruit, the great men of his realm to support his efforts to unify his political and religious institutions. Meanwhile, the conflict over religion caused by the Reformation also provided kings with the opportunity to enlist the aid of their general populations in what often appeared to be a struggle of religious conscience. Such intense struggles gave kings the possibility of shaping their states to their liking, if they could maintain popular support for their religious enterprises and secure access to the financing needed to meet the rising cost of government. If successful, these kings indeed became the rulers of true territorial states.

The territorial state emerged after nearly a century of warfare between Catholics and Protestants (1556–1648) that helped European monarchs refine their royal armies as instruments of coercion. The coercive power of the army provided the monarch with an implicit threat of reprisal as he strove to justify his religious and political policies after the era of intense warfare ceased. Combined with the intellectual consequences of the scientific revolution (1543–1687) and the Enlightenment (1690–1789) (see chapter 19), the territorial state emerged after 1648 to offer Europeans a respite from the religious violence of the Reformation. It gave them a chance to catch their breath and prepare for the next great

stage in modernization (the French Revolution, 1789–1815, and British industrialization, 1750–1850; see chapter 20).

As an era of temporary calm before another great modernizing storm, the territorial state marked a brief period (1648–1789) when Europeans agreed to talk to one another to settle their differences, rather than use warfare. To achieve this level of calm, however,

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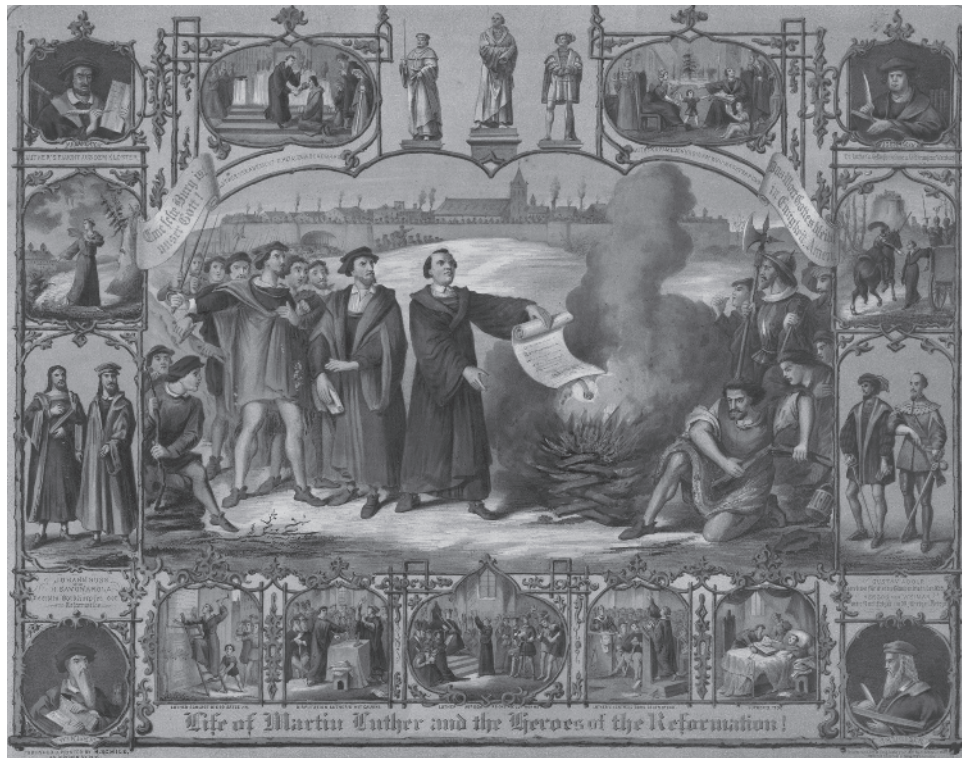
Europeans first had to experience the cauldron of religious conflict in order to remove the residue of a feudal system from the fabric of their society. The steps taken to achieve this transformation of the European political landscape included the concentration of military and financial power in the hands of kings and the integration of political authority in a realm under one set of governmental institutions. Fundamental to this process of political change were the integration of commercial capitalism and the political consequences of the Reformation.

### ***The Reformation: A Conflict over Salvation***

The Reformation pitted against each other two forms of Christianity that proposed opposite routes to salvation. Catholics relied on the sacraments, while Protestants chose faith. The sacraments involved the rituals of the Catholic Church and a reliance on the special competence of a priest to transform the faithful from sinners into righteous worshipers through the spiritual and physical consequences of religious ceremonies. In contrast, Protestants relied on the healing powers of Christ, which worked when the adherent surrendered his or her will completely to God as an expression of pure faith in His Son's infinite mercy. Such faith made each worshiper capable of



Martin Luther burning the papal bull of excommunication, with vignettes from Luther's life and portraits of Hus, Savonarola, Wycliffe, Cruciger, Melanchton, Bugenhagen, Gustav Adolf, & Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar.



achieving salvation without the intervention of a priest. Accordingly, Catholics relied on external ceremonies and the clergy, while Protestants relied on internal submission to God and the sincerity of their faith.

The sacraments had evolved over the long history of the Catholic Church and comprised a series of rituals focused on the passages of life that prepared worshipers for salvation: baptism occurred after birth and removed original sin; confirmation occurred at puberty and acknowledged entry into adulthood; marriage followed adulthood and sanctioned sexual passions; and extreme unction occurred prior to death to cleanse the soul as it exited this world. Two further sacraments repaired the soul on a daily basis, if needed: first, the Eucharist occurred during the mass, where the worshiper received the host in the form of bread dipped in wine; the miracle of transubstantiation changed this sacred food into the body and blood of Christ. Second, penance was the act of confession, in which worshipers voluntarily revealed their sins and sought absolution. If done out of love for God, or contrition, the ritual of confession and absolution freed the soul from sin; if done out of fear of God, or attrition, then the soul retained a fraction of the sin, which meant that the worshiper

would have to suffer through a stay in purgatory after death. Finally, priests experienced the sacrament of holy orders, which elevated them out of the laity, distinguished them from all other Catholics, and bestowed upon them the spiritual capacity to perform the church's sacred rituals to save their flock.

The sacraments made attending church mandatory. Since only the priest could administer them and since such rituals alone could cleanse the soul of the stain of sin, worshipers had to participate in these rituals to attain salvation. Also, since the priest existed within an established Church hierarchy that took spiritual guidance from the pope, and since the pope was the vicar of Christ on Earth, then the pope's judgment was equated with God's majestic powers, giving the pope the aura of infallibility. Long established practice within the Church reinforced this aura of infallibility until it became Church doctrine; this aura made the pope the religious conscience of Europe during the Middle Ages.

In contrast, the Protestants initially followed the teachings of Martin Luther (1483–1546), who focused solely on faith. Luther's method of achieving salvation came from his study of the Bible; there he sought an answer to a personal question: how could he as a sinner earn salvation using the sacraments when

his soul was already deeply mired in spiritual corruption? From Luther's perspective, every act performed by a sinner was already thoroughly contaminated and generated stained results that could never achieve the purity God required in return for salvation. Therefore, sin had already condemned the sinner's efforts to failure before he participated in the sacraments.

In his review of Paul of Tarsus's message in the New Testament, Luther stumbled upon the passage called The True Gates of Paradise (Romans 1:17). This passage states, "Man is justified by faith alone." Trained as a lawyer prior to becoming a monk, Luther interpreted the verb *justified* to mean *judged*. He concluded that God judged humanity solely by the sinner's faith in Jesus. Hence, faith and faith alone saved the sinner; faith permitted the sinner to utterly surrender to Christ and receive His infinite mercy. This mercy cleansed the soul and granted the sinner grace.

While Martin Luther defined faith for the Protestants, John Calvin (1509–1564) refined Protestant practices and spread Luther's message beyond Germany, the realm of Lutheranism. Developing a vision of God as the absolute sovereign of the universe whose will was totally unknown, Calvin concluded that humanity was utterly helpless in its quest for salvation because of its contamination with original sin. As a result, people could only be saved by the grace of God through the redemption made possible by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Divine law had been given to humanity as a means to reveal the utter helplessness of each individual, and it thus served as a warning to all sinners that a life of absolute submission and complete obedience to God's will was the sole means of acquiring the grace needed for salvation. This grace, however, came as a gift from God and could not be earned, no matter how hard the sinner might try.

Faith in God's infinite mercy alone served as the signal that perhaps the supreme lord of the universe had selected an individual for salvation. Belief in the Holy Spirit as presented in scripture allowed a person to discover the *hope* that perhaps God might have selected him or her salvation. For Protestants, this hope, and not the sacraments, was the initial sign that God dwelled within a particular individual's heart. As this hope matured into faith, the possibility of grace occurred.

Calvin developed these beliefs as a young man but revised them over the course of his entire life. He completed his first explanation of his ideas, the book *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1535, when he was only 26. However, the idea of the power of faith was not fully refined until 1559 when he published the final edition. In that year, Calvin presented the doctrine of predestination, which became the hallmark of his religious system. For him, predestination was the logical consequence of God's absolute authority over everyone and everything.

As the eternal lawgiver who judged every event in the universe, God had a majesty that towered over human sin. Since humanity was completely worthless when compared to

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the purity of God, no one had the capacity to sway the divine judgment, because God already knew each individual's destiny—in other words, it was predestined. Therefore, the *true* Christian could only be saved by the direct intervention of God as part of the divine plan. Such an intervention occurred only when faith awakened in worshipers the exquisite hope that God had embraced them and would permit them to lead a life worthy of Jesus' sacrifice. Yet faith did not offer certainty; it only offered hope, required a constant discipline, and demanded the diligent reading of scripture.

According to Calvin, scripture induced faith in the righteous when the Holy Spirit touched their souls. These elect few sensed the divine presence through the hope inspired by studying the Bible. This hope filled them with the sensation that God might have chosen





Title page of Niccolò Machiavelli's "The Arte of Warre" illustrated with cavalries engaged in battle.

them. This was the first sign of grace, which overwhelmed the worshipper with the utter awe of God's majesty. Realizing the depth of original sin, these special worshipers understood the necessity of repentance and looked to Christ for redemption. Then, on the basis of the promises made in the New Testament, such an individual began a life of complete obedience to God's will.

Faith met the needs of the Protestants who followed Luther and Calvin, and this emphasis on faith led them to condemn all Catholic practices as mere distractions from the one, true path to salvation. The sacraments enabled the Catholics to enter paradise, so

they responded by condemning the Protestants for denying the true path to heaven and spreading a false interpretation of God's word. Both sides denounced each other as heresies, which denied the possibility of resolving their differences peacefully. Accordingly, both felt compelled by their religious conscience to rid Europe of the other by any means possible, including warfare.

### **Religious Warfare and Its Political Consequences**

Hence, Christendom split into hostile camps that proposed exactly opposite routes to salvation and heaven. These differences inspired the wars that swept through Europe for ninety-

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two years, from 1556 to 1648. Yet, warfare itself changed more than simply the religious landscape; it also redefined politics. Hence, war released forces of change that only well-armed rulers had a chance to control.

The wars that determined a kingdom's faith allowed some local monarchs to take power into their own hands, while others failed. As these successful kings discovered the potential power available to them through religious warfare, those who abandoned issues of faith in favor of the amoral thinking of science proved far more likely to survive than rulers trapped by their religious passions. These successful kings constituted a new social character called the *politique* personality.

Technically, the term *politique* referred to a faction of French Catholics and Protestants who objected to the political and economic mismanagement of their country during the era of religious civil war from 1562 to 1598. This *politique* party placed the common good of France above their religious differences and attempted to create a rational, scientific solution to their country's problems by shifting back and forth between the Catholic and Protestant leaders. The leading *politique* thinker, Jean Bodin (1530–1596), established the modern concept of sovereignty by arguing that every society needed one ultimate authority capable of imposing law, preferably with the consent of the people but by force if necessary. The term *politique* defined the modern political thinking of this group, but the term is used in this chapter to depict the reasonable yet amoral practices of a far more important coterie of people: the successful leaders who profited politically from the Reformation.

*Politique* individuals used Machiavelli's principle that "the ends justify the means" to achieve their goals (see chapter 14, volume one). Similarly, *politique* monarchs followed Machiavelli's advice and wore morality as a mask to cover their actions. The combination of these two strategies allowed *politique* kings to appear to be moral and justified their conduct while they achieved their political goals by whatever means possible.

At the heart of *politique* behavior was the use of reason alone to decide political issues. Practitioners of this new political conduct applied themselves to the process of solving problems in a dispassionate manner calculated solely for the purpose of success. Such

individuals were the first to discover that religious warfare could not offer either side a decisive victory and that religious pluralism would become the new political reality of Europe. When surviving kings finally came to this realization, they discovered that a careful, rational application of their material resources to the problem of acquiring power served best to achieve their political ends.

Like many of the intellectuals who began to appear as a result of the scientific revolution (1543–1687; see chapter 19), these *politique* kings concluded that religion itself was suspect as a political instrument. It became clear to them that Europe was no longer going to be dominated by a single, universal faith. Thus, fighting wars to enforce conformity both was wasteful financially and entailed unnecessary cruelty and carnage. After 1648, these *politique* monarchs redefined political authority in their realms. Achieving this new kind of political reality, however, took time.

The events that drew Europe into religious warfare between 1556 and 1648 involved dynastic rivalries that actually preceded this century of combat. Beginning with Charles VIII of France's invasion of Italy (1494–1495) to take possession of the land he claimed, the nature of warfare caused matters of faith and royal ownership of European estates to overlap. For example, after Charles VIII marched into Italy to claim Naples and Sicily, the Valois rulers of France fought the Habsburgs of Spain, the Netherlands, and the Holy Roman Empire over who would rule this peninsula. Using their control of their vast estates, the Habsburgs proved to be more than a match for the Valois of France as both dynasties turned Italy into a battlefield. Their struggle spanned the years between 1494 and 1559, when the Valois finally admitted military failure and relinquished their claim to lands in both Italy and the Low Countries. Yet, by the year 1559 the first phases of religious combat had erupted as Catholics and Protestants across Europe squared off to determine what form of Christianity their countries would embrace.

Meanwhile, the Valois' hunger for Italy and the religious strife that followed on the heels of France's failure to realize its dreams of conquest combined to transform the role of warfare in European politics. Between 1556 and 1648 every war fought in Europe



allowed the combatants to test and refine their weapons while consolidating power in the hands of the monarchy. The French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, Germans, Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Danes, Swedes, and Swiss all engaged in a pan-European struggle that destroyed obsolete feudal practices and advanced the modern forms of combat. Simultaneously, all types of regional weapons, tactics, and practices met one another on the battlefield when dynastic and religious rivalries burned their hottest. The intense military struggles of this era refined the means of violence, while kings and princes everywhere pressed their political claims. At the same time, continuous armed trials on the battlefield introduced new weapons like artillery and muskets that changed the nature of tactics and strategy. The result was the emergence of a new model of military might that defined the political landscape in the West between 1660 and 1789.

Only when the kings and princes of Europe had resolved their dynastic disputes did the pan-European era of violence officially subside. At that moment, the political developments that unfolded alongside Catholic and Protestant hostility could finally separate secular from religious issues. When this separation occurred, kings and princes everywhere agreed that political conduct could no longer be linked to establishing a universal church. In addition, each monarch had to be free to determine the religion of his own realm.

The various wars during the Reformation—the civil war in France, the Spanish invasion of the Netherlands, the Spanish Armada against England, and the Thirty Years War (1618–1648)—ultimately demonstrated that neither side could prevail. On the final battlefield, Germany, the Thirty Years War forced both sides to come to terms with the new religious reality of Europe: multiple churches and multiple sects. This new religious reality took shape in the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648.

The Treaty of Westphalia marked the end of Thirty Years War and the Reformation. Two articles from this treaty defined the political landscape of the territorial state after 1648. One stated that the pope would no longer participate in politics, and the other that the prince of each realm would determine the religion practiced there. The first article removed the pope as a political rival and left the king in

charge of his state's church. The second reinforced the first by explicitly making the prince the sole authority capable of defining religion within his state. Accordingly, both articles made the king the sole ruler and true sovereign of his domain, provided he could find the means to pay for the cost of his new military institutions.

## Simultaneous Revolutions: Phase IV, Commerce

While warfare, politics, and religion defined sovereignty in the territorial state, the economic examples of Spain and England illustrated the commercial conduct that determined financial success between the years 1492 and 1763. The central economic force that differentiated Spain's failure from England's success was inflation. Inflation created the specific set of circumstances that defined the state and private decisions that led to financial prosperity or culminated in pecuniary destitution during this era of commercial change.

Inflation occurs when demand exceeds supply. Between 1492 and 1648, demand exceeded supply in Europe because of a combination of economic forces: 1) the steady influx of gold and silver from the Americas from 1521 to 1619, which became the means to make purchases; 2) the steady growth in Europe's population from 1490 to 1590, which spurred the rising cost of necessities; and 3) the increased military expenses caused by religious warfare from 1556 to 1648. Each of these economic forces was a form of demand that caused the cost of luxuries and necessities in Europe to rise, increases that threatened the foundations of political power because of the growing cost of government.

Yet, inflation also created extraordinary business opportunities for those who responded to this steady rise in demand. Innovations in production that substantially increased supply in response to the growing demand would generate exceptional profits for those willing to risk investing in these changes. England's response to inflation involved taking these innovative risks, while Spain chose to maintain traditional practices; hence, England succeeded in commerce and Spain failed. Spain's failure was most obvious during the reign of Philip II (1556–1598).

During Philip II's reign, the Spanish consolidated their hold on Mexico and the

Andean Plateau in the western hemisphere, places rich in gold and silver. The potential wealth available to the new Spanish Empire was enormous because of their access to these new supplies of gold and silver, their occupation of rich American territories that could form new estates, and their initial ability to command the Atlantic trade route without competition. Philip's use of these resources, however, actually eroded his country's economy rather than generating the wealth that inflation might offer.

As Spain expanded its hold on its new colonies, gold and silver poured into the Spanish domain, of which 20 percent, or the royal fifth, went directly into the Spanish treasury. This abundance of precious metal released the slow and grinding force of inflation within Philip's kingdom. His habit of spending his new supplies of capital on religious wars squandered their productive potential. Also, his faith in the principle of *bullionism*, the belief that gold and silver were the sole source of wealth, led him to stockpile precious metals within his kingdom; this hoarding only accelerated inflation. The combination of bullionism and religious warfare meant he squandered his newfound wealth on destructive, non-productive enterprises while ignoring potential investments in new methods of increasing supply. Thus, as gold and silver poured into Spain, the productive base of the country's economy not only did not grow, it actually eroded because religious warfare sapped Spanish manpower and diverted investments away from economic innovation. As a result, Spain became a victim of the commercial revolution rather than its beneficiary.

Because the supply of money in Spain grew much faster than the supply of goods, inflation struck the Spanish with a severity far greater than anywhere else in Europe. Also, since Philip II stockpiled these precious metals instead of investing them in his productive base, Spain's economic growth never kept pace with Philip's continued import of gold and silver. Furthermore, since the degree of inflation is equal to the degree that demand exceeds supply, the value of capital that could have been used for production eroded as the supply of precious metals continued to exceed the supply of goods. Thus, as Spanish prices rose, the cost of living and the cost of production in Spain were the highest in Europe. This situation made Spanish goods more expensive

than foreign items and encouraged the Spanish to import cheaper foreign goods, stimulating foreign production while their own economy stagnated.

In short, although this huge influx of American gold and silver should have stimulated the Spanish economy, Spain experienced economic failure. Simultaneously, the extension of Spanish holdings in the western hemisphere, combined with her military commitments in Europe, led to the depopula-

Because the supply of money in Spain grew much faster than the supply of goods, inflation struck the Spanish with a severity far greater than anywhere else in Europe.

tion of Spain during its peak years of power. The flow of people to the colonies and into religious wars reduced the number of Spanish people while everyone else enjoyed population growth. Also, excessive taxation to pay for the wars on behalf of the Catholic cause and later interest payable on loans taken out for the same purpose added to Spain's costs. Spanish goods became even more expensive when compared to foreign commodities. As a result, even though Spain had launched the commercial revolution in 1492, Spain did not benefit from it.

While inflation pummeled the Spanish economy, Spain continued to invest in the *Mesta*, an aristocratic association of sheep owners. The Mesta had developed out of the religious wars of the Reconquest (714–1492). The Reconquest was a conflict between the Catholics and the Muslims (Moors) that lasted over seven and a half centuries and encouraged the Spanish aristocracy to invest in sheep rather than wheat. Sheep could be moved out of harm's way whenever the Muslims invaded, but all planted crops would be burned. Accordingly, the population of merino sheep in Spain grew in excess of 3 million animals by 1492.

The Mesta's sheep required a grazing right of way in order to feed their numbers. Shepherds had to march their herds across Spain twice a year in search of fresh pastures, because their sheep ate everything in sight.

The result of this biannual trek was overgrazing, which caused erosion. Erosion, in turn, undermined Spanish agriculture and made food even more expensive. Since the price of food also set the minimum price of labor, the decline in Spanish food production increased Spanish wages. The rising cost of labor then increased the cost of production and made Spanish manufactured goods the most expensive in Europe. All these elements compounded the impact of the inflation that

In a pattern of step-stage migration that became typical of Europeans after the industrial revolution, people left England's rural districts and ventured to its political capital to find jobs, and then found themselves expelled from England altogether because of financial, political, or religious circumstances. Between 1600 and 1670, more than 250,000 people left England for the colonies in what was called the Great Migration.

had already been set in motion by religious warfare and bullionism. As a result, Spain suffered the most destructive effects of rising prices in Europe rather than profiting from the business opportunities that steady inflation offered producers.

In contrast, the commercial system that England (and later Great Britain) assembled between 1550 and 1763 required significant changes at home. Central to these changes was the aforementioned rise in Europe's population. In England's case, however, the population increased some 120 percent between the years 1500 and 1700—the fastest growth rate in Europe prior to the Industrial Revolution. By 1700, England had added more than 3 million people to its original 2.5 million, but the way these people distributed themselves contrasted sharply with the traditional urban-rural ratios of the Middle Ages.

London is a good example. This city reflected the basic changes that took place in

England between 1500 and 1700. In 1500 the ratio of urban dwellers to farmers represented the standard one-to-nine distribution common to most traditional societies throughout world history. In 1700, England's ratio, however, had shifted to an unprecedented one urban dweller for every three farmers. This extraordinary urban-rural ratio represented the impact of the economic changes that occurred in England during the commercial revolution. At the heart of the growing urbanization was London; it grew from 50,000 in 1500 to 500,000 in 1700. This growth pattern meant that London alone held 9 percent of the total English population. Thus, by itself, London almost housed the one urban dweller for every nine farmers traditionally found throughout world history.

The growth of London, however, still obeyed certain traditional limits. Migration from England's rural districts and not the city's birthrate generated the rise in London's population. The average rural migrant survived only eleven months in this massive city if he or she did not find an occupation. Such a short lifespan reflected the high incidence of disease, the lack of adequate shelter, the cold, and the threadbare clothing worn by the poor. Despite the fact that London had the best poor-relief system in England, those rural migrants who did not find a place of employment, or did not have good family connections, simply did not last long.

Between 1600 and 1700, 900,000 people moved to London. Despite this sudden influx, the city's population only grew by 300,000. This meant that for every three people who moved to London, one died, one found a place to stay, and one had to leave altogether in order to survive. Hence, London became a permanent home for only one-third of its migrants, while it also served as a staging ground for the transfer of people abroad.

Of those who came to London and ventured out into the world in order to survive, most went to the American colonies after 1607. In a pattern of step-stage migration that became typical of Europeans after the Industrial Revolution, people left England's rural districts and ventured to its political capital to find jobs, and then found themselves expelled from England altogether because of financial, political, or religious circumstances. Between 1600 and 1670, more than 250,000 people left England for the colonies in what was called the Great Migration. They

were fleeing an era of political and religious upheaval that included the English Civil War (1640–1649) and the Interregnum (1650–1659; see below). These 250,000 immigrants felt the pull of the colonies and comprised that portion of the English population that occupied the growing empire. In the colonies, this growing number of people secured Great Britain's hold on North America, the West Indies, and India after 1705.

London's growth between 1500 and 1700 reflected the fact that the English finally chose to make this city their permanent capital. The king and Parliament had begun to stay in London rather than move the court from town to town, as was the habit of the medieval monarchy. And as the crown and Parliament struggled to strike a balance of sovereignty between themselves, the elite of England moved to London to participate in politics.

Simultaneously, the concentration of the elite in the capital drew merchants, artisans, and shopkeepers into the city. These people supplied the goods and services consumed by the elite. Other forms of labor required to supply these merchants, artisans, and shopkeepers with their necessities further increased the total number of people living in London. Finally, the vast number of poor who migrated into the city found the best poor-relief program in England because London merchants used charity to control riots. Yet, a good poor-relief program eventually attracted more people in need of charity than the system could handle. Thus, this rapid influx of poor people partly explains why such a high death rate occurred within the city and why a step-stage migratory process accompanied the rapid growth of London.

The growth of London represented major changes in English agriculture. These changes included enclosure of grazing land that had once been open to everyone on an estate, new strategies to increase the size of farms, the development of crop rotation, new methods of raising livestock, and experimentation in selective breeding. Each change, in turn, placed England ahead of all other European states in the development of commercial food production. Eventually, the combination of all these innovations resulted in what scholars called an “agricultural revolution.” These changes in food production explain why the English could support such an unusually high urban-rural ratio as one to three.

Enclosures became famous wherever landlords fenced off the “commons” and denied their peasants access to the untilled acres where they had long grazed draft animals. The commons received its name from the medieval practice of allowing everyone on a feudal estate to use a specific section of wasteland in common to feed their livestock. Commons had been a traditional property right passed down from one generation to the next and had allowed peasants to feed the draft animals they needed to grow the food they gave to their landlord as part of their feudal services. Later, when the landlord converted these services into money rents, peasants sold food to raise

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the funds they needed to pay their masters for the right to use the soil. But inflation increased the value of all acreage—including the supposed wasteland that comprised the commons—and caused English landlords to reconsider how their estates should be farmed.

The medieval method of cultivation called the “three-field system” meant that commons existed apart from the acreage tilled each year. The three-field system took its name from the practice of plowing only two-thirds of an aristocrat's estate each year, while the remaining third lay fallow. By rotating these fields each year, English peasants learned that when they allowed this third section of land to rest, the unused acreage recovered much of its fertil-



ity. While this system worked well during the medieval era, it left unplanted 33 percent of all the land that might have been cultivated at any one time. Enclosures, however, changed these agricultural practices and allowed English landlords to bring all this land into use.

Enclosures denied peasants their grazing rights and forced those with small holdings to eat their draft animals and abandon their strips



Engraving after a portrait by Hans Holbein the Younger from the series known as the "Birch's Heads: Heads of Illustrious Persons of Great Britain."

of land. Driven from the estate, these small landholders released acreage that the landlord could consolidate into larger farms. Collecting these strips of land into new and more efficient agricultural units, these enterprising landowners now had access to acreage that they used to increase food production or raise sheep. At the same time, the expelled peasants made up a growing population of vagabonds (see below) who migrated to cities like London. As this process accelerated and the growing number of sheep in England began to compete with people for food, landlords began to look at their fallow fields.

English landlords found that to create a new supply of fodder for their expanding herds or to feed people, the third, fallow field had to be brought under cultivation. Planting legumes among the many foods that they grew to feed their animals, some of these English landlords unintentionally introduced Europe to the modern process of crop rotation. Since a legume draws nitrogen from the air into the soil, crops like clover or alfalfa helped to fertilize exhausted soil. By putting this third field into use, all the land on an aristocrat's estate

came under cultivation and there was silage to feed livestock.

Simultaneously, by increasing the supply of animals living in an enclosed area (i.e., fenced-off commons), other English landlords generated a new supply of manure that they could use to increase soil fertility. Thus, those landlords who chose hay, turnips, or oats to feed their livestock, instead of legumes, soon found themselves also able to restore the fertility of their land by spreading animal waste on their fields. Consequently, all the landlords who enclosed commons also gradually discovered the secrets of how to increase the total number of acres under tillage, how to renew soil fertility to maintain the productivity of their farms, and how to avoid leaving any of their land fallow.

Furthermore, after fencing specific animal populations into an enclosed area, some of these inventive landlords began to experiment with selective breeding. These experiments in animal husbandry involved choosing the most valuable animals for reproduction, a process that increased the quality and quantity of meat, wool, and hides available for sale. In time, not only could English landlords grow more food for both people and livestock, but they also produced a greater supply of high quality animal by-products for sale.

Discovered by accident early in the process of enclosures, this new style of total land use was implemented more methodically after 1688. By that year, the landlords of England had won their struggle with the king over sovereignty and had secured Parliament's role as England's sole legislature (see below). In the process of elevating the power of Parliament, landowners also came to dominate English politics and used this power to establish their absolute control over the land. Working in alliance with the great merchants in England's corporate towns, this landowning aristocracy took charge of its estates and self-consciously applied everything it learned about raising animals and increasing food production.

In retrospect, we can see that two centuries of enclosures, shifting cultivation practices, and fluctuations in the prices of wool and food stocks had to take place before the English farmer fully understood the productive changes set in motion by the commercial revolution. By 1700, however, a sufficient number of innovations had occurred that let English cultivators grasp the significance of the events

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taking place around them. Using this knowledge during the eighteenth century, English landowners changed food production enough that they were able to feed the labor pool that would migrate to cities during the Industrial Revolution (1750–1850).

Thus, a new set of agricultural practices that began spontaneously in England brought an increasing amount of land into cultivation over the three hundred years between 1500 and 1800. The combination of new cultivation techniques, expanded land use, and accelerated meat, wool, and vegetable production added enough new calories to the food supply to feed a rapidly growing population. At the same time, new foods from the Americas helped to feed the desperate during a time of profound economic changes.

During these centuries, the Reformation, inflation, and agricultural innovations combined to set the price of labor at subsistence. The Reformation began in England when Henry VIII (reigned 1509–1547) tried to divorce his wife, Catherine of Aragon, in 1529. Henry's quest for this divorce derived from his desire to have a legitimate male heir. By 1529, Catherine had become infertile, and she had borne Henry only one living child, a daughter named Mary (reigned as Queen of England from 1553 to 1558). Catherine's inability to provide Henry with the desired son had forced him to contrive a reason to annul his marriage, for he feared that if he did not produce a male heir, his dynasty, the Tudors, would lose the throne after his death. This fear was based on the fact that the War of the Roses (1455–1485) had pitted numerous claimants to England's crown against one another with only one survivor, Henry's father, Henry VII (reigned 1485–1509). Henry VII had trained his son to do everything within his power to prevent a return to the civil strife that had raised the Tudors to the throne. The king's lack of a male heir was almost certain to lead to such strife. Therefore Henry sought to divorce Catherine of Aragon. At the same time, he indirectly launched the Reformation in England and caused a redefinition of the price of labor that would help secure Britain's success in the commercial revolution.

Ironically, Henry's quest for a divorce failed because circumstances had worked against him. In 1529, the European Reformation was already twelve years old. The pope, Clement



First wife of Henry VIII, Catherine of Aragon. From "Birch's Heads: Heads of Illustrious Persons of Great Britain."

VII, had refused to grant Henry an annulment because extending it would have raised questions about papal infallibility—a power the pope claimed against attacks leveled by Martin Luther. Previously, Pope Julius II had granted Henry and Catherine a dispensation to marry despite her original marriage to Arthur, Henry VII's first-born son, heir, and Henry VIII's older brother. Arthur's death in 1503 elevated Henry VIII to the throne, but his failure to father a legitimate son with Catherine raised doubts twenty-five years later. Now Henry argued that God had punished him for marrying his brother's wife, a sin according to Leviticus (18:16). Henry hoped to have Julius II's decision reversed as an error, but such a reversal would have forced Pope Clement VII to accept Biblical authority over the judgment of a sitting pope—a claim Martin Luther never grew tired of asserting. A declaration of this nature by Clement VII was unthinkable because Martin Luther's challenge to the Catholic Church had already ruptured the unity of Christendom during Luther's numerous disputes with the Roman Catholic Church between 1517 and 1521.

To complicate matters further, Catherine's nephew, Charles V, the king of Spain, the Holy Roman emperor, and the Archduke of the Netherlands and Austria, had just defeated Francis I of France and gained control of Italy. Pope Clement VII had joined with Francis I

of France to try to expel Charles V from the Italian peninsula but failed because of Charles' superior forces. Having witnessed Charles' power and the fury of his soldiers during the sacking of Rome in 1527, Clement VII did not want to do anything to provoke Catherine's nephew, such as allowing his aunt to be cast off by her husband. When the pope failed to grant Henry VIII his divorce, the English king broke with the Roman Catholic Church and became the head of the newly created Church of England.



Helmet of Charles V, in the Royal Armoury, Madrid, ca. 1862.

As the ultimate religious authority in England, Henry VIII then took possession of all church land. Allowing the parishes to remain open, he confiscated the monasteries and convents, turning out all the monks and nuns, and sold a generous number of these reclaimed acres to his supporters in Parliament. This move began a vast redistribution of land that not only won Henry the votes he needed to secure his divorce, but also allowed well-connected and enterprising farmers to become landowners during his reign and those of his successors, Edward VI (reigned 1547–1553) and Elizabeth I (reigned 1558–1603). Even Mary Tudor (reigned 1553–1558), who came to the throne intent on restoring Catholicism, began her short reign with a reconciliation with the new landowners who had secured their estates from the monasteries and convents.

Meanwhile, by closing the monasteries and convents of England, Henry unintentionally

brought the Church's role in charity to an end; thus, he destroyed an important social safety net used to support the poor during hard times. Like their counterparts in other European kingdoms, England's monasteries and convents provided the poor with economic relief when they could not find employment or had been displaced from their homes. Because of the forces of inflation and enclosures during Henry's reign, many desperate peasants began to roam the countryside in search of their next meal. Called "healthy beggars" by contemporaries, this mobile population represented a potential social danger because of England's history of rural rebellions during bad times. To deal with this growing crisis, England's elite joined with the crown to produce a series of Poor Laws intended to control the movement of these people. These laws later developed into a countrywide parish relief program.

The Poor Laws created the poor house, or workhouse, for vagrants who could not find employment elsewhere. Controlled by the justice of the peace, the poor house confined healthy beggars to the parish of their birth, where they worked for their subsistence. The justice of the peace who administered the poor house was also the local landlord; that is, he was the aristocrat who was responsible for enclosures or had acquired the land that once belonged to monasteries and convents.

As both the justice of the peace and the local landlord, this aristocrat was the person most responsible for the plight of the vagrants. He had in fact placed these healthy beggars in a financial double bind. As the landlord, he was the principal employer in the parish. As the justice of the peace, he restricted the movement of healthy beggars, defined vagrancy, and confined the unemployed to the poor house. Hence, he determined the primary conditions of labor as the chief private employer, while simultaneously serving as the chief public employer. He was therefore in a position to set the price of labor at subsistence and hold it there until the Industrial Revolution changed the poor.

### **Proto-industry**

Any agricultural family living in the countryside, trapped with a fixed income and faced with a rising cost of living, felt mounting economic pressures. Fearing the poor house, the

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members of farm families would eagerly work for anyone who might ease the pain of rising prices and falling purchasing power. Seeking a supplemental wage to meet these difficult conditions, these potential laborers were happy to work for the entrepreneurs who created a new cottage industry in this period, especially in textiles and iron. Together, the entrepreneurs and rural laborers known as *cottagers* joined in the development of a pre-industrial revolution. Both groups were willing to try anything new to meet the rising demand responsible for inflation. The entrepreneurs supplied the jobs, the tools, and the materials needed in the manufacturing process in woolen goods, shoes, iron, and other domestic products, and the cottagers provided the work. The combination created what was called “the household handicraft” or “putting out system.”

Entrepreneurs took their name from two French terms: *entre* and *prendre*. *Entre* means “between” and *prendre* means “to take.” Hence, an entrepreneur was a “between-taker.” In a less literal translation, such a person was a “middleman,” an “undertaker,” or a “go-between.” Starting in the 1500s but becoming more prevalent thereafter, the entrepreneur left his city of residence, where guilds, i.e., those enterprises licensed to produce certain items, had begun to fail because of the fixed prices in their licenses and inflation. The entrepreneur then ventured into the countryside to redefine the conditions of production. No longer housing laborers and himself in a licensed establishment, as did the guild master, the entrepreneur took his capital to rural districts and placed tools and raw materials inside the cottages of desperate and hungry peasants. Distributing his stock along a path that constituted the steps in the manufacture of specific items, the entrepreneur created a horizontal division of labor (a distribution of production along a geographic route) that also separated the worker from his or her employer. The result was a completely new relationship between labor and management, a completely new method of manufacturing, and a completely new means of integrating the rural and urban districts of a territorial state into an expanding market. All of this took place under the steady influence of inflation.

Taking each of these factors in order, the new relationship between management and labor released the employer from having to

provide for all the needs of his workers. In contrast, feudal guilds had met those needs by providing food, clothing, and shelter along with a disposable wage to workers. Now, the cottager found him- or herself responsible for providing his or her own food, clothing, and shelter. This new arrangement made agricultural laborers dependent on wages and subject to market conditions, just like the manufacturer or merchant. As the demand for a product rose or fell, so did the demand for labor. And if a new method of production made an old technique obsolete, the laborers had to adjust

Together, the entrepreneurs and rural laborers known as cottagers joined in the development of a pre-industrial revolution. Both groups were willing to try anything new to meet the rising demand responsible for inflation. The entrepreneurs supplied the jobs, the tools, and the materials needed in the manufacturing process in woolen goods, shoes, iron, and other domestic products, and the cottagers provided the work.

their patterns of employment. Hence, as an increasing number of peasants in England and Western Europeans found themselves drawn into cottage industry, the rural labor pool within a territorial state became subject to market conditions. This situation created what eventually became known as a “national economy.”

At the same time, the entrepreneur who was no longer responsible for the well-being of his employees was free to calculate the potential profits of whatever enterprise he wished to set in motion. Using woolen textiles as an example, the entrepreneur estimated the tools, materials, and labor needed to manufacture clothing. Distributing his tools and materials to the cottagers of his work force, the entrepreneur created a logical pattern to production. One group of peasant laborers received



spinning wheels and spun raw wool into yarn. Then the entrepreneur transported this yarn to another group, whom he supplied with looms. This second cohort of laborers produced cloth. Next, a third group of workers received this woven cloth, vats, and dyes and colored the new fabric. Finally, this prepared cloth ended up in the hands of a fourth group of cottagers who used needles, thread, and labor to pro-

Many peasant laborers eagerly accepted employment from the entrepreneur. Not knowing the value of their labor because they never saw their products sold, these cottagers settled into a growing dependency on the entrepreneur and this new manufacturing technique.

duce clothing. Throughout the entire process, the entrepreneur owned the raw materials, the tools, and the finished product.

Many peasant laborers eagerly accepted employment from the entrepreneur. Not knowing the value of their labor because they never saw their products sold, these cottagers settled into a growing dependency on the entrepreneur and this new manufacturing technique. In areas where the “putting out system” became widespread, an increasing number of peasant laborers joined the entrepreneurial workforce. For example, by 1739 as many as 4.25 million English cottagers supplied the labor used to manufacture the goods available for sale in this island realm. This figure included men, women, and children and comprised 50 percent of the entire English population. The same type of manufacturing became popular in France and Holland as well; northwestern Europe seemed to be the economic zone where most of this entrepreneurial activity took place, but entrepreneurs could be found in Central Europe, too.

Larger entrepreneurial enterprises spread back into towns and absorbed the failing guilds located there. Prosperous entrepreneurs who needed the urban skills of a guild household turned to master weavers and cobblers and converted them into subcontractors. Great “clothiers” or “drapers” remade the guild mem-

bers into subordinate employees who could no longer control how the finished product would be made or sold. Such powerful entrepreneurs became the richest manufacturers in England, France, and Holland.

All the productive forces mentioned above combined to create what economic historians have called the “profit-inflation spiral.” The profit-inflation spiral linked all the elements of inflation (population pressures, rising state demands, and the increased supply of gold and silver coins) with productive innovations (those found in agriculture and manufacturing especially in England but also in northwestern Europe) to generate extraordinary profits. Any employer who invested in the new techniques of production during an era of inflation found himself in an expanding market because inflation means “demand exceeds supply.” At the same time, this risk-taking producer hired laborers who were eager to work for any wage that would pay for the rising cost of food, clothing, and shelter. Since the exceptional demand caused by inflation ensured a steady supply of new customers willing to absorb the growing number of goods produced, the manufacturer enjoyed an expanding market.

Given the low cost of labor in England and the process of enclosure that forced people off the land, the conditions for entrepreneurial investments in the British Isles were ideal. Since enclosures accidentally stimulated a significant number of agricultural innovations in England after 1500, the British Isles eventually became a leader in what historians now refer to as the “agricultural revolution.” The availability of a generous supply of food during an era of commercial development allowed the English to support their unprecedented urban-rural ratio of one to three. And combined with the poor laws and the end of church-sponsored charity during the Reformation, enclosures placed extraordinary pressures on English peasants to find supplemental income. These pressures, in turn, encouraged the cottage industry system to develop in England at a rate that surpassed that of the other countries in Europe.

Simultaneously, the profit-inflation spiral stimulated exceptional profits for English entrepreneurs. They often reinvested their profits in an expanding proto-industrial system that continued to grow even after the era of inflation itself came to an end (see below). Eventually, the spread of proto-industry



European trading posts on the Gulf of Guinea (now Nigeria). Maintained by English, Dutch, Portuguese, and French merchants, sea captains, and directors, at these posts a wide variety of European and African goods were exchanged—including slaves.

caused these English entrepreneurs to enlist the aid of 50 percent of the rural population by 1739. Thus, the profit-inflation spiral and the development of proto-industry in England laid a foundation for a national economy that, in turn, generated the preconditions needed for the Industrial Revolution.

### **Mercantilism**

The new transoceanic trade routes required major political backing in order to succeed. Shipbuilding was so expensive and required such costly materials as timber, canvas sails, and rope, not to mention the cannons and muskets needed to defend ships on the high seas, that state participation was essential. Thus, the appearance of new monarchies at the end of the Middle Ages constituted a necessary and fundamental element of the commercial revolution.

The development of sovereignty and the rise of the territorial state played a key role in the development of commercial capitalism. At the end of the Reformation, when royal armies and navies bestowed a monopoly on coercion on either the king or Parliament in many European countries, no other authority figure existed within the state to rival the sovereign (see above). As a result, the state alone commanded the resources necessary to sustain exploration, build outposts, and supply colonies.

Power concentrated in the hands of kings or maintained by England's Parliament provided the political support needed to establish colonies around the world. Unlike any other region active in global trade during the early modern era (1492–1763), Europeans alone built commercial empires capable of sustaining the expanding global system of trade. Even England's form of sovereignty, the partnership between Parliament and the crown that emerged after the Glorious Revolution (see below), saw the value of politically supporting colonial ventures.

Only those colonial systems with strong diplomatic, political, and military resources survived, while all others failed. No free city, small principality, or commercial league could compete with a determined king or Parliament. Thus, the more completely centralized states of Western Europe had a significant material advantage over their less centralized Central European neighbors. This allowed France, Holland, England, Sweden, Spain, and Portugal to initiate, expand, and maintain global commercial outposts, while the great cities of the Holy Roman Empire and Italy began to lose economic ground.

What role the sovereigns of Europe played in stimulating trade depended on the answers to several key questions. When did colonization begin? What theory of value, or defini-

tion of wealth, did a European monarch use? How restrictive was royal authority when applied to the control of economic development abroad? And how much military support did a king offer his subjects in protecting them against rival monarchs seeking to eliminate competition?

Although Portugal introduced Europe to the idea of exploring the Atlantic and capturing foreign sources of what the Portuguese called “pagan” wealth, the Spanish were the

## Although Portugal introduced Europe to the idea of exploring the Atlantic and capturing foreign sources of what the Portuguese called “pagan” wealth, the Spanish were the first to begin the process of colonization on a large scale.

first to begin the process of colonization on a large scale. The Spanish discovered the western hemisphere and opened the way for Europeans to contemplate the possibility of conquering and assimilating the 16 million square miles of land that lay across the Atlantic. Europeans called the Americas the “New World,” a phrase that reflects their ethnocentric view of the Western Hemisphere as a place empty of native peoples. The Spanish were the first to set about occupying this vast expanse of land. Hence, Spain played the key role in initiating the process of planting European colonies on foreign soil.

But while the Spanish set the pattern for conquest and colonization, their early start was actually a disadvantage, for they began the process of colonizing the Western Hemisphere with the least sophisticated concept of value. Still very much bound by medieval traditions, the Spanish launched the commercial revolution in the opening days of modernization, when no one could have foreseen the monumental changes about to take place. The Spanish introduced Europe to one of the key forces of economic change, inflation, without being aware of what they were doing. Accordingly, when Spain gained access to the immense amount of American gold and silver that they took from Native Americans, they also

encouraged other kings in Europe to debase their coins. This process unleashed the price revolution mentioned earlier.

Furthermore, the Habsburg rulers of Spain chose to use their gold and silver to finance the wars of the Catholic Counter-Reformation (1556–1648), in which they squandered an enormous pool of capital on non-productive enterprises. The Habsburgs had acquired control of Spain when Ferdinand and Isabella’s daughter, Juana, married Philip I of Austria. Their son, Charles V, united Spain, the Austrian Netherlands, and the Holy Roman Empire under one crown and linked Spain’s political destiny to his determination to resist Protestantism. Thus, the kings of Spain did not expand their productive base during a time when demand exceeded supply and instead watched their neighbors become the chief beneficiaries of the profit-inflation spiral. In addition, Spain’s Habsburg kings followed a traditional theory of value called “bullionism” in their royal policy in the Western Hemisphere (see above).

In contrast, England started later than Spain, had a better grasp of the changes taking place during the commercial revolution, and developed a more coherent state fiscal policy. The English followed the Dutch theory of value, which stated that gold and silver functioned as a lubricant to trade, while trade itself was the true source of all wealth. Like the Dutch, the English believed that global commerce redistributed the world’s total supply of riches from one location to the next. To acquire the greatest share of this limited supply of wealth, a state had to encourage trade by investing gold and silver in the machinery of exchange. Unaware of the concept of production, the English, like the Spanish, did not really understand where value actually originated. Like the Spanish, the English would have to wait until the *Physiocrats* (French intellectuals who developed the first theory of production) and early economists like Adam Smith decoded the secrets of production in the 1760s and 1770s (see chapter 19). Meanwhile, the English had stumbled onto a theory of value that actually stimulated the generation of new goods despite the fact they did not yet have the conceptual framework to understand what they were doing.

Unlike the Spanish, the English did not discover vast supplies of gold and silver in their colonial holdings. This seemingly unfor-



fortunate state of affairs proved, however, to be a boon to the English economy. The absence of immediate profits like those enjoyed by the Spanish forced the English to develop complex new corporations and caused their colonial settlers to seek out local products for export. The result was a very productive and highly profitable system of transatlantic trade.

Between 1550 and 1630, the English slowly developed the means to become the world's greatest commercial empire. Central to this process were the first great trans-oceanic corporations, called "joint-stock companies." These early modern companies developed new and sophisticated ways of recruiting anonymous partners by separating ownership from control. Those who acquired stock did not participate in formulating the company's policies; instead, an elected board of directors made the decisions. The investors merely served as silent partners who reaped the rewards of a successful venture.

Some of these joint stock companies were assembled for a single foreign adventure, while others became ongoing business concerns. If investors did not like the policies of the corporation, all they had to do was sell their shares; this did not disrupt the organization of the company. Most joint-stock enterprises were designed with the expectation that several years would pass before the shareholders saw any profits. During this time, the joint-stock company built up its capital base in order to have the means to establish, protect, and maintain outposts abroad.

Raising money for economic activities outside Europe, these corporations did not engage in domestic manufacturing or intra-European trade. In Europe, the capital held by a single entrepreneur proved sufficient for local, regional, or territorial exchanges. Joint-stock companies, however, provided the funds needed for expensive, long-range, and highly risky foreign enterprises. A round trip from Europe to Asia, for example, took on average three years. If a company planned to establish a colony, then even more time would be needed before anyone could expect to see any profits. Often these companies included within their charter a final date of liquidation, which could be set as much as twenty years in the future. When this date finally arrived and their "ship had come in," the investors were assured that they would receive rewards appropriate to the uncertainty of their investment. Thus,

the English joint-stock companies provided an effective mechanism for distributing the cost and risk of a foreign venture over a broad base of silent partners.

In the eighty years between 1550 and 1630, the English established their first colonies along the North American coast. At the same time, they launched the great East India Company to trade with Asia. Furthermore, numerous joint-stock companies assembled to engage in trade with Russia, Africa, and the Middle East. Silent partners invested an estimated £13 million in joint-stock enterprises that sought profits from abroad. Yet, nearly a third of this money went into privateering ventures; these were government-licensed and regulated forms of piracy. The most common targets of this legitimate form of global robbery were the Spanish treasure ships.

Privateering, the biggest and most important portion of England's initial foreign investments, also proved to be the most profitable. Between 1550 and 1630, stock purchased in privateering ventures returned an estimated 60 percent on each share, while the East India Company paid only 20 percent and the Virginia Company never showed a profit for the Jamestown colony. Furthermore, government-licensed piracy appealed far more to the aristocratic or well-to-do investor than the mundane enterprise of trade; both felt a common disdain for commerce. Accordingly, the glory accrued by the most successful of these pirates, Francis Drake, led to a knighthood, partnership with Queen Elizabeth I (reigned 1558–1603), and the status of a popular hero.

Given the nature of early modern European commerce, privateering made perfect financial sense. Virtually all the European overseas exchanges were in luxury goods: spices, gold, silver, furs, high quality textiles, and later slaves and sugar (see below). One could sell such cargoes in any English port for an immediate and enormous profit. Furthermore, every kingdom in Europe viewed the ships of its rival states as legitimate targets—especially during the Reformation, when a general state of war existed between Catholics and Protestants for nearly every one of the ninety-two years between 1556 and 1648. Thus, commercial warfare merely became one of the risks joint-stock companies had to be prepared to take.

Such long-term ventures as the East India Company became permanent organizations



Sir Francis Drake (1540–1596), favored privateer of Queen Elizabeth I.

because this was the only way a corporation could deal with the violence of European trade. Licensed to make war on the Portuguese, the East India Company was a commercial privateering enterprise that built its own fortifications, raised its own military units, and armed its own merchant fleet. West India Companies and corporations with colonies on the North American coast faced Spanish and Portuguese rivals in much the same way. Violence was merely a part of the adventure, and since the glory and profits were so good, in the long run, these capital-intensive commercial firms successfully planted English outposts all over the world.

After 1630, the English refined their laws and traditions, defined sovereignty as a joint enterprise between two equal partners, the crown and Parliament, and created a new political concept called the *commonwealth* (see below). By 1690, this commonwealth had produced the concept that England was more than merely a state; rather, it was an estate shared by the wealthy of the realm, whose private interests could not be separated from public prosperity. Hence, the English were the

first to forge an explicit link between public and private affairs.

At the same time, the kingdom of England had gone to war successfully with its commercial rivals and bested them at every turn. The Portuguese, the Spanish, the Dutch, and the French could not compete with the methods of raising money and financing military campaigns that the English launched. The joint-stock companies had trained the English in the uses of capital and created a credit system that turned war itself into an enterprise. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, England's leaders attracted investors to finance government-sponsored military adventures, producing a pool of money called the "fund" that gave England command of the sea. Thus, the English proved to be the most successful risk-takers of the commercial revolution.

By 1707, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland joined England to create the "United Kingdom." Dominated by the English, this new political union, also called "Great Britain," mustered the military resources of all four realms. Together, they ensured the safety of Britain's numerous commercial outposts and made possible a complex system of global trade. Seen as elements in a single mercantile system, all these outposts took advantage of *geographic differentiation*. Geographic differentiation merely meant that each outpost in the British Empire produced its own unique supply of goods, all of which could be exchanged in a vast global network of trade.

Exporting tobacco from Virginia, codfish, ship stores (rope and sails), and timber from Massachusetts, rice from South Carolina, wheat and corn from the middle colonies of North America, sugar from the West Indies, slaves from Africa, cotton and spices from India, and tea from China, the English stimulated a highly profitable system of global exchanges based on the principle of buying low (at the point of supply), and selling high (at the point of demand). The diversity of these various goods made every port of call in the British commercial empire a potential zone of profit. As ships traveled from one port to another, they distributed goods throughout this global commercial network.

For example, by the eighteenth century, the joint-stock company turned colony of Massachusetts Bay produced timber, ships, rope, canvas, and fish; all of these goods were in high demand in Great Britain. Thus, this New

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English colony supported a very profitable trade. A merchant could load his Boston-built vessel with a cargo of fish or timber, sail to England, sell these goods for a profit, and buy a new cargo of luxury items there. Sailing next to Jamaica (an island first colonized by Spain, attacked twice by the English in 1596 and 1643, captured in 1655, and acquired legally at the Treaty of Madrid in 1670), this Boston merchant could sell these luxury goods for another profit and purchase a cargo of sugar. Returning home, the sugar could be converted into rum, a third profit made, and the merchant's ship outfitted for the next voyage.

Using these accumulated profits, this Boston merchant could then take his rum back to England, sell it for a fourth profit, collect another cargo of luxury goods, and sail to Virginia. Since both Virginia and Jamaica used a plantation system to produce commercial crops for export and neither had a diversified economy capable of manufacturing high quality goods, the luxury items from Britain always sold well. While in Virginia, a Boston merchant could acquire a cargo of tobacco, then arrange a voyage back to England. There, he could sell the tobacco, purchase manufactured goods, and plan a voyage to Pennsylvania. Once there, he could sell the manufactured goods, purchase a cargo of corn or wheat, and prepare a trip back home to Boston. The only exceptions to this pattern of commerce within the British Empire was the occasional trip to Spain during times of peace, when British and American goods could be exchanged for precious metals, bringing more gold and silver lubrication into this commercial system.

This multiport trade pattern allowed Great Britain to stimulate agriculture and manufacturing everywhere within the empire even though no one as yet understood the concept of production itself. Demand in Great Britain drew raw materials from the Americas, the West Indies, and Asia, as well as labor from Africa, into exchange for finished products provided by the mother country. Each port within the empire served as a potential market, bought goods, and exported local products. The overall demand caused by the Atlantic trade system sustained entrepreneurial production in Great Britain even after inflation subsided in the seventeenth century. Accordingly, as all these ports matured, the empire became a web of trade that supported anyone who participated.

By 1650, the English realized the value of what they could create. Thus, efforts to capture global commerce became a principal goal of English politics. A series of wars with the Netherlands (1652–1654, 1664–1667, and 1672–1674) and the Navigation Acts of 1651, 1660, 1662, 1663, 1670, and 1673 laid the groundwork. Called the Dutch Wars, these conflicts with the Netherlands allowed England, in conjunction with France, to break Holland's control over Europe's carrying trade (i.e., shipping of goods). Complementing these armed struggles, the Navigation Acts forbade English goods from traveling on foreign ships. At the close of the seventeenth and into the eighteenth centuries, British commercial warfare next targeted the French, seeking to drive them from their key colonial outposts around the world. The combined results of all these legal and military efforts bore fruit in the Seven Years War (1756–1763), when the British effectively disposed of France as a commercial rival by expelling the French from Canada and India. With no one left to challenge British supremacy in global trade, Great Britain had the last key factor essential for the Industrial Revolution: a world marketplace.

### **Travel**

One major caveat should be added to the entire discussion of the commercial revolution; that caveat has to do with travel. The contrast between Great Britain's successes and Spain's rapid economic and political failure developed in part out of the difficulty Europeans had in moving from place to place. The commercial revolution entailed great changes in global trade, but travel in general remained very difficult for most Europeans from 1500 to 1800.

In the context of global trade, the difficulties of travel also underlay a fundamental issue: how to distribute food from economies still primarily based on agriculture. The ease or difficulty of distributing food played a key role in famine relief during times of poor harvests across the globe and throughout world history. If travel conditions were bad, then local food production was critically important when it came to feeding people and played a major role in determining human survival and population dynamics. Where travel functioned as a barrier to famine relief, the introduction



of new crops from one part of the world into another or agricultural innovations had a mainly local impact. A study of travel and the innovations in cultivation that occurred on the British Isles offers a sharp contrast with the agricultural disaster overseen by Spain's Mesta, especially when considering population dynamics between 1500 and 1800.

Overland travel required roads. But the roads in Europe were abysmal. Almost everywhere the word "road" was a misnomer. Rather, the term "track" would be far more accurate. Most so-called roads had no underlying foundation or drainage and were deeply eroded due to their constant use. Also, seasonal variations in precipitation and temperature converted roads, even main thoroughfares, into quagmires or dust bowls.

The capacity of local food production to sustain the growth in human numbers for these three centuries underlines the differences between British and Spanish cultivation. During the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, travel over even the most modest of distances in any form throughout Europe required great expense and time. Because of friction, or the physical resistance to movement, any journey faced various degrees of difficulty; overland travel was far more problematic than river and canal transportation, while sailing by sea was the easiest of all. Yet, even sailing on the open ocean could only occur if the traveler knew the seasonal winds, the currents, and the daily tides. When considering any of these three methods of human movement, however, water trips always proved easier than crossing land.

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lying foundation or drainage and were deeply eroded due to their constant use. Also, seasonal variations in precipitation and temperature converted roads, even main thoroughfares, into quagmires or dust bowls. Hence, travel by foot was almost as fast as travel by coach. Only during the eighteenth century did conditions improve.

Waterways proved far better than roads because of the reduction of friction. Another major advantage of traveling by river or canal was the elimination of the bone-shattering discomfort experienced by anyone using carriages; the lack of adequate spring suspension to ease the impact of rolling over deeply pitted roads made overland travel a misery. Yet, the ease of movement along a river or canal was undercut by the number of tolls imposed on travelers every time they crossed any local political boundary along the way. Thus, as the difficulty of movement decreased, the expenses increased, reducing the number of people who could afford the trip.

Seas and oceans provided the best means of transportation, as the new Atlantic trade routes demonstrated. Yet, here too, winds, currents, and tides dictated the terms of travel. Even the length of a simple, local trip from Dover in England to Calais in France, a mere twenty-one miles, could vary widely depending on the conditions of the sea. Traveling during the wrong time of year or inclement weather could add days to what should be an easy journey.

Thanks to the difficulty of travel during the three centuries from 1500 to 1800, food production was essentially a local affair that depended heavily on the weather, and local shortages could not as yet be ameliorated by broader distribution patterns. Only the introduction of the British turnpike or the Dutch canals, starting in the seventeenth century, made a significant difference in terms of time and expenses of local travel, because of the quality of these routes. These, however, were the exceptions to the rule. Thus, any changes in agriculture as a result of new methods of cultivation or the addition of more hardy and fecund plants would have a significant impact on local population dynamics in Europe.

To illustrate this point, one need only look at figures depicting the growth in human numbers in both Spain and England during the 300 years between 1500 and 1800. The Spanish population dropped about 25 percent between 1590 and 1665, while England's population

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grew by an estimated 30 percent. The question these facts raise in scholars' minds is what could have caused this dramatic contrast.

To understand the growth in English numbers when compared to Spain's losses, one must consider the three great killers of this era: warfare, plague, and famine. England's population growth can partly be explained by this island kingdom's success in avoiding the most destructive effects of the religious wars fought during the reign of King Philip II of Spain (1556–1598) and the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), which brought the Reformation to an end. England did sink into a civil war between 1640 and 1649 that cost numerous lives, but this mortality paled in contrast to what the Spanish suffered.

The Spanish played the central role in the Catholic Counter-Reformation (1550–1648). Philip II tried to redefine French politics during the French religious civil wars, but a French Protestant prince, Henry of Navarre, won the struggle and converted to Catholicism to claim his kingdom. Philip II also tried to force the Dutch to return to the Catholic fold after years of bloodshed, but without success. And Philip II sent the mighty Armada against England, but Queen Elizabeth I's navy and bad weather destroyed it. Philip's heir, Philip III, participated in the Thirty Years War but watched the Catholic cause fail again after four bloody phases of fighting. Happily, from Europe's perspective, the Treaty of Westphalia, signed in 1648, ended the wars of the Reformation, sharply reducing this major source of death.

Bubonic plague also struck both England and Spain at about the same time. For the English, plague took the form of a concentrated assault on London in 1665 that killed somewhere between 80,000 to 100,000 people in this city of 500,000. In contrast, plague did not confine itself to one major city in Spain; rather, the infection traveled from Valencia to Aragon and on to Catalonia from 1647 to 1651, killing an estimated 20 to 30 percent of the population. Again, happily from Europe's perspective, the plague ceased to be a threat after 1665. Why the plague disappeared is hotly debated: some argue that the black rat drove away the brown rat, which carried the plague; others claimed that hygiene improved, lessening the likelihood of plague passing from rats to humans; and still others argue that medical practices improved. Whatever the reason, the

bubonic plague ceased to bedevil Europeans in the second half of the seventeenth century.

Famine struck in both countries between 1590 and 1650. Caused by a return of the mini-ice age that devastated Europe during the Late Middle Ages, a prolonged cold period destroyed local harvests everywhere at the end of the sixteenth century. But the impact in Spain far outweighed that of England. Spain still used the destructive practices of the Mesta (see above), which thoroughly undermined Spanish cultivation, reduced the calorie intake of the Spanish people, and made them more vulnerable to disease. In contrast, while England suffered as severely as Spain from the poor weather, English cultivation was already beginning to show signs of greater productivity because of changes made during the era of inflation from 1500 to 1590 (see above). These innovations partly explain why England's population grew between 1590 and 1665. After the plague disappeared and warfare diminished, famine continued to be the primary killer for the remainder of the seventeenth century and then declined for the next two centuries.

Considering these three major causes of death from 1590 to 1800, the reduction of warfare and plague left food shortages as the sole ubiquitous cause of death after 1665. Under these new conditions, the population of Eng-

## Considering these three major causes of death from 1590 to 1800, the reduction of warfare and plague left food shortages as the sole ubiquitous cause of death after 1665.

land continued to grow, in sharp contrast to that of Spain. England's population increased from 4.6 million to 8.2 million, while the Spanish only grew from 7.1 million to 10.5 million. In other words, England nearly doubled its human numbers, while Spain increased by just less than one-third. This disparity can only mean that England had stumbled onto a better way of feeding its people during this 250-year period. And added to this improved food production were England's turnpikes, which facilitated the more efficient distribution of the new food supply throughout the realm.



Louis XIV (1638–1715) at age 63. After a portrait by Hyacinthe Rigaud.

### Simultaneous Revolutions: Phase V, the State

While a comparison of Spain and England reveals the consequences of success and failure in commerce between 1492 and 1763, a comparison of France and Great Britain outlines unsuccessful and successful models of state formation between the years 1648 and 1789. During this post-Reformation era, France and Great Britain developed the two political forms that defined sovereignty for the rest of Europe to imitate. France developed its definition of sovereignty before Great Britain, and, just like Spain during the commercial revolution, suffered the ill effects of achieving a stable definition of the sovereignty early in the modernization process.

Ironically, France under Louis XIV (reigned 1643–1715) was the largest and richest country in Europe when the Treaty of Westphalia brought the Reformation to a close in 1648. Louis XIV commanded 19 million

people, or four times the number of humans that lived in England. France had the most favorable climate and the most fertile soil; also, it had the greatest concentration of wealth. Yet, despite these advantages, the French lost most of their wars with the new United Kingdom (the union of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland; see above), defeats that speak to an underlying weakness in France's political system.

Louis XIV was an absolute monarch who transformed France into a proto-modern state based on the newly developed concept of sovereignty. He dominated French politics as the agent of God on Earth, embodying James I of England's definition of royal authority in his *The True Law of Free Monarchy*. As the agent of God, Louis XIV, who hailed himself as the "Sun King," had a free hand to do as he pleased within the limits of his royal resources. Only God could intervene and show displeasure at Louis's conduct by frustrating France's efforts to achieve its goals.

To enforce God's will on Earth, Louis had to develop an efficient administration and army. These two arms of government would serve as the basis for exercising royal power. Yet the real power lay in Louis's soldiers. Here the king concentrated nearly all his efforts to complete the process started by the Valois Dynasty.

The French military developed out of the army that the Valois had refined during the Hundred Years War (1337–1453), which drove England from French territory at the end of the Middle Ages. This army had also invaded Italy under Charles VIII between 1494 and 1495, a war that transformed the Italian peninsula into a battlefield between the Valois of France and the Habsburgs of Spain, the Netherlands, and the Holy Roman Empire; this was a struggle that the Valois ultimately lost in 1559. The French army acquired further refinement during the religious wars of the Reformation (1556–1648), especially in defeating the Habsburgs in the Thirty Years War (1618–1648). This victory allowed France to become the most powerful state on the European continent. Finally, France's army became a professional force, made up of specialists hired by the French kings for combat and financed by their tax base.

Prior to the reign of Louis XIV, the French army had relied upon professional officers, colonels, who raised enough money to outfit

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a regiment and hired them out as mercenaries. The enterprise of war had made this regiment the most responsive unit on the battlefield. But this kind of organization fell short of Louis XIV's goals. The Sun King wanted to make the army an instrument of the state and not the tool of a mercenary colonel. If anyone had an army in France, that person had to be the king. Thus, Louis systematically overhauled the French army. He made every branch of the military responsive to his will as the general. From this exalted position, he created a direct chain of command through a common system of ranks. His government supervised recruiting and kept a ledger of colonels responsible for all his regiments. These regiments had to be equipped with the proper number of men, weapons, provisions, and housing. A quartermaster general's office was set up to control supply. The king's color, white, became the standard for all uniforms. Troops were taught to take up their stations on command through rigorous discipline imposed by an officer who gave his name to this rigid military order: Jean Martenet, the royal inspector. Regular audits of these military units held colonels accountable for any failure to meet royal standards.

As a result of this reorganization, the army became the king's political tool. With an army mobilized and ready to implement his will, Louis demonstrated to Europe that a monopoly on coercion was the key to absolute power. This example did not escape the British, who saw to it that their army never grew very large, while their navy became the envy of Europe. In other words, the British realized that whereas an army secured royal authority, ships instead secured commerce and revenue streams.

The foundation of French military power, however, rested on the royal bureaucracy. Here, too, Louis XIV took long strides forward in modernizing his state. The Sun King preferred men who had acquired their rank recently. Called, "new men," these individuals were more loyal to a monarch than were the hereditary nobility. The king made these new men into *intendants* (superintendents or government officials) and placed them throughout France in order to run his reorganized territorial state.

These intendants administered districts, supervised military recruiting, checked the inventories provided by colonels, kept an eye on the local nobility, dealt with town officials

and guilds, and generally secured the obedience of the population. Social order took shape under the watchful eye of the intendants.

It was an administrator's responsibility to control hereditary offices, prevent crime, run local markets, watch over the courts, provide famine relief, and serve as the judge of a court of appeals in local disputes. Appointed by and accountable to the king, the intendant became an extension of the royal will.

Whereas he relied upon the intendants, Louis viewed the ancient noble families of France as the unstable portion of his kingdom. To make sure that these ancient families had nothing to do with politics, Louis avoided calling the Estates General (i.e., France's parliament). In this way, Louis excluded the French nobility and Church (the first two estates within the Estates General) from political power,

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but at the same time the king made them tax-exempt. Their tax-exempt status came from their property, real estate that required consultation before it became a source of revenue. Giving them this privilege meant that he did not have to consult his nobility or church on matters of taxation and ran his government by placing the tax burden on those who had no rights, privileges, or power to resist, the third estate, the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie had money, a form of property that lacked any legal protection from taxation.

The financial system that Louis created ran smoothly so long as the monarchy stayed within its means. Yet war upset the internal financial balance between taxation and the cost of governing in France and strained the French state to its limits. Since Louis was not willing to share power with his nobility or Church, war caused his government to constantly run short of funds.

Because taxes fell only upon the unprivileged people of France, French peasants and those in the middle of society usually funded the French political system. Together, however, these two groups of people were those who could least afford to carry the cost of government. Consequently, the exemption of the wealthy from taxation became the principal weakness of royal absolutism as established in France, and it eventually led to royal bankruptcy in 1789.

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When Louis ran short of money, he often resorted to the sale of noble titles to raise the needed revenues, but this ploy only made matters worse. Those who purchased a noble title also received tax-exempt status, which reduced the king's tax revenue even as it increased the tax burden on the bourgeoisie and the peasants. Thus, France became a paradox: it was the richest country in Europe, but the French king was poor compared to his chief rival, his royal cousin in Great Britain. While royal absolutism constituted a claim to unlimited power, in reality the French monarchy found itself restricted by what the king could afford.

Seemingly disregarding the state of his finances, Louis XIV fought a series of ruinous wars during his seventy-two-year-long reign (1643–1715). Taken together, all these military adventures did not produce sufficient gains to justify Louis' expenses. Also, his successors did not learn from his mistakes. As a result, Louis XV and Louis XVI both ran up massive debts.

At the same time, the French nobility felt no obligation to help bail the French government out of its financial woes. Since the aristocrats had been excluded from politics, they took pleasure in their tax-exempt status, happy to let the French poor carry the full

burden of state finances. Whereas England's men of estate, elevated to the role of equal partner with the king through the Parliament, felt a kind of civic virtue that bound them together in the idea of a "commonwealth" (see below), France never gained this type of internal unity. In short, Louis XIV created a strong system of state power but asked too much of it financially.

### **Great Britain**

In contrast to French royal absolutism, Great Britain demonstrated how kings and queens had to work with real estate owners and corporate towns to create a stable government. The creation of this partnership did not occur without a struggle, as the English royals flirted with absolute monarchy during the seventeenth century but had to settle for a political arrangement that recognized the power invested in the term *absolutism* as illusory. The English people generated a political contract that balanced the will of their king with the political privileges of his subjects; this arrangement became the great exception to royal absolutism between 1660 and 1789.

England (and later Great Britain or the United Kingdom) was an island kingdom at the edge of the European continent, separated from the concentrated military power of absolute monarchy. This geographic circumstance allowed the English to experiment with politics free from direct continental pressures. Because the English enjoyed a water barrier to overland invasion, the people of this island realm ultimately invested more resources in developing a navy rather than an army. The English monarchy had fewer justifications for producing a standing army and was denied access to the principal instrument of the royal powers of the continent. As a result, the English only came close to royal absolutism when the Tudors reigned (1485–1603), but Parliament quickly lessened its subordination to the crown after Elizabeth I died in 1603. Under the Stuart kings who succeeded Elizabeth I, Parliament asserted itself and claimed the right to set the tax rates for the realm whenever the king asked for more money to pay for the rising costs of state. This parliamentary claim led to nearly a century of political struggle (1603–1689).

Unlike in Poland or Germany, where assemblies of landlords, aristocrats, and

townsmen successfully asserted themselves against the crown, in England the rise of Parliament did not lead to decentralization. Also, in contrast to the continent, where successful governments meant the rise of royal absolutism, in England sovereignty developed on the principle of representation. This unique success reflected the character of Parliament itself. Parliament was the only representative body for the entire state, while the notable men of Spain, France, Germany, and Poland met in local assemblies that often competed with central deliberating councils. In England, however, Parliament concentrated all the power of the great magnates in two houses that united the financial strengths of corporate towns with real estate owners. These two houses were the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

The House of Commons mixed the political interests of non-titled, landed aristocrats called squires or the gentry with those of merchants from England's great commercial centers. Both groups of wealthy men had the tendency to elect representatives who shared one general goal: protection of their property rights. The House of Lords brought together the titled aristocracy and church potentates. However, the titled, secular aristocracy outnumbered the bishops eighty-two to twenty-six in the eighteenth century because Henry VIII had confiscated the monasteries and eliminated the abbots in 1526 (see above). This aspect of the Reformation in England converted the House of Lords into a legislative chamber that tended to agree with the House of Commons on issues of property rights. The result was that both houses, filled with *men of estate* (those empowered by their property ownership to have a voice in government) required the crown to consult with them before raising taxes. Hence, Parliament developed the doctrine of "no taxation without representation" well before the phrase helped inspire the American Revolution of 1776.

In 1603 when Queen Elizabeth I died, Parliament was ready to assert its will. In the closing years of Elizabeth's reign, Parliament had already hinted at a growing desire to intervene in politics. Only the old Queen's popularity forestalled any such a move, but her death then released parliamentarians to voice their political opinions.

Elizabeth's heir, James VI of Scotland (son of Mary, Queen of the Scots; see insert above),



became James I of England. A Scot, he was viewed by the English as a foreigner. On top of this perception, James wrote *The True Law of Free Monarchy* (1598), which argued that a king had the right to rule without consulting any representative body. Based on the thesis that the crown held absolute power granted by God, James I tended to lecture Parliament on his vision of royal authority rather than attempt to work with these men of estate. Needless to say, James's views on monarchy conflicted directly with the desire of Parliament to intervene in government to control taxation.

James I would not have had any problems with Parliament if he could have ruled so frugally that he did not have to impose new taxes. But he was in constant need of money. The struggle between England and Spain during Elizabeth I's reign had produced substantial debts. James himself was far from restrained in his tastes for splendor or his gifts

Queen Elizabeth I (1533–1603) by renowned portrait and figure engraver William Holl the Younger, 1859.



## THE ELIZABETHAN ERA\*

Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603) became the third Queen of England to rule in her own right after Lady Jane Gray, who reigned for a mere nine days in 1553, and Mary Tudor, whose five years on the throne have been vilified by English Protestants. In contrast, Elizabeth proved to be such a competent and popular monarch that she gave her name to an entire age.

Coming to the throne at the age of twenty-five, Elizabeth was truly the Reformation's child. Her father, Henry VIII, had divorced his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, to marry Anne Boleyn, his second wife and Elizabeth's mother. This marriage had required Henry to break with the Catholic Church so that all of Anne's children would be legitimate. Anne's failure, however, to produce a living son (after two miscarriages) had left Henry with only another daughter, Elizabeth. Feeling himself cursed with Anne as he had felt with Catherine, Henry allowed his chief minister, Thomas Cromwell, to engineer Anne's execution. Accused of adultery, incest, and plotting to murder the king, Anne, her brother George Boleyn (Lord Rochford), her music teacher, Mark Smeaton, and several others, all felt Henry's wrath and suffered death. Elizabeth now had to cope with the stain of her mother's execution as she grew up in the shadow of her younger half brother, Edward, son of Jane Seymour (Henry's third wife) and her older half sister Mary (Catherine's daughter).

Surviving the anger of Mary's reign (1553–58), when Catholicism enjoyed a resurgence, Elizabeth as Anne Boleyn's daughter spent time in the tower

but managed to outlive her half sister. Once in power, then Elizabeth exhibited excellent judgment in the selection of her advisors as well as in politics when it came to guiding her policies through parliament. Her subjects loved her because they could see their ambitions coinciding with hers. And her personal ability to direct the affairs of men, while remaining a glamorous woman, helped her to achieve an unprecedented record of administrative successes in an era fraught with religious, political, and military pitfalls.

Early in her reign, Elizabeth faced religion as a growing domestic and foreign problem. Upon her ascension to the throne, Elizabeth restored the Anglican Church after Mary attempted to turn back the tide of Protestantism. Elizabeth instituted a new Act of Supremacy hoping to restore her father's religious settlement, but the Protestants who had fled to the continent during Mary's reign, returned with a far more radical outlook. They had come in contact with John Calvin's religious ideas and hoped to impose a far more rigorous religious conformity on England through a Protestant Act of Uniformity (1558). Their success, however, was partially neutralized by Elizabeth's acceptance of their legal position while she carefully avoided enforcing the new act. At the same time, Elizabeth's determination to use marriage as a diplomatic tool led her to deliberately delay the selection of a husband. Yet, her remaining single made her cousin Mary, Queen of the Scots, her closest living relative and the heir to the English crown. Mary's devout Catholicism posed a threat to Protestants so long as Elizabeth remained single and

to his friends. Furthermore, inflation caused the price of running the state to climb. Finally, since James drew income from fixed sources, as was customary with a feudal inheritance, his purchasing power declined with each year. Hence, he needed to work with Parliament rather than tell the Houses of Commons and Lords merely to obey his will.

Throughout James I's reign, hostility mounted between the crown and Parliament,

but no open rupture occurred. James I's heir, Charles I, was not so fortunate. Having learned about monarchy from his father and having witnessed the crown's struggle with Parliament, Charles I inherited the throne with the same attitudes as James I. Hence, the struggle continued and intensified during Charles's reign (1625–1649).

Only four years into his rule, Charles and Parliament had deadlocked over issues of taxation. After 1629, Charles I tried to govern without Parliament, but again he had to be

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## THE ELIZABETHAN ERA (CONTINUED)

childless. This became obvious to all Protestants when Elizabeth contracted smallpox and nearly died. Her survival increased her popularity, while her reliance on a red wig, her use of heavy white make up, and her ornately jeweled dresses spoke both to her spirit and to the fact that smallpox survivors were frequently both pockmarked and hairless.

After the religious settlement of the early years of her reign, Elizabeth enjoyed relative calm until 1570. The Anglican religion was the only established Church in the realm so everyone was technically an Anglican (derived from *Anglicana*, Latin for English). Happily for Elizabeth, Calvinists and Catholics were basically mute for twelve years as both parties lacked a coherent or focused program of opposition. After 1570, however, things changed.

A failed Catholic uprising in the north in 1569, Mary, Queen of the Scots' self-imposed exile and virtual house arrest in England during that same year, and Elizabeth's excommunication by the pope in 1570, convinced the majority of English that "papists" were traitors. Radical Protestantism also began to demand a "purification" of the Anglican church to remove any remaining papist vestiges; this demand for religious purity of faith created the Puritan movement. Together, the Catholic threat and Puritan demands forced Elizabeth to walk a political tight rope—something at which she excelled.

The Catholic threat combined a new missionary zeal that involved a steady stream of returning English exiles determined serve the church and convert the uncertain. Joined by young men trained by the Jesuits (see the Catholic Counter-Reformation above), the number of Englishmen willing to confront Elizabeth

increased, while making Mary Stuart of Scotland a growing threat. This mounting Catholic pressure forced Elizabeth to request of parliament anti-Catholic legislation in the 1570s and '80s that isolated the Catholic opposition. Simultaneously, the Catholic threat inspired the Puritans to demand an accelerated reform of the Anglican Church that Elizabeth opposed. These Puritans grew in number and power as they developed strongholds in eastern England as well as in parliamentary representation.

In the later years of Elizabeth's reign (1585–1603) a state of war between Spain and England dominated the political scene. Precipitating this war, Elizabeth's execution of her cousin Mary eliminated the possibility of a Catholic heir to the English throne: Elizabeth felt compelled to eliminate Mary after catching her in several plots to end the Tudor reign in England. This execution, however, made Elizabeth a regicide, and gave Philip II of Spain the excuse he needed to invade England with his fabled Spanish Armada (see above). Yet Elizabeth's survival of this war, with a resounding English victory, placed a capstone on her political career. Now, with most of her friends and advisors dead, however, Elizabeth grew less interested in government as she aged. Her passing in 1603, began a new political era in England because James VI of Scotland (Mary Stuart's son), who became James I of England, lacked Elizabeth's good judgment in selecting advisors as well as in managing the religious and political opposition in parliament.

\* Youngs, Frederick, Jr., Henry L. Snyder, and E. A. Reitan, *The English Heritage, Volume One to 1714*, Second Edition (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Forum Press, Inc. 1988) p. 109–30.

frugal. If he had succeeded, Charles would have created a regime very much like the one developed in France under Louis XIV. Louis ran his state without having to consult the Estates General, the principal French parliament, because he attempted to stay within existing royal sources of income.

But just like the French monarchy, Charles I simply had too many expenses. The mounting cost of government and Charles' unwillingness to be a frugal monarch led him to

experiment with taxation. He put forth the theory that traditional revenues had to adjust to contemporary times. Using ship money as a test case, he tried to alter tradition.

Ship money was a tax that the crown could collect from coastal cities to build a navy that protected these ports. Charles wanted to extend this levy to the entire kingdom and build an English navy justified by the idea that such a modern military institution protected

the entire state. Yet, to tax the interior of the country without consulting Parliament was to create a precedent that could not go unchallenged. One English gentleman, John Hampton, took up this challenge in 1637 and refused to pay. His trial focused parliamentary hostility on Charles I's efforts.

Coincidentally, 1637 was the same year that the Scots launched a rebellion against Charles I. The king had pressed for religious conformity in both his realms, England and Scotland, by supporting the high Anglican Church and pursuing a policy of hostility to Calvinists—and many Scots were Calvinists. Furthermore, his reforms in Catholic Ireland hinted at pro-Catholic sympathies that antagonized the Calvinists. Because the king's religious policy required strict conformity to Anglican doctrine, it pushed some 25,000 Puritans (see insert on Elizabeth I above—Puritans were radical Calvinist reformers determined to “purify” the Anglican Church) out of England to found the Massachusetts Bay Colony as part of the Great Migration.

Like the Puritans, most Scots wanted to preserve the integrity of their Calvinist churches. The Scots reacted to Charles I's religious policies by rebelling against his rigid intolerance. Needing money to deal with the Scots, Charles called Parliament in 1640 when the members' mood was at its darkest because the king had not assembled his men of estate for eleven years, since 1629. When Charles requested new taxes from Parliament, the representatives of wealth expressed

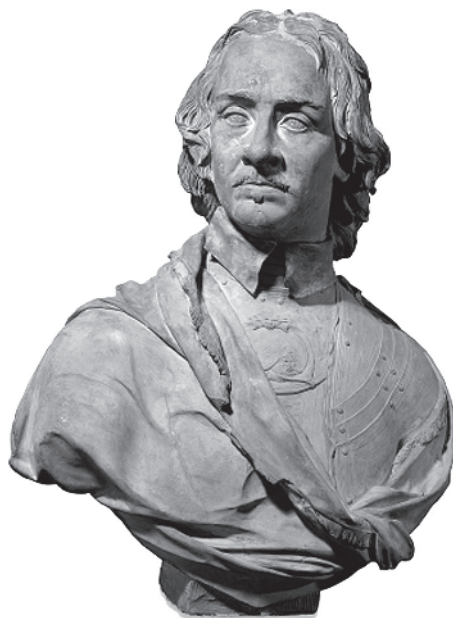
their own political goals: they wanted a voice in state affairs.

Parliament's leaders included John Hampton, who had opposed ship money; John Pym, an outspoken advocate of parliamentarianism; and a Puritan named Oliver Cromwell. These men galvanized those opposed to the king to launch the English Civil War (1640–1649). Parliament remained in session in various forms for the next twenty years while Charles fought for his right to rule as an absolute monarch. The outcome of the civil war was the first major step in determining England's modern political destiny.

Led by Cromwell, the parliamentary forces won a very difficult struggle. Nine years of fighting and internal strife removed England from the continental struggle of the Thirty Years War, which came to a close one year before the English Civil War in 1648. Charles lost this contest and then found himself a prisoner of the most radical elements of his countrymen. While other parliamentary generals had either retired or died, Cromwell had continued in command of the army, whose members were mostly ardent Calvinists who insisted on greater changes than the majority of England's men of estate sought. Using this army to purge Parliament, Cromwell soon found himself the head of a government that wanted to end the monarchy, close the House of Lords, and punish Charles. After an intense trial, Charles I was beheaded on January 30, 1649.

As regicides, however, Cromwell and his followers now faced a bleak political and diplomatic future. In England, Cromwell had to rule a state whose leaders sought fewer political changes than he actually implemented. He therefore had to maintain a standing army to enforce his will while functioning in complete isolation from the rest of Europe. His Calvinist ideals made his style of government too harsh for his old parliamentarian allies, while his reputation as a “king killer” made his regime a pariah to foreign countries. Consequently,

A member of Parliament at the outbreak of the English Civil War, Oliver Cromwell became a formidable military leader, winning the war against Charles I in 1649. As one of the judges at Charles I's trial, Cromwell signed the king's death warrant and later became lord protector. During his rule, he campaigned vigorously for religious liberty for Protestants and Nonconformists. Terracotta bust by Louis-François.



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he repeatedly purged the House of Commons to secure the right mix of opinion that he needed to support his vision for England's future. Simultaneously, he ruled with an iron fist because he lacked support beyond the minority of English people who were Puritans. Ironically, therefore, Cromwell acted like an absolute monarch even though he had not assumed the title of king.

During the Interregnum (1650–1659), meaning the era between the kings, Cromwell governed the English as their sovereign using the title “lord protector.” With the authority granted by a standing army, Cromwell made his will the law and usurped more authority from Parliament than any Stuart king. Yet, soon after Cromwell died on September 3, 1658, Parliament returned to a more familiar system of government. First it restored the House of Lords, which joined the House of Commons to invite Charles I's son, Charles II, back to England to reestablish a less severe political regime than the one offered by Cromwell's followers. Thus, from 1660 to 1688 the Stuarts again reigned over England during an era known as the Restoration, but questions concerning sovereignty remained unanswered.

Part of the price charged by Parliament in return for restoring the Stuart dynasty was that the legislature revise the legal definition of property rights to further secure estates from the king's power. Parliament sought to make a proprietor's control over his estate absolute by ending knight's service.

Knight's service was the last vestige of feudalism in English common law. It defined the obligations that the possessor of real estate owed to the crown. These obligations included paying feudal dues to the king as a symbol of his ownership of all the land in England. By eliminating these dues, Parliament eliminated the legal principle of *allodial* title. Allodial title assigned ownership of all land in a kingdom to the monarch as an agent of God; this concept allowed the king to bestow estates on his retainers as long as they performed specific services in the king's army.

Clearly, allodial title was essential for the operation of a feudal monarchy. To eliminate allodial title meant that the king no longer was a part owner of all of the kingdom's land. Moreover, getting rid of allodial title acknowledged that the new form of contemporary military service substituted professional mer-

cenaries for knights in the royal army. Thus, by eliminating knight's service, Parliament recognized the reality of the profound changes that had taken place in warfare while also creating the concept of absolute property, meaning that the landlord now controlled both the title and all the rights of possession to his estate. Combining these elements in proprietorship gave men of estate absolute ownership of their holdings. From this point forward, taxation could only come from the consent of the taxpayers.

The idea of absolute property converted real estate into a form of wealth more like cap-

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ital. Landlords began to think of themselves as owners of a type of property that could be used to generate more income, and this change in attitude reinforced trends already set in motion by the commercial revolution, such as the enclosures, crop rotation, and animal husbandry mentioned above. At the same time, landlords began to change the way they leased acreage. When enclosures drove so many poor farmers from their cottages, their land reverted to the landlord; now he chose to replace leases that secured land to a tenant for a number of years with leases at will, that is, leases that could be terminated whenever the landlord wished.

Meanwhile, the fact that Parliament, when consulted, proved generous with the kings on issues of taxation meant that English property owners were developing a sense of duty to the state. This sense of duty led them to tax themselves in times of need far more than any other people in Europe. In addition, this sense of duty to the state foreshadowed the modern

concept of citizenship as a key ingredient in the nation-state.

In contrast, aristocrats in France, across the channel from England, developed the opposite sentiment. Since they had no share in government, they did not have to pay taxes. Since their king avoided consulting with them, they developed the attitude that their status set them apart from the state and the rest of society. Thus, tax exemption came to

The new sense of duty to the state among the wealthy made England much stronger and richer than its neighbors—especially in the eighteenth century under the leadership of Sir Robert Walpole (1676–1745), chancellor of the exchequer, first lord of the treasury, and, in effect, the first prime minister in English history after the issue of sovereignty had been settled .

equal freedom from state responsibilities as a mark of the highest possible status in France. This situation meant that if anyone wished to demonstrate his or her lofty social position, he or she had to seek this tax-exempt status. As a result, no sense of duty to the state comparable with that found among wealthy landholders of England developed in France.

The new sense of duty to the state among the wealthy made England much stronger and richer than its neighbors—especially in the eighteenth century under the leadership of Sir Robert Walpole (1676–1745), chancellor of the exchequer, first lord of the treasury, and, in effect, the first prime minister in English history after the issue of sovereignty had been settled (see below). In 1716 Walpole created the sinking fund, which was a fiscal mechanism that assigned certain British taxes to reduce the government's debt each year. This sinking fund produced such confidence in Britain's debt that the wealthy came to believe that investing in the government was a gilt-

edged security. This faith in the fund grew over the course of the century as trade generated by the commercial revolution produced unexpected revenues. Hence, the wealthy in Britain invested in government with a growing understanding that they were investing in themselves.

In England, therefore, participation in government drew taxpaying aristocrats closer together with their fellow townspeople in corporate cities. This sense of ownership in a common endeavor made Britain powerful and prosperous. Together landlords and merchants created a solid financial basis for investing in government. Linking these interests to one another also led to a government that protected the state economy.

Expressed by the term *commonwealth*, first used during the civil war and Interregnum, estate holders saw economic prosperity and politics as belonging to a common unity of property interests. Such a view became explicit in the formation of public opinion during the Enlightenment (see chapter 20). Men such as John Locke, David Hume, and Adam Smith linked politics, property rights, and private and public interest to the concept of the commonwealth to create a bond between the exercise of political power and the general well-being of the people.

Yet, before these political and fiscal practices and enlightened principles could be implemented during the eighteenth century, the issue of sovereignty in England had to be resolved. One question remained unanswered at the close of the seventeenth century: what was the relationship between Parliament and royal power? Could the king issue an edict that explicitly contradicted parliamentary law? If so, which power took precedence: the king's will, or the majority opinion of the commonwealth's elected representatives? Charles II proved to be sufficiently competent to sidestep this issue so that his rule was not interrupted with rebellion. His Catholic brother and heir, James II, however, was not so lucky.

James II became king in 1685 with the benefit of the power that Charles had amassed during his reign. James had the support of a friendly Parliament led by the Tories, the party of the king's court. Furthermore, he was backed by the leading figures of the Anglican Church, the bishops. Finally, his treasury was full. If he had ruled quietly, the crown would

have prevailed. Instead, James pressed for royal absolutism with a vengeance.

First, he violated Parliament's expressed will by ignoring the Test Act, which required all officeholders to take communion in the Anglican Church in order to prove that they were members in good faith. He tolerated both Calvinists and Catholics alike so that he could bring Catholics back into politics. Consequently, he undercut his Anglican support in Parliament. Next, he enrolled Irish Catholics as officers in the English army and tried to expand this arm of the military to increase his ability to punish those who would disobey his rule. Finally, he advanced the same legal position that James I promoted on royal authority: kings had to answer to no one except God.

When James II's wife gave birth to a son whom he had baptized as a Catholic, thus ensuring another generation of "papist" rule, the great magnates of England shifted their loyalty to his opponents, the Whigs, the party of the country. Completely out of step with his own kingdom, James II continued to press for royal absolutism. Eventually, his single-minded efforts prompted his subjects to rebel, and leading figures of opposition began to look around for a potentially friendly king who might be willing to replace James II.

The so-called Glorious Revolution (1688–1689) resolved the issue of sovereignty in England by establishing a contract between Parliament and one such friendly monarch who accepted the English crown. Seeking an alternative to James II, the Whigs and their new Tory allies approached Mary Stuart, James II's sister and wife of William of Orange. William of Orange ruled Protestant Holland and had spent most of his life fighting French aggression against the Low Countries. Offered a new monarchy that could strengthen him in his struggle with Louis XIV, William happily agreed to nearly any terms Parliament might impose on his new kingdom. His only concern was whether England would actually rise to support him when he made his attempt to overthrow James II.

Landing on English soil in 1688 with every intention of withdrawing if James II resisted, William waited to see how the English would respond to an alien force on their shores. Yet, James so completely distrusted his own people that he failed to react. Marching with more confidence on London, William discovered that the English in fact wished a change of

government. More and more notable Englishmen joined William's camp as the English aristocracy abandoned James II to his political destiny. As a result, James II's support melted away until the outcome became clear. James then abandoned England without a fight as this transition to Parliamentary sovereignty became a fact.

Louis XIV of France continued to back James as the king of England, but this alliance only strengthened English resolve to support their new monarch. Thus, in 1689 a new political settlement developed into what the English called their *constitution* (i.e., a contract between men of estate and the monarchy that produced the commonwealth). Foremost among the new laws were the Bill of Rights, the Toleration Act, and the Settlement Act.

The Bill of Rights stipulated that the king was bound by the law and could not suspend an act of Parliament. Furthermore, a king could not levy taxes or raise an army except by parliamentary consent. Finally, a king could not arrest or detain a subject without due process of law.

Added to the Bill of Rights was the Toleration Act, which allowed Protestant dissenters (that is, those who were not members of the Church of England) or Calvinists to worship as they please, but excluded them from public office. Like the Test Act before it, the Toleration Act measured an official's loyalty to the commonwealth by his willingness to swear allegiance to the new government by acknowledging the Anglican Church. The Toleration Act also officially recognized that matters of faith and knowledge belonged to two different realms of belief. Thus, the power of science and reason were established in English law, revealing that Parliament now comprised men with *politique* personalities (see above).

Finally, Parliament added the Settlement Act of 1701, which stated that no Catholic could rule England. Aimed specifically at James II and his son and grandson, this act implicitly excluded all male descendants of the Stuart line. Parliament would no longer align itself with any Catholic members from James II's family.

And to close the door on a possible Stuart invasion from the north through Scotland, Parliament worked to unify these two kingdoms. To overcome Scottish opposition to a merger with England, Parliament used the



growing commercial network of the Atlantic trade system as bait. The Scots had no right to engage in commerce in the English empire unless they joined England in a “united kingdom.” The Lowland Scots accepted this commercial opportunity and joined with England and Wales to form the United Kingdom, or Great Britain. The Highland Scots, called Jacobites, resisted. Nevertheless, Parliament passed an act creating a union between Scotland and England in 1707, and the last Jacobite effort to oppose this union failed after the bloody battle of Culloden Moor in 1746.

Outside the Scottish Highlands, Ireland remained the only trouble spot after the Glorious Revolution of 1688–89. Here James centered his resistance to William III by mobilizing a force supported by Louis XIV. Losing the Battle of the Boyne River (1690) to William III, however, officially ended James II’s claim on England. All potential support for the ousted king evaporated, but the status of Ireland was now subject to a wrathful Parliament.

Wishing to punish the Irish for their stubborn support of James II, the English brought them into the United Kingdom at the same time that they reduced Ireland to a zone of abject poverty by imposing the Penal Codes. First, Parliament banished the Catholic clergy from Ireland. Second, Catholics were banned from voting or sitting as members of the Irish Parliament. Third, Catholic teachers could not teach and Catholic parents could not send their children abroad for a Catholic education. Fourth, no Catholic could take a degree from the University of Dublin. Fifth, the Catholic Irish could not purchase land, hold a lease of more than thirty years, inherit property from a Protestant, or own a house worth more than £5. Sixth, a Catholic son who converted to Protestantism inherited the family’s wealth even if he was not the oldest. Seventh, Catholics could not become attorneys, constables, tradesmen, or employers of more than two apprentices.

The Penal Codes went further in limiting Irish economic opportunities. Irish shipping was excluded from the British colonies. In addition, Ireland could not import colonial goods except through England. The Irish could only export agricultural goods, not woolens or glass products. Furthermore, the Irish could

not impose a tariff on English imports. Goods produced on Irish estates, however, belonged to English landlords who had taken up residence in Ireland as a new nobility, a fact that explains why Ireland was allowed to export agricultural products.

The purpose of the Penal Codes was obvious: England intended to weaken the potentially hostile Ireland so that it could not support James II or his heirs. These codes also ensured that Ireland could not compete with England in the expanding commercial system generated by Atlantic trade. At the same time, however, the imposition of the Penal Codes ensured hostility between Ireland and England for centuries to come, despite the fact that England relented on some of the more severe features of these codes later.

These codes made Ireland a zone of utter poverty in the new United Kingdom. They also explain why the Irish were hungry enough to accept a foreign food like the potato as a staple in their diet. Finally, these codes remind the reader that England had only developed a nascent version of such modern concepts as toleration and political representation. The harsh way England treated the Irish indicated a deeply rooted fear of Ireland as a source of political instability. Implicitly described by John Locke in his *Second Treatise on Government* as an irrational people willing to support a “conqueror,” the Irish were subjected to “economic enslavement” as punishment for performing the most “animal-like” of human practices (see chapter 20). Charles Davenant, a political arithmetician (one of the founders of statistics), depicted the Irish as an irrational tribe in his *Essay Upon the Probable Method of Making a People Gainers in the Balance of Trade* (1699). In this explicit attack on the Irish, Davenant was unrestrained in his indictment, converting Locke’s implicit attack on the Irish into a stated “fact.”

Davenant’s wrath fuelled a new type of ethnic hostility that foreshadowed the concept of racism. Davenant thought that the Irish’s blind refusal to recognize reason placed them in a human category all their own. This category defined the Irish as beasts in human form who lacked the capacity to rule themselves rationally. As a result, they had to be subordinated to the heavy hand of a just, paternal, and sagacious foreign monarch. Ireland joined the United Kingdom as a conquered land filled

with people who, according to their conquerors, needed to be controlled by a political parent because of their failure to act like rational human beings. Simply stated, Davenant said that Ireland should be reduced to the status of an English colony.

With the addition of Ireland to the United Kingdom, Great Britain was now complete. As a complex combination of several estates, the United Kingdom represented the great exception to the political design adopted by Europe during the early modern era: Great Britain, save for Ireland, enjoyed the rights and privileges of a constitutional monarchy. In contrast, the standard model used by the other kings on the European continent was that of France under Louis XIV, who had developed the most efficient example of royal absolutism found in Europe. Furthermore, Louis XIV and his heirs became the dominant political figures of Europe between 1660 and 1789.

Yet, modern science and the Enlightenment undercut absolute monarchy. Modern science and the Enlightenment did so by developing a new political weapon called public opinion. Modern science combined the radical redefinition of the physical universe consolidated by Sir Isaac Newton with idea of public opinion developed by John Locke. Both of these individuals were English, both symbolized the modern outlook, both exemplified for the rest of Europe the justification of the British model of government, and both undercut the French design. Hence, both modern science and the Enlightenment as manifested in the work of these two men laid a foundation for the next stage in spontaneous modernization, a full account of which appears in chapter 19.

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