

[T]he Irish land system, which is so much talked of as though it were some peculiarly atrocious system, is essentially the same land system which prevails in all civilized countries, which we of the United States have accepted unquestioningly, and have extended over the whole temperate zone of a new continent—the same system which all over the civilized world men are accustomed to consider natural and just.²⁵³ [Henry George]

CHAPTER 8

CORE POWER AND PERIPHERAL STATES

THE QUEST TO UNITE THE PEOPLE OF THE BRITISH ISLES

The examination of history thus far presented has revealed the periodic and unfortunate tendency we exhibit toward self-destruction. A central socio-political problem for us has been the predominance of decision-making hierarchies forged out of coercion. The pursuit of ever greater power and personal fortunes result in protracted warfare and frequent societal upheavals. History has shown us that the subordination of individual liberty to the tyranny of conflict-based institutional power accelerated as tribal groups adopted a settled

existence. Warrior subgroups arose to dominate societies as they made the transition from hunting and foraging to domestication of animal and plant life—from subsistence to surplus production of food and other forms of wealth. Settlement also stimulated the transition from communal to individual property in production and then land.

A settled existence provided greater opportunities for specialization; and, in some societies, the process of creative thought was nurtured by greater planning and cooperation for the production of wealth at a level that supported not only basic needs but fueled development of culture. The cornerstone of this early knowledge explosion was the development of writing, allowing subsequent generations to more completely benefit from the creative efforts of those who had come and gone. Writing provided an important link between past and present that made contemplation and studied observation endeavors of increasing importance. Men of ideas competed for status and respect with men of action. History recorded not only the great deeds of warrior leaders but also the great thoughts of those who contributed to the increase of knowledge.

Understanding the operation of the physical universe is essential to our survival, of course. Yet, arguably even more important is the need to fully understand and incorporate moral principles in our socio-political arrangements and institutions. Only then will justice prevail. The widespread possession of material items of wealth necessary for survival and the access to communal and private services necessary for personal health and learning are important bench marks of the degree to which just socio-political arrangements exist within a society. Conversely, the prolonged existence of an impoverished majority or minority suggests the presence of injustice. Throughout the centuries, the investigation of the relation between moral principle and law has become increasingly transnational and has operated despite very deliberate attempts by some to thwart and control the dissemination of knowledge. In the process of creating geo-political entities on the scale

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of the nation-state or empire, our forefathers ensured we would inherit a world characterized by constant strife and warfare. Almost without exception, wars have erupted over who would control access to specific regions of the earth and our planet's natural resources. *Transnationals*, on the other hand, have sought to identify universal principles operating across time and space. In some instances, this search occurred in an effort to defend the status quo. Increasingly, however, the transnational dialogue has concentrated on achieving *equality of opportunity*, under socio-political arrangements that secure and protect individual liberty. One person who dedicated his life's work to this challenge was Mortimer J. Adler. Building on the framework provided by John Locke, Mortimer Adler asks us to think of our behavior distinguished by whether our actions fall within the realm of *liberty* or the realm of *license*:

Liberty is freedom exercised under the restraints of justice so that its exercise results in injury to no one. In contrast, license is freedom exempt from the restraints of justice and, therefore, injurious to others in infringing their freedom as well as violating other rights. When no distinction is made between liberty and license, the freedom of the strong can destroy the freedom of the weak. For the freedom of any one individual to be compatible with an equal measure of freedom on the part of all others, the freedom of each must be limited and limited precisely for the purpose of preventing the freedom of one from encroaching upon or destroying the freedom of others. Hence maximization of freedom for all, with an equal measure of freedom for each, is impossible without the restraints of justice, which confines the freedom of doing as one pleases to conduct that in no way injures anyone else.²⁵⁴

Here in this brief passage offered by Adler is a guiding light for our behavior, so fundamental and important yet so much ignored or obfuscated by those who benefit most by licenses granted them by those who hold political power. To the most aggressive rent-seekers, for example, the primary function of government is the distribution of

monopolistic licenses (in return for financial contributions to political campaigns and other forms of payment that corrupt the process of just governance).

Our moral sense of right and wrong has for many centuries also been under constant attack by the propaganda of the secular and religious state bureaucracies. Even today, the overwhelming majority of people on the earth live under socio-political structures that reduce the potential of people to produce and achieve to a lowest common denominator. Literally billions of people live at or near the bare subsistence level in countries that abound in natural resources; privilege, in the form of criminal and economic licenses taken by the few and too often protected by the police powers of the State, is the underlying cause of their misery. And, as another social commentator, Eric Hoffer, understood so well, there is considerable destructive power associated with this condition:

When our individual interests and prospects do not seem worth living for, we are in desperate need of something apart from us to live for. All forms of dedication, devotion, loyalty and self-surrender are in essence a desperate clinging to something which might give worth and meaning to our futile, spoiled lives. Hence the embracing of a substitute will necessarily be passionate and extreme. We can have qualified confidence in ourselves, but the faith we have in our nation, religion, race or holy cause has to be extravagant and uncompromising. A substitute embraced in moderation cannot supplant and efface the self we want to forget. We cannot be sure that we have something worth living for unless we are ready to die for it. This readiness to die is evidence to ourselves and others that what we had to take as a substitute for an irrevocably missed or spoiled first choice is indeed the best there ever was.²⁵⁵

Whatever promise there is for a better, more just future rests on a fragile hope; namely, that a healthy dose of skepticism will spread throughout the world and that reason will serve as the basis for right

action. And so, to borrow directly from Henry George, “I ask no one who may read this book to accept my views. I ask him to think for himself.”²⁵⁶ The essence of the moral principles I espouse, to which I have attached the term *cooperative individualism*, is compared at length to the other competing socio-political philosophies in a later chapter. Within the very term itself, however, a powerful sentiment emerges; cooperation is essential to our survival, as is respect for our rights as individuals. In order for our civilization to advance (i.e., become more just), we must first recognize that we are of one species, and in that sense equal. Our survival depends on acceptance of a universal set of moral and ethical values. To this extent, cooperative individualism is a *moral sense* philosophy that looks within our instinctive understanding of right and wrong for certain essential self-evident truths; that is, knowledge derived from an internal logic which all of us possess in differing degrees. Throughout recorded history, the principles of cooperative individualism have been articulated by individuals who from their earliest experiences living under a hierarchical structure gave serious thought to the appropriateness of those arrangements. They frequently wrote or spoke on behalf of these principles under threat of physical harm. As the monarchies of Eurasia attempted to impose their will on each other and on the indigenous peoples of the Americas, Africa and Asia, there were a few voices in the wilderness willing to challenge established power on moral grounds.

The arrival of Europeans to other parts of the globe brought oppression and, not infrequently, decimation of traditional cultures. A very few Europeans sought to spread transnational values, as well as learn from the people they encountered. We are the beneficiaries of their efforts and the records they left to posterity. We are able to learn from their writings that people everywhere shared common concerns and attempted to reform their socio-political institutions with moral principles in mind. Principle and practice came together during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when upheaval in the existing

socio-political order occurred in dramatic fashion. During the sixteenth century, however, France followed Spain in the consolidation of power within one central government. The Roman Catholic Church joined with Europe's Catholic monarchs, putting large armies in the field to oppose the spread of Protestantism and assist Catholic factions where Protestants had already gained power. For three critical centuries the balance of power between the emerging nation-states of Europe shifted repeatedly under the pressure of religious intolerance and nationalism. Hundreds of thousands of lives were lost, the physical infrastructure of societies destroyed or curtailed, and the financial reserves of European states consumed by military adventurism.

As we have already seen, the struggle for hegemony among the European states spilled over into the Americas. And, in the Americas, Britain emerged in the mid-eighteenth century as the most powerful of the empire-builders. Her competitors were far from defeated, however; and, the combination of internal weaknesses and continuing external conflicts hastened the rebellion of second, third and fourth generation Anglo-Americans. To those who had cleared the land and built new communities in North America, their fight was in no small part to protect the *freedoms* distance and isolation had provided from the very beginning of settlement at Jamestown in 1609 and Plymouth in 1620. The isolation of frontier life meant that those who migrated to the interior lived beyond the reach of the State, not merely the British state but the Colonial state as well; thus, instead of a tyranny imposed by a strong government, another sort of tyranny arose in the absence of government, the nature of which was described by historian Frederick Jackson Turner:

So long as free land exists, the opportunity for a competency exists, and economic power secures political power. But the democracy born of free land, strong in selfishness and individualism, intolerant of administrative experience and education, and pressing individual liberty beyond its proper bounds, has its dangers as well as its

benefits. Individualism in America has allowed a laxity in regard to governmental affairs which has rendered possible the spoils system and all the manifest evils that follow from the lack of a highly developed civic spirit.²⁵⁷

Government would eventually surround and absorb the frontier population of North America. The arrival of hundreds of thousands of European settlers—periodically supported by frontier militia and professional soldiers—eventually displaced the indigenous tribes. Government then employed surveyors to divide the conquered land into territories. Once populated, these territories subdivided further into separate states within *the Union*.


For several decades the descendants of the earliest European-Americans fought a cold war over some very important issues. For all practical purposes, the *War Between The States* resolved the question of whether the Union existed as a voluntary association of sovereign states, or as one nation divided into administrative districts called *states*. Although some migration did occur between the states during the colonial period and increased thereafter, for most of the antebellum period the indigenous European-American populations thought of themselves as citizens of a particular state rather than of one nation. This was the period of the Union, and is best characterized by that term. After the war, the makeup of the population even in the original states began to change dramatically.

In the fifty years between 1870 and 1920, millions of native Eurasians left their homelands for the Americas. Those who came to the republic that was now, both conceptually and in reality, the United States, had no history or experience with the questions of states rights or state citizenship as opposed to rights of citizenship guaranteed by a national government and a centralized system of socio-political institutions. The spirit of rugged individualism described by Turner collided with a growing dependency on government as the source of privilege and means of acquiring wealth and power. Americans, even those brutalized

by unjust socio-political arrangements and institutions, to a significant extent subordinated their ethnic or religious values to a nationalistic ideal in an effort blend in with the Anglo-American majority as much as possible. In this new republic, to be different was to be discriminated against and even ostracized. The children of immigrants from Eurasia could eventually learn to speak English without an accent and adopt behavior making them almost indistinguishable from the descendants of earlier European immigrants. For the majority of indigenous Americans, or those we today refer to as *people of color*, blending in was just not possible.

Other dynamics were involved in the forging of a society precariously balanced by private arrangements and public policies that simultaneously encouraged and thwarted the drive toward homogeneity. Life on a constantly moving frontier and in the increasingly Europeanized eastern cities revealed vulnerabilities the framers of the Constitution hoped have been left behind in the *Old World*. The more thoughtful began to see structural flaws in the nation's system of positive law, and even in the Constitution itself. Few of the nation's critics were able to identify the specific conflicts existing between just principles and the unjust circumstances that had become pervasive so soon.. What the nation needed but could not obtain was the adoption and enforcement of a universally-applied system of positive law, the specific application of which protected individual liberty and guaranteed equality of opportunity. Such an ambitious objective would, of course, interfere in what most individuals accepted as their legitimate right to accumulate and dispose of property (including, to some, the labor and lives of other people) as they saw fit. European-Americans who could trace their origins in the Americas back to the period of *salutary neglect* remained deeply fearful of allowing the federal authorities much power in the realm property. ?

Individualism fueled by conflict with a fierce indigenous population, nurtured by land hunger and speculation rejected the traditional



aspects of aristocratic privilege; however, economic power—regardless of the means obtained—was very much ingrained in the laws adopted to stimulate commercial activity and achieve the rapid development of such internal improvements as roads and canals. The Congress of the United States became the instrument by which monopoly privilege was distributed and the public domain squandered for the benefit of the few (including, of course, the members of Congress themselves). European feudalism had placed important societal responsibilities on the privileged. When that system disintegrated and larger and larger number of the landless chose migration over starvation, they came to the Americas having learned one valuable lesson: those who control land possess not only the source of wealth but of power as well.

THE SOCIAL FABRIC WEARING THIN

The spirit of *cooperative individualism*, absent from the European experience and only marginally appreciated by European-Americans, almost disappeared as the nineteenth century progressed and only partially emerged within the current of reform that swept through Europe and arose separately in the United States. In the Old World, the language of reform became the rhetoric of groups determined to take control of the State. In the United States, reform took the form of a *nativist* reaction to the societal problems accompanying (and that many felt were caused by) rapid industrialization and the arrival of immigrants in numbers far too large for orderly absorption into the mainstream population. Immigration provided subsistence wage labor to the factories, brought millions of people together in cramped and unhealthy urban slums and stretched established social institutions to the breaking point. The fact that all of these conditions could have been avoided by law that enforced just principles was understood only by a few—the voices in the wilderness.

A small remnant of cooperative individualists remained vocal and active in the face of attacks by the private monopolists on the one hand (i.e., the *agrarian and industrial-landlords*), and by advocates of state monopolies on the other. For two decades at the end of the nineteenth century, Henry George appeared as their most prominent spokesperson. His untimely death in 1897 left a void that could not be filled. The few who truly understood and believed in the principles of *cooperative individualism* carried on as best they could, hoping the momentum generated by Henry George would be sufficient to overturn conventional wisdom and the propaganda machinery of the agrarian and industrial-landlords and the State.

With the conclusion of the Second World War, the transnational philosophy of the cooperative individualists lost even more ground, overwhelmed by the global balance of terror imposed on the world's citizenry by nation-states in possession of stockpiled nuclear weapons. Yet, this danger and an increasing awareness of global environmental problems produced an enlarged generation of people searching for ~~a~~ [?] transnational values on which to build a more harmonious world. Many scientists were in the forefront of this new movement, and one—the physicist and astronomer Carl Sagan—captured the imagination of many individuals with an educational project that looked at the interdependence of all life on our planet and the absolute need for cooperation among the people of the earth. In the final episode of *Cosmos*, Carl Sagan called out to his audience for their participation in a citizen-based movement of transnational activism:

We, the nuclear hostages—the peoples of the Earth—must educate ourselves about conventional and nuclear warfare. Then we must educate our governments. We must learn the science and technology that provide the only conceivable tools for our survival. We must be willing to challenge courageously the conventional social, political, economic and religious wisdom. We must make every effort to understand that our fellow humans, all over the world, *are* human. ...

The old exhortations to nationalist fervor and jingoist pride have begun to lose their appeal. Perhaps because of rising standards of living, children are being treated better worldwide. In only a few decades, sweeping global changes have begun to move in precisely the directions needed for human survival. A new consciousness is developing which recognizes that we are one species.²⁵⁸

Even now, the future remains uncertain. In the United States and many other societies there are signs of a breakdown in the moral and social fabric. For example, too many children are not receiving the necessary nurturing from parents, family and community. On the other hand, we appear to have entered a new era in which the threat of a massive nuclear exchange has been greatly reduced, but replaced sadly by an increased threat of the use of devastating weapons as instruments of hate. The collapse of State Socialism within the Soviet Union and the societies of eastern Europe has created a window of opportunity for positive change. Yet, important lessons from our past have yet to be learned. The rise of State Socialism throughout so much of the world was in reaction to socio-political institutions that maintained privilege for the few and misery for the many. The fact that the Bolshevik regime replacing the Czar was capable of extreme brutality and lost sight of what real liberty could achieve does not diminish the willingness of so many to give their lives for just the promise of a better existence. For a time, many others looked to the Soviet experiment with hope (and blinders on). Fear of the Soviet style of State Socialism forced leaders in other societies to come to the table with reformers in search of measures that would improve conditions without attacking entrenched privilege at its core. The fact that even in the most *liberal* of today's social democracies, privilege and monopolistic licenses continue to be protected under law speaks to the enormous power of those who have long enjoyed their privileged position at the expense of the general populations.

This brings me to an appropriate pause to once again remind the reader of the lesson of history that Henry George so masterfully stated in the form of a *natural law*. All that we do in the creation of just, positive law depends on our understanding of this fundamental axiom of human behavior on which George builds his study of political economy:

[T]his disposition of men to seek the satisfaction of their desires with the minimum of exertion is so universal and unailing that it constitutes one of those invariable sequences that we denominate laws of nature, and from which we may safely reason.²⁵⁹

Nowhere in the Western experience has this fundamental principle been so clearly in evidence as in the long struggle for control over Ireland.

The Long Calm

Ancient Ireland was invaded and its earliest known inhabitants conquered between the fourth and third centuries B.C. by central Europeans known today by the name *Gaelic Celts*. To this island and its people they brought the monarchical form of government, a somewhat advanced knowledge of iron-making, and a socio-political hierarchy that gave power to a special class of knowledge-keepers, "*who preserved the traditions, epics, laws, pedigrees, and history of the race*"²⁶⁰ And, under Gaelic tradition, although power was concentrated within a monarch (born both priest and king) the ability to impose this power was limited by several factors: the tribal nature of the Celtic states; a very poor system of roads; and, an absence of large, permanent settlements.

The economist and historian Murray Rothbard suggested that the conditions prevailing in Celtic Ireland support the case for minimal government as the best government. He describes Ireland in this period as “*a highly complex society that was, for centuries, the most advanced, most scholarly, and most civilized in all of Western Europe.*”²⁶¹ One might argue against the specific example of Celtic Ireland as a society governed under just socio-political arrangements; however, the correlation suggested by Murray Rothbard between the absence of a strong, central authority and general well-being of the population is, as we have seen, an important historical observation. Ancient Ireland under Celtic rule introduced feudalism to the native tribal population, pulling the people of Ireland toward a socio-political structure closer to what existed elsewhere in Europe. From this point on, Ireland would be governed under principles of inherited, aristocratic privilege, limited to some degree by a necessary interdependence between lord and peasant producer. Below the lords there existed a small number of independent peasant farmers, possessing title and working their own land; and, below this group in status were the landless and hereditary serfs. As in all other feudal societies, the confiscation of production by the lords provided them with a lifestyle superior to that appropriate as exchange for the administrative services they provided to the community as a whole. Very soon thereafter, the development of civilization in Ireland would experience grave shocks as a result of contact with the Roman occupants of Britain.

Ireland was by location and political organization uniquely at the frontier of Eurasia for most of its known history. At the height of Roman power, Ireland remained independent of the reach of empire but was nonetheless influenced by Rome’s close proximity. As early as the first century A.D. Rome established a trading post in Ireland, which was maintained and expanded over the next three centuries. When, in the late fourth century A.D. the Romans were forced to relinquish their holdings in Britain, the Celtic-Irish invaded their larger neighbor and

managed to gain a foothold in the western part of the island, remaining in southern Wales until well into the tenth century and in Scotland from that time forward. Most important to the future course of events, the colonization of parts of Britain by the Celtic-Irish not only exposed them to Roman influences but also opened the door for Christianity and the establishment of monasteries throughout southern Ireland.

Anglo-Normans Achieve A Divided Ireland

Celtic expansionism was itself curtailed by Viking invaders in the ninth century. The Celts then fought a long series of battles to retain their independence and territorial integrity. The invasion began near the end of the eighth century, and the Vikings (primarily Norwegians) made frequent raids on villages all along the Irish coast. Celtic resistance increased after 840 and for a time the attentions of the Vikings turned elsewhere. Returning in force in 914-915, however, the Vikings were able to establish a foothold in the area around Dublin and the northern coastal regions, and they maintained control here for the next 35-40 years.

The Vikings had taken great advantage of the disunity and conflict among the Celtic tribes in Ireland; however, for reasons that are unclear they did not engage in empire-building or colonization in Ireland (although they did do so in Britain and elsewhere). As historian Donnchadh O Corrain has written:

The Vikings were after plunder, captives (who could be ransomed or enslaved), and food. ...They did a great deal of damage, killed a number of clerics and frightened a lot more. ...But church life went on. ...

From the mid-tenth century, the [Vikings] made a great impact on Ireland as traders. They introduced more sophisticated ships and boats, for trade as well as for

war. ...[They] took the trade of Ireland in hand, including the slave trade which was extensive and profitable down to the twelfth century. ...

In contract with Scotland, where the incomers became farmers and fishermen, the [Vikings] in Ireland became merchants and seamen, who hugged the coastline.²⁶²

As a result, Dublin developed into a major Viking trading center during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. At the same time, Celtic princes were consolidating their power on the battlefield. Out of a long period of internal warfare emerged the warrior-king Turlough O'Connor in the early decades of the twelfth century as the first king over a somewhat pacified Ireland. With O'Connor's death, however, the internecine struggles resumed among the Celtic tribes, opening the door for the Anglo-Norman invasion during the reign of Henry II.

By this time, the intermarriage of conquerors and the conquered resulted in a new race of people in Ireland. The Vikings and Celts of Dublin gradually came together, so that by the eleventh century a stable society had evolved that acted independently of either the minor kings of Ireland or the Viking rulers of Scandinavia. Trade and contact with Britain expanded during this period, which not only brought prosperity but also established strong religious bonds and subordination to the Catholic Church in Britain.

Norman conquest of the Anglo-Saxon tribes of Britain in 1066 also achieved a gradual unification of peoples, so that by the mid-twelfth century much of Britain was dominated by a much more aggressive and powerful aristocratic hierarchy. These Anglo-Norman lords looked upon Ireland as part of their legitimate sphere of influence.

The first step taken by Henry II in his designs on Ireland was to obtain from pope Adrian IV titular authority over Ireland. Though Roman Catholic and ostensibly subject to papal authority, the Celtic-Viking Irish were not about to voluntarily submit to Anglo-Norman rule. After Celtic Wales was subdued and firmly in Anglo-Norman hands, Henry II crossed the Irish Sea with his army in 1171.

Remarkably, he was asked to do so by some of the Celtic-Irish themselves.

Dublin arose as the primary objective of the Anglo-Norman invasion force in Ireland. Although cosmopolitan in population, Dublin sat within the province of Leinster and had for some time been under the control of the Celtic King, Dermot MacMurrough. In 1166 another Celtic tribe led by Rory O'Connor defeated MacMurrough's forces and occupied Dublin. MacMurrough fled to Britain, where he raised an army of Norman mercenaries and Welsh Celts. This army returned to Ireland, captured Dublin and went on to gain control over all of the province of Leinster.

Seizing the opportunity to finally add Ireland to his kingdom, Henry II arrived in 1171 at the head of a large army. MacMurrough and the Norman barons immediately yielded to Henry II's authority and attempted to consolidate power in the areas under their control. Under the terms of the Treaty of Winsor in 1175, Rory O'Connor became the acknowledged king of the remaining provinces of Ireland. Instead of peace, however, rebellion against these central authorities seemed to be continuous and everywhere.

The late twelfth century also saw the beginning of large-scale, commercial agriculture in Ireland, stimulated by the immigration of colonists from all parts of Britain. Gradually, the Celtic and Celtic-Viking Irish were displaced by Anglo-Normans from the most productive agricultural lands. During the reign of King John (Henry II's son) further encroachments onto Celtic-held lands advanced by a combination of armed struggle, alliance and marriage. Along with the consolidation of power in the hands of the monarchy, administration of governmental affairs in Ireland shifted from the feudal barons to agents of the crown; and, in 1210 King John formally declared Ireland and the Irish people subjects of the *Laws of England* (which laws applied, of course, to Wales as well). Despite pledges of loyalty and the payment of land rents by the Celtic *provincial* kings to the English crown, King John

continued to award large fiefdoms to favorite Anglo-Norman barons. A long period of warfare ensued over disputed land titles, during which many Celtic and Anglo-Norman groups fought on either side as mercenaries. Scottish mercenaries were recruited to fight in Ireland as well.

In England itself, events were moving forward in an unanticipated direction. A large faction of Anglo-Norman barons defeated King John's forces on the battlefield, leading to the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215, a document fondly thought of as a precursor to later instruments of constitutional (and participatory) democracy. We are cautioned in this conclusion by G.M. Trevelyan, who correctly observes, that the Magna Carta was "*designed to obtain public 'liberties' and to control the King through the Common Law, baronial assemblies, and alliance with other classes.*"²⁶³

The signing of the Magna Carta did not bring stability. Fighting between the barons and Royalist supporters continued even after the death of King John in 1216. Welsh and Scottish nobles continued to act in opposition to the monarchy, and a French-Norman army arrived to stand with them against the royalists. Britain seemed on the verge of division into minor principalities and what would have amounted to a return of feudalism. In the midst of this chaotic circumstance, John's young son was crowned Henry III in 1216. A Regency was created under Ranulf de Blundevill (the Earl of Chester), William the Marshal and Hubert de Burgh to govern and to bring rebellion to an end, which they did with great speed. And, in the process, the Royalists forced the French army under Louis VIII to retreat from Britain.

William the Marshal was already an old man when the Regency was created; thus, when he died in 1219 control of the government effectively fell into the hands of Hubert de Burgh. Recognizing the weakened state of the English monarchy, Hubert de Burgh postured to keep the Anglo-Norman barons from involving England, Wales and Ireland in new wars on the continent. This he managed to do until

Henry III, now twenty-two years of age and backed by a large army, took power with an intent to claim his rightful estates in France.

French-Norman influence in the affairs of England increased significantly under Henry III, with the result that Welsh, Scottish and many Anglo-Norman barons arose in opposition to the King. Henry III's army was routed in Wales, forcing the King to agree to terms that restored Hubert de Burgh. Even so, under Henry III the barons had been subjected to a king who taxed and spent without consideration to the potential domestic consequences, and Henry's French courtiers urged him to fully exercise the traditional rights of absolute sovereignty over his subjects. As a consequence, by the 1250s, Henry III's continental and Papal intrigues once again placed him at great risk. Both the Catholic hierarchy in Britain and the Anglo-Norman barons refused Henry III's demands for money and troops. In 1258, they forced on Henry the creation of a commission to entertain reform of the government, resulting in the creation of an elected Council of Fifteen to advise the King and see to the administration of the State. This Council, effectively controlled by Simon de Montfort, championed the diffusion of socio-political power beyond the interests of the anti-royalist barons. Winston Churchill observes that Montfort "*wished to extend to the baronial estates the reforms already undertaken in the royal administration...making it plain that the great lords were under the Royal authority, which was again—though he did not stress—under the Council.*"²⁶⁴ In response to this challenge, Henry III called upon the Norman-French for assistance. Civil war erupted in 1262 and Montfort's party emerged victorious, thereby achieving a further weakening of the monarchy.

Reform was in the air. Montfort summoned a Parliament in 1265 to sanction his actions and position. At this point, however, the Anglo-Norman barons saw that their privileged positions were being threatened and joined forces with Edward, the son of Henry III, to march against Montfort. Greatly outnumbered, Montfort's army

became trapped in southern Wales and Montfort was killed on the battlefield. Victory resulted in another of the continuous confiscations of landed estates that so characterizes the post-feudal era in Britain. Those who had joined the royalist faction gained at the expense of Montfort's supporters. The immediate reaction was widespread rebellion and several years of violence in the countryside.

During Edward's reign, which began in 1272, the work begun by Montfort was actually carried on under the direction of the monarchy. Edward was intent on ridding his kingdom of corruption, the excesses of the feudal barons and the growing influence of the Catholic Church over secular affairs. By disavowing debts owed to mostly Jewish financiers and forcing their departure from England, Edward effectively nationalized much of the land of England and Wales and strengthened the autonomy of the crown. Despite these achievements, however, Edward jeopardized his reign by persisting in the fruitless attempt to advance Anglo-Norman territorial claims on the continent. These *foreign* adventures were resisted by Welsh and Scottish barons, in particular; the Scots went so far as to join forces with the French king, Philip IV, against Edward.

Despite the heavy financial burden brought on by a war on two fronts, Edward moved against the Scots early in 1296 with the full fury his army could harness, easily taking the Scottish coastal city of Berwick and slaughtering many of its citizens. A Scottish army was defeated the next month at Dunbar, after which Scotland was brought under Edward's direct rule. Insurrection followed, and a large English army sent to restore order was routed by partisan forces under William Wallace. A larger English army, its ranks filled with archers, eventually defeated Wallace, who escaped to France; fighting nonetheless continued intermittently until Edward's war with France ended in 1302. Wallace, who had returned from France, and many of his supporters were captured and executed. The struggle for Scottish independence then fell to Robert Bruce, who managed to escape the grasp of Edward

I until the latter's own death left the English crown in the hands of a far less aggressive (and capable) sovereign.

With the new king, Edward II, at its head, an army of some twenty-five thousand marched northward against ten thousand Scots led by Bruce. The Scots were anxious to avenge English brutality and did so at Bannockburn in June of 1314. The war continued until 1323, and in 1328 Scotland formally regained independence from England. Noteworthy is the Scottish expression of nationalism contained in a letter written in 1320 to Pope John XXII, the substance of which is referred to as the Scottish *Declaration of Arbroath*:

For as long as one hundred of us shall remain alive we shall never in any wise consent to submit to the rule of the English, for it is not for glory we fight, for riches, or for honours, but for freedom alone, which no good man loses but with his life.²⁶⁵

During the reigns of Edward I and Edward II, Ireland remained at the periphery of the English quest to consolidate the lands of Britain under an English king and to hold onto Anglo-Norman territories on the continent. In Ireland, where a large portion of the Anglo-Norman barons were absentee landlords, they entrusted the administration of their holdings to Celtic-Irish lords and merely collected tribute (a large portion of which was in turn compromised by the military adventures of their kings). The absence of a strong, stabilizing military presence in Ireland also created an environment in which the various factions of Celtic-Irish lords and Anglo-Norman barons fought their own minor wars of consolidation, greatly interrupting commerce and agricultural productivity.

For these reasons and others described below, the Anglo-Normans (i.e., the group destined to be referred to as the *Old English*) were unable to consolidate their holdings in Ireland into a true colony or vassal state. Because the Celtic-Irish tribes were scattered throughout the island, they were both difficult to conquer and almost impossible to govern.

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Thus, for a brief period, the possibility of regaining independence from England seemed more than a remote possibility for the Celtic-Irish. The Celtic king, Donal O'Neill, supported by a Scottish army sent by Robert Bruce and commanded by Bruce's brother, Edward, marched against the Anglo-Norman colonists. Between 1315-1318 continuous fighting occurred between these factions; unfortunately for the Celts, however, their effort was hampered by shifting alliances that prevented the Scots from advancing very far south. At the same time, a long period of poor weather further disrupted the agricultural economy, brought famine to the population and an out-migration of Anglo-Norman colonists back to England. More than anything else, in fact, the *Black Death* of the mid-fourteenth century temporarily ended the threat of total Anglo-Norman domination over Ireland and the Celtic-Irish population.

In the western province of Connacht, the Anglo-Norman influence disappeared almost entirely. Nevertheless, the ability of this civilization of loosely knit tribal groups to resist the invasion of the more aggressive and technologically advanced people of Britain was short-lived.

Improvements in the design of ocean-going vessels brought Ireland closer to the core of British politics; and, as the Anglo-Normans became over several centuries distinctly English, their entrance into the competition among the empire-building nation-states gave a strategic importance to Ireland far beyond the wealth-producing capacity of the island's lands and natural resources. The first wave of invading Anglo-Normans generally regarded the Celtic-Irish as "*savages...outside the pale of Papal Christendom*"²⁶⁶ in much the same way as Christian Europeans came to view all other groups as heathen and inherently inferior. And yet, a significant number of the Anglo-Norman conquerors were themselves of mixed Norman and Celtic blood. Many of these invaders eventually intermarried with the conquered Celtic-Irish to produce a people distinct from any other. The Anglo-Norman presence also brought Ireland into the periphery of European feudalism

and expanded the consolidating presence of Roman Catholicism, which soon became the dominant religious doctrine.

Anglo-Norman views toward militarism and warfare also differed substantially from those of the Celtic tribes in Ireland. How this impacted Ireland's subsequent history is explained by historian Edmund Curtis:

To the Irish kings a battle was intended to achieve an immediate object; that achieved, their armies retired. To the Norman-French, war was a business proposition and their enterprise a joint-stock company out of which profits were expected. A battle once gained, the next step was to throw up an impregnable castle, the next was to organize the conquered country into a manor or barony and seek if necessary a charter for it from Earl or King.²⁶⁷

Thus, the Anglo-Normans brought with them the formal structure of positive law within which private titleholdings in land were sanctioned and protected. As a result, the Celtic-Irish tribes were slowly forced to abandon their more or less nomadic way of life. Use of tribal lands had up to this time been largely communal. Norman law now established fixed relationships between lord and peasant tiller under which a pattern of contributions in produce was paid to the lord in exchange for access to land.

Henry George, as he examined these socio-political arrangements, would ask whether the result was a more or a less just distribution of wealth. The protective and administrative services provided by the lord of the manor would tend to secure the tiller's improvements to the land; thus, the lord was justly entitled to wages for services rendered (roughly equivalent to the difference in the quantity of wealth produced over what would be produced absent such services). Anything taken above this amount would represent an unjust confiscation, or theft, of wealth from actual producers. Another characteristic of the manor system, however, was that the tillers were tightly bound to the feudal lord and

were unable to offer their labor to others. The feudal lord rather than a freely operating market determined how wealth would be distributed. Under such circumstances, we should not be surprised that the amount of wealth absorbed by the feudal lords far exceeded their contribution to the actual production of wealth.

With surprising speed, the Anglo-Norman presence was turning Celtic Ireland into a post-feudal state, but a state subject to the greater pressures of both absentee landlords and the whims of a distant monarchy. As would occur in the Americas, the introduction of these arrangements and institutions was externally imposed rather than evolving on their own. Yet, as we have seen, the Anglo-Norman influence was not strong enough to fully secure the island. As a consequence, a gradual adjustment by each group to the other occurred, creating what is described by Trevelyan as a feudal society "*built upon the foundation of an Irish bog.*"²⁶⁸ In England, time eventually reduced the animosities held by Anglo-Saxons against the Norman invaders, allowing a unified national identity to evolve. Positive law also gained a stronger foothold in England when Henry II arrived in 1154 to rule over England, bringing with him a uniform system of law and courts subject to royal jurisdiction. Equally important, Henry II also introduced the practice of jury hearings and saw to the writing down of English common law. For a brief period of time these measures had the effect of shifting power away from the feudal lords and into the hands of the monarchy. The longer run effect was to give birth to the idea that the *rule of law* is to be pursued as superior to the arbitrary *rule of men*.

The signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 represented an advance in this direction. By written agreement, the rights and responsibilities held by the monarchy in opposition to a landed—though less feudal—nobility were formalized. With Magna Carta as a starting point, the English nobles of the thirteenth century moved to displace feudal arrangements with a modern system of titleholdings that converted

land from being a communal source of sustenance into a commodity, to be bought and sold as any other. This innovation would ultimately separate peasant tillers from the soil and set the stage for the sweeping enclosure of the commons into large, pastoral farms dedicated to sheep and cattle.

Ireland seemed from this time forward always to be at the periphery of the struggle for power in England. Edward II ruled subject to severe limits placed on him by powerful barons; and, when Edward's large army was routed by Robert Bruce and the Scots, opposition to his rule increased. As Edward II's troubles worsened, the queen abandoned him for the safety of France. At the head of the opposition party was Roger Mortimer, who had also escaped to France and there became the queen's confidant and lover. Mortimer returned to England in 1324 at the head of an invasion force. He and Queen Isabella seized control of the government and executed Edward II. The crown was then passed to the dead king's young son, Edward III; for the next six years Mortimer and the Queen Isabella exercised the authority of the crown over the English people.

When Edward III reached adulthood, a number of nobles rallied to his support, captured and executed Mortimer and placed the Queen mother under close arrest for the remainder of her life. Under the firm hand of Edward III, England then once again looked outward toward the continent in a quest to rekindle Norman power and territorial sovereignty.

While Anglo-Norman colonists in Ireland pleaded for intervention by Edward III to restore order and control the excesses of the barons, England's economic interests drew the King into war with the feudal aristocracy of the Netherlands over the wool trade. At the same time, what became known as the *Hundred Years War* also began with France. Edward III raised a large army of mercenaries and, after soundly defeating the French fleet in the Channel, landed without opposition on the continent, protected by English archers and their long bows. After a

failed siege of the city of Tournai, however, the army returned to England and awaited Parliament's approval of new taxes so the soldiers could once again sail for France. Funds were finally approved, and this time Edward III's army advanced rapidly toward Paris, where the English were met by a French force nearly three times as large, forcing a harried retreat. Ironically, the English retreat led to the famous Battle of Crecy, in which the English archers and their long bows decimated the much larger French army of medieval knights.

After an eleven-month siege, Edward took the port city of Calais. And, then, the Eurasian continent was devastated by The Black Death. By the middle of the fourteenth century, the plague had taken one-third of the population of the continent. Yet, even in the midst of such a widespread calamity, the empire-builders of fifteenth century Europe continued to seek territorial gains and new sources of tribute on the battlefield. Another English army under the Prince of Wales (nicknamed the Black Prince) thoroughly defeated a much larger French force in 1355 and captured the French monarch, King John. By the Treaty of Bretigny in 1360, the English foothold on the continent was greatly expanded.

As we would expect, the large expenditures required to maintain this army on the continent drained the English of their financial reserves; as a result, Edward III's repeated summoning of Parliaments to approve his requests for money yielded important compromises in how the realm was to be governed. Most importantly, the Commons evolved into a permanent House of Parliament with the primary responsibility for taxation, while a separate House of Lords is created.

Fighting on the continent resumed in 1369, but in this round the French refrained from committing their forces in any one engagement. A stalemate of sorts developed which further drained the English force of energy and finances. Moreover, because The Black Death took the lives of so many peasant farmers in Britain and Ireland as well as on the continent, agricultural production had fallen drastically; in fact, large

regions of Britain had become fallow and unoccupied. Peasant revolts broke out in reaction to acts of Parliament that attempted to keep them bound to feudal lords at wages at or near subsistence levels in an environment of rising prices.

Edward III's queen, Philippa, died during the plague, and the aged king lived only seven more years until 1377. The Prince of Wales, Edward's only son, had died a year earlier. Thus, the heir to the throne became the King's grandson, Richard II. Until 1389, when the new king reached the age of twenty-three, the barons and Parliament held sway over the affairs of state. A truce with the feudal lords then allowed Richard II to rally popular support to himself and negotiate a rapprochement with the French king, Charles VI. By 1394 he felt sufficiently secure in England to lead an expedition to Ireland at great expense but with little permanent benefit to the English crown. Roger Mortimer, cousin to Richard II and potential heir to the English throne, was appointed governor in Ireland, and Richard II returned to England. Back in Ireland fighting began anew between the Celtic-Irish factions, the Anglo-Norman barons and the royalist forces under Mortimer.

Mortimer was killed during this uprising, and Richard II was forced to mount another expedition in an effort to restore order. At home he faced a constitutional crisis of his own making, after he directly attacked established Parliamentary privilege in an attempt to secure absolute rule for himself. Rebellious barons gathered around the King's cousin, Henry of Lancaster, who returned from exile in France to command their army. Richard hurriedly returned to England but was forced to surrender to the rebels and abdicate his throne. By acclamation, Henry of Lancaster ascended to the throne as Henry IV. The English barons then made sure that Parliamentary influence over the actions of the King was firmly re-established, demanding in particular an accounting from royal officials of how funds were being spent. In return, succession to Henry's son and the House of Lancaster was affirmed. And yet, there was still to be no peace in the realm.

Insurrection and then open civil war erupted. Although the initial opposition came from the Welsh, a number of powerful English barons eventually turned against Henry as well. With his health failing and his financial reserves nearly gone, Henry subordinated his rule to the direction of Parliament and governed under an appointed Council. Upon his death in March, 1413 he was succeeded by his son, who became Henry V; and, during his reign Britain entered an era of reconciliation and national unity—accompanied, however, by an expansion of the Royal Navy and of renewed foreign intrigues.

Britain Fights For A Position At The Core

Once again an English army was dispatched to France in search of empire. This time the French monarchy was also embroiled in civil war. At Agincourt a French army three times the number commanded by Henry V experienced another devastating defeat in the face of the long bow. War continued until 1420, when Henry V effectively became overlord of what had constituted the French state. Within two years, however, Henry V was dead and his infant son ascended to the throne. The war in France dragged on, only now the French nationalists were reinforced by a Scottish army. Gradually, the drain of continuous fighting and a resurgence of French unity (sparked by the mystical leadership of Joan of Arc) weakened English resolve. One by one fortresses held by the English fell to the French, and by 1453 all but the port city of Calais was back in French hands. In the end, as historian G.M. Trevelyan concludes, whatever advantage came of this long period of English involvement on the continent "*was of the intangible and intellectual order.*" By which he means:

[A] strong national self-consciousness, more democratic than feudal; great memories and traditions; a belief in the island qualities, which helped Englishmen to

carry their heads high in the coming century of eclipse behind the crescent monarchies of France and Spain.²⁶⁹

At the same time, the dedication of so much of England's manpower and resources to continental adventures allowed events in Ireland to take on an insular character. Alliances between the Celtic tribes shifted and fighting remained continuous. No indigenous clan or leader could command the loyalty of the individual tribes. Historian Katharine Simms makes the observation that such efforts were essentially doomed "*because of the power of the Anglo-Irish lordships, occupying the more agriculturally profitable and well-populated parts of Ireland.*"²⁷⁰

The rise and fall of the first British empire had been swift. Now, under Henry VI even national unity in England itself virtually disappeared. The loss of French territories was blamed by many on the intrigues and treason of the King's Council. The air was thick with the promise of armed conflict. As the retreating army returned from the continent, England became, in fact, an armed camp awaiting only the right moment to take to the field. Adding to the turmoil, the landed barons increasingly ignored both the common and written laws so that the protection of individual liberty rested on the will of these feudal-like lords.

Around Richard of Gloucester (the Duke of York and great-grandson of Edward III) arose a challenge to Henry VI that finally erupted into civil war in 1452. Richard had been serving as governor in Ireland but returned once convinced that only the removal of Henry VI could restore order and glory to England. Although Henry VI experienced a prolonged period of mental exhaustion, his queen bore him a son and heir. In the meantime, with strong support in both Houses of Parliament, Richard took over administration of the State. Then, with the King's recovery, Richard was ousted from the government.

In short order the opposing forces met on the battlefield to decide whose will would prevail. Richard's army emerged victorious but his

quest for power was resisted by a faction of the English nobility who arose in opposition to his return. A period of uneasy truce lasted between 1456-1460 during which Richard returned to Ireland. His supporters again took up arms, defeating a royalist army at Worcester and opening the door for yet another return of Richard to England. Before leaving Ireland again, Richard summoned an Irish Parliament (its members now of Anglo-Irish composition) and secured from them a promise of allegiance regardless of what shifts in power might occur in England. This time Richard would not be blessed with good fortune. Upon his return he was met by yet another army of royalist supporters which had moved south against him from Wales. Richard's own force was destroyed and both he and his eighteen year old son killed.

Upon hearing of his father's death, an older son, Edward (now the new Duke of York), marched against his father's enemies. Each side acted viciously toward the other, and few prisoners were taken in the ensuing battles. The King and Queen sought refuge in the North, while the Duke of York, occupying London, seized the throne of England. In March of 1461 Edward marched northward and met Queen Margaret's forces (for she had effectively taken control from Henry VI) near York. Here, Edward handed Margaret and the House of Lancaster a devastating defeat, followed by a purge that resulted in the execution of hundreds of nobles and the confiscation of almost one-third of the landed estates of England. In June, the nobles of the House of York and their supporters put Edward formally on the throne and began to divide the spoils.

Henry VI and Margaret escaped through Scotland and eventually made their way to France, where the Queen solicited French support and returned the following year with a new army. Her forces captured and occupied three fortresses on the northeastern coast of England, near the Scottish border. Edward marched north and after a month long siege took these strongholds. Again, the Queen escaped to Scotland, returned once more with fresh soldiers and was again driven from

England. The fighting continued through 1464, but this time Edward took no chances; all captured lords and knights of the House of Lancaster were swiftly executed. The power of the House of Lancaster was nearing its end; only a few battles remained before their role in English history would forever disappear.

An end to civil war once again shifted the attention of Edward and his strongest counselor, John Neville (the Earl of Northumberland) toward the continent. Affairs in Ireland were given scant attention. Edward and Neville disagreed strongly over the proper course of action, Neville desiring an accommodation with France and Edward an alliance with Burgundy. As Winston Churchill explains, the arguments between Edward and Neville spoke to an emerging English nationalism based on a firm strategy for self-preservation:

Never should England become a vassal state; instead of being divided by her neighbours, she would herself, by dividing them, maintain a balance.²⁷¹

Neville's fears of a French and Scottish invasion moved him to gather sufficient support to temporarily take power from Edward. Edward merely awaited the opportune moment, after giving Neville assurances that he would yield to whatever foreign policy stances Neville thought appropriate, then raised an army and drove Neville out of England and to France. In France, where Margaret lived under the protection of Louis XI, she immediately sought a reconciliation and alliance between herself and Neville. The two of them agreed with Louis XI to join forces against Edward and Charles of Burgundy.

In September of 1470 Neville landed with a French force at Dartmouth, on the southern coast of England, while Edward was north putting down another minor insurrection. By the time Edward learned what was happening, Neville was in London and had released Henry VI from the Tower. The boldness displayed by Neville prevented Edward from raising a large enough army to defeat this usurper, so Edward took

temporary refuge on the continent with Charles of Burgundy. Then, in March of 1471 Edward returned with around a thousand mercenaries to reclaim his throne. As he advanced south his force was enlarged but was still greatly outnumbered and threatened by two armies loyal to Neville and approaching from opposite directions. A confused battle took place at Barnet, where Neville was finally killed and his army routed. While this battle raged, Margaret landed with her army and began a march toward Wales to join forces with Welsh allies. Edward met her at Tewkesbury and, once again, emerged victorious on the battlefield. Those Lancastrian lords not killed in the battle were executed by Edward (including Henry VI), and Margaret taken prisoner.

With what became known as the *War of the Roses* temporarily subsided, Edward negotiated a peace with Louis XI and did what he could to nourish recovery of the English economy. He died suddenly, however, in 1483, leaving the throne to his young heir and under the Protectorate of his brother, Richard. Richard, taking full advantage of his opportunity, moved immediately to remove any possible opposition by taking Edward's two young sons into protective custody (eventually executing them), and summoning Parliament to declare his dead brother's marriage null and his sons bastards. This cleared the way for his own ascendancy to the throne as King Richard III.

Richard's ruthlessness brought his enemies together and turned even strong supporters away from his side. News of the murder of Edward's sons spread throughout England and Wales, resulting in a general uprising against Richard. An organized rebellion, planned by Henry Stafford (the second Duke of Buckingham) and Henry Tudor (the Earl of Richmond) faltered. Stafford was caught and executed; Tudor, leading a small force provided by Francis II (the Duke of Brittany), returned to the continent without ever engaging Richard. Order was temporarily restored. Yet, even a serious effort by Richard to inaugurate needed reforms failed to bring the people to his side.

Richard's own son became ill and died the following year, which greatly advanced the position of Henry Tudor as legitimate heir to the throne. Richard, in turn, achieved a remarkable reconciliation with his brother's widow, restoring her to a position of eminence at court and putting forth several of his supporters as marital candidates for her daughters. Then, Richard waited for the inevitable return of Henry Tudor and another battlefield challenge to his reign. In August of 1484, Henry landed with two thousand troops on the southwestern coast of Wales. Several thousand Welsh, eager to restore the blood of ancient Britain to the English throne, marched eastward with him. The armies of Henry and Richard met on August 17 at Bosworth. In this battle, however, Richard was abandoned by important allies and was killed as his army suffered defeat. The War of the Roses came to its final conclusion, and Henry Tudor was crowned Henry VII.

Parliaments And Monarchies The Struggle For Power Renewed

Trevelyan reminds us that the factions vying for power during the War of the Roses were each more Welsh in demeanor than English; that is, more Celtic than Anglo-Norman, and less respectful of the law imposed by central authority than their counterparts. "*Wales remained a paradise for the robber and the homicide,*" observes Trevelyan, "*so long as the Crown was preoccupied with adventures in France and dynastic strife in England.*"²⁷²

Now, however, a Welsh prince was on the throne, and the people of England and Wales anxiously awaited whatever changes might be forthcoming. An immediate problem facing this first Tudor king was the disposition of the landed estates that had passed back and forth between the opposing feudal houses of Lancaster and York. The death in battle and execution of so many lords and their heirs required Henry

to resort to expediency. He proclaimed that existing occupancies would be sanctioned by title for all nobles who acknowledged and swore allegiance to Tudor rule. He then established powerful Councils to administer northern England and Wales on his behalf.

The Anglo-Irish lords in Ireland at this point inadvisably supported an attempted seizure of the throne by Perkin Warbeck, a pretender whose ambitions were financed by Richard III's sister in Burgundy and encouraged by the Scots. In an effort to remove any possibility of an Irish declaration of independence, the Irish Parliament was cajoled by Henry VII's Lord Deputy of Ireland, Edward Poynings, to subordinate itself to the Parliament of England. For a brief period, Henry orchestrated a balance of power among the Anglo-Irish factions by first threatening then elevating to Lord Deputy the Earl of Kildare and arming his forces with English cannon. This strategy eventually fell victim to continued animosities between the opposing Anglo-Irish and the largely ungovernable nature of the Celtic dominated regions distant from Dublin.

Beyond the fortresses and centers of agriculture and commerce, Ireland remained under strong feudal domination, even where the lords themselves gave titular allegiance to the English king. Because of this, the conflict between the houses of York and Lancaster had serious ramifications in Ireland as well. With Henry VII's rule firmly secured, however, the competition in Ireland became one of the right to represent Henry's interests. Opposing the Earl of Kildare (a FitzGerald) was the Earl of Ormond (a Butler). Each of these Anglo-Irish clans sought alliances with Celtic-Irish chieftains against one another.

One obvious result of this militant competition was an ever-present need to secure funds for arms and men (particularly Scottish mercenaries), made extremely difficult because Ireland's peasant population was not organized to produce a large surplus. The one major exception existed in the Anglo-Irish dominated regions where settlements were large and farming techniques more similar to those in

use throughout southern England. In these potentially productive regions, however, the almost continuous fighting interfered with agriculture and, hence, also kept the growth of population in check. The records of this period suggested to historian Nicholas Canny that circumstances in Ireland during the late fifteenth and throughout the sixteenth centuries were very different from those in most of Western Europe:

Where the population of Europe almost doubled in size over the sixteenth century, that of Ireland at best remained constant and may have stood at little more than 750,000 people at the close of the century. Even this figure, which is no more than a crude estimate, conceals as much as it reveals. The population was not evenly distributed, and we know from literary evidence that the more fertile areas of Munster and Ulster were left almost entirely denuded of people in the aftermath of the wars that had been fought over these territories during the 1580s and 1590s.²⁷³

Ireland could not yet be subdued or fully colonized, nor could its people be brought in as full partners with the English and Welsh as citizens of Britain. These issues were, however, not yet at the forefront of English concerns. The right to reign and rule had been settled on the battlefield, and Henry VII pursued domestic policies that brought comparative peace to the English and Welsh countrysides. He did so with strokes of boldness. First, he approached the Scottish king, James IV, and negotiated a truce cemented by the marriage of his own daughter Margaret to James in 1502. In 1492, with Parliamentary support, he had sailed to Calais and by a show of strength negotiated a favorable settlement with France. His death in 1509 left what is universally agreed-upon as a well-ordered State poised to become a modern empire-builder. The emerging nation over which his son ruled as Henry VIII had a population of around three million, low enough to suggest that prolonged warfare might sufficiently weaken England and open the door for invasion by the French.

For the first twenty-two years of his reign Henry VIII pursued a foreign policy in concert with Spain that was both defensive and expansionist. As early as 1512 Henry sent a military expedition to Gascony under Thomas Grey, the Marquis of Dorset. This initial foray onto the continent failed, however, and Grey returned in defeat. Undaunted, Henry approached Maximilian, Emperor of the Holy Roman empire, and purchased the support of an Austrian army. This combined English and Austrian force advanced against the French, winning a decisive victory and occupying the city of Tournai in northeastern France. A second victory, this time involving the use of Swiss mercenaries, secured former Burgundian lands for Henry and Maximilian. Despite their own alliance, Ferdinand of Spain became fearful of Henry's successes and initiated peace negotiations with France. Unwilling to take on Spain as well as France, Henry dutifully followed suit. In Henry's absence the Scots invaded England with an army of fifty thousand troops, against whom Thomas Howard (the Earl of Surrey), threw half that number. Once more, however, the Welsh long bow destroyed English enemies on the battlefield. Among the casualties in this battle was James IV, Scotland's king.

Returning from the continent, Henry virtually turned the administration of government over to Thomas Wolsey, who was made Lord Chancellor and given extraordinary powers to act on Henry's behalf. Among Wolsey's innovations was to expand the authority of the Star Chamber and to train local justices in the law. Henry meanwhile directed his attentions to a further expansion and modernization of the navy. By 1520 he had entered into another alliance with the Hapsburgs and was at war with Francis I of France. And, then, things began to fall apart.

War with France required unpopular new taxation, and after two years and little success, Wolsey convinced Henry to seek a separate peace with Francis I. Not long thereafter the French were decisively defeated by Emperor Charles V and forced to cede a large territory to

the Hapsburg empire. With much of Italy and the Papacy now controlled by Charles V (the nephew of Catherine of Aragon), Henry's efforts to divorce his aging wife were also thwarted. Henry's anger centered on the failed Wolsey, who was arrested for treason and would have been executed had he not sickened and died first. Henry had himself declared Supreme Head of the Church of England and demanded that the clergy repudiate papal authority. With Parliamentary support secured, Henry banished Catherine from his court and married Anne Boleyn, who bore him a daughter (Elizabeth).

More?
The penalty for failure or simply obstructing Henry's whims was severe, as was demonstrated when Henry ordered the execution of Sir Thomas More, Wolsey's successor. Henry's actions are described by most historians as largely unprincipled and self-serving. Yet, he had been faithful to Catherine until it became clear she would not give him a son. Now, his domestic life unraveled. Married to Anne Boleyn but still frustrated in his quest for a male heir, his affections turned to Jayne Seymour. In the meantime, Catherine died in January, 1536. After a swift trial on charges of being unfaithful, Anne Boleyn was executed in May of the same year. Henry was now free to marry Jayne Seymour and did so. Eighteen months later, Henry had his son (Edward) but his third wife was dead.

Henry was now ready to move against the church hierarchy that had caused him so much anguish. Henry's *First Minister*, Thomas Cromwell, was given the task of confiscating and selling off the monastic lands within all of Britain. In Ireland, the destruction of the monasteries affected more than simply religious practice; the monasteries had served as the primary centers of education and culture available to the Celtic Irish. Henry also dispatched an army to Ireland to quell a show of resistance by the FitzGerald of Kildare. He confiscated their lands and then had all the male members of this family executed.

In 1536 Henry summoned an Irish Parliament, and its Anglo-Irish members dutifully sanctioned the establishment of the Church of England and repudiation of papal authority. By this measure Henry became head of the new state church in Ireland as well as England and Wales. If nothing else Henry was consistent in his implementation of policy decisions, and so the Anglo-Irish lords shared in the division of the monastic lands in Ireland. Moreover, with the FitzGeralds removed a vacuum was created into which the Anglo-Irish gradually moved.

Within England itself, Cromwell gravely mistook Henry's attack on papal authority as a willingness to support a break with orthodox practice. Cromwell attempted to forge a new alliance between England and the German Protestant princes, and Henry even agreed to a marriage between himself and the German princess, Anne of Cleves, on assurances from Cromwell that she was a remarkably attractive woman, which she was not. After seeing her, Henry refused to consummate the marriage and obtained an annulment within a year. Cromwell was executed for his troubles. Within weeks, Henry married for the fifth time, to Catherine Howard; unfortunately for Catherine, her unfaithfulness led to her execution after only two years of marriage. In the following year Henry married for the last time, to the widow, Catherine Parr; three years later Henry was dead and once again the throne of England was occupied by a young boy.

With the reign of Edward VI there began the long period of enclosures and displacement of peasant farmers by sheep and cattle (and eventually coal mines) on land held under private title, the wider effect of this demise of the commons described in 1962 by E.M. Leonard:

Inclosure proceedings as conducted in England conduced to the destruction of...rural society. The labourers gradually ceased to own or occupy land; the farms increased in size; the possession of land became more exclusively the privilege of the

rich; and an ever-increasing proportion of the people left the country for the towns.

...²⁷⁴

The increase of pasture in the sixteenth century was rendered profitable by the rapid increase in the price of wool, but in the seventeenth century this cause ceased to operate. The change to pasture, however, continued, partly owing to a great rise in the price of cattle and partly because the increase of wages made it less profitable to employ the greater number of men necessary for tilling the fields.

The decreased demand for labour rendered inclosure for the sake of pasture-farming a source of hardship to the poor, for as fewer labourers were needed it was to the interest of the landlord to evict the smaller farmers from their holdings and to banish the labourers from the villages.²⁷⁵

The predictable result was greater wealth for the landed and misery for the general population. Rebellion soon swept across southeastern England, which was put down mercilessly at great loss of life among the peasants.

In 1553, Edward VI died after a short illness and was succeeded by his half-sister Mary, the daughter of Catherine of Aragon. This new Catholic queen sought restoration of the old religious order in England, but actually advanced the Protestant cause. Her marriage in 1554 to Philip, heir to the Spanish throne, committed England to an alliance few Englishmen cared for. A rebellion of sorts broke out against Mary but was unsuccessful. Elizabeth's life was threatened at this point because of her rumored association with the plot; in the end, she was merely sent to where she could do no harm, to wait until Mary's death would bring her to power.

Mary allowed England to be involved with Spain in a war against France, the only significant result of which was the loss of Calais, what had been England's only remaining outpost on the continent. Mary's death in 1558 then made Elizabeth I Queen of England. The realm she inherited, despite all that Henry VII had worked for, was financially and spiritually exhausted. Once again, Britain's national unity was at risk.

The Puritan contingent in England now arose to advance its own severe Protestant agenda in the Parliament. A similar challenge emerged in Scotland against the Catholic Queen-Mother, led by the religious scholar George Wishart and Protestant nobles returning from exile. Despite support from the French, the Catholics were defeated by Scottish Protestants (with assistance provided by Elizabeth). Elizabeth then removed the last great internal threat to her power—and institutionalized the drift from orthodoxy to Protestantism—when she executed Mary Stuart, the exiled Queen of Scotland, for treason in February of 1587.

Ireland, Again At The Periphery

After the death of Henry VIII, Mary had appointed Thomas Radcliffe (the Earl of Sussex) as governor of Ireland in 1556, and he remained until 1565. Radcliffe was determined to expand and consolidate Anglo-Irish power by use of the sword, the expense to be borne by the Anglo-Irish nobles themselves. When Radcliffe's army failed to gain the promised territorial expansion, Elizabeth replaced him with Sir Henry Sidney, who embarked on a vast scheme to colonize with English settlers much of what remained of Celtic Ireland. In the north, Sidney's ambitions were thwarted by Shane O'Neill (described by Edmund Curtis as "*the most uncompromising opponent of English rule in Ireland that had yet appeared*"²⁷⁶) until 1567, when O'Neill's army was routed and he was murdered by the Scots. Although Elizabeth intervened and Sidney was not able to bring Ulster (O'Neill's feudal estate) under Anglo-Irish rule, she dispatched a large army to assist Sidney in putting down an insurrection by Catholics led by James Fitzmaurice (a FitzGerald) and Sir Edmund Butler. The Protestant English army and its Anglo-Irish allies proceeded to devastate the country wherever they fought, mercilessly slaughtering all those who resisted their advance.

Their victories were followed by the creation of a new English province, or *Plantation*, in southwestern Ireland. Here, they confiscated and distributed around 210,000 acres of land to certain English lords. Sir Walter Raleigh, for example, gained control of an estate of some 40,000 acres.

Sidney and other Protestant nobles wanted to achieve a more far-reaching purge of Catholic power in Ireland, but Elizabeth needed a peaceful Ireland. Her own security at home was increasingly threatened by Spanish ambitions. Nonetheless, as Edmund Curtis observes, the relationship between the English monarchy, the remaining Celtic lords and Ireland's people had reached a point of no return:

The old Gaelic world, which had existed for two thousand years, was now to clash with the modern world as represented by the Tudor government, strongly entrenched in Dublin. Its ideal was that of an aristocracy who still lived in the heroic age, in the atmosphere of battle and foray, and who were expected by their poets, historians, and followers to be warriors rather than statesmen. Numbers of them fell in the forefront of useless battles, while the wise man who let the others do the fighting and kept himself in power for a long life was rare.²⁷⁷

A distinctly Irish nationalism had not developed to pull the Celtic Irish together in opposition to either the English crown or the Anglo-Irish establishment. Those who might have been capable of creating a strong coalition had been killed in battle or later executed for their resistance to English authority and encroachments. For the moment, in any event, a degree of peaceful coexistence was achieved by the settlement of disputes over landed estates between the Celtic-Irish and Anglo-Irish lords in the western regions. The independence of England and Wales themselves was as yet to be determined, and Elizabeth had precious little wealth and military power with which to defend her homeland.

By the late sixteenth century, the expansion of Spanish power to the Americas was recognized by Elizabeth as an inevitable threat to her reign as the first Protestant Queen of England. Buoyed by the inflow of tremendous wealth and a vaunted land force, Philip II planned the invasion of England and then a reconquest of the Netherlands. Elizabeth learned of Philip's plans and gave to John Hawkins and the Royal Navy the formidable task of driving off the Spanish Armada.

The British forces prevailed, in large part, because Philip's own navy was ill-trained, ineptly led, poorly provisioned and comprised of ships vastly inferior to the new vessels built by Hawkins. Hawkins bested the Armada in repeated engagements off the English coast but had to disengage when his force ran out of provisions and ammunition. The Armada made its way northward around the coast of Scotland and eventually to Ireland, where the Spanish captains attempted to put ashore in search of water. Storms drove the Spaniards onto the rocks, and many ships and men were lost. Thousands more were executed by the Anglo-Irish and newer English settlers as they made their way ashore. One English lord, Richard Bingham, was known for his cruelty as military governor of the province of Connaught. His attitude toward Ireland and the Celtic-Irish is described by historian Cecil Woodham-Smith:

The Bingham family acquired a baronetcy, a stronghold at Castlebar, and vast acreages of wild land in Mayo, but they never became identified with Ireland. They remained, as such families did remain, foreigners, separated from the Irish population by religion and language, preserving through the centuries the outlook and behavior of conquerors in an occupied country, regarding their Irish estates merely as the source of which produced money to pay for English pleasures.²⁷⁸

After the disaster of the Armada, Lord Bingham boasted that "*he had caused the throats of more than a thousand [Spanish] men to be cut.*"²⁷⁹ Altogether, some 10,000 Spanish and Portuguese soldiers and sailors

perished, along with half of the Armada. Elizabeth was not yet in a position to take advantage of her victory, however; the English treasury was nearly empty and her advisors urged caution and diplomacy rather than dangerous and expensive expeditions.

Men such as Walter Raleigh and Robert Devereux (the Earl of Essex) were anxious to follow-up on the victory of 1588 and pressured Elizabeth to continue the war against Spain on the high seas. In 1596 they destroyed the Spanish fleet anchored at Cadiz and captured and sacked the port. The next year, Philip II sent a second Armada against England, also with disastrous results.²⁸⁰ In this instance, however, the Royal Navy had been away from home in search of Spanish treasure ships, and only foul weather and Spanish ineptitude prevented the Armada from achieving its objective. Such a close brush with disaster shook Elizabeth's confidence, and thereafter for the remainder of her reign the English fleet became a purely defensive force.

A growing resistance in Celtic Ireland to Elizabeth's authority finally attracted her attention to this troublesome appendage. Her newest adversary was Hugh O'Neill (the Earl of Tyrone), a disciplined soldier who had learned his craft in England and gradually acquired the support of the Celtic-Irish of northern Ireland. Significantly, he was being provisioned and assisted by the Scots. Fighting broke out in 1594, and the Celtic-Irish emerged victorious in a series of minor clashes. Elizabeth was now moved to act decisively. By the end of 1596 Elizabeth had an army of 7,000 in Ireland to counter O'Neill. In May of 1597 O'Neill's forces scored several additional victories against the English forces, and another major victory was achieved in August of 1598 at Portmore against a force of 4,000 under the command of Sir Henry Bagenal. These successes stimulated a general uprising among the Irish. Almost half the old Anglo-Irish rallied to the side of O'Neill, and the conflict took on the character of both a nationalist and religious struggle.

While O'Neill looked to Philip III of Spain and James VI of Scotland for the additional men and weapons he needed to take Dublin and

other English strongholds, Elizabeth dispatched an army of almost 20,000 to Ireland in 1599 under Robert Devereux. Unwisely dividing his forces, Devereux suffered several defeats in quick succession, negotiated a truce with O'Neill and returned to England to face the wrath of Elizabeth. Desperate to save himself, Devereux plotted against Elizabeth, was discovered and ended his career at the hands of the Royal executioner. His replacement, Sir Charles Blount (Lord Mountjoy), proved a far more effective tactician. Blount decided on a war of attrition, using his army of 20,000 to destroy stores of food and other supplies and burn crops before they could be harvested and sent north.

The only real hope for O'Neill and the Irish nationalists who remained with him was that Philip III would send a strong force to join with him in the north. A Spanish army of some 4,000 did arrive in September of 1601; however, this force landed not in the north but at Cork on the southern coast. O'Neill marched south to meet up with the Spanish at Kinsale, only to be routed by Blount and forced to retreat back to the north with the English in hot pursuit. What defeat on the battlefields initiated, famine concluded. Thousands perished in Ulster before O'Neill finally surrendered to Blount on March 30, 1603. In measured irony, Elizabeth had died the previous week, and England and Scotland were about to share the same monarch. On the surface, a unified Britain promised the arrival of a new era, characterized by improved relations between the ancient Celtic people, their Catholic Anglo-Norman allies and the newer English lords and settlers. As history reveals, this was a promise not fulfilled.

Stuartship Over An Emerging British Empire

Mary's son assumed the throne of Scotland as James VI in 1587, at twenty-one years of age. From the very beginning he became a staunch ally of Elizabeth, working to further the Protestant cause in Scotland

without actually persecuting Catholics. He dutifully sent his army south against Scottish earls who had joined Philip II against Elizabeth. James even dispatched forces to fight under Blount in Ireland. Upon the death of Elizabeth, he was called to London by the Privy Councillors to be crowned King of England. Once on the throne, James had himself proclaimed King of Great Britain, France and Ireland.

Despite the fact that James was now King of both England, Wales and Scotland, these diverse peoples were as yet far from becoming united politically or culturally. Unity, it seemed, was to demand a considerable degree of force applied to subdue those Scots who resisted unification. One of the King's first acts was to send Sir William Cranston to subdue the border clans and rid the region of longstanding raids against settlements on both sides of the border. In the north of Scotland, James dispatched a large army under Andrew Stewart to once and for all bring the remaining recalcitrant clans under control of the crown. While these expeditions were probably necessary, James created animosity between himself and members of the House of Commons by extravagant spending and subsequently by his attempts to resurrect rights of taxation long since abandoned by British monarchs.

Francis Bacon emerged to defend the doctrine of Crown prerogative, and Sir Edward Coke, making his way to the House of Commons after being dismissed by James as Chief Justice, defended the rights of Parliament against renewed encroachment by this King. John Zane's assessment of Coke as "*a very narrow-minded man to whom justice was nothing*"²⁸¹ should caution us to not make the mistake of assuming high motives.²⁸² Nor, according to Zane, was "*Bacon's career as a judge... creditable.*" And yet, Bacon's writings showed he understood something about power and the consequences of its abuse:

The causes and motives of seditions are, innovation in religion, taxes, alteration of laws and customs, breaking of privileges, general oppression, advancement of

unworthy persons, strangers, dearths, disbanded soldiers, factions grown desperate, and whatsoever in offending people joineth and knitteth them in a common cause.²⁸³

Bacon's advice to his King was "*to remove, by all means possible, that material cause of sedition ..., which is, want and poverty in the estate.*"²⁸⁴ The attitude of the King is, on the other hand, conveyed by an exchange with the Spanish Ambassador quoted by Winston Churchill:

The House of Commons is a body without a head. The Members give their opinions in a disorderly manner. At their meetings nothing is heard but cries, shouts, and confusion. I am surprised that my ancestors should ever have permitted such an institution to come into existence. I am a stranger, and found it here when I arrived, so that I am obliged to put up with what I cannot get rid of.²⁸⁵

James underestimated the power that had been acquired by the Parliaments of England and he acted without any thought that he would experience opposition. Against the will of his subjects he initiated a rapprochement with Spain and, at the urging of George Villiers (the Duke of Buckingham), the seventy year old Sir Walter Raleigh was arrested in August 1618 and executed for piracy against the Spanish and treason against his king. By this one act, James weakened himself and hardened the growing resistance building against him. The memory of Raleigh's contributions to an emerging British state made him the symbolic hero of British nationalism within the collective British mind, as noted by Raleigh biographer, Robert Lacey:

Death, indeed, became his supreme triumph, the victory which did not simply round off his life but which gave his entire career its meaning, for had King James let Walter Raleigh die quietly in his bed of old age, posterity would merely have acknowledged the passing of an ambitious, gifted and flawed personality. As it was, Walter Raleigh died an ambitious, gifted and flawed martyr, the symbol of an age superseded, an eternal parable of passing time, an immortal.²⁸⁶

The execution of Raleigh displayed the King's disdain for foreign adventures and represented a message to Britain's empire-builders of the period. To quote Trevelyan, "*We were still a maritime community, but for thirty years we almost ceased to be a naval power [and] the ghost of Raleigh pursued the House of Stuart to the scaffold.*"²⁸⁷

Austria and Spain moved quickly to take advantage of Britain's weakened naval capability, initiating what became the Thirty Years' War. The Dutch were at the same time in rebellion against Spanish rule over the Netherlands and sought to form an alliance with Britain and France. These negotiations made little headway until the death of James I in 1625 brought his son, Charles I, to the throne. In the meantime, Parliament succeeded in further reducing the prerogatives and power of the monarchy. In 1621 charges of corruption were brought against Francis Bacon, and he was dismissed from the office of Chancellor. In 1629, the Lord Treasurer, Richard Weston, was impeached on charges that he was a Papist; and, after a failed expedition against the Spanish port of Cadiz in 1626, a similar fate fell upon George Villiers (although his end would come at the hands of an embittered subordinate rather than an angered monarch). Britain's temporary alliance with France had also deteriorated into war as a consequence of Cardinal Richelieu's repression of the French Huguenots.

Charles I now found himself besieged at home and abroad. Parliament's conditions for raising the funds to conduct the war, contained in a *Petition of Right*, measurably reduced the prerogatives of the monarchy under law. Frustrated and angered at the recalcitrance of the members of the House of Commons, Charles I dissolved Parliament with an intent of ruling without interference.

The combined reigns of James and Charles revealed that Ireland was emerging as a far more important object of colonization and source of wealth (particularly timber) than ever before. English and Anglo-Irish landowners raised cattle for export and expanded the area of land under cultivation. Several sources put the number of English, Scot and

Welsh immigrants to Ireland during this period at between 50,000-100,000, including a significant number of Catholics lured by the promise of greater freedom to practice their faith without persecution. For the ancient Celts, however, the arrival of these new settlers to claim grants of land made by a British crown, "*establish[ed] English landlordism without its best features in Ireland, [reducing] the masses of the people at best to mere leaseholders or even cottagers and tenants-at-will.*"²⁸⁸

Throughout the reign of James I, Protestant strength in Ireland continued to increase. This became a particular irritant among both Celtic and Anglo-Irish Catholics as the newer arrivals gained in wealth and influence. Moreover, the ascendancy of the Puritans in the British Parliament threatened the tenuous balance of power that existed between Catholics and Protestants promoted by Charles I.

Struggling against his own Parliament and in desperate need of revenue, Charles I looked to Ireland to fill at least part of his needs. In 1633 he appointed Thomas Wentworth (the Earl of Strafford) as Lord Governor and charged him with keeping order and imposing a significantly higher level of taxation on the landed. Wentworth's first step was to replace entrenched Anglo-Irish government officials with Englishmen of his own choosing. By various actions he created new sources of revenue for the King while also managing to stimulate industry and commerce. Wentworth could not, however, prevent a *nativist* Catholic uprising against recent Protestant colonists. He was soon to be called back to England to give council and support to Charles, who was increasingly faced with opposition on a whole host of fronts.

Charles now found himself in deep trouble with the Protestant Scots, who grew increasingly suspicious of the King and what they perceived to be a toleration for Papist Catholics in England. A powerful Scottish force was raised under the command of Alexander Leslie, a dynamic strategist with considerable experience on the battlefields of Europe. In

May of 1639 the Scots marched south to face Charles, who negotiated for time, with the result that the Scots re-established themselves as an independent nation and entered into an alliance with France. Wentworth then urged on Charles two courses of action that would eventually result in the King's execution. Once and for all, Wentworth argued, England must destroy the capacity of Scotland to resist English domination. To finance the campaign, Wentworth urged Charles to summon the Parliament.

The result was more disaster for Charles, who dissolved the new Parliament after only a few days. Wentworth marched north against the Scots at the head of a meager force which was soon routed, and the Scots stood ready to march south, awaiting only word from English Protestants that Scottish support was needed to depose the King.

Once again Charles summoned Parliament, and neither the King nor Wentworth were prepared for the level of opposition to come from that body. Puritan members of Parliament welcomed the Scots and awarded their army a sum sufficient to keep it in place and ready to march south against Charles I should this be necessary. They then went after Wentworth and other Ministers to the King, who were either impeached and arrested or fled the country. Wentworth was executed in April of 1641, and thereafter the Parliament secured one concession after another from the King.

With Wentworth dead and his army disbanded, order broke down and civil war erupted. Catholic Celts attempted to seize Dublin castle in October 1641 and, although this failed, the rebellion spread to Ulster where some 10,000 Protestant colonists were slain. In retaliation, the Parliament in Britain authorized the confiscation of all rebel lands and attempted to raise an army of adventurers to enforce this measure. When many of the Anglo-Irish finally joined the Celtic-Irish in rebellion, Parliament (and Charles I) called upon the Scots for support in defeating the rebels. In April of 1642 a Scottish army landed in Ulster under the command of Robert Munro, joining forces with Scottish

Protestants who had been in northern Ireland since the beginning of the century. Against the Scots and Protestant English the Celts and Anglo-Irish Catholics found support from the French Cardinal, Richelieu, and, more importantly, leadership under two commanders with great experience and prestige on the continent in service to Spain.

With the Scots under Protestant command, Charles recognized his own position was seriously threatened. Once the rebellion in Ireland was put down, Parliament with the aid of the Scots would surely move against him next. The King determined to act first.

After attempting to arrest several Parliamentary leaders in January, Charles was forced to abandon London for Nottingham, where his supporters gradually gathered. Against him came a force of some twenty-five thousand troops loyal to Parliament (the *Roundheads*) under the command of Robert Devereux (the third Earl of Essex). The early confrontations between these opposing forces were inconclusive, and the participants all realized this might be a protracted affair. As the costs (and taxes to pay for the war) mounted, resistance grew among the citizens of London and a growing number of Parliamentary leaders called for a negotiated peace.

As the year 1643 began, forces loyal to Charles controlled much of the north and west. The Royalist cause seemed on the verge of gaining the advantage when the King's forces were turned back with heavy losses inflicted by Devereux at Newbury. This defeat denied the Royalists their quest to take London. Then, in September, the Parliamentary leader John Pym successfully negotiated a military and religious alliance with the Scots. Early in 1644 an army of over twenty thousand Scots crossed the border and advanced in conjunction with the Roundheads against York. Although driven off by relief forces from the King, these two armies were themselves reinforced by Edward Montagu (the second Earl of Manchester) and Oliver Cromwell. The opposing forces met at Marston Moor (west of York), and there the Protestant armies handed the Royalists a crushing defeat.

In May two large armies, commanded by Devereux and Sir William Waller moved directly against Charles at his Oxford stronghold. The King outmaneuvered these armies, causing them to separate, fighting off Waller and by early September capturing Devereux's army near Plymouth. As winter arrived and the fighting entered a lull, Oliver Cromwell called for and obtained reorganization of the Protestant armed forces, putting experienced and successful soldiers in charge of what was fast becoming a professional army; and, in June of 1645, Cromwell was given overall command.

Weakened and growing increasingly desperate, Charles attempted to raise an army of Anglo-Irish Catholics in Ireland to pull his iron out of the fire. Dissention among the Catholics in Ireland prevented such an alliance with the King, whose cause in any event was by this time lost. Cromwell, reacting to the threat of Irish Catholic involvement, dispatched an army of eight thousand to Dublin, which he established as a base for further military onslaughts against the Catholics. The tide had decisively turned against Charles.

A Commonwealth, If You Can Keep It

Late in 1645 Charles sought refuge in Scotland. His position was extremely tenuous and he became very much the prisoner until finally released to the custody of Britain's Parliamentary Commissioners in February 1647. Victorious, the Parliamentary leaders had no concrete plan for restructuring the government to secure the peace. The army, for its part, refused to disband or move against the Catholics in Ireland until fully paid for their services. Parliament itself was now in jeopardy of being overrun. Cromwell, Henry Ireton and other generals moved to bring the King physically into their camp, and—on the surface—secured his support for their demands with Parliament. Negotiations between the Army and Parliament finally yielded the soldiers full

compensation for unpaid salaries and a tentative agreement on the fundamental restructuring of the new government. When Parliament failed to act on these promises, the Army marched into London intent on bringing about the promised reorganization. In addition to the immediate issues of pay and representation, many in the Army were determined to remove those members who sought to institute Presbyterianism in England.

Even at this late hour, with the virtual dismantling of the British state hanging in the balance, Cromwell and Ireton were seeking a rapprochement with Charles that would include even the Catholics "*in a new peaceful England under the King.*"²⁸⁹ Cromwell warned against the imposition of the Army's will by force of strength rather than by negotiation with Parliament. Ireton, for his part, saw that the Army's demands were put into writing. In the interim, however, the Presbyterian faction in London had moved to assume power, and the moderate and Puritan members of Parliament sought the protection of the Army. The King then publicly rejected the Army's demands for reform, certain that only he could restore order and confidence. The true nature of his position was soon made apparent to Charles; early in August of 1647 the Army with Cromwell at its head marched into London and effectively assumed control of the government. Although Cromwell apparently still hoped a reconciliation with the King would be possible, events had already moved beyond any hope for the monarchy.

Division arose within the Army, with a number of regiments gathering around a group of radical leaders who, in October, issued a proclamation demanding the election of a new Parliament on the basis of popular vote. These *Levellers*, called for a return of the ancient rights the people had enjoyed as citizens of Anglo-Saxon England. Cromwell presided over formal meetings in which the Levellers challenged their leaders to look beyond the expediencies of the moment and use their strength to form a new government built on just principles.

Privileges of long standing were threatened by Leveller proposals. A call for much wider manhood suffrage and representation in Parliament based on the actual distribution of population evoked a response from Ireton that is the cornerstone of *conservative* socio-political philosophy:

For you to make this rule, I think you must fly for refuge to an absolute natural Right, and you must deny all Civil right... For my part I think that [the notion of Natural Rights] no right at all. I think that no person hath a right to an interest or share in the disposing or determining of the Kingdom, and in choosing those that shall determine what laws we shall be ruled by here, no person hath a right to this, that hath not a permanent fixed interest in this Kingdom... But that by a man's being born here he shall have a share in that power that shall dispose of the lands here, and of all things here, I do not think it a sufficient ground.²⁹⁰

The Levellers had reached closer in their proposals to moral principles than any of their contemporaries—during a time when privilege and inherited property rights in land were accepted as sacrosanct. Cromwell maintained a moderate position, responding to the Levellers that such sweeping changes would lead to anarchy. He was intent on the transfer of all effective power from the King and House of Lords to the House of Commons, but saw only danger in pressing for anything more. Events then moved quickly. Charles attempted an escape from the protection of the Army but fell into the hands of Robert Hammond, who instead of facilitating the King's escape took him prisoner and sent word to Parliament. The preservation of the monarchy was no longer a possibility, and Cromwell now adopted much of the rhetoric of the Levellers. In November, he presented their case before Parliament and joined with those who demanded an end to nearly all prerogatives of the monarchy (though not yet joining in any call for elimination of the monarchy as an institution).

Parliamentary rule was already changing the nature of government in England and Wales. The administration of justice was increasingly transferred to the jurisdiction of the State, and the way people were allowed to live came under the dictates of a Parliament that practiced intolerance and Puritan values.

Outbreaks of violence against the government were threatening to erupt in a new rebellion, and the Army had just about reached the end of its patience. Much of the English and Welsh population, as well as that of the Scots, turned in desperation to the monarchy to end the current despotism. In April of 1648 a Royalist force attacked Berwick with assistance from the Scots, and in Wales a Royalist uprising brought the Army to determined action, described with alacrity by Winston Churchill:

The story of the Second Civil War is short and simple. King, Lords and Commons, landlords and merchants, the City and the countryside, bishops and presbyters, the Scottish army, the Welsh people, and the English fleet, all now turned against the New Model Army. The Army beat the lot. And at their head was Cromwell. Their plight at first might well have seemed desperate; but this very fact wiped out all divisions among them. Fairfax, Cromwell, Ireton, were now once again united to their fierce warriors. The Army marched and fought. They marched to Wales; they marched to Scotland, and none could withstand them. ...

By the end of 1648 all was over. Cromwell was Dictator. the Royalists were crushed; Parliament was a tool; the Constitution was a figment; the Scots were rebuffed, the Welsh back in their mountains; the Fleet was reorganized, London overawed. King Charles, at Carisbrooke Castle... was left to pay the bill. It was mortal.²⁹¹

Churchill's verdict, that the Army's victory retarded the cause of democracy and brought an "*autocracy of the sword*" is the judgment of one who conveyed throughout his life a deep respect for tradition and long-standing institutions (particularly those constituting Britain's socio-political institutions). Thousands had perished in a war the

leaders had initiated to enforce privilege of one sort or another. And, as Antonia Fraser concludes, "*Charles's conception of kingship seemed to have been altered not one whit by the exhibition of the temper of the nation which he had witnessed...which demonstrated that some greater participation must and would be catered for.*"²⁹² None of those who enjoyed the benefits of privilege under British Law were sincerely prepared to advance principles that radically departed from those under which they had always lived. The Levellers sought justice in a world that responded only to the sword. The Army in power would prove unable to make such a grand transition from tyranny to equality of opportunity or from oligarchy to participatory democracy.

Arriving victorious in London, the Army immediately purged the House of Commons of all those not in sympathy to its demands, and debate began over reforms the radicals produced in a document called *The Agreement of the People*. All the while, movement was afoot to bring the King to trial under charges of being "*tyrant, traitor, murderer, and a public and implacable enemy of the Commonwealth of England.*"²⁹³ The verdict was never in doubt, and on January 30, 1649 Charles I was executed. To the end he maintained his divine right to rule, declaring:

For the people truly I desire their liberty and freedom as much as anybody whatsoever; but I must tell you that their liberty and freedom consists in having government, those laws by which their lives and goods maybe most their own. It is not their having a share in the government; that is nothing appertaining to them; a subject and sovereign are clean different things ...²⁹⁴

England and Wales were to be governed by a Council of State selected each year by Parliament. Although the House of Lords and the monarchy were dissolved, the leaders of the new Commonwealth rallied against the demands of the Levellers and other radical factions of the Army. Parliament had no intention of broadening the base of privilege or moving toward a constitutional democracy. When one of the radical

groups, (*the Diggers*), lead by Gerald Winstanley, clamored for a return of the commons to the people and their ancient rights under Saxon law, troops were called in to disperse them and their leaders were imprisoned. Yet, the elements of dissent and resistance to the power structure continued to grow.

Royalists in Ireland were falsely encouraged by the reports of dissension within the Army and the activities of the Levellers. News also reached Ireland that a number of regiments mutinied over not receiving accrued pay and the government's failure to address their demands for suffrage. Cromwell marched against them and had the leaders executed, and Parliament passed an expanded Act of Treason in May that set the stage for a deeply penetrating form of censorship. Criticism of the government would no longer be tolerated.

In July Cromwell began preparations for his expedition against the Royalists in Ireland. While still in Wales awaiting funds and supplies, he received news that Michael Jones, the Governor of Dublin, had achieved a remarkable victory over a large Royalist force under James Butler (the twelfth Earl of Ormonde). Thus, Cromwell was able to sail directly to a resoundingly Protestant and at least nominally Commonwealth Dublin in mid-August. From this base, Cromwell successfully carried the fight to Butler and the Royalist forces, moving in early September against the fortified town of Drogheda. The Royalist force was defeated and the survivors slaughtered by Cromwell's army, a practice in accord with military strategy widely followed at this time because of the hardships associated with laying siege against an enemy stronghold. After Drogheda, thinly garrisoned positions either surrendered or retreated in the face of Cromwell's advancing army. Belfast and the north were secured by Commonwealth forces, leaving Cromwell to turn south and march against the port of Wexford. Here, his army gained access to the town by the treachery of one of its own defenders, slaughtering defenders and citizens alike in the course of

their plunder. In neither instance was any mercy shown for noncombatants; the Jesuits, in particular, suffered near annihilation.

New Ross (some 25 miles west of Wexford) surrendered to Cromwell without resistance, and Commonwealth forces under the command of Roger Boyle (the Earl of Broghill) reduced opposition throughout Munster in the southwest. Cromwell tried but failed to take the Royalist fortress at Waterford, then retired to the coastal town of Youghal for what turned out to be a brief winter respite. In short order his army was again on the march, and by April of 1650 he had, with only minor opposition, secured Tipperary and Kilkenny. The Royalist alliance then fell apart and many of its leaders escaped or were exiled from Ireland.

One last major battle remained for Cromwell in Ireland, and in this one he was bested by Hugh O'Neill (nephew of Owen Roe O'Neill), a capable soldier born in the Netherlands and trained in the Spanish army. At Clonmel in Tipperary Cromwell's attacks were repulsed and, suffering more than two thousand casualties, he retreated. O'Neill pulled out of Clonmel with his army, saving them to fight once more against Ireton the next year. Yet, when Cromwell was recalled to England in May of 1650 his mission had largely been accomplished. Royalist and Catholic resistance dissipated into an undercurrent of growing hatred, as Ireland opened to further English settlement and what Trevelyan describes as "*[t]he first step in the reconstitution of the British Empire by the Republican Government...*"²⁹⁵ Of Cromwell's impact on the course of events in Ireland, the historian Thomas Macaulay wrote:

His administration in Ireland was an administration on what are now called Orange principles, followed out most ably, most steadily, most undauntedly, most unrelentingly, to every extreme consequence to which those principles lead; and it would, if continued, inevitably have produced the effect which he contemplated, an entire decomposition and reconstruction of society. He had a great and definite object in view, to make Ireland thoroughly English, to make Ireland another Yorkshire or

Norfolk. Thinly peopled as Ireland then was, this end was not unattainable; and there is every reason to believe that, if his policy had been followed during fifty years, this end would have been attained.²⁹⁶

Defeat meant far more than the mere loss of sovereignty for the Celtic-Irish and Royalist Anglo-Irish. Many of those who had fought against Cromwell and the Commonwealth were forced to leave Ireland for Spain, France or the Americas. Thousands more were dispatched as “*practical slaves*” to the British-held islands in the West Indies. Winston Churchill puts much of the blame on Cromwell for the unresolved animosity that kept the Irish from ever looking favorably to, a union with England. Writes Churchill:

By an uncompleted process of terror, by an iniquitous land settlement, by the virtual proscription of the Catholic religion, by...bloody deeds ..., he cut new gulfs between the nations and the creeds. ...The consequences of Cromwell's rule in Ireland have distressed and at times distracted English politicians down even to the present day. To heal them baffled the skill and loyalties of successive generations.²⁹⁷

By an *Act of Settlement* passed by the English Parliament in 1652, nine counties in Ireland were confiscated and either distributed directly to officers or sold and the money given to Commonwealth soldiers in payment for their services; all additional counties with the exception of Connacht and Clare suffered a similar fate during the next few years. The Catholic Church in Ireland was dissolved and its property absorbed as part of the British domain. Consistent with a pattern repeated throughout history and in many parts of the world, most of the land distributed to Commonwealth soldiers was quickly resold to existing Protestant Anglo-Irish landowners, English speculators or high-ranking army officers. Ireland as a state was formally dissolved and absorbed into the Commonwealth with thirty seats in Parliament.

Upon his return to England, Cromwell was once more at the head of his troops. This time the insurrection came from the Scots, who brought Charles II from Holland and, after eliciting from him a conversion to Presbyterianism, crowned him Scottish sovereign. Cromwell's return served to unite the Scots and the remaining English Royalists against him, but Cromwell handed David Leslie a serious defeat and then marched into Edinburgh. The cause of Presbyterianism became secondary to the preservation of Scottish nationalism and the defense of Scottish territory. Rather than attack Cromwell, however, Leslie led his army southward into England. This turned out to be a grave miscalculation, as Cromwell cut him off from his supply lines and at Worcester finally crushed the Scots and the Royalist cause. Charles II escaped once more to Holland. Scotland, like Ireland, was brought (to its knees) into the Commonwealth.

As had occurred in Ireland, the expenses of the war were paid for out of the confiscation of land from those who fought for the Royalist cause. Also, as in the case of Ireland, the Scots were given a mere thirty seats in Parliament. Despite these victories on the battlefield and the imposition of one government over all the British Isles, the Commonwealth was to be short-lived. Oliver Cromwell had by force of arms and personality held the country together. His death in 1658 revealed all the weaknesses of the Commonwealth and the absence of any national identity or appreciation for the principles underlying voluntary association. With the collapse of its Cromwellian autocracy, Britain would have to move forward into uncharted waters as a constitutional democracy or return to the more familiar pattern of ethnic and religious conflict within a framework of aristocratic privilege. There was never really any basis for thinking the first scenario might develop.

The Illusion Of Liberty Perpetuated In The Age Of Exploitation

With the death of Oliver Cromwell and the restoration of a weakened monarchy under Charles II in 1659, Catholics in Ireland hoped for a return of their lands and political status. Protestant pressure at home prevented such a wholesale shift in policy; however, select petitioners received favorable results from the King. More than two-thirds of Ireland was now under the control of Protestant Anglo-Irish or English landlords, and Ireland was in socio-political structure more English than Celtic. Even so, English merchants and landowners obtained from Parliament severe restrictions on the import of goods produced in Ireland (and Scotland). Ireland's economic independence was perceived to be as much of a threat as the continuance of a separate Irish Parliament. As explained by Edmund Curtis:

[W]hile the Crown had formerly been the supreme power for Ireland, the Parliament of England now shared the sovereignty with it and, though for some fifty years the claim to legislate for Ireland was not laid down, it was already working in practice. The later 'restrictive Trade acts' passed by the British Parliament to the disadvantage of Ireland rested, however, on the ground that after 1660 Free Trade between the three kingdoms had been done away with and that the trade of the Empire was an English and Welsh preserve in which Scotland and Ireland as long as they had their own parliaments had no right to share.²⁹⁸

These restrictions adversely affected not only the Celtic-Irish and the remaining Catholic Anglo-Irish but the newer English settlers as well. Hostility toward the British Parliament now took on an added economic dimension. In England, the confused state of government saw the age-old communitarian responsibilities of feudal lords eliminated while the wealth and power they derived from control over large estates increased dramatically. The chaos of civil war transferred

titleholdings back and forth between factions; however, as a class the lords and military officers gained a strangle hold over those who had long toiled as peasant farmers and would increasingly be driven off the land and into the towns—and, with the industrial revolution well underway, the factories of Britain.

Over time, the landed began to derive their power and wealth less from aristocratic privilege than from the monopoly privileges enjoyed because of their control over nature and by other licenses issued by the State that, together, came to be known as *mercantilism*. Britain's drift toward protectionist restrictions on trade and the ethnocentricity of mercantilism had advanced materially during the decade of the Commonwealth, resulting in a trade war between Britain and the (Protestant) Dutch. While civil war raged in the British Isles, Britain's colonies in the Americas had grown ever more prosperous out of expanded trade with Britain's Dutch adversaries. In an effort to control this leakage, Parliament passed the first Navigation Act (1651), under which only English ships could carry goods from Britain's colonies. Even more challenging to the Dutch, the Act required that goods shipped to Britain from anywhere had to come on either English ships or those of the exporting country. When Britain's naval vessels tried to search Dutch ships to examine the origin of their cargoes, the trade war erupted into actual hostilities.

By the end of 1652, the Army was already clamoring for the dissolution of Parliament. The Dutch handed the British navy a resounding defeat in November, prompting a shift in military expenditures from the Army to the Navy early in 1653. When it became apparent to Cromwell that the sitting Parliament meant to forestall a new election, he matter-of-factly walked into the House of Commons and closed it down. A new assembly was formed and attempted to govern during the remainder of 1653; after failing to achieve any progress on either domestic or foreign affairs, this assembly was

dissolved and a new *Instrument of Government* was adopted under which Oliver Cromwell became Lord Protector.

The people of Britain were being pulled into a new and uncertain era of empire-building. Late in 1654, Cromwell initiated an expedition to the West Indies under William Penn (father to the recipient of the large land grant in North America that became the colony of Pennsylvania) and Robert Venables. On the island of Barbados they were greeted by people who had been trading extensively with the Dutch and had four years earlier declared themselves for the Royalist cause. The expedition force ran desperately short of supplies, and the health of its soldiers deteriorated rapidly. Penn, as commander of the English fleet, landed Venables and the Army of 8,000 troops on the island of Hispaniola in April of 1655. Spanish resistance drove the English back to their ships and onto a less challenging Spanish outpost, Jamaica. Here, Venables succeeded but at great cost; several thousand men perished from disease and the lack of adequate food and water.

To secure and defend Britain's expanding colonial empire, Cromwell initiated the construction of a vastly enlarged navy, commanded by Admiral Robert Blake. An alliance with France was entered into against Spain, and in the Fall of 1656 British ships intercepted and captured a large Spanish treasure fleet. They scored an even greater victory the following year. Despite these successes, the cost of war—first with the Dutch and then the Spanish— further drained the Commonwealth's treasury and burdened the producing population with heavy taxation. The sale of government lands acquired in Scotland and Ireland yielded but a part of the revenue needed, and the Commonwealth government incurred a rising national debt.

In 1655, Cromwell appointed his son, Henry, to replace Charles Fleetwood as Lord-Deputy in Ireland. His tenure is recorded as one of considerable tolerance and moderating influence over the Army, even to the point of declining an award by Parliament of lands in Ireland. Upon his father's death in September 1658, Henry returned to England

to participate in the formation of a new government, leaving an uneasy population in Ireland to await decisions from London regarding the permanence of changing land titles.

Richard Cromwell was chosen by his father as successor to the position of Lord Protector, yet he had no standing with the Army. The Army, in fact, demanded that Parliament be dissolved and the Protectorate removed. A new *Republican* constitution was adopted, and the Army put down yet another Royalist revolt. At this point, however, General John Lambert entered into secret discussions with key Royalist leaders for the restoration of the monarchy. In opposition, a large contingent of Army rank and file aligned themselves with leading Parliamentary figures.

George Monk now marched his army south from Scotland and occupied London. With Monk's support, a new Parliament was summoned that included most of the Presbyterian and Royalist Members purged in 1648. The way was now paved for the restoration of the monarchy, subject to several important conditions the most important of which was that the King affirm the changes in land titles gained at the point of the sword. New Parliamentary elections brought an overwhelming majority to the Royalist faction. The House of Lords was also restored. And, in May 1660 the English navy escorted Charles II back from exile to reign—but rule in a much diminished capacity and with the direction of the House of Commons. The Army peaceably disbanded, and the government of Britain was returned to civil authority.

Charles II returned to a largely impoverished nation, divided by religion and ethnic distrust. The King's Chief Minister, Edward Hyde (the first Earl of Clarendon), and most of the Members of the House of Commons pushed hard for a union of Church and State. For his part, Charles II sought to reduce by toleration the importance of religion in the fulfillment of his responsibilities. In Ireland, where the overwhelming majority of the population remained Catholic, the

degree of toleration arose and fell in conjunction with events in England and British forays into continental empire-building. In a more lasting way, the socio-political structure in Ireland was undergoing changes directly associated with landownership. Most important, the number of landless peasants increased significantly after the arrival of English settlers.

By 1664 the competition between the British and the Dutch erupted in renewed hostilities on the seas. Charles II and Parliament now faced not only the external threat posed by the Dutch (supported by the Danes and French) but also suffered the devastation of a new plague that gripped London in 1665, followed the next year by the *Great Fire* that consumed much of old London. Faced with these overwhelming problems at home, Charles II made peace with the continental powers. The Dutch gave up their claim to New Amsterdam in the Americas but gained some protection from French ambitions in the Netherlands by an alliance with England. At this juncture, Louis XIV intervened and for a large sum purchased a commitment from Charles II to join the French against the Dutch (and, in a secret caveat to this agreement, Charles obtained a commitment from Louis XIV to provide troops so that Charles could openly declare his intent to re-establish Catholicism in England).

To carry out his policies in Ireland, Charles II appointed James Butler (the Duke of Caved) as Viceroy in 1662. Ireland's primary importance to Charles was as a source of revenue, and of the taxes imposed on the population in Ireland none hit more directly on the poor than the so-called *hearth* or chimney tax. The restoration of the monarchy, on which Catholic Royalists in Ireland had turned to with great hope, did little to moderate the worsening conditions created by English domination of the land. The landless in Ireland were now at the mercy of an enlarged class of absentee landlords who cared nothing about the poverty inflicted on the Celtic population.

In the late Spring of 1672 a large Anglo-French force engaged a somewhat smaller Dutch fleet, commanded by Admiral De Ruyter. Heavy losses were experienced on both sides, but the Dutch fleet was far from destroyed. At the same time, a massive French army of nearly 120,000 troops invaded Holland. Taking command of the Dutch army, William of Orange ordered the dykes opened to stop the French advance, and Dutch resistance both on land and the open seas hardened. In England, Protestants began to sense the probability that Charles had made undisclosed promises Louis XIV, a suspicion amply supported by the toleration showed for English Catholics. Spain soon entered into a defensive alliance with Holland, and a frustrated and suspicious English Parliament pressured Charles II into peace negotiations with the Dutch.

After February of 1674 the French continued alone for four years in a war of attrition with the Dutch, while in England the adventurism of Charles II had inadvertently and disastrously (for the institution of the monarchy) united the Protestant sects in a final purge of Catholicism from Britain proper. Already the Protestants were thinking of succession and the promotion of William of Orange (the chief magistrate, or *stadholder*, in the United Provinces, as their choice. William was the grandson of Charles I and a staunch Protestant; Mary, his wife, was the daughter of James Stuart (the Duke of York), brother to the King and *legitimate* successor to the throne. Then, in 1678, the intrigue Charles II had woven around himself and the promises made to Louis XIV unraveled. Thomas Osborne, the Lord Treasurer, was impeached for his role in negotiating payments from Louis XIV on behalf of Charles II (although his own sentiments were anti-French). Fearful of what might occur, Charles II dissolved Parliament in December of 1678. New elections were held, however, and the House of Commons (meeting for the first time in 1680) proved even more antagonistic to the King than the old.

A reign of terror raged against Catholic nobles accused of seeking French interference in Britain. And, within this climate of civil unrest, a new Privy Council was chosen—ostensibly from a wide spectrum of political factions but in practice directed by Anthony Cooper (the first Earl of Shaftesbury). With resistance hardening, the King once again dissolved Parliament and new elections were ordered. The result changed little, and once more Charles II used his power to dissolve Parliament. Anthony Cooper was indicted for attempting to stir rebellion and fled to Holland (accompanied by John Locke, who had been a close adviser to Cooper and was himself in some danger of arrest). A Protestant (Whiggish) plot against the life of Charles, II failed, and a number of Whig leaders paid the price with their lives.

A much needed calm then settled over Britain until the death of Charles II in 1685. James, brother to the deceased king, now ascended to the throne. Almost immediately, he demonstrated a desire to use the monarchy to rekindle the spark of Britain's empire-building and to directly challenge the power of Louis XIV and France. Parliamentary elections were held, and James petitioned the new members for revenue to maintain the fleet and raise a standing army. To maintain the Crown's authority in Ireland, he dispatched Richard Talbot to build and command what amounted to a Roman Catholic army that could be called upon by the King to serve in Britain or elsewhere. Edward Hyde (the Earl of Clarendon and the King's brother-in-law) was appointed Lord Lieutenant and charged with overseeing the civil government. Although an Anglican, Hyde followed the King's directives and placed many Anglo-Irish Catholics into key positions. Eventually, however, Hyde became extremely uncomfortable with his charge and was recalled to England. In his absence, Richard Talbot advanced the cause of Anglo-Irish Catholicism by purging the Army of Protestant officers and implementing a program of compensation to Catholics for earlier land confiscations.

Not long on the throne, James crushed an attempt by his nephew, James Scott (the Duke of Monmouth) to forcibly claim the throne but then ran into firm resistance from Parliament toward his proposal to sustain a professional army in Britain and for his policies of religious toleration toward Catholics. His authority challenged, James dissolved Parliament and attempted to rule by dictum. Foolishly, he isolated himself from Tory supporters of the monarchy by appointing Catholics to key positions in the government. By mid-1686, however, his army grew to nearly 20,000 troops; nearly all its senior officers were Catholics.

Thomas Osborne and other Whig leaders were now negotiating with William of Orange to come over with a Protestant army and take the throne from James, and more moderate opponents of the King worked to neutralize the Army. On the continent, Louis XIV threatened both Holland and central Europe with attack. Had he moved against the Dutch, William's obligation would have been to protect his homeland. In September, Louis advanced against the German princes, leaving William free to embark for England.

Finally recognizing the threat to his position, James abandoned his pro-Catholic policies and restored many Protestants to their former positions in the government. The time had passed, however, for moderate measures and compromise. A Protestant army (comprised of English, Welsh, Scotch, Dutch and other Europeans) under William's command left Holland in late October 1688, landing on the coast of Devon on November 5. Key leaders of the Army abandoned James; and, after William announced his intention to reign as a Parliamentary servant, a general rebellion sent James to France and then to Ireland. Even as support for James was disintegrating in England, Richard Talbot and the Anglo-Irish Catholic lords consolidated their control over the government of Ireland. Fearful of a violent purge, a large number of Protestants temporarily left Ireland to join the rebellion and urge on William a *Cromwellian* retaliatory invasion to secure (and add

to) their Irish estates. In March of 1689 James arrived in Ireland supported by a French army of 3,000 troops. From Ireland he hoped to build a new power base and reclaim his throne.

William's attentions were naturally drawn toward the continent and France. Yet, under great pressure from Parliament, he dispatched troops and supplies in an attempt to relieve the Protestants defending the city of Derry (Londonderry) in Ulster. This first attempt failed and the siege continued until July, when the English fleet arrived with supplies. A large army of some 20,000 troops landed at Bangor under the command of Marshal Schomberg to challenge an equally large but ill-equipped army raised by Butler. Here both armies waited for spring. In March the Catholic forces were reinforced by 7,000 French regulars. This set the stage for William's arrival in June and the decisive Battle of the Boyne.

The Protestant army overpowered the Catholic force and occupied Dublin. James fled to the safety of France, and the Catholic army fell back across the Shannon River and retreated south to Limerick. After failing to take Limerick, William turned his army over to Godert de Ginkle and returned to England. The following May, Ginkle defeated the remaining Catholic army (which had again been reinforced by the French) at the Battle of Aughrim and advanced against Limerick. A large French force arrived in October, but too late; the terms of surrender had already been accepted by the Catholic commander, Patrick Sarsfield. Under the treaty that followed, the status of Catholicism as an institution was preserved but the landed property of Catholic nobles who had fought in the war forfeited. Once again, Ireland's lands were used as payment for the expenses of warfare; this time, as observed by Edmund Curtis, the effects were long-lasting:

Of the whole of Ireland's last army 11,000 finally sailed for France with most of the officers, of the rest 2,000 went home, and 1,000 enlisted with Ginkle. Seldom in history have a few thousand men, departing into exile, represented as these did almost

the whole aristocracy, the fighting force, and the hope of a nation. ...Their great estates, left ownerless, were destined to enrich still further the English ascendancy and reduce Catholic Ireland to the shades.²⁹⁹

The new Parliament in Ireland mirrored the anti-Catholic legislation adopted in England, if somewhat less strictly enforced. Catholics were restricted from acquiring additional land, either by purchase or inheritance; and, intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics was discouraged by similar attacks on land ownership. Historian R.F. Foster adds that:

By 1703 (and the final adjustments made to the Williamite land settlement), the Catholic share of Irish land ownership had fallen to 14 percent; a half-century more would reduce it to 5 per cent.³⁰⁰

Ulster now became the center not only of anti-Catholic but of anti-Anglican sentiment as well. A steady flow of Scottish immigrants arrived during the 1690s, bringing with them their Presbyterianism and appreciation for commercial activity. Within a short period they acquired considerable material and landed wealth, but in the process raised the level of animosity between themselves, the Anglo-Irish and English Protestants. The Scottish contingency in Ireland became increasingly harassed by protectionist measures that prevented them from exporting wool and other agricultural products to England. They were similarly discriminated against in matters associated with political rights. As a result, large numbers began an exodus to North America during the early eighteenth century. Crop failures throughout Ireland also led to general famine and the death of nearly four hundred thousand people. Thereafter, migration to the Americas seemed the only hope of survival for the landless Celtic-Irish as well. Ironically, most first generation immigrants would spend much of their lives as

indentured servants under English masters in the Americas as repayment of the expenses to make their way across the Atlantic.

The same socio-political structure that drove countless Irish from their island was also at work in Britain proper. Even before William of Orange was called from Holland in 1688 to take the throne, Parliament had exercised great license in protecting the privileges and property of its members. The enclosure of the commons proceeded at an advanced pace, initially for the purpose of maximizing the profits from commercial agriculture. With the arrival of the industrial revolution, however, confiscation of the public domain paralleled an intense speculation in land thought to be coal-bearing. The landed also used their political influence to shift from themselves the burden of paying the costs of the government, thereby further guaranteeing their privilege and vested interests. In an 1845 speech in the House of Commons, Britain's great *free trade* protagonist, Richard Cobden, described just how successful this process had been:

For a period of 150 years after the Conquest, the whole of the revenue of the country was derived from the land. During the next 150 years it yielded nineteen-twentieths of the revenue—for the next century down to the reign of Richard III it was nine-tenths. During the next seventy years to the time of Mary it fell to about three-fourths. From this time to the end of the Commonwealth, land appeared to have yielded one-half of the revenue. Down to the reign of Anne it was one-fourth. In the reign of George III it was one-sixth. For the first thirty years of his reign the land yielded one-seventh of the revenue. From 1793 to 1816 (during the period of the Land Tax), land contributed one-ninth. From which time to the present (1845) one-twenty-fifth only of the revenues had been derived directly from land. Thus the land which anciently paid the whole of taxation, paid now only a fraction or one-twenty-fifth, notwithstanding the immense increase that had taken place in the value of the rentals...³⁰¹

Adam Smith, for one, had predicted just such an outcome. In *The Wealth Of Nations* he wrote that “Civil government, so far as it is instituted for the security of property, is in reality instituted for the defence of the rich against the poor, or of those who have some property against those who have none at all.”³⁰² As a product of his class and era, Smith was not, however, prepared to go further. Although he instinctively recognized in labor the legitimate basis for property, he declined to challenge the system of positive law that interfered with the moral distribution of wealth:

But this original state of things, in which the labourer enjoyed the whole produce of his own labour, could not last beyond the first introduction of the appropriation of land and the accumulation of stock. It was at an end, therefore, long before the most considerable improvements were made in the productive powers of labour, and it would be to no purpose to trace further what might have been its effects upon the recompence or wages of labour.

As soon as land becomes private property, the landlord demands a share of almost all the produce which the labourer can either raise, or collect from it. His rent makes the first deduction from the produce of the labour which is employed upon land.³⁰³

By means of the enclosures and the replacement of feudal arrangements with a system of contractual obligations, the agrarian and industrial-landlords of Britain quickly consolidated their political and economic power. As the exercise of British naval power protected an expanding colonial empire, trading companies received exclusive grants and licenses that enriched their holders at the expense of those who depended on trade with the mother country for finished goods.

The inventions that stimulated the Industrial Revolution further shifted the equilibrium in favor of the commercial farmer and industrial-landlord at the expense of the propertyless peasants. Hundreds of thousands, forced from the land, migrated to the growing cities to compete for subsistence wages offered in the new textile mills.

The need for living space by people laboring for very low wages turned existing dwellings into crowded tenements and neighborhoods into slums, as owners demanded higher and higher payments for housing and workers drifted deeper and deeper into generational poverty. Historian John Osborne describes the living conditions among factory workers in Britain as more life-threatening than whatever poverty the rural peasant had previously experienced:

Factories, dyeing vats and slaughter houses discharged their waste matter into streams used for drinking water. Dwellings were built as close together as possible. Streets were unswept and privies unemptied.³⁰⁴

Had these people been given a choice, few of the landless would have left the land to face such conditions as existed in factory life. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, not alone in their observation, described how English factory owners made effective use of landless Irish peasants to make sure the labor pool remained large and the pressure on wages continued in a downward direction.³⁰⁵ This emerging class of industrial-landlords also understood that as long as English workers concentrated their antagonism on the Irish immigrants and not on the real cause of their misery, the privileges from which almost all social problems arose were safely hidden.