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THREE BRITISH
REVOLUTIONS:
1641, 1688, 1776

Edited by J.G.A. Pocock

In this collection of essays, a group of distinguished American and British historians explore the relations between the American Revolution and its predecessors, the Puritan Revolution of 1641 and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. By locating the Puritan Revolution at the beginning rather than at the end of a historical period, and by focusing directly on the transition from a Tudor to a Whig autocratic order, these scholars offer a new perspective on all three revolutions and crystallize recent research in this area.

The contributions address some fundamental questions about the relations of stability to instability, and of conservation to change and revolution, within and without the parliamentary structure of British politics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The essays grew out of a conference of the same title sponsored by the Folger Institute of Renaissance and Eighteenth-Century Studies in May 1976. The contributors to this volume—many of whom were participants in that conference—are as follows: Lawrence Stone, Christopher Hill, G. E. Aylmer, Charles Carlton, Robert Ashton, Lois G. Schwoeber, David S. Lovejoy, J.G.A. Pocock, Alison Galbraith Olson, John Brewer, and John M. Murrin.

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EDITED BY J.G.A. POCOCK

FOLGER INSTITUTE ESSAYS
PUBLISHED FOR THE FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

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COMPILED BY THE FOLGER INSTITUTE
OF RENAISSANCE AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES
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FOREWORD

Three British Revolutions is the first of what I hope will be a long and distinguished series of publications emanating from symposia organized and sponsored by the Folger Institute of Renaissance and Eighteenth-Century Studies. Founded in 1970 to foster advanced research and instruction in the humanities, the Folger Institute is a unique collaborative enterprise centering on the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington and supported, at present, by fourteen major universities in the Middle Atlantic region: American University, the Catholic University of America, the University of Delaware, Georgetown University, the George Washington University, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University, the Pennsylvania State University, Princeton University, Rutgers University, the University of Virginia, and West Virginia University. Aided by generous grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Surdna Foundation, the Institute offers a growing program of interdisciplinary seminars, workshops, symposia, conferences, colloquia, and lectures.

As Chairman of the Institute since my arrival in 1974 as Director of Research Activities at the Folger, I have had an opportunity to participate in a wide variety of stimulating programs. In many ways, however, the symposium that led to the present volume has been the highlight of my involvement with the Institute. The idea for such a conference originated with Charles Carlton of North Carolina State University, who proposed both the theme and the title at lunch one spring day in 1975 at the Supreme Court cafe-

teria. I thought it an inspired suggestion and soon found that other scholars at the Folger thought likewise. I therefore convened a planning committee to draw up a detailed scenario. That committee included two other members of the Folger administration—Philip A. Knachel, Associate Director of the Library (whose broad background as a historian proved enormously valuable), and Brenda B. Szitty, Program Coordinator of the Folger Institute (whose organizational skills were essential to the implementation of the committee's recommendations)—along with seven gifted historians who all happened to be at or near the Folger at the time: Jack P. Greene of Johns Hopkins University, Francis C. Haber of the University of Maryland, David S. Lovejoy of the University of Wisconsin, Guy F. Lytle of the Catholic University of America, Alison Gilbert Olson of the University of Maryland, Lois G. Schwoerer of the George Washington University, and of course Charles Carlton himself. The committee did in fact come up with a plan, and the result was a richly provocative symposium that took place in the Folger's Elizabethan theatre on May 21–22, 1976. In a gathering that seemed particularly appropriate as the Bicentennial contribution of an American research library prominently identified with the preservation and transmission of English-speaking traditions, nine major historians (all represented in the pages that follow) met to share perspectives on the British antecedents of the American Revolution.

During the wrap-up session that concluded the symposium, one panelist observed that something approaching a new paradigm could be seen to emerge from the sequence of lectures and discussions. The Folger Institute therefore decided to publish a volume of essays stating and amplifying the themes that had proven so exciting for the audience attending the conference. J.G.A. Pocock of Johns Hopkins University graciously accepted the Institute's invitation to edit the volume, and under his magisterial direction it became the shapely collection here presented.

On behalf of everyone at the Folger (including O.B. Hardison, Jr., Director of the Library and founder of the Folger Institute, and Susan Z. Nascimento, Associate Chairman of the Institute), and on behalf of the fourteen university representatives on the Folger Institute's Central Executive Committee, I wish to thank Professor Pocock and all the others who helped make *Three British Revolutions* possible. It is a publication in which the Folger Institute takes deep pride.

JOHN F. ANDREWS
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gland (Oxford, 1971), *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York, 1972), *Change and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), and *Milton and the English Revolution* (New York, 1978).

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Index prepared by Barbara Coons.

INTRODUCTION

J.G.A. POCOCK, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

On May 21–22, 1976, the Folger Institute of Renaissance and Eighteenth-Century Studies held, as a contribution to the Bicentennial of American independence, a conference at the Folger Shakespeare Library under the title borne by the present volume. All participants on that occasion have contributed chapters to this symposium, although those of Lawrence Stone, Charles Carlton, Alison Gilbert Olson, and John M. Murrin have been substantially rewritten since they were presented at the Library, and that by Christopher Hill is altogether new—his paper at the conference having been previously committed to appear elsewhere. The chapters by Gerald Aylmer and John Brewer were written especially for this volume.

The main aim of the original conference was to explore the relations between the American Revolution and its predecessors in what was, down to 1776, a predominantly British—indeed English—political history. To those present, however, it was apparent by the end of the sessions that something like a new perspective on all three Revolutions was emerging, and this became the rationale for editing and publishing the present volume. The participants certainly did not think of themselves as collectively the originators or authors of a new interpretation, but they did feel that they had announced the fact of its emergence from recent research and reflection. There now seems to exist a new way of looking at the Puritan Revolution, the Glorious Revolution, and the American Revolution in

their chronological order; and the purpose of this Introduction is to assist the reader by outlining this interpretation and placing it in its historiographical context. Dr. Christopher Hill's dissent from the view that there exists a new agreed perspective is recorded in his contribution and forms part of the context.

It has long been the practice among scholars and teachers to present the first of these Revolutions as the climax or catastrophe of a period known variously as "Tudor-Stuart" or "Tawney's century"—the latter in honor of the Christian socialist historian whose name will recur in these pages. During the period from 1540 to 1640 a Tudor political, religious, and social order is created and the seeds are sown of its decay; in 1640 this world comes shatteringly to an end, but after a revolutionary hiatus is restored in 1660. This restored world, however, is so unlike the old that historians are required to begin interpreting it anew, with new ideas and assumptions.

The structure of the Folger conference obliged the participants to locate the Puritan Revolution at the beginning rather than the end of a historical series, and this was in part the secret of the new perspective they found themselves presenting. If any major works of recent historiography can be said to have dominated their thinking, it seems—to this editor at least—that these were three: Lawrence Stone's *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1640*,¹ J. H. Plumb's *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1660–1730*,² and Bernard Bailyn's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*.³ That is to say, we see the Revolutions of 1641 and 1649 as occasioned by the breakdown of a certain aristocratic order, the Tudor, but as leading toward the reconstitution of another, the Whig; we see the Revolution of 1688 as an important but not the final step in the construction of the Whig order; and we see the Revolution of 1776 as the greatest but not the only insurgence against that order in the reign of George III. What renders the

last Revolution "American" is its role in the creation of a continental republic and nation; in this volume we are concerned with it in its "British" character.

In line with these perceptions, Lawrence Stone, in the chapter which opens this volume, presents a "seismic rift" running, from 1620 to 1720, through the relations between government and society in English history. John Murrin, in the chapter which closes it, presents a tension between "Court" and "Country"—itself a product less of the seismic rift than of the way in which it had been closed—running through Anglo-American history from 1720 to 1820 and beyond, and resolved, when transferred to the United States, in ways so paradoxical as to deserve the epithet of "the great inversion." The concepts of seismic rift and Court and Country, it should be noted, both presuppose a relationship between government and society rather than between different social classes. In the seventeenth century, the aristocracy undergo crisis and recovery, and this may be the cause of the rift between Crown and gentry, as later of its cure; but the country gentry themselves change relatively little. In the eighteenth century, their antipathy toward the Court, and its "corruption" and "monied interest," is directed not so much against a bourgeoisie as against the new resources in office and patronage, money and men, of which the Court has come to dispose. In general—though with the very weighty exception of Christopher Hill—the contributors to this volume do not think in terms of changing relations between classes—whether aristocracy, gentry, or bourgeoisie—so much as of a governmental structure recruiting men and money from new sources, and adopting new methods as it faces new problems in a changing but still preindustrial society. In part, this reflects a common belief among recent historians that preindustrial societies are difficult to interpret in terms of class conflict. In the historiographical *longue durée*, however, it is the most recent development in a debate over the origins of the

English Civil War, a debate which has been going on ever since that crisis itself.

There were two major contemporary interpreters of that conflict. Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, an actor in it and author of a *History of the Rebellion*,⁴ though far from oblivious to social change and conflict, presented England as a society ruled by the Crown through its relationships with great men. Human errors, of which Clarendon set out to make himself the historian, had been made in the conduct of these relationships (vital to government and social order), and in consequence the floods of unreason, popular fanaticism, and human wickedness had been released. Since society was in the last analysis a moral construct, moral explanation was what so great a catastrophe required. James Harrington, an observer rather than an actor, and author of *The Commonwealth of Oceana*,⁵ argued, however, that the government of England by the King through magnates was a historical phenomenon, which social causes had brought into being and social causes had brought to an end. He contended that the power of King and nobility had rested upon feudal tenures, and that, as these had decayed and disappeared, the government of monarchy and aristocracy had not merely broken down for moral reasons, but had become forever impossible for reasons that were ultimately historical. The restoration in 1660 of both King and House of Lords cast many doubts upon Harrington's explanation, but ever since his day there has been debate between those who see revolutions as breakdowns in government that might have been avoided and those who see them as the products of social change that could not be controlled. Today the readers of Stone and Plumb think of a Tudor aristocracy as declining between 1570 and 1640, and a Whig aristocracy as created between 1660 and 1730. Others deny that the Puritan Revolution marked more than the briefest hiatus in aristocratic power, or that any long-range social process is needed to explain

the episode.⁶ The Clarendonian model retains its attractiveness.

The constitutional explanation of the first English Revolution is also as old as the doctrines concerning an "ancient constitution" which figured in its preliminaries. According to this interpretation, there existed a body of laws, precedents, and customs that defined the distribution of power within English government, and the Civil War arose out of controversy over the King's exercise of authority within its definitions. Those who came to be known as "Whig" historians, and dominated thought during the nineteenth century, maintained that the Stuarts were in the wrong, or at any rate were attempting innovation, according to the rules of this constitution. But since Harrington in the seventeenth and David Hume⁷ in the eighteenth century, there has existed another school of interpretation—to which no party label need necessarily be given—that maintains, first, that the conventions of the constitution were indeterminate, and second, that the historical conditions under which it existed were in process of change. It is from this latter contention that all social-cause explanations of the Civil War have been able to develop and to combine in various patterns with the constitutionalism of the Whig interpretation.

The English parliamentary structure separates the hereditary aristocracy in the House of Lords from the representatives of counties and boroughs in the House of Commons. This lower house—and the representation of boroughs itself—was for centuries dominated by the country gentry, who in a system of Continental estates would have sat as nobles and been institutionally separated from a Third Estate of townsmen. It is this which has always made a "bourgeois" interpretation of English history at least linguistically difficult: although the English word "burgess" has the same meaning as the French "*bourgeois*" or German "*burger*," the lack of a separate institutionalization has

ensured that there is no equivalent to the collective nouns "*bourgeoisie*" and "*Burgertum*," and the very notion of a bourgeoisie is foreign to the English language. From the late eighteenth century onwards, Scottish and English historians became attracted by the thesis that it was the growth of trading towns that had transformed the barbaric and feudal order in medieval Europe, and attempted to apply this "bourgeois" interpretation (in the proper sense of the term) to their own history. But the facts of parliamentary life have so structured English history that the conflicts of the seventeenth century can only be thought of as involving an institutionalized hereditary aristocracy and an institutionalized gentry, both of them living in counties and exercising patronage over boroughs. The burgesses are present and important, but do not possess the institutional means of independent political action.

Consequently, any attempt to apply to preindustrial English political history the concept of a bourgeoisie—a class engaged in trade and investment and controlling the means of distribution and manufacture—is obliged to contend that the gentry of the House of Commons were themselves a bourgeoisie, or were in process of becoming one. It was the concept of a "rise of the gentry" that about a generation ago converged—by no means for the first time—with the idea of a "crisis of the aristocracy," charted by Harrington in the seventeenth century and by Lawrence Stone in the twentieth. R. H. Tawney was famous for his contention that the landowning gentry had become a class of successful farmer entrepreneurs; that as they did so the way of life of the greater nobility became economically obsolete and burdensome; that the rising gentry and their allies among the urban merchants became a class that grasped at increased political power and the conduct of government in ways better suited to their interests.⁸ To this Christopher Hill added, and still maintains, the argument that the appeal of Puritanism, notably in its more sectarian and radical forms, was to an urban "middling and indus-

trious sort of people," and that their specifically bourgeois outlook and values are contained in its teachings.⁹

But an epic debate in modern historiography was launched when H. R. Trevor-Roper smote the followers of Tawney hip and thigh, and argued that the gentry were in fact an economically declining class, desperate for office, perquisites, and patronage, and that the Civil War was a wild and irrational assault on their part upon the royal government, or Court, which had grown vast and expensive in response to their own demands on it.¹⁰ The ensuing uproar was memorably summed up by J. H. Hexter in an essay entitled "Storm Over the Gentry."¹¹ While leaning toward the camp of Trevor-Roper, he emphasized the inexact and clumsy character of language that spoke of classes as either "rising" or "falling," whether in the social scale or in their relations to government and the pursuit of power. Much contemporary research seemed to support him, and it may be said that the attempt to supply class-based or "bourgeois" explanations of the first English Revolution has not yet recovered from this debate of twenty years ago. It has not been given up, but it has been obliged to seek more precise terminology and techniques. It is also not impossible that the techniques of social research are developing in directions that leave the concept of "class" looking somewhat unsatisfactory. The idea that social and political relations were transformed by the growth of commerce, however, visibly retains great attractiveness.

Meanwhile, the "storm over the gentry" has left several major consequences behind it. As Hexter pointed out, the idea that the gentry "rose" and displaced the aristocracy might be dismissed without discounting the logically separate idea that the aristocracy's control of society underwent some kind of failure or transformation; and he suggested a long-range model for early-modern English history, constructed in terms of the changing character of aristocratic ascendancy and its occasional interruptions.¹² In a spirit

similar to Hexter's, Stone's *Crisis of the Aristocracy* depicted the hereditary nobility as losing their military power, their means of social and political patronage, and their prestige, and the gentry of the Long Parliament as no longer manageable by the King because they were no longer led by their superiors. For all the immense sophistication of its twentieth-century research techniques, this was in some respects a return to the position of James Harrington, whom both Tawney and Trevor-Roper had identified as a pioneer of the "rise of the gentry," but who had in fact argued for something far more like a "crisis of the aristocracy." But Harrington's predictions of the future had failed completely in one important respect. Believing that aristocratic power had rested upon feudal tenures, and noting correctly that these had vanished forever, he had supposed that a hereditary nobility could never return to power in England. But the House of Lords had been restored along with the monarchy, and England had moved into an era of aristocratic parliamentarianism lasting from the late seventeenth to the late nineteenth century. Stone propounded no naive theory of feudal aristocracy, but his account of a nobility profoundly in crisis by 1640 left unsolved the problem of its revival after 1660. We reach here the heart of the new perspective that the present volume is designed to illustrate: the transition from a Tudor aristocratic order, breaking down in the first half of the seventeenth century, to a Whig aristocratic order first brought into being during the second half of that era. The decade from 1649 to 1660, during which the House of Lords was formally abolished (though the nobility kept their titles and estates), seems to mark the hiatus between the two orders; but because we do not naively suppose that the pre-Civil War nobility was feudal and the Restoration nobility was not, we must include in our pursuit of Hexter's model the possibility that aristocracy after 1660 displays continuities as well as discontinuities with aristocracy before 1640. Opponents of a social-change thesis press the idea of continuity so far as to deny that there was any crisis of the aristocracy at all.¹³

age, through their personal contacts with the Court at one end of the chain and with the county communities at the other. If the Civil War broke out—as Harrington in his own terms believed—through a breakdown in their ability to act as intermediaries, it is not surprising that the Restoration is preceded by a loud demand for "the old Lords" in their role as "a screen and bank" between King and people,¹⁷ and followed by a reconstitution of political aristocracy. Part of the problem of whether the late-Stuart and Hanoverian aristocracy was a new creation, or a rebirth of the old, is whether the increased importance of Parliament after the destruction of the old Court and its councils did not lead to parliamentarization of the Court as a center of patronage. As political contacts between the Country and the Crown came to run increasingly through the House of Commons, the political aristocracy was reconstituted not only to fill the House of Lords and make it a counterweight but also to furnish the King with ministers and counsellors who would manage his relations with Parliament. The word "Court" consequently begins to change its meaning, denoting less the ritualized society of office holders and power seekers who had surrounded Elizabeth or James I, and more a class of aristocratic managers of parliamentary politics.¹⁸ The role of patronage, influence, or corruption, as a principal means of this management, is anxiously discussed for the next century and a half.

The recovery of aristocracy, which may be traced from 1660, is one major theme of J. H. Plumb's *The Growth of Political Stability in England*. His narrative, however, reaches its climax between 1714 and 1722, and his term for what happened then is "the growth of oligarchy," a word not simply interchangeable with "aristocracy." A central contention is that throughout the seventeenth century—despite recessions after 1660 and 1680—it was the persistent policy of the county gentry to enlarge their political base by enlarging the electorates in the boroughs where they exercised influence, so that by the reign of Anne

The problem of a post-feudal political aristocracy is the problem of patronage, but this problem is of a wider significance still. Trevor-Roper, as we saw, contended that the gentry first enlarged the Court through their insistent demands for perquisites and offices, and then rebelled against the swollen and expensive regimes they had themselves created. One merit of this argument is that it obliges us to examine the question of Court and Country. In a work bearing that title, Perez Zagorin¹⁴ has stated the case for a growing estrangement, under the first Stuarts, between the Court (the political, administrative, and social nexus surrounding the person of the King) and the Country (the gentry and their urban associates organized into communities of shire and borough). Commentators on this thesis have warned against too ready an assumption that the two were naturally opposed, and the same has been said concerning Alan Everitt's work on the internal politics of such county communities as Kent.¹⁵ Though communities of gentry may at times appear so interwoven and inward-looking as to merit the phrase "autonomous rural city-states," we have to remember—the warning runs—that standing and authority in the shire depended in large measure on public office. So long as the King remained the fountain of office and honor, it was from the Court and through its patronage that the Country must obtain this part of its sustenance.¹⁶ Though the country gentlemen prided themselves on their independence, Court and Country were ultimately in symbiosis, and patronage (the informal distribution of office) played a large part in holding them together. In times of acute mismanagement the Country might rebel against the Court, but it was bound to end by seeking to restore it. Harrington was therefore wrong in supposing that, whereas baronial rebellions were aimed at the person of the King, seventeenth-century revolution necessarily struck at his office.

The role in this system of the territorial aristocracy—who were country gentlemen writ large—was to act as independently operating transmitters and dispensers of patron-

a larger proportion of the male population voted than was the case even after the Reform Bill of 1832. J. R. Jones¹⁹ has interpreted the Revolution of 1688, second in our series, by arguing that James II hoped, through offering concessions to Dissenters and through judicious electoral management, to wean the borough electorates away from the gentry patrons whom they normally followed—with the result that Whig and Tory gentry united against him. Use of the words "Whig" and "Tory," however, obliges us to return to Plumb's main argument that the era of large electorates, even after the Restoration, coincided with and helped cause an era of intense political competitiveness. Issues in ecclesiastical and dynastic politics—above all Shaftesbury's attempt to exclude James from succeeding his brother as King—divided both gentry and borough electors along lines of Whig and Tory. The increased role of parliamentary management and patronage divided them along lines of Court and Country. In this context the word "Court" denotes the ministers of the day and their followings; the word "Country" denotes, first, the independent gentry in and out of Parliament and, second, those attempting—from whatever motives—to unite them in opposition to the ministry's means of controlling and influencing the House of Commons. The Whigs are a "Country party" in the days of Charles II, the Tories in those of Anne.

As historians are reworking this part of the pattern, the Glorious Revolution—which could never have happened if Whigs and Tories had not conjoined against James II—appears a momentous event indeed, having far-reaching consequences (notably for the Church),²⁰ but not in itself a major alteration in the structure of British politics. The structural change comes a few years later, in what we are now accustomed to calling the Financial Revolution;²¹ and though it was a consequence of the events of 1688, it was neither foreseen nor intended by the actors in that memorable year. By "the Financial Revolution" is meant the successful creation, centering around the foundation of the

Bank of England in 1694, of a structure of public credit through which England's trading wealth could be invested in the security and stability of government and give that government the power to engage successfully in long-range war for political and commercial ends. It was public credit that made England a major European, Atlantic, American, and Indian power in the world wars of the era from Louis XIV to Napoleon, and the creation of "Britain" through the Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707 was an effect of the same process. At the same time, it vastly expanded the government's resources in patronage, to which the country gentry were already objecting.²² To the increasingly Tory "Country party" of the 1690s and after, it seemed that Whig rule, high taxes, and standing armies were being imposed upon the gentry by a "monied interest" investing in the stability of an increasingly bureaucratic regime.²³

In the reign of Queen Anne, the Tory gentry staged their last great revolt against Whig rule; but under the heading of "the growth of oligarchy," Plumb traces a complex counterrevolution which followed the reversal of party fortunes in 1714. Whig politicians, restored to office under George I, passed the Septennial Act of 1716, which increased the duration of Parliaments and so rendered political contests less common. The "growth of oligarchy" was in fact a systematic reduction of political competitiveness and so of the participation of the electorate in politics, which could never have happened if Tory as well as Whig gentlemen had not turned against the borough electorates that their forefathers had been steadily enlarging for at least a hundred years. The thesis of an electorate large in the seventeenth²⁴ but restricted in the eighteenth century means that the Whig aristocratic order attacked by American revolutionaries and British reformers was not an *ancien régime* and had no feudal character, but was a recent outgrowth of mercantile and patronage politics instituted in the search for social stability combined with expanding empire. The Whig oligarchs combined with the monied interest and

successfully bought off the landed gentry. What became of the borough electorates now excluded from politics—and whether these can properly be termed a bourgeoisie—is another question.

Plumb and his allies among historians have been engaged in a kind of indirect revolt against the historiographical revolution associated with the name of Sir Lewis Namier. The latter carried out a series of masterly studies of the politics of "the Whig supremacy" toward the end of the period 1714 to 1760 (conventionally used to date it), and in so doing demonstrated very effectively a historical technique of identifying individuals and tracing their connections, which does much to satisfy the modern historian's thirst for the grass-roots and the concrete foundations.²⁵ It was a technique exceptionally well suited to studying the politics of oligarchy (there is among British historians an ideological disposition toward saying that politics are always oligarchical), in which personal connections matter more than party organization. But since in the world of the country gentry politics were always a question of neighborhood, family, marriage, and estate, Namier's methods of analysis could clearly be used to travel back in time, past the era of the Country parties, and explore the structure of the county communities themselves. Namier was much more than a historian of the Court or of its party. But there arose a disposition to argue that there had never been parties, and that in the preindustrial and predemocratic age only connections had existed.²⁶ Plumb and his followers have successfully denied this by demonstrating that Anne's reign was an era of "the rage of party," in which divisions between Whig and Tory, Court and Country, ran deep in the county communities and the borough electorates.²⁷ It was under the Hanoverians that Court and Country united to end the first age of party, by dampening down the energies of the seventeenth-century electorate.

The Namierite inheritance has also been attacked for its disposition to deny the importance of political ideology.

It is evident that an effective oligarchy will not be split by ideological divisions, and Namier had no difficulty in proving that this was the case with the political world he studied. But he also shared an inclination, very common among historians, to deny that ideologies have more than a superficial significance in any circumstances at all; and it is this that has been found less than satisfactory in the understanding of both British and American history in the eighteenth century. If oligarchy by its nature does without ideology, ideology can nevertheless play a highly significant role among those who wish to attack the institution of oligarchy from the outside. A number of works have now been written tracing the existence of such an ideology throughout the Hanoverian era.²⁸ They have shown that it united dissident Whigs with surviving Tories, country gentlemen with urban radicals, and that it drew heavily on both Country and Commonwealth sources surviving from the time of Charles II, if not that of Cromwell. It is possible to study the role of this ideology both in the history of philosophical thought about human society and in the movements of political opinion in the age of George III, when the Whig oligarchy was disturbed both by the initiatives of the Crown and by the rise of popular movements in London and elsewhere. On the Court rather than the Country side of the debate, it is possible to trace a growing acceptance of the need for both ideas and methods appropriate to the government of commercial society.

But the third of our British Revolutions comes in sight as we look down this vista, thanks to the seminal work of Bernard Bailyn cited earlier, and much more to which it has given rise.²⁹ Bailyn demonstrated that the minds of Americans before, during, and after the Revolution were to a remarkable degree dominated by the ideology of opposition to the Whig regime, to the point where it became possible to look upon the Revolution as a Country movement of a sort like, and yet unlike, those to which the English counties and boroughs might give rise. There has ensued a debate concerning the extent to which ideology

may suffice to explain the motives of the Revolutionaries or the causes of the Revolution; but the contributors to this volume do not seem to have entered upon this question. What they have done—we see as we look from Stone to Murrin—is to present the American Revolution as a schism in Whig political culture, in such a way that our three Revolutions form at last a single sequence. The seismic rift was healed by the establishment of the Whig oligarchy, but the latter sharply limited the distribution of political power. New rifts consequently opened, and the revolt of the North American colonies can be ranked with English parliamentary reform and Irish parliamentary nationalism as one of a series of reactions against the rule of the oligarchy. Even the republicanism with which the Founding Fathers rejected the parliamentary model of government itself was initially "commonwealth" in character, and owed much to speculations put forward in the Cromwellian phase of the first English Revolution.

It goes without saying that causes inherent in American history alone must be invoked in order to explain why the colonial revolt developed into a political and geopolitical Revolution. This volume is not an attempt to reduce American history to a continuation or derivation of British history. But Murrin's conclusion raises the question whether the categories of Court and Country and the political and social forces they denote do not continue to operate in American history and explain major aspects of American experience. We might go on to ask whether these categories do not tend to lose meaning in British history as we pass from the Hanoverian to the Victorian era. The familiar problem of the uniqueness of America, the less recognized need for a reconstruction of British history, are therefore brought forward by this attempt to unite 1641, 1688, and 1776 in a sequence built around a revised "Whig" interpretation of history. This Introduction is an attempt to provide a historiographical context in which the contributors will now speak for themselves.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

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2. London, 1967.
3. Cambridge, Mass., 1967.
4. *The History of the Rebellion and Civil War in England* (Oxford, 1702-4). The standard modern edition is by W. D. Macray (Oxford, 1888); see also Gertrude Huehns (ed.), *Selections from Clarendon* (Oxford, 1955).
5. London, 1656. Standard editions of Harrington's works are by John Toland (London, 1700, 1737, 1747, 1774) and J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge, 1977).
6. This view was stated by G. R. Elton in a review of Stone's *The Causes of the English Revolution* in *The Historical Journal* 16 (1973), 205-8. See further Conrad Russell (ed.), *The Causes of the English Civil War* (London, 1970) and *Parliament and English Politics, 1621-29* (Oxford, 1979); Kevin Sharpe (ed.), *Faction and Parliament: Essays in Early Stuart History* (London, 1978); and n. 13, below.
7. *The History of Great Britain, Volume One, containing the Reigns of James I and Charles I* (London, 1754; modern edition by Duncan Forbes, Penguin Classics, Harmondsworth and Baltimore, 1970).
8. R. H. Tawney, "Harrington's Interpretation of his Age," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 27 (1941), and "The Rise of the Gentry," *Economic History Review*, 11 (1941).
9. Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (Oxford, 1964), *The Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1965), and other works.
10. "The Gentry, 1540-1640," *Economic History Review Supplement no. 1* (1953); "The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century," *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (New York, 1968).
11. J. H. Hexter, *Reappraisals in History* (London, 1961), pp. 117-62.
12. "A New Framework for Social History," *Reappraisals*, pp. 14-25. See also his essay on Stone's *Crisis* in *On Historians* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978).
13. See the articles by Paul K. Christianson, James Farnell, and Mark Kishlansky in *Journal of Modern History*, 49, No. 4 (1977),

- and the replies by J. H. Hexter and Derek Hirst in 50, No. 1 (1978). Hexter's reply is reprinted as "Power, Parliament and Liberty in Early Stuart England," in a second edition of *Reappraisals in History* (Chicago, 1979).
14. Perez Zagorin, *The Court and the Country* (New York, 1969). The work of Russell and Sharpe (n. 6 above) is in many ways a reply to Zagorin's position.
 15. Alan F. Everitt, *The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion* (Leicester, 1966).
 16. For a study of county-capital relations under the conditions of civil war, see Clive Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1974); J.S. Morrill, *The Revolt of the Provinces* (London, 1976); Robert Ashton, *The English Civil War* (New York, 1978).
 17. Corinne C. Weston, *English Constitutional Theory and the House of Lords* (New York, 1964); J.G.A. Pocock, "James Harrington and the Good Old Cause," *Journal of British Studies*, 10, No. 1 (1970), 30-48. For all topics covered in this and preceding notes, consult R. C. Richardson, *The Debate on the English Revolution* (New York, 1977).
 18. Compare Zagorin's work cited above with Dennis F. Rubini, *Court and Country, 1688-1702* (London, 1967).
 19. *The Revolution of 1688 in England* (New York, 1972); and *Country and Court: England, 1658-1714* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978).
 20. G. V. Bennett, *The Tory Crisis in Church and State, 1688-1730* (Oxford, 1975).
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 22. J.G.A. Pocock, "Machiavelli, Harrington and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century," in *Politics, Language and Time* (New York, 1971).
 23. W. A. Speck, *Stability and Strife: England, 1714-60* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), ch. 1.
 24. Derek Hirst, *The Representative of the People?* (Cambridge, 1975).
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26. Robert Walcott, *English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956).
27. Geoffrey Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (London, 1967); W. A. Speck, *Tory and Whig: The Struggle for the Constituencies, 1701-1715* (New York, 1970).
28. Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959); Isaac F. Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968); John Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge, 1976); Herbert Butterfield, *George III, Lord North and the People* (London, 1949); Ian R. Christie, *Myth and Reality in Late Eighteenth-Century British Politics* (Berkeley, 1970); H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: English Political Ideologies in the 18th Century* (London, 1977).
29. Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill, 1969); Robert F. Shalhope, "Towards a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 19, No. 1 (1972), 49-80; Lance Banning, *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1978).

 PART I • THE THEME STATED
AND EXPLORED