

group who called themselves Levellers, primarily members of the army, advocated abolishing the House of Lords and extending the vote to all adult males, instead of only those with a certain amount of property; this political egalitarianism disturbed most members of Parliament. Radical religious groups such as the Ranters preached that God was in everyone, so that people should listen to the Jesus Christ inside themselves rather than to ministers in church buildings. Under the leadership of George Fox (1624-94) and his wife Margaret Fell Fox (1614-1702), the Society of Friends - called "Quakers" by their detractors because they sometimes shook when "moved by the spirit" - also stressed equality among Christians, going so far as to suggest that women should have the right to preach and minister to others if they had the spirit. All of these ideas were spread by word of mouth, as Quaker preachers and Leveller orators spoke on street corners and town squares, and also communicated through posters, pamphlets, and cheap books.

Fighting began in the summer of 1642, and was generally indecisive for several years. In 1645, Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), a member of the gentry and a leader in the House of Commons, convinced Parliament to create a completely reorganized army, the New Model Army, with himself in command.

36 Gerrard Winstanley and the True Levellers

Gerrard Winstanley (1609-76) was a laborer and clothing maker who began having religious visions in 1649 telling him that the earth should be held in common. He wrote a series of pamphlets laying out his views, becoming the leader of a community of like-minded people calling for an end to private property. They called themselves True Levellers, though their detractors called them Diggers because they demonstrated their aims in a sort of street theatre, tearing down hedges and digging up fields that had previously been held in common by villagers but were now owned by gentry. The True Levellers offered social criticism far more radical than the generally property-owning members of the House of Commons would accept, and they were forced to stop their actions. Winstanley used religious, moral, and political grounds in arguing his ideas:

In the beginning of time the great Creator made the earth to be a common treasury, to preserve beasts, birds, fishes and man, the lord that was to govern this creation . . . Not one word was spoken in the beginning that one branch of mankind should rule over another . . . But selfish imaginations . . . did set up one man to teach and rule over another. And thereby . . . man was brought in to bondage, and became a greater slave to such of his own kind than the beasts of the field were to him. And hereupon the earth . . . was hedged into enclosures by the teachers and rulers, and the others were made . . . slaves. And that earth that is within this creation made a common

storehouse for all, is bought and sold and kept in the hands of a few, whereby the great Creator is mightily dishonored, as if he were a respecter of persons, delighting in the comfortable livelihood of some and rejoicing in the miserable poverty and straits of others. From the beginning it was not so . . . The poorest man hath as true a title and just right to the land as the richest man . . . True freedom lies in the free enjoyment of the earth . . . If the common people have no more freedom in England but only to live among their elder brothers and work for them for hire, what freedom then have they in England more than we can have in Turkey or France? . . . All laws that are not grounded upon equity and reason, not giving a universal freedom to all . . . ought to be cut off with the King's head . . . Wheresoever there is a people . . . united by common community of livelihood into oneness, it will become the strongest land in the world; for then they will be as one man to defend their inheritance . . . Whereas on the other side, pleading for property and single interest divides the people of a land and the whole world into parties, and is the cause of all wars and bloodshed and contention everywhere . . . But when once the earth becomes a common treasury again, as it must . . . then this enmity of all lands will cease.

(From G. H. Sabine, *The Works of Gerrard Winstanley* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1941], pp. 251-4, 288.)

huge annual subsidy in return for support against the Dutch, and a promise that he would gradually return England to Catholicism. The treaty did not stay secret for long, and England was swept by anti-Catholic hysteria, made more powerful by the fact that Charles had no legitimate heirs, so that on his death the throne would pass to his openly Catholic brother James. Parliament attempted to pass legislation that would have prevented the throne from going to a Catholic, but this never became law.

James did succeed his brother, appointed Catholics to important positions, and granted religious toleration. There was a renewal in the tug-of-war over the limits of royal and Parliamentary power. When James's second wife gave birth to a son - thus assuring a Catholic dynasty - a group of leaders in the House of Commons offered the throne to James's Protestant daughter Mary and her husband William, a Dutch prince from the House of Orange-Nassau, who also happened to be a grandson of Charles I. In 1688 William invaded England with a small force, James II and his wife and young son fled to France, and Mary and William were named joint rulers by Parliament. They explicitly recognized that sovereignty was shared by monarch and Parliament, and agreed to a Bill of Rights that, among other provisions, forbade royal interference in the making or enforcement of laws and the creation of a standing army during peacetime. They allowed limited religious toleration, though hostility to Catholicism was enshrined in laws that required all future monarchs to be members of the Protestant Church of England, and allowed only Protestants to own firearms.

This coup, bloodless in England though not in Scotland and Ireland, was later called the "Glorious Revolution." It assured the political power of the gentry, that 2 percent of the population perched socially between the tiny group of high nobles and the rest of the population. Despite the restoration of the House of Lords, the House of Commons was the most powerful half of Parliament, and the majority of members were gentry, along with merchants, lawyers, and professionals who often married into gentry families; this small elite controlled England's policies and institutions into the twentieth century. William brought England into various continental alliances against Louis XIV, and the expenses of war led to the establishment of a regular program for paying off the national debt, financed through the Bank of England, which was founded in 1694. Military campaigns included several in Ireland, where the supporters of James II were eventually defeated, and a series of harsh penal laws were enacted against Catholics, further reducing Catholic landholding. William also authorized a massacre of the leaders of one of the Scottish clans, and opposition to English rule in Scotland simmered, though the two countries were officially united in 1707 with the Union of Parliaments, which provided that Scotland would send members to the House of Lords and the House of Commons in London instead of having its own Parliament. (Scotland reestablished a separate representative assembly in 2000.) Scotland, England, and Ireland were declared the "United Kingdom of Great Britain."

William and Mary, who had no surviving children, were succeeded by Mary's sister Anne (ruled 1702-14), who also had no surviving children, despite

eighteen pregnancies. At Anne's death, the crown passed, with Parliament's approval, to Anne's distant cousin George, the ruler of the small German principality of Hanover. Groups in Scotland favoring James, the son of James II, who had grown to be a young man in France, revolted. This uprising in favor of the Stuarts - termed "Jacobite" from the Latin form of James's name - was suppressed, as was a similar uprising in 1745 which sought to bring back James's son Charles ("Bonnie Prince Charlie").

The Hanoverians, almost all of whom were named George, ruled Britain into the nineteenth century, with more and more executive power moving into the hands of their chief officials, who came to be called Prime Ministers; in this the model was set by the brilliant Robert Walpole (1676-1745) who was the Prime Minister for both George I and George II. George I (ruled 1714-27) and his son George II (ruled 1727-60) were more interested in Hanoverian interests than British ones, and spent much of their time in military campaigns on the continent. They had difficult relations with one another, though both were competent and pragmatic, allowing the further development of political structures, including rival political parties, the Whigs and the Tories. Toward the end of George II's reign, national policy was directed by William Pitt the Elder (1708-78) who managed British successes in the Seven Years War. Under Pitt's leadership, Britain became the dominant European power in North America and south Asia. Part of British North American holdings were lost in the American War of Independence, but British sea power remained formidable.

The Dutch Republic

The tumultuous nature of England's path to a limited monarchy sometimes benefited its neighbor - and often rival - across the Channel, the Republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, the seven northern provinces of the Netherlands that had won their independence from the Spanish Habsburgs in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. (This long official name is shortened in various ways: the United Provinces, the Netherlands - which means "low countries" - and the Dutch Republic all refer to the same political entity; "Dutch" is a variant of the word "Deutsch," meaning German. This area is also sometimes called "Holland," the name of its westernmost province, whose provincial capital, The Hague, became the capital of the country.) Individuals and groups who opposed Stuart or Cromwellian rule were welcome in the tolerant Netherlands, as were those fleeing religious or political persecution in other parts of Europe. The French philosopher René Descartes lived most of his adult life in the Netherlands, where he felt free to write and publish than he did in France. The English philosopher John Locke published many of his important works while living in the Netherlands during the 1680s, where he shared the streets of Dutch cities with French Protestants who had left France after Louis XIV had revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Thousands of Jews from the Iberian peninsula, especially from Portugal, emigrated to