The Bourgeois Revolutions

by Robert Lochhead

William Hogarth, Some of the Principal Inhabitants of the Moon; Monarchy, Episcopscopacvy, Magistracy, 1724

Foreword

This notebook began as the course on bourgeois revolutions of the international seminar on Marxism held at the International Institute for Research and Education in 1985. The seminar dealt with several topics in which the concept of bourgeois revolution came into play: reform or revolution in the history of humanity, how can the Third World break out of underdevelopment, the true content of parliamentary institutions and the regressive trends at work in post-capitalist states. These questions were treated, in part, through the study of Marxist classics who often used the concept of bourgeois revolution as the starting point of their argument.

For instance, in the *Communist Manifesto,* Marx draws a parallel between the revolution that brought down the power of the aristocracy, and the proletarian revolution that will overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie. In the great debates on socialist strategy in Western and Central Europe, the mass workers parties claimed the legacy of these revolutions, particularly the French, while denouncing the way in which the institutions created by these revolutions now helped to preserve the power of the bourgeoisie. In the debates on the expected course of the Russian revolution too, Plekhanov, Lenin and Trotsky evoked the various stages of the French revolution from the moderate Girondins to the radical Montagnards. The idea of bourgeois revolution also appears in the study of the paths of the revolution in the "Orient," particularly in the theory of permanent revolution elaborated by Trotsky. Finally, when Stalin's opponents sought a Marxist explanation for the degeneration of the Soviet state in the 1920s and 30s, their first analytical tool was an analogy with the backsliding of the French revolution after Thermidor towards elitist and authoritarian regimes.

This sort of analogy has not occurred only to Marxists. The most extreme ideologues of the new conservatism, such as Solzhenitsyn, explain the Stalinist repression as the consequence of the disorder created by the Russian revolution which they attribute, in turn, to the destabilizing ideas of Marx, Rousseau and even anti-authoritarian Christian currents. Marxists are thus invested with the duty to defend the humanist and democratic legacy of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

On a more pragmatic register, advocates of capitalism like the US economist Walt Rostow argue that underdeveloped countries are today in a situation comparable to that of the outstanding rich bourgeois democracies (the United States, Britain and France) on the eve of their industrial take-off. Counterposing a classless "modernization" to what they describe as archaic structures, these theorists claim that today's underdeveloped nations can achieve development by adopting the same "modern", i.e. capitalist, institutions which have worked so well for others. Most often, they forget to mention the political and social upheavals which preceded the economic take-off of the major industrial powers, and the advantages which the latter drew from their position as pioneers of capitalism in a pre-capitalist world.

To understand these debates, it is necessary to study the nature of the bourgeois revolutions, their diversity as well as their common features and their role in giving birth to modern capitalist Europe. The only ambition of this notebook is to produce a source of information that can constitute a common reference point for further study and discussion of these questions.

All these issues were widely discussed in recent commemorations: bicentennial of the so-called Glorious Revolution (1688) in Britain, bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence (1776) in the United States, and of the storming of the Bastille (1789) in France. Each one of these events became an arena for ideological battles in which supporters of social progress have a stake.

But to take up these challenges — to deepen the comparative study of the economic, social and political development of the different countries, or to answer the conservative offensive on the field of public opinion — clear concepts and a common language are needed. This is the modest goal of this notebook.

After a first chapter which is a reminder of key features of the bourgeois revolutions, Robert Lochhead recounts two particular cases: the revolution of the Low-Countries of 1566-1609 (Chapter II) and the English Revolution of 1640-1660 (Chapter III). Together with the French revolution of 1789, they constitute the three great classic bourgeois revolutions according to Marx. We hope that these detailed surveys will provide our readers with an opportunity to discover these revolutions, too often neglected outside the country in which they took place, get away from the habit of considering the French revolution as the model bourgeois revolution, and suggest the complexities of a' comparative analysis. Finally Chapter IV is an introduction to a few problems of Marxist interpretation in light of the debates between Marxist and liberal historians over the very concept of bourgeois revolution.

John Barzman

Pierre Rousset

Chronology

General reference **points**	**Revolutions in Europe**	**Revolutions in other continents**
	1158-1250 anti-imperial revolt of northern Italian cities	
1200-1300 first meetings of States-General	1200-1300 communal movement for charters of freedom granted by the sovereign	
	1282 democratic constitution in Florence 1291-1499 Swiss cantons' war of independence against the Hapsburgs	
1350-1450 Great Plague	1356-1358 States-General (led by Etienne Marcel) attempt to seize power in France; peasant insurrection of the "Jacques"	1368 Red Turbans' peasant insurrection puts the Ming dynasty in power in China
	1381 English Peasant Revolt	
	1419-1434 Czech Hussite revolution	
1492 Caribs discover a certain Christopher Columbus		
1500 Europe has 50 million people		
1517 Protestant Reformation begins		
1521 fall of Mexico	1525 Peasant War in Germany	
	1566-1609 revolution of the Low Countries	
	1640-1652 Catalan revolution	
1618-1648 Thirty Years war	1640-1660 English revolution	
	1647 insurrections of Naples and Palermo	1622-1644 uprisings linked to the fall of the Ming dynasty and rise of the Manchu
	1648-1653 revolutionary crisis of the Fronde in France 1670-1671 revolt of Stenka Razin (Volga and Don) 1688 "Glorious Revolution" in England	
1700-1789 Enlightenment; industrial revolution in England		1689 rebellions in New York (Leisler), Boston and Maryland
	1785-1787 Patriots' movement in the Low Countries	1776-1783 revolution of the United States of America
	1789-1815 French revolution: 1792 proclamation of the republic	
	June 1793-July 1794 government of the "Montagnard" Jacobins	1780-1782 Peruvian revolt of Tupac Amaru 1791-1802 revolution of Santo-Domingo (Black Jacobins)
1796-1815 Napoleonic Wars	1795-1799 Directory (Thermidorian regime) 1799-1815 dictatorship of Napoleon Bonaparte	
	1795-1806 Batavian republic 1797-1802 Cisalpine republic	
1800 Europe has 200 million people	1798-1803 Helvetic republic	
	1808-1814 Spanish war of independence	
	1812 liberal constitution of Cadiz	
	1830 revolution in France	1810-1822 independence wars of Latin America
	1830 Belgian uprising	
	1830 Polish insurrection	1837 Canadian rebellion
1847 *The Communist Manifesto*	1847 Radicals win Swiss civil war	
	1848 French revolution	
	1848-1849 German, Italian and Hungarian revolutions	1851-1864 Taiping revolt in China
	1854-56 revolution in Spain	1857-1858 Sepoy revolt against the English in India 1857-1867 Mexican revolution (Reforma) 1861-1865 Civil War in the United States
	1859-1870 wars of Italian Unification	
	1864-1876 First International	
1870-1871 Franco-Prussian War	1868-1874 revolution in Spain	1867-1889 Meiji restoration in Japan
	1871 Paris Commune	1905-1908 Iranian revolution
	1889 foundation of the Second International	1910-1920 Mexican revolution
1914-1918 World War One	1905 first Russian revolution	1911 proclamation of Chinese Republic
	1916 Irish insurrection	
	1917 Russian revolution	

The Bourgeois Revolutions
1. General Features

I. What were the bourgeois revolutions?

For Marxists, bourgeois revolutions cover a period of nine centuries. They began in Western Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries with the movement of the communes, more precisely the struggle of the Italian cities (the largest and richest in Europe at that time) against the Emperor and his German and Italian nobility. This victorious struggle transformed northern Italy not into a bourgeois state, but an archipelago of independent urban republics where no royal power could sink roots for three centuries.

This long nine-century period culminated in the French revolution of 1789-1815, and closed in Western Europe with the revolutions of 1848, particularly the failure of the German revolution of 1848-49.

Other revolutions before the French revolution were links in this long chain, the most notable being: the independence movement of the Swiss League of cities and mountain communities in the 14th and 15th centuries; the French revolutionary crisis of 1356-1358 from the seizure of power by the States-General to the peasant insurrection of the Jacques; the revolutionary crisis in England in 1380-1381 with the Peasant Revolt of Wat Tyler, following the Lollard movement, a sort of pre-Reformation; the German Peasant War of 1525, which was much more than a peasant uprising. The revolution of the Low Countries of 1566-1609 was the first to found a kind of modern bourgeois state. The English revolution of 1640-1660 was the first, despite its apparent failure, to start to transform the institutions of a great kingdom. Other contemporary revolutionary crises — the Fronde in France in 1648-1653, the Catalan revolution of 1640-1652, the uprisings of Naples and Sicily in 1647 — failed to overthrow absolutism. England, the main commercial and industrial power of the world for over two centuries, would serve as a model for the Enlightenment philosophers who created the cultural universe of the French revolution.

At its high point, this wave of transformations spread, with more or less success and popular participation, to the countries of western and southern Europe: through the revolutions connected to the French which led to annexations (Belgium, Rhineland) or sister republics (Batavian, Helvetic, and Cisalpine), the uprising for Belgian independence (1830), the insurrections and military campaigns which united Italy (1848-1849 and 1859-1870), and the series of revolutions which shook the Iberian peninsula in the 19th century (from the democratic Constitution proclaimed in Cadiz in 1812 to the constitutional monarchy established by the Cortes in 1876).This cycle of revolutions spread beyond western Europe, in the first place to its colonies: the revolution of the thirteen United States of America of 1776-1783, the revolution of Santo Domingo/Haiti, known as the revolution of the "Black Jacobins", in 1791-1802, the Latin American independence movements from 1809 to 1822.

In Japan, the Ancient Regime, the only non-European system truly deserving to be described as feudal in the strict sense, faced with the mortal challenge of European and North-American expansionism, was overthrown by the revolution of Meiji of 1867-1889, a genuine bourgeois revolution. This cycle of revolutions closed with the Mexican revolution of 1910-1920 and the Russian revolution of 1917, each of which, in its own way, inaugurated a new chapter, that of revolutions in semi-colonial underdeveloped countries in the age of imperialism.

These revolutions rarely produced unambiguous results; several aborted or were crushed, in particular those unjustly confined to obscurity and seldom mentioned. But none of them failed to produce lasting results. The whole nine-century process, with its diverse branches and dense undergrowth, gave birth to the modern bourgeois states.

The bourgeois revolutions issued from the tensions created by the development of a commercial economy, and later capitalism, within a feudal and absolutist Ancient Regime stretched to the limit of its capacity for adaptation.

The classes and parties who were the actors of these revolutions seldom had systematic programs for reform or transformation of the Ancient Regime. The ideals of the insurgent classes were often expressed in terms of a return to a better, albeit completely mythical, past. Starting from an initial vacillation of the Ancient Regime which took them by surprise, all the actors defended their particular interests and improvised in the face of events which gradually acquired a dynamic

that no one had wanted or predicted. Nevertheless, what eventually emerged more or less clearly, was a further expansion first of commodity relations, then of capitalism in all fields of economic life, and an increase in the economic, social and therefore political weight of the bourgeoisie at the expense of the Ancient Regime's nobility.

The juridical and institutional transformations characteristic of the transition from the Ancient Regime to the modern bourgeois state, can be summarized as follows:

1/ Emancipation of the serfs from personal serfdom and commutation of dues owed to their lord, from services *(corvées)* to money.

2/ Division of the lords' fiefs into small peasant properties or their direct transformation into capitalist agricultural enterprises.

3/ Juridical transformation of conditional property rights typical of the feudal regime, into absolute property typical of the mercantile and later capitalist economy.

4/ Abolition of the privileges of the nobles, including judicial and state powers in their fiefs.

5/ Juridical guarantees protecting individuals and their property against arbitrary action by lords or the Crown.

6/ Restriction of Church power and land ownership and freedom of religion and conscience. Abolition of the tax paid to the Church: the tithe.

7/ Equality before the law and an end to the nobility's privileged access to official responsibilities, "the opening of careers to talent."

8/ Reduction or even elimination of institutional obstacles to the free activity of artisans, merchants, and manufacturers, particularly the freedom to purchase labor power and sell commodities and services produced by it; elimination of the corporate organization of crafts and internal customs.

9/ A diminution in the censorship of ideas.

10/ Rationalization of the territorial divisions, weights and measures, education, tax system and civil and penal legislation.

11/ Limitation or even elimination of royal power by national representative bodies, elected first through a propertied franchise, and later universal suffrage.

These transformations did not come about in linear fashion but earlier or later, in different combinations and forms, depending on the country. Some were implemented little by little as the market economy and then capitalism developed within the Ancient Regime. Others were implemented by absolutism as part of its rationalizing, centralizing and mercantilist reforms.

But all bourgeois revolutions caused an acceleration of these measures, were fought over attempts to implement programs of this sort, and centered on the conflicts of classes and parties around such programs.

II. Aspects of the western European Ancient Regime

I. *Feudalism*

Feudal society stabilized in Europe around the year 1000. Society was then characterized by a division into two social classes:

- Almost the entire population was composed of peasants who worked the land of noblemen and owed them a part of their crops and labor services *(corvées).* These peasants were not free; as serfs, they could not leave the land of their lord. But they enjoyed far greater rights and guarantees than slaves. Lords could not expel them from their land.

- A small percentage of the population were noblemen who received fiefs from a suzerain in exchange for providing military services to the latter. At the top of the pyramid of the nobility stood the kings of the various kingdoms of Europe.

"Next" to these two fundamental classes was the Church, an institution older than feudalism. The Church constituted a vast bureaucracy; it was the single largest landowner. Its hierarchy was open in priority (but not exclusively) to the nobility. The Church supplied feudalism with religious justifications — an ideology — and intellectuals.

Feudalism, like every other mode of production, never existed in a pure state. It combined with preexisting social relations at the same time as it marginalized them:

- mercantile, or even capitalist relations: the cities were never completely eliminated. Italy had the largest ones in Western Europe. On the periphery of feudal Europe, Venice was already a merchant republic before the stabilization of feudalism.

- slave relations: in the Mediterranean south.

- tribal relations: in the east and north, for

example in Scotland and Friesland.

    - "allodial" relations: there were free peasants, with full ownership of their land and owing no feudal dues (freeholders) almost everywhere, and in larger numbers in mountainous regions.

    The Ancient Regime was a highly parcellized society, in which power had endlessly fragmented and devolved to a myriad of territorial entities: lordships, cities and abbeys, each subdivided into smaller units existing in a juridical maze of property titles, charters of freedoms and particular alliance treaties. It was in the many pores of this social order, playing some against the others, itself often played off against another, that the bourgeoisie was able to make the cities, when they developed in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries, into self-governing republican islands enjoying a measure of independence.

    By the late Middle Ages, or by the 15th and 16th centuries, western European feudalism had lost some of its initial features due to the following transformations:

    - The majority of peasants were no longer serfs.
Having obtained their personal freedom, their dues
commuted to money, they had become free tenants
working on the land of a lord to whom they paid an
annual rent. They are also known as "emphyteutic"
tenants, meaning that their right to the land was eternal
and hereditary, but relative and dependent on easements
such as payment of feudal rent, marriage and inheritance rights, etc, to the lord. (This category
included the English copyholders.)

    The peasantry was a very heterogeneous body; it included in particular: true serfs (some still existed in the 17th century) and feudal tenants, but also sharecroppers, lease-holding farmers, small landowners, servants, agricultural wage-earners, unemployed and rural vagabonds.

    It often occurred that following cycles of peasant revolts, with the strengthening of the royal state apparatus, absolutism and the tendency for intermediate suzerains to disappear, the feudal lords acquired the *de facto,* and sometimes *de jure,* absolute ownership over
their lands which then stopped being fiefs properly speaking, since the fief was a sort of

hereditary loan in exchange for military service.

    Along with this evolution, feudal vassalage ties generally stopped being obligations between specific individuals. Lordships, complete with the feudal rights which provided their revenue, could be sold and purchased; similarly, an emphyteutic tenant peasant's tenure could be sold or purchased. Land was becoming a commodity, something which had not been the case in feudalism in the strict sense of the term. Emphyteutic tenures tended to give way to short-term farming or sharecropping leases.

2. Urban society under the Ancient Regime

    Juridically, any citizen of a town or city was a bourgeois (or burgher, in English). (This definition is quite different from that used by contemporary Marxists for whom all capitalists, whether they exploit wage labor in the country or city, are bourgeois).

    The social stratification of the Ancient Regime city was typically the following, starting with the upper classes:

    1/ The **patricians** were a small number of families, usually of merchant or financial origin, defined by privileged access to the municipal government. Their names were inscribed on an official register. Patricians lived like nobles and often were ennobled; they acquired lordships in the countryside. Their numbers included noble lineages who had settled in the city and others allied to the nobility through marriages. The patriciate was the cream of the bourgeoisie. Patricians were often the richest bourgeois, though not always.

    2/ The great majority of the urban population was formed by the membership of the **guilds:** butchers, merchants, masons, drapers, goldsmiths, tanners, bakers, brewers, boatmen, glaziers, etc.

    The master craftsman's home sheltered not only his wife and children, his apprentices whose parents paid the master to train them in the trade, but also male and female servants, and most importantly, his journeymen, who earned wages but were members of the guild and could hope to become masters some day.

    The rich master craftsmen — and some were very rich —, the merchants, goldsmiths, bankers, butchers, drapers, corresponded most directly to

the modern meaning of the word "bourgeois." Some of them employed more journeymen than they could shelter under their own roof and these journeymen, whose hopes of ever becoming masters grew steadily dimmer, tended to become simple wage-earners; certain burghers owned genuine workshops, others employed many homeworkers.

Most guild members were not rich; some had a little more comfort: small master craftsmen, shopkeepers, well-established journeymen. Many owned real estate on the outskirts of the city.

3/ The lower orders (the French *menu peuple)* included the lesser crafts not organized in guilds: itinerant craftsmen, street traders, water carriers; male and female servants, day-laborers in construction and the port, workers in large workshops, beggars.

Until the first third of the 19th century, the workers, that is in the modern sense of the word wage earners, remained a very small minority in a sea of small property-owners.

In the Ancient Regime, and already in the Middle Ages, social and political struggles in the cities usually involved three camps:
. the patricians
. the well-to-do burghers of the corporations, sometimes called the guild oligarchy, and
. the plebeians, that is the mixture of the lower ranks of the guilds, petty-bourgeois and lower orders.

There is no precise frontier separating the bourgeois from the plebeians. In most cases, bourgeois and plebeians acted together, under the leadership of some brilliant patrician dissident seeking a mass of maneuver to impose some project or settle some account. Sometimes the plebeians outflanked the bourgeois. Over time, this struggle of classes and other layers caused an alternation of exclusively patrician municipal regimes and more democratic municipal regimes in which power was in the hands of the guilds, i.e., generally of their elite. This alternation was occasionally disrupted by shorter episodes of even greater democracy, of relatively more plebeian municipal governments imposed by a plebeian insurrection. These episodes gave rise to the demand for universal suffrage. Very often, a lasting compromise between the patricians and guilds was institutionalized by the creation of a municipal government made up of several councils with voting rights, the one reserved for the

patricians, the other for the delegates of the guilds, and with a broader citizens' assembly summoned from time to time, but infrequently on the whole.

A municipal plebeian revolt expelled the patricians from the city council; the patricians took revenge with the assistance of the nobility, the royal armies, or through a demagogic use of the lower orders; a plebeian revolt placed leaders of the guilds in power; they eventually made their position hereditary and, in turn, became patricians: such was the pattern of urban class struggles for centuries. Struggles of wage-earners did occur, even strikes, but until the first third of the 19th century, there was never a working class playing an autonomous social and political role, distinct from that of the general plebeian movement. Cities also had a "bourgeois" militia composed of the well-to-do burghers.

For centuries, through cooptation into the municipal patriciate and the purchase of land, and even lordships, the summits of the bourgeoisie were integrated, again and again, into feudal society. In his own individual consciousness, the bourgeois dreamed not of instituting a bourgeois republic, but quite simply of becoming a gentleman.

3. The States-General

From the 13th century on, at various intervals, kings summoned assemblies of deputies of the three "orders" or "estates": the first was the clergy, the second the nobility and the third, the rest of the population (the commoners). Each house of the first two estates included seats reserved by right to various dignitaries: bishops, abbots, dukes, counts, etc. Delegates of the lower clergy, i.e., the parish priests, and of the lesser nobility, were elected in each region by a sort of "democratic" vote. In the Third Estate, only certain cities had the right to send deputies. Depending on the municipal regime in vigor in a city, the mode of election of the deputies might be more or less "democratic." The great mass of the population, the peasantry, was not represented at all. Only Sweden had a fourth chamber of peasant deputies, the Fourth Estate. Together the three assemblies constituted the States-General.

Each house discussed and voted separately. Decisions were taken by a plurality of the houses. Decisive votes were therefore always 3 to nil, or 2 to 1. Officially the king could not institute a new tax or abolish an ancient law without the consent of the States-General. Depending on the period and kingdom, the States-

General might be strong or weak. They were strong when the monarch had to summon them and they only agreed to grant him provisions if he accepted their conditions. They were weak when the king could do without them.

Each session of the States-General saw a contest between the king, who wanted more funding and less control, the nobility who wanted to be exempted from taxes (and achieved that goal in several kingdoms), and the bourgeoisie who wanted to limit taxes, impose conditions for their payment, and control how they were spent, as well as a royal policy suited to its economic interests. Bourgeoisie and nobility sometimes found common ground in seeking to control the Crown. This control took the form of standing committees of the States-General, whose powers varied in different kingdoms. One of the most powerful such committee, whose title has survived to the present day, was the "Generality" of Catalonia.

The creation of the States-General in the 13th century marked the recognition by the king, nobility and clergy, who alone had been associated to the conduct of public affairs until that time, that the bourgeoisie had achieved new strength and importance. Since the goal of the royal government was to obtain taxes, its relations with the bourgeoisie, which was gradually becoming the class owning and dealing with the largest amounts of wealth, were decisive.

Rich, governing the cities, controlling the sources of credit (the king and nobility borrowed liberally) as well as the production and trade of the crafts and manufactures (which feudal society never did without), owning lands and sometimes lordships, wielding considerable means of pressure in the States-General, being the best educated class in society, supplying the king with civil servants and sometimes ministers, the bourgeoisie of the Ancient Regime was a social class at once profoundly integrated and powerful. It was not an oppressed class. Subordinate, but not oppressed. To a certain extent one may speak of the nobility and bourgeoisie as the "propertied classes."

Things might have been different, of course, with respect to those sectors of the bourgeoisie, at first a minority, who started new manufacturing and commercial ventures and often ran up against the strict market regulation of the Ancient Regime: ban on the import of certain merchandise, ban on the export of others, internal customs, monopolies over certain activities decreed by law, imposed prices, compulsory profit margins,

compulsory sale and purchase sites, guild regulations limiting the number of wage-earners, etc. These "modern" bourgeois were a very small minority which was constantly confronted by the narrow framework of the regime, and with increasing frequency as their businesses expanded. That is unless they became powerful and obtained some derogation from the royal administration. Indeed, patricians and even noble grandees, who could obtain such derogations more easily, also entered such "modern" businesses.

The Ancient Regime bourgeoisie was very diverse. But it is not possible to designate a layer in its midst who wished to transform society or pushed in sustained and consistent fashion in that direction.

4. Absolutism

To a certain extent already in the 12th and 13th centuries, but particularly between the 15th and 17th centuries, royal power had grown progressively stronger. It had equipped itself with a bureaucracy, courts of law, emissaries in the provinces distinct from the great lords, permanent taxes, a permanent army and diplomacy. Beginning in the 15th century, but particularly in the 16th and 17th centuries, it cut down the "state" powers of the nobility on its lands and the autonomy of the cities. This is what has been called absolutism.

The reason why the nobility finally accepted the absolutist state and even participated in it, despite centuries of armed resistance and plots, is that royal power had become indispensable to protect the nobility against:
- peasant uprisings whose suppression required genuine armies,
- the attempts of neighboring nobilities to conquer their land,
- growing debts.

The nobility was able to resist the burden of its debt thanks to the partiality of the law courts, the king's pensions and gifts, and the remuneration of the civilian and military functions it held in the royal administration. For centuries, the absolutist state was able to prolong the existence of the nobility by redistributing to it the revenue derived from taxes levied on the peasantry, as well as on the bourgeoisie and lower orders of the cities.

We should note, in this regard, that absolutism did not precede the bourgeois revolutions but was contemporaneous with them. In many cases, the Crown accelerated its efforts to

strengthen absolutism as a reaction against attempts to establish a constitutional monarchy, as in France, Charles V after 1355-1358 and Louis XIV after the revolutionary crisis of the Fronde in 1648-1653. The strengthening of absolutism was therefore an answer to a constitutional challenge by the States-General. The French revolution of 1789 and the Russian revolution of 1917 overthrew aging absolutisms that were running out of steam. But the revolution of the Low Countries of 1566-1609 and the English revolution of 1640-1660 overthrew young absolutisms who had been destabilized by their very efforts to tighten their control.

A note on the Protestant Reformation

The 16th- and 17th-century revolutions expressed themselves in the language of the Protestant Reformation. But it would be wrong to consider Protestantism as something like the ideology of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against feudalism. The Protestant Reformation is far too complex a phenomenon to be analyzed in this notebook.

The content of Protestantism does, of course, display many features which identify it with the development of the bourgeois universe inside the Ancient Regime. But as all religious phenomena, and even all cultural phenomena, the Reformation was socially and politically ambiguous. It served as a religious standard for all sorts of classes and parties, including quite often the nobility. The princes of northern Germany and the Scandinavian monarchs used it to strengthen their weak and belated absolutisms at the expense of an overly powerful Church.

Nevertheless the Reformation in the 16th century, and the Enlightenment in the 18th century, were a new culture which reflected the loss of legitimacy of the powers that be in the eyes of many different social classes, particularly the intellectuals; they formulated new values and new conceptions on the organization of society, but without any homogeneity.

Moreover, the Enlightenment was the direct heir of the Reformation. Both displayed a common critical rationalism and confidence in the freedom of thought of the individual. The Enlightenment substituted a rationalist secular language to the religious language which had been the only language in which western Europeans debated social problems and expressed their fears and hopes until that time.

The place of the Church in the Ancient Regime was such that the bourgeois revolutions necessarily had to confront the problem of religion. The English revolution of 1640-1660 was the last to do so in terms which were themselves religious. But the secular terms in which the French revolution dealt with it, did not make the problem of the Church and religion any simpler.

III. The mechanisms of the bourgeois revolutions

Beneath their diverse forms, stages and detours, the bourgeois revolutions share certain common mechanisms. The conflict of the same social classes produced similar effects.

1. The crisis of absolutism and unanimous support for a constitutional monarchy

Like all revolutions, the bourgeois revolutions broke out to everyone's surprise, not really wanted or foreseen by anyone. Absolutism suddenly stopped being able to rule as before and its authority was no longer accepted as previously. It entered this crisis under the weight of contradictions slowly accumulated over a long period, usually as a result of some conjunctural obstacle: economic crisis, defeat in war, bankruptcy of the state.

The bourgeois revolutions began with a vacillation of the royal government before a widespread opposition movement reaching into all classes of society. It was not so much popular revolts, which were always savagely repressed, that caused the royal state to falter in the first stage, as the opposition and demand for reforms expressed by broad layers of the propertied classes in a situation of grave crisis and tension in society. This demand for reform often appeared as a desire to avoid even worse social explosions.

1. The demand for reforms arose within a vast
movement of new ideas, which had acquired a relative,
albeit confused, hegemony among social layers of all
kinds, delegitimated the powers that be, and laid bare
the faults of absolutism. The success of this new counter-culture, despite its ambiguities, prepared the
minds of the people for change, but their

expectation

was that reforms would be gradually accepted by the

Crown itself in a beautiful movement. This happened:

- in the *16th century:* the Protestant
Reformation;

- in *England before 1640:* Puritanism and the "Baconian Enlightenment" (from Francis Bacon (1561-1626), the Protestant humanist philosopher who classified the sciences, analyzed the causes of error, and developed an optimistic view of the progress of reason, the sciences and technics);

- in the *18th century,* before the French revolution: the Enlightenment;

- in the *19th century:* liberalism and the prestigious example of the French revolution.

2. Faced with the paralysis of absolutism, a large

section of all classes of society demanded a constitutional monarchy in which the powers of the

king would be limited by those of the States-General.

Constitutional reform was expected and undertaken in an atmosphere of near unanimity.

. Low-Countries 1566: the feudal grandees opposed the strengthening of absolutism; a petition of the nobility demanded that the persecution of Protestants be moderated (Compromise of the Nobility); the call for the summoning of the States-General was widespread.

. Low-Countries 1576: the States-General seized power; the Pacification of Ghent and its promise of a constitutional solution won unanimous approval.

. England 1640-1641: Parliament met amidst general enthusiasm and the anti-absolutist legislation adopted in 1641 by the House of Commons won unanimous approval.

. France 1789: general hope was focused on the meeting of the States-General; unanimous desire for a constitutional monarchy; transformation of the States-General into a National Assembly; Declaration of the Rights of Man; drafting of the constitution.

. Germany-Austria 1848: general uprisings in Vienna and Berlin in March, meeting of the German parliament in Frankfurt and of the Constituent Assembly in Vienna. Drafting of the constitution.

2. The decisive role of the States-General

To start a real revolution that is more than a wave of demonstrations around specific demands and isolated insurrectional riots, the relay must be taken by an institution that is both a channel for the expression of dissatisfaction and demands, and the bearer of some traditional legitimacy, and therefore capable of becoming a counter-power opposed to the royal government. This counter-power can undertake, with some legitimacy yet, if need be, without the king's consent, the drafting of constitutional reforms. This is why the call for the summoning of the States-General, or the meeting of the States-General themselves, or of a national or constituent assembly, to use more modern terms, has played such a decisive role in starting the bourgeois revolutions on their track. In the European feudal monarchies, the king's claim to be the source of all law necessarily carried with it the risk that his prerogatives would be challenged at every meeting of the States-General. At first, the Crown was able to use the States-General against powerful separatist barons, but later, absolutism was built on staggering and then cancelling meetings of the States-General. There was an intrinsically republican element in the very institution of the States-General. The main prerogative of the States-General was to vote taxes. Ever since the Middle Ages the bourgeoisie had insisted on this prerogative with the slogan: "No taxation without representation." This was only one step removed from the appointment of a permanent committee to oversee the collection and use of taxes, a step often taken or at least considered; only a bit further down the same road was the demand that the States-General should represent all taxpayers and that its deputies should be democratically elected, a path which the plebeians attempted many times over the centuries, initiating the long march towards universal suffrage.

During the revolutionary crisis of the Low Countries in 1566, the king was well aware of this logic and obstinately refused to summon the States-General despite unanimous demands for him to do so. In France, the last meeting of the States-General before 1789 took place in 1614. Certain demands were expressed already then which were implemented only in 1789-1790 by the Constituent Assembly. Many voices again called for the summoning of the States-General during the revolutionary crisis of the Fronde in 1648-1653, and at the death of Louis XIV in 1715. The

Crown, knowing the price it would have to pay for any meeting of the States-General, did everything in its power to avoid it.

3. Dissident nobles come over

In all these revolutions some of the greater and lesser aristocrats sided with the bourgeoisie, peasantry and plebe, and rebelled against their king.

These grandees tried to ride the mass mobilizations and use them to their own ends, mainly to take over the government and save whatever could be saved from the upheaval. As soon as the movement overflowed the moderate bounds in which they wanted to contain it, they took their distances or turned against the revolutionary movement.

There were several reasons in feudal society for the frequent insubordination, adventurism and divisions of the nobility. The most important was the fact that with the generalization of money and capitalism in all spheres of the economy, a minority of the nobility had begun, as early as the Middle Ages, to "bourgeoisify," to acquire economic interests and activities similar to those of the bourgeoisie.

A compromise between the nobility and bourgeoisie was a material possibility because their respective properties usually did not overlap. The material basis of this compromise was the joint defense of private property and the privileges of wealth against the exploited masses, with the nobility abandoning its lordly powers to preserve "only" the economic ownership of its lands. Feudal lords could become capitalist landowners and many did so. This was the basis for the seemingly generous renunciation of its feudal rights by the French nobility in the night of August 4, 1789 — but even that took the pressure of a peasant insurrection.

4. Can the royal army suppress the movement?

The revolutionary crisis could last and deepen only because the repressive forces of absolutism, who had crushed so many peasant and plebeian insurrections before, were temporarily prevented from intervening and/ or faced with military forces who defended the social movement. A sort of dual power situation existed.

. *Low-Countries 1566:* the Brussels government barely had any professional troops, the dissidence of the nobility obstructed the mobilization of the noble Ordinance Bands and the urban militias allowed the insurgents to proceed.

. *Low-Countries 1576:* the royal army which had not been paid for a long time, mutinied in mass. The municipalities, Provincial States and States-General raised their own troops to defend themselves against the plunder of the mutineers who no longer recognized any authority.

. *England 1640-1642:* the royal army was defeated by the Scots and the king could no longer pay it. The urban militia of London moved to the defense of Parliament against the king's attempted coup in January 1642. During the summer 1642, the peasant and plebeian insurrections in the provinces slowed down the mobilization of the king's troops drawn from the gentry (the lesser nobility), and supplied the Parliamentary army with new recruits. During the Civil War, the military questions were the political questions. Parliament had a shortage of cavalry and officers; in 1643, most noble officers deserted; but the moderate Parliamentary majority refused to arm the people. By the end of 1642, Cromwell had raised his own politicized army in the East, composed of well-to-do plebeians and peasants (yeomen), with new officers of modest origins. The New Model Army constituted on this basis made the difference and defeated the royal army in 1645.

. *France 1789:* in June, the new Paris municipality founded a bourgeois militia, the National Guard. In July the regiments of French Guards, with whom the Crown had attempted to put down the Parisian agitation, fraternized with the populace and disbanded.

. *France 1792-1793:* the regime's ability to survive the intervention of foreign powers was jeopardized by the deficiencies of the old royal army and the betrayal of its noble officers; it was saved by the creation of a new army of the Republic originating among other sources in the mass levy of 1792-1793 which incorporated politicized sans-culottes into the army.

. *Germany-Austria 1848-1849:* this is in certain ways a significant counter-example. The Prussian army at first stayed away from the disturbances and remained intact, overall, although certain units fraternized with the insurrections, particularly the territorial reserve militias *(Landsturm).* The insurrections gave birth to bourgeois national guards and to the academic legions (composed of students). But the government elected by the Frankfurt Assembly pledged not to try and win over pro-revolutionary soldiers in the Prussian army and not to challenge its reactionary general staff. In 1849, the Prussian army crushed the democratic insurrections in

Saxony and the Palatinate.

The Austrian army was busy in Italy; but once victorious there, and reinforced with troops raised in the underdeveloped Slavic regions, it became available to crush the Vienna insurrection in October-November 1848 and the Hungarian insurrection in 1849 with the assistance of the army of Russian absolutism.

5. *The propertied classes outflanked by the plebeian and peasant explosion*

The revolt of the rich classes and the collapse, or at least paralysis of the Crown, allowed the pent-up resentment of the poor classes, city plebeians and peasants, to explode. The rebel nobility and bourgeoisie were propelled forward and then outflanked by the popular uprising. Meanwhile, the king and the rest of the nobility prepared the violent counter-revolution.

A popular political radicalism emerged, demanding the abolition of the monarchy, universal suffrage, a reform of the judicial, administrative and tax systems, and land reform.

. *Low-Countries: in 1566,* the riot of the Iconoclasts; *in 1577-1579,* the popular demonstrations that forced the States-General to break with the governor appointed by the king and name the Prince of Orange lieutenant-general of the Low Countries, the insurrectional communes of Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, Arras, Amsterdam.

. *England 1647-1650:* the wave of agitation by the Levellers.

. *France : in July 1789,* the explosion of peasant uprisings and urban demonstrations. *In 1791,* the big demonstrations around the flight of the king and his capture at Varennes; the radical Jacobins and their political program. *August 10,1792:* an insurrection of the *sans-culottes* overthrew the Legislative Assembly and the king, and introduced universal suffrage and the republic. *June 2,1793:* an insurrection overthrew the Girondin government.

. *Germany-Austria 1848-1849:* the workers' insurrections in Vienna in May and October 1848.

6. *The challenge to private property*

In all bourgeois revolutions, the rich always perceived the mobilization of plebeians as laden with the threat that the poor would seize their wealth, as a threat to their property. Even when the plebeians put forward no demand which challenged private property in any real sense! In fact, until the emergence of the working class

on the political scene in the 19th century, the plebeians had always, in their great majority, been owners of small means of production. But they were forced, in the cities at least, to purchase their food, and for centuries the money they spent on it ate over half their daily income. Hence, the recurrence and importance of riots against increases in the price of bread... and against bakers. Moreover, poverty created a latent clanger of looting.

As for agrarian social struggles, attacks on the property rights of large landowners, whether feudal or bourgeois, emerged clearly in the movements and demands of the tenants in all the bourgeois revolutions.

. In the *revolution of the Low-Countries* of 1566-1609, as in all the municipal revolts under the Ancient Regime, plebeian uprisings tending to wrest the municipality from the patricians, or even from the guild oligarchy, jeopardized all the material advantages and income the latter derived from their control of municipal affairs, in particular their fiscal advantages.

. In the *English revolution* of 1640-1660, the Levellers' program, although mainly concerned with political and legal matters and quite respectful of private property, nevertheless contained demands whose economic cost to the rich was far from negligible: its proposals for land reform, call for abolition of the tithe (now often collected by lay people), rejection of indirect taxes and proposal for an income tax. The Levellers' demand for the eligibility of all public authorities also threatened many entrenched interests; finally, the prospect of universal suffrage conjured in the minds of the rich the danger that the poor majority might some day enact laws directed against them, beginning on the fiscal plane.

. In the *French revolution,* the Jacobin dictatorship under Robespierre from June 1793 to July 1794 was the first government in the history of bourgeois revolutions to try to satisfy the economic demands of the plebeians through a policy of government control of the markets: a freeze on prices (but also on wages!) and the strict regulation of supplies. This policy was embodied in the Law of the "general maximum" of September 29, 1793. Initially successful, this policy led prices to decrease and stabilized the Assignat (paper money); but it soon met with failure because in a society of small craftsmen and traders, it clashed brutally with the interests not only of the bourgeois but also of the petty-bourgeois, even the very small ones, and at the same time, alienated the support of the poorest

sans-culottes, the wage earners. It became the "Economic Terror."

. In the *German revolution of* 1848-1849, the plebeians' economic demands were straightaway qualitatively more dangerous for property owners because the workers now constituted a massive proportion of the plebeians and had organized "workers' societies." Because of that, the bourgeoisie's fear for its property was even more violent and spread vigorously among the ranks of the petty-bourgeoisie.

In all bourgeois revolutions, a left wing of the plebeians, an extreme minority, challenged the very principle of private property and developed a more or less explicit communist perspective. The conditions of their time did not afford any realistic hope that their project could be implemented and doomed them to remain a small minority conducting propaganda for its ideas, while acting inside the plebeian movement in the bounds of its general demands. But in the context of their epoch, they were precursors of the communist movement which only developed truly in the second half of the 19th century, the 1848 revolutions being the turning point.

. *The Low-Countries, 16th century:* the Anabaptists.

. *England 1649:* Gerard Winstanley and the Levellers.

. *France 1792-1793:* Jacques Roux and the Enraged, then in *1795-1796,* Gracchus Babeuf and the "Conspiracy of the Equals."

. *Germany 1848-1849:* the various socialist groups, and the Communist League to which Marx and Engels belonged.

7. *Toward a questioning of women's oppression*

In all these bourgeois revolutions, the plebeian mobilization implied a broad mobilization of women in the revolutionary crowd. Events motivated and politicized women too. By the English revolution of the 17th century, the legal emancipation of women was already debated in the vast discussion of ideas which these revolutions provoked. The most consistent minds foresaw that the logic of granting freedom to the individual's religious conscience, as advocated by Protestantism, as well as the logic of the Rights of Man and universal suffrage, would inevitably, sooner or later, pose the question of their application to women, of women's equality with men, and therefore of their emancipation.

Altogether the bourgeois revolutions brought little or no improvement to the condition of women. Embryonic efforts on behalf of women's emancipation, mainly under the impulse of male and female thinkers belonging to intellectual circles, often of upper class origin, sometimes plebeian, were blocked by the determined patriarchalism of the bourgeoisie and, once the broad mobilizations were over, of the insurgent plebeians. In the English revolution and later in the French revolution, the idea of universal suffrage first appeared not even simply as the idea of male universal suffrage but the suffrage of all family heads! The long march of women towards civil, moral and political emancipation (not to mention economic emancipation, which is yet another matter) only seriously began in the latter half of the 19th century.

. *Low-Countries 1583-1584:* bourgeois and plebeian women played an important role in the people's mobilization in defense of the radical communes of the large Flemish cities besieged by the royal army.

. *England 1640-1660* Puritanism placed great emphasis on the freedom of religious conscience of women too; women played an important role in the dissident radical Puritan communities where they acquired a status equal to that of men; many women signed democratic petitions, particularly those of the Levellers, and joined street demonstrations; among the abundant protest literature published at the time, there was a feminist publication and several women authors; the sects of the Familists and Quakers practiced marriage and divorce by mutual declaration before the community; John Milton wrote *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* in 1643 to propose a right to divorce by mutual consent, much to the dismay of the conservatives; like other radical Puritans, he valued most highly the dignity of the free choice of spouses and physical love through mutual affinity; the Ranters experimented with free love; Lucy Hutchinson was an important political figure among the Independents; women were preachers in the plebeian sects; Margaret Fell was one of the organizers of the Quakers; she organized a Women's Petition in 1659 and published *Women's Speaking Justified* in 1659; among the Quakers, a certain conception of women's emancipation (regular meetings of the women of a community) remained alive after the Restoration of 1660.

. *France 1790-1795:* in 1790 Condorcet (1743-1794), an encyclopaedist and republican, proposed the right to vote for women in his *Sur l'admission*

des femmes au droit de cite (On the Admission of Women to the Rights of the City); in 1791, Olympe de Gouges (1748-1793) published her manifesto *Les droits de la femme (The Rights of Woman);* in 1793, the Convention instituted divorce by mutual consent; in June, the Jacobins of the Mountain allowed the creation of the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women (in which Claire Lacombe and Pauline Leon were prominent) among the *sans-culottes* circles, but dissolved it in October by a decision of the Convention, in the wake of the measures to stop demonstrations against high food prices.

After the fall of Robespierre, the regime of bourgeois restoration of the Thermidorians and of the Directory abolished divorce by mutual consent; women again experienced severe repression during the last *sansculotte* uprisings of 1795; by 1804 the Napoleonic Civil Code again closed the lid of patriarchy on women.

An important theoretician of women's emancipation emerged among the leaders of the English radical democratic movement at the end of the 18th century, a movement which supported the French revolution: Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), who authored *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792.

. *Germany 1848-1849:* as in the French revolution of 1789 and again in the French revolution of 1848, women created many feminist clubs. As in the two French revolutions, these clubs were soon banned by the conservatives, along with the radical democrats who, incidentally, did not necessarily support these clubs. The great feminist figure of the German revolution of 1848-1849 is the Saxon Louise Otto (1819-1895). Beginning in the early 1840s, she published various books arguing for a feminist and radical democratic view. For a long time, she edited *Die Frauenzeitung (The Women's Newspaper)* and in 1865 she founded the General Union of German Women (Allgemeine Deutsche Frauenverein) in Leipzig. German women acquired the right to vote with the German revolution of 1918.

8. The properted classes want to stop the revolution and repress the popular movement

In place of the royal government paralyzed or confined to a part of the kingdom, the States-General in permanent session found themselves at the head of the state. The divisions of the nobility, or its disarray and exile, and the social strength and wealth of the bourgeoisie gave the latter an overwhelming majority in the assembly. The most conservative upper layers of the bourgeoisie held a majority. The States-General, not quite convinced of the need to take power, decided to enact minimum reforms intended to limit durably the power of the Crown while seeking a compromise with it. This compromise was based on a monarchy whose power would be curtailed by a representative assembly reserved for the rich. But such a compromise was unattainable when, on the one hand, the royalist party had undertaken a fierce war of reconquest and, on the other hand, popular mobilizations clamored for more radical and democratic measures.

In the face of the radicalism of the people, the great majority of the bourgeoisie became scared; it turned to repression, fiercely defended the propertied franchise and sought an accommodation with the king.

. *Low-Countries 1576-1583:* the States-General summoned in 1576 and meeting since that time, began with attempts to negotiate with the king for several months. Following the resumption of hostilities in July 1577, they entrusted their army to the Walloon grandees. The latter failed to put up a serious fight against the royal army, were defeated and turned against the radical plebeian commune of Ghent. The States-General and the prince of Orange did not defend Ghent and even tried to suppress it themselves. In October 1578, the Walloon nobility and the Provincial States of Artois, Hainault and Walloon Flanders, i.e., the bourgeoisie of Lille and Arras, crushed the plebeian insurrection of Arras and in May 1579 made obedience to the royal governor.

. *England 1644-1645:* the Presbyterian majority in Parliament feared the plebeian mobilization and negotiated with the king to quickly end the Civil War . In 1647, after the king was defeated, they still sought an arrangement with him and tried to dismiss the army. *1653-1658:* the successive Parliaments in which the rich classes had the upper hand, tried in vain to compel Cromwell to abolish religious toleration, suppress the popular sects, impose a conservative and authoritarian form of Calvinism and dismiss the army, which they deemed too close to the plebeians.

In England, after the death of Cromwell, the resurgence of republican and democratic radicalism inside the army was smothered by general Monck and king Charles II was reinstated in 1660.

. *France 1789-1791:* the Constituent Assembly approved a Constitution in which the vote was

based on narrow property qualifications. On July 17, 1791, the Constituent Assembly, the Paris city council and Lafayette, who commanded the National Guard, ordered their troops to fire on demonstrators demanding the dethronement of the king on the Champs de Mars field. The Girondins who dominated the government from March 1792 to June 1793 considered the revolution complete, opposed the dethronement and later the condemnation of the king. They disapproved of the economic demands of the *sans-culottes* and tried to put an end to the pressure emanating from such quarters.

Robespierre defined perfectly the mechanism whereby the bourgeoisie was outflanked and driven rightwards. He was himself involved in promoting this outflanking.

"Thus it was, among you, that the judiciary, the nobles, the clergy, the rich gave the original impulse to the revolution. The people appeared on the scene only later. Those who gave the first impulse have long since repented, or at least wished to stop the revolution when they saw that the people might recover its sovereignty." (Speech before the Jacobins' Club, January 2, 1792).

In France, the *sans-culottes* and their organizations (the Parisian sections), already repressed and discouraged by the Robespierrists, were defeated by the Thermidorians between summer 1794 and winter 1795. The last insurrections of the *sans-culottes,* driven to desperate defensive actions in April and May 1795 (known as the events of Germinal and Prairial) were crushed by the army.

. *Germany-Austria 1848-1849:* in May 1848 in Vienna, the liberal government dissolved the academic legion and based itself on the army against the bourgeois National Guard. In August, the National Guard destroyed the movement of the workers of Vienna. The democratic insurrections in Frankfurt, Baden and Cologne in September 1848, were crushed by the Frankfurt National Assembly and executive committee themselves.

October-November 1848: in revolutionary Vienna besieged by the imperial army reinforced by Croat and Czech contingents and the Russian army, the liberal-democratic government repressed the workers and refused to call for assistance from the army of the Hungarian national movement. On November 1, Vienna was taken by the imperial army.

In May 1849, the Frankfurt National Assembly failed to support the insurrections in Saxony, Baden and Palatinate, and to overthrow

its executive committee, which was plotting with the princes. Finally the Assembly, deserted by its right, and left wings, faced with the advance of the Prussian army, had to take refuge among the democratic insurgents of Rhineland, who were finally crushed by the Prussian army in July.

9. A middle solution is imposed by the party prepared to ride the popular radicalization

The most advanced, effective and fertile episodes of bourgeois revolution were implemented by parties who were prepared to use the plebeian radicalization; who, instead of brutally turning against the insurgent plebeians, took their leadership and channelled their energy towards energetic measures against the royalist counter-revolution and a thorough institutional reform. This type of party did not arise from among the plebeians but was created by small minority groups of radical intellectuals and political and military leaders whose origins were in the nobility, gentry, bourgeoisie or even the Church, although they were totally unrepresentative of these social layers. This type of party succeeded in building around itself a bloc or alliance which brought together plebeians and a few minority but substantial segments of the bourgeoisie, nobility and especially the gentry. Its goal was to engineer a compromise between the bourgeoisie and plebeians, whose strength it strove at once to mobilize and bridle, and to confine within certain limits, often by resorting to partial repression designed to safeguard the interests of the rich and avoid their defection to the royalist camp.

During the *revolution of the Low-Countries of* the 1566-1609, it was the prince of Orange and the Orangist party who played this role and provided the revolution with the continuity of a leadership capable of maneuvering despite its many conservative aspects. In fact, the alternative leadership that arose to its left out of the 1577 Ghent plebeian insurrection, around the two outstanding figures of Hembyze, the dissident patrician, and Ryhove, the "left" Orangist noble, represented a current of the same type.

. In the *English revolution,* it was the Independents, Cromwell and his political allies. To their left stood the republicans, and even further left, the Levellers. The republicans were associated to the government from 1647 to 1653, then again in 1659-1660, but never had the power to implement their program. As for the Levellers, they never had a chance to accede to

power and were defeated. But the republicans, as well as the leading group among the Levellers, were bourgeois and well-to-do gentry.

. Finally, in the *French revolution,* the Jacobins of all tendencies fitted this description, since the French revolution between 1789 and 1794 is the classic example of the coming to power (and mortal struggle) of successive teams, each prepared to go further in the use of the *sans-culotte* uprising and to make concessions to it, but without ever allowing the true representatives of the *sans-culottes* to take power themselves.

The remarkable differences between the leading teams of these three revolutions, express the profound gradual, material and cultural transformation of western Europe from the 16th to the 18th centuries. In this series Unking Orange, the feudal grandee, to Cromwell, the small, bourgeoisified, country squire, to Robespierre, the petty urban lawyer, can be seen the slow emergence of European society from the feudal universe which still impregnated the oldest bourgeois revolutions.

All these parties found themselves in a similar unstable equilibrium, making concessions to the left and repressing the right, then concessions to the right and repressing the left. All caused, or nearly caused, the final downfall of their regime because, by putting down the plebeian mobilization, they weakened and discouraged the only social force likely to support them against the ruling classes.

Orange, by bridling the Ghentish radical Calvinists in 1579, while making concession after concession to the upper Walloon nobility and the duke of Anjou, disgusted the plebeians, demobilized them, opening the way for the fall of the Flemish cities in 1584 and nearly causing the reconquest of the whole country by the royal army.

Cromwell, by dashing the hopes of the plebeians between 1649 and 1653, by excluding them from the right to vote, deprived his own regime of the only social base which might have protected it against reaction.
The Robespierrists had themselves so bridled, disappointed and repressed the *sans-culottes* that there was no *sans-culotte* uprising to rescue him when he was overthrown by the Convention on the 10th of Thermidor (July 28, 1794).

In several revolutions that were crushed very rapidly, it was precisely this sort of energetic intermediate party that was lacking, leaving the isolated plebeians to face the counter-revolution

alone. This was the situation in the German revolutions of 1525 and 1848-1849, but also in other defeated bourgeois revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Contrary to the energy and determination of Cromwell and the Jacobins, and even of the Prince of Orange, the German democratic leaders of 1848-1849 displayed pathetic vacillations and much pusillanimity. Marx and Engels made a scathing critique of these people whom they had hoped would become the Jacobins of the German revolution. (See *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* by Friedrich Engels).

10. The dilemma of the liberals: between reaction and outflanking by the people

Thus the course of all these bourgeois revolutions was conditioned by a class struggle which divided the "anti-absolutist camp" itself between bourgeois and plebeians. The bourgeoisie wanted an anti-feudal reform of society, of course, but it feared above all the mobilization and initiatives of the people which might jeopardize its political control (the question of suffrage) and challenge its wealth (the question of property). The bourgeoisie accepted the solution of the establishment of a bourgeois republic, however ideally suited to it in theory, only if the popular mobilization could not be contained or repressed. Otherwise it always preferred to renounce its demands for reforms and reconcile with the king and nobility who took charge of crushing the plebeian uprisings.

Thus, for two to three centuries, it was the fear of social radicalism in the heart of the bourgeoisie which postponed the overthrow of the Ancient Regime. This appears with particular clarity in the mid-17th century revolutions: the Catalan of 1640-1652, those of Naples and Palermo in 1647, and the French of the Fronde in 1648-1653.

Thus, what we call a victorious bourgeois revolution would be a revolution in which the replacement of absolutism by a constitutional monarchy or bourgeois republic could be achieved, and more importantly preserved, with the continuing support of the bourgeoisie, because the plebeian upsurge, too far-reaching in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, could be contained or put down without requiring a surrender to the forces of noble and royal reaction: an ideal and theoretical solution which was never concretized anywhere!

This is the nub of the liberals' historical dilemma as a party determined both to bring down absolutism and the Ancient Regime on the one hand, and curb plebeian excesses on the other. It is the party of constitutional monarchy, wherever possible, or of the conservative republic, where necessary, and of the restrictive propertied franchise everywhere. In the English revolution of 1640-1660 it can be found among the Presbyterians, in the French revolution among the supporters of constitutional monarchy and the Thermidorians. In England as in France, it was the party which, after the restoration of the monarchy, progressively imposed a moderate constitutional monarchy, in the guise of Ashley-Cooper under Charles II in England in the 1670s, and of La Fayette and Benjamin Constant under Louis XVIII in France in the 1820s. Socially and politically moderate, fervent adepts of free enterprise, the liberals had everything it took to become the preeminent party of the bourgeoisie. Yet it is striking how often they were abandoned and isolated by the bourgeoisie who preferred to join the frankly backward-looking and counter-revolutionary reaction, for fear of being outflanked by the plebeians, and later in the 19th century, by the proletariat.

This uncomfortable dilemma of the liberals lives on today in the persistent retrospective disapproval with which all bourgeois public opinion views the revolutions that brought them to power.

All the bourgeois revolutions concluded, each in their own way, with a compromise between the bourgeoisie and nobility granting the latter a subordinate yet quite favored place. A very conservative regime was stabilized, which guaranteed the safety of the property-owners, but unlike the feudal Ancient Regime: the Republic of the United Provinces by 1581-1587, the English Restoration of 1660-1688, the Directory followed by the Empire in France after 1795, the German Empire united and reorganized by Chancellor Bismarck's reforms from 1862 to 1871. After the defeat of the German revolution of 1848-1849, these reforms were on the one hand a way for backward Germany to adapt to capitalist and bourgeois Europe by the particular means of a revolution from above, a modernization carried out by the representatives of absolutism themselves; but coming in the aftermath of a great revolution despite its defeat, they were also the compromise which the Prussian nobility and Bismarck passed with the liberal bourgeoisie, a compromise institutionalized in the Imperial Constitution of 1871.

All the bourgeois revolutions were defeats for the plebeians. Outbid by the latter, the owning classes had to strain to suppress this radicalism and achieve a solution which, though conservative, registered the decline of absolutism and the nobility, and the rise of the bourgeoisie.

But to attain this conservative bourgeois solution, they had first to overthrow the feudal Ancient Regime. It was the popular uprising which gave them the strength to do so, which was the battering ram that brought down the gates of the ancient fortress.

11. The proletariat arrives on the scene in the 19th century

In the bourgeois revolutions of the 19th century, which marked the close of that era, the bourgeoisie hurried into the arms of the nobility and royal state. The classical example of this was the German revolution of 1848-1849. Until that time, the proletariat, the wage-earners, had always remained a minority inside the plebeian camp. Industrial development now gave them a majority. The outflanking of the bourgeoisie by the plebeians became its outflanking by the working class. This new "player" was far more fearsome than the small artisans of the 16th and 17th centuries, or than the *sans-culottes.* It had numbers, the ability to stop production and transportation by strikes, and demands which challenged the very right of private property of the means of production and exchange. The terrified bourgeoisie now had only one concern: to stop and repress. At the same time, industrialization finally swept away the old plebeian dream of a democratic republic of small property owners, farmers, craftsmen, traders. Caught between the two giants, the petty-bourgeoisie hesitated and vacillated, dreaming of an impossible middle road. The era of proletarian revolution was opening.

IV. The permanent revolution

In all bourgeois revolutions one can observe, to one degree or another, the bourgeoisie being outflanked by the most oppressed and poorest social classes, and seeking a compromise with the former ruling class to turn on the insurgent people. The very conquests of the bourgeois revolution were only made secure by a

revolutionary movement which tended to overreach the bourgeois framework of the revolution.

This was the starting point of the theory of permanent revolution elaborated by Marx in the 19th century and revived by Trotsky in the 20th. From this phenomenon, both drew lessons for the conscious action of the party of the working class.

For Marx, the task of the bourgeois revolution, to institute a democratic republic, could be achieved in the revolutions of his time only by the proletariat standing at the head of the nation, including the petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry. Moreover, the proletariat now clashed with the bourgeoisie in the very course of the revolution. The revolution was permanent because it grew over into a proletarian revolution.

"While the petty-bourgeois democrats wish to bring the revolution to an end as quickly as possible, and after obtaining, at the very most the implementation of the demands listed above, it is in our interest and our duty to make the revolution permanent, until all the more or less property-owning classes have been thrown out of power and the proletariat has conquered public power...." (Marx, *Opening Address to the Central Council of the League of Communists,* 1850).

Trotsky returned to the idea in the different context of imperialism subordinating various precapitalist societies in a unified capitalist world market.

He applied the idea first to Tsarist Russia in 1905. The revolution that was imminent was a bourgeois revolution against the old absolutism. But it was the proletariat, "abnormally" numerous and modern, that would carry it out and move directly to the implementation of a socialist revolution.

"Our liberal bourgeoisie comes forward as a counter-revolutionary force even before the revolutionary climax.... The very fact of the proletariat's representatives entering the government, not as powerless hostages, but as the leading force, destroys the border line between maximum and minimum programme; that is to say, it *places collectivism on the order of the day."* (Leon Trotsky, Quote from his own 1905 *Nachalo* article in *The Permanent Revolution* (1929), New York: Pathfinder, 1964, pp. 181-182).

In 1929, Trotsky generalized the conception of the permanent revolution to the colonial countries. In these countries, as in Tsarist Russia, imperialist rule combined, inside the same social formation, modern industry and precapitalist structures, united in a community of interests imperialist capital, the indigenous bourgeoisie and the old "feudal" ruling classes. It was precisely because "different centuries" intermingled in these countries that their social situation was so explosive. The democratic transformations achieved elsewhere in Europe by the revolutions of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries remained to be made in these countries but the bourgeoisie, faced with an "abnormally" numerous proletariat, would not make them.

"2. With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses....

8. The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfillment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes *a permanent* revolution." (Leon Trotsky, "What Is the Permanent revolution? Basic Postulates" (1929), *The Permanent Revolution,* New York: Pathfinder, 1969, pp. 276-278).

This is not an exposition of the theory of permanent revolution, only an indication. But we had to indicate the direct relationship between the bourgeois revolutions of past centuries and the problems of the revolution in the Third World.

ll. The Revolution of the Low Countries 1566-1648

I. The Low Countries in the 16th century

In the 16th century, the Low Countries (or Netherlands) constituted an entity of seventeen provinces ruled from Brussels. Their territory encompassed present-day Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, the department of Nord and part of the department of Pas-de-Calais in France. Since 1556, the sovereign of the Low Countries was Philip II of Spain (1527-1598), chief of the elder Hapsburg branch, ruler of a worldwide empire and head of the most powerful absolutist state in Europe. Philip II's father, Emperor Charles V (1500-1558) (Charles I of Spain) inherited the Low Countries from the dukes of Burgundy who had assembled its main provinces between 1384 and 1473 through marriages, purchases and conquests and endowed them with a set of common central institutions. Charles V conquered and added the five provinces to the northeast of the Zuid-er Zee between 1523 and 1543. In addition to the Low Countries, Burgundian Franche Comte was also ruled from Brussels. As a result, although the Duchy of Burgundy, properly speaking, had been recovered by the King of France in 1477, the term "Burgundy" was in the 16th century almost equivalent to "Low Countries" and their inhabitants called their sovereign the duke of Burgundy. Formally the Low Countries were part of the Holy Roman Empire. Emperor Maximilian II, the head of the younger Hapsburg branch, was therefore in theory the suzerain of his cousin Philip II for the Low Countries.

Although known as the Spanish Netherlands, the seventeen provinces had experienced no real Spanish rule. The Hapsburgs were sovereign of the Low Countries before they inherited the throne of Spain. Charles V grew up in the Low Countries before ascending the throne of Spain as an adult. "Burgundians" were integrated in the Madrid government at all levels and took command of it on several occasions. The splendor of Spanish absolutism had been enriched by the more ancient and refined splendor of the court of Burgundy.

The leading urban region of Europe

In the 16th century, the Low Countries were the richest, most densely settled and most urbanized area in Europe: two hundred cities, including nineteen with over ten thousand inhabitants, compared to only four in England. Altogether slightly over two million people lived there. In the provinces of Flanders, Brabant, Holland and Zeeland, the most developed, over half the population lived in towns, an extraordinary proportion that was reached elsewhere in Europe only in the 19th century. The largest city, Antwerp, with eighty thousand inhabitants, was the trading and banking metropolis of northern Europe. The Netherlanders sailed the largest commercial fleet of Europe. Their merchants dominated all extra-Mediterranean trade, from the Baltic to Lisbon. Three quarters of the ships passing through the Danish Straits were from the Low Countries. They imported wool from Castille and England, Scandinavian wood, Polish wheat, and were the main European exporters of cloth and ships. They exported throughout Europe salted herring produced by their fishermen.

Together with Italy, the Low Countries were the only European region with a real manufacturing working class, numbering thousands of people in the largest cities. But they also had more urban unemployed and poor than anywhere else. The clothmaking industry was located mainly in Flanders and Holland. In the towns, it was rigidly controlled by guilds and regulations which blocked the accumulation of capital and tried to protect the small family firm of the master craftsman and his journeymen. But clothmaking had spread massively to the villages of Flanders where no corporations existed and municipal regulations were less restrictive. Here, the great merchant-drapers employed many craftsmen working in their own homes. The system was know as "rural" draperies or "new draperies." Its most thriving center was Hondschoote.

In the cities, almost the entire population was literate. Plantin, the largest editor and printer in Europe, had established himself in Antwerp.

The Low Countries also boasted the most modern agriculture in Europe, market-oriented and run by urban interests. Flowers were already grown commercially and the Low Countries exported meat and cheese.

The nobility was particularly few, accounting for only one percent of the population as against 8% in Spain and 5% in Germany and France. A dozen great feudal lords owned almost entire provinces while hundreds of impoverished noblemen had integrated into urban life to become traders or lawyers.

The cities of the Low Countries had a long tradition, dating back to the 14th century, of revolts against their overlords in defense of communal freedoms. The last in this line, the insurrection of Ghent, the second city of the country, in 1539-1540, was led by a committee of unemployed craftsmen and bloodily suppressed by Charles V. All freedoms gained by the city since the Middle Ages were cancelled at that time.

Advance of Protestantism

As early as the 1520s, Protestantism found a favorable response in the cities of the Low Countries: Luthe-ranism among a minority of the richest cosmopolitan burghers, simple and equalitarian Anabaptism among the workers and small craftsmen. But repression was fierce and unrelenting, and had forced the Anabaptists underground.

In the 1550s, rigid, elitist and theoretical Calvinism spread massively among the well-to-do educated petty-bourgeoisie and among many intellectuals of the gentry. In the 1550s and 1560s, repression drove thousands of Calvinists into exile and Netherlandish Calvinist communities were established in Germany and England. Nevertheless Protestants were able to find enough safe places in the largest cities and on the lands of a few non-conformist noblemen. French Calvinists even took refuge in the Low Countries.

An underdeveloped absolutism

The political structure of the Netherlands was extremely decentralized and its representative institutions, the provincial estates and States-General, quite powerful. The sovereign appointed a governor, the "stadholder," at the head of each province. But each province had its own administrative and judicial institutions, laws, procedural regulations, customs and taxes, and its own provincial estates with whom the sovereign or the stadholder had to negotiate the taxes, laws and appointment of magistrates. Provincial estates sent delegations bound by rigorous and imperative mandates to the meetings of the States-General in Brussels. The latter's sessions were consequently slowed down by endless trips back and forth to consult the mandators. The Netherlands, along with two or three European kingdoms - Catalonia and, partially, England -, had the privilege of having States-General convened frequently and endowed with standing committees associated with the executive branch. In 1557, the States-General only authorized a

yearly tax of 800 000 florins for nine years on the condition that its levy and expenditure be controlled by a committee of the Estates.

The Brussels government had only a few permanent troops on hand and mobilizing the urban and feudal militias was a complicated endeavor. This was why the presence of Spanish troops was to be so decisive.

The absolutism of the Low Countries still had not been fully constructed. There was a world of difference between it and Spanish absolutism, the most modern in Europe. The latter was based on the subordination of the cities and States-General of Castille, and the successful integration of the nobility into an immense bureaucratic and military machine operating from Palermo to Lima, as well as on the enormous financial resources provided by the silver mines of Potosi. The incompatibility between the medieval contractual state of Burgundy and Spanish absolutism could not last forever: on the one hand, Madrid poured its financial wealth into planetary commitments while the Castil-lian economy declined, on the other it could not even extract enough wealth from the richest region of Europe to simply pay all the expenses of the Brussels government.

A non-feudal periphery

The Low Countries brought together extremely diverse regional social formations, three of which were quite exceptional in the European context of that time:

- the urban civilization of the large cities of Flanders: Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, Lille;

- Holland (and the adjacent province of Zeeland), recently settled on land reclaimed between the 11th and 14th centuries from the sea, or more precisely from marshes and flooded bogs. The counts had systematically organized the settlement by selling off large rectangular tracts to individuals who pledged to drain them, and later cultivated them and extracted peat from them - the Netherlands' main fuel. It was therefore a region of farmers who owned their land and elected institutions to run the dikes and canals from the start. A large part of this land had been accumulated by capitalist entrepreneurs of the many small towns of Holland. In Holland, the nobility was almost non-existent: it included only twelve families who owned less than ten percent of the land. In the Estates of Holland, the nobility was represented by the prince of Orange alone.

- Friesland, another land of agricultural settlement, had a strong tradition of particularism

and insubordination since tribalism had been abolished late in the 11th century. The Frisian tribes, unconquered for centuries, had finally become proprietary peasants, the richest among whom were more or less recognized as noble, even when they cultivated the land themselves.

Thus, the area of Zeeland-Holland-Friesland in the northern Low Countries astride the Zuider Zee, had simply never known feudalism. By contrast, in the countryside of Flanders and Brabant, despite their prosperous and modern agriculture, the nobility was powerful. It was stronger yet in the more classically feudal provinces, closer to the Western European average, of Artois and Hainaut in the south, and Gelderland in the north. Finally on the northeastern and southeastern edge of the Low Countries stood the little urbanized, very poor and very feudal provinces of Overijssel and Drenthe, and particularly retarded amid its forests, Luxemburg.

II. From the resistance against absolutism to the uprising of 1566-1567

During the 1560s, the government's efforts to strengthen absolutism caused increasing discontent among the ruling classes, the nobility and municipal patriciates who had wielded power in the traditional provincial and central institutions and felt edged out by the rise of absolutist bureaucrats. In addition, the steady rise of arrests and trials for heresy during the 1550s had established an increasingly sharp climate of tension. The persecutions were more and more unpopular, even among the population which remained Catholic for the greater part of the revolutionary process.

As early as 1562, public executions of Protestants triggered riots in the cities. Prisoners were freed by the crowd. By 1564, no more informers and witnesses could be found to prosecute Protestants.
Municipal authorities violently opposed the suppression of Protestants and, consequently, the Inquisition dealt its blows in the countryside rather than the cities. The cities had obtained jurisdiction over the bulk of criminal procedures during the Middle Ages. But now the number of prosecutions for heresy - which had remained in the purview of the Inquisition and royal courts -

far surpassed all other criminal prosecutions. As a result, municipal courts were reduced to insignificance and the cities deprived of the wealth confiscated from the condemned.

Conversely, the suppression of Protestants offered the advantage of enabling the royal government to establish for the first time a centralized jurisdiction over the entire country.

Against these encroachments of absolutism, the bourgeoisie defended the prerogatives of the town councils and provincial estates. Although Calvinists stood at the forefront of the revolution, the leaders of the liberation struggle always denied that they were fighting for one religion over another. They asserted that they were fighting solely to uphold "the rights and freedoms" of the towns and provinces.

In this climate, probably feeling that it was sitting on a volcano about to erupt, the nobility of the Low Countries decided to intercede with the king, asking for concessions that would make for appeasement.

At the Council of State which sat in Brussels around the regent Marguerite of Parma, the half-sister of the king, the nobility was represented by the prince of Orange, Count Egmont and Count Homes. These were the three greatest feudal lords of the Low Countries; together, they held the governorship of several provinces. By threatening to resign, they obtained from the king in December 1564 the dismissal of the Council of State's strongman, Cardinal Granvelle. They then sent Egmont to Madrid with an official request that the prosecution of Protestants be softened and that greater powers be entrusted to the Council.

The winter 1564-1565 was terribly cold. Icebergs drifted down to the shores of the country. The 1565 harvest was poor. The war between Denmark and Sweden closed the Straits, causing much unemployment in the Low Countries. The king's negative and totally inflexible answer arrived in late 1565, in the midst of an economic crisis.

In December 1565, four hundred members of the gentry signed a petition asking for the abolition of the Inquisition and moderation of the persecution of Protestants. This was known as the "Compromise of the Nobility." Orange, Egmont and Homes refused to sign it but succeeded in getting it toned down. On January 24, 1566, Orange resigned from all his functions. On April 5, three hundred armed gentry paraded through Brussels on the way to present their petition to the regent. There, one of the regent's courtiers

called them "beggars," an unfortunate utterance as the protesters immediately seized on the word, in an act of defiance, and paraded through the streets disguised as beggars. Thus labelled, they could not avoid being placed at the head of a popular mobilization inspired by their example.

The regent conceded on all points. She stopped the persecution of Protestants. The government was paralyzed. Exiles flocked back to the Netherlands. During spring and summer 1566 an atmosphere of freedom and insolence prevailed. Tens of thousands of city dwellers gathered outside the city walls in great assemblies to listen to preachers. Many of these plebeians had armed themselves under the nose of the government, unable to react.

But the king refused to concede to the growing cry that he summon the States-General.

The explosion came in August and September: bands of radical Calvinists, plebeians, craftsmen, masters, journeymen, workers, and teachers invaded the churches in most cities and toppled the ornaments and statues to the applause of the crowd. The movement testified to the hatred of the plebeians for the opulence of the Church and expressed Protestantism's rejection of all "idolatry." It displayed a strict self-discipline and nothing was stolen. The urban militia, composed of burghers (rich enough to pay for their outfit), allowed things to proceed. The phenomenon was particularly strong in the regions of the "rural" draperies of Flanders.

Outflanked, a majority of the nobility and urban patriciate entered an agreement with the regent to suppress the crowds. They engaged in police operations and laid siege to several cities, totally crushing the movement. Egmont, Hornes and Orange participated in this repression while striving to ride the movement and negotiate impossible compromises with all parties. Finally, in spring 1567, outflanked by the regent's lieutenants more determined than themselves to repress, they fled abroad. There they joined the thousands they had helped to put down.

Back in Madrid, a debate in the Council of State had pitted the party of appeasement, led by the prince of Eboli, to the party of harshness, led by the duke of Alba, for several months. In September 1566, the king ruled in favor of the hard line. The Duke of Alba was given an army of 10,000 soldiers to march on the Low Countries. The advance of this army from Italy to the Low Countries through the pass of Mount Cenis, below the walls of Geneva, terrorized all the Protestants of Europe. The army entered Brussels on August 22, 1567. Egmont and Homes returned immediately to offer their submission. To their great surprise, they were arrested. They were beheaded in the main square on June 5, 1568. The regent resigned to protest the death sentence and retired to Parma. She was succeeded by Alba. He established special courts which conducted a systematic repression: 12,000 trials, 9000 condemnations, over 1000 public executions, 60,000 people exiled, and thousands of books burned.

Many town councils were purged.

The Revolution of the Low-Countries
15-66-1609

Approximate front line of advancing Spanish army in early 1580

Approximate frontline of advancing Spanish army in December 1572

Emden

GRONINGEN

Groningen

FRIESLAND

DRENTHE and OVERIJSSEL

Alkmaar

ZUIDERZEE

Haarlem

Amsterdam

Naarden

Zutphen

GELDERLAND

Leiden

Utrecht

UTRECHT

Arnhem

Nijmegen

HOLLAND

Delft

Brill

GERMANY

Dordrecht

S'Hertogenbosch

ZEALAND

Breda

BRABANT

Walcheren Island

Middleburg

Flushing

Antwerp

LIEGE

Bruges

Mechelen

Maastricht

Nieuwport

Ghent

LIMBURG

Dunkirk

Dixmude

FLANDRES

Brussels

Hondschoote

Ypres

PRINCIPALITY OF

Lille

Tournai

ARTOIS

WALL. FLANDRES

Mons

NAMUR

Arras

HAINAUT

EPISCOPAL

CAMBRAI

LUXEMBURG

KINGDOM OF FRANCE

20

III. From the beggars' guerrilla to the liberation of the three provinces 1567-1576

Insurgents hid in the countryside or took refuge across the border, from where they launched guerrilla actions. Known as the "forest beggars," they met with little success. The "sea beggars" were to be more effective. They were exiles, including a few owners of merchant and fishing ships, led by nobles, who organized a small fleet in English, German and French ports for guerrilla activity against the coastal areas of the Netherlands... and survived on pure and simple piracy. The prince of Orange granted them letters of marque which gave them the status of a belligerent likely to be recognized by foreign powers, particularly should they be ill-disposed towards Spain. For Orange was not only the greatest feudal lord of the Netherlands and Franche Comte, but also the lord of the independent principality of Orange, near Avignon. As sovereign of this principality, he was the vassal of no king or emperor. According to international law at that time, he was therefore not only a rebel against his king but also a sovereign prince with the right to wage war against his enemy, the duke of Alba, who confiscated his lands and imprisoned his oldest son. This was a diplomatic trump card for the rebels and the reason why they fought under the colors of Orange.

Furthermore, Orange had family ties with Protestant princes of northern Germany and had established close relations with French Huguenot noblemen. In 1568, he organized an invasion of the Low Countries from four different directions, with armies composed of exiles, troops of his German cousins, Huguenots and various mercenaries. One after the other, they were all defeated. Orange lost his wealth and fell deep into debt. His only remaining base was the sea beggars.

To celebrate his victory, the Alba had a grandiose statue of himself erected in Antwerp from the molten Orangist cannons he had captured. In 1570, he felt able to proclaim a partial amnesty and devoted himself to rationalizing the administration and legislation with some success. The absolutist state now progressed at the tip of the sword and the States-General granted it generous taxes. But they still refused to vote permanent taxes that would be collected by agents of the Crown rather than committees of the States-General. This would have amounted to voting their pure and simple disappearance.

In July 1571, Alba decided to disregard their refusal and collect the taxes by force. In fall 1571, a general strike broke out: all shops and workshops closed down, trade stopped and no tax of any kind was paid. Unemployment aroused the people's discontent.

The Orangists felt the wind changing and stepped up their activities. Suddenly in March 1572, the English government, harassed by Spanish diplomats and all North Sea traders who suffered from the sea beggars' piracy, expelled the latter from English ports. After wandering around, the sea beggars, lacking any home base, fell back on the small port of Brill, on an island of southern Holland. A quick raid gave them the city on April 1.

On April 6, people rioted in the large neighboring port of Zeeland, Flushing, and massacred the Spanish officers. On April 22, the town opened its gates to the beggars. From April to September, a wave of popular insurrections overwhelmed most of the towns of the whole country, except for some of the largest. Patrician city councils who refused to open the gates to the beggars were overthrown; others agreed to open them under pressure from the people. The burghers' militia looked on. In Holland and Zeeland, the patricians of most towns opened the gates without much resistance.

On August 27, Orange invaded Brabant from Germany at the head of a large army. His triumphal march was soon transformed into aimless wandering though, and ended in a headlong flight as he proved unable to pay his troops and Alba refused to fight. By October, defeated and pursued by the Spanish army Orange took refuge in Holland and Zeeland. The two provinces were surrounded as the royal army gained ground every day and laid siege to one town after the other.

In July 1572, the Provincial Estates of Holland sat in Dordrecht in the presence of an envoy of the prince of Orange, his lieutenant and speechwriter, Philip Mar-nix, lord of Sainte Aldegonde in Brabant. For the first time, revolutionary decisions were taken:

- William of Orange was recognized as governor of the province (stadholder) and commander-in-chief of the army and navy.

- Taxes were voted to pay his troops and raise new ones.

- An executive was elected, composed of a standing council, a financial council, an admiralty.

- All appointments of officers and

functionaries were to be signed jointly by the estates and Orange.

    - Religious freedom was granted throughout the province.

    - Internal duties were abolished.

The Estates of Zeeland and Utrecht endorsed these decisions in 1573 and 1574. A formal Act of Union of the three provinces was signed on June 4, 1575.

Although they continued to proclaim the formal sovereignty of Philip II, a separate state was born, formed of the two rather particular - and particularistic - maritime provinces of Holland and Zeeland. It was a very small state since it totalled slightly over 300 000 inhabitants. But it was a state in the republican style since the estates elected its executive. When government troops finally lifted the long siege of Leiden, a university was founded (February 8,1575). It was the second Calvinist university of Europe, after Geneva, but unlike the latter, it included Catholic students and professors.

Individual role of the prince of Orange

The individual role of the prince of Orange in the revolution of the Low Countries was important enough to deserve some detailed attention: William of Nassau (1533-1584), brother of the German count of Nassau-Dillenburg, inherited the lands of the princes of Orange and lords of Chalon, the most eminent grandees of the Burgundian possessions. Among his many titles, he was marquess of Flushing in Zeeland and baron of Breda and Herstal in Brabant. He was the most illustrious person in the Council of State and at the court in Brussels, where he was raised.

As all feudal grandees, he strove to control the royal government, a source of influence and revenue. While he joined the other feudal lords in their maneuvers against the regent from 1561 to 1567, this was certainly intended to avoid an explosion which he considered imminent, to take power as the savior likely to apply a better policy and to gain the upper hand over the absolutist bureaucrats whose rise was progressively cutting him out of access to government. His collaboration with the repressive measures taken in 1566-1567 shows how determined he was to counter the unruliness of the people and impose a minimal reformist solution.

Until 1572, nothing in his policy distinguished him from the many insubordinate feudal grandees who had arisen for centuries, particularly those who had allied with the States and cities against the king: from Charles the Bad in 1357 to the

Great Conde during the Fronde in 1648-1653, including the dukes of Guise and of Mayenne in 1588-1594, to cite examples drawn from the history of France only. Not even his plots, leadership of armies raised in foreign lands, and support for plebeian radicalism against leading burghers, which he was to make into a specialty as he became the idol of the crowds, were new in that sense. All that was part of the contradictory relations between the feudal grandees and the royal government: mass uprisings had to be channeled one way or the other and they could provide a useful social base to oppose not only royal power but also the richer burghers who dominated the States and city councils and controlled the country's wealth. But these "rebels" had always eventually been reconciled with the king at the expense of the masses and the States.

What made William of Orange exceptional was that he made a definitive commitment to a group of insurgent cities and led them constructively towards the creation of what was, in the end, a new republic.

His motivations surely changed as events unfolded. The execution of Egmont and Hornes must have been a decisive turn for him, cutting off any possible retreat. This was obviously a tactical mistake which the royal government was to pay dearly.

Moved by the scope and dynamic spirit of the Low Countries' urban society, Orange must have understood that royal government had very little chance of ever reestablishing itself, whereas a middle solution was feasible if the Low Countries were detached from the king and if this middle solution was socially conservative and allowed Orange and his noble supporters to recover their lands and status. He must have been convinced of the feasibility of this middle solution in 1572, when he saw the rebellion in Holland and Zeeland was both solid and socially conservative. For in these provinces, unlike in the large Flemish cities, the rebellion had relied less on an urban mass movement that overthrew the established bourgeois oligarchies, than on the particularism of established hierarchies bolstered by the relative social consensus which existed around them in the smaller cities.

For the insurgent burghers and plebeians, the prince of Orange was a man sent by Providence. He alone, thanks to his name, could provide them with a modicum of respectability in the eyes of the European nobility at a time when rebelling against one's king was an unforgivable offense. He alone could establish diplomatic relations, spare them

international isolation, and provide the necessary military experts and mercenaries.

As against the chaotic local selfish outlook of the provinces and cities, he embodied centralization in his own person. Plebeians could appeal to him at the same time as he reassured the conservative rich. He was the illustrious chief at a time when nothing seemed possible without noble leadership. He converted from Catholicism to Lutheranism and then Calvinism and passed for a total opportunist in religious matters, but he did defend tolerance towards Catholics against the sectarianism of the Calvinists. A brilliant politician, he combined in his person a man of principle and a tactician whose cunning was proverbial (hence the surname of "the Silent"). He maneuvered between all sides. He was the indispensable unifier.

The royal army's offensive peters out

Beginning in October 1572, the ability of the royal troops to tighten their encirclement of the "liberated area" of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht was slowed down by the countless inlets, river branches and lakes which then covered a surface far greater than today. Both sides tore down dams to flood particular areas, as their needs dictated. The Orangists were thus able to rush help to besieged inland cities by boat. Orange vowed that, should he suffer a complete defeat, he would destroy all the dams and flee with all his supporters in a seaborne exodus. The Council of State in Madrid had refused to authorize the Spanish army to tear down all the dikes and flood the whole country, judging that this would amount to a genocidal measure.

As the royal army reconquered land, it left behind a string of cruelly plundered cities: Mechelen, Zutphen, Naarden. Haarlem's siege began in December 1572 and the city surrendered in July 1573 against the promise that no defender would be executed. This promise was immediately broken: about two thousand people were executed, almost the whole garrison and several magistrates of the city! This was a political mistake which caused the reconquest to stop. A outburst of indignation swept over the entire country. The deed was formally disapproved all the way up to the summits of the government in Madrid, since henceforth no besieged city would surrender.

The king's policy began to display signs of exhaustion. The "liberated area" resisted successfully. As money became scarce, multiple mutinies broke out in the Spanish army. In September 1573, a genuine strike of the king's soldiers forced the commander to lift the siege of Alkmaar. In October, the royal navy was defeated by the sea beggars in the Zuider Zee, and its admiral, count Bossu, a local grandee, was made a prisoner.

In a sort of repeat performance of the 1560s, the leaders of the nobility loyal to the king, the duke of Aerschot and the baron of Champagney, pressed the government to implement a policy of clemency and openness to negotiation.

Alba, now old and sick, had asked for some time to be relieved. The replacement, originally scheduled for September 1571, was postponed due to the insurrection of 1572. His successor arrived in November 1573. The king had chosen a Catalan grandee, Don Luis de Reque-sens, previously governor of the duchy of Milano. He was expected to implement a more flexible policy.

The royal position was getting steadily worse. The insurgents conquered Middleburg (February 18, 1574) and broke the siege of Leiden (October 3, 1574). The royal government's financial means grew scarcer as the war swallowed up astronomical sums. All the Spanish garrisons still in the province of Holland mutinied and deserted the province. In September 1574, the Turks regained Tunis from the Spaniards and their navy began threatening raids in the Western Mediterranean. It became most urgent for Philip II to shift his efforts against the Turks. He sent orders to negotiate to Brussels.

Negotiations opened on March 3, 1575, in Breda. Orange and the States of the three liberated provinces offered their submission to the king on three conditions:

1. that Spanish troops leave the Low Countries,

2. that a full amnesty and constitutional guarantees banning future reprisals be granted, and

3. that freedom of conscience be recognized in the three provinces of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht.

Requesens accepted the first two conditions but rejected the third. Instead he proposed a six-months grace period to allow Protestants to sell their possessions and leave the country.

The Orangists would not give in, knowing full well that the king's financial bankruptcy loomed quite close. Negotiations broke down on July 13, 1575. Requesens immediately launched a vigorous military offensive aimed at cutting Holland off from Zeeland. The offensive succeeded. But the fleet that brought American silver to Seville failed to reach the port that year. The king faced financial strangulation. On September 1, 1575, Philip II suspended all interest payments on his gigantic debt. He declared himself

bankrupt. On March 5, 1576, Requesens fell ill and died; the Spanish army, some of whose units had not been paid for two years, mutinied *en masse* and began roaming through the country in search of opportunities for plunder, terrorizing the population along the way.

IV. The revolutionary crisis of 1576-1578

Royal power collapsed in the Low Countries. The Council of State in Brussels, lacking an army and a governor, was left suspended in mid-air. A radically new situation emerged. The Provincial States, summoned on an emergency basis, demanded to be allowed to raise troops to put down the mutineers, and that negotiations with Orange and the three insurgent provinces be reopened immediately. When mutineers sacked Aalst, near Brussels, the population of the capital took to the streets shouting "Death to the Spaniards!" and attacked the homes of state councilors. It was urged on by a committee of "Patriotic" burghers led by Liesvelt, a lawman who had been Egmont's lawyer. The council of state in disarray authorized a levy of troops and outlawed the Spanish soldiers.

But the troops raised by the States of Brabant were defeated by the mutineers and only succeeded in chasing the latter from one place to another, across the country.

On September 4, de Heze, second in command of the States of Brabant's troops, burst into the Council of State at the head of a detachment of the Brussels burghers' militia and arrested the councilors. Two days later, in violation of the king's formal prohibition on any contact between States of different provinces, delegates from the States of Brabant and Hainaut met in Brussels and decided to summon the States-General. In so doing, they assumed a right which had hitherto been the purview of the king or his representative. The States-General began to meet as delegations arrived. Some of their leaders had corresponded for weeks with Orange, who had urged them to restore peace and unity.

The Provincial States and the States-General took power. By law, it was an insurrectional power since they met without being summoned by the king and, more importantly, through a military coup against the Council of State and royal army, under pressure from the people demonstrating daily. But in fact, under the form of

the States-General, it was the traditional ruling classes of the country, the clergy, nobility and municipalities, which took government into their hands, not willfully but because the royal government had collapsed. Their goal was to ride and channel the people's explosion, and then to achieve, at the earliest possible time, a compromise which would safeguard the traditional order; that is a compromise with the king and ideally also with Orange and the States of Holland, Zee-land and Utrecht.

But even before all provincial deputies had joined the Brussels assembly, an Orangist minority emerged in the States-General. It was composed of deputies who had been exiled in 1567, Calvinist as well as non-Calvinist, and above all of representatives of the less exclusively patrician municipalities. While in Holland and Zeeland, Orange was associated with the traditional bourgeois elites of the cities, Orangism in the large cities of Flanders, Brabant and Artois became the political expression of municipalities which had been democratized through the removal of the traditional patriciate by a majority of the bourgeoisie supported by the plebeians.

The States-General assumed the legitimacy of state power. Although they could be lawfully summoned only by the king or his representative, and their decisions had force of law only when signed by him, they decided on the frequency of their sessions, raised taxes, organized an army and treated with foreign powers. They appointed the duke of Aershot as general, and the count of Lalaing as lieutenant-general, to lead their armies.

On September 22, the States-General again outlawed the Spanish troops, but this time mutineers and loyalists alike. On October 7, negotiations opened in Ghent between a delegation of the States-General and Orange's emissaries. Agreement was reached on November 8, 1576 in what came to be known as the "Pacification of Ghent":

- Peace was reestablished. Everyone was to unite against the Spanish troops.

- The solution of political and religious problems was postponed until the end of the war, to a session of the States-General which would decide the religious and political organization of the whole country.

The Pacification of Ghent was signed precipitously as the news broke of a new catastrophe: on November 3, roaming Spanish

troops had converged around Antwerp. The next day they stormed into the city and proceeded to sack it for days on end. This came to be known as the "Spanish Fury": 100,000 houses were burned, 8000 people massacred. As the inhabitants fled, the Spanish troops, faced with the arrival the States-General troops, locked themselves into the city.

Widespread hatred of the Spaniards reached a high pitch. The new governor appointed by the king, his half-brother Don John of Austria, the victor of the Battle of Lepanto against the Turks, had just arrived in Luxemburg, and remained there in total isolation.

Don John decided to risk all he had: he agreed to negotiate, concluded a cease-fire on December 15,1576, obtained the Spanish troops' safe exit from Antwerp and withdrawal to Italy, and even accepted to sign the Pacification of Ghent on February 12, 1577.

Peace had returned, the so-called peace "of the duke of Aershot." The States-General, against the opinion of the Third-Estate which advised that Orange be consulted first, agreed to welcome Don John to Brussels. He arrived there amidst popular rejoicing on the 1st of May 1577 and was officially sworn in as governor.

The Netherlands reunited

The deputies of the three provinces, placed before the accomplished fact, left the city. But while the Orangists had not been strong enough to prevent the majority of the States-General from reaching an agreement with Don John, they were strong enough for this same majority to force Don John to seek a compromise with them. Negotiations nevertheless broke down on the same issue as in 1575, under Requesens: Orange and the three provinces refused to abandon Protestantism. Faced with this deadlock, Don John fled from Brussels on July 24 and repaired to Namur from where he called for the return of the Spanish troops. At first, the king disavowed him, refusing to believe in a failure of the compromise. The deputies of the three provinces resumed their seats and the States-General called on Orange for help. On September 23, 1577 William of Orange finally entered Brussels in triumph, ten years after his flight.

He found there the leaders of the Walloon nobility, the people among whom he had grown up, the French-speaking grandees who set the tone in the court of the Burgundian Low Countries: the duke of Aershot, stadholder of Flanders, the count of Lalaing, stadholder of Hainaut, his brother, the

baron of Montigny, count Bossu, the stadholder of Gelderland, and baron Champagney, the brother of Cardinal Granvelle.

On October 1, 1577, the Brussels Patriots published a manifesto which they put before the States-General. They demanded that

- the people be armed and a mass levy organized,
- the government, the administration, the States-General and the Provincial States be purged,
- all municipalities of the 17 provinces be renewed,
- the States-General elect two noblemen and two commoners from each province; these sixty-eight persons to be assigned to a Council of State, a Council of Finances and a Secret Council;
- an alliance be concluded between the cities and, since all princes were tyrants, a republic be created, modeled on the Swiss Confederacy.

Aershot and the Walloon grandees answered on October 9 by proposing a "new king": archduke Matthias of Hapsburg (1557-1619), the cousin of Philip II and brother of Emperor Rudolf II. Matthias accepted to be governor of the Low Countries. He was to be the first (and far from the last) prince that the Netherlands sought from a neighboring great power in the hope that the latter would act as a counter-weight to Spain. After Matthias, who came from Vienna, they turned to the duke of Anjou, brother of the king of France, and then to the queen of England, Elizabeth I.

In the meantime, even skeptics could not afford to reject the brother of the emperor who was after all the suzerain of the Low Countries and ostensibly wished to act as a mediator between his vassals and his powerful cousin in Madrid.

The radicals on the offensive

This skillful move by Aershot and his friends compelled Orange to turn to the democratic mobilizations now in full swing in the cities. The Brussels Patriots had established a Committee of Eighteen composed mainly of representatives of the guilds, whose purpose was to supervise the municipality but which, in reality, took power in the city. The Committee of Eighteen proposed to the Provincial States of Brabant to appoint Orange "ruwaard" of Brabant. The ruwaard, literally the keeper of the peace, was a protector which the States of Brabant had the right to elect in case of a conflict with the duke of Brabant, according to the duchy's 1356 charter, the "Joyous Entry," by which each new duke had to swear upon his arrival in Brussels. This exorbitant privilege had been abolished by the duke of Burgundy, Philip

the Good, in 1458.

The States of Brabant refused to appoint Orange ruwaard. The Brussels crowd then invaded the chambers and imposed his nomination by the Third Estate, over the protest of the clergy and nobility (October 22,1577).

In what he believed to be a clever move, Aershot, stadholder of Flanders, then had the Provincial States of his province vote a motion protesting this nomination of a heretic. Orange counter-attacked by persuading the States-General to reestablish the municipal freedoms of Ghent, the largest city in Flanders. These freedoms had been abolished by Charles V in 1540, after the city's insurrection. On October 18, a demonstration of the city's plebeian party had demanded that they be reestablished. Orange thereby became the idol of Ghent

Since Aershot refused to implement the decision, the radical Orangist party took power in Ghent on October 28. As evening fell, to the beat of drums, the conspirators, with the complicity of the burghers' militia and at the head of the plebeian crowd, took over the Guild Hall and placed Aershot, the bishops of Bruges and Ypres, the bailiff of Ghent and several other gentlemen under arrest. Aershot was to be freed quite soon after the event at the insistence of the States-General and Orange, but the others remained in jail. On November 1, the insurgents appointed a Committee of Eighteen and had the municipality renewed on November 4. The patriciate was removed from power.

Most of the Eighteen were new men from the guilds. But at least three of them had previously been aldermen and others were born into families of aldermen. Those who would become the radical Calvinist leadership of Ghent were in fact the traditional bourgeois-plebeian opposition of the city. Their three main leaders were Jan van Hembyze, Peter Dathenus and Francois de la Kethulle, lord of Ryhove. This was the leadership of the plebeian outflanking of the revolution of the Low Countries, the potential left alternative leadership to Orange.

Jan van Hembyze (1517-1584) was a patrician steeped in humanist scholarship, speaking several languages and well-traveled. The son of a first alderman of the city, he had himself served as alderman for several years, as had his brother Francois. His son died in 1572 fighting the Spaniards.

Peter Dathenus (1531-1588) was a Calvinist preacher who had just returned from exile. A former priest, he had married a former nun, as many other reformers. He was the translator of the

Psalms and *Heidelberg Catechism* into Dutch.

Ryhove was the military man in the team. He was the brother of a first alderman of Ghent

Ryhove appointed new captains to Ghent's urban militia. Scandalizing those who upheld the traditional hierarchies, he named Mieghem, a locksmith, Gerard Netezone, a bookbinder, Jean Bliecq and Noel Hauwel, hatmakers, Cornil Vlieghe, a furrier, and Gerard van der Meeren, a tailor.

On December 29, Ghent's new masters received the prince of Orange with great pomp and ceremony.

Matthias was finally sworn in as governor of the Netherlands, on January 20, 1578, only after he had accepted to govern in strict accordance with the decisions of the States-General, according to the advice of a Council of State elected by that assembly, and of the lieutenant-general appointed under the pressure of the people: William of Orange. Since, in addition to all that, Matthias had a completely inconsistent personality, he was reduced to nothing before he even appeared, and was back in Vienna and long forgotten by the time the States-General formally deposed him in 1581. (This did not prevent him from becoming emperor thirty years later when his brother died, in 1612.)

The Walloon nobility turns on the revolution

The election of the Council of State by the States-General was a complicated affair (each of the provinces and each of the three estates had to be represented) and a matter of competition between the various parties. On December 20, 1577, at Champagney's suggestion, the four Orangist candidates, Marnix for Holland, Liesvelt for Brabant, d'Estembecque for Artois and the abbot of Maroilles for Hainaut, were not elected, in favor of old hacks of the royal bureaucracy. After the Brussels Patriots submitted petitions on the 22, and again on the 24 of December, a compromise was reached allowing them to join the Council of State on December 29,1577.

But on January 31, 1578 the king's army defeated that of the States-General at Gembloux and took Leu-ven. Orange, Matthias and the States-General had to flee Brussels, which was too exposed, and take refuge in Antwerp.

After the defeat, the States-General discovered that the commander-in-chief Lalaing, the commander of the cavalry, Robert of Melun, the commander of the artillery, Valentin de Pardieu,

and other officers had failed to appear at the site of the battle because they were attending a wedding in Brussels! Hembyze and the Ghenters had unceasingly denounced the outrageous idea of handing the high command over entirely to the Walloon upper nobility. Amidst general indignation, Lalaing was stripped of his command but... replaced by another Walloon grandee, count Bossu.

The Patriots reacted to the urgent situation with stricter and more daring measures. The Eighteen of Ghent organized conscription and, beginning in February, ordered the confiscation of Church properties and the levy of forced loans on priests and the rich, to pay the expenses of the military. The Catholic Church was targeted for its wealth and suspected of hoping for a Spanish victory.

Armed detachments were dispatched to the surrounding towns and villages to place a Patriotic municipality in power in each one of them.

The Eighteen of Ghent and the Eighteen of Brussels proposed to renew the old 1339 alliance between the two cities. This was solemnly accomplished on April 18, 1578.

On the other side, the nobility and clergy, led by the abbot Jean Sarrazin, had proposed at the Provincial States of Artois on February 7 that the States-General be dissolved. In early March, the States of Artois, Hainaut and Walloon Flanders (Lille) proposed the same thing and decided to cease paying taxes to Brussels as they believed the money was used to undermine the Catholic Church and undertake democratic experiments.

The Patriots of Arras, led by a group of Orangist lawyers including Crugeol and especially Nicolas Gos-son, responded by establishing a Committee of Fifteen which, on March 7, 1578, mobilized the burghers and placed several Church dignitaries under arrest, though not the bishop of Arras who had escaped and taken refuge behind Spanish lines. The Fifteen of Arras concluded "The Close Union of the Cities of Artois" with the Patriots of St Omer and other towns. Encouraged by Ghent and assisted by the veritable military expeditions that city now sent throughout Flanders, the Patriots took power in Bruges (March 20) and Ypres (July 20). A democratic and Calvinist insurrection also captured the municipality of Amsterdam, until then the most conservative city council in Holland.

On May 18, the Ghent Eighteen allowed iconoclastic riots to proceed against various churches and convents and the Calvinist cult appeared in broad daylight in Ghent, in violation of the terms of the Pacification. Hembyze, who now controlled almost all of Flanders, founded a Chamber of Accounts of Flanders in Ghent, separate from the Chamber of Accounts of the Low Countries based in Lille, a royalist city, and, on July 1, 1578, a Protestant university funded by the revenue of confiscated Church and monastery lands.

This was the high point of the democratic mobilizations in the Revolt of the Netherlands. It affected mainly the largest cities in the southern part of the country, above all in Flanders.

V. Counter-revolution and survival of the revolution 1578-1590

It was the breaking point of the revolution.

The Walloon nobility, faced with a choice between plebeian radicalism and the king, chose the king. With it stood not only the clergy but the patriciate of many cities, particularly that of the largest city in southern Flanders, Lille, where no plebeian or Patriotic movement ever succeeded in gaining a foothold. Lille had the particularity of being a large drape-manufacturing city, but with a traditional and rigid guild organization which had successfully banned any clothmaking activities in the surrounding countryside; at the same time, Lille was the seat of the Chamber of Accounts of the Low Countries, that is the seat of a numerous royal bureaucracy which had mixed with the municipal patriciate. Since July 1578 the Provincial States of Artois, Hai-naut and Walloon Flanders had declared their rejection of Protestantism and appealed for help to the younger brother of the king of France, Francois, duke of Anjou, who entered Mons, in Hainaut, with a small army on July 12.

Orange sought a compromise. In June, he and his friends proposed to the States-General the draft of a "Peace of Religion": in all provinces except Holland and Zeeland, which had long ago forbidden Catholic worship in public, the respective minority cult, here Catholic, there Protestant, would have the right to public worship in a church which would be made available to it if one hundred families requested it. All confiscated Church properties would be restituted. The final text was adopted by the States-General on July 12, 1578. Article 27 foresaw the dissolution of Committees of Eighteen and Fifteen which

supervised city magistrates. But the Peace of Religion was rejected by all Provincial States save one: by those of Holland, Zeeland and Flanders which had already banned Catholicism; by those of the other provinces in the name of the defense of Catholicism, by the nobility and clergy everywhere, and sometimes by the Third Estate too. Orange persisted and, as a concession to the Walloon nobility, supported the candidacy of the duke of Anjou to the position of "Protector and Defender of Belgian Liberties Against Spanish Tyranny."

He sent letter upon letter to the Ghenters, then Mar-nix, his loyal follower, to convince them to be more moderate and accept the Peace of Religion and Anjou.

The States of Artois, Hainaut and Flanders return to the king

This, in effect, was encouragement to the Walloon nobility to act against Ghent. On October 1, 1578, Montigny, leading the States-General's regiments, began to march on Ghent without having received orders to do so. He occupied Menin, cut the road between Ghent and Arras, and addressed an ultimatum to the States-General: he would withdraw only if the Ghenters were brought to heel. The duke of Anjou's troops joined him there and began plundering the Flemish countryside. A group of Flemish prelates, noble-men and patricians wrote to him, urging him "to be a true Gideon and reestablish them in their possessions and liberties." They played on the grumblings of the soldiers who had not been paid and took the name of Malcontents. On October 17, the Arras Fifteen took power; on the 21st, the Malcontent troops crushed the Arras commune and hanged Crugeol, Gosson and their friends. Artois, Hainaut and Walloon Flanders broke with the States-General.

Don John fell ill and died on September 29, 1578. On his deathbed, he appointed his lieutenant and nephew, Alexander Farnese, son of Margaret of Parma and the duke of Parma, and soon to become duke of Parma himself, as his successor. Philip II accepted this choice. Alexander Farnese (1543-1592) saw the opportunity to bring back to the fold the southern Catholic and noble reaction now increasingly estranged from the States-General. Through a skillful combination of political concessions and military efforts, he slowly, until his death fourteen years later, reconquered the Low Countries for the king.

On January 6, 1579 the States of Artois, Hainaut and Walloon Flanders concluded the "Union of Arras" and began negotiations with

Farnese. The Treaty of Arras of May 17, 1579 sealed their reconciliation with the king.

Having won over the southern propertied classes and bloodily put down Calvinist and Orangist radicalism, Farnese drew the lessons of the events and thereafter respected scrupulously the traditional privileges of the provinces, avoiding in particular the quartering of foreign troops on their soil except along the front and supply lines. He even allowed Protestants to arrange the sale of their possessions before leaving for exile and sometimes to worship discretely in private. To pitched battles he preferred the calculated remote strangulation of the economic lifelines of cities, which, once they had surrendered to him, he treated with relative leniency.

By June 29, 1579 he had captured Maastricht. To protect themselves, the Ghenters brought in John Casi-mir, count palatine of the Rhine, a Calvinist prince of Germany whom the queen of England had agreed to finance, together with his army, at the request of the States-General. John Casimir immediately urged the Ghenters to moderate their aims and accept the Peace of Religion.

Orange vs. the radicals

Orange was determined to suppress the Ghenters and restore the unity of the propertied classes, which to his mind, would make possible the maintenance of the unity of the country under a new king, the duke of Anjou, whom he expected to manipulate easily.

Already on November 15, 1578, at a stormy session of the Ghent city council, Ryhove, acting at the behest of Orange and with the backing of the patriciate, had tried to obtain Hembyze's arrest. A popular demonstration had foiled the maneuver and demanded that Ryhove and Hembyze reconcile. On December 2,1578 Orange came in person to Ghent. On December 8, wielding the full weight of his authority, he had the municipality vote to accept the Peace of Religion and pay the taxes due to the States-General, over the opposition of Hembyze and the Eighteen. Along with this, the first Catholic mass was celebrated once again on January 1,1579 in Ghent and March 6,1579 in Ypres. Acceptance of the Peace of Religion was imposed in like manner in Antwerp and Brussels. On June 18, 1579 the Ghent Eighteen had to face reelection for the first time, but by the municipality; the latter elected moderates instead of Hembyze's friends. Four days later, the city militia appeared at the Guild Hall to announce that it refused to obey the new

Eighteen; the militia forced several moderate aldermen to flee and rec-omposed the Eighteen in favor of Hembyze.

On the 4th and 5th of June 1579, a coup was attempted in Brussels by noblemen led by none other than Philip Egmont, the son of the martyr, who had established a correspondence with Farnese. The attempt was blocked by an armed mobilization of the burghers as the crowd recalled the young Egmont to the memory of his father. The plebeians' indignation burst into a wave of iconoclastic riots. On June 29, Maastricht fell. The Ghenters had tirelessly denounced the States-General's failure to send aid to besieged Maastricht. Hembyze reacted by purging the Orangists from the municipality, raising taxes and publicly denouncing Orange's policy. On July 2, he sent troops to Bruges to put down a coup attempt by the nobility and patriciate. Rich burghers began to flee Ghent.

Orange resolved to strike out. On July 27, he announced in a letter to the municipality that he would come to Ghent. Upon receiving this letter, Hembyze, relying on the militia and the crowd, had the municipality deposed and a new one designated, which would oppose Orange's projected visit. Orange refused to recognize the new municipality. Matters had come to a head. A middle party led by Ryhove gained ground in the city: it accepted the Peace of Religion but rejected the restitution of confiscated properties to the Church and clergy. Orange arrived in Ghent on August 18, established relations with this middle party and organized new elections of the municipality. On the 26th he addressed a hostile crowd of plebeians: he denied that they had the right to vote and ordered them to return to their homes. They complied. Hembyze and Dathenus were exiled and sought refuge in the lands of John Casimir in the Palatinate. William of Orange had fulfilled the task of suppressing Flemish plebeian radicalism. The States of Flanders elected him stadholder of the province.

The Union of Utrecht

By July 1578, a new perspective was taking shape among sectors outside Orange's circle: the plan for a "Closer Union" of the provinces, proposed by count John of Nassau, Orange's younger brother and the stadholder of Gelderland. Unlike his brother, John of Nassau was a professed Calvinist. He violently opposed the candidacy of the duke of Anjou and did not believe in a reconciliation with the Walloon nobility. The plan for a "Closer Union," which was discussed throughout the fall of 1578, was designed to meet several concerns: first of all, it was to overcome the disunity, quarrels and lack of coordination of the efforts of the provinces, and the vulnerability and paralysis which flowed from them; second, to organize a compromise between, on the one hand, the nobility and patriciate of Gelderland which, though fiercely Catholic, was drawn to Germany and therefore hostile to the Walloon nobility, and, on the other hand, the bourgeoisie of Holland and Zee-land where Calvinism had been institutionalized; and finally to fasten the Flemish Calvinists to this bloc which required taming Ghentish radicalism. The text of the Closer Union therefore included the following' items:

- each province to remain free to organize religion as it saw fit, provided each individual was guaranteed freedom of conscience;

- the provinces to defend each other against their enemies, particularly so-called representatives of the king;

- an indirect tax to be levied in the form of a tax on all merchandise;

- no province to be allowed to conclude an armistice or treaty with a foreign power;

- decisions to be taken by delegates of the provinces by a majority of the provinces (instead of unanimously, as previously).

The 'Treaty of Union, Eternal Alliance and Confederacy" was signed in Utrecht on January 29, 1579.

Contrary to certain legends, the Union of Utrecht was neither a revolutionary pact nor a separatist move by the northern provinces. It was a middle solution conceived in a spirit of consolidation. Ghent joined on February 4, 1579 and Hembyze and his followers actively collaborated with it and urged Bruges and Ypres to join too. Brussels and the Third Estate of the Provincial States of Brabant joined in June. Nor was the Union of Utrecht exclusively Dutch-speaking since Tournai remained a faithful member of it until its fall.

On the other hand, Orange refused to join for four months to avoid cutting himself off altogether from the Walloon nobility. He only joined on May 3, 1579 on the condition that the Union of Utrecht accept the duke of Anjou.

In September 1579, the college of the Union of Utrecht allocated the financial burdens needed for the creation of an army of 100,000 men. This distribution gives an idea of the relative wealth of each province at that time:

Brabant	80 000	pounds
Gelderland	33 000	
Flanders	150 000	
Holland-Zeeland	106 000	
Utrecht	12 000	
Friesland	24 000	
Groningen	18 000	
Overijssel	16 000	
Drenthe	5 000	

From May to November 1579, an "international" conference, to which emperor Rudolf II had summoned the contending parties of the Low Countries, was held in Cologne to seek peace by compromise. It failed despite a few concessions offered by Philip II.

Retreat and encirclement

Farnese, who could draw on gigantic resources and, after 1582, on large numbers of Spanish troops, slowly began his reconquest, nibbling away in disquieting fashion at Flanders and Brabant. By spring 1580 the territory controlled by the States-General had been reduced to that of the Union of Utrecht and the two institutions merged in fact.

Philip II reacted to the failure of the Cologne conference by setting a bounty on William of Orange's head (June 15, 1580). Orange replied by distributing throughout Europe his *Apologia* of December 15, 1580, a memorable political tract indicting Spain for its policy, not merely in the Low Countries but in the whole world (including its persecution of the Moors and Jews in Spain, its massacre of Indians in America, etc.)

During the winter 1579-1580 one of the darkest episodes of the Netherlandish revolution occurred: the peasants of Gelderland, Friesland, Overijssel, Groningen and Drenthe, who had remained Catholic and were exasperated by the ravages of the German mercenaries in the employ of the States-General, revolted. The insurgent peasants chose the name the "Desperate" for their movement. It was suppressed with difficulty by fresh troops sent by the States-General under the command first of John of Nassau, then of William of Orange who had to rush there in person.

On March 2, 1580 another somber affair occurred which surprised only the most naive: the stadholder of Groningen, who, as if by chance, happened to be a Walloon grandee, Georges of Lalaing, count of Ren-nenburg, cousin of the count of Lalaing, handed over the city and province to Farnese whom he now joined as his cousins had earlier. Henceforth the Spanish troops could advance in a pincher action from the southeast and from the north.

The betrayal of Rennenburg, who had signed and sworn the Union of Utrecht and was known as a friend of Orange, triggered a wave of iconoclastic plebeian riots in Friesland, Drenthe, Overijssel, Utrecht and Brussels.

Act of Abjuration

On July 22, 1581, the States-General meeting in Antwerp finally voted to dethrone Philip II whom they declared a tyrant by the Act of Abjuration. Overshadowing all the conservative aspects of States-General policy, this was a revolutionary act unheard of in Europe at that time. Even queen Elizabeth of England, although a Protestant and an ally of the States-General, categorically condemned this challenge to the sovereignty of her enemy, Philip II!

Francois duke of Anjou was proclaimed "sovereign of the Low Countries." But this new sovereign was tightly bound in a mesh of regulations and committees by the States-General. He would soon announce that he had been made into a Matthias. All the Catholic princes of Europe, beginning with his own brother, the king of France, urged him to abandon this rebel nation. On January 15, 1583, he attempted to stage a coup with his French troops. He seized several cities but failed to enlist the Catholic burghers who united with the Protestants against him. Despite two days of fierce fighting, he failed to gain control of Antwerp where the States-General were meeting. This was known as the "French fury." Anjou's coup only succeeded in a few small towns of Flanders, including Dixmuiden, Dunkirk and Nieuwport.

Anjou was now definitively discredited in the Low Countries and his Frenchmen universally hated. The States-General now seemed convinced that they could do without a sovereign and proclaim a "Swiss-style" republic.

But to everyone's surprise, Orange concluded that the States-General had no other choice but to seek a reconciliation with the duke of Anjou, for the support of a great power antagonistic to Spain was essential. Orange worked so effectively to overcome the general disgust that he finally

obtained, on April 5, 1584, overriding the objections of Ghent and Utrecht, the States-General's recognition of Anjou as their sovereign. They voted this, although Anjou had personally left Dunkirk and the Low Countries on June 28, 1583 and the French garrison he left behind him had handed that city, as well as Nieuwport, to Farnese!

Orange remained blind in suicidal fashion. Already suspect in the eyes of many Flemish and Brabancon radicals for his suppression of Ghent, he would now also be associated with their hatred of Anjou and the French. The result was to push the Flemish plebeians into the arms of Farnese! And more immediately to bring them closer to their Catholic countrymen who hated Anjou as a usurper.

To this problem was added the growing conflict between the Flemings and Hollanders over the lucrative trade conducted by Hollander merchants not merely with faraway Spain but with the Union of Arras... and even Farnese himself. Holland sold supplies to the Spanish armies and the money Philip II borrowed from Genovese bankers to pay Farnese's armies was forwarded through Amsterdam bankers. The Flemings demanded that this trade be banned. The States of Holland replied that their important financial contribution to the war effort had to be earned somewhere and that the money was decisive for the survival of all. Their argument was strong. But the Flemings soon answered that if Hollanders could enrich themselves through trade with Farnese while they were dying of hunger and the plague inside the walls of their besieged cities, they too must have the right to negotiate with Farnese to stop the bloodletting.

Farnese's propaganda and the Walloon nobility were quick to exploit this widening gap between Orange and the Flemish cities. They flooded them with insidious royalist tracts and brochures that went so far as to express sorrow for Hembyze and Dathenus sent into exile by Orange.

Fall of Ghent, Brussels and Antwerp

The States of Flanders deposed Orange from stad-holdership of their province and, deluded by the prince of Chimay, son of the duke of Aershot, chose the latter as replacement. The ambitious youth who had married a Protestant princess was then posing as a pious Cal-vinist. In this poisonous atmosphere, the Ghentish radical Calvinists finally thought they could find a way out by electing Hembyze first alderman on August 14,

1583, and recalling him from exile.

But the military situation was more and more desperate. The army of 100,000 was still nowhere to be found. Farnese laid siege to Ypres in October 1583. For ten months, people ate horses, dogs and cats and 14,000 died of the plague. After a heroic defense, Ypres capitulated on April 7, 1584. Two weeks earlier, the handsome prince of Chimay had converted to Catholicism and handed Bruges over to the Spaniards. A shining career awaited him in the service of the king of Spain.

Hembyze began loosing his bearings. On January 8, 1584, Orange, who despite everything had not tired of organizing the resistance, sent him a courteous letter inviting him to collaborate with Ryhove in the defense of Ghent now besieged in its turn. By February, in a strange move, Hembyze demoted some Calvinist aldermen and replaced them with Catholics. On March 23, the municipality and population learned that their first alderman had engaged in discussions with Farnese since January and promised him help in taking the neighboring city of Dendermonde, then under Ryhove's command. The people of Ghent rose against Hembyze and had him thrown in jail.

Orange had already been seriously injured in an assassination attempt on March 18, 1582. On July 10, 1584 he was murdered in his house in Delft by Balthazar Gerard, a Franc-Comtois man who had obtained an interview with Orange under a false pretense and was coached by the Jesuits. Solemn masses were celebrated throughout Catholic Europe to mark the death of this heretic.

Back in the Low Countries, the States-General proclaimed William of Orange "Father of the Nation" and arranged for a magnificent funeral. In Brussels, people cried in the streets.

Hembyze was beheaded in the main square of Ghent on August 4, 1584, but the city nevertheless had to surrender on September 17. Farnese granted very generous conditions: the city was to restitute to the Church all its possessions and pay 200,000 florins in reparations, but it was granted an amnesty and its troops allowed to retreat to the States-General lines, with their weapons, and the Protestant inhabitants were given two years to leave the city.

Brussels capitulated on March 10, 1585 and Antwerp on August 17 of the same year. Their governors, old and loyal lieutenants of Orange, surrendered prematurely according to the States-General: colonel van Tympel in Brussels and Marnix himself in Antwerp. Farnese had blockaded the port of Antwerp by building a bridge across the Scheldt. Nijmegen in Gelderland fell the

same year, betrayed by its Catholic burghers. The Spanish army was closing in on Utrecht. Orange was dead. For two years, the States-General had taken refuge in the island of Walcheren. The reconquest of the royal armies had reduced the territory under their control to more or less the "liberated area" of 1572. Was it the end?

England drawn into the war 1585-1588
Following the death of Anjou on June 10, 1584, Orange had the king of France, Henry III, proclaimed sovereign thereby incorporating the Low Countries into the kingdom of France. But Henry III refused the offer in spring 1585.

At this point, the very impetus of the Spanish reconquest of the Netherlands at a time when conflicts between Spain and England were multiplying elsewhere, forced the latter power to enter the war. The English economy was traditionally tied to that of the Low Countries. English merchants were steadily encroaching into the Spanish trade monopoly over South America and engaging in piracy in the Caribbean. Spanish absolutism had found new financial resources in the silver mines of America. It conquered the Philippines and annexed Portugal along with its colonial empire. Spain was the foremost European power and the conquering policeman of the Counter-Reformation. It protected the papacy and the German Empire, intervened into the French civil war on the side of the Holy League against the Huguenots, and aided the Irish rebels and the English Catholic plotters who tried to assassinate queen Elizabeth. With the fall of Antwerp, total mastery over Europe seemed within its reach.

Queen Elizabeth refused to be sovereign of the Low Countries as proposed by the States-General, but she accepted on August 20, 1585 to send a task force in exchange for a thirty-year lease over the two ports of Brill and Flushing! The task force commander was the earl of Leicester and was elected governor and captain-general of the Low Countries by the States-General on January 10, 1586. Leicester tried to organize a strong executive power basing himself on Flemish and Bra-bangon refugees. He banned all trade with the enemy. This led to a showdown with the patricians of Holland. The latter, led by Jan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547-1619), the pensioner, i.e., general secretary of the States of Holland, had the upper hand. After attempting to stage a coup in September 1587, Leicester resigned on April 1, 1588. The party of the Regents of Holland was

henceforth in control of the Confederacy.

The Royal Navy launched a series of raids on Spanish and Caribbean ports. Madrid responded by preparing the Great Armada in Lisbon and the Atlantic ports of Spain. It was intended to force its way into the Channel, link up with Farnese's army and carry it to Kent.

But at the decisive moment (August 1588), Dutch privateers prevented Farnese's barges from leaving Dunkirk and Nieuwport, while harassment from the Royal Navy and a storm scattered the Great Armada and sent it on its famous flight around Scotland and Ireland.

This was a new turn. With Alexander Farnese bogged down in the French civil war, the insurgent Low Countries were able to loosen his stranglehold. Maurice, son of William of Orange, a brilliantly educated young officer, was elected captain-general and stadholder in 1588. He applied himself to a systematic military reform and became the most renowned strategist of his time. The States-General's army now advanced southward to Breda in Brabant, reconquered in 1590, eastward to Nijmegen in Gelderland, in 1591, and northward to Groningen, in 1594.

By 1590, the States-General of the Low Countries definitively gave up the idea of seeking a sovereign and finally proclaimed the "Republic of the United Provinces of the Low Countries."

War continued until 1609, exhausting the finances of both sides and devastating the country. In 1596, Philip II was forced to declare bankruptcy for the third time. When he died in 1598, he had to settle for having stabilized the reconquered south into a principality partially autonomous from Madrid, which he entrusted to his daughter Isabella (1566-1633) and her husband the archduke Albert of Hapsburg (1559-1621). The couple of "archdukes" managed the compromise with the propertied classes who had returned to the fold in 1579 with moderation, and were the founders of what became present-day "Belgium." An economic development of non-negligible proportions consolidated this improvised half-country over the course of the 17th century.

VI. The Republic of the United Provinces

The expansion of Dutch capitalism

The other "liberated" half of the Low Countries, although only half as populous (1.5 million in 1600), was quite a different matter. The Republic of the United Provinces was not simply another republic in Europe, after Venice, Genova and Switzerland. Even as it was a revolutionary creation whose survival hung on a thread, it was already a great economic, military, maritime and colonial power.

The small towns of Holland and Zeeland were swollen by the influx of refugees from the south as over one hundred thousand fled Flanders, Brabant and Artois (many of these refugees were French-speaking and French remained the official language of the republic, along with Dutch, for a time). Most refugees came from a specific layer of the southern elite: craftsmen and manufacturers of Flanders, merchants and financiers of Antwerp, hundreds of printers, teachers and preachers. Many Flemish cloth-makers and cloth-merchants took refuge around Utrecht and Leiden. Those of Hondschoote, which had been razed, in particular brought their "new draperies" to Leiden and insured its prosperity. The influx of exiled craftsmen disintegrated the guild system of Holland and eased the way for the concentration of capital by entrepreneurs. While reconquered Antwerp was ruined, its population cut by half and its outlet to the sea blocked by the front line which crossed the Scheldt downstream from its port, Amsterdam, where the large Antwerp firms had taken refuge, replaced it as the commercial and financial metropolis of northern Europe. From 1590 to 1639, 80,000 hectares of agricultural land were reclaimed from the sea. The Dutch merchant marine was the largest in Europe and soon took the lead in the Mediterranean too. The East India Company was founded in Amsterdam in 1602, the Bank of Amsterdam in 1609, both large joint stock companies. Java was conquered in 1596, Ceylon in 1609, Formosa in 1624, the Cape in 1652. Batavia, the present Jakarta, was founded on the ruins of the ancient Jakatra in 1609. Dutch merchants, installed on an artificial island in the port of Nagasaki, obtained the monopoly of trade with Japan. In 1617, the Republic could even afford the luxury of sending a task force to Venice to protect it from the emperor and Spain.

In 1609, an unconditional twelve-year truce was concluded with the king of Spain. The new republic immediately obtained diplomatic recognition from France, England and Venice. When the truce came to its end, the Thirty Years War (1619-1648) was raging throughout Europe. The war pitted both branches of the Hapsburg family, the Madrid branch arming the Vienna branch, against a wide array of enemies of all sorts (the Czech people, the German Protestant princes, the republic of the United Provinces, the republic of Venice, and the Swedish, Danish and French absolute monarchies). Time after time the Hapsburgs seemed on the verge of victory. But the United Provinces subsidized all their enemies. They even discussed whether to send a fleet to Peru to raise the Incas against their Spanish masters. But they preferred to conquer Brazil and its sugar plantations.

Finally, Spain, having entered a severe economic decline and undermined from 1640 to 1647 by revolutions in Portugal, Catalonia, Naples and Sicily, could no longer sustain its enormous planetary military commitments and sued for peace. French absolutism, the new leader of the anti-Hapsburg coalition, emerged as the candidate for European hegemony. Paradoxically, the French menace now compelled Spain to seek the alliance of the United Provinces to protect the Spanish Low Countries, present-day Belgium, from French greed. Over the next few decades, France bit off Artois (Arras), parts of Flanders (Lille, Dunkirk) and Luxemburg. During the Thirty Years War, the armies of the United Provinces had reconquered s'Hertogenbosch in Brabant and Maastricht in Limburg. To this day, the border between the Netherlands and Belgium has stood essentially where the front line stood in 1648.

From 1643 to 1648 international conferences were held in Osnabruck and Munster to organize Europe in light of the new relationship of forces that emerged from the Spanish defeat, leading to what are known as the Treaties of Westphalia. By the Treaty of Munster of January 30,1648 Spain finally recognized the independence of the Republic of the United Provinces. It had taken eighty years of revolution and war.

The golden age of the republic

Until the French revolution of 1789, the republic of the United Provinces was an object of admiration for progressive European thinkers. In the 18th century, Enlightenment philosophers turned to it for it was a republic (an oligarchic one of course, but where were the democrats among

Enlightened circles?), a very prosperous republic, of unusual diversity and tolerance on the religious plane. This diversity and tolerance even extended to the Catholics who accounted for one third of the overall population and over half in the countryside (the religious geography varied extensively in each region), and was a haven for Jews, particularly from Spain and Portugal, with unheard freedom of the press and publishing.

The 17th century was the golden age of the United Provinces who stood in the vanguard of European culture and science. Its achievements are enshrined in such names as Simon Stevin (1548-1620), an engineer and mathematician who was the tutor of Maurice of Orange; Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), a jurist and the founder of international law; Christian Huyghens (1629-1695), the physicist who applied the pendulum to clocks, discovered the rings of Saturn, studied the distance of the stars and the refraction of light; Leeu-wenhooek (1632-1677), the inventor of the microscope and a microbiologist; the great philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), a Spanish Jew; Jan Swamerdam (1637-1680), an anatomist and naturalist; and Zacchari-ah Jansz of Middleburg who perfected the telescope which enabled Galileo (1564-1642) to discover the satellites of Jupiter.

The university of Leiden was the center of this intellectual flowering. People came to it from all over Europe.

The United Provinces acted as a haven for thinkers whom the censors and policemen of absolutist kingdoms had forced into exile: the Frenchmen Rene' Descartes (1596-1650) and Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) and the Czech Jan Comenius (Jan Komensky, 1592-1671). Until the French revolution of 1789, the printing firms of the United Provinces published the literature, both the lesser and greater, which had been banned in all countries of Europe.

VII. The party struggle in the Republic of the United Provinces 1590-1747

Maurice of Orange was succeeded as stadholder by his brother Frederick-Henry (1584-1647) in 1625. Basking in the aura of the founding father, the princes of Orange succeeded one another, from father to son, in a genuine dynasty which later occupied the throne of the Netherlands. Was the prince of Orange, the stadholder,

therefore reigning over the Republic of the United Provinces?

Reality was more complex. The prince of Orange was a magistrate of the entire republic, only as elected captain-general of the armies by the States-General. In addition, he was stadholder of certain individual provinces, Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Gelderland and Over-ijssel, formally in the same way as he had been when the stadholder, as the very name indicates, represented the king. However, he was now elected by the Provincial States. Depending on the period, one of his cousins might be stadholder of Friesland and Groningen. By law, he was therefore only an elected magistrate, subject to the Provincial States and the States-General. In fact, he achieved more or less dictatorial powers at various times: through his control of the armed forces, through his nominating powers, patronage, influence, the wealth of his family and international connections, and because he was the head of a party. For nearly two centuries, the politics of the republic revolved around a permanent struggle between two parties:

- The party of the municipal patriciates, mainly of Holland, by far the richest province. This was the party of the "Regents": it was republican, decentralizing, jealously attached to the prerogatives and privileges of municipalities, Provincial States and the States-General, and oriented to commercial and banking interests.

- The Orangist party, the party of the nobility, but also of the plebeians, of the refugees from the south, centralizing, oriented to the reconquest of Belgium, but also populist and desirous of reforming municipal government, proposing more fiscal justice and supporting the burghers' guilds against the patriciates.

In religious affairs, the party of the Regents favored an open tolerant Calvinism, the Orangists, a purist and authoritarian Calvinism.

The stadholdership was undoubtedly an institution quite distinct from the European monarchies, a sort of presidency of the republic improvised on the basis of pre-revolutionary institutions. But as it became hereditary inside a princely family, the stadholdership also expressed, in the form of a tendency to a monarchical restoration, the adaptation of an isolated bourgeois republic to the absolutist environment of Europe at that time.

Nevertheless, for two centuries each prince of Orange could not simply inherit his functions as a king; he had to be elected and succeeded in doing so as the demagogic leader of

a popular party. Twice the Regents' party succeeded in abolishing the stadholdership and confining the Orange family to the sumptuous life of rich individuals: from 1651 to 1672 and from 1702 to 1747. Twice the stadholdership was restored when a foreign invasion, in these cases French, threatened the country.

But when William IV of Orange took power in 1747 he was quick to scuttle the democratic reform program on which the plebeian movement had imposed his election. Instead of democratizing city government, he simply purged the most corrupt Regents. He did not reinstate the craftsmen's guilds and instead of replacing indirect taxes with a personal tax on wealth, he merely did away with tax farming. Orangists and Regents were finally reconciled in the solidarity of the opulent.

VIII. The evolution of bourgeois democracy in the Netherlands after 1776

Two centuries thus passed, Western Europe was transformed by an unprecedented expansion of the capitalist economy, by new agricultural techniques and the beginnings of the industrial revolution. The time when political and cultural reformism was formulated in religious terms was long past. It was now expressed in the strictly secular and rationalist language of the Enlightenment philosophers. The old republic of the United Provinces entered a relative economic decline. When it was born, its daring innovations had been cause for scandal. By the end of the 18th century, was it different from the established European order with its privileges and absolutism which the French revolution would overturn?

The Netherlands' democratic plebeian party was never again Orangist. In the second half of the 18th century, a third party was formed by enlightened intellectuals, both bourgeois and noble, who split from the Regents' party under the influence of the Enlightenment. This party fought both to broaden the right to vote for municipal and provincial governments and for the abolition of the stadholdership. It was called the party of the Patriots. When the United Provinces helped the American revolution of 1776, the Patriots took advantage of the opportunity to conduct a press campaign and organize rallies, and even irregular forces; they gained control of many cities and in 1785 proposed a constitution inspired by that of the United States of America. The prince of Orange (William V, 1748-1806) had to flee, but in 1787, the army of his brother-in-law, the king of Prussia, occupied the country to put him back in power.

The Patriots were forced into exile. They came back in 1795 with the armies of the French revolution and became the Jacobins of the Batavian republic. But Thermidor had already been consummated, and just as the Patriots' left wing was about to get universal suffrage written into the constitution of the Batavian republic (1798), the Directory of the French republic called a halt to the process.

When Napoleon fell in 1814, the victorious allies made the prince of Orange king of the Low Countries (William I,1772-1843). These were no longer exactly the same Low Countries. Real estate law had been purged of its feudal remnants, schools and the administration reformed along French lines. The draft had been instituted along with the Napoleonic Civil Code. These were the classic transformations implemented in the countries more deeply affected by the French revolution: Piedmont-Savoy, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Rhineland. William I inaugurated an authoritarian constitutional monarchy with a restrictive propertied franchise whose evolution thereafter followed the general pattern of the Western Europe. The Congress of Vienna of 1815 reunited the Low Countries through fusion with Belgium. But two centuries of separation had crystallized too many different interests. Belgium rose in 1830 and obtained its separation. While Europe was shaken by the revolutions of 1848, the Dutch liberals were able to quietly accede to the government and institute a more generous constitution. But universal suffrage was only obtained, as elsewhere, under the pressure of the labor movement. In 1887, an initial broadening of the suffrage raised the number of eligible voters from 100,000 to 350,000. Universal manhood suffrage was achieved in 1918, and women's right to vote in 1922. The reform posed religious problems which were a distant echo of the 16th century revolution: industrialization and the rural exodus had turned the traditionally Catholic peasant into a worker. Granting workers the right to vote meant giving it to more Catholics. Hence the rigid reaction of several variants of Calvinist conservatism and the multiplicity of religious bourgeois parties in the Netherlands down to this day.

The Dutch parliament is still called the States-

General. And the Netherlands still officially celebrate the revolution of 1566-1648, as the founding epic of their nation.

111. The English Revolution 1640-1660

I. England in the early 17th century

On the eve of the revolution, England was a rather small kingdom of about 6.5 million people. Europe had experienced a period of intense economic growth during the 16th century, with a massive influx of gold from Spanish America and advances in technology, mainly in civil engineering, shipbuilding and mines, stimulated by the scientific spirit of the Renaissance. England belonged to the new Northern European economic development pole centered in the Low Countries, which now surpassed Italy. The Dutch and English merchants, principal European exporters of cloth and naval equipment, were winning a growing share of Spanish American trade away from the Spaniards

Since the Middle Ages, England's main export item had been woolen cloth, sold mainly, but not exclusively, to the Low Countries. Steadily larger tracts of land had been given over to the raising of sheep and the spinning and weaving industries had grown beyond the traditional urban guilds as peasants became cottage workers and new workshops developed. At the same time, other farms specialized in cereals, dairy products or meat, to supply the part of the population now employed in the production or transformation of wool. A first division of labor occurred, leading to the emergence of a rather substantial domestic market

In the 1620s, "new draperies" emerged: they manufactured lighter cloth and successfully exported it to the Mediterranean despite the European recession of the 1620s and 1630s. The expansion of the clothmaking industry was strongest in those rural regions which escaped the strict guild regulations of the cities, such as the east (East Anglia) and north (Lanchashire and York-shire). But it took place under the control of the great London merchant-drapers who lent the necessary capital and set prices due to their near-purchasing monopoly. The expansion of the metalworking industries around Birmingham, a town where guilds were weak, took much the

same form. London, the main port of the kingdom, was the gigantic capital of the small country, with about 450 000 inhabitants in 1640, that is one twelfth of the population of the realm, while no other English cities had over 25 000 inhabitants. London handled seven-eighths of English trade. The principal fuel in the 16th century was already coal, shipped by sea from Newcastle, where mines were shifting from surface to underground pits, at the cost of great capital outlays. Coal fueled other bulky industries such as brickmaking, breweries, glassworks, tanneries and soapmaking.

In breaking with Rome, king Henry VIII (1509-1547) had confiscated, then sold, the vast lands of the Church and monasteries. After being decimated by a civil war (the War of the Roses 1455-1485), the English noble class had been shaken by a massive influx of new landowners of bourgeois origin, many of whom were generously ennobled by the kings in exchange for financing. Together with the spread of the wool industry and the provisioning of the enormous capital, all this had deeply commercialized English agriculture, at least in the southeast of the country.

Compared to the feudal scheme which still prevailed on the European continent and in the north and west of England, the social structure of the English village was being transformed. Alongside the freeholders, who owned their land, a majority of the peasants were descendants of serfs emancipated in the Middle Ages. They were called copyholders because they were supposed to have a copy of the original contract tying their ancestor and his descendants to the lord. Their equivalent on the continent were the feudal or emphyteutic lease-holders who, although their right to the land was eternal and hereditary, owed easements — such as the *cens* or marriage and inheritance dues — to their lord.

In England more than on the continent, the noble class managed its lands in a commercial spirit and strove to drive off its copyholders and replace them by farmers with a short-term lease of 6 or 9 years.

A defective absolutism

In the Middle Ages, the English royal state was the most centralized in Europe. But in the 16th and 17th centuries, when the European kingdoms with France and Spain in the lead, built up powerful absolute states, the English monarchy could only produce an incomplete absolutism. In the 13th century, when most kingdoms established States-General, the English noble

class obtained that Parliament be given a particularly broad purview, greater than most of its counterparts: not only the right to vote taxes, but also the right to vote the laws and remove and judge royal administrators. The early centralization of the state in a small country had generated a particularly active constitutionalism among the noble class which, unlike its continental peers, could not express its insubordination through the separatism of its principalities.

From the end of the 15th century until the revolution, a real English absolutism existed; it reached a high point under Henry VIII and, even more so, under his daughter, Elizabeth I (1558-1603). As elsewhere, absolutism tried to whittle away the standing of Parliament, the English equivalent of the States-General (to make it obedient by a royal policy of corruption and intimidation, to stretch the intervals between its meetings, to abstain from summoning it for decades at a time). But the English variant failed to impart real strength to the three state instruments which define absolutism:

- its bureaucracy was not very numerous; since the Middle Ages, justice had been dispensed and government administered in the shires by local "nonprofessional" gentry;

- unlike other European monarchies, the kings of England never obtained from Parliament the creation of taxes not subject to periodic approval by Parliament, although Elizabeth I did exercise a *de facto* right to levy customs duties not voted by Parliament. In the early 17th century, the English tax burden was less than half its French counterpart, a factor which enhanced the accumulation of capital;

- taxes were low not only because Parliament was strong, but also because the absence of any serious military threat inside the island never required the creation of a permanent army. Since Henry VIII, England's military strength was its navy. But a navy cannot substitute for a permanent army. It cannot be used as a repressive force and is largely dependent on the influence of commercial interests — the shippers and merchants of its ports.

An unstable state Church

In 1543, the builder of English absolutism, Henry VIII, had detached the Anglican Church from Rome while striving to retain Catholic institutions and dogma. His decision was not exceptional. All European absolutisms tried to gain control over the Church. But while Spanish and French absolutism were able to submit their Churches to themselves directly, and Spain, to a certain extent in the 16th century, managed to submit the papacy itself, the weaker and later absolutisms of England, Denmark, Sweden, Saxony and Brandenburg (the future Prussia) could only achieve that sort of submission by taking advantage of the Protestant Reformation to break with Rome and make up for their terrible shortage of money by expropriating the Church. Despite his religious conservatism, Henry VIII was led by his own logic to implement the reform Catholic program that so many European monarchs had longed for in vain: the Mass and the Bible in the vernacular, the Communion in both kinds (wine for the laity as well), the abolition of convents. In a country in which the Lollards, 14th century-precursors of Protestantism, survived tenaciously underground, and at a time when intellectuals were turning to the Reformation in droves, the English schism could not avoid opening the door to Lutheranism, and especially Calvinism, most popular among European literate circles. Faced with the latter's popularity, the Anglican Church appeared to be a hybrid and fragile construction, which all sides constantly reproached for its inconsistency. Elizabeth I had succeeded in stabilizing the Anglican Church, making it Protestant in dogma and Catholic in certain forms. But she found irreducible dissent at both extremes of society: the Irish tribes and lords remained openly Catholic, and a non-negligible minority of old-style English feudal lords and their peasants retained the old faith under cover, especially in the north and west of the kingdom; on the other hand, in the cities a substantial minority of cultured layers of the petty-bourgeoisie, bourgeoisie and gentry, along with a few intellectual grandees, were Calvinists and known as the Puritans. All these dissenters, whether Catholic or Puritan, were officially persecuted but could, at times, find support up to the summits of the Anglican hierarchy, which never achieved homogeneity around definite principles.

The indocile tribal periphery

Elizabeth I died in 1603 with no direct heir; her distant cousin, the king of Scotland James Stuart therefore became king of England under the name of James I. Scotland was very poor and scarcely populated (less than one million inhabitants) but it could boast some considerable cities. A handful of grandees, at once tribal chieftains and feudal lords, dominated its political life and ruled immense

quasi-independent principalities at the head of large private retinues. This sort of nobility had become extinct in England over a century and a half earlier. In 1560, Calvinism or Presbyterianism became the official religion of Scotland, by decision of the Scottish Parliament in revolt against James's mother, Mary Stuart.

For centuries, the kings of England had claimed the title of king of Ireland, a land of tribalism even more backward than Scotland. More importantly, Ireland was a land of English colonization. In the Middle Ages English feudal settlers had mingled with the Irish chieftains to form a particular nobility which remained fiercely Catholic. But by the 16th century, the new settlers were English Puritan entrepreneurs of modest standing whose settlement was encouraged by London after each revolt of the Irish.

The gentry

Several particularities of England converged in a typical social class: the lesser nobility or gentry, as opposed to the upper noble layers known as the nobility as such. Juridically, they might have been similar to other lesser nobles of Europe, living on their land, were it not for the fact that their representatives in Parliament did not sit with the upper nobility in a House of the Second Estate, but with the representatives of the cities, the Third Estate, in the House of Commons. (The House of Lords was composed of 26 bishops and about a hundred grandees, the Peers; the Commons, of 90 members from counties, 400 from boroughs and 4 from the universities). In practice, the English gentry, often originating in recently ennobled bourgeois families, farming its land on a commercial basis and lacking careers in the army and bureaucracy, had become somewhat *bourgeoisified*. It defended its juridical privileges but apprenticed its younger sons to merchants, and many of its members (not just younger sons) were lawyers, ministers, medical doctors and professors, a rare, even unthinkable, demotion on the continent. Certain layers of the English gentry had become in certain ways a landed bourgeoisie. During the English revolution, it would be almost impossible to distinguish its role from that of the bourgeoisie properly speaking, to which it was, moreover, related by a thousands busi-. ness and family ties. Its weight in the state was considerable. Its most enterprising members had already enlarged their wealth from the increase of agricultural prices in the 16th century (the price of wheat increased

nearly six-fold in England between 1540 and 1640). Since the towns had grown accustomed to choose members of the gentry as their representatives to the House of Commons, because of their economic weight and political influence, the latter sat not only for the counties but the towns. Therefore, although far more seats were allocated to the towns than the counties, almost all members of the Commons were gentry, the remainder being a few burghers, lawyers and rich merchants. Nevertheless, over half the Commons were shareholders in commercial ventures.

II. The attempt to harden absolutism   (1603-1640)

James I (1603-1625), then his son Charles I tried methodically to bolster absolutism. Despite constant clashes with the Puritan majority in the house of Commons, they apparently succeeded. As Parliament failed to allocate money to them, they raised money by extralegal means:

- by reviving old Crown rights, such as that of managing the lands of a noble heir not yet come of age (Court of Wards), by forcing nobles to buy titles of nobility, or by selling titles of nobility to commoners, to name only three practices hated by the gentry;

- by selling economic monopoly rights to groups of merchants, to cite a practice hated by the mass of the bourgeoisie;

- by selling to large agricultural entrepreneurs, whether noble or bourgeois, the right to drain royal moors to enclose and cultivate them, to cite a practice hated by the mass of the peasantry.

While they strengthened the disciplinary powers of the bishops, drove out Calvinist ministers and banned Puritan writings, they refused to commit England to the side of the German Protestants fighting Spain in the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). To the contrary, they flirted with the Spanish monarchy. Furthermore, for lack of fundamental interest and money, James I and Charles I sustained neither the settlement of North America nor the East India Company, whose profits declined in the 1630s, and failed to send the navy to the Mediterranean to protect English merchants more and more numerous in those parts. Charles I advised the merchant circles to withdraw from the Mediterranean.

The challenge to the Spanish alliance, which

began in the first part of Elizabeth I's reign a century earlier, had marked the emergence of commercial interests in the definition of English foreign policy. In reaction to this and given the fact that Spanish absolutism was at once the model, policeman and potential supplier of funds of European absolutism, it was only natural that English absolutist policy should be favorably inclined to Spain.

James I fought with his Parliaments throughout his entire reign. He had to dissolve that of 1622 without it having voted any taxes, because the Commons demanded that war be declared with Spain.

Absolutism seems triumphant (1628-1640)

The first Parliament of Charles I was dissolved in 1626 without having voted the customs duties. Charles collected them anyway, successfully, and levied a compulsory loan. The following year, he had five members of the gentry who had refused to pay the forced loan imprisoned and managed to get them condemned by the courts, a sign that the Crown could now get its way not only in the royal prerogative courts (the Star Chamber and Court of High Commission, specialized in religious affairs), but also common law courts (the Ring's bench and Court of Common Pleas), which, in the eyes of Parliament, were supposed to embody not the will of the king but the laws of the realm, according to which a forced loan was only a disguised tax, and illegal if Parliament had not approved it. Common law courts had resisted the Crown in the 1620s. But successive purges obtained their submission in the 1630s.

The second Parliament counter-attacked in 1628. The House of Commons presented the king with a Petition of Rights which condemned arbitrary arrests and taxes not voted by Parliament. The king accepted the petition and negotiated a compromise in the hope of obtaining approval of the taxes. But the compromise broke down. The Commons also criticized the religious innovations promoted by the government. The king dismissed this Parliament too. As the dismissal was announced, the opposition leaders in the Commons, Sir John Eliot, Denzil Holies and John Valentine held the Speaker (the chairperson of the House) in his seat by force so that the House could vote a protest (March 2, 1629). They were arrested. Sir John Eliot died in the Tower of London in 1632 and Valentine was only released by the victorious Parliament in 1640.

Charles I summoned no Parliament for eleven years. For those eleven years absolutism seemed triumphant. The king's supporters as well as his Puritan opponents and foreign observers, all were convinced that the English Parliament would never meet again, that it would fall in complete disuse, as the States-General of the kingdom of France had since their last meeting in 1614. (the comparison was made frequently at that time and the French States-General were not to meet again until 1789!) In 1634, Charles created the Ship Money tax, to be levied on coastal towns, allegedly to finance the fleet. In 1635, he extended it to inland cities. The Ship Money was collected successfully, year after year, amidst general submission. In 1628, Charles I obtained the services of one of the leaders of the center in the Commons of 1626, Sir Thomas Wentworth, first as Chairman of the Council of the North in York, then as Lord Deputy, that is Viceroy, of Ireland, where he crushed yet another revolt. Made earl of Strafford, many contemporaries viewed him as a potential Richelieu of English absolutism.

In 1633, when the notorious Calvinist archbishop Abbot died, Charles I appointed William Laud (1573-1645) archbishop of Canterbury and primate of England. Born into the petty-bourgeoisie, Laud was the mentor of a group of young anti-Calvinist theologians who were inclined towards certain aspects of Catholicism, particularly a revival of ceremonialism. Archbishop Laud stepped up the purge of Calvinist ministers, tightened censorship on written materials, had the divine right of kings taught from the pulpit, reintroduced golden chalices and chandeliers and sumptuous vestments into religious services and had the communion table separated from the faithful by a railing. Inside Charles I's government, Strafford and Laud formed the "thorough" party, an expression coined by Strafford himself.

The Puritan Opposition

Critics were dealt with harshly. In 1637, the lawyer William Prynne, the reverend Henry Burton and Dr. John Bastwick, who had published denunciations of Laud's religious policy, were judged by the Star Chamber and sentenced to mutilation (nose and ears) and life imprisonment.

In February 1638, the Star Chamber condemned a 24-year old intellectual, **John Lilburne** (1614-1657). The younger son of a Durham gentleman, he had become a draper

by trade. He would later become the main leader of the Levellers. Arrested upon his return from the Low Countries, he was accused of having organized the import of subversive literature printed in Holland, including the works of Dr. Bastwick. He was whipped in public, pilloried in Westminster and, because he had harangued the crowd from the stocks, he was kept in chains in a dungeon cell.

On the other hand, Charles I, whose wife Henrietta-Maria was Catholic and the sister of the king of France, showered his favors on the Catholic nobles. He was so generous that by 1640, one out of every five members of the House of Lords was Catholic.

Following the 16th-century and early 17th-century economic expansion, the 1620s and 1630s were a period of economic depression in Europe, made particularly harsh by the ravages of the Thirty Years War and the many bad harvests due to a cooling of the climate in what is now called a "Little Ice Age."

Discouraged, many Puritans chose to emigrate. They went to Ireland but mainly to Holland and New England. This was the beginning of the English settlement of North America: the Virginia colony was founded in 1624, that of Massachusetts in 1629. Several Puritan leaders took refuge there. Far from London, the Puritans turned Massachusetts into a sort of little republic built on their ideals. In fact, a company in which London Puritan merchants and financiers had gathered to fund the settlement of America, the Providence Island Company, secretly organized resistance in England. It was this Providence Island Company, whose treasurer was John Pym (1583-1643), a member of the 1625 Parliament, which arranged for one of its rich members, John Hampden, to refuse to pay the Ship Money. After a resounding trial, Hampden was sentenced in 1637, to the outrage of the propertied classes. Moreover, the Providence Island Company was the most active and generous of the primarily London-based commercial companies which created foundations

to instal and pay Calvinist preachers (often ministers purged by their hierarchical superiors) alongside the Laudian priests in their own parishes or in more distant parishes. Despite all archbishop Laud's bans and prosecutions, a network was created in this fashion. Thus the guild of London mercers funded a preacher for Huntingdon, a small city 20 miles from Cambridge where a certain Oliver Cromwell was fighting the new more

oligarchical royal charter of the town, and supporting the peasants of the surrounding area against entrepreneurs who had purchased from the king the right to drain the moors where the peasants had pastured their animals. **Oliver** Cromwell was born in 1599 into a family of the gentry, yet allied to great aristocratic lineages; a pious Calvinist, he began but never finished university studies and lived in relative poverty on his farm, until he received an inheritance in 1636. He was a member of the House of Commons in the Parliament of 1628. He was a friend of John Pym and several of his relatives were shareholders in the Providence Island. Company. He too made preparations to leave for New England at one point.
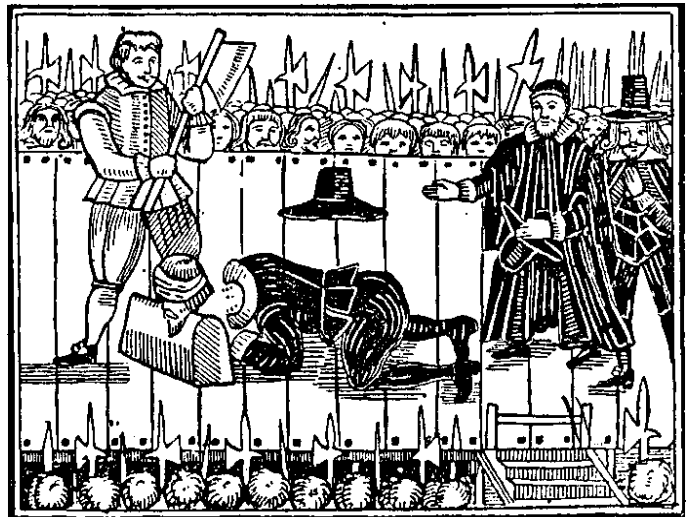
Execution of Charles I before Whitehall Palace on February 9, 1649

III. Absolutism collapses
1640-1642

Charles I ran afoul of Scotland. He tried to introduce a religious reform that would strengthen the still weak powers of Scottish bishops, and more importantly a new liturgy inspired by the Anglican liturgy. The kingdom of Scotland rose. In February 1638, an assembly of noblemen and burghers swore an oath and solemn resolve, the National Covenant, to demand the complete reestablishment of Presbyterianism in its original form through the abolition of the episcopacy. The movement was entirely dominated by the Scottish feudal grandees.

Charles I raised an army to put down the Scots. But his army was defeated and the king had to sign the Treaty of Berwick (June 1639). Negotiations broke down soon after and the border war resumed. Pressed by a lack of funds with which to pursue the war, Charles I finally summoned the English Parliament in April 1640. Parliament accepted none of the royal requests, undertook an inquiry into the legality of the king's acts during the previous eleven years, and secretly negotiated with the Scots. This Parliament was dissolved after only three weeks and the leaders of the Parliamentary opposition, including John Pym, thrown in jail. The Scottish army occupied Newcastle and Durham and seemed about to march deeper into England. The royal army, irregularly paid, threatened to mutiny. The City of London refused a loan to the king. Only the Church offered him a subsidy. Petitions poured in from all over the country asking for a new convocation of Parliament. Among them, one, signed by twelve peers, caused a sensation (August 28,1640). Charles I tried to maneuver by summoning the House of Lords only, under the name of Great Council of the Realm, and away from London, in York. But the Lords themselves advised him to summon Parliament in due form. The king had run out of expedients. He gave in and signed a new agreement with the Scots whereby he would pay for the occupation of the north by the Scottish army. Parliament met on November 7, 1640.

The opening of the
revolutionary crisis

This time, the elections to the House of Commons were held in unusual circumstances marked by extraordinary agitation among the people. Only a minority had the right to vote, but this minority was now quite sizeable. Decades of economic expansion and inflation had substantially democratized the legal threshold of 40 shillings in force in several counties; in several cities, all members of guilds, and sometimes even all adult male residents, had the right to vote. Furthermore, in some places, crowds of disenfranchised people burst into the electoral assemblies or pressured them from the outside. For the first time, the election was contested, in that there was more than one candidate per seat in 70 of the 259 constituencies. Everywhere the people were active, that is all around London, opposition candidates were elected at the expense of the candidates sponsored by the Court.

As soon as Parliament was in session, the opposition led in the House of Commons by John Pym, John Hampden, Denzil Holies (1598-1680) and Edward Hyde (1609-1674), and in the House of Lords by the earls of Manchester, Essex and Warwick, took its revenge against eleven years of personal government It undertook to dismantle the edifice of absolutism: Prynne, Valentine, Burton, Bastwick and Lilburne were freed, the earl of Strafford and archbishop Laud were indicted and arrested. Strafford in particular was a source of anxiety. He was known to have counseled a strong-arm policy to the king, and the army, which he had built up in Ireland, inspired fear. Bills were drawn up stipulating that Parliament would be summoned every three years (adopted nearly unanimously on February 15, 1641), banning the dissolution of Parliament without its consent (adopted May 10, 1641), abolishing the Star Chamber and Court of High Commission (adopted July 5, 1641) and declaring Ship Money illegal (adopted August 7,1641). All economic monopolies were abolished except those of the most important commercial companies such as the Merchant Adventurers (export drapers) and the East India Company; the farming of taxes, universally detested, was abolished; monopolists and tax farmers were expelled from Parliament (twelve of the twenty two richest merchants and financiers who were the representatives of London). These decisions were taken by very broad majority votes and the king was forced to sign them into law. But Parliament was deliberating under pressure from the streets. By November 1640, a petition was circulated among London burghers calling for the elimination, root and branch, of the episcopacy and all Laudian religious innovations, denounced as "papist." This Root and Branch Petition received 15,000 signatures. One thousand five hundred people (mainly respectable burghers) formed a procession, led by alderman Isaac

Pennington (1587-1661), MP for London and a rich Puritan merchant-draper, to submit it to the House of Commons. On December 23, a petition of similar content but formulated in more virulent terms, was submitted by a procession of thousands of craftsmen and apprentices. It carried 30,000 signatures and was initiated by more plebeian circles than the earlier one. The House of Lords, the king and the Municipality had tried to stop people from gathering signatures and submitting it to Parliament, but to no avail. On April 21, 1641 between 20,000 and 30,000 signatures demanded that Strafford, dubbed Black Tom Tyrant, be tried. The House of Commons demanded a death sentence against him, but his judgement was in the purview of the House of Lords. At first, the Lords refused energetically. Day after day, they entered the House through a crowds of thousands of demonstrators shouting "Justice against Strafford and all traitors." The Lords eventually gave in and voted the death sentence on May 10. The king's advisers then urged him to sign the sentence with the hope that all would be appeased by it. The king finally conceded and Strafford was decapitated in the field behind the Tower of London, before tens of thousands of spectators.

The Commons then demanded the exclusion of the bishops from the House of Lords, which the Lords refused on June 8, and began discussing a bill on reform of the Church in July 1641 and a resolution on "ecclesiastical innovations" in September. There was a plague in London during summer 1641. Rich people left the city while poor people died. Social tensions grew more bitter. In the fall, a wave of iconoclastic riots swept through London and several cities: bands of radicalized plebeians destroyed ornaments, stained glass and chandeliers in the churches, smashed the communion railings separating the choir from the faithful, and tore the "papist" scapulars and surplices off the priests, while preachers harangued the parish members.

Parliament splits

Many members of Parliament around Edward Hyde were growing steadily more outraged that the House of Commons did nothing to put down the popular movements and seemed, to the contrary, to hope to use them as a tool for its own purposes. Whereas all the anti-absolutist measures of early 1641 were adopted by very broad majorities of the House of Commons, the debates on ecclesiastical questions in the fall witnessed the emergence of a

party of order composed of close to half of the Commons and a majority of the Lords. The king, who had remained almost totally isolated until then, finally acquired a party. Edward Hyde, who switched sides along with many others, became its most skillful leader.

Whereas only 59 members of the Commons had voted against Strafford's condemnation, 149 voted against the Grand Remonstrance of December 1,1641, and by the time the civil war broke out the following year, 236 had joined the king.

In November came the news of the revolt of Ulster in Ireland and the massacre of Protestant settlers. The news aroused a great panic in English Puritan circles. It was feared that the royal army in Ireland, officially dissolved but in fact still operational, would not put down the Ulster rebels, but ally with them and transfer to England to help the king regain the upper hand.

Doubts were raised about the army which the king was supposed to raise to go and reestablish order in Ireland. Parliament then demanded that all civilian and military appointments be submitted to it. The king could obviously not accept that even his executive powers be withdrawn. Emboldened by his new party, he toughened his position. Events moved quickly. On November 22, the Commons approved, 159 for to 148, the Grand Remonstrance, a manifesto whose 204 articles detailed their grievances against fifteen years of "tyranny." Worse yet, on December 15, they voted to have the Remonstrance printed. Edward Hyde denounced this "call to the people." On December 21, the elections to the London Common Council gave a majority to the Puritan opposition. The patrician municipality was overthrown and a new Lord-Mayor, Isaac Pennington, elected. The king refused to confirm his election. On December 23, the king appointed a new military commander to the Tower of London, colonel Thomas Lunsford. The personality of this career officer made his nomination a genuine provocation. The Lords ratified his nomination, but the Commons, supported by petitions and demonstrations, refused it. The king accepted to replace him by a less hated officer and offered Pym to become Chancellor of the Exchequer, that is minister of finances. Pym refused.

On the 27th, a mass demonstration before Parliament demanded the expulsion of bishops and Catholic Peers from the House of Lords. Although dismissed, Colonel Lunsford, and his officers attacked the demonstrators with drawn

swords. A hundred people fought back with stones, under the guidance of John Lilburne. The officers all sported beautiful curls whereas the plebeians wore their hair short. Insults were exchanged. The officers called the plebeians "roundheads" and the latter retorted with the epithet of "cavaliers," a pejorative term that evoked a young, arrogant and brutal noble adventurer. The two parties now had names. On December 28 and 29, new demonstrations, led by John Lilburne physically prevented the bishops from taking their seats in the House of Lords.

On January 4, 1642, the king attempted a coup. He personally led a military detachment into the House of Commons to arrest five "ringleaders" whom he accused of high treason: John Pym, John Hampden, Denzil Holies, William Strode, Sir Arthur Haselrig; likewise, in the House of Lords, the earl of Manchester.

But the accused MPs had gone into hiding and the House of Commons decided to transfer from Westminster to the London Guildhall. The royal coup was foiled by the mobilization of the people of London and the intervention of the bourgeois militia. The king left London to seek refuge in Windsor. The majority of the Lords and the minority of the Commons gradually began to desert Parliament and leave London too.

At the end of the winter, Charles I undertook a trip through the north to rally his supporters. Lacking financial resources, his expenses were assumed by the extremely wealthy earls of Newcastle, Southampton and Worcester, the latter being the most powerful Catholic peer. On February 5, the House of Lords finally accepted to disbar the bishops. On February 13, the king even accepted to sign the Clerical Disabilities Act excluding all churchmen from any temporal function such as member of Parliament, member of the government, justice of the peace, etc. This was to be the last decision of Parliament that he accepted. He absolutely rejected the law on the militia which gave Parliament all powers to organize and appoint the military. Although it searched through the archives for a precedent, Parliament was now forced into a revolutionary action. On March 5, it conferred executive force to its bills, even without the signature of the king, by edict-ing them as ordinances, in this case the Militia Ordinance.
On June 1, Parliament again addressed nineteen proposals to the king. In substance, it promised to authorize the king to levy ample taxes on the following conditions:

- all ministers of the king, civilian and military officers and judges to be appointed by Parliament, along with the tutors of the king's children;
- the nominations of peers to be ratified by Parliament.

These would have reduced the king of England to a symbolic office under total Parliamentary supremacy.

IV. The Civil War
1642-1645

On June 12, 1642 the king signed the Commissions of Array in York and addressed them to the entire kingdom. On July 12, Parliament voted to raise an army and appointed the earl of Essex general and the earl of Warwick admiral of the fleet. On August 22, Charles I raised his standard in Nottingham. The English Civil War had begun.

The country divided
Who sided with which camp when the Civil War broke out?

Geographically, Parliament held London, the London basin, the east (East Anglia), i.e., the economically most "modern" regions of the country. The Royalists held Cornwall, Wales and the upper Thames valley (Oxford), and the north, on the whole, the more traditional regions.

Socially and politically, the king was joined by a majority of peers and an unquestionable majority of the gentry, if one includes the entire country. However, many nobles withdrew into neutrality on their lands. On the other hand, several nobles of the north and west were able to join the royal army with their mobilized peasants, as in Scotland or during the Middle Ages. Also with the king were the large monopolistic financiers and former tax fanners, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the urban patriciates, and in very traditional small and middling towns, the upper rungs of the guilds, and sometimes, in manufacturing regions, the workers of Parliamentary employers.

As for Parliament, it was supported by the burghers and plebeians of London and its region; by the freehold-ing and copyholding peasants of the southeast; the drapers of the east and north, with merchant-employers, dependent-craftsmen and wage-earners generally standing together; the employers, craftsmen and workers of the coal

fields of Newcastle. All this ought to be tempered by the observation that most English people, in all walks of life, probably remained basically neutral and suffered the Civil War without joining it.

In military terms, the king initially had few troops, but they were the only trained units left from the old royal army, and the gentry supplied him with manyca-valrymen and officers. In addition, most English career officers, returning from Ireland or the continent where they had fought in the Thirty Years War as mercenaries, sided with the king. Parliament had the fleet but little in the way of an army. It had the London urban militia, of course, but few cavalrymen and few experienced officers. On the other hand, it had a lot of money to buy guns.

Modern historians who delight in statistics, have vainly sought the social differences between the two fractions of Parliament which definitively split in summer 1642. Both display a similar sampling of the English ruling classes: lords, many gentry, a few bourgeois. Interestingly though, Royalists were younger, on the average than Parliamentarians.

What the parliamentary party had, and the Royalist party lacked, was the support, however uncomfortable, of a popular mobilization.

The popular explosion

During the summer of 1642, a "great fear" spread among the people across the country. Rumors circulated of "papist plots" and "Irish landings" in preparation of a slaughter of the Puritans. In many places, crowds of peasants and plebeians attacked the houses of members of the gentry to stop them from joining the royal army, and drove the royal commissioners carrying the king's commissions of array from the towns and villages. Genuine popular insurrections broke out in August 1642 in Colchester, for instance.

Eight thousand London apprentices volunteered for the parliamentary army. In September 1642, the weavers of Manchester forced the earl of Derby to lift the siege of the town. Coventry and Birmingham rose against their timid municipalities, to stop the Royalists from entering their towns. Birmingham was an unincorporated town, with the juridical status of a mere village, with no representatives in Parliament or fortifications. It was the capital of the most modern metallurgical industries, unimpeded by the regulations of guilds. A committee brought together knife-makers, blacksmiths, glaziers and carpenters, and improvised a militia, emergency fortifications and a guard. They fought heroically against the cavalry of prince Rupert of the Palatinate, the nephew of the king and darling of the royal army.

The insurrection was most massive in the regions of the draperies in the north (West Riding of Yorkshire). Improvised peasant units attacked the army of the earl of Newcastle. Almost alone among the gentry of the region, the rich Sir Thomas Fairfax (1612-1671) agreed, after much hesitation, to take the head of the movement. He organized an army, obtained subsidies from the Municipalities and, in January 1643, forced the earl of Newcastle to lift the siege of Bradford and progressively freed the entire north. "Do it like in Bradford" became the slogan of radical Parliamentarians, as proclaimed in *Plain English,* a widely circulated pamphlet published in London on January 12, 1643, which demanded that the people be armed.

What sort of war?

In London, Parliament tried to organize the war effort. Committees were elected to assume executive functions. Their soul and chief organizer was John Pym. But he died in 1643. They strove to coordinate their work with the shire committees outside London; the latter had brought together Parliamentary figures and coopted more and more new men, of lesser standing, to try and tame the "popular anarchy" and mobilize "real troops." An army was created but the war was very expensive. Direct taxes were levied and the shire committees put in charge of collecting them. An indirect tax was introduced, on all sales, modeled on the United Provinces. All in all, this amounted to a heavy fiscal burden; committees of London merchants and financiers, mandated by Parliament, advanced the necessary funds and oversaw their management

The king's base was right next to London, in Oxford, and the main force of the royal army attempted to march on the capital on several occasions. After a confused battle at Edgehill (October 23,1642), London was saved in November 1642 at Turnham Green by the urban militia commanded by Philip Skippon, an officer promoted from the lower ranks, and again, in 1643 at Newbury. But Parliament refused to arm the people. In May 1643, as the people of London worked like ants to fortify the city with trenches and erected twenty-eight forts bolstered by earthworks, the Municipality proposed a mass levy on the city. On July 19, a large meeting at the

Merchant-Tailors' Hall created a Committee for a General Rising. But Parliament refused and sent away the thousands of country folk who had come to enroll in November.

The general, the earl of Essex, a Puritan grandee and a somber and meditative man, guided the army in flaccid and fatalistic fashion. He did not conceal that his aim was not to vanquish the king but merely force concessions from him. In fact, his approach was supported not only by the Lords but a majority of the Commons.

Cases of gentlemen officers deserting the army to join the king grew more frequent The royal army had the initiative. Men like Denzil Holies hoped for peace with the king.

How to win without arming the people was the troubling question on Parliament's mind. An intermediate solution would be to create an army of "saints," that is well-bred Puritan burghers. A petition to that effect was circulated in London already in June 1643.

Another, more cautious, intermediate solution was preferred: to seek an alliance with the Scots.

On September 23, 1643, the Parliaments of England and Scotland concluded the Solemn League and Covenant. The deal killed several birds with one stone: the 20,000-strong Scottish army came to the rescue; Presbyterianism on the Scottish model was imposed in England, ostentatiously as a concession to the Scots; this radical change in religious organization could be used to ban and prosecute the popular congregations and discipline the plebeians; at the same time Parliament's war could be placed under a religious flag, an identification lacking until that time, which could help to turn closely controlled masses into fanatical fighters. The Presbyterian majority also expelled from Parliament Henry Marten, who had distinguished himself on the far left of the Commons by his calls for all-out war against the king.

After Pym's death, a Committee of the Two Kingdoms was set up in January 1644 to lead the war effort. The committee was dominated by English and Scottish peers and moderates from the Commons, but it was the occasion for Cromwell to enter the government along with two other hard-liners who would soon become prominent among the handful of principled Republicans in Parliament, Sir Henry Vane (1613-1662) and Sir Arthur Haselrig (1610-1661).

Cromwell, MP for Cambridge and now a colonel, began the war as a captain of cavalry. After the half-defeat at Edgehill, he returned to Cambridge and, in consultation with the earl of Manchester, raised an army in East Anglia, the Eastern Association. In this army, he created a cavalry regiment composed of peasant volunteers, freeholders or modest copyholders, who were well enough off to pay for their horse and harness. He carefully trained them. These were the famous Iron-sides. He shocked everyone, including the earl of Manchester, by appointing commoners as officers.

Joining forces, the Scottish army, Fairfax's army and the Eastern Association defeated the royal army at Marston Moor in July 1644.

But the victory was by no means decisive. In September, the earl of Essex, surrounded by the Royalists on the coast of Cornwall, lamentably abandoned his army and escaped by boat. Pym was no longer there to keep the various Parliamentary factions together. Parliament still hesitated to impose the highly unpopular Presbyterianism. Essex and Manchester rebuked Cromwell for his appointments and he in turn rebuked them for their incompetence. The parliamentary majority, guided by Essex, Manchester and Denzil Holies, the leader of the "Presbyterian" majority in the Commons, wanted to negotiate with the king. So did the Scottish Parliament. Negotiations opened in Uxbridge in December 1644-January 1645. The king made no concession. Things were at a standstill. Parliament had no alternative but to continue the war. The time had come for the Parliamentarians who wanted not merely to continue the war, but to win it.

The New Model Army

This had been the approach of a small minority of members of Parliament known as the Independents because, in rejecting the religious monolithism of Pres-byterianism, they argued for the independence of each congregation and a certain doctrinal latitude. The Independents were a heterogeneous ill-defined tendency whose numbers varied from one vote to another. On the religious plane, they ranged from strict Calvinists to heterodox "searchers," including moderate Baptists like Cromwell, and on the political plane, from conservatives simply bent on winning the war, to principled Republicans. Their religious standpoint was consistent with their military standpoint: they defended religious toleration, not only because, as they put it, it was impossible to know God's will explicitly, but also because they refused to exclude the Anabaptists and other

plebeian heretics from the army. In fact, they wished to promote motivated officers, originating in these ill-considered circles, at the expense of the blue-blooded but ineffective officers. On April 3, 1645 they obtained a fragile majority in Parliament to vote for the clever Self-Denying Ordinance, which forbade any member of the House of Lords or the House of Commons from holding a commission in the army. This was an easy way to get rid of the Manchesters, Essexes and others of the same ilk. For a long time, Parliament had discussed the creation of a New Model Army, with uniform and rational structures, functions, ranks and weapons. This was the first modern army. It was commanded by new men, who emerged during the Civil War. Sir Thomas Fairfax was appointed commander-in-chief. An indication of Cromwell's rising authority was that he was not asked to abandon his command but was instead appointed Lieutenant-General. The House of Lords, hostile to him, accepted his nomination for three months only.

That was enough, for the New Model Army worked wonders. The royal army was smashed at Naseby on June 14, 1645. Charles I, cornered, chose to surrender to the Scots. The year 1646 was spent in negotiations which brought nothing new. On January 30, 1647, the Scots handed their prisoner over to the English Parliament in exchange for one-half million pounds. The country was tired of war: in 1645, in several regions, an armed movement of peasants exasperated by the ravages of both camps had formed to demand an end to the war and a peace of compromise (the movement of the clubmen).

V. Religious radicalism

Calvinism

By the time the great reformer John Calvin (1509-1564) had founded the Academy of Geneva in 1559, Calvinism had become not only the most dynamic current of the Protestant Reformation, but also the most prestigious system of thought among all European critical humanist intellectuals of the second half of the 16th and early 17th century. To the general features of the Protestant Reformation (salvation through faith, not through works; rejection of the transsubstantiation of wine and bread into the blood and flesh of Jesus Christ, and therefore of Mass; denial of the priest, and therefore the Church, as mediators between the believer and God, in the name of the priesthood of all believers and therefore of each individual's communication with God; absolute authority of the Bible and therefore emphasis on the literacy of all to read it; rejection of all "papist" "superstitions and idolatry": belief in the purgatory, cult of the Virgin and Saints, images and ornaments; rejection of the temporal authority of the Church and its hierarchy; rejection of monastic life; marriage of ministers) Calvinism added essentially three elements:

1. a rigorous rationalization of the doctrine;
2. a particular emphasis on the dogma of the predestination of souls to salvation or damnation, according to which the contention that a believer's merits, and therefore his will and efforts, could insure his salvation, amounted to doubting the omnipotence of God; for the number and identity of those who would go to Heaven or Hell had been foreordained by God. Calvinism was therefore very elitist because it conceived of an elite of "saints," who would be saved, while the mass would be damned.
3. an ecclesiastical organization which subjected the parish to the combined authority of a pastor and council of Elders, chosen by cooptation, the "Presbytery," a group of prominent lay people chosen in the parish rather than imposed from above by a Church or state hierarchy (hence the name of Presbyterianism).

In 16th and 17th century Europe, Calvinism was the Protestantism of rather well-to-do, educated and cultured people — sometimes to the point of being intellectuals — of intermediate social standing: lesser nobility, bourgeois, artisans. Among the plebeians it ran into the competition of (and sometimes intermingled with) Anabaptism, which was older, more egalitarian, or even communistic, emphasized baptism, and therefore the conversion of conscious adults, and rejected the existence of a Beyond and any form of ecclesiastical organization.

In the context of the English Puritan movement, Calvinism and Anabaptism underwent an evolution which gave birth to the most innovative and audacious Protestant religious and intellectual radical currents. The Calvinist dogma of predestination was very pessimistic. The threat that a person, whatever he or she might do, may in fact already have been damned, should have been a source of anguish, discouragement and passivity. Instead it generated a type of highly anx-

ious but extremely dynamic individual. For Protestantism valued practical activity, not contemplation, faithfulness to the voice of one's conscience and the assuming of responsibility, not conformism and obedience. And the Calvinists, although few at first, were convinced that their dynamism and their courage was a sign that they were indeed preordained "saints," confident in their salvation despite their weaknesses.

The dogma of predestination also had a social connotation: the predestined saints were the people of a certain elite, property owners, cultured people. The crude, envious, uncultured mass of the poor were the damned.

The Catholic Church rejected the dogma of predestination and asserted the possibility of each individual to work towards his or her salvation. Arminianism (from the name of a Dutch Calvinist theologian) was the doctrinal current within Protestantism which rejected predestination in favor of the promise of salvation for all. There was a right-wing Arminianism, that of Laud's Anglican followers, leaning towards Catholicism. But there also was a left-wing Arminianism which asserted the possibility for the poor to go to Heaven. In this sense, the Anabaptists and their English variant, the Familists, had always been Arminians

The Puritan humanisms

The novelty was the emergence of a left-wing Arminianism on a superior plane, elaborated by the great Puritan humanists born in the ruling classes and educated in the best universities. This was an aspect of what has come to be known as the "Baconian cultural revolution." Chancellor Francis Bacon (1561-1626), the great Puritan humanist philosopher whom the Enlightenment philosophers considered as their forerunner, rejected the Calvinist pessimism about human destiny. He believed optimistically that the progress of science and technology and collective efforts would some day make it possible to recreate the abundance of Eden on Earth through labor.

The most prestigious intellectual of this current actually involved in the English revolution was John Milton (1608-1674). His father was a rich burgher of London, a public writer and moneylender; his mother, the daughter of a merchant-tailor. Milton studied at Cambridge and had already made himself a name as a poet before 1640. In 1638-1639, he travelled through France and Italy, quite in the humanist

spirit of the time. He met Grotius and Galileo, and corresponded with Gassendi, the greatest critical philosophers of the period. In 1644 he became famous through his pamphlet against censorship, *Aeropagitica,* an attack on the Presbyterians, and by 1645 he had joined Cromwell.

Milton not only took the defense of the plebeian heretics, the Anabaptists and Familists, but incorporated many elements of their doctrine into his writings: he was anticlerical and Arminian, but also anti-Trinitarian, that is, convinced of the primacy of the Father over the Son; Mortalist, that is, denying the existence of a Beyond and the immortality of the soul and holding that Heaven and Hell were not external realities but inner states of the human soul; Antino-mian, that is, dismissing the obsession with sin and the strict respect of rules of behavior in favor of the freedom of the individual guided by faith; and Millenar-ian, that is that Milton, like many others, believed that the great upheavals of the revolution were the prelude to Christ's return to establish His kingdom on earth.

This is a long way from Calvinism. The disappearance of censorship in 1640 and the political activity of the plebeians had set into motion an unprecedented ferment of ideas, a flowering of religious, philosophical, artistic and political writings, doctrines and polemics. In 1645, 722 periodicals were published in England!

While Milton believed that God was the designation of the cosmic order, Divine Providence was something like the laws of history and that the Book of Revelation could help interpret the events of the revolution, another "searcher," the military chaplain William Erb-ery, and later the Quakers, put into question the text of the Bible as the word of God as well the faithfulness of the Apostles to the intentions of Christ; and for the Communist theoretician Gerard Winstanley (1609-1676), the kingdom of Christ designated a democratic republic and the Bible ought to be interpreted in strictly allegorical fashion as a description of the inner process of liberation of the human spirit and of the formation of consciousness.

Archbishop Laud's accession to the commanding heights of the Church drove the Calvinists to regroup in their own communities (congregations, hence Congregationalism) and elect their own pastors, that is to separate from the Church. The move signified that people who belonged mostly to the ruling classes had come to do openly what the plebeian sects had long

done under cover. When the repressive machinery collapsed in 1640, all this came to surface and spread with great speed. The issues raised by this process were not only those of ecclesiastical organization and religious freedom, but also those of the freedom of assembly and organization. The reason the plebeian religious "sects" scared property owners, including the Calvinists, was that people did not discuss religion only at their religious meetings. They talked of their problems, of then-lives and developed a common outlook and will. They moved from religious radicalism to political radicalism with hardly a step. In 17th century England, tolerating religious freedom meant tolerating the self-organization of the plebeian masses against the powers that be.

VI. The agrarian question

One of the components of the anti-Royalist popular insurrections of summer 1642 stemmed from a longstanding discontent among peasants. The advance of commercial agriculture had sharpened the social differentiation of the peasantry and jeopardized the security of the mass of copyholders, and eventually of freeholders too. This trend had quickened in the 16th century as the the European economy expanded, prices rose and purchasers of Church lands strove to increase their yield and recover their often borrowed outlay. For the new gentlemen as well as the older feudal lords hard pressed by the rise of consumer goods prices, the most immediate solution to increase their income was the meticulous and strict collection of feudal rents and other dues. Inflation provided peasants with a relative shelter from the severity of this drive, because the annual feudal dues were often set by custom at a fixed nominal amount, unlike the tithe, which was all the more hated for that. Moreover the tithe was often no longer paid to the Church, but to the landowner who had purchased the right to collect it in exchange for taking on the duty of paying a (meagre) wage to the parish priest, whom he also had the right to choose and could therefore control.

Agricultural improvement
A more complex solution was to introduce the new farming techniques which were beginning to be presented to a wider public, in the rationalist spirit of the Renaissance, through a new sort of literature: textbooks of agronomy. The trick was to replace the traditional fallow period applied every three years to regenerate the soil, with fertilization by animal droppings. The farmer instead of having to slaughter his few cows and horses in the winter, for lack of fodder, and use them as meat, could replace the fallow with new cultivated plants such as alfalfa, clover or lettuce... which both regenerated the soil and provided more fodder for a larger and more permanent herd. More cattle meant more manure and more draught-power, and therefore the possibility of using heavier machines and ploughs which would dig deeper into the soil, to introduce the first seeders, and to transport more goods in heavier carts over longer distances.

This was the embryo of what would become the great technological revolution of European agriculture in the 18th and 19th centuries. But this modernization clashed with the traditional organization of the triennial crop rotation by the village community, and required some education and more importantly large capital outlays which only a few landowners could afford. The 17th century witnessed the appearance in the English countryside of a new denizen, the improving landlord, ancestor of the gentleman-farmer.

In the traditional three-year crop rotation, the one third of the fields left to lie fallow in any particular year was open to all villagers who could freely pasture their cattle in it. The fields were therefore not enclosed. In addition to these village commons, villagers had access to uncultivated swamp lands, to the lord's or king's forests, and in several regions, to vast fens: on all these surfaces they could collect fruit, nuts and mushrooms, and graze cattle and pigs. On the one hand, demographic growth made access to the commons more and more important to the poor majority of peasants; on the other, the advance of commercial farming and the purchase and sale of land increased the number of noble, gentry, clerics, bourgeois, and even rich villagers who owned land and wanted to enclose and improve it, and replace the emphyteutic lease of their copyholders with short nine-, six- or even three-year farming leases. A process of expulsion of poor peasants who could not pay their feudal dues or rent, slowly gained momentum. The status of the English copyholder began to erode. Some became farmers, sometimes rich farmers, while many others were threatened with falling into the ranks of the landless peasants, day laborers and vagrants.

The struggle against enclosure
The agricultural depression of the 1620s and 1630s, in the wake of the relentless increase of feudal dues since 1570, sharpened tensions.

Villagers resorted to lawsuits and more direct demonstrations to obtain guarantees of their emphyteutic leases and stop enclosures.

Pressed by its lack of money, the government of Charles I sold authorizations to enclose, wholesale and retail, notwithstanding the illegality of such transactions. Archbishop Laud was the only person in the government to argue for stopping enclosures and he used the ecclesiastical courts to that effect.

He understood that this was the only way to avoid peasants joining the already too long list of enemies of absolutism. (It was in fact the quite consistent policy of French absolutism to repress enclosures until the second half of the 18th century.)

Between 1636 and 1638, six hundred enclosers — mainly from the lower ranks: gentry, burghers, rich villagers — were fined in England. But Charles generously granted exemptions to the higher flying birds, particularly to the large entrepreneurs who consented great outlays to enclose and drain bogs: high financiers received at Court, great improving landlords, or mere speculators, and even the queen. By the end of the 1630s villagers revolted more frequently, tore out enclosures and fought off the armed men sent to stop them. This movement directed against the Court party culminated in the insurrections of summer 1642 and brought the support of large sectors of the peasantry to Parliament, which then edicted measures to slow down the rate of enclosure over the next fifteen years.

But this movement against "improvers" linked to the Court temporarily masked the conflict of interests between peasants and those Parliamentarians, who were themselves enclosers and held Laud's anti-enclosure policy among their grievances against absolutism.

The sale of impounded lands

When the Civil War broke out, and in many cases under the pressure of the people, the lands of the Royalists and bishops were impounded and their income confiscated by Parliament to pay for war expenditures. The impoundment was made official by an Act of Parliament on March 27, 1643, which entrusted the management of these lands and the collection of feudal rent and other dues and farming leases, to local committees who were supposed to prevent peasants from taking advantage of the proscription of their masters to stop paying their rent. The income from these went to Parliament's war chest at the Guildhall in London. Already in 1643, Royalist landowners were offered a settlement whereby they had to agree first to pay back all their debts, and then to pay a fine equal to between one half and two thirds of the price of their lands. They were therefore compelled either to go deep into debt or to sell heavily to those who held capital. These composition fines were managed by a committee of burghers sitting in the Goldsmiths' Hall. The House of Lords opposed these composition fines. With the support of the Presbyterian majority of the Commons, it succeeded in stopping impounded lands from being auctioned off, as demanded by the army and radicals. But by 1646, the financial necessities of the war effort and the rise of the radicals combined to impose the sale. On October 9, 1646, Parliament voted to sell the bishops' lands, the easiest step as they had the fewest friends; in April 1649, it was the turn of cathedral chapters' lands; finally in 1651-1652, that of all non-amnestied Royalists. Before putting the land up for sale at auctions, Parliament had pawned it to the bankers, mainly from London, who lent money to the state. In the end, these were the buyers. Parliament did grant peasants a right of preemption on their master's lands, but for thirty days only, at a price equal to eight years of income from the land, and without extending any credit or easy payment terms, so that in fact, the peasants did not have a chance. In 1647, at the time of victory, soldiers who demanded to be paid off received titles to parcels pawned on impounded land destined for subsequent sale. The intent of the army chiefs, or at least of some of them, was to consolidate the class of small well-to-do farmers who had been the backbone of the new army and of victory. But obstruction by the property-owning majority in Parliament caused the move to produce precisely the opposite effect. Soldiers had no cash that would have enabled them to wait for the sale of these lands. To survive, they were forced to sell their titles at cheap prices to businessmen, gentry and mainly bourgeois, but also to the upper officers to whom Parliament granted immense domains for services rendered.

The **defeat of the English peasants**

The defeat of the popular movement between 1648 and 1653 meant the defeat of the movement for the guarantee of copyhold and the abolition of the tithe. The ban on enclosures, already violated on multiple occasions, soon came to an end too. On June 19, 1657, Cromwell's Parliament passed a law which authorized them provided

certain regulations were adhered to. The lands were to be enclosed after being divided among the villagers themselves. This was apparently a compromise. In reality, it helped the better-off villagers and led them to side with the large agricultural entrepreneurs, for as the laws of the market inevitably drove the small peasant, burdened with debts, to sell his rights to the land, the path was cleared for the destruction of the communal organization of the English village and the expulsion of the small peasants.

When the monarchy was restored in 1660, the lands of exiled or outlawed Royalists were formally returned to them, except for the land which they had already sold. In fact they had had to sell them off on a large scaleand since many returned pennyless and burdened with debts, they had to continue to sell. Moreover, despite their rights, they had little chance of winning lawsuits against the new landowners, wielding large sums of cash, in courts which had to settle an endless number of challenges. In the countryside, the net result of the English revolution, despite its apparent defeat, was therefore a new massive transfer of land from the traditional nobility and gentry to the new rich who, whatever their origins as London burghers, army officers or members of the Parliamentary gentry, now operated as capitalists.

Moreover, both the new capitalist landowner and returning Royalist noble now set themselves to thoroughly improve the farming of their land, the one because he was penniless and understood he had almost disappeared from the face of the earth, the other because he operated in terms of yield and profitability. The road was open for the massive expulsion of copyholders and even small freeholders from the English countryside, and for the development of the large capitalist agricultural enterprise which characterized the 18th century in England.

VII. The Levellers' high tide and the partial counter-revolution 1647-1649

The Levellers
The enthusiasm of victory and the end of military operations triggered an explosion of the radical democratic movement to the left of the Independents: the "Levellers' Party" as its enemies called it. The Levellers were not represented in Parliament. Their activists originated in the left wing of the craftsmen's guilds and London Common Council. They were led by a group of brilliant intellectuals, writers and tribunes around John Lilburne: the silk merchant William Walwyn, the printer Richard Overton, the lawyer John Wildman. The "Leveller's Party" collected and formulated in an elaborate political program, the demands of the plebeian movements of the city and countryside which rallied behind it. The plebeians had been further radicalized by the onset of an economic crisis: the 1640s were the worst years of the century, and 1648 the worst of all; harvests were bad, the war had caused major damage, prices were rising while unemployment brought wages down.

In 1645-1646, a struggle was waged to democratize the London guilds and Municipality; in May 1646 Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire peasants had come to London to demand the abolition of the tithe. In 1644, after the battle of Marston Moor in which he fought as a lieutenant-colonel of the dragoons, Lilburne quit the army because he refused to swear the Covenant. The Presbyterians and Lords judged his writings subversive and had him imprisoned from July to October 1645 and again in April 1646. In 1646, he published two resounding pamphlets: *London's Liberty in Chains Discovered* and *The Free-Man's Freedom Vindicated,* in which he wrote that God had created men "by nature all equal and alike in power, dignity, authority and majesty..." A flurry of Levelling publications denounced the exploitation of the poor by the rich, the deprivations of the poor, the insensitiveness, arrogance and religious hypocrisy of the rich Parliamentarians.

In reality, the "Levellers' party" was the only current of opinion in the entire Parliamentary camp to present a systematic political program for a revolution in society and the state:
. universal male suffrage;
. a single Assembly, and therefore the abolition of the House of Lords;
. dissolution of Parliament and new elections to be held after the broadening of suffrage requirements and allocation to each constituency of a number of representatives proportional to its population;
. election of judges, town and county magistrates and parish priests;
. abolition of the tithe;
. religious freedom for all, even Roman Catholics;
.abolition of indirect taxes; return to the

territorial subsidies which existed before the war or better yet, institution of an income tax;

. elimination of enclosures;

. guarantee of copyholders' tenure and conversion of their tenure into free ownership of the land through payment of twenty years of the dues owed; therefore abolition of feudal dues through repurchase;

. abolition of the birthright of the eldest son, and therefore equal division of the inheritance among all children;

. abolition of imprisonment for debt;

. softening and codification, in understandable language, of the penal laws. The composition and strength of the New Model Army made it a powerful carrier of plebeian radicalism.

The plebeian army against Parliament

On February 18, 1647, the Presbyterian majority of Parliament which had continued to negotiate with the imprisoned king, dissolved the army without pay, indemnities or pensions for the widows and orphans of the soldiers, and without judicial immunity for acts committed in war. After the disbandment of the army, soldiers would have the right to re-enlist individually to go and fight the rebellion in Ireland under the command of Fairfax, provided the officers swore the Covenant.

This was a veritable provocation. The troops were indignant. In March, the cavalry regiments, whose members were more self-confident and politicized, elected soldiers' delegates known as agitators and many of whom were convinced Levellers. In April, the infantry regiments followed suit. After initially condemning the initiatives of their troops and with much hesitation, Fairfax, Cromwell and the generals decided to side with the movement and refused to disband the army. The generals and leaders of the Independents understood that the Presbyterian majority, in its fear of being outflanked by the Levellers, was about to rush into accepting the king's restoration at a low price, a move that would inevitably cause a return of the pendulum in favor of the Royalists; and that disbanding the army amounted to eliminating the only counterweight and running the risk of an uncontrolled popular insurrection.

On May 25, Parliament voted an ultimatum and designated locations to which each regiment should proceed to be demobilized. Instead, all the regiments met on June 2 at Newmarket. There, on June 4 and 5, the troops resolved to refuse to be dissolved as long as their demands were not satisfied

and to demand religious freedom and the sale of Royalist lands.

On June 3, the cornet Joyce, at the head of 500 men, without commissions from any authority or commanding officer, seized the person of the king. It seems that he consulted Cromwell beforehand. On June 15, the newly created Council of the Army, composed of the generals and colonels and two officers per regiment, was forced to allow two soldier-agitators per regiment into its midst. The Council of the Army accused eleven Presbyterian leaders of the Commons, including Denzil Holies, of treason and plotting.

Resolved to dismiss this Parliament, the army proceeded to march on London. On July 17, the Council of the Army addressed a catalog of constitutional reforms, the Heads of Proposals, to Parliament. As the army approached, the eleven Presbyterian members of Parliament who had been threatened fled, most of them overseas. The city militia refused to defend London against the army, but a demonstration of Presbyterian apprentices briefly invaded the Commons and forced them to vote for the return of the king to London. Fifty-seven Independent members of Parliament accompanied by nine Lords took refuge with the army which now accelerated its march and took London without opposition, on August 6. Parliament quickly voted a month's pay to soldiers and non-commissioned officers.

Cromwell and the Levellers

Between the summer 1647 and the spring 1649 the drama of the English revolution was played out. The Levellers seemed to have the wind in their sails. If the army followed their proposals, if it converged with a plebeian uprising, if the Levellers obtained the alliance of the radical Parliamentarians, then the dissolution of Parliament and the election of a new Assembly would open the way to a liquidation of the feudal order and the coherent building of a democratic republic of small property-owners. In this confused situation of dual power, in reality of multiple powers in unstable equilibrium, Cromwell and his friends maneuvered between the Levellers and Parliament, between the plebeians and traditional ruling classes. Cromwell improvised his moves as he went and professed not to know what he wanted, but to know well what he did not want. He succeeded in riding the outpour and channeling it back into more limited bounds by playing on military discipline.

The Heads of Proposals written by two close collaborators of his, Colonel Ireton, his son-in-

law, and general Lambert, contained the following principal demands:

- dissolution of Parliament within one year;
- new elections following a reapportionment of constituencies in line with their fiscal contribution;
- payment and maintenance of the army until such a new Parliament convened;
- supremacy of Parliament over the king and withdrawal of any authority over the army from the king for a period of ten years, as in the last proposals of Parliament;
- total religious freedom, except for Roman Catholics;
- exemption of first necessity goods from the indirect tax;
- abolition of the monopolies of commercial companies;
- re-examination of the advisability of the tithe. The concessions to the Levellers were perceptible;

at the same time these proposals were unacceptable for them as well as for the Presbyterian majority of Parliament.

In October, the Levellers published a draft of a constitution, *The Agreement of the People,* and submitted it to the Council of the Army. The latter discussed it in the course of a memorable debate held at Putney Church, in the suburbs of London, October 28 and 29 and November 1,1647. The Levellers' view was defended by Wildman, a major in the army, Sexby, an agitator, and mainly colonel Rainsborough.

The question of universal suffrage

The discussion dealt mainly with universal suffrage. Ireton and Cromwell absolutely refused to consider granting the right to vote to men who did not own at least some property. The label of Levellers had been devised by the latter's opponents to paint them, slanderously, as communists. Now Ireton and Cromwell conceded that the Levellers did indeed wish to respect private property, but asked what would prevent a parliament elected by a majority of poor to vote for expropriations, the division of the land, and who knows, the abolition of private property. Furthermore, the election of all local public authorities jeopardized the centralization of the state: for Cromwell, the Levellers were "Switzerizing anarchists."

The Levellers themselves were hesitant about the right of the poor to vote and divided over it. They too feared the insurrection of the destitute

masses which might be tempted to plunder and seize lands, who were concerned with sectoral economic demands and not politicized, and a majority of whom, everybody agreed, were gullible and accustomed to submit to their masters and would vote Royalist, if they had the right to vote.

To try and resolve this problem, the Levellers invented the Constitution, in the modern sense of a fundamental law that could not be amended by Parliament as a normal law. They made the Agreement of the People more complex, added many articles, in particular articles which safeguarded private property. Whereas the first draft only excluded from the franchise beggars and servants and apprentices who lived under their master's roof, that is a tiny minority of the population considered incapable of holding an independent opinion (the secret ballot had not yet been invented), the second draft of January 15, 1648 had, in the hope of being accepted by the generals, excluded all wage earners, journeymen of the crafts and agricultural day laborers. In the third and last version, in May 1649, once they realized they had no chance of winning over the generals but were loosing the support of the poor, they returned to their first definition.

Cromwell turns on the Levellers

On November 4, 1647, the Council of the Army adopted the Agreement of the People, and a resolution calling for an end to all negotiations with the king, despite the opposition of Cromwell and Ireton, and set an assembly point for the entire army for the 15th at Cockbush Field; Spitalfield weavers were supposed to meet it there.

Cromwell obtained an order from Fairfax expelling the agitators from the Council of the Army. On November 11, four days before the appointed meeting of the army, there was a dramatic turn of events: the king escaped (thanks to whose complicity?) and took refuge in the Isle of Wight, whose governor was a friend of Cromwell.

The general staff seized the opportunity as a pretext to cancel the meeting, or rather to summon different regiments in three separate places. It was a test of military discipline. All the regiments obeyed save one cavalry regiment, colonel Robert Lilburne's, John's brother, and one infantry regiment, colonel Thomas Harrison's. Mutinous, uncontrolled by their officers, the soldiers of these regiments marched on Cockbush Field, carrying green flags, the

color of the Levellers, and pinned their copy of the Agreement of the People to their hats under the slogan "England's Freedom-Soldier's Rights." John Lilburne and Rainsborough addressed them. Fairfax and Cromwell showed up and urged them to obey for the sake of the unity of the army. Harrison's regiment applauded. Lilburne's regiment hooted and stopped the commander-in-chief and his second in command from speaking. Cromwell ordered them to take the bits of paper off of their hats. Upon the soldiers' refusal, he drew his sword, moved his horse into their ranks and began ripping the badges off and throwing them on the ground. Overwhelmed, the troops remained silent. A martial court was set up on the spot. Three ringleaders were sentenced to death. A lottery was held. Private Richard Arnold was shot and the other two spared and expelled from the army. The Levellers had lost the first round.

As for Charles I, he continued to negotiate with everyone, with Parliament as well as with the generals. On November 17, he addressed an offer calculated to sow discord between the Presbyterians and the military, and to create confusion. He offered to abandon control of the armed forces for the remainder of his life on condition that it should return to to his successor; he accepted the establishment of Presbyterianism for three years until a national council settled the matter, but he defended religious freedom; finally, he took the defense of the army's demand to be paid and announced that he preferred the mode of election of Parliament defined in the Heads of Proposals of the Army. He allegedly even contacted the Levellers to propose to them a popular monarchy based on universal suffrage.

Charles I loses his head

In reality, he had made a deal with the Scots behind the back of his other contacts. The agreement was signed on December 26, 1647. It was entirely motivated by the specter of the Levellers and Anabaptists. Charles I signed the Covenant provided a Scottish army march on London and restord him to all his prerogatives. The Second Civil War began.
Royalist uprisings broke out in Wales and Kent. In addition to the "old" Royalists, some Presbyterians now fought for a "treaty with the king" and many malcontents protested the heavy burden of Parliamentary taxation.

The Council of the Army swore to bring the king to trial and on January 17, 1648, the Commons approvedl42 to 92 a resolution submitted by Henry Marten ending all negotiations with the king. Cromwell, the generals and the Independent Parliamentarians drew closer to the Levellers. Fairfax, Cromwell and Lambert divided the war operations to be conducted throughout the country; these ended on August 17, 1648 with Cromwell's victory over the Scottish army at Preston. Meanwhile in London, the Independents and Levellers opened negotiations over the second version of the Agreement of the People. From mid-1648 to fall 1649, the Levellers published an influential weekly, *The Moderate.*

But, with the most energetic Independents involved in campaigns away from London, the Presbyterians, who still had a majority, regained the upper hand. Denzil Holies returned and had a vote taken on August 24 to resume negotiations with the king.

This was too much for the returning victorious army. On November 20, 1648, the Council of the Army addressed a "Humble Remonstrance" to Parliament in which it asked for an end to negotiations and that the king be brought to trial. Parliament refused to discuss the matter. On December 6, colonel Pride and his regiment occupied the House of Commons — on orders from Cromwell, but without consulting Fairfax. He carried a list of a hundred representatives to be expelled. Only a "Rump" of Parliament now remained, in which the Independent finally had a majority.

But this coup was also a defeat for the Levellers who did not want a purge of Parliament, but its dissolution and new elections. By judging the king and proclaiming the republic, Cromwell, the generals and Independent members of Parliament implemented the outer appearances of the Levellers' program and gained some popularity among some of their followers. But the negotiations over the Agreement of the People petered out and the Levellers, realizing that the constant postponement of the promise to implement the Agreement of the People was merely designed to gain time, broke off the talks in January 1649. John Lilburne refused the offer of seats in the High Court of Justice that would judge Charles I. On January 20, the Commons postponed indefinitely the examination of the Agreement of the People.

On January 6, 1649, the House of Commons, without the agreement of the Lords, elected the High Court. On January 29, Charles I was

sentenced to death and executed the next day. On February 13, a Council of State of a dozen people was elected to govern the country. Oliver Cromwell was its president; its members included: Skippon, Pennington, Vane, Haselrig, Marten, Ludlow. On March 17, the monarchy was abolished. On March 19 the House of Lords was abolished. And on May 19, 1649, the Republic was proclaimed.

Judging and publicly executing the king was an unprecedented act in history. The event had immense impact throughout Europe. John Milton justified the regicide in his famous 1649 work, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*.

But Charles I, a skillful politician, played an elaborate part at his trial as the royal martyr, a victim of arbitrariness. His performance renewed the prestige of the monarchy among property owners scared by the transgressions of the people, and among some lower-class circles alienated by the anti-people policy of the king's judges. Over the next few years, the Royalist party would tap this sympathy with a success which increased in inverse ratio to the people's disappointment with Cromwell and Parliament.

Cromwell defeats the Levellers and the Irish revolt

The new republic was in fact a dictatorship of the generals. Caught between the Presbyterians' reaction and the Levellers' radicalism and faced with the intrigues of the king, Cromwell and the generals improvised a middle course, striking out to the right then to the left.

The Levellers loudly decried the betrayal of their hopes. On February 26, 1649, Lilburne submitted to Parliament a petition signed by several thousand people denouncing the increased severity of military discipline. It was entitled *England's New Chains Discovered*.

The English government finally had a free hand to put down the Irish revolt. On March 15, 1649, Cromwell was appointed commander of the expeditionary force sent to Ireland. The Levellers denounced the priority given to this military expedition and protested against the oppression of the Irish: First, implement the Agreement of the People, here and now! In reality the attack on Ireland was an operation designed to cut the Levellers off from potential support in English society by playing on the colonialist ambitions of petty-bourgeois sectors. Moved by the protests of the Levellers, the Council of the Army voted on March 25 that the army should not expropriate

the Irish. On March 26, Lilburne, Walwyn and Overton were arrested. On April 25, a regiment waiting to be shipped to Ireland mutinied, refused to leave and demanded the implementation of the Agreement of the People. The mutiny was put down. Fifteen "ringleaders" were court-martialed. Five were sentenced to death. Four were pardoned by Cromwell, but Robert Lockyer was shot. His funeral in London on the 29th was the largest popular demonstration of the English revolution. On May 10, four regiments stationed near Salisbury refused to leave for Ireland and mutinied in the name of the Agreement of the People. On May 12th, one of these mutinous regiments set out to meet the other three.

With two thousand sure troops, Cromwell went in pursuit of them, driving them on while negotiating with them; he finally surprised them at midnight at a bivouac and defeated them. This battle, the Battle of Burford, spelled the defeat of the Levellers. Four prisoners were sentenced to death and executed. Upon their return, Cromwell and Fairfax were made doctors *honoris causa* by the University of Oxford and celebrated at a banquet given by the Municipality of London on June 7. They had saved the rich from the "levelling beast." Lilburne defended himself brilliantly and was acquitted by the court, with the applause of the crowd, on October 26, 1649, and the Council of State was compelled to release the Leveller leaders on November 8. In December, Lilburne was even elected to the Common Council of the City of London, but Parliament annulled his election. In reality, though, the Levellers' movement was exhausted, repressed, dispersed and discouraged.

The division of the republicans

Their defeat in 1649 marked a turning point in the English revolution. The mobilization of the people which had carried them forward, although substantial, remained too partial and limited. More importantly it was blocked by the army which originated from the same popular mobilization and continued to enjoy the support of a section of the radicalized plebeians. These plebeians continued to idolize Cromwell, or at least viewed him as a lesser evil, a safeguard against a return to the Ancient Regime.

The Leveller officer who had achieved the highest rank and commanded the greatest authority, the only person who could have used military discipline on behalf of the Levellers' goals, colonel Rainsborough, was mysteriously assassinated during the Second Civil War in

October 1648.

Some of the Independent intellectuals around Cromwell, the most radical of those who were not pragmat-ists like him, but people of principle, republican theoreticians, were drawn very close to the Levellers for a while: among them were Edmund Ludlow, John Mil-ton, the lawyer John Cooke, who argued that Law should have a more of a social content and served as Lilburne's lawyer and as prosecutor in the king's trial, and Henry Marten who helped draft the first version of the Agreement of the People. Their social origins were similar to those of the Levellers' leaders but, unlike the latter, they did not dare cut off all bridges to Parliamentary circles and oppose Cromwell.

The radical leaders split: on the one side, the Levellers, on the other, those who trusted Cromwell and placed their hopes in a new republic of which they would become the administrators.

In summer 1649, the expedition against Ireland literally crushed the Irish revolt which had been simmering since 1641. Cromwell massacred all the inhabitants of Drogheda on September 11,1649.

The Irish were massively expropriated and driven into the northwestern provinces to make way for a large influx of Protestant settlers.

Gerard Winstanley and the Diggers

At the height of the wave of democratic radicalism, a more marginal though highly significant episode took place. In April 1649, **Gerard Winstanley** (1609-1676), a draper by trade, created a colony with his comrades; their goal was to begin to farm collectively the uncultivated common lands of St George's Hill, in Surrey. Their action was part of the wave of peasant movements against enclosures which the Levellers organized all over the London basin between 1646 and 1651. What made their endeavor original was that Gerard Winstanley was a theoretician of the abolition of private property who wanted to start a model experiment in agrarian communism. Winstanley and his comrades wanted to base their experiment on the latest agricultural techniques, notably the new crops (carrots, beans, lettuce and clover) that underpinned the fodder revolution. Their project was therefore nothing less than to propose an alternative — communist — path to the capitalist path of the large "improving" landlords for the emerging agricultural revolution. In the space of

one year, about ten colonies joined the Diggers or True Levellers movement. They demanded that confiscated lands be set aside in a fund of the Republic for poor peasants.

The Diggers' colonies only lasted as long as the Army protected them against the furious landowners of the surrounding area. In April 1650, the Army itself dispersed them, in rather benevolent fashion. In 1652, Winstanley published the remarkable book (dedicated to Cromwell!) which made him the most subtle radical philosopher of the English revolution, *The Law of Freedom or True Magistracy Restored.*

VIII. The impossible republic of the generals 1649-1660

The history of the next period, which runs to the restoration of the king in 1660, is the history of the Independents' impossible attempt to stabilize a republic consistent with their socially moderate outlook, under Cromwell's leadership. They cut piece after piece from their proposed reforms and made increasing concessions to social conservatism, but to no avail: their path was consistently obstructed by the propertied classes. They wanted a socially conservative republic, but with some minimal concessions to the plebeians to obtain the lat-ter's support for the regime. But while the propertied classes were willing to accept the republic, they wanted no generals at its head, let alone concessions to the plebeians. The Cromwellians, having smashed the popular movement and refused to extend the right to vote to the plebeians, were left without a social base to support them. Their power rested more and more on military and police force alone. They did not aspire to military dictatorship; to the contrary, they relentlessly tried to obtain a legitimate Parliament that would support their policy and vote a constitution and legal taxes. But all their attempts ran up against the same Parliamentary majority of Presbyterian property owners who demanded the suppression of religious tolerance and the dissolution of the army. The army was too expensive and too democratic for the taste of the owners. Cromwell and the generals never accepted these two demands, if only because the disappearance of the army would have meant their own disappearance. Reluctantly, they had to dissolve every Parliament before the end of its deliberations. In breaking the popular

movement, Cromwell and the generals had set into motion the mechanism that would bring about their own downfall.

Moment of truth and defeat of the republicans

In August 1652, the Council of Officers severely shocked the rump Parliament by presenting it with a petition demanding approval of sufficent provisions for the army, the abolition of the tithe, a reform of Law and a date for the dissolution of Parliament allowing the next one to be elected under the new election rules that were under debate. These rules, which set the property requirement for voting at two hundred pounds of personal capital, narrowed the eligibility to vote, but a fairer reapportionment of constituencies gave seats to many regions which had none. On the whole, the number of electors was increased.

As the rump Parliament gave no indication of intending to meet any of these demands, anger rose within the army. On April 20, 1653, Cromwell and major-general Harrison dissolved the Rump. Thomas Harrison, a former clerk and the son of a butcher who was the mayor of his town, represented a radical sector of the army. At the same time, Vane, Haselrig, Ludlow and Marten, overly attached to Parliamentary supremacy and opposed to military dictatorship, were removed from the Council of State.

Cromwell and the generals then convened a "designated" assembly, composed of representatives appointed by them, known as the Barebones Parliament (July-December 1653). This was the most progressive Parliament of the revolution. It instituted civil marriage and a law for the relief of poor debtors and prisoners; it tried to restrict the death penalty for thieves to second-offenders only, started work on a Penal Code, which Cromwell supported, and discussed the abolition of the tithe, which he did not support.

On December 12,1653 the right wing of the House led by two young noblemen, Sir Charles Wolseley and Sir Anthony Ashley-Cooper, succeeded in getting a vote for dissolution of the House passed in the absence of the majority. Cromwell ratified the dissolution and general Lambert took charge of sending on their way those representatives who obstinately tried to keep Parliament in session.

The Protectorate, a new monarchy

Harrison was removed from the Council of State while general Desborough, Wolseley, Ashley-Cooper and another aristocrat, colonel Edward Montagu, the nephew of the earl of Manchester, were added to it! Lambert wrote a constitution which became effective immediately on December 16, 1653, *The Instrument of Government:* the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland was to be governed by a "Lord-Protector," elected for life and a three-year Parliament of 460 members elected according to the new law with the two-hundred pound franchise described earlier.

By accepting the title of "Lord-Protector," the traditional English title for a regent of the kingdom, Oliver Cromwell not only acquired dictatorial powers that would facilitate his role in balancing the ruling classes on the one hand, and the army and plebeians on the other; he also accepted to establish, through his own person, the monarchical restoration to which the property owners aspired. The solemnity of the monarchy was reintroduced; Royalists who rallied to it were flattered; republicans withdrew to their homes or spent time in jail; at the head of the police, the reign of John Thurloe, Cromwell's former personal secretary, began with its tentacular network of informers; censorship was reestablished in August 1655, while the faithful John Milton, who had been secretary of foreign languages, left the government's service.

The first Parliament of the Protectorate sat from September 1654 to January 1655, after open and contested elections which produced a conservative, i.e., a Presbyterian majority. The Leveller Wildman was elected along with a few friends, but the Council of State forbade him taking his seat. Parliament set out to revise the Instrument of Government to reduce the powers of the Lord-Protector and increase those of Parliament, and to decrease religious tolerance; Ashley-Cooper proposed that Cromwell should become king; but Parliament refused to vote the supplies for which the government asked to pay the army. Having come to a dead-end, it was dissolved.

The country was then divided into eleven regions, each governed by a Major-General. This was the only time in history that England had such a centralized system with true prefects. The property owners raged: the administration of the counties had been taken away from them to be handed over to zealous new men who flattered the plebeians and began to stop enclosures.

A second Parliament sat from fall 1656 to February 1658. The majority of its members

vented their rage against the radicals by having the Quaker leader James Nayler (1617-1660), a former quartermaster of Lambert, condemned for "blasphemy" and sentenced to be whipped and have his tongue pierced. Cromwell allowed them to proceed but then addressed a solemn remonstrance to Parliament in defense of religious freedom.

Returning to the constitutional question, Parliament negotiated a compromise with Cromwell. According to the Humble Petition and Advice finally adopted on May 25, 1657, the powers of Parliament were expanded and religious tolerance restricted, but Cromwell was given the right to appoint his successor and designate an upper chamber which he filled with the dignitaries of his regime, mainly the generals. At the last moment, the generals forced Cromwell to refuse the title of king which Parliament had offered him. But general Lambert refused the new monarchy and resigned from all his functions.

When this Parliament refused to vote for military credits and claimed it had the right to reject nominations to the "Other House," it too was dissolved.

Discouraged and ill, Oliver Cromwell died in September 1658 amidst a widespread feeling that the regime had come to a dead-end.

IX. The evolution of democratic radicalism

The Levellers' defeat in 1649 led to disarray and fragmentation among the radicals, but not to their disappearance. A certain milieu of plebeian activists, a minority albeit a broad and influential one, survived and continued to agitate levelling ideas. Several political-religious currents can be distinguished in this milieu, often in competition with each other:

- After 1653, some of the main leaders of the Levellers, Wildman, Sexby, Overton, set themselves the goal of assassinating Cromwell. To that end, they entered into relations with the Royalists to obtain money and the support of their underground networks. Several attempts were made, but unsuccessfully; in most cases, Thurloe, who was kept well-informed, arrested the plotters when they had only begun their preparations. The most determined, Sexby, is the putative author of the 1657 best-seller *Killing No Murder* which justified the need to kill Cromwell. Implicated in an assassination attempt in January 1658, he was arrested in July and died in prison six months later, having gone mad (tortured?).

- The Ranters formed an identifiable milieu between 1649 and 1651 in London and a few large cities. They were plebeian intellectuals who met in taverns to smoke tobacco (a novelty at the time), a grass reputedly conducive to higher states of consciousness, to discuss daring ideas of all sorts and experiment with new lifestyles: communal living, nudism, free love and provocative insolence towards all public authorities. The Ranters took Antinomianism to new extremes: there was no sin and to the pure, all things were pure. There was no Beyond and God was a Force which existed in all humans and throughout nature. It was against them that Parliament voted the Blasphemy Law of August 9, 1650: anyone claiming to be God or the equal of God and denying the existence of sin would be punished. Repeatedly threatened, they were forced to retract and apologize in 1651.

- The Fifth Monarchists were a weightier current since Cromwell seemed allied with them from 1650 to 1653. Major-general Harrison was their most prominent member. They were Millennarians: Christ's return was imminent and He would overturn all terrestrial monarchies to establish His kingdom on earth, the Fifth Monarchy announced in the Book of Revelation of the Bible.

One had to prepare His coming by establishing a dictatorship of the saints, the conscious vanguard, that is, the New Model Army, instituting equality and abolishing all monarchies. The ranks of the Fifth Monarchists came from artisan-drapers and the army. Their leaders were a group of influential preachers. Their origin can be traced to a Millennarian statement published in Musselburgh on August 1, 1650 by a group of non-commissioned officers and soldiers of whom Cromwell spoke well, and to the Propagators of the Gospel sent by Parliament to Wales to evangelize the backward province. They demanded the abolition of the tithe, a democratization of guilds and municipalities, a reform of Law to help the poor and debtors, the election of judges and abolition of indirect taxes. They viewed the creation of the Protectorate as a betrayal, the "Apostasy," but refused to join plots against the regime and remained the radical republican current in the army. Several of their leaders were imprisoned under the Protectorate. In prison, they established relations with Henry Vane.

In 1657, a small group among them, mainly artisans, organized an armed revolt in the middle of London. They were led by Thomas Venner, a

cooper by trade, who published *A Standard Set Up.*

The Quakers

- While the Fifth Monarchists were an essentially Londonian current, the main radical current of the 1650s, the Society of Friends, known as the Quakers, hailed from the provinces, more precisely from the clothmaking regions of the north. As the Congrega-tionalists and the General Baptists (a split from the Anabaptists) bourgeoisified and moved away from any sort of radicalism after 1649, the Quakers inherited the Anabaptist and Familist tradition. The Quakers did not believe in a Beyond, rejected any form of sacrament or priesthood, questioned the faithfulness of the Scriptures to the spirit of Christ, refused to take oaths and to take off their hat before a superior, and addressed everyone informally as thee and thou. The Quakers' Christianity emphasized the Inner Light of each believer. Instead of a service, the community of Quakers gathered and waited in silence for God to inspire one of them, who would then preach while shaking in a trance.

The Quakers were founded in 1651 by two former soldiers turned itinerant preachers, James Nayler (1617-1660) and George Fox (1624-1691). They recruited many former soldiers who after being expelled from the army for radicalism, had become itinerant craftsmen, many repented Ranters, and many former Levellers. In fact, the ruling classes considered them purely and simply as the continuation of the Leveller movement. This was not without reason: during the 1650s, the Quakers' pamphlets reasserted most points of the Leveller program and even put them forward in open letters to Cromwell and petitions to Parliament. They actively participated in the Parliamentary elections of 1656 and in 1659 several Quaker figures proposed to apply constitutional formulas close to those of the Agreement of the People. John Lilburne who, although again acquitted by a court in 1653, remained imprisoned, joined the Quakers from his prison. When he died in jail in 1657, they organized a moving funeral for him. Gerard Winstanley also died a Quaker.

X. An enlightened and effective regime

Cromwell's regime can boast of many achieve-ments. These were owed in great part to the availability of large sums of money obtained through confiscation and sale of Church and Royalist lands and through a rational organization of indirect taxation.

- Domestically, his administration, staffed by new men of lower social extraction than their royal predecessors, but trained in the strict school of Puritan principles, was the most rational, honest and efficient administration that England had ever known until that time or would know for a long time thereafter. Most civil servants received a precisely calculated wage instead of the commissions that had been a source of corruption.

Thurloe was not only the chief of the police but the organizer of a postal service which the state extended over the entire territory. Regular stagecoach lines were generalized.

In 1655, the Jews were readmitted to England, from which they had been expelled in the Middle Ages.

In occupied Scotland, the peasantry was freed from feudal obligations.

In razing all fortified castles, the Republic imprinted a mark on the English countryside still visible today. The University of Oxford was purged of the theoreticians of the divine right of kings and other scholastic conservatives, and a pleiad of forward-looking Baconian scientists installed in their place: John Wallis (1616-1703), the great mathematician and cryptographer of the Commonwealth, Jonathan Goddard, its chief army medical officer, Sir William Petty (1623-1687), the surveyor, statistician and economist.

Giving the lie to the Puritans' reputation as killjoys, it was under Cromwell that England introduced the first opera performances and allowed the first women on stage as actresses.

From internationalism to imperialism

- Externally, while absolutist England had been only a second-rate European power, the England of the Republic and Protectorate was a great power which built up the most powerful navy in Europe.

On October 9, 1651 Parliament voted the Navigation Act, a protectionist law designed to favor English shipowners: merchandise could enter or leave English ports only on English ships or on ships of the producing country or importing country, if they were European countries; the act

excluded all intermediaries. This was a challenge to the supremacy of the Dutch merchants. It caused the war of 1652 with the Netherlands, won by England. England now succeeded the Netherlands as the foremost economic power of Europe.

England extended its protection to the Protestants of the entire continent. Its foreign policy evolved as its domestic policy had; that of the Republic was revolutionary: admiral Blake (1599-1647) landed in Cadiz in 1651 and, alluding to the wave of revolutionary crises then shaking Europe (Catalonia 1640-1652, Sicily 1647, Naples 1647, France 1648-1653), announced on the public square that the world had grown tired of kings and that all countries would become republics. The former agitator Sexby was sent to Bordeaux as an agent of the English government from 1651 to 1653 and won the plebeian revolutionaries of the Ormée (the rebel government of the Gironde area) to endorse the text of the Agreement of the People.

Under the Protectorate, England's foreign policy entirely lost its internationalist dimension and became simply imperialist. As early as 1654, the English navy gained control of the Mediterranean. The Barbary pirates were liquidated and English naval bases imposed on the beys of Algiers and Tunis. In 1654, a commercial treaty was concluded with Portugal, which had just separated from Spain and placed itself under the protection of the English navy. In alliance with French absolutism, war was declared on Spain. Jamaica was conquered in 1655 and the Spanish silver fleet intercepted and destroyed in 1655 and again in 1657. That year, Cromwell created a sensation by sending off three fleets to different and distant places at the same time: Blake to the Mediterranean, Penn to the Caribbean and Goodson to the Baltic!

XI. The collapse of the regime 1658-1660

The semi-monarchical constitution of the Protectorate foresaw that at the death of Cromwell, his son, Richard, would succeed him. Richard Cromwell (1626-1712) was a more competent man than commonly remembered, but he was soon overwhelmed by events. Oliver Cromwell had played an irreplaceable personal role in maintaining the equilibrium of the regime. He alone enjoyed such authority, at once the prestige of the military chief and of the Parliamentary leader; he alone had learned to keep close ties with both the property owners and the popular religious dissenters and pursue a policy of equilibrium. In the vacuum left by his death, the ambiguities of the regime returned to the form of an unresolved clash of conflicting parties. The summits of the regime appeared divided in two parties: that of the "restorationist" civilians whose ascension had marked the last years of Cromwell's personal rule, who proposed the Crown to him, and to whom Richard Cromwell was clearly linked; and that of the generals, led by the most political among them, Fleetwood, Des-borough and Lambert, who preserved some links with the army's tradition of plebeian republicanism. The latter intended to get their revenge on the former, and in the breach opened by the division of the summit and the relaxation of censorship, democratic radicalism revived, first in the army, then beyond.

Republican resurgence

From October 1658, a petition circulated in the army asking that Fleetwood be appointed commander-in-chief, a function which Oliver had held jointly with that of Lord-Protector; another petition, less to the liking of the generals, asked that no officer be purged without a court-martial. In November, a Parliament was convened, "as is the custom at the beginning of a reign." Elected in constituencies and according to the electoral rules defined under the monarchy, it could not but reflect once again the traditional elite of the country which, moreover, was drifting further to the right.

In the new circumstances, the various republican tendencies managed to close ranks somewhat. But the resignation and passivity of the masses and the involvement of the most active plebeian circles in the religious sects, totally deprived republicanism of a mass base, a means of pressure. Or was it rather precisely their absence which allowed the republicans to close ranks? The only remaining social base of republicanism was the army, but the place of the army was the main subject of discord among the republicans

Immediately to the right of the place formerly occupied by the Levellers, a new group of republicans emerged, forming the left wing of the republican Parliamentarians. This new group had gathered around a new personality whose authority had been earned as a theoretician:

James **Harrington** (1616-1677) was the

most penetrating republican theoretician produced by the English revolution, the one whose economic explanation of the causes of political revolutions made him a precursor of the Enlightenment. Born into the good and wealthy nobility, he had a brother who was a big merchant specializing in trade with the Levant. He was himself a university intellectual who did not participate in the Civil War. An erudite who had studied Greek and Roman Antiquity and the Italian republics and an admirer of Venice and Macchiavelli, his reasoning was based on comparative history.

He became famous when he published *The Republic of Oceana* in 1656, a book which recounted the history and revolution of an imaginary country, Oceana, in which everyone recognized England, and described in the Utopian mode the application of his constitutional proposals. *Oceana* was a polemic against Thomas Hobbes's (1588-1679) *Leviathan* (1651); Hobbes, although disliked by the Royalists as a materialist and atheist, was nonetheless the theoretician of absolutism and became the tutor of the young Charles II.

Harrington explained the conflict between the Commons and Crown by the economic decline of the feudal nobility and the enrichment of a new, more numerous, class of property owners represented by the Commons. With this "new balance [or distribution] of property," the monarchy had been deprived of its necessary social base. For to each balance of property corresponded a different form of government: to the "Gothic" balance the monarchy, to the new balance, in which the "people" was far richer than the remains of the nobility, the republic and democracy.

James Harrington is often considered as the theoretician of the propertied franchise. In fact, he favored universal manhood suffrage. More precisely, he was the theoretician of a combination of manhood suffrage and propertied franchise through multi-tiered institutions of indirect democracy (two houses corresponding to two classes of electors defined by income and age). In practice, in 1659 and 1660, he inspired an attempted compromise between the plebeians' democratic radicalism and the property owners' republicanism. That is why during the French revolution the men of the post-Thermidorian Directory (1795-1799) turned to him for inspiration, why they published his writings in French, and why several founding fathers of the American revolution identified with him. Faced

with the problem of the contradiction between the demand for universal suffrage and the preservation of economic inequality in capitalism, he was one of the forerunners of the analysis of the conditions of equilibrium of "bourgeois democracy."

Harrington set up a discussion club that became the focus of the desperate efforts of the republicans to transform the military dictatorship into an institutionalized republic and prevent the restoration of the king, made steadily more likely by the general unpopularity of the regime, the ebb of the popular movement and the determination of the propertied classes to end all forms of plebeian radicalism.

This club became famous as the Rota Club. It brought together the flower of the republican intelligentsia, including the MP Henry Neville, a close political friend of Marten, the former Leveller leaders John Wildman (1621-1693) and Maximilian Petty, and the young Samuel Pepys (1633-1703). Milton and Vane kept away but were represented by very close friends; Milton by Andrew Marvell and Cyriack Skinner, Vane by Henry Stubbe (1632-1676). Moreover, Milton's friends met at the house of his friend, general Fleetwood, with Ludlow, another political friend of Harrington.

Richard Cromwell's Parliament met on January 27 1659. The republicans were only a small minority in it.

Re establishment of the republic

Of course, this House of Commons too refused to pay the army. In addition, it refused for months to recognize the "Other House" as various oppositions combined their forces: to the left of the Protectorate, the republicans who saw in it only the "creatures" of the government; to its right, the Presbyterian and semi-Royalist majority who saw in it only revolutionary upstarts usurping the place of the true House of true Lords. The debate ended with a victory of the right which finally recognized the "Other House" but added that it did not intend to exclude from it the former Lords (March 28, 1659). On April 18, the Commons, over the opposition of all republicans, united for once, voted on a resolution against the army banning all meetings of the Council of Officers and demanding from the latter an oath never to interrupt Parliamentary debates. This was too much. Since March, officers had been meeting to discuss politics again; since April "agitators" had started meeting again at the Nag's Head Tavern.

On April 2, the Council of the Army met (for the first time in a long while) and Fleetwood received a petition signed by 680 officers and non-commissioned officers. On February 16, a pamphlet outlining the standpoint of the Levellers had already been issued under the title *The Leveller,* immediately answered by Harrington's *Art of Lawgiving.* When the Lord-Protector finally ordered the dissolution of the Council of the Army, Fleetwood and Desborough, under the pressure of the rank-and-file, organized a military coup on April 21, 1659 and forced him to dissolve Parliament

But the generals, particularly Lambert who now came back to the fore, distrusted the republicans and were wary of any sort of "democratic adventure." Lacking any other options, they recalled the Rump Parliament, which seemed preferable to Harrington's Utopias and offered the advantage of the appearance of a return to the good old days before 1653 when the defenders of the "Cause" were united and powerful, and therefore of a concession to the republicans. On May 8, the first forty veterans of the Rump, among whom the republicans prevailed, met, voted that they intended to reestablish the Republic without a Protector and House of Lords, and established a Committee of Public Safety. The administrators of the Protectorate were replaced and Vane, Ludlow and Haselrig returned to power. On May 25, Richard Cromwell submitted his resignation and retired to his estate where a long and peaceful life awaited him.

The restored republic disintegrated in a few months as its makers quarreled among themselves. Meanwhile, the ruling classes, alarmed by the resurgence of republican radicalism, now shifted to open Royalism, while the popular classes, disappointed and confused too many times, disgusted by the arbitrariness of the generals, came to hope for a return of the king in which they now saw a return to legal forms.

How to create a lasting republic?

The generals schemed against each other while the republicans polemicized in pamphlets in which they desperately tried to defend the validity of the republic. The issues of social discontent and the army continued to divide them. The Levellers, who experienced a certain revival in summer 1659, violently opposed a dictatorship of the generals and fought for a single assembly elected by universal suffrage, limited only by the provisions of the Agreement of the People. Harrington and his friends, adverse to the generals'

dictatorship and worried by its fiscal cost, proposed to dissolve the army following the election of a Lower House of one thousand representatives elected by universal suffrage in 50 equal constituencies, and an Upper House, or Senate of 300 members elected by a propertied franchise and renewed at regular intervals by rotation (like the U.S. Senate!) *(Pour enclouer le canon,* by James Harrington, May 2, 1659; *The Army's Dutie, or Faithful Adviceto the Souldiers,* by Neville, Marten and Wildman, May 2, 1659; *The Humble Petition of DiverseWell-Affected Persons,* July 6, 1659). Milton's and Vane's friends were more realistic and understood that the army was the last bulwark against a restoration of the monarchy and that any elected assembly might well be inclined towards the king. They therefore proposed an Upper House composed of sure personalities, appointed for life, whose function would be to preserve the advances of the revolution (A *Needful Corrective or Balance in Popular Government, expressed in a letter to James Harrington, Esquire, upon occasion of a late treatise of his,* by H. Vane, May 1659; *An Essay in Defense of the Good Old Cause,* by H. Stubbe, September 1659; *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth,* by J. Milton, October 1659). Stubbe, who had less reservations about universal suffrage than Mil-ton, proposed a House of Commons elected by universal suffrage, plus a "select Senate," appointed for life, including leading figures of the Independents (and therefore many generals), but also of the Anabaptists, Fifth Monarchists and even Quakers. Finally, another tendency, led by Haselrig, upheld a fiercely oligarchic republicanism in the form of a single House elected by property owners only.

Disintegration

Haselrig, a master at parliamentary maneuvers, chose repeatedly the risky gamble of an alliance with the Commons majority to attack the army in the name of Parliamentary supremacy. Predictably, when the Rump finally met, it failed to vote provisions for the army. On August 19,1659, Lambert had to put down a sizeable rebellion in Cheshire in which both Royalists and Presbyterians had participated under the slogan "A Free Parliament, Lower Taxes." The victorious army addressed a petition to the Rump which the latter ordered banned on September 23,1659. On October 10, the Rump invalidated all the laws edicted since 1653 and voted to place Lambert under arrest for authorizing the petition to circulate among his troops. The

generals wasted no time in fighting back.

Two days later, on October 12, 1659, there was a new military coup; the army closed down Parliament and prevented it from meeting. A new Public Safety Committee was formed with generals and moderate pro-army republicans.

This was the time chosen by general Monck, the commander of the occupation army in Scotland since 1650, whose shadow had been looming more menacingly since the death of Oliver Cromwell, to make his move. George Monck (1608-1670), a former career officer of the royal army won over in 1646, had always stayed away from London politics and carefully suppressed all political activity in his regiments. His army, paid regularly on the taxes levied in occupied Scotland, was the ideal tool for a reactionary coup. In fact, Monck had already advised Richard Cromwell to purge the army, reduce religious tolerance and appoint to the Upper House certain well-born personalities ... who subsequently joined the Royalist uprising of summer 1659.

In October 1659, Monck protested against the suspension of the Rump and announced that he would intervene to restore civilian authority against the seditious Lambert.

Desperately seeking support, the Public Safety Committee finally drew closer to the Quakers and proposed to reinstate them in the army with commanding positions and a lieutenant-colonelcy for Fox. Already, since Richard Cromwell's fall, Quakers had been appointed to responsible positions, particularly as justices of the peace in the counties. But the proposal came too late. The Quakers refused. They did not trust the generals. Fox published a few more anti-monarchical pamphlets, but subsequently turned to setting up a stricter organizational structure for the Quakers, to restoring faith in a Beyond, and, in January 1660, to proclaiming the principle of non-violence, all measures designed to turn the Quakers into a sect capable of surviving the Restoration.

The king restored

Monck, having received guarantees from the Scottish ruling classes, marched slowly on London to the delight of property owners everywhere along his way who saw in him the instrument of their revenge. The ground was slipping from under the feet of republicans of all stripes at a dizzying speed. In early December, Ashley-Cooper turned the garrison of Portsmouth against the Committee of Public Safety; Fairfax rallied the Yorkshire gentry to

rebellion, joined Monck and seized the city of York; the admirals joined Monck and took the navy up the Thames. Elections changed the majority in the London Common Council and purged those who had purchased confiscated lands; the new municipality refused to extend any credit to the government: the London bourgeoisie was abandoning the regime. The generals were loosing their bearings amidst a pitiful confusion. On December 24, Fleetwood authorized the Rump to meet, resigned from all his responsibilities and retired to his home.

The Rump excluded Lambert and Vane from its membership. Monck entered London on February 3, 1660, without firing a shot. He jailed the generals, Republicans and Levellers, purged the army and readmitted to the Commons the representatives purged from it in 1648. Denzil Holies returned. Cautiously, never revealing his intentions, Monck organized the Restoration. He had the Commons vote to dissolve on March 16, and hold an election of a convention Parliament to meet on April 25.

As soon as Monck entered London, Edward Hyde understood that, from his exile, Charles II had only to promise a reasonable amnesty, reasonable freedom of conscience in religious matters, and above all, some form of guarantee of the titles of all buyers of expropriated lands and the continued validity of the anti-absolutist legislation signed by his father in 1641, for the property owning classes to reunite around his restoration to the throne. This is precisely what he did on April 4 with the Declaration of Breda, written by Hyde. On May 8, Parliament, including the House of Lords, as in the old days, proclaimed Charles Stuart king. Charles II entered London on May 29,1660 cheered by the crowd.

The army was dissolved save for Monck's four regiments, this time after being scrupulously paid (one million pounds were allocated to that effect!) Fleetwood summed the matter up for the Puritans: "God has spit in our face!"

XII. From the Restoration to modern England

Revenge

The Royalists, returning from abroad or from their internal exile, took their revenge. Eleven Republican statesmen and regicides, including major-general Harrison and Sir Henry Vane, were decapitated after proudly justifying their actions and ideas. A few dozen others were imprisoned

for life, such as the old alderman Isaac Pennington, who died in prison in December 1660, and general Lambert, heartbroken by the events of 1660 and locked up in Guernesey fortress, until his death in 1683. Several survived only because they went into exile on the continent or in America, as Edmund Ludlow (1617-1692) who took refuge in Vevey, Switzerland, where he lived until 1692 and wrote his memoirs, true to his convictions.

The corpses of Cromwell and a few other people, including admiral Blake, were disinterred to be publicly hanged

Edward Hyde, made earl of Clarendon, became Lord Chancellor and took over the government. But most of the Protectorate's administrative staff and a good part of the governmental staff remained in place, to the disappointment of the Royalists who had hoped to replace them. The king was restored at the summit of a state apparatus which remained that of the Protectorate. George Monck was made duke of Albermarle; the earl of Manchester was appointed Lord Chamberlain; Edward Montagu earl of Sandwich; Anthony Ashley-Cooper baron then earl of Shaftesbury; Denzil Holies, made baron was henceforth Lord Holies. Of the thirty members of the king's Privy Council in 1661, twelve had fought the Civil War on the Parliamentary side. This was the revenge of the Presbyterians.

But the Royalists too wanted revenge. They were able to vent their furor a little later. The occasion arose in 1661 after the second uprising of Thomas Venner's Fifth Monarchists. For several days, groups of artisans fought the forces of order in London. Venner had published a manifesto, *A Door of Hope.* The rising was drowned in blood and Venner executed this time.

The Restoration now became tougher: James Harrington was arrested on December 28, 1661; he. remained in jail until 1665, first in the Tower of London, then in Plymouth, but was released before his time as he had become mentally deranged. Wildman also spent six years in jail.

The ostensibly conservative Presbyterian clergy now fell prey, in turn, to the restorationist furor. The new Parliament was filled with Royalist bigots who, for lack of any prospect of recovering their lands, dedicated themselves to restoring the Anglican Church in its full Laudian pomp and adopting draconian laws against all sorts of religious dissenters. As a result, 1760 Presbyterian curates, whom the Anabaptists and Quakers had considered persecutors, discovered in 1662 to their great surprise that they were now the persecuted ones, driven out of their parishes and thereby deprived of their livings.

Survival and lasting gains

John Milton was arrested when the Restoration took place and narrowly escaped being condemned; his books were burned; after his release, he had to hide in his home, to be forgotten and lived by giving private lessons. He applied himself to his three masterpieces, three great epic Biblical poems: *Paradise Lost,* published in 1642, was an epic of the Fall in which the despondent poet perceived the malice of history as the malice of the God of the Old Testament; *Paradise Recovered,* the epic of Christ, was published in 1671 at the same time as *Samson Agonistes,* which was the epic of hope recovered and of the second chance of the leader of the Hebrew people. Milton had to try and out-smart the censors while his readers had to decode between the lines the allusions that maintained their faith in the Republican ideals. Milton became the poet of the Whigs.

As for Henry Stubbe, he made his living as a doctor and wrote what is probably the most breathtaking application of the Puritan critical mind: his *Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism, with the Life of Mahomet.* This was in fact a history of early Christianity through the efforts to locate the origins of Islam in primitive Christianity. A translation of the Koran had been published in London in 1649 and Islam, with its doctrinal simplicity and rigorous monotheism, fascinated the Puritans. Stubbe's book was not published but circulated among intellectuals.

The Baconian scientists had been driven out of Oxford University by the Restoration. As for John Ray (1627-1705), the botanist and paleontologist, and probably the most brilliant biologist of his time, he preferred to resign from his chair in Cambridge than to serve "under the yoke of slavery." But while Oxford and Cambridge could turn the wheels of history back, the Baconian scientists were too prestigious to remain outlaws.

Led by Wallis and Robert Hooke (1653-1703), the great physicist and anatomist, they obtained the support of king Charles II himself to found a private society that would become the model of other academies of science throughout Europe: the Royal Society. Under its aegis, English science literally exploded and acquired an uncontested superiority among European scientists: the physicist and chemist Robert Boyle (1627-1691),

the astronomer John Flamsteed (1646-1719) who founded the Greenwich observatory, his successor Edmund Halley (1656-1742), who predicted that the comet of 1681-1682 would return in 1758, and especially the great Isaac Newton (1642-1727) whose theory of universal gravitation (in addition to his differential calculus and theory of colors) placed the stars under the empire of mathematics and founded the possibility of elucidating the mechanism of the whole universe. New-ton's God the clockmaker succeeded to Milton's interventionist Providence.

It is not easy to define the class nature of the regime produced by the Restoration of 1660. Superficially the king, the court, the lords and bishops reproduced all the ceremonies of an absolutist monarchy. But below them, the supremacy of the House of Commons, henceforward summoned at frequent intervals, was solidly established. The anti-absolutist legislation of 1641 was not abolished, the Navigation Act was confirmed. English absolutism had disappeared forever, as had feudalism. The soldiers released from service were given the right to set up a trade without being certified by the craft guilds. By 1689, of the 200 main English cities, only one quarter still had guilds.

The Whigs' Parliamentary Monarchy

In February 1660, Harrington had predicted to his friend Aubrey that the Parliament, just elected and dominated by the Royalists, being a Parliament of property owners, would turn Republican within seven years. It did not, in fact, turn Republican in the strict sense of the word but it did in the sense that Harrington meant: for by 1667, the same representatives overturned the earl of Clarendon and submitted the accounts of the state to a Parliamentary committee, as in the best days of the Commonwealth, a move unheard of in absolutist Europe. From 1661 to 1673, the strongman of the government was the earl of Shaftesbury, that is Ashley-Cooper, Cromwell's former minister! After his downfall, Shaftesbury (1621-1683) founded the Whig Party, the ancestor of the Liberal Party that governed England for a good part of the 18th and 19th centuries.

King Charles II was a clever but rather disillusioned man. During his long reign (1660-1685), he systematically but cautiously strengthened his power. By contrast, the prince next in line for succession, his younger brother James (the duke of York) ostentatiously advertised his commitment to a fierce absolutist program. Against the latter and against the strengthening of the Court and Church, Shaftesbury united the Presbyterians around old Denzil Holies, the London merchants and financiers and the Protestant dissenters, to found the Green Ribbon Club in 1675. Green had been the color of the Levellers... The new Whig Party campaigned in 1679 to have Parliament exclude the duke of York from the succession, but to no avail.

The Whigs' adversaries, the Tories, ancestors of the present-day Conservatives, advocated a strong royal power and the persecution of religious dissenters. They were supported by the rural gentry. Nevertheless, even they situated themselves within the framework of Parliamentary supremacy as defined by the legislation of 1641. And while Charles II and James II converted to Catholicism and surrounded themselves with Catholic ministers and officers, they did so only because the latter were the only ones prepared to support an outright absolutist program.

James II reestablished royal prerogatives little by little, incurring the displeasure of Parliament, but when he dared to seek an alliance with plebeian religious dissenters, over the head of the ruling classes, the Tories and Whigs could no longer stand it and united against him (1688). They called on his son-in-law, the prince of Orange, stadhouder of the very bourgeois Republic of the Netherlands. William of Orange landed at the head of a powerful army and very peacefully entered London while James II returned into exile for the rest of his life. William and his wife Mary were proclaimed sovereigns by Parliament after they signed a Bill of Rights drastically cutting back royal prerogatives. However, the old Republican Ludlow, who thought the time had come for him to return to England, was arrested and firmly sent back to the continent. For the next 150 years, the Whigs would discuss broadening the franchise, but, although in power for most of that time, never did anything about it. The Whig Era witnessed the creation of the Bank of England (1694), the invention of the vote on the public budget, of a cabinet of ministers accountable to Parliament and not the king, the introduction of freedom of the press in 1695, the Union of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland (1707), the industrial revolution and the conquest of India. A bourgeois state was born in the form of a parliamentary monarchy based on a narrow franchise and socially conservative. It was the second bourgeois state in Europe, after the Netherlands, and like them a refuge and model for the

Enlightenment philosophers. The left-wing Whig editor Toland pub-lished the memoirs of Ludlow in 1698 and the complete works of Harrington in 1700.

From the Whigs to the Enlightenment

The ideologue of the Whigs was John Locke (1632-1704). *The protégé* of Shaftesbury, he became the philosophical and political fountainhead of Voltaire and the Enlightenment. He glorified the distinguished coup of 1688 which, according to him, had removed any need for a new revolution. With his *First Treatise on Civil Government* of 1690, he became the theoretician of constitutional monarchy. It was through him that the Enlightenment, and therefore the French revolutionaries of 1789, inherited whatever they did from the English revolution: the moderate constitutionalism of the Whigs, the heirs of the Presbyterians of 1640 to 1660. Independent republicanism, Cromwell, democratic radicalism and the Levellers' ideas were all lost in this transmission and remained taboo. The Republicans who survived into the last years of the 17th century still reviled the Whig regime in which they saw only the betrayal of the ideals of the revolution, but their language was becoming unintelligible to progressives and radicals of the 18th century. The democratic political content of the Levellers' program was exactly the same as that of the late 18th century democrats, but they were separated by a cultural gap. The Jacobins did not recognize the English Levellers and Republicans as their ancestors because they did not know of them. The latter's writings lay buried in archives rendered obscure by their complex Biblical language. By contrast, Locke wrote in the clear, rationalist and above all secular — albeit simplified — language of the Enlightenment.

The English Presbyterians became the "Latitudinarians:" with them, Calvinism lost its bite and became a tolerant rationalist deism. The mental universe of the English revolution had finally disappeared.

Locke and the Whigs therefore transmitted to the Enlightenment an ultra-moderate interpretation of the legacy of the English revolution. In the same vein, the particular institution of Free Masonry, so typical of the Enlightenment and Liberalism, was imported from England. The society was founded in 1717 in London. It was established in France for the first time in 1725. Its first condemnation by the Vatican dates back to 1738. Free Masonry combined esoteric rituals with the ideology of liberalism, tolerance, philanthropy, rationalism as well as ultra-moderate reformism, a distrust of the people and democracy, so typical of the Enlightenment. It became a meeting place for Enlightenment philosophers, progressive bourgeois, enlightened aristocrats and even reform-minded kings. Indeed the trust in the efficacy of reform from above, implemented by "enlightened despots," was very typical of the Enlightenment. But Free Masonry was also the place where the preliminary regroupment of many revolutionaries of the late 18th and 19th century took place: many leaders of the North American, French and Latin American rev-olutions were Free Masons; to name but a few: Con-dorcet, La Fayette, Danton, Marat, Couthon, Babeuf... as well as Mozart.

As for the Quakers, after being cruelly persecuted in the 1660s and 1670s, they were finally left in peace. Excluded from all public employment and the universities, they were a plebeian sect renowned for its moral and non-violent principles and its generosity. With schools of their own and their refusal to bend to the petty rituals of social deference, they were a school of plebeian dignity. But they also formed a network of mutual aid and specialized in trade and loans during the English capitalist expansion of the 18th century, giving rise to great capitalist enterprises: Lloyds and Barclays!

The revival of English democracy

The 18th century witnessed the industrial revolution in England almost one century before the continent: Adam Smith (1723-1790) published *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776, the entrepreneur John Wilkinson built the first iron bridge in 1779, James Watt (1736-1819) developed the rotary steam engine in 1784.

It witnessed the liquidation of the English artisan and peasant, the exodus of the rural populations, the formation of the English working class, the darkest poverty for the masses as well as the industrial take-off and the first signs of a rise in the standard of living of the English industrial wage earner.

English democratic radicalism revived in 1768 around the defense of the fiery distiller, editor and left-wing Whig Member of Parliament: John Wilkes (1727-1797). In 1776, the year of the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, Wilkes submitted to the Commons a proposal for universal manhood suffrage, to no avail of course.

Elected alderman then Lord-Mayor of London under the pressure of the plebeian movement, Wilkes and other left-wing Whigs supported the American insurgents. In 1776, in Philadelphia, a Quaker newly arrived from England, Thomas Paine (1737-1809), a corset-maker by trade and passionate reader of Milton, published a republican manifesto in favor of independence that soon became a best-seller, *Common Sense*. Paine who was the leader of the democratic plebeian movement in the American revolution, **returned to England where, from 1789 to 1792, he joined or rather competed with the left-wing Whigs in leading the movement of solidarity with the French revolution. Around Paine were the feminist Mary Woll-stonecraft (1759-1797) and her husband, the radical writer William Godwin (1756-1836). Paine had to take refuge in France in 1792; a member of the Convention, he sat with the Girondins. He embodied the democratic republican internationalism of the revolutions of the late 18th century. But in the England of the industrial revolution, "Jacobinism" was a political movement of the working class and no longer only of artisans! The Whigs turned away from it as they turned away from the French revolution. It was to answer the rightward drift of one of them, Edmund Burke (1729-1797), expressed in his 1790 pamphlet Reflections on the Revolution in France which became the handbook of the Liberal counter-revolution, that Paine wrote The Rights of Man in 1791. English "Jacobinism" was cruelly hunted down.**

It fell upon the workers movement to press for universal suffrage through the Chartists' mass petition campaigns from 1829 to 1839-1842. In the Reform Act of 1832, the English ruling classes only conceded a slight loosening of the propertied franchise and a bit more justice in the allocation of seats to constituencies: this amounted to no more than a belated reestablish-ment of the electoral reform of 1654! Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham recovered the seats obtained in 1654 but withdrawn in 1658! The number of eligible voters increased from 500 000 to 800 000 in a country of 24 million inhabitants.

Yet the revolution of 1640-1660 must have finally overturned the decisive obstacles since the regime founded in 1660-1688 proved actually capable of transforming itself by degrees, through the 19th and 20th centuries, into a parliamentary democracy similar to that of other industrialized capitalist countries. It was able, like the others, to integrate its labor movement; among the major steps along the way were the successive broadening of the franchise in 1867 and 1884-1885. In 1885 the number of eligible voters climbed from 900 000 to 2.5 million. The powers of the House of Lords were restricted in 1911. In 1918, universal manhood suffrage was finally instituted at the same time as the right to vote of women of 30 years of age or more; universal female suffrage, in 1928.**

All these reforms were achieved only under the pressure of the labor movement, each time through long and hard battles, yet without genuine governmental crises.

The revolution repudiated

The revolution of 1640-1660 is not celebrated by British officialdom these days. Quite the contrary! Today as during the entire 19th and 20th centuries, it is, paradoxically, the labour movement which must constantly rescue the memory of the revolution, not only of the Levellers, but even of Cromwell, from slander by the bourgeoisie.

In restoring the royalty in 1660 and accepting that the corpses of Cromwell and other revolutionaries be disinterred and hanged, the leaders of the British ruling classes cast a veil of infamy on the twenty years of the revolution. Down to this day, the revolution of 1640-1660 is defamed, at best as an accidental and fratricidal civil war, at worst as the odious rebellion of fanatics, whereas the distinguished coup of 1688 is termed the "Glorious Revolution."

The compromise of 1660, in dressing the English bourgeois state in the frills of a feudal monarchy, created the justification system of the British state still in force today (and by the same token encumbered the state of a great 20th century imperialist power with medieval survivals).

This justification system, invented by the Whigs, emphasized the aspects of continuity with the pre-1640 period and post-1660 period, and not the aspects of rupture. It invented the myth of an ideal parliamentary monarchy under good queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603), destroyed by the bad Stuart kings and reestablished by the good anti-absolutist legislation of 1641, the subsequent execution of Charles I being an absurd and regrettable deviation.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the point was to preach a gradualism full of respect for tradition in the face of the growing struggles of the working class and dangers of proletarian revolution. The assemblage of feudal and

capitalist institutions, slapped together between 1660 and the 18th century, was therefore made into a virtue, a sign of the alleged British genius for gradual peaceful change. In the second half of the 19th century, the benefits of industrialization and the conquest of empire sanctified this assemblage with the prestige of success in the eyes of millions of workers. Their fascination with the British monarchy has lasted down to this day.

1789-1989: Two new books
on the French revolution

Daniel Bensaid

Moi, la Révolution.

Remembrances dune bicentenaire indigne

Paris: Gallimard, 1989   An essay, written in the first person, on the contradictions of the French revolution: its attitude towards slavery, women's emancipation, internationalism and elitist republican institutions.

E. Balibar, J.-S. Beek, D. Bensaid, D. Berger,
F. Dosse, F. Gabriel, F. Gauthier, J.-F. Gay,
A. Geoffroy, P. Geneste, G.-R. Ikni, G. Labica,
O. Le Cour, M. Lequenne, M. L6wy, K. Mann,
G. Pago, M. Riot-Sancey, P. Tort, E. Toussaint.

(Permanence de la révolution.

Pour un autre bicentenaire
Paris: La Breche, 1989

Twenty authors challenge the interpretation of the French revolution promoted by the official organizers
of the bicentennial festivities.

The English Revolution
1640-1660

KINGDOM OF
SCOTLAND

Berwick

Edinburgh

Newcastle

Durham

Marston Moor
York
Bradford ● Leeds
Preston
● Manchester

Drogheda

Dublin

KINGDOM OF IRELAND

Nottingham

KINGDOM OF ENGLAND

Naseby

IV. Have Bourgeois Revolutions Existed?

A particular view of "bourgeois revolutions" gained currency within Marxism towards the end of the 19th century. It blended nicely with the commemorative tradition kept alive by bourgeois or petty-bourgeois democratic movements often joined by social-democrats. This vulgarized view was widely disseminated and influenced the prevailing historical culture in many countries. It conferred upon the concept of "bourgeois revolution" a label of Marxist origin, even of Marxist orthodoxy.

A certain Marxist tradition

In this conception, the bourgeoisie, having grown stronger and wealthier through the development of trade, then of capitalism, in feudal society, rebelled against the obstacles which the latter placed on the development of capitalism. The development of the productive forces came into conflict with the dominant relations of production. [1] The bourgeoisie led the oppressed nation in the overthrow of absolutism and feudalism. It abolished the privileges of the nobility, implemented a land reform, asserted equality before the law, consolidated national independence, unity and identity, and built a parliamentary republic based on an extensive franchise: this, precisely, was "bourgeois" democracy. It opened the road to industrialization. In the feudal Ancient Regime society, the bourgeoisie was an oppressed class, and therefore a revolutionary class. It carried out its revolution, imposed its dictatorship on the ruins of the feudal and absolutist institutions and became the new ruling class of the new capitalist society. Having thus cleared the ground, it found itself facing the working class generated by industrialization. The struggle of this proletariat, the new revolutionary class, was pregnant with a socialist revolution.

One of the sources of this conception — which may be described a Marxist *Vulgate,* after the expurgated Latin version of the Bible once promoted by the Catholic Church — can be found in Engels's 1880 pamphlet, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific,* which was the standard Marxist educational textbook of the young workers movement organizing in the Second International. Many greater and lesser analyses of the bourgeois revolutions written according to this classical schema flourished in the orbit of the Social-Democratic Parties before and after 1914, and later of the Communist Parties. In practice, this classical schema afforded fertile explanations and outlined a fruitful program of investigation for a whole generation of Marxist historical studies.

Marx and Engels originally borrowed this explanation from the French historians of the mid-19th cen-tury, Augustin Thierry and Francois Guizot, who had invented the concept of "class struggle" in their studies on the English and French revolutions. [2] These historians themselves stood in the Enlightenment tradition which attributed the decline of feudalism to the advance of trade and industry. In the 18th century for instance, this had been the view of Voltaire, who admired English moderation and became one of the inspirational sources of the French revolutionaries. The lineage can be traced further back to James Harrington who brilliantly exposed the argument in the 17th century.

Since the end of the 19th century, the development of academic research has produced a plethora of studies of "bourgeois revolutions" from all possible angles, and more generally of the transition from the Ancient Regime to capitalist society and the "modem democracies" characteristic of the capitalist countries, or more accurately of the imperialist countries of Western Europe, North America and Japan. Within this new academic historiography, the Marxist interpretation of the bourgeois revolutions can boast of impressive scientific contributions since the World War II, particularly those of George Lefebvre, Albert Soboul, George Rude in the study of the French revolution, and of Christopher Hill or

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[1] (1) This question of the transition from feudalism to capitalism is also the subject of an interesting debate; see: Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism,* London, 1946; Rodney Hilton, ed., *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism,* London: Verso, 1976. The debate is rejoined in Robert Brenner, "The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism," in T. S. Aston and C. H. E. Philpin, eds., *The Brenner Debate. Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-lndustrial Europe,* Cambridge University Press, 1985. The question of the primary role of the development of the forces of production is debated in Isaac Joshua, *La Face cachee du Moyen Age,* Paris: La Breche, 1988.

[2] (2) See Ernest Mandel, *The Place of Marxism in History,* Notebooks for Study and Research Number 1, Paris, 1986.

Brian Manning in that of the English revolution (see the bibliography for some of their main works). These contributions remained a minority current in their overall milieu, however, which only stands to reason as it is hard to imagine that the ideological relations of force could have escaped the more general social and political relationship of forces.

The new anti-Marxist polemic

Marxist academic historiography has been faced with a new type of anti-Marxist polemic in the last thirty years. The historians who have launched this new polemic against the Marxist conception of bourgeois revolutions adopt a detached, voluntarily non-partisan standpoint. They have made significant analyses of the events under debate and their political opinions tend to be democratic, liberal or social-democratic when they are not personally apolitical. Their anti-Marxism is careful to note nuances and welcome useful contributions (which does not exclude an occasional flirtation with counter-revolutionary interpretations); they pay homage to Marx as a great 19th century thinker, but conclude that Marxism is merely a 20th century, rather arbitrary, religion and that the concept of "bourgeois revolution" is devoid of any meaning.

A polemic of this sort has been raging in Britain for some time around the English revolution and, somewhat more recently, a similar one about the French revolution has grown to larger proportions in France. Many of these historians believe that the "bourgeois" revolutions have simply not existed as such.

It is of course a gross simplification to amalgamate their views and try to summarize them, despite then-heterogeneity. Nevertheless, we take the risk of doing so in the form of the following theses:

1/ Capitalism developed gradually within the Ancient Regime and progressively eliminated strict feudalism; however, neither the English revolution of 1640-1660, nor the French revolution of 1789-1815 had any direct causal link with this gradual evolution.

2/ The institutions of "bourgeois" democracy were obtained or conceded through political, not social struggles, by bits and pieces, in England beginning with the Reform Act of 1832, and in France beginning with the Charter of June 14, 1814, and above all the "revolution" of July 1830.

3/ The English revolution of 1640-1660 and the French revolution of 1789-1815 were confused outbursts provoked by fortuitous causes, different in each case. All the actors involved in these explosions improvised their part with more or — in most cases — less wisdom. Marxists lump together totally dissimilar events under the heading of "bourgeois revolution." They manipulate historical truth to fit these events into the same conceptual straightjacket.

4/ The radical democratic transformations attempted by these revolutions, far from expressing the needs of rising layers or classes, were the expression of the common, strictly political, ideal of parties composed of people from the most diverse social origins.

5/ Far from being anti-feudal or anti-absolutist, let alone revolutionary, the Ancient Regime bourgeoisie was profoundly integrated in Ancient Regime society through the purchase of land, often lordships, ennoblement, smaller and greater positions in the royal bureaucracy, the financing of royal loans and the farming of taxes. Far from being pregnant with modern capitalism, these revolutions, both in England and France, witnessed the most modern bourgeois, the bankers and large industrialists — in fact a small handful of people — side with the Royalists against the revolution.

6/ Far from standing at the head of the oppressed nation, the bourgeoisie was faced with violent peasant and plebeian uprisings, often directed against it rather than the nobility, and put them down cruelly. Far from wishing to implement a land reform on behalf of the peasants, it owned too much land, particularly lord-ships, not to fear the anti-feudal demands of the peasantry.

The peasant uprisings were autonomous, not under bourgeois leadership; they were directed against mer-chants, bankers or large capitalist agricultural entrepreneurs as often as against lords or royal tax collectors.

7/ Far from fighting for innovations that would enhance a free capitalist market, peasant and plebeian uprisings were defensive struggles to preserve old institutions undermined by the advance of capitalism: the village commons and trade guilds, for instance.

Marxists have more than once assimilated the urban plebeians of the Ancient Regime, the *sans-culottes* for instance, to proletarians in the modern sense, to a working class, whereas they were in fact petty owners, craftsmen, shopkeepers, whose property was often far from negligible.

8/ Far from being waged against the "feudal" nobility, these revolutions witnessed many nobles' participation in the uprising and support of the most revolutionary solutions. This demonstrates that what is decisive is not "class interests," but the seduction of new political ideas.

9/ Far from giving birth to industrial capitalism, the contending parties in these revolutions fought for ownership of land, a feudal value.

Far from advancing the capitalist economy, the "bourgeois" revolutions caused an economic retreat of such proportions that many years would be needed to simply return to the pre-revolutionary levels of production.

Were Marx and Engels Marxists?

All the great Marxist historians of bourgeois revolutions tried to answer these objections in their work. In fact, the quality of their original interpretative contribution was determined in great part by their attempts to meet the combined challenge of these objections and the elucidation of new empirical data. Furthermore, many of these objections can be traced back to old debates within Marxism, between its various traditions, and even to contradictions or tensions in Marxist thought that were already present in Marx and Engels.

It is high time to set matters straight with respect to the Marxist interpretation of the bourgeois revolutions: a Vulgate has indeed been elaborated and diffused. The "bourgeoisie-revolutionary-class-leading-the-oppressed-nation" is no more than a myth. At the same time as it sponsored some quite respectable scientific studies of these revolutions, Stalinist orthodoxy added another twist to that Vulgate, namely the myth of "the-industrial-bourgeoisie-most-revolutionary-layer-of-the-bourgeoisie." Moreover, several of the objections mentioned above refer to real difficulties in the interpretation of very complex events.

As for Marx and Engels, they never produced a systematic analysis of the three bourgeois revolutions which they considered "classic": the Netherlandish of 1566-1609, the English of 1640-1660 and the French of 1789-1815. Their remarks on the topic, scattered in several works of Marx, particularly in his great studies on the class struggles in France from 1848 to 1871, reveal a great flexibility and caution in the application of the concept of bourgeois revolution, and above all a great respect for the particulars of a time and place, "the concrete analysis of a concrete

situation." On several occasions Marx, in particular, touched on some of the thornier problems in the historiography of bourgeois revolutions: the class nature of the Jacobin dictatorship in 1793-94, and the interpretation of the radically different evolution of land tenure in France, where the revolution broke up large aristocratic estates into an swarm of small peasant parcels which survived into the mid-20th century, and England, where the peasants were driven off the land in droves after the revolution, thus enabling the large aristocratic estates, systematically fanned by capitalist agricultural entrepreneurs from the end of the 17th century, to survive down to the present day.

But Marx never found an opportunity to settle the issue. The writings of Marx and Engels provide certain paths for the analysis of bourgeois revolutions but not the foundations of an elaborate scientific doctrine on the topic, unlike, for instance, their work on political economy. Thus, in their analysis of the 1793-94 episode, Marx and Engels always hesitated between between two options: one viewed it as the the dictatorship of the most conscious and revolutionary party of the bourgeoisie, the Robespierrist Jacobins, using the *sans-culottes'* fervor, that is, "a bourgeois revolution by plebeian methods"; the other, as an outflanking of the bourgeoisie by plebeians led by intellectuals of bourgeois or noble origin, an unrepresentative minority of the bourgeoisie.

By contrast, Marx and Engels did produce systematic studies of the German revolution of 1848-1849, and other studies inspired by it, such as Engels's *The Peasant War in Germany* (that of 1525). These develop an interpretative schema that is quite different from the classical "Marxist" dogma of the "revolutionary-bourgeoisie-standing-at-the-head-of-the-oppressed-nation." They emphasize the real — albeit partial — interpenetration of the interests of the bourgeoisie and nobility, the autonomy of the peasant and plebeian uprisings, the uncomfortable situation of the bourgeoisie caught between the aristocracy and plebeians, and its propensity to renounce its objectives, at a certain stage, and side with the royal and aristocratic reaction to reestablish order and save the united property owners.

The monumental work of the patriarch of Marxist historians of the English revolution, Christopher Hill, applies a very similar interpretative model distinguished by the subtlety of his Marxist approach. One reason is that English historians have had to struggle with

the particularly complex and ambivalent reality of this revolution which apparently failed and whose contours are blurred under religious garb.

Moving Beyond the Standard Schema

It seems as if a standard schema of the bourgeois-revolution gained acceptance around the time of the Second International. It was derived from an oversimplified interpretation of the French revolution which was proclaimed "normal." This standard schema incorporated elements particular to the French revolution alone as well as images drawn from the 19th and 20th century battles between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. Thus the *sans-culottes* of 1793 were sometimes anachronistically perceived as modern proletarians. [3]Likewise, in Eduard Bernstein's otherwise remarkable study of the English revolution (1899), the Levellers are assimilated to precursors of the labor movement and Cromwell is presented as the conscious leader of the bourgeoisie, an interpretation which could not withstand criticism, but to which Trotsky quite naturally deferred, in 1925, in his exciting evocation of the English revolution in *Whither Britain?*

George Rud6's studies of revolutionary crowds (see bibliography) have demonstrated that, while proletarians (factory workers, the unemployed and day laborers) constituted a steadily rising portion of the urban population as it evolved from the 16th to the 19th century, their mobilizations did not acquire distinctive political characteristics, separate from those of the entire plebe of which they were only one component, until the 1790s insofar as England is concerned, and the 1830s insofar as the European continent is concerned; this was true notwithstanding the fact that they did struggle for their own economic and trade interests (in strikes for instance) much earlier.

The "standard schema" had a checkered career. It should be recognized that it was sometimes expressed in variants not lacking in subtlety and solid empirical foundations. But its life received a ten-fold extension thanks to the

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[3] Guerin does not always avoid this assimilation of *sans-culottes* and proletarians when he describes the "plebeians" in his otherwise remarkable study of the" conflict between the popular movement and the Robespierrist Jacobins (Daniel Guerin, *Les Luttes de classes sous la Premiere republique: bourgeois et bras-nus,* Gallimard, Paris 1973).

long intellectual hegemony of the French Communist Party on the historiography of the French revolution. (It is legitimate here to ask why French CP historians did not take advantage of this hegemony to translate Christopher Hill's and George Rude's books into French during the 1950s and 1960s, although both were Communist historians at the time and most of their work is still unavailable to the French-speaking public today!)

The interpretative model which guided the writing of this notebook is derived from Engels's approach in *The Peasant War in Germany* and Christopher Hill's works, informed in a fashion by Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, whose originality is, at least in part, precisely based on Marx's interpretation of the German revolution of 1848-1849.

The thesis argued here is that this model is more resistant to the "academic" objections cited earlier.

Interpretations of contemporary social and political struggles in capitalist countries based exclusively on the struggle of the two fundamental classes, the bourgeoisie and proletariat, are already a frightful simplification, even though the population is indeed composed of a majority of wage earners facing a minority of capitalists. But Ancient Regime society was infinitely more complex and its social and political struggles focused on multiple poles that can be ignored only at great cost. Time after time, absolutism played the plebeians off against the nobility or bourgeoisie, or the bourgeoisie off against the nobility; time after time the nobility played the plebeians off against absolutism allied to the bourgeoisie, etc, etc, and each time on the basis of the very concrete material interests of each one of the actors of this class struggle. Moreover, any serious analysis should reintegrate an actor too often forgotten — albeit quite familiar to Marx and Engels — namely the nobiliary constitutionalist movement, sometimes even nobiliary republicanism, not to be confused with the insubordination of the nobility to absolutism. During several centuries of European feudal society, this nobiliary movement played on several occasions the role of complex ally-but-competitor of the anti-absolutist movement of the bourgeoisie.

The stakes in the concept of bourgeois revolution

The question arises then of why revolutionary Marxists should obstinately defend

the very concept of "bourgeois revolution." Why should they persevere in attributing a similar underlying phenomenon to such different revolutions? Why not be content with studying the way in which the oppressed tried to find the path to their emancipation through a maze of favorable or unfavorable constellations of forces, in constant flux through time and space?

Because it is characteristic of a scientific approach to seek the recurrence of a small number of simple factors beneath the infinite variety of appearances; because the scientific stake is to explain the transition from the social and political structure of European countries in the Middle Ages, the relative homogeneity of which is denied by no one, to the social and political structure of the same countries in the 19th and 20th centuries, the homogeneity of which is not denied either. A comparative approach reveals that in each of these countries, this transition was interrupted by an event, a great upheaval, a break: precisely the revolutions discussed here. These revolutions broke out in the various countries at different stages of their evolution; they took forms characteristic of the particularities of each country and the international constellation of forces at the time; the various contending social, political and cultural programs were formulated in the language of the time, which for centuries was the language of religion, then in the 18th century, the secular language of the Enlightenment... These very different revolutions nevertheless displayed quite a few common mechanisms which are precisely what needs to be explained.

The comparative approach also reveals the example of countries which never reached, or only reached belatedly, through tortuous paths, the situation of a "modern" capitalist country with its "bourgeois" democracy: Russia and Spain are cases in point. The best argument for the concept of bourgeois revolutions lies in the study of those which failed or aborted, or half-failed, and of the lasting consequences this had on the economic and social structure of the country: Germany between 1848 and 1919, Spain between 1808 and 1939, and the Italian Mezzogiorno from 1860 until today.

What Marxists ought to defend in the concept of "bourgeois revolutions" is their function as midwives of modern capitalist society and therefore their usefulness in clarifying the historical mechanisms which, through nine centuries, produced the type of social formation in which we live today in imperialist countries.

The bourgeois revolutions were not wanted by a "revolutionary class" or revolutionary party. It is characteristic of revolutions that they break out to the surprise of their participants. All revolutions were triggered by contingent mechanisms. As Trotsky explained in his *History of the Russian Revolution,* if Alexander III had not died prematurely, if Russia had not lost the war of 1905 against Japan, if Germany and France had reconciled once again in summer 1914, there would have been no Russian revolution in 1917. But no fuse can detonate a bomb with no explosives. A society goes into revolutionary crisis because the Ancient Regime has run out of elasticity and compensatory mechanisms with which to resist the stress of accumulated contradictions. In the mid-16th century in the Low Countries as well as in the early 17th century in England and the late 18th century in France, or the 1840s in Germany, the Ancient Regime had become overburdened with contradictions it could no longer digest. The explosive matter was precisely the expansion of bourgeois society inside a feudal and absolutist social, political, juridical, cultural and religious order established in ancient times to solve other problems.

The revolution was "bourgeois" in the first place for that reason.

The bourgeoisie was certainly not the class that "stood-at-the-head-of-the-oppressed-nation." Any characterization of the bourgeoisie as revolutionary under the Ancient Regime ought to be severely qualified. As for the designation of a particular more genuinely revolutionary layer inside its ranks, this remains an unresolved question of the Marxist interpretation. The role of the bourgeoisie is better described as reformist. What a decisive majority of it had come to wish was for limited adjustments: a certain form of constitutional monarchy, careers open to talent rather than reserved for the well-born, free enterprise, more rational laws and state institutions, a broader franchise perhaps, though still narrowly property-based. This majority was overtaken by the peasant and plebeian explosion which it had neither wanted nor led. In the ensuing storm, it had to improvise, like everyone else. But once the popular beast was subdued, the bourgeoisie quite naturally became the ruling class because of its wealth and place in the economy. Nothing could return to the way it had been before the storm. The absolutist edifice, previously only cracked, now lay in ruins, and the nobility had lost a tremendous amount. The market economy could spread through all the breaches opened in the

collapsed old order and the bourgeoisie was the obvious class to profit from it, for all sorts of very simple economic reasons that can be summarized as the power of money. The nobility did hold on to some handsome remains, of course, through its reconciliation with the bourgeoisie in the united front of the property owners against the plebeians. But the future for the old nobles who had survived was not as feudal lords but as as large capitalist landowners.

This was the second reason why the revolution was bourgeois.

The third reason is that it was precisely this initial reformism of the bourgeoisie, timid though it was, that made the difference with the scores of plebeian insurrections rapidly drowned in blood under the Ancient Regime. The triggering event in all these revolutions included a peasant or plebeian mobilization which only succeeded in loosening the grip of the absolutist state because bourgeois reformism (and/or nobiliary reformism!) took the relay from it and was prepared, for a moment and to a certain extent, to play the popular card to wrest concessions from the king.

Finally, the concept of bourgeois revolution is useful to suggest that although the plebeian democratic movement was defeated each time, these revolutions are not simply a melancholic succession of heroic rising of the people, always crushed by the bad people, as recounted by certain Anarchist historians.

They were stages in a concrete advance. As explained in *The Communist Manifesto,* they opened the road to the transformation of the majority of the population into wage earners, and thereby created the first social class in history that had a chance of some day abolishing private property and social inequality; they opened the road to "bourgeois" democracy, to human rights and individual freedom; they eventually created better conditions for the struggle of the exploited and oppressed against their exploiters and oppressors.

The old classical schema of "bourgeois revolution" can still be recognized in this revised formulation. It will have served a purpose as an initial overly crude approximation of a multifarious reality.

The bourgeois revolutions then, as a category of revolutions representing a violent and creative break in the evolution from the feudal Ancient Regime to the present capitalist and parliamentary New Regime of Europe, did indeed exist. The standard schema of the "bourgeoisie-standing-at-the-head-of-the-oppressed-nation" must therefore be revised and give way to a more differentiated interpretative model. Nevertheless, like all approximations, this classical schema performed an explanatory role in the attempt to describe the functional — not random — character of these revolutions which recurred in one country after another.

Long Duration and Political History

It is fashionable these days to use the research of the historians of the long duration to demonstrate the futility of the ambitions of the revolutionaries of yesteryear and downplay the impact of political action yesterday and today. Why waste one's energy for a revolution that is powerless against demography, ecology, geography and thousand-year old cultural traditions? And so the history of revolutions is rewritten in this light, erasing the decisive moments when conscious collective action tipped the balance, and erecting in their place the slow evolution of mentalities. The social history of the long duration, itself a by-product of the history of economic trends, of everyday life, of the social relations of the mass of the people, of their mentalities, has brought a salutary corrective to the history of saints and martyrs, kings and queens, generals and presidents, assassins and great battles, still taught not so long ago.

This is the place to recall that a work which played such an important role in the founding of the Annales school as Lucien Febvre's *Philip II and Franche-Comte,* published in 1912, is not only a study of the economic, social and moral life of Franche-Comte' in the 16th century. It is also a study of the impact of the revolution of the Low Countries in a province administratively linked to them, and the description of the political struggles which in the space of a few years modernized the institutions of absolutism in that province.

The enduring realities and slow evolution of the material and moral life of a society bring their full weight to bear, and seem to dilute the struggles of social classes and layers, the polemics of parties, in their immense inertia. But the dilution is only apparent. Tensions accumulate slowly in a system which resists and seems at first sight only barely affected by them. But the elasticity of the social body has a limit, and when that limit is reached, the system locks and comes to a breaking point: social struggles broaden in a sudden paroxysm in which the entire organization of society is debated and challenged

by contending parties — this is a revolution. It cannot escape the ponderous burden of material and moral facts, of course, as all is not possible. But for a brief moment of a few years, a struggle for power is played out, the outcome of which is not predetermined. A small number of different outcomes are possible; there will be winners and losers and they are not known in advance. For this brief moment, the intensity of the mobilization of the crowd, their greater or lesser perception of a goal more or less intelligently formulated, their collective or individual courage, a few more regiments, better guns, one or two more effective leaders, the support of an ally, a ruse, can make all the difference. The outcome of the struggle, in turn, will create new material and moral realities that will last and weigh down over long periods, and new institutions and mentalities that will mix their permanent reality to more ancient realities.

In the English revolution of 1640-1660, the peasants were defeated; in the French revolution of 1789-1815, the peasants were victorious. The English and French agrarian systems were launched on two divergent trajectories with all their consequences on the mentality and economic development of the country down to this day: on the one hand the universe of the French peasant smallholders, of a peasantry which owned small parcels and remained numerous up until the most recent period. On the other hand, the universe of the great English landed estates, at once aristocratic and entrepreneurial, whose mark is still visible in the English landscape today.
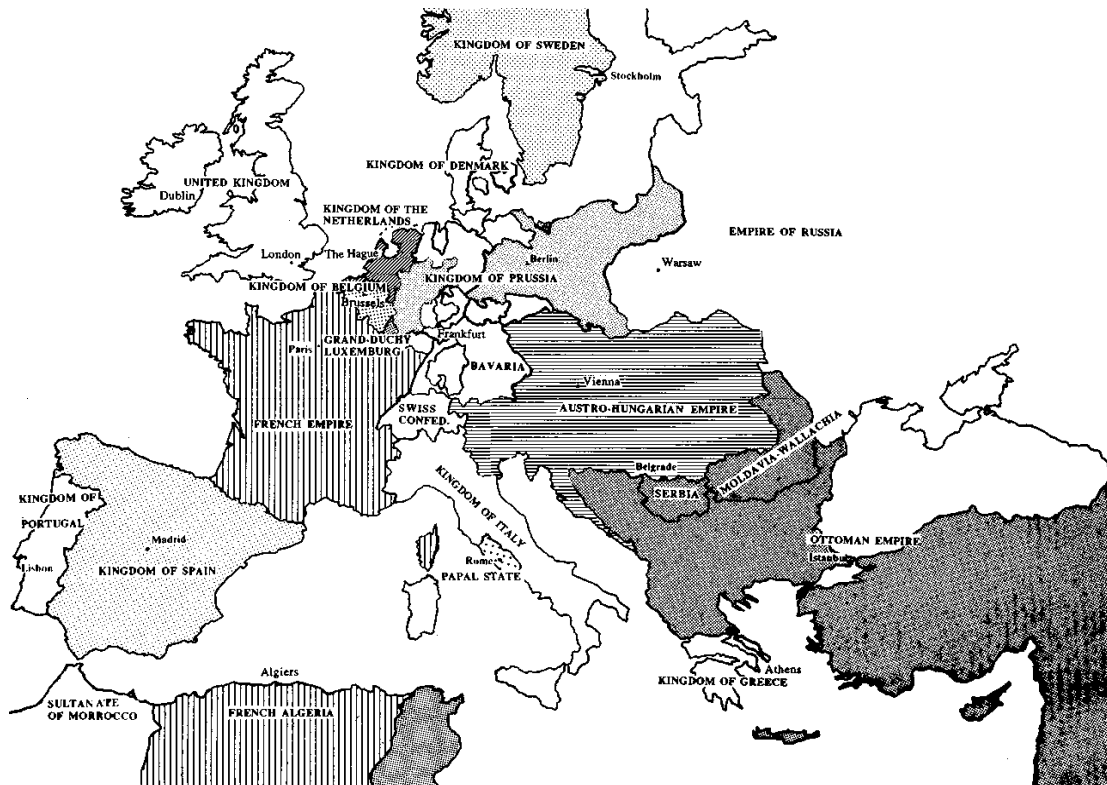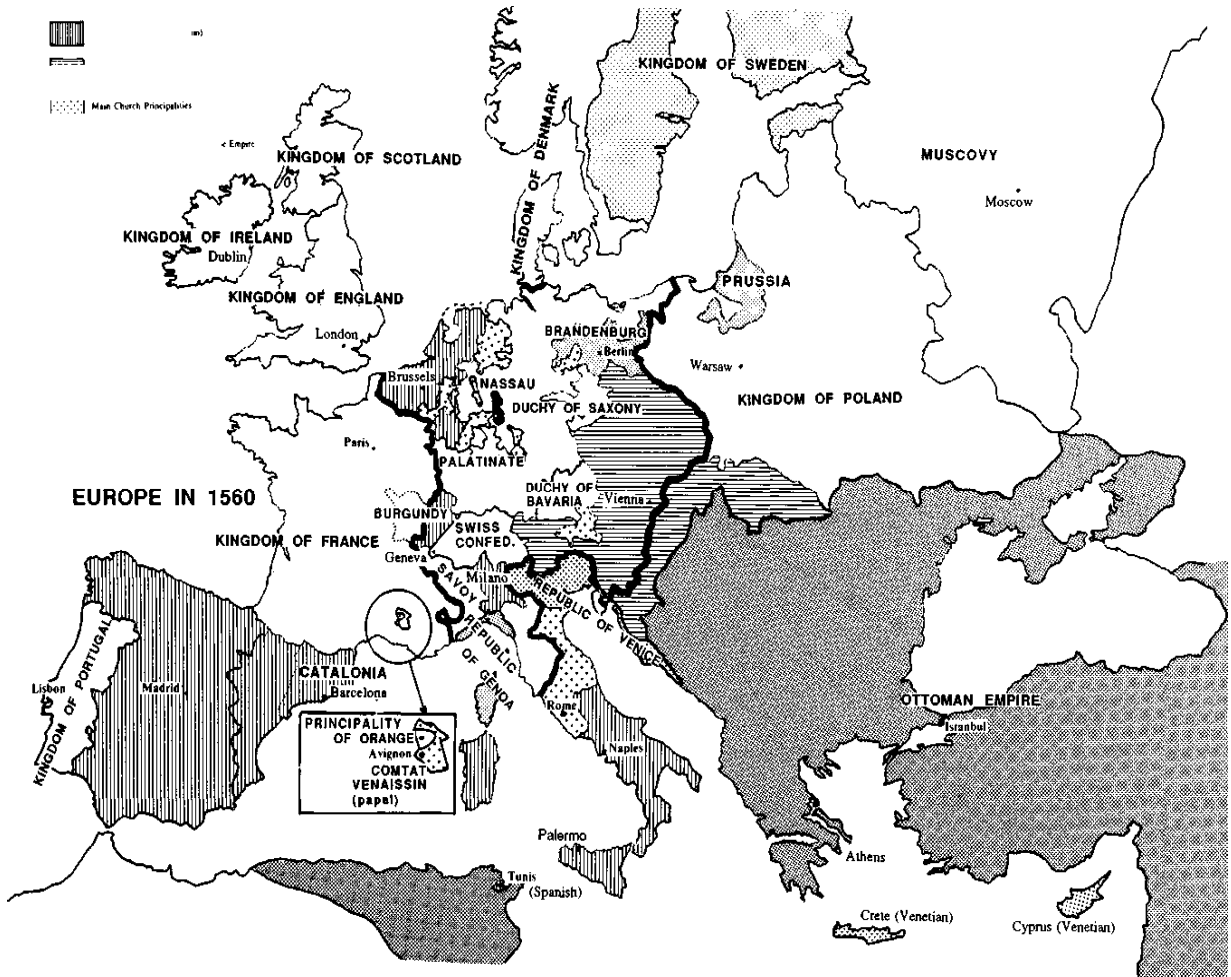
In the English revolution of 1640-1660, the insurgent plebeians could be crushed only by restoring the king, saving medieval forms and apparently renouncing all the ideals and transformations of the revolution. In the French revolution, the property owners consolidated their power through Napoleon's regime, with its many institutional creations and systematic spirit borrowed from the Jacobins.

The forms of these two bourgeois states, the English and the French, left a lasting mark up to our time; along their divergent paths, different institutions, traditions and mentalities were shaped: on the one hand, in England, a pompous and hypocritical parliamentary monarchy, state institutions formed out of improvised bits and pieces over centuries, the mix of the medieval and the modem; on the other, in France, the Napoleonic ... or Gaullist... or Jacobin... state, as people are wont to call it, with its systematic institutions and impressive technocratic bureaucracy on which a rather authoritarian parliamentary republic relies.

The particularities of the labor movements of the two countries also carry the imprint of this divergent history. In England, a labor movement based on a broad trade-union movement formed early in the 19th century but one which has inherited very little from the democratic movement of a revolution already quite ancient by that time; a labor movement which combines massive struggles for economic demands with the docile fascination of the broad popular masses with the monarchy. In France, a labor movement which inherited directly, only thirty years after the French revolution, the political formulas of the *sans-culottes* and Robes-pierrists; a labor movement in which politics preceded and still overshadow the trade-union aspect; a labor movement which shares with the French bourgeoisie a certain Jacobin tradition allying infatuation with the systematic spirit of states and socially heterogeneous but verbally extremist political mobilizations.

This reminder of the classic comparison of England and France suggests the need for a balance between the social history of the long duration and the political history of revolutions, a balance in which the study of bourgeois revolutions is an unavoidable stage in the effort to understand the present.

EUROPE IN 1560

Main Church Principalities

KINGDOM OF SWEDEN

MUSCOVY
Moscow

KINGDOM OF SCOTLAND

KINGDOM OF DENMARK

KINGDOM OF IRELAND
Dublin

PRUSSIA

KINGDOM OF ENGLAND

London

BRANDENBURG
Berlin

Warsaw

KINGDOM OF POLAND

Brussels

NASSAU

DUCHY OF SAXONY

Paris

PALATINATE

DUCHY OF BAVARIA
Vienna

BURGUNDY

SWISS CONFED.

KINGDOM OF FRANCE

Geneva

SAVOY

Milano

REPUBLIC OF VENICE

REPUBLIC OF GENOA

KINGDOM OF PORTUGAL

Lisbon

Madrid

CATALONIA
Barcelona

PRINCIPALITY
OF ORANGE
Avignon
COMTAT
VENAISSIN
(papal)

Rome

Naples

OTTOMAN EMPIRE
Istanbul

Palermo

Athens

Tunis
(Spanish)

Crete (Venetian)

Cyprus (Venetian)

KINGDOM OF SWEDEN
Stockholm

UNITED KINGDOM
Dublin

KINGDOM OF DENMARK

KINGDOM OF THE
NETHERLANDS

EMPIRE OF RUSSIA

London

The Hague

Berlin

Warsaw

KINGDOM OF BELGIUM
Brussels

KINGDOM OF PRUSSIA

Paris

GRAND-DUCHY
LUXEMBURG

Frankfurt

BAVARIA

FRENCH EMPIRE

SWISS
CONFED.

Vienna

AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE

KINGDOM OF ITALY

Belgrade

MOLDAVIA WALLACHIA

KINGDOM OF
PORTUGAL

Madrid

SERBIA

Lisbon

KINGDOM OF SPAIN

Rome

PAPAL STATE

OTTOMAN EMPIRE
Istanbul

Algiers

Athens

KINGDOM OF GREECE

SULTANATE
OF MORROCCO

FRENCH ALGERIA

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Appendixes

Voltaire, admirer of post-revolutionary England

Here is a more essential difference between Rome and England, all to the advantage of the latter: it is that the fruit of the civil wars in Rome was slavery, whereas that of the troubles of England, freedom. The English nation is the only one on earth which succeeded in regulating the power of kings by resisting them, and which, trial after trial, finally established this government in which the Prince, all-powerful to do good, finds his hands tied to do evil, in which lords are great without insolence and without vassals, and in which the people shares in the government without confusion....

There was a cost to establish liberty in England; the idol of despotic power had to be drowned in seas of blood; but the English do not believe they paid too dearly for good laws. Other nations have had no less trouble, spilled no less blood than they; yet this blood they gave for the cause of liberty only helped to cement their servitude....

Henry VII (1485-1509), usurper and fine politician, who pretended to like the barons, but hated and feared them, took it into his head to obtain the alienation of their lands. This way, the commoners who later acquired wealth through their labors, bought the castles of illustrious peers who had ruined themselves by their follies. Little by little all the land changed masters.

The House of Commons became daily more powerful. The families of the ancient peers were extinguished with time; and, since only the peers are proper nobles in England strictly according to the law, there would no longer be any nobility in that country if the kings had not created new barons from time to time, and preserved the order of the peers, which they had formerly so feared, to counterpose it to that of the Commons, which had become overly strong....

A man, because he is noble or because he is a priest, is not exempt from paying certain taxes here; all taxes are set by the House of Commons, which, though second only in rank, is first in its credit....

Commerce, which enriched the citizens in England, contributed to make them free and that freedom has spread commerce in turn; from there stemmed the greatness of the state. It is trade which established little by little the naval forces which have made the English the masters of the seas....

All that gives an English merchant a well-deserved pride, and makes him dare to compare himself, not without good reason, to a Roman citizen. Thus the younger brother of a peer of the kingdom does not scorn trade. Milord Townshend, a minister of state, has a brother who is content to be a merchant in the City. In the days when Milord Oxford governed England, his younger brother was an agent in Aleppo, whence he would not return and where he died....

In France whoever wants is a marquess; and anyone arriving in Paris from the depth of a province with some money to spend and a name ending in Ac or Ille, can say "a man like me, a man of my quality" and superciliously despise a trader; the trader himself so often hears his trade spoken of with contempt, that he is foolish enough to blush over it. Yet I do not know which is more useful to a state, the fully-powdered lord who knows exactly at what time the King rises, at what time he goes to bed, and sports the grandest airs while playing the role of a slave in the antechamber of a minister, or the trader who enriches his country, sends orders to Surat and Cairo from his office, and contributes to the happiness of the world.

[Extract from *Lettres philosophiques,* 1734]

The foundation of the theory of class struggle: Francois Guizot (1787-1874), minister of king Louis-Philippe from 1830 to 1848, on the English revolution

The political and religious parties were not alone in the fray. Their struggle overlay a social question, the struggle of various classes for influence and power. Not that these classes were, in England, profoundly separate and hostile to each other, as they were elsewhere. The great barons had supported the people's liberties with their own liberties, and the people did not forget it. The country gentlemen and the city burghers had sat together for three centuries, in the name of the Commons of England, in Parliament. But, for a century, major changes had taken place in the relative force of the various classes in society, without analogous changes occurring in government. Commercial activity and religious ardor had imparted a prodigious impetus to wealth and ideas among the middle classes. People noted with surprise that in one of the first Parliaments of Charles I's reign, the House of Commons was three times richer than the House of Lords. The upper aristocracy no longer had and no longer brought to the royalty, which it continued to surround, the same preeminence in the nation. The burghers, gentlemen of the counties, farmers and small country landowners, at the time quite numerous, did not exercise in the conduct of public affairs an influence proportional to their importance in the country. They had grown more than they had risen. Hence, there arose among them and in the orders below them a proud and powerful spirit of ambition, prepared to seize any opportunity to burst forth. The civil war opened a vast prospect for their energy and hopes. At the outset, it did not present the aspect of an exclusive and heinous social classification: many country gentlemen and several of the most considerable peers marched at the head of the popular party. Nevertheless the nobility on one side, the bourgeoisie and people on the other, rallied massively the ones around the Crown, the others around Parliament; and symptoms already appeared of a great social movement inside a great political struggle, and of the effervescence of a rising democracy cutting its way through the ranks of a weakened and divided aristocracy.

[Francois Guizot, *How Did the Revolution in England Succeed? A Speech on the History of the English Revolution (Pourquoi la revolution d'Angleterre a-t-elle reussi? Discours sur l'histoire de la revolution d'Angleterre)* (1850), pp. 10-11.]

Friedrich Engels on the Peasant War in Germany

The parallel between the German revolution of 1525 and

that of 1848-49 was too obvious to be rejected altogether at that time. Nevertheless, despite the uniformity in the course of events, where various local revolts were crushed one after another by one and the same princely army, despite the often ludicrous similarity in the behavior of the city burghers in both cases, the difference also stood clear and distinct....

[Author's 1870 preface to Frederick Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany,* Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956, pp. 16-17]

The rest of the troops marched against Heil-bronn. In this powerful free imperial town the patriciate was, as almost everywhere, confronted by a burgher and revolutionary opposition. In secret agreement with the peasants, the latter opened the gates to Georg Metzler and Jacklein Rohrbach on April 17 during a disturbance. The peasant chiefs and their people took possession of the town, which was accepted into their brotherhood and delivered 1200 guilders in cash and a squad of volunteers. Only the possessions of the clergy and the Teutonic Order were pillaged. On April 22 the peasants moved out, leaving a small garrison. Heilbronn was to become the center of the various troops, the latter actually sending delegates and conferring over common actions and the common demands of the peasantry. But the burgher opposition and the patricians who had joined forces after the peasant invasion, regained the upper hand in the town, preventing decisive steps and waiting only for the approach of the princes' troops to betray the peasants for good.

[1850 text of Frederick Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany,* Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956, p. 115]

Christopher Hill on the reconciliation of the propertied classes in the English revolution

In the end the social anxieties to which Levellers and radical sectaries gave rise were to reunite the propertied classes. Thanks largely to the skill with which in 1649 Charles I played the only card left to him, acting out the role of royal martyr, and to the great propaganda success of *Eikon Basi-like,* this reunion focused on the monarchy. But the reunion was based on strong material links between the two sections of the propertied classes as well as on the magic of monarchy.... (p. 121)

This unprecedented radicalism was slowly and painfully suppressed in the fifties, but it left a searing memory. In 1660 MPs were so afraid of its revival, so anxious to disband the dangerous army as quickly as possible, to reestablish control over lower-class sectaries, that they failed to impose precise enough terms on the monarchy....

The obsessive fear of radicalism which led to the overkill of 1660 had regrettable social and political consequences.... Legal reform, like franchise reform was forgotten by "responsible" politicians until the 19th century, (pp. 122-123)

[Christopher Hill, "A Bourgeois Revolution?" in Pocock, ed., *Three British Revolutions 1641, 1688, 1776,* Princeton University Press, 1980.]

A FEW FIGURES DESERVING TO BE BETTER KNOWN

Babeuf, Francois Noel known as Gracchus (1760-1797): the political leader who formulated a communist viewpoint on the left of democratic radicalism during the French revolution; editor of *The Tribune of the People* (1794-1796); leader of the Conspiracy of the Equals; guillotined.

Dathenus, Peter (1531-1588): Flemish reformer; translator of the *Psalms;* leader of the democratic Commune of Ghent (1577-1579) during the revolution of the Low Countries.

Gosson, Nicolas: lawyer, leader of the democratic Commune of Arras (1578) during the revolution of the Low Countries.

Fell, Margaret: leader of the Quakers during the English revolution; author of *Women's Speaking Justified* (1667); wife of George Fox (1624-1691).

Harrington, James (1611-1677): English Republican theoretician; he analyzed the decline of the nobility and wrote *The Republic of Oceana* (1656).

Hembyze, Jan van (1517-1584): alderman and burgomaster of Ghent; leader of the radical democratic Commune of Ghent (1577-1579) during the revolution of the Low Countries.

Lacombe, Claire (born 1765) and Pauline Leon (born 1768): led the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women which organized the *sansculotte* movement against high food prices in 1793 during the French revolution.

Lilburne, John (1614-1657): leader of the Levellers in the English revolution.

Otto, Louise (1819-1895): German feminist and radical democrat; in 1865 she founded the General Union of German Women.

Overton, Richard: leader of the Levellers during the English revolution.

Paine, Thomas (1737-1794): English radical democrat and democratic leader during the American revolution; he defended, and later participated in the French revolution as a deputy to the Convention; author of *Common Sense* (1776) and *The Rights of Man* (1791).

Roux, Jacques (1752-1794): French priest and revolutionary; a radical democrat and *sans-culotte* leader, he led the Enraged; arrested in 1793; killed himself after his sentence.

Walwyn, William (1600-1680): leader of the Levellers in the English revolution.

Wildman, John (1623-1693): leader of the Levellers during the English revolution; imprisoned in 1660 at the time of the Restoration and released in 1666; he later became a senior civil servant in the post office and a Whig politician.

Winstanley, Gerard (1609-1676): communist theoretician and leader of the Diggers during the English revolution.

Wollstonecraft, Mary (1759-1797): English feminist and "Jacobin," a leader of the English democratic movement in support of the French revolution; author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792); wife of the philosopher William Godwin (1756-1836) and mother of Mary Shelley (1797-1851), author of *Frankenstein* (1818) and wife of the poet
Percy Shelley (1792-1822).

A GUIDE TO FURTHER READING AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

An enormous body of literature has been written about each individual bourgeois revolution. But there is no book about all of them. Marxist historians have applied the concept of "bourgeois revolution" to the study of single revolutions more often than to the comparative study of several. Our readers who wish to begin to study the bourgeois revolutions will find a brief guide to further reading below.

1. To familiarize oneself with the Ancient Regime in Europe (and Japan) and with the history of Europe since the Middle Ages: **Perry Anderson,** *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (London: New Left Books, 1974) and *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: New Left Books, 1974).

This is a remarkable and encyclopaedic fresco of comparative history which discusses and clarifies several fundamental notions of Marxist historiography. It includes a vast bibliography. Its main shortcoming, not inconsequential for the subject under examination here, is that it considers the development of absolutism and the bourgeois revolutions as two entirely distinct stages, with absolutism first and the bourgeois revolution later. For each country, Anderson breaks off his narrative of the development of absolutism, too logically, on the eve of the revolution, in the case of England in 1640, in the case of France in 1789, for most other countries in the 19th or even 20th century. But the development of absolutism and that of the bourgeois revolutions were combined, and more than once, contemporary, processes. This leads Anderson to allocate almost no space to the oldest, defeated yet essential, bourgeois revolutions: as for example the 17th century revolutions other than the English; and generally only little attention to the struggles of the urban classes.

2. In several excellent chapters of his 1948 book, *Les soulevements populaires en France au XVIIe siecle,* (Flammarion Paris, 1972), the great Soviet historian Boris Porshnev (1905-1972) explains the relations between absolutism, the nobility, the bourgeoisie and plebeians in Ancient Regime France, and shows how the bourgeois revolution did not arise suddenly in 1789 but has roots deep in the preceding centuries; in particular how the Fronde of 1648-1653 was a genuine, but defeated, bourgeois revolution. Porshnev's book also provides an interesting Marxist history of the historiography of France. Porshnev has written several other works on the Ancient Regime. Why have the publishing houses associated with the Communist Parties of France and britain never offered us his *France, the English Revolution and European Politics in the 17th Century (Frantsiia, Angliiskaia Revolutsiia i Evropeiskaia Politika v Serednie 17v.)* published in Russian in 1970?

3. Friedrich Engels's little book, *The Peasant War in Germany* (Moscow: Foreign Languages, 1956), written in 1850-1874, is an obligatory introduction to the German revolution of 1525, to the 16th century and to the Reformation, and to the analysis of the Ancient Regime and bourgeois revolutions by the founders of Marxism.

4. To discover the 16th century revolution of the Low Countries: **Geoffrey Parker,** *The Dutch Revolt* (London: Allen Lane, 1977) and **Tibor Wittman,** *Les Gueux dans les "bonnes villes" de Flandre 1577-1584* (Budapest Akademiai Kiado,1969).

Parker is the most modern history of the Netherlandish revolution. It brings together the findings of the most recent research, is well documented, fascinating reading and includes a vast commented bibliography. But it neglects in staggering fashion the plebeian democratic movements and more generally the political and constitutional debates among the insurgents against the king of Spain.

Wittman concentrates on the plebeian democratic movements and their conflict-ridden relations with the prince of Orange. It is very interesting on the economy of Flanders, its draperies, and corporate and municipal organization, but written in a clumsy style (translation?) and weighed down by pseudo-theoretical considerations typical of Eastern European history books.

The Dutch Marxists recommend Erich Kuttner, *Het Hongerjaar 1566* (Amsterdam, 1949). But you have to read Dutch, which we do not. The book was written in German before World War II, by a German social-democrat in exile in the Netherlands, but never published in German.

5. Christopher Hill's large and creative work was our main guide in the interpretation and narrative of the English revolution. His *Century of Revolution 1603-1714* (London: Nelson, 1961) still provides the best overall initiation to the English revolution. Ivan Roots, *The Great Rebellion 1642-1660* (London: Batsford, 1966) has the indispensable modern systematic narrative of the political history of the upheaval, with due attention to the often neglected period from 1653 to 1662, including the establishment of the Protectorate and an analysis of the Restoration. For those who wish to delve further, two books are recommended: Brian Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution* (London: Peregrine, 1978) which brings to life the plebeian and peasant insurrections from 1640 to 1649 and analyzes masterfully their clash with the ruling classes, both Parliamentary and Royalist. **Christopher Hill,** *The Experience of Defeat* (London: Faber & Faber, 1984) is a dense and difficult book but sheds light on the attitude, relations and thinking of the various anti-Royalist currents (Presbyterians, Independents, republicans, Levellers, radicals, Quakers, etc) towards the resurgence of social and political conservatism in the 1650s, the republican revival of 1658-1660 and their general defeat by the Restoration in 1660. It is therefore indispensable to understand the overall effect of the revolution.

6. To discover the French revolution, the best book remains **Albert Soboul,** *The French Revolution 1787-1799. From the Storming of the Bastille to Napoleon* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975). One can counterbalance the vestiges of Robespierrism extant — albeit —— in already very nuanced form — in Soboul, with the

indispensable **Daniel Guerin,** *Les luttes de classes sous la Premiere Republique: bourgeois et bras-nus 1793-1795* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), unfortunately not available in English. Soboul stops in 1799. For a good understanding of the revolution, one must proceed to 1815. The study of the Restoration of 1814-1815 is indispensable for a proper balance sheet of the revolution at the time the Bourbons returned to the throne but the Ancient Regime was precisely not reestablished. For that, read the first volumes of the excellent *Nouvelle Histoire de la France contemporaine* (Paris: Seuil), volumes 4 and 5 by Bergeron, Lovie **and Paluel** on the 1799-1815 period, and especially volumes 6 and 7 by **Jardin and Tudesq,** *Restoration and reaction* (Paris, 1984), on the 1815-1848 period. The overall period including a balance sheet of the Restoration is covered in the remarkable **George Rude,** *Revolutionary Europe 1783-1815* (London: Fontana, 1964).

7. On the 19th century revolutions, one can begin with Karl Marx, *Class Struggles in France 1848-1850,* and Friedrich Engels, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany,* formerly attributed to Marx. One can continue with **Eric** Hobsbawm's three masterful surveys: *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848; The Age of Capital 1848-1875* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962, 1975) *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (New York: Pantheon, 1987), which contain ample bibliographies.

8. Just before the Russian revolution, the Mexican revolution of 1910-1920 opened the era of "Third World" revolutions of the 20th century. The role of the workers movement in it, however, was still quite limited, and it is in a sense the last case of a classical bourgeois revolution. Read **Adolfo** Gilly, *The Mexican Revolution* (London: Verso, 1983).

9. On women in bourgeois revolutions, the best general introduction is **Sheila Rowbotham,** *Feminism and Revolution. A History of Women and revolution in the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 1972).

10 . For those who wish to consider the stimulating objections to the Marxist interpretation of bourgeois revolutions, we recommend:

- on the English revolution: **Conrad Russell, ed.,** *The Origins of the English Civil* War (London: Macmillan, 1973) and David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985);

- on the French revolution: Alfred Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1964) and Francois Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1981).

11. A great debate between Marxist historians which has become a classic can be found in Paul Sweezy, **et** al., *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism,* with an introduction by Rodney Hilton (London: New Left Books, 1976).

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Notebooks for Study and Research

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The Bourgeois Revolutions

Robert Lochhead

The history of past revolutions carries a political message for the present. This comes through clearly in the polemics surrounding the bicentennial of the French revolution of 1789. A similar controversy exists in Britain about the English revolution of 1640-1660. The task of defending the humanist and democratic legacy of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries has devolved upon the left, and more particularly the Marxists.

The comparative study of bourgeois revolutions is also indispensable to analyze the particularities of the various bourgeois states of Western Europe to which these revolutions gave birth. The question arises, for instance, of what remains of the democratic and egalitarian ideals proclaimed by the insurgents. The bourgeois revolutions are also a necessary reference for the study of revolutions in the Third World In fact, the notion of bourgeois revolution is central to the Marxist analysis of contemporary society.

This notebook is an introduction to the study of the bourgeois revolutions. It presents their general features and develops two case studies (the Low Countries and England) to illustrate the complexity of the classes, parties and leaders who made these revolutions. It concludes with an overview of the various interpretations of the nature of these revolutions, showing the diversity of the Marxist tradition in this regard.

Robert Lochhead was born in 1950 in Bern, Switzerland. He teaches biology and is a member of the Socialist Workers Party (Swiss section of the Fourth International), an activist in the public services union and a city councillor elected on the Socialist Alternative Green slate in Nyon, Switzerland. He is the author of many articles published in *La Brèche,* notably on ecology, and is affiliated with the International Institute for Research and Education.