The Past and Present Society

The General Crisis of the 17th Century
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Source: *Past & Present*, No. 16 (Nov., 1959), pp. 31-64
Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of The Past and Present Society
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/650152
Accessed: 04-05-2020 05:36 UTC

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# THE GENERAL CRISIS OF THE 17TH CENTURY

THE MIDDLE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY WAS A PERIOD OF revolutions in Europe. These revolutions differed from place to place, and if studied separately, seem to rise out of particular, local causes; but if we look at them together they have so many common features that they appear almost as a general revolution. There is the Puritan Revolution in England which fills the twenty years between 1640 and 1660, but whose crisis was between 1648 and 1653. In those years of its crisis there was also the series of revolts known as the *Frondes* in France, and in 1649 there was a *coup d'état* or palace revolution, which created a new form of government in the United Provinces of the Netherlands. Contemporary with the troubles of England were those of the Spanish empire. In 1640 there was the revolt of Catalonia, which failed, and the revolt of Portugal, which succeeded: in 1641 there was nearly a revolt of Andalusia too; in 1647 there was the revolt of Naples, the revolt of Masaniello. To contemporary observers it seemed that society itself was in crisis, and that this crisis was general in Europe. "These days are days of shaking . . . ' declared an English preacher in 1643, "and this shaking is universal: the Palatinate, Bohemia, Germania, Catalonia, Portugal, Ireland, England".[1] The various countries of Europe seemed merely the separate theatres upon which the same great tragedy was being simultaneously, though in different languages and with local variations, played out.

What was the general cause or character of this crisis? Contemporaries, if they looked beyond mere surface parallels, tended to find deep spiritual reasons. That there was a crisis they felt sure. For a generation they had felt it coming. Ever since 1618 at least there had been talk of the dissolution of society, or of the world; and the undefined sense of gloom of which we are constantly aware in those years was justified sometimes by new interpretations of Scripture, sometimes by new phenomena in the skies. With the discovery of new stars, and particularly with the new comet of 1618, science seemed to support the prophets of disaster. So also did history. It was at this time that cyclical theories of history became fashionable and the decline and fall of nations was predicted, not only from Scripture and the stars, but also from the passage of time and the organic processes of decay. Kingdoms, declared a puritan

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preacher in 1643, after touching lightly on the corroborative influence of the comet of 1618, last for a maximum period of 500 or 600 years, "and it is known to all of you how long we have been since the Conquest".[2] From our rationalist heights we might suppose that the new discoveries of science would tend to discredit the apocalyptic vaticinations of Scripture; but in fact this was not so. It is an interesting but undeniable fact that the most advanced scientists of the early sixteenth century included also the most learned and literal students of Biblical mathematics; and in their hands science and religion converged to pinpoint, between 1640 and 1660, the dissolution of society, the end of the world.[3]

This intellectual background is significant because it shows that the crisis of the mid-seventeenth century did not come by surprise, out of sudden accidents: it was deep-seated and anticipated, if only vaguely anticipated, even before the accidents which launched it. No doubt accidents made revolution longer or deeper here, shorter or more superficial there. No doubt, too, the universality of revolution owed something to mere contagion: the fashion of revolution spreads. But even contagion implies receptivity: a healthy or inoculated body does not catch even a prevailing disease. Therefore, though we may observe accidents and fashions, we still have to ask a deeper question. We must ask what was the general condition of Western European society which made it, in the mid-seventeenth century, so universally vulnerable — intellectually as well as physically — to the sudden new epidemic of revolution?

Of course there are some obvious answers. Most obvious of all is the Thirty Years' War, which began in 1618, the year of the comet, and was still raging in the 1640's, the years of revolution. The Thirty Years' War, in the countries affected by it, undoubtedly prepared the ground for revolution. The burden of war taxation, or military oppression, or military defeat, precipitated the revolts in Catalonia, Portugal, Naples. The dislocation of trade, which may have been caused by the Thirty Years' War, led to unemployment and violence in many manufacturing or commercial countries. The destructive passage or billeting of soldiers led to regular peasant mutinies in Germany and France. One need only look at M. Roupnel's study of Burgundy in those years, or at the reports sent to the chancellor Séguier describing the constant risings of the French peasants under the stress of war-taxation, or at the grim etchings of Callot, to realise that the Thirty Years' War was a formidable factor in the making of that discontent which was sometimes mobilised in revolution.[4]

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And yet it is not a sufficient explanation. After all, the European wars of 1618-1659 were not new phenomena. They were a resumption of the European wars of the sixteenth century, the wars of Charles V against Francis I and Henry II, of Philip II against Elizabeth and Henry of Navarre and the Prince of Orange. Those sixteenth-century wars had ended with the century, in 1598, in 1604, in 1609: in 1618 and 1621 and 1635 they had been resumed, consciously resumed. Philip IV looked back constantly to the example of Philip II, "mi abuelo y mi señor", Prince Maurice and Prince Frederick Henry to William of Orange, their father; Oliver Cromwell to "Queen Elizabeth of glorious memory". Richelieu and Mazarin sought to reverse the verdict of Câteau Cambrésis in 1559. And yet, in the sixteenth centuries these wars had led to no such revolutions. Moveover, the seventeenth-century revolutions were sometimes independent of the war. The greatest of those revolutions was in England which was safely — some said ignominiously — neutral. In the country which suffered most from the war, Germany, there was no revolution.

I have said that the sixteenth-century wars had led to no such revolutions. Of course there had been revolutions in the sixteenth century: famous, spectacular revolutions: the religious revolutions of Reformation and Counter-Reformation. But we cannot say that those revolutions had been caused by those wars. Moreover, those revolutions, however spectacular, had in fact been far less profound than the revolutions of the next century. They had led to no such decisive breach in historical continuity. Beneath the customary wars of Hapsburg and Valois, beneath the dramatic changes of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the sixteenth century goes on, a continuous, unitary century, and society is much the same at the end of it as at the beginning. Philip II succeeds to Charles V, Granvelle to Granvelle, Queen Elizabeth to Henry VIII, Cecil to Cecil; even in France Henri IV takes up, after a period of disturbance, the mantle of Henri II. Aristocratic, monarchical society is unbroken: it is even confirmed. Speaking generally, we can say that for all the violence of its religious convulsions, the sixteenth century succeeded in absorbing its strains, its thinkers in swallowing their doubts, and at the end of it, kings and philosophers alike felt satisfied with the best of possible worlds.[5]

How different from this is the seventeenth century! For the seventeenth century did not absorb its revolutions. It is not continuous. It is broken in the middle, irreparably broken, and at the end of it, after the revolutions, men can hardly recognise the

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beginning. Intellectually, politically, morally, we are in a new age, a new climate. It is as if a series of rainstorms has ended in one final thunderstorm which has cleared the air and changed, permanently, the temperature of Europe. From the end of the fifteenth century until the middle of the seventeenth century we have one climate, the climate of the Renaissance; then, in the middle of the seventeenth century we have the years of change, the years of revolution; and thereafter, for another century and a half we have another, very different climate, the climate of the Enlightenment.

Thus I do not believe that the seventeenth-century revolutions can be explained merely by the background of war, which had also been the background of the previous, unrevolutionary century. If we are to find an explanation, we must look elsewhere. We must look past the background, into the structure of society. For all revolutions, even though they may be occasioned by external causes, and expressed in intellectual form, are made real and formidable by defects of social structure. A firm, elastic, working structure — like that of England in the nineteenth century — is proof against revolution however epidemic abroad. On the other hand a weak or over-rigid social structure, though it may last long in isolation, will collapse quickly if infected. The universality of revolution in the seventeenth century suggests that the European monarchies, which had been strong enough to absorb so many strains in the previous century, had by now developed serious structural weaknesses: weaknesses which the renewal of general war did not cause, but merely exposed and accentuated.

What were the general, structural weaknesses of the Western monarchies? Contemporaries who looked at the revolutions of the seventeenth century saw them as political revolutions: as struggles between the two traditional organs of the ancient "mixed monarchy" — the Crown and the Estates. Certainly this was the form they took. In Spain, the Crown, having reduced the córtes of Castile to insignificance, provoked the Catalan revolution by challenging the córtes of the Kingdom of Aragon. In France, after the meeting of the Estates General in 1613, Richelieu contrived to discontinue them, and they never met again till 1789; the Parlement of Paris struck back in the Fronde, but only to be defeated by Mazarin and reduced to the insignificance which was afterwards so bluntly rubbed in to it by Louis XIV. In Germany the Emperor challenged and reduced the Electoral college, even though the electors, as individual princes, reduced their own Diets to insignificance. In England the Parliament challenged and defeated the King. At the same time the kings of

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Denmark and Sweden, struggling with or within their Diets, ended by establishing a personal monarchy, while the king of Poland, unable to imitate them, became the puppet of his. Altogether, we may say, the universal casualty of the seventeenth century was that Aristotelian concept, so admired in 1600, so utterly extinct in 1700, "mixed monarchy". The position was described summarily by the English political philosopher, James Harrington who, in 1656, diagnosed the general crisis which had produced such violent results in his own country of *Oceana*. "What", he asked, "is become of the Princes of Germany? Blown up. Where are the Estates or the power of the people in France? Blown up. Where is that of the people of Aragon and the rest of the Spanish kingdoms? Blown up. Where is that of the Austrian princes in Switz? Blown up . . . Nor shall any man show a reason that will be holding in prudence why the people of Oceana have blown up their king, but that their kings did not first blow up them".

Now there can be no doubt that politically Harrington was right. The struggle was a struggle for power, for survival, between Crowns and Estates. But when we have said this, have we really answered our question? If revolution was to break out otherwise than in hopeless rural *jacqueries*, it could only be through the protest of Estates, Parliaments, Cortes, Diets; and if it was to be crushed, it could only be through the victory of royal power over such institutions. But to describe the form of a revolution is not to explain its cause, and today we are reluctant to accept constitutional struggles as self-contained or self-explanatory. We look for the forces or interests behind the constitutional claims of either side. What forces, what interests were represented by the revolutionary parties in seventeenth-century Europe — the parties which, though they may not have controlled them (for everyone would agree that there were other forces too) nevertheless gave ultimate social power and significance to the revolts of córtes and diets, estates and parliaments?

Now to this question one answer has already been given and widely accepted. It is the Marxist answer. According to the Marxists, and to some other historians who, though not Marxists, accept their argument, the crisis of the seventeenth century was at bottom a crisis of production, and the motive force behind at least some of the revolutions was the force of the producing *bourgeoisie*, hampered in their economic activity by the obsolete, wasteful, restrictive, but jealously defended productive system of "feudal" society. According to this view, the crisis of production was general in Europe, but it was only in England that the forces of "capitalism",

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thanks to their greater development and their representation in parliament, were able to triumph. Consequently while other countries made no immediate advance towards modern capitalism, in England the old structure was shattered and a new form of economic organisation was established. Within that organisation modern, industrial capitalism could achieve its astonishing results: it was no longer capitalist enterprise "adapted to a generally feudal framework": it was capitalist enterprise, from its newly-won island base, "transforming the world".

This Marxist thesis has been advanced by many able writers, but, in spite of their arguments, I do not believe that it has been proved or even that any solid evidence has been adduced to sustain it. It is of course easy to show that there were economic changes in the seventeenth century, and that, at least in England, industrial capitalism was more developed in 1700 than in 1600; but to do this is not the same as to show either that the economic changes precipitated the revolutions in Europe, or that English capitalism was directly forwarded by the Puritan "victory" of 1640-1660. These are hypotheses, which may of course be true; but it is equally possible that they are untrue: that problems of production were irrelevant to the seventeenth-century revolutions generally, and that in England capitalist development was independent of the Puritan revolution, in the sense, that it would or could have occurred without that revolution, perhaps even was retarded or interrupted by it. If it is to be shown that the English puritan revolution was a successful "bourgeois revolution", it is not enough to produce evidence that English capitalism was more advanced in 1700 than in 1600. It must be shown either that the men who made the revolution aimed at such a result, or that those who wished for such a result forwarded the revolution, or that such a result would not have been attained without the revolution. Without such evidence, the thesis remains a mere hypothesis.

Now in fact no advocate of the Marxist theory seems to me to have established any of these necessary links in the argument. Mr. Maurice Dobb, whose *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* may be described as the classic text-book of Marxist history, consistently assumes that the English Puritan Revolution was the crucial "break-through" of modern capitalism. It bears, he says, "all the marks of the classic bourgeois revolution": before it, capitalism is cramped and frustrated, never progressing beyond a certain stage, a parasite confined to the interstices of "feudal" society; in it, the "decisive period" of capitalism reaches its "apex";

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after it, the bonds are broken and the parasite becomes the master. Similarly, Mr. E. J. Hobsbawn, in his two articles on "the General Crisis of European Economy in the seventeenth century",[6] consistently maintains the same thesis. "Had the English Revolution failed", he writes, "as so many other European revolutions in the seventeenth century failed, it is entirely possible that economic developments might have been long retarded". The results of the puritan "victory" were "portentous": nothing less than the transformation of the world. But it is to be observed that although Mr. Dobb assumes this position throughout his book, he nowhere gives any evidence to prove it. As soon as he reaches the "decisive period" of capitalism, he suddenly becomes vague. "The lines of this development", we learn, "are far from clearly drawn"; "the details of this process are far from clear and there is little evidence that bears directly upon it". In fact, not a single piece of documented evidence is produced for what is throughout assumed to be the crucial event in the whole history of European capitalism. And Mr. Hobsbawm is even more summary. He dwells at length upon the economy of Europe at the time of the revolutions. He assumes the "portentous" importance of the puritan revolution in changing the economy. But of the actual connexion between the two he says not a word.[7]

Altogether, it seems to me that the Marxist identification of the seventeenth-century revolutions with "bourgeois" "capitalist" revolutions, successful in England, unsuccessful elsewhere, is a mere *a priori* hypothesis. The Marxists see, as we all see, that, at some time between the discovery of America and the Industrial Revolution, the basis was laid for a new "capitalist" form of society. Believing, as a matter of doctrine, that such a change cannot be achieved peacefully but requires a violent "break-through" of a new class, a "bourgeois revolution", they look for such a revolution. Moreover, seeing that the country which led in this process was England, they look for such a revolution in England. And when they find, exactly half-way between these terminal dates, the violent Puritan revolution in England, they cry εὕρηκα! Thereupon the other European revolutions fall easily into place as abortive bourgeois revolutions. The hypothesis, once stated, is illustrated by other hypotheses. It has yet to be proved by evidence. And it may be that it rests on entirely false premises. It may be that social changes do not necessarily require violent revolution: that capitalism developed in England (as industrial democracy has done) peacefully, and that the violent puritan revolution was no more crucial to its history than

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(say) the fifteenth-century Hussite and Taborite revolutions in Bohemia, to which it bears such obvious resemblances.

If the crisis of the seventeenth century, then, though general in Western Europe, is not a merely constitutional crisis, nor a crisis of economic production, what kind of a crisis was it? In this essay I shall suggest that, in so far as it was a general crisis — i.e., ignoring inessential variations from place to place — it was something both wider and vaguer than this: in fact, that it was a crisis in the relations between society and the state. In order to explain this, I shall try to set it against a longer background of time than is sometimes supposed necessary. For general social crises are seldom explicable in terms of mere decades. We would not now seek to explain the communist revolution in Russia against a background merely of the twelve years since 1905, nor the great French revolution against the background merely of the reign of Louis XVI. For such a purpose, we would think it necessary to examine the whole *ancien régime* which came to an end here in 1917, there in 1789. Similarly, if we are to seek an explanation of the general European crisis of the 1640's, we must not confine ourselves to the preceding decade, ascribing all the responsibility (though we must undoubtedly ascribe some) to archbishop Laud in England or the Count-Duke of Olivares in Spain. We must look, here too, at the whole *ancien régime* which preceded the crisis: the whole form of state and society which we have seen continually expanding, absorbing all shocks, growing more self-assured throughout the sixteenth century, and which, in the mid-seventeenth century, comes to an end: what for convenience we may call the state and society of the European Renaissance.

* * *

The Renaissance — how loose and vague is the term! Defining it and dating it has become a major industry among scholars, at international congresses and in learned papers. But let us not be deterred by this. All general terms — "*ancien régime*", "capitalism", "the middle ages" — are loose and vague; but they are nevertheless serviceable if we use them only generally. And in general terms we know well enough what we mean by the European Renaissance. It is the sudden expansion of our civilisation, the excited discovery of world upon world, adventure upon adventure: the progressive enlargement of sensitivity and show which reached its greatest extension in the sixteenth century and which, in the seventeenth century, is no more. Expansion, extension, — these are its essential

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characteristics. For the sixteenth century is not an age of structural change. In technology, in thought, in government, it is the same. In technology, at least after 1520, there are few changes. The expansion of Europe creates greater markets, greater opportunities, but the machinery of production remains basically constant. Similarly, in culture, the great representatives of the European Renaissance are universal but unsystematic. Leonardo, Montaigne, Cervantes, Shakespeare, take life for granted: they adventure, observe, describe, perhaps mock; but they do not analyse, criticise, question. And in government it is the same too. The political structures of Europe are not changed in the sixteenth century: they are stretched to grasp and hold new empires, sometimes vast new empires, vaster than they can contain for long without internal change. Nevertheless, as yet, there is no such change. The Renaissance state — up to and beyond 1600 — expands continuously without as yet bursting its old envelope. That envelope is the medieval, aristocratic, monarchy, the rule of the Christian prince.

It is a fascinating spectacle, the rise of the Princes in sixteenth-century Europe. One after another they spring up, first in Italy and Burgundy, then all over Europe. Their dynasties may be old, and yet their character is new: they are more exotic, more highly coloured than their predecessors. They are versatile, cultivated men, sometimes bizarre, even outrageous: they bewilder us by their lavish tastes, their incredible energy, their ruthlessness and *panache*. Even when they are introverted, bigoted, melancholy, it is on a heroic scale: we think of Charles V solemly conducting his own funeral at Yuste or Philip II methodically condemning millions of future lives to the treadmill of ceaseless prayer for his own soul. Undoubtedly, in the sixteenth century, the Princes are everything. They are tyrants over past and future; they change religion and divine truth by their nod, even in their teens; they are priests and popes, they call themselves gods, as well as kings. And yet we should remember, if we are to understand the crisis at the end of their rule, that their power did not rise up out of nothing. Its extraordinary expansion in the early sixteenth century was not *in vacuo*. Europe had to make room for it. The princes rose at the expense of someone or something, and they brought in their train the means of securing their sudden, usurped new power. In fact, they rose at the expense of the older organs of European civilisation, the cities; and they brought with them, as the means of conquest, a new political instrument, "the Renaissance court".

Not much has been written about the eclipse of the European cities on the eve of the Renaissance; but it is an important

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phenomenon.[8] For how can we think of the Middle Ages without thinking of the cities, and yet who thinks of them after 1500? In the Middle Ages the free communes of Flanders and Italy had been the founders of Europe's trade and wealth, the centres of its arts and crafts, the financiers of its Popes and kings. The German cities had been the means of colonising and civilising the barbarous North, the pagan East of Europe. These cities, moreover, had had their own way of life and had imposed upon Europe some of their own methods of government and standards of value. In its earliest form, the Renaissance itself had been a City phenomenon: it had begun in the cities of Italy, Flanders and South Germany before it was taken over, and changed, by princes and popes. And this early Renaissance had the character of the cities within which it was still contained. Like them it was responsible, orderly, self-controlled. For however great their wealth, however splendid their town-halls and hospitals, their churches and squares, there is always, in the cities, a trace of calculation and self-restraint. It is the virtue of civic self-government, however oligarchically controlled: a spirit very different from the outrageous, spendthrift, irresponsible exhibitionism of the princes which was to come.

For between the fifteenth and the sixteenth century the princely suitors came, and one after another the cities succumbed. The rich cities of Flanders gave in to the magnificent dukes of Burgundy, the rich cities of Lombardy and Tuscany to the magnificent princes of Italy. The Baltic cities of the Hanse were absorbed by the kings of Poland or Denmark or ruined themselves by vain resistance. Barcelona yielded to the King of Aragon, Marseilles to the King of France. Even those apparent virgins, Genoa and Augsburg, were really "kept cities", attached by golden strings to the King of Spain and the Emperor. The doge of Venice himself became a prince, ruling over lesser cities in the *terra ferma*. Only a few, like Geneva, remained obstinate spinsters; and that sour, crabbed city missed the gaiety of the Renaissance. Even the exceptions prove the rule. Accidental princely weakness, or indirect princely patronage, lie behind the new prosperity of Frankfurt, Ragusa, Hamburg, Danzig.

For as a rule surrender was the price of continued prosperity: how else could the cities survive, once the princes had discovered the secret of state? By subduing the Church, extending their jurisdiction, mobilizing the countryside, the princes had created a new apparatus of power, "the Renaissance state", with which they could tax the wealth of the cities, patronise and extend their trade, take over and develop their art and architecture. If the cities hope

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to thrive now, it must be by new methods. It must not be through independence: those days are past. It must be through monopoly, as the sole grantees of princely trade in these expanding dominions; as Lisbon and Seville throve on the grants of the kings of Portugal and Spain. Or they might thrive as centres of extravagant princely consumption, as royal capitals. For in some of the old cities the victorious princes would establish their new courts: courts which sucked up the wealth of the whole country and rained it down on the city of their residence. Essentially the sixteenth century is an age not of cities but of courts: of capital cities made splendid less by trade than by government. It was not as industrial or commercial cities, but as courts, that Brussels, Paris, Rome, Madrid, Naples, Prague achieve their splendour in the sixteenth century. And the brilliance of these courts is not the discreet, complacent self-advertisement of great merchants out of their calculated profits: it is the carefree magnificence of kings and courtiers, who do not need to count because they do not have to earn.

Of course the cities wriggled at first. Ghent resisted its Burgundian dukes. The old cities of Spain struck back against their foreign king. Florence sought to throw out the Medici. Genoa and Augsburg surrendered only after doubt and strife. But in the end each in turn was overpowered, subdued, and then — if lucky — rewarded with the golden shower which fell not from trade, or at least not directly from trade, but from the court. And with the cities the old city culture was transformed too. Erasmus, preaching peace and civic justice and denouncing the heedless wars and wasteful magnificence of princes, is a true figure of the first, the city Renaissance, cultivated, pious, rational; but he is swept up in the princely embrace and made a mascot of royal courts, until he flees to die in a free city on the Rhine. Sir Thomas More, whose *Utopia* was a league of virtuous, independent cities, is captured and broken by the splendid, cannibal court of Henry VIII. Soon after 1500 the age of independent city culture is over. So is the age of careful accountancy. We are in the age of the Field of Cloth-of-Gold, of heroic conquests and impossible visions and successive state bankruptcies: the age of Columbus and Cortés, of Leonardo da Vinci and St. Francis Xavier, each, in his way, like Dr. Faustus, still climbing after knowledge infinite, or, like don Quixote, pursuing unattainable mirages, heedless of mortal limitations. It is the age, also, whose fashionable handbooks were no longer civic nor clerical but were called *The Courtier*, *The Governour*, *The Prince*, *The Institution of a Christian Prince*, *The Mirror* (or *the Horologe*) *of Princes*.

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How was this miracle possible? When we look back at that age, with its incredible audacities, its contemptuous magnificence in speculation and spending, we are amazed that it lasted so long. Why did not European civilisation burst in the sixteenth century? And yet not only did it not burst, it continued to expand, absorbing all the time the most fearful strains. The Turks in the East wrenched away the outposts of Europe; Christendom was split asunder by religious revolution and constant war: and yet at the end of the century the kings were more spendthrift, their courts more magnificent than ever. The court of Spain, once so simple, had been changed to a Burgundian pattern; the court of England, once so provincial, had become, under Queen Elizabeth, the most elaborate in Europe; and the princes of Italy and Germany, with palaces and libraries, picture-galleries and *Wunderkammer*, philosophers, fools and astrologers, strove to hold their own. As the century wore on, social conscience dwindled, for social change seemed impossibly remote. Was ever an architect more effortlessly aristocratic than Palladio, or a poet than Shakespeare, or a painter than Rubens?

How indeed was it possible? One answer is obvious. The sixteenth century was an age of economic expansion. It was the century when, for the first time, Europe was living on Asia, Africa and America. But there was also another reason. The reason why this expansion was always under the princes, not at their expense, why the princes were always carried upwards, not thrown aside by it, was that the princes had allies who secured their power and kept them firmly in place. For the princes could never have built up their power alone. Whatever weaknesses in society gave them their opportunity, they owed their permanence to the machinery of government which they had created or improved, and to the vested interests which that machinery fostered. This machinery, the means and result of princely triumph, is the Renaissance State, and it is to this that we must now turn: for it was the Renaissance State which, in so much of Europe, first broke or corroded the old power of the cities and then, in its turn, in the seventeenth century, faced its own crisis and dissolved.

* * *

We often speak of the Renaissance State. How can we define it? When we come down to facts, we find that it is, at bottom, a great and expanding bureaucracy, a huge system of administrative centralisation, staffed by an ever-growing multitude of "courtiers"

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or "officers". The "officers" are familiar enough to us as a social type. We think of the great Tudor ministers in England, Cardinal Wolsey, Thomas Cromwell, the two Cecils; or of the *letrados* of Spain, Cardinal Ximénez, the two Granvelles, Francisco de los Cobos, Antonio Pérez; and we see their common character: they are formidable administrators, machiavellian diplomats, cultivated patrons of art and letters, magnificent builders of palaces and colleges, greedy collectors of statues and pictures, books and bindings. For of course these men, as royal servants, imitated their masters, in lavishness as in other matters. But what is significant about the sixteenth century is not merely the magnificence of these great "officers", it is the number — the ever growing number — of lesser officers who also, on their lesser scale, accepted the standards and copied the tastes of their masters. For all through the century the number of officers was growing. Princes needed them, more and more, to staff their councils and courts, their new special or permanent tribunals which were the means of governing new territories and centralising the government of old. It was for this reason that the Renaissance Princes and their great ministers founded all those schools and colleges. For it was not to produce scholars, or to advance learning or science, that old colleges were reorganised or new founded by Cardinal Ximénez or Cardinal Wolsey, by Henry VIII of England or John III of Portugal, or Francis I of France. The new learning, it is notorious, grew up outside the colleges and universities, not in them: the function of the new foundations was to satisfy the royal demand for officers; officers to man the new royal bureaucracies; and, at the same time, the public demand for office: office which was the means to wealth and power and the gratification of lavish, competitive tastes.

Thus the power of the Renaissance princes was not princely power only: it was also the power of thousands of "officers" who also, like their masters, had extravagant tastes and, somehow, the means of gratifying them. And how in fact were they gratified? Did the princes themselves pay their officers enough to sustain such a life? Certainly not. Had that been so, ruin would have come quicker: Cobos and Granvelle alone would have brought Charles V to bankruptcy long before 1556, and Henry VIII would have had to dissolve the monasteries fifteen years earlier to sustain the economic burden of Cardinal Wolsey. The fact is, only a fraction of the cost of the royal bureaucracy fell directly on the Crown: three-quarters of it fell, directly or indirectly, on the country.

Yes, three quarters: at least three-quarters. For throughout

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Europe, at this time, the salaries paid to officers of state were small, customary payments whose real value dwindled in times of inflation; the bulk of an officer's gains came from private opportunities to which public office merely opened the door. "For the profits of these two great offices, the Chancellor and the Treasurer", wrote an English bishop, "certainly they were very small if you look to the ancient fees and allowances; for princes heretofore did tie themselves to give but little, that so their officers and servants might more depend upon them for their rewards".[9] What Bishop Goodman said of Jacobean England was true of every European country. Instances could be multiplied indefinitely.[10] Every officer, at every court, in every country, lived by the same system. He was paid a trivial "fee" or salary and, for the rest, made what he could in the field which his office had opened to him. Some of these profits were regarded as perfectly legitimate, for no man could be expected to live on his "fee" alone: it was taken for granted that he would charge a reasonable sum for audiences, favours, signatures, that he would exploit his office to make good bargains, that he would invest public money, while in his hands, on his own account. But of course there were other profits which were generally regarded as "corruption" and therefore improper. Unfortunately the line dividing propriety from impropriety was conventional only: it was therefore invisible, uncertain, floating. It differed from person to person, from place to place. It also differed from time to time. As the sixteenth century passed on, as the cost of living rose, as the pressure of competition sharpened and royal discipline slackened, there was a general decline of standards. The public casuists became more indulgent, the private conscience more elastic, and men began to forget about that conventional, invisible line between "legitimate profits" and "corruption".

Let us consider a few instances which illustrate the system. In England, the Master of the Wards had a "fee" of £133 *p.a.*, but even Lord Burghley, a conscientious administrator, made "infinite gains" — at least £2,000 *p.a.* — out of its private opportunities, quite apart from its non-financial advantages. His son did far better. The Lord Treasurer's fee was £365 *p.a.*, but in 1635 even Archbishop Laud, that great stickler for administrative honesty, reckoned that that great officer had "honest advantages" for enriching himself to the tune of over £7,000 *p.a.* The archbishop made this calculation because he had been shocked by the much larger sums which recent Lord Treasurers had been making at the expense of King and subject alike. In 1600 the Lord Chancellor's fee was £500 *p.a.*, and

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in fact the office was known to be "better worth than £3,000 *p.a.*" To Lord Chancellor Ellesmere this did not seem enough, and, like many great men, he sighed that he could not make ends meet. He was thought conscientious: perhaps (like Lord Burghley) he was also hypocritical. At all events, his successors had no such difficulty. "How have the Lord Chancellors lived since", exclaimed Bishop Goodman, "how have they flowed with money, and what great purchases have they made, and what profits and advantages have they had by laying their fingers on purchases! For if my Lord desired the land, no man should dare to buy it out of his hands, and he must have it at his own price; for any bribery or corruption, it is hard to prove it: men do not call others to be witnesses at such actions".[11] All writers of the early seventeenth century agree that the casual profits of office had grown enormously; and these casual profits were multiplied at the expense of the consumer, the "country".

Thus each old office granted, each new office created, meant a new burden on the subject. Royal parsimony made little difference. Our Queen Elizabeth, we all know, was judged very parsimonious: far too parsimonious by her own officers. But she was not praised for her parsimony in her own time. For what in fact did it mean? "We have not many precedents of her liberality", says a contemporary, "nor of any large donatives to particular men . . . Her rewards consisted chiefly in grants of leases of offices, places of judicature; but for ready money, and in any great sums, she was very sparing".[12] In other words, she gave to her courtiers not cash but the right to exploit their fellow-subjects: to Sir Walter Ralegh the right to despoil the bishops of Bath and Wells and Salisbury and to interpose his pocket between the producer and consumer of tin; to the Earl of Essex the right to lease the monopoly of sweet wines to merchants who would recoup themselves by raising the cost to the consumer. All European sovereigns did likewise. They had no alternative. They had not the ready money, and so, if they were to gratify their servants, reward their favourites, service their loans, they had to raise it at a discount or pay excessively in kind. They leased Crown lands at a quarter (or less) of their true value in order that "officers" or "courtiers" could live, as lessees, on the difference. They granted monopolies which brought in to the Crown less than a quarter of what they cost the subject. They collected irrational old taxes, or even irrational new taxes, by imposing, fourfold, irrational burdens on the tax-payers. The king of France obliged his peasants to buy even more salt than they needed, in order to raise his yield from the *gabelle*. We all know what a burden wardship and

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purveyance became in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James. Both visibly cost the subject four times what they brought to the Crown. Invisibly — that is, beyond that invisible line — they cost far more.[13] Nor was it only the Crown which acted thus. The practice was universal. Great men rewarded their clients in exactly the same way. The Church, which was now everywhere a department of state, was similar. It was burdened with its sinecures: absentee clergy, tithe-eating laity; with its "officers": the swollen number of ecclesiastical officers — "caterpillars of the Commonwealth" — was one of the great complaints against the Anglican church in the 1630's; with its lessees: church lands, like Crown lands, were regularly leased at absurd under-rents. It was not only the State, the whole of society was top-heavy.

Moreover, and increasingly as the seventeenth century succeeded to the sixteenth, this multiplication of ever more costly offices outran the needs of state. Originally the need had created the officers; now the officers created the need. All bureaucracies tend to expand. By the process known to us as Parkinson's Law, office-holders tend to create yet more offices beneath them in order to swell their own importance or provide for their friends and kinsmen. But whereas today such inflation is curbed by the needs of the Treasury, in the sixteenth century the needs of the Treasury positively encouraged it. For offices, in the sixteenth century, were not granted freely: they were sold, and — at least in the beginning — the purchase-price went to the Crown. If the Crown could sell more and more offices at higher and higher prices, leaving the officers to be paid by the country, this was an indirect, if also a cumbrous and exasperating way of taxing the country. Consequently, princes were easily tempted to create new offices, and to profit by the competition which forced up the price. As for the purchaser, having paid a high price, he naturally sought to raise his profits still higher, in order to recoup himself, with a decent margin, for his outlay: a decent margin with which an ambitious man might hope, in the end, to build a house like Hatfield or Knole, entertain royalty to feasts costing thousands, retain and reward an army of clients, plant exotic gardens, and collect *objets d'art* and pictures.

So "the Renaissance State" consisted, at bottom, of an ever-expanding bureaucracy which, though at first a working bureaucracy, had by the end of the sixteenth century become a parasitic bureaucracy; and this ever-expanding bureaucracy was sustained on an equally expanding margin of "waste": waste which lay between the taxes imposed on the subject and the revenue collected

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by the Crown. Since the Crown could not afford an absolute loss of revenue, it is clear that this expansion of the waste had to be at the expense of society. It is equally clear that it could only be borne if society itself were expanding in wealth and numbers. Fortunately, in the sixteenth century, the European economy was expanding. The trade of Asia, the bullion of Africa and America, was driving the European machine. This expansion may have been uneven; there may have been strains and casualties; but they were the strains of growth, which could be absorbed, individual casualties which could be overlooked. Occasional State bankruptcies clear off old debts: they do not necessarily affect new prosperity. War increases consumption: it does not necessarily consume the sources of wealth. A booming economy can carry many anomalies, many abuses. It could even carry — provided it went on booming — the incredibly wasteful, ornamental, parasitic Renaissance Courts and Churches.

* * *

Provided it went on booming . . . But how long would it boom? Already, by 1590, the cracks are beginning to appear. The strains of the last years of Philip II's wars release everywhere a growing volume of complaint: complaint which is not directed against constitutional faults — against the despotism of kings or the claims of Estates — but against this or that aspect or consequence of the growth and cost of a parasitic bureaucracy. For of course, although war has not created the problem, war aggravates it: the more the costs of government are raised, the more the government resorts to those now traditional financial expedients: creation and sale of new offices, sale or long lease, at undervalues, of crown or church lands, creation of monopolies, raising of "feudal" taxes: expedients which, on the one hand, multiply the already overgrown bureaucracy and thus the cost to the country, and, on the other hand, further impoverish the Crown.

But if the strains are already obvious in the 1590's, they are, as yet, not fatal: for peace comes first. A few opportune deaths — Philip II in 1598, Queen Elizabeth in 1603 — hasten the process, and throughout Europe war after war is wound up. And then, with peace, what relief! The overstrained system is suddenly relaxed, and an era of pleasure and renewed extravagance follows. Was there ever an era of such lavishness as the time between the end of Philip II's wars and the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War, the time when the world was ruled, or at least enjoyed, by Philip III and the

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Duke of Lerma in Spain, James I and the Duke of Buckingham in England, "The Archdukes" in Flanders, Henri IV and Marie des Medicis in France? It is a world of giddy expenditure, splendid building, gigantic feasts and lavish, evanescent shows. Rubens, when he came to the Duke of Buckingham's England, marvelled at such unexpected magnificence "in a place so remote from Italian elegance"; no nation in the world, said a contemporary Englishman, spent as much as we did in building: we built houses, said another, thinking of Hatfield and Audley End, "like Nebuchadnezzar's"; all "the old good rules of economy", said a third, had gone packing. But the Spanish ambassador, reporting to his king these costly Jacobean festivals, would only say that no doubt they would seem very impressive "to anyone who had not seen the grandeur and state with which we do such things in Spain" — as well he might, in the days when the Duke of Lerma, the courtier of the almost bankrupt king of Spain, went forth to meet his future queen with 34,000 ducats' worth of jewels on his person, and another 72,000 ducats' worth carried behind him.[14]

Such is the character of the Renaissance courts in their last Indian summer after the close of the sixteenth century. And even this, of course, is only the conspicuous, still sunlit tip of the iceberg whose sides are hidden from us by intervening oblivion and whose far greater base was always, even at the time, submerged. How, we may ask, could it go on? Even in the 1590's, even a far less expensive, more efficient bureaucracy had only been saved by peace: how could this much more outrageous system survive if the long prosperity of the sixteenth century or the saving peace of the seventeenth, should fail?

In fact, in the 1620's they both failed at once. In 1618 a political crisis in Prague had set the European powers in motion, and by 1621 the wars of Philip II had been resumed, bringing in their train new taxes, new offices, new exactions. Meanwhile the European economy, already strained to the limit by the habits of peacetime boom, was suddenly struck by a great depression, the universal "decay of trade" of 1620. Moreover, in those twenty years, a new attitude of mind had been created: created by disgust at that gilded merry-go-round which cost society so much more than it was willing to bear. It was an attitude of hatred: hatred of "the court" and its courtiers, hatred of princely follies and bureaucratic corruption, hatred of the Renaissance itself: in short, puritanism.

In England we naturally think of our own form of puritanism: extreme protestantism, the continuation, to unbearable lengths, of

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the half-completed sixteenth-century Reformation. But let us not be deceived by mere local forms. This reaction against the Renaissance courts and their whole culture and morality was not confined to any one country or religion. Like the thesis, the antithesis also is general. In England there is an Anglican puritanism, a "puritanism of the Right". What greater enemy had English puritanism, as we know it, than Archbishop Laud, the all-powerful prelate who drove it to America till it returned to destroy him? And yet he too illustrates this same reaction. Did English puritans denounce "the unloveliness of lovelocks", gay clothes, the drinking of toasts? The archbishop forbade long hair in Oxford, reformed clerical dress, waged war on alehouses. In Roman Catholic countries it was the same. Did the English puritans first denounce, then close the London theatres? In Spain — even the Spain of Lope de Vega — *pragmática* after *pragmática* denounced stage-plays. In France the Jansenist Pascal disliked them hardly less. In Bavaria there was a Catholic prudery, and a police enforcement of it, as disagreeable as the worst form of English puritanism. There was the same war against luxury too. In 1624 Philip IV of Spain cut down his household, published sumptuary laws, and banished the ruff — that symbol of sartorial magnificence — from Spain by decree, from Europe by example. In France, Cardinal Richelieu was doing likewise. It was a sudden war, almost a crusade, against the old Renaissance extravagance. In Flanders, Rubens would find himself surviving his old court patrons and would turn to country landscapes. Literature reflects the same change. Of Castiglione's famous manual, *The Courtier*, at least sixty editions or translations were published between 1528 and 1619; after the latter date, for a whole century, none.

In the 1620's puritanism — this general mood of puritanism — triumphs in Europe. Those years, we may say, mark the end of the Renaissance. The playtime is over. The sense of social responsibility, which had held its place within the Renaissance courts of the sixteenth century — we think of the paternalism of the Tudors, the "collectivism" of Philip II — had been driven out in the early seventeenth century, and now it had returned, and with a vengeance. War and depression had made the change emphatic, even startling. We look at the world in one year, and there we see Lerma and Buckingham and Marie des Médicis. We look again, and they have all gone. Lerma has fallen and saved himself by becoming a Roman cardinal; Buckingham is assassinated; Marie des Médicis has fled abroad. In their stead we find grimmer, greater, more resolute

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figures: the Count Duke of Olivares, whose swollen, glowering face almost bursts from Velázquez's canvases; Strafford and Laud, that relentless pair, the prophets of Thorough in Church and State; cardinal Richelieu, the iron-willed invalid who ruled and re-made France. In literature too it is the same. The fashion has changed. After Shakespeare, Cervantes, Montaigne, those universal spirits, with their scepticism, their acceptance of the world as it is, we are suddenly in a new age: an age here of ideological revolt, Milton's "jubilee and resurrection of Church and State", there of conservative pessimism, cynicism and disillusion, of John Donne and Sir Thomas Browne, of Quevedo and the Spanish Baroque: for the baroque age, as Mr. Gerald Brenan says, " — one cannot say it too often — was a tight, contracted age, turned in on itself and lacking self-confidence and faith in the future".[15]

Such was the mood of general, non-doctrinal, moral puritanism which, in the 1620's, launched its attack — here from within, there from without — on the Renaissance courts. There are differences of incidence, of course, differences of personality from place to place, and these differences could be crucial — who can say what would have happened if archbishop Laud had really been, as Sir Thomas Roe thought, "the Richelieu of England"? There were also differences in society itself. But if we look closely we see that the burden on society is the same even if the shoulders which creak under it are different. For instance, in England the cost of the court fell most heavily on the gentry: they were the tax-paying class: wardships, purveyance and all the indirect taxes which were multiplied by the early Stuarts fell heaviest on them. On the other hand in France the *noblesse* was exempt from taxation, and the *taille* and *gabelle*, which were multiplied by the early Bourbons, fell heaviest on the peasants. No doubt English landlords could pass some of their burdens on to their tenants. No doubt impoverishment of French peasants diminished the rents of their landlords. But the difference is still significant. It was a commonplace in England, where "the asinine peasants of France", with their "wooden shoes and canvas breeches" were regularly contrasted with our own, more prosperous yeomen. It is illustrated by the ultimate result: in England, when revolution came, it was a great revolution, led and controlled by the gentry; in France, there were, every year for the same twenty years, revolts — little but serious revolts — of the peasants. Nevertheless, if the rebels were different, the general grievance against which they rebelled — the character and cost of the state — was the same.

For wherever we look, this is the burden of all complaints. From

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1620 to 1640 this is the cry of the country, the problem of the court. We can hear the cry from the back-benches of the English parliaments in the 1620's. We can see the problem in Bacon's great essays, written between 1620 and 1625, on "Sedition and Troubles" and "The True Greatness of Kingdoms". We hear the cry in Spain in the protests of the Córtes, see the problem in the pamphlets of the *arbitristas*, in Fernández Navarrete's *Conservación de Monarquias* with its wonderful analysis of the social ills of Spain, and in Olivares' long memorandum to Philip IV, outlining his new programme for the country,[16] both written in the 1620's. We see it in France, above all, in the *Testament Politique* of Richelieu, written in 1629 and the early 1630's, the periods when governments everywhere were facing these problems, or trying to face them, before it was too late. And these demands, these problems, are not constitutional, they are not concerned with monarchy or republic, Crown or Parliament. Nor are they economic: they are not concerned with methods of production. Essentially they are demands for emancipation from the burden of centralisation; for reduction of fees; reduction of useless, expensive offices, including — even in Spain — clerical offices; abolition of the sale of offices ("for whosoever doth farm or buy offices doth bind himself to be an extortioner", and "they which buy dear must sell dear"); abolition of heredity of offices; abolition of those wasteful, indirect taxes which yield so little to the Crown but on whose superabundant "waste" the ever-expanding fringe of the court is fed.

* * *

Thus the tension between court and country grew, and the "revolutionary situation" of the 1620's and 1630's developed. But revolutionary situations do not necessarily lead to revolutions — nor (we may add) are violent revolutions necessary in order to create new forms of production or society. Society is an organic body, far tougher, far more resilient, than its morbid anatomists often suppose; the frontiers between opposing classes are always confused by a complex tissue of interests:[17] and if a country is to pass from a revolutionary situation to a revolution, a whole series of political events and political errors must intervene. Therefore if we are to carry this study further, from crisis to revolution, we must take account of these intervening events and errors: events and errors which by definition, must vary from place to place, and whose variation will explain, in part, the difference between the revolutions in those different places.

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Perhaps we can see the problem best if we consider the means of avoiding revolution. If the Renaissance courts were to survive, it was clear that at least one of two things must be done. On the one hand the parasitic bureaucracies must be cut down; on the other hand the working bureaucracy must be related to the economic capacity of the country. The first programme was one of administrative, the second of economic reform. The first was easy enough to define — any country gentleman could put it in two words — but difficult to carry out: it meant the reduction of a parasitic, but living and powerful class; and although this can be done without revolution, as it was done in nineteenth-century England — one only has to read the *Extraordinary Black Book* of 1831 to see the huge parasitic fringe which had grown again around the eighteenth-century court — it is at best a delicate and difficult operation. The second was far more difficult to define: it meant the discovery, or re-discovery, of an economic system. Nevertheless, such a definition was not beyond the wit of seventeenth-century thinkers, and in fact several thinkers did point out, clearly enough, the kind of economic system which was required.

What was that system? It was not a "capitalist" system — or at least, if it was capitalist, there was nothing new about it. It did not entail revolution or a change in method of production or in the class structure. Nor was it advocated by revolutionary thinkers: in general, those who advocated it were conservative men who wished for little or no political change. And in fact the economic programme which they advocated, though applied to modern conditions, looked back for its example. For what they advocated was simply the application to the new, centralised monarchies of the old, well-tried policy of the medieval communes which those monarchies had eclipsed: mercantilism.

For what had been the policy of the medieval cities? It had been a policy of national economy — within the limits of the city-state. The city had seen itself at once as a political and as an economic unit. Its legislation had been based on its trading requirements. It had controlled the price of food and labour, limited imports in the interest of its own manufactures, encouraged the essential methods of trade — fishing and shipbuilding, freedom from internal tolls — invested its profits not in conspicuous waste or pursuit of glory, or wars merely of plunder, but in the rational conquest of markets and the needs of national economy: in technical education, municipal betterment, poor relief. In short, the city had recognised that its life must be related to its means of livelihood. In the sixteenth-century eclipse

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of the cities, in their transformation into overgrown, overpopulated capitals, centres merely of exchange and consumption, much of this old civic wisdom had been forgotten. Now, in the seventeenth-century eclipse of the spendthrift Renaissance courts, it was being remembered. The economists wished to go further: to re-apply it.

Of course, they would re-apply it in changed circumstances, to different national forms. The princes, it was agreed, had done their work: it could not be reversed. The new nation-states had come to stay. But, said the Reformers, having come, let them now apply to their different conditions the old good rules of the cities. Let them not merely pare down the parasitic fringe that had grown around them, but also relate their power, in a positive sense, to economic aims. Let them favour a gospel of work instead of aristocratic, or pseudo-aristocratic *hidalguía*. Let them protect industry, guarantee food-supplies, remove internal tolls, develop productive wealth. Let them rationalise finance and bring down the apparatus of Church and State to a juster proportion. To reverse the Parkinson's law of bureaucracy let them reduce the hatcheries which turned out the superfluous bureaucrats: grammar schools in England, colleges in France, monasteries and theological seminaries in Spain. Instead, let them build up local elementary education: skilled workers at the base of society now seemed more important than those unemployable university graduates, hungry for office, whom the new Renaissance foundations were turning out. "Of grammar-schools", declared that great intellectual, Sir Francis Bacon, "there are too many"; and he and his followers advocated a change in the type of education or the diversion of funds to elementary schools. Of colleges, declared the founder of the French Academy, Cardinal Richelieu, there are too many: the commerce of letters would banish absolutely that of merchandise "which crowns states with riches" and ruin agriculture "the true nursing-mother of peoples". Of monasteries, declared the Catholic Council of Castile in 1619, there are too many, and it prayed that the Pope be asked to authorise their reduction, for although the monastic state is no doubt, for the individual, the most perfect, "for the public it is very damaging and prejudicial". So, in country after country, the protest was raised. It was the backswing of the great educational impulse of the Renaissance and Reformation, the great religious impulse of the Counter-Reformation.[18]

To cut down the oppressive, costly sinecures of Church and State, and to revert, *mutatis mutandis*, to the old mercantilist policy of the cities, based on the economic interest of society — such were the

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two essential methods of avoiding revolution in the seventeenth century. How far were either of them adopted in the states of Western Europe? The answer, I think, is instructive. If we look at those states in turn, we may see, in the extent to which either or both of these policies were adopted or rejected, some partial explanation of the different forms which the general crisis took in each of them.

In Spain neither policy was adopted. In spite of the *arbitristas*, in spite of the wisdom of influential statesmen, including the greatest of Spanish ambassadors, Gondomar, whose letters show him a perfect mercantilist,[19] in spite of the Council of Castile, in spite even of Philip IV and Olivares, the system remained basically unchanged. Whatever projects of reform he may once have entertained, whatever beginnings of reform or paper-reforms he may even have carried out,[20] Olivares, like Richelieu, soon surrendered to necessity and the fact of war. On the other hand Spain — that is, Castile — lacked the organs of effective protest. The middle-class was weak and penetrated by office-holders; the old Cortes towns had been suppressed in their last rising against the Burgundian state; and the Cortes of Castile were now an aristocratic body which hardly sought to do more than demur. In spite of constant demands for reduction and disendowment, the wealth and number of churches and monasteries constantly grew; so did court offices and the sale of offices. In 1621 — the first year of crisis and reforming zeal — the number of royal officers had been fixed by law. In 1646 the Cortes of Castile pointed to the factual consequences: instead of one President and three Councillors of the Treasury, there were now three presidents and eleven councillors; instead of three *contadores* and a *fiscal*, there were now fourteen *contadores;* instead of four councillors at war there were now more than forty; and all these, salaried or unsalaried (for their salaries, their "fees", were anyway trifles), had entertainment, expenses, lodgings, privileges and perquisites at the expense of the subject.[21] The weight of this burden might have been redistributed a little within the country, but it had certainly not been reduced.[22] Nor had the Spanish economy been enabled to bear it. For meanwhile the national wealth of Spain had not increased: it had diminished. The voices of the mercantilists were stifled. The trade of Spain was taken over almost entirely by foreigners. The vitality of the country was crushed beneath the dead weight of an unreformed *Ancien Régime*. It was not till the next century that a new generation of *arbitristas* — philosophers inspired by English and French examples — would again have the strength

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and spirit to urge on a new dynasty the same reforms which had clearly but vainly been demanded in the days of Philip III and Philip IV.[23]

Very different was the position in the emancipated Northern Netherlands. For the Northern Netherlands were the first European country to reject the Renaissance Court, and the court they rejected was their own court, the greatest, most lavish court of all, the Burgundian court which had moved and made itself so fatally permanent in Spain. The revolt of the Netherlands in the sixteenth century was not, of course, a direct revolt of society against the court. That is not how revolutions break out. But in the course of the long struggle the court itself, in those provinces which freed themselves, was a casualty. There the whole apparatus of the Burgundian court simply dissolved under the stress of war. So did the Burgundian Church, that huge, corrupt department of state which Philip II unskilfully sought to reform and whose abuses the great patrons of revolt, in the beginning, were seeking to preserve. Whatever the causes or motives of the revolution, the United Provinces emerged from it incidentally disembarrassed of that top-heavy system whose pressure, a generation later, would create a revolutionary situation in other countries. Consequently, in those provinces, there was no such revolutionary situation. The new court of the Princes of Orange might develop some of the characteristics of the old court, but only some: and as it started lean, it could better afford a little additional fat. There were crises no doubt in seventeenth century Holland — the crises of 1618, of 1649, of 1672: but they were political crises, comparable with our crisis not of 1640 but of 1688; and they were surgically solved for the same reason: the social problem was no longer acute: the top-heavy apparatus of the state had been purged: society beneath was sound.

Moreover, if accident rather than design had rid the United Provinces of the Renaissance State, policy had also achieved there the other, economic reform of which I have written. It was not that there was a "bourgeois" or "capitalist" revolution in Holland.[24] Dutch industry was relatively insignificant. But the new rulers of Holland, seeking the means of guarding their hard-won freedom set out to imitate the fortune and the methods of those older mercantile communities which had preserved their independence through centuries by rationally combining commercial wealth and maritime power. By adopting the techniques of Italy, welcoming the *émigré* experts of Antwerp, and following the old good rules of Venetian policy, Amsterdam became, in the seventeenth century, the new

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Venice of the North. The economic originality of seventeenth century Holland was to show that, even after the conquest and reign of the Renaissance princes, whom they alone had driven out, the mercantilism of the cities was not dead: it could be revived.

Midway between completely unreformed Spain and completely reformed Holland lies what is perhaps the most interesting of all examples, Bourbon France. For France, in the seventeenth century, was certainly not immune from the general crisis, and in the *Frondes* it had a revolution, if a relatively small revolution. The result was, as in Spain, a victory for the monarchy. Triumphant over its critics and adversaries, the monarchy of the *Ancien Régime* survived in France, and survived for another century and a half. On the other hand the French monarchy of Louis XIV was not like the Spanish monarchy of Philip IV and Charles V. It was not economically parasitic. Industry, commerce, science flourished and grew in France, in spite of the "failure" of the "bourgeois revolution", no less than in England, in spite of its "success". To all appearances, in 1670, in the age of Colbert, absolutism and the *Ancien Régime* were perfectly compatible with commercial and industrial growth and power.

And indeed, why not? For what had hindered such growth in the past, what had caused the crisis in society, was not the form of government, but its abuses: and though these abuses might be removed by revolution, or might fall as incidental casualties of a revolution, their removal did not necessarily require revolution. There was always the way of reform. It is not necessary to burn down the house in order to have roast pig. And although France (like Holland) had had a fire in the sixteenth century, in which some of its burden of waste matter had been incidentally consumed, it did also, in the years thereafter, achieve some measure of reform. The fire, indeed, had prepared the ground. The French civil wars of the sixteenth century, if they had done much harm, had also done some good. They had burnt up the overgrown patronage of the great nobles and reduced the patronage of the Court to the patronage of the king. Henri IV, like the Prince of Orange, like Charles II of England after him, found himself at his accession disembarrassed of much ancient parasitism: he could therefore afford to indulge a little new. And on this basis, this *tabula partim rasa*, he was able to achieve certain administrative changes. The *Paulette*, the law of 1604 which systematised the sale of offices, did at least regulate the abuses which it has often, and wrongly, been accused of creating. Sully, by his *économies royales*, did keep down the waste around the throne.

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And Richelieu, in the 1630's not only meditated a complete mercantilist policy for France, but also, even in the midst of war, succeeded — as Laud and Olivares, whether in peace or war, did not — in regulating that most expensive, most uncontrollable of all departments, the royal household.[25] Thanks to these changes, the *Ancien Régime* in France was repaired and strengthened. The changes may not have been radical, but they were enough. Richelieu and Mazarin no doubt had other advantages in their successful struggle to maintain the French *Ancien Régime* in the era of the Huguenot revolt and the *Frondes*. They had an army absolutely under royal control; they had taxes whose increase fell not on gentry, assembled and vocal in parliament, but on scattered, inarticulate peasants; and they had their own political genius. But they had also an apparatus of state which had already undergone some salutary reform: a state which, in the mind of Richelieu and in the hands of his disciple Colbert, could become a mercantilist state, rationally organised for both profit and power.

Finally there is England. In England the Crown had not the same political power as in France or Spain, and the taxes fell on the gentry, powerful in their counties and in parliament. In England therefore, it was doubly important that the problem be faced and solved. How far was it in fact faced? To answer this question let us look in turn at the two sides of the problem, administrative and economic.

In the sixteenth-century the apparatus of the English state had neither suffered nor benefited from any such destructive accident as had befallen Holland or France. The Renaissance court of the Tudors, whose parsimony under Elizabeth had been so unreal and whose magnificence and ceremony had so impressed foreign visitors, survived intact into the new century, when its cost and show were magnified beyond all measure by King James and his favourites. Already in 1604 Francis Bacon warned the new king of the danger: the court, he said, was like a nettle: its root, the Crown itself, was "without venom or malignity", but it sustained leaves "venomous and stinging where they touch".[26] Two years later, King James's greatest minister, Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, apprehended revolution against the same burden of the court; and in 1608, on becoming Lord Treasurer, he applied all his energies to a large and imaginative solution of the whole problem. He sought to rationalise the farming of taxes and the leasing of Crown lands, to reform the royal household, liberate agriculture from feudal restrictions, and abolish archaic dues in exchange for other forms of income whose

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full yield, or something like it, instead of a mere fraction, would come to the Crown. In 1610 Salisbury staked his political career on this great programme of reorganisation. But he failed to carry it through. The "courtiers", the "officers" who lived on the "waste", mobilised opposition, and the King, listening to them, and thinking "not what he got but what he might get" out of the old, wasteful, irritant sources of revenue, refused to surrender them. Within two years of his failure, Salisbury died, out of favour with the king, completely unlamented, even insulted by the whole court which he had sought to reform and, by reform, to save.[27]

After Salisbury, other reformers occasionally took up the cause. The most brilliant was Francis Bacon. He had been an enemy of Salisbury, but once Salisbury was dead he sang the same tune. He diagnosed the evil — no man, perhaps, diagnosed it so completely in all its forms and ultimate consequences — but he could do nothing to cure it except by royal permission, which was refused, and he was overthrown. After his fall, in the years of the great depression, even the court took alarm, and a new reformer seemed to have obtained that permission. This was Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, who set out to carry through some at least of Salisbury's proposals. But permission, if granted, was soon, and conspicuously withdrawn. Cranfield, like Bacon, was ruined by court-faction, led from above by the royal favourite, the Duke of Buckingham, the universal manager and profiteer of all those marketable offices, benefices, sinecures, monopolies, patents, perquisites and titles which together constituted the nourishment of the court. Thus when Buckingham was murdered and Strafford and Laud, the "puritans of the right", came to power, they inherited from him an utterly unreformed court.[28]

Did they do anything to reform it? Ostensibly they did. "The face of the court", as Mrs. Hutchinson wrote, "was changed". King Charles was outwardly frugal compared with his father: but such frugality, as we have seen in the case of Queen Elizabeth, was relatively insignificant. Laud and Strafford waged war on the corruption of the court, whenever they perceived it; but they left the basic system untouched. Whenever we study that system we find that, in their time, its cost has not been reduced: it has grown. The greatest of court feasts in Buckingham's days had been his own entertainment of the king in 1626, which had cost £4,000; the Earl of Newcastle, in 1634, went up to £15,000. An office which was sold for £5,000 in 1624 fetched £15,000 in 1640. Wardships, which had brought in £25,000 to the Crown when Salisbury had sought to

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abolish them in 1610, were made to yield £95,000 in 1640. And the proportion that ran to waste was no smaller. For every £100 which reached the Crown, at least £400 was taken from the subject. As Clarendon says, "The envy and reproach came to the King, the profit to other men".

Thus in 1640 the English court, like the Spanish, was still unreformed. But what of the English economy? Here the parallel no longer holds. For in England there was not that absolute divorce between Crown and *arbitristas* that was so obvious in Spain. The early Stuart governments did not ignore matters of trade. They listened to the City of London. By their financial methods, whether deliberately or not, they encouraged the formation of capital, its investment in industry. There were limits of course to what they did: they did not satisfy the systematic mercantilist theorists; they paid less attention to the base of society than to its summit. Nevertheless, in many respects, they favoured or at least allowed a mercantilist policy. They sought to naturalise industrial processes; they sought to protect supplies of essential raw-materials; they sought to monopolise the herring-fisheries; they protected navigation; they preferred peace abroad and looked to their moat. The years of their rule saw the growth of English capitalism, sponsored by them, on a scale unknown before. Unfortunately such growth entailed dislocation, claimed victims; and when political crisis increased the dislocation and multiplied the victims, the stiff and weakened structure of government could no longer contain the mutinous forces which it had provoked.

For in 1640 the leaders of the Long Parliament did not seek — they did not need to seek — to reverse the economic policy of the Crown. They sought one thing only: to repair the administration. The Earl of Bedford as Lord Treasurer, John Pym as Chancellor of the Exchequer, intended to resume the frustrated work of Salisbury; to abolish monopolies, wardships, prerogative taxes, cut down the "waste", and establish the Stuart court on a more rational, less costly basis. Having done this, they would have continued the mercantilist policy of the Crown, perhaps extending it by redistribution of resources, rationalisation of labour, at the base of society. They would have done for the English monarchy what Colbert would do for the French. All they required was that the English monarchy, like the French, would allow them to do it.

For of course monarchy itself was no obstacle. It is absurd to say that such a policy was impossible without revolution. It was no more impossible in 1641 that it had been in the days of Salisbury and

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Cranfield. We cannot assume that merely human obstacles — the irresponsibility of a Buckingham or a Charles I, the reckless obscurantism of a Strafford — are inherent historical necessities. But in fact these human obstacles did intervene. Had James I or Charles I had the intelligence of Queen Elizabeth or the docility of Louis XIII, the English *Ancien Régime* might have adapted itself to the new circumstances as peacefully in the seventeenth century as it would in the nineteenth. It was because they had neither, because their court was never reformed, because they defended it, in its old form, to the last, because it remained, administratively and economically as well as aesthetically, "the last Renaissance court in Europe", that it ran into ultimate disaster: that the rational reformers were swept aside, that more radical men came forward and mobilised yet more radical passions than even they could control, and that in the end, amid the sacking of palaces, the shivering of statues and stained-glass windows, the screech of saws in ruined organ-lofts, this last of the great Renaissance courts was mopped up, the royal aesthete was murdered, his splendid pictures were knocked down and sold, even the soaring gothic cathedrals were offered up for scrap.

So, in the 1640's, in war and revolution, the most obstinate and yet, given the political structure of England, the frailest of the Renaissance monarchies went down. It did not go down before a new "bourgeois" revolution. It did not even go down before an old "mercantilist" revolution. Its enemies were not the "bourgeoisie" — that bourgeoisie who, as a puritan preacher complained, "for a little trading and profit" would have had Christ, the puritan soldiers, crucified and "this great Barabbas at Windsor", the king, set free.[29] Nor were they the mercantilists: the ablest politicians among the puritan rebels did indeed, once the republic was set up, adopt an aggressive mercantilist policy; but in this they simply resumed the old policy of the Crown and, on that account, were promptly attacked and overthrown by the same enemies, who accused them of betraying the revolution.[30] No, the triumphant enemies of the English court were simply "the country": that indeterminate, unpolitical, but highly sensitive miscellany of men who had mutinied not against the monarchy (they had long clung to monarchist beliefs) nor against economic archaism (it was they who were the archaists), but against the vast, oppressive, ever-extending apparatus of parasitic bureaucracy which had grown up around the throne and above the economy of England. These men were not politicians or economists, and when the court had foundered under their blows, they soon found that they could neither govern nor prosper. In the end they

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abdicated. The old dynasty was restored, its new mercantilist policy resumed. But the restoration was not complete. The old abuses, which had already dissolved in war and revolution were not restored, and, having gone, were easily legislated out of existence. In 1661 Salisbury's "Great Contract", Bedford's excise, were at last achieved. The old prerogative courts — whose offence had been not so much their policy as their existence — were not revived. Charles II began his reign free at last from the inherited lumber of the Renaissance Court.

Such, as it seems to me, was "the general crisis of the seventeenth century." It was a crisis not of the constitution nor of the system of production, but of the state, or rather, of the relation of the state to society. Different countries found their way out of that crisis in different ways. In Spain the *Ancien Régime* survived: but it survived only as a disastrous, immobile burden on an impoverished country. Elsewhere, in Holland, France and England, the crisis marked the end of an era: the jettison of a top-heavy superstructure, the return to responsible, mercantilist policy. For by the seventeenth-century the Renaissance courts had grown so great, had consumed so much in "waste", and had sent their multiplying suckers so deep into the body of society, that they could only flourish for a limited time, and in a time, too, of expanding general prosperity. When that prosperity failed, the monstrous parasite was bound to falter. In this sense, the depression of 1620 is perhaps no less important, as a historical turning-point, than the depression of 1929: though a temporary economic failure, it marked a lasting political change. At all events, the princely courts recognised it as their crisis. Some of them sought to reform themselves, to take physic and reduce their bulk. Their doctors pointed the way: it was then that the old city states, and particularly Venice, though now in decadence, became the admired model, first of Holland, then of England. And yet, asked the patient, was such reform possible, or even safe? Could a monarchy really be adapted to a pattern which so far had been dangerously republican? Is any political operation more difficult than the self-reduction of an established, powerful, privileged bureaucracy? In fact, the change was nowhere achieved without something of revolution. If it was limited in France, and Holland, that was partly because some of the combustible rubbish had already, in a previous revolution, been consumed. It was also because there had been some partial reform. In England there had been no such previous revolution, no such partial reform. There was also, under the early Stuarts, a fatal lack of political skill: instead of the genius

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of Richelieu, the suppleness of Mazarin, there was the irresponsibility of Buckingham, the violence of Strafford, the undeviating universal pedantry of Laud. In England therefore the storm of the mid-century, which blew throughout Europe, struck the most brittle, most overgrown, most rigid court of all and brought it violently down.

*Oxford* *H. R. Trevor-Roper*

# NOTES

[1] Jeremiah Whittaker, Εἰρηνοποιός *Christ the Settlement of Unsettled Times*, a fast sermon before the House of Commons, 25th January, 1642-3.

[2] William Greenhill, Ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν Ῥίξαν a sermon preached before Parliament, 26th April, 1643.

[3] It is enough here to refer to J. H. Alsted, the great scholar and educationalist of Herborn, who was also "the standard-bearer of millenaries in our age"; to his pupil, the great Bohemian educator, J. A. Comenius; to the English disciple of Bacon Joseph Mede, the author of *Clavis Apocalyptica;* and to the Scottish mathematician Napier of Merchistoun, who invented logarithms in order to speed up his calculations of the Number of the Beast.

[4] See G. Roupnel, *La Ville et la Campagne au XVII^e Siécle dans le pays dijonnais* (Paris, 1955); Sequier's documents are printed, in French, in the appendix to B. F. Porchnev, *Narodnie Vosstania vo Francii pered Frondoi*, 1623-48 (Moscow, 1948).

[5] This point — the growing social insensitivity of the sixteenth-century thinkers as monarchical, aristocratic society becomes more self-assured, is made by Fritz Caspari, *Humanism and the Social Order in Tudor England*, (Chicago, 1954), pp. 198-204.

[6] In *Past & Present*, V. 33, VI, 44, (1954).

[7] As far as I can see, Mr. Dobb's only arguments of such a connexion are the statements (1) that agricultural capitalists supported the Parliament while old-fashioned "feudal" landlords supported the Crown; (2) that "those sections of the bourgeoisie that had any roots in industry . . . were wholehearted supporters of the parliamentary cause"; and (3) that the industrial towns, particularly the clothing towns, were radical. None of these statements seems to me sufficient. (1) is incorrect: the only evidence given consists in undocumented statements that Oliver Cromwell was an improving agriculturalist (which is untrue: in fact having — in his own words — "wasted his estate", he had declined from a landlord to a tenant farmer), and that "Ireton his chief lieutenant was both a country gentleman and a clothier" (for which I know of no evidence at all). In fact some of the most obvious "improving landlords", like the Earl of Newcastle and the Marquis of Worcester, were royalists. (2) is unsubstantiated and, I believe, incorrect: wherever the industrial bourgeoisie has been studied — as in Yorkshire and Wiltshire — it has been found to be divided in its loyalty. (3) is correct, but inconclusive; the radicalism of workers in a depressed industry may well spring from depression, not from "capitalist" interest.

[8] Fernand Braudel has touched on it in his great work, *La Mediterranée et le Monde Mediterranéen au Temps de Philippe II*, (Paris, 1949), pp. 285-291.

[9] Godfrey Goodman, *The Court of King James I*, (ed. 1839), I, p. 279.

[10] On this subject generally see Federico Chabod's essay "y a-t-il un État de la Renaissance" in *Actes du Colloque sur la Renaissance*, Sorbonne 1956, (Paris, 1958), and also, for Milanese instances his "Stipendi Nominali e Busta Paga

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Effettiva dei Funzionari nell' Amministrazione Milanese alla Fine del Cinquecento" in *Miscellanea in Onore di Roberto Cessi II* (Rome, 1958) and "Usi e Abusi nell' Amministrazione dello Stato di Milano a mezzo il 1500" in *Studi Storici in Onore di Gioachino Volpe*, (Florence, Florenic). For Naples, see G. Coniglio, *Il Regno di Napoli al Tempo di Carlo V*, (Naples, 1951), pp. 11-12, 246, etc. For France see R. Doucet, *Les Institutions de la France au 16e Siecle*, (Paris, 1948), pp. 403 foll.; cf. Menna Prestwich, "The Making of Absolute Monarchy, 1559-1683" in *France: Government and Society*, (1957). I have given some English instances in *The Gentry*, 1540-1640, (1953). See also J. E. Neale, "The Elizabethan Political Scene", (*Proceedings of the British Academy*, XXIV, 1948); K. W. Swart, *The Sale of Offices in the Seventeenth Century*. (The Hague, 1949).

[11] See, for the Master of the Wards, J. Hurstfield, "Lord Burghley as Master of the Court of Wards", *Trans. R. Hist. Soc.* 1949; for the Lord Treasurer, P. Heylin, *Cyprianus Anglicus*, 1668, p. 285; for the Lord Chancellor, Goodman, *loc. cit.*; *Manningham's Diary* (Camden Soc. 1868) p. 19.

[12] Sir R. Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia*, (ed. A. Arber, 1870) p. 18.

[13] For the cost of monopolies see W. R. Scott, *A History of English Joint-Stock Corporations* I, 1911; the cost of wardship appears clearly from Mr. Joel Hurstfield's studies. He concludes that "the unofficial profits from fiscal feudalism taken as a whole, were at least three times as high as the official ones". "Fiscal Feudalism" in *Econ. Hist. Rev.* 1955-6, p. 58. Of purveyance, Bacon wrote, "There is no pound profit which redoundeth to Your Majesty in this course but induceth and begetteth £3 damage upon your subjects, besides the discontentment". (*Works*, ed. Spedding, III, 185). The truth of this last statement is clearly demonstrated in Miss Allegra Woodworth's excellent study, *Purveyance in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, (Philadelphia, 1945). For Crown lands, Bacon told King James that, properly administered, they "will yield four for one", (Works IV, 328): others put the proportion far higher, sometimes twenty to one. (cf. E. Kerridge, "The Movement of Rent", in *Econ. Hist. Rev.* 1953-4, pp. 31-2). The Earl of Bedford similarly, in 1641, calculated that in some places the proportion was twenty to one.

[14] *Corespondencia Oficial de . . . Gondomar*, (Madrid, 1944) III, 232. P. Mantuano, *Casamientos de España y Francia*, (Madrid, 1618), pp. 124-5, quoted in Agustín Gonzales de Amezúa, *Lope de Vega en sus Cartas*, (Madrid, 1935) I, 70-1.

[15] Gerald Brenan, *The Literature of the Spanish people*, (Cambridge, 1951), p. 272.

[16] Published in Valladares, *Semanario Erudito*, vol. xi, Madrid 1788, (I owe this reference to Mr. J. H. Elliott).

[17] E.g., in this instance, the interpenetration of "bourgeoisie" and office-holders, which paralysed the Spanish cortes, the French parlements and even the English parliament.

[18] For Bacon's proposal see his *Works*, ed. Spedding, IV, 249 foll.; for Richelieu, his *Testament Politique*, (ed. Louis André, Paris, 1947, pp. 204-5); for Spain the *Consulta del Consejo Supremo de Castilla*, published in P. Fernández Navarrete, *Conservación de Monarquías*, (Madrid, 1947, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, vol. XXV, p. 450).

[19] See, in particular, Pascual Gayangos, *Cinco Cartas Politico-Literarias de D. Diego Sarmiento, Conde de Gondomar*, (Madrid, 1869, *Sociedad de Bibliófilos*, Tom. IV).

[20] For a summary of these reforms, see H. Bérindoague, *Le Mercantilisme en Espagne*, (Bordeaux, 1929), pp. 85-104.

[21] *Consulta* of the Cortes of Castile, 18th August, 1646, printed in Alonso Núñez de Castro, *Libro Historio-Politico, Solo Madrid es Corte*, 2nd. ed. Madrid, 1669, pp. 84 foll. This whole book, written by the royal chronicler and first published in 1658, illustrates the process I am describing.

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[22] For the factual (though not legal) redistribution of fiscal burdens in Spain under Philip IV, see the interesting article of A. Domínguez Oritiz, "La desigualidad contributiva en Castilla en el siglo XVIII", in *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 1952.

[23] For these *arbitristas* of the eighteenth century see M. Jean Sarrailh's excellent work, *L'Espagne Eclairée*, (Paris, 1954): which does not however bring out the extent to which Ward, Jovellanos, Campomanes, etc. were repeating the programme of the early seventeenth-century Spanish mercantilists.

[24] That the economy of the United Provinces was not a new, revolutionary form of capitalism, but a return to the system of the medieval Italian cities is argued by Mr. Jelle C. Riemersma in his article "Calvinism and Capitalism in Holland, 1550-1650", *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, I, (i), p. 8, and is admitted even by Marxists like Mr. Dobb and Mr. Hobsbawm, who calls the Dutch economy "a feudal business economy", (*op. cit.*, p. 55).

[25] For Richelieu's mercantilism see H. Hauser, *la Pensée et l'Action Economique du cardinal de Richelieu*, (Paris, 1944). For his reform of the royal household, see M. R. Mousnier's article in vol. I of *Histoire de France*, ed. M. Reinhard, (Paris, 1955). (I owe this reference to Mr. J. P. Cooper).

[26] Francis Bacon, *Works*, (ed. Spedding) III, 183.

[27] Public justice has never been done to Salisbury's programme of reform in 1608-12, although the "Great Contract", which was only part of it, is well-known. The evidence of it is scattered among the official papers of the time. Of contemporaries, only Sir Walter Cope and Sir William Sanderson, both of whom had been employed in it, sought to make it known and understood, but neither Cope's *Apology for the Late Lord Treasurer* (which was given to the King in MS) nor Sanderson's *Aulicus Coquinariae* was published at the time. Bishop Goodman and Sir Henry Wotton also appreciated it, but also did not publish their appreciation. (See L. Pearsall Smith, *Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, 1907, II; Goodman, *op. cit.* I, 36-42, 487-9.

[28] Bacon's projects are scattered through his writings which Spedding collected. One only has to compare his various proposals for reform of the court, the law, education, the Church, the Crown estates, etc., with the demands of the radical party in the 1640's, to see the truth of Gardiner's statement (in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, s.v. Bacon) that his programme, if carried out, might have prevented the revolution. For Cranfield's work see R. H. Tawney, *Business and Politics under James I*, (1958).

[29] The preacher was Hugh Peters, as quoted in *State Trials*, V. 1,129-30.

[30] Those who regard the whole revolution as a bourgeois revolution on the strength of the mercantile policy of the Rump between 1651 and 1653 might well reflect (a) that this policy, of peace with Spain, navigation acts, and rivalry with Holland over fishery and trade, had been the policy of Charles I in the 1630's, and (b) that it was repudiated, emphatically and effectively, by those who had brought the revolution to a "successful" issue — the Puritan Army — and only revived at the Restoration of the monarchy.

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