

the survivors could reconstitute the entire order piecemeal - and we are left with the impression that precisely this was done on more than one occasion (67).

On the other hand, after paying homage to the positive aspects of medieval ingenuity, it must likewise be remembered that the era seethed with incessant paradoxes and contradictions. Although they retained their older technical skills and added to them, although some of the writers of the period (Boethius, John Scotus, Cassiodorus, etc.) produced laudable tracts on rational governmental theory and semi-modern morality, the strange fact persists: medieval men took some perverse pride in binding themselves to unworkable schemes, preposterous practices, Godlike oaths and ceremonies, only to break loose outlandishly, making a mockery of their self-imposed restraints. Youths fornicated in cathedrals, while "whores prowled for customers, students in holy orders played dice on the altars" (68). It was a time of "fantastic licence and irreverence" compensating for the threat of horrifying sanctions.* "At no time in the world's history has theory, professing all the while to control practice, been so utterly divorced from it" (69). These contradictions exploded in the 13th and 14th centuries,

*But these paradoxes and conflicts had their brighter side: "Medieval worldliness led to a growing naturalism, humanism, and individualism that anticipated the Italian Renaissance, and characteristic passion of Western man to savor, know, feel and express all the manifold possibilities of life in the natural world. In short, it promoted a spirit of freedom". Muller, Opus cited., p. 51.

but before the period of Dante's discontent, Europe took asylum from morbid introspection, during the famous 12th century.

As Charles Haskins proved long ago in a famous work (70), whatever was dark about Western (predominantly British and French) (71) civilization dissipated in the blinding light and conviviality of the 12th century. This proto-renaissance was possessed of everything good: a lack of firm national boundaries and the related promotion of cosmopolitanism; intellectual commerce with Islamic and Eastern sources, especially in regaining lost knowledge of Aristotle and Greek culture; an undogmatic clergy linked to an as yet unossified, noncoercive church - concerning, that is, those who were not potential enemies of the Crusaders. But as quickly and wondrously as the clear light of toleration had dawned over the continent, it faded, with the arrival of the bloody and treacherous 13th and 14th centuries. These were years in which seeds of discord were sown that flowered into problems of unmanageable magnitude we still face in our own time. The familiar divisions - church-state, nation-nation, Islamic-Christian, church-intellectual - and other conflictual dichotomies all find their roots in this unforgiving period.

However, both the highspots of glory and the lowest points of cultural and personal despair were basically the province of elites. For the common people, it is reasonable to suppose that life was brief, predictably strenuous and

boring. Thus, when viewing the past with sociological emphasis, those great leaps forward heralded by professional historians very often amount to ideological or organizational changes perpetrated by the upper crust, having only secondary effect upon the masses. As mentioned above, technological change is more democratically represented in history. As White conclusively illustrated (72), from the 7th century onward, innovation in nutrition, warfare, and unrelated manorial technology made possible the production of a delicate surplus economy, paving the way for the urban explosion of the early renaissance. While an intense discussion of technological change during this early period is beyond my scope, it is important to note that Ogburn was at least partially correct in his comparison of mental vs. material constructs. It seems there was no end to technological improvements, both born of European minds and borrowed from distant cultures (73), but the rate of change in social structure and value processes significantly lagged. Apparently there existed an almost humorous cat and mouse relationship between lord and serf: the lord made a feudal demand upon the vassal's energy, the innovative vassal promptly devised a tool or method with which to shorten or ease his labor so that he might return to his own affairs, the lord "reevaluating the serf's performance", and upping the take, etc. Modern parallels are obvious.*

*In emphasizing the appreciable gap between technological and ideological development, I refer the reader to monographs on warring techniques, e.g. A. Z. Freeman's "Wall-Breakers and River-Bridgers: Military Engineers of the Scottish Wars of Edward I" (74), which emphasize the consummate skill of men engaged in mutual annihilation, but still thoroughly within an intellectually feudal framework, as late as 1307.

The heritage and significance of the middle ages for the modern world comes through most clearly in several familiar terms: Christianity, the classical tradition, the feudal system, and the urban bourgeoisie (75). While the roles of the last three in the slow growth of freedom and innovation do not require comment, perhaps several remarks about the Church and its doctrine are necessary in view of the usually negative response given "supernatural systems" by sociologists.

The first medieval treatise on government, John of Salisbury's Policraticus, was inspired by the behavior of the prophets of the Old Testament who rejected their sovereigns, in stipulating that subjects need not obey monarchs who disregarded the law (76). The author of this work was certainly a millenium or so ahead of his time (1159) in calling for legal responsibility on the part of ruling individuals, who within several centuries had assumed the mantle of deity. (Even today it seems behavior in the upper reaches of political life operates for the most part either in pro forma legality or cloaked extralegal maneuvers.) It is important of course to distinguish between the often repressive Church bureaucracy and Christian beliefs, the latter of which animated such radicals as Aquinas, who managed to gain official backing for his rational conceptions of men as possessing free will. On the collective scale, the peasant rebellions which came somewhat later also found intellectual and emotional sustenance in the basic Christian

premises of equality in brotherhood and its logical extension, the value of the individual. Probably most important of the many "liberalizing" sentiments built into Christian dogma was this issue of the individual, his uniqueness and inherent right to certain "natural" prerogatives, although of course most people lived without them, East and West. But as Muller states, "The barbarities of our own time seem worse because of the still-live Christian sentiment that you simply can't do certain things to people" (77). (The most poignant reminder that this spirit does not infect the entire world resides in the Bataan Death March and related ordeals through which the Japanese put their "less than human" captives in the last war. While atrocities in the West often occur, they are inevitably branded as abhorrent aberrations. Such feelings were not normally associated with beast-like aggression in other cultures.)

I made this digression on the spiritual sources of innovation because of the distinctly Western quality of existence which during the medieval emerged in full bloom and was to remain relatively continuous thereafter; and to emphasize the interdependence of innovation and freedom, which thus far has been assumed rather than stated. Without actually doing so, it could easily be demonstrated that the other three factors (classical philosophy - especially Aristotelian -, the feudal system with its incessant conflicts and eruptive nature, and the determined bourgeoisie) all

contributed to the general awareness of the strength of investigation on empirical grounds, which more than anything else determined the prospects and dilemmas of Western life. Such investigations and primitive research were naturally the bailiwick of innovators of one sort or another, and with each passing decade their mental productions multiplied (almost comically), far outdistancing demand.

All the major developments which dominated later history began as inauspicious rumblings during the middle ages, and only recently, very recently indeed, have the most advanced sectors of the West begun operating in a universe of structure, process and values for which the medieval gives few clues as to future trends.

1250 - 1700

Although a cruel and suspicious time, the 13th and 14th centuries excite and stimulate the student of change, even moreso than the preceding epoch. The death throes of medieval social organization were practically complete, and the beginnings of vernacular literature, nationalistic feelings on the parts of many societal members, and growing general intolerance for anything unconventional (particularly within the formalized supernatural system), brought an avalanche of change to Europe.

But more startling than the bloody exchanges between national armies was the unforeseen expansion of minds and purses resulting from trade and consciousness-

expansion imported by the Crusaders, from Byzantine and Islamic sources. The entrepreneur of the 18th and 19th centuries has been immortalized in social history, song and scholarship, but their 14th century precursors, bent on individual accumulation through daring and invention are equally important, simultaneously shocking and delighting different segments of their society. The innovators held center-stage, if not with the clergy, then with the common people as well as with many lords, who began leaning heavily upon Italian, French, Hanseatic and English merchant capital to finance their wars and public works. Men like Tiedemann of Limburg, Nicholas Bartholomew of Lucca, Sir Richard Whittington, and the best known of all, Jacques Coeur, began to give the clergy and the royalty alike reason to fear and admire the quickly entrenched Third Estate (78). These men and their peers began to exercise such power that by the mid-14th century, they clamored for representation in governmental operations, and with the failure of the Hundred Years War to resolve itself, they succeeded in establishing institutionalized statuses for themselves in every major country (79). It is to be emphasized that these men worked with feverish self-imposed regimen. The ideological support of the time they did not have; in fact, like all innovators, they had to operate sub rosa much of the time, being not only the originators of various techniques in trading, navigation, banking, coinage and so on, but also their own advocates in the face of suspicious and counterinsurgent mentalities in both the

First and Second Estates. They had the opportunity, the courage, and after some wrangling, the means for opening up trade between East and West, the Baltic and the Adriatic, and for the most part had to rely for moral and intellectual reward upon themselves. Although this kind of independent alteration of social reality is not unique, there had probably not been an instance of such great import for succeeding generations as in the case of the merchants and bankers of the early modern period. Their capital created urban centers, and as is well-known, everything Western, good and bad, was born in the ever-growing metropolis.

On the other end of the change continuum, collective action in its most rudimentary form also flourished. In Sicily, France, England, the Netherlands and elsewhere, popular revolts wrought murderous havoc upon recalcitrant and arbitrary lords. The Sicilian Vespers (from which we have the word "mafia") was the most spontaneous and brutal, with the massacre of the occupying French, but other attempts by the lower class to rectify and soften their wretched condition were longer in coming, and more difficult to subdue. The invaluable distinction between revolution and revolt was at this time unknown, for the first of the great democratic revolutions, with armies, fully developed ideologies, recognized leaders and so on, were far off. The peasant revolts were tragic lunges by the dispossessed, futilely trying to construct the social world more equitably, but certain to fail because of the technology and social organization of the time.

Repression or the simple dwindling of energy and supplies invariably ended the libertarian activities (80). The notion that purposive change as possible and worthy finally reached the masses in the 18th century is only partially correct. The great revolutionists from Cromwell to Lenin shared with the early peasants and their spur-of-the-moment leaders the conviction that reality as given required rearrangement (very often in a regressive direction). What the peasants did not have was the ability to construct or reconstruct a new social fabric, only to destroy the noxious elements wholly, like children confronted with an unsolvable puzzle. But as Engels noted (81), the sheer fanatical zeal of later plebian revolutionaries was foreshadowed clearly in the suicidal battering of social structure performed in this era by the untutored masses.*

By the middle of the 15th century, the world was changing at a rate which must have seemed to many as absolutely "unGodly", which it was. The Papacy was a power, bankers ruled the fortunes of more noblemen than vice versa, the working class grew and developed appropriate sentiments (in some instances capable of being termed a distinct "class consciousness"), and the first series of large-scale, monarchically inspired national wars began in efforts to enlarge

*As is often noted, the Black Death beginning in 1348, killed one-third of Europe's population, and this put a premium on the value of individuals, if for no more enlightened reason than the need of laborers; thus, the further growth of individualism and its inevitable correlate, rationality.

treasuries and gain general esteem. And of course, the renaissance was on, the reformation around the bend. However, in keeping with my focus thus far, I will skirt the well-trod ground of theological-intellectual history in favor of economic and social change, disregarding the endless arguments of causation: do ideas cause behavior, or reflect behavioral definition? I see in this period the minds of Fuggers and Medici fascinated far more by temporal calculation and invention than religious insights or aesthetic achievement. As a matter of fact, the more artistically inclined the Medici became, the poorer were their returns on the European market.

The impetus for mercantile and consequently social development shifted from the Mediterranean to the North Sea. Antwerp became the banking center of Europe, and economic relations were already so interdependent that a delayed galleon arriving in Lisbon (the receiving port from the East) caused banks to fail in Germany (82). To add to the modern flavor of the era, prices began climbing as gold and silver reached Spain and Portugal in huge quantities, while wages for many remained fixed as relics of feudal agreements. (Tawney documents this phenomenon along with other problems in his The Agrarian Problem of the 16th Century.) There is speculation that inflation was also a work of manipulation by the gold-hoarding Spanish government, but the debate is unresolved (83). Meanwhile, technological and navigational innovations of the Portuguese brought misery to Arab middlemen who for years had exacted gigantic taxes and carrying

charges (often over 50%) on the exotic imports from India and China.

However, "spectacular as were the changes caused in the long run by the enlargement of the scope of commerce, it must be emphasized that the discovery of America and the sea route to the Indies did not all at once revolutionize the economic organization of Europe" (84). This was due to the type goods being imported: only the finest and most expensive luxuries, spices and jewels, to name the most popular. Although the upper class clamored for increasing quantities, for the common 16th century participant in economic relations, changes were slow and indirect. But because of the great distance between exorbitant prices and fixed wages, many of the bourgeois merchants had the opportunity to amass wealth, and this capital created the search for investment possibilities of all types. Hunger for the new and profitable in whatever form was fed by innumerable mechanical devices and innovational techniques, especially in "money and banking" and related industrial areas. This is a prime example of the sociological truism that "both/and" explains more accurately than "either/or" when considering cultural change. "Both" cultural milieu, social forces, etc. "and" the presence of independent, untrained and noninstitutionalized innovative talent assured the birth of industrialism during the early 16th century.

The figures concerning industrial growth are staggering. Thanks to Gutenberg, the production of books repre-

sented the first mass production item, and silk, alum mining, ship-building in Venice, among others, followed quickly as factory-based capitalist ventures (85). Strikes among "unionized" journeymen began almost immediately (86), in response to conservative tactics of masters clinging to the dying guild idea of limited membership and the correlate, high prices for goods. As an example of the maddening rush for factory production, Louis XI in 1466 imported 16 Italian silk masters and set them up in Lyons. The city bourgeoisie protested because of preferred treatment given the workers and also out of provincial distrust of foreigners. After being moved to Tours four years later, the business began to explode, and by 1500, more than 800 masters and 4000 workers produced silk for the French nobility in order to keep the King's gold within the borders of France and not in Italy as had been the case before (87). By mid-century, these numbers doubled. The same magnitude of operations obtained in Papal alum mines near Volterra to name but one of the many other European "manu-factories".

Naturally, with industry of this type came the urban proletariat, powerful high-finance tactics, attempted monopolies and cartels, and most of the other incursions into medievalism which have become "natural" in our day. But it is wise to cite still more statistics: out of the 70 million European inhabitants in 1500, only 2 or 3 million labored in capitalist enterprises, and less than a third of these worked in factories, the rest in crafts or home-based

piecework. What did occur however, in spite of the figures, was the birth of a new kind of human, the industrial proletariat, whose life in every way differed, in major qualitative terms, from the lives of anyone who preceded them. And this small, cancerous cell of antimedievalism was the joint product of innovating talent in enterprising merchants, bankers, visionary lords, and not least of all, those whose genius made mass production possible. There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that nebulous social forces or Zeitgeist or Mind coerced or even aided in any way those relatively few individuals* from whose hands came the thousands of technological and organizational changes that would inexorably finalize the death of medieval social structure, and begin the move Maine has described, from status to contract. There is no period so crucial to an understanding of what followed than this period, the renaissance of not only intellectual and antidogmatic fireworks, but the small and barely sustained maneuvers of the few to make changes in centuries-old traditions, or even more difficult, to formulate and institute entirely new procedures

*"I tended to think of history run by impersonal forces. But when you see it in practice you see the differences that the personalities make", could have been the words of a Medici, Fugger, Chigi or Welser (bankers), of kings, lords, merchants or traders, all of the 16th century; they were spoken by Henry Kissinger in January, 1974. If one substitutes for "personalities" the phrase "innovative actions and thoughts of specific people", my position is capsulized. (Time, Feb. 4, 1974, p. 24.)

aimed at unorthodox ends.

A note contra economic determinism: all the evidence points to the royalty and nobility being the actual decision-makers of the period, and the existence of a strangely impotent wealthy class of financial leaders. Apparently the jump from successful businessman to power-wielder was still beyond the conceptual limits of even the most ambitious money-lender. Jacques Coeur and the Fuggers both collapsed at the hands of dynastic monarchs, who without their funds could not have amassed sufficient power to end their benefactors' enterprises! But this situation was soon to change when revised ideas regarding self, the state, and God began permeating the manipulated bourgeoisie.

As previously stated, the 16th century generally was a time of monumental increase, in population (88), total wealth (89), industry, trade, and size of the known world, emigration within and very soon outside of Europe, and so on. And, as traditional history teaches, the reformation was also a logical philosophic and religious outgrowth of renaissance secularism. Luther is in most estimates considered not only a "great man" but also an innovator of the first rank. With his "discovery" that salvation need not be earned through the application of sacraments performed by a priest, the self-conceptions of the masses altered radically. As the notable, still respected Preserved Smith put it,

Columbus burst the bounds of the world, Copernicus those of the universe; Luther only broke his vows. But...the repudiation of religious vows was the hardest to do at the time, a feat infinitely more impressive to the masses

than either of the former. (90)... That the Reformation strengthened the state was inevitable, for there was no practical alternative to putting the final authority in spiritual matters, after the pope had been ejected, into the hands of civil government. Congregationalism was tried and failed as tending to anarchy. (91)

No matter what motivation is attributed to Luther and Calvin in their world-changing activities, the fact remains that nothing could have pleased the bankers and industrialists more than the demoting of the Papacy and a concurrent boost for individualism and the work ethic. (Cf. Nisbet's Quest for Community.) However, the speedy growth of monarchy and nationalism proved that reformation sentiment was a mixed blessing. The Pope had been much less vigilant about mercantile activities in the most creative, ruthless, accumulating practitioners than the civil governments were to become. It is easy to picture an early 16th century "liberal" trader in his old age blaspheming Luther and the development of states, because of a rise in the sin of sins, the "death of initiative and individualism".

From this point forward in the history of Western social change a subtle blend of individual and collective action is noticeable, but not like the Peasant Rebellions two hundred years earlier. The difference lies in effectiveness, and with the growing secularism destroying Papal Europe, all of the same cloth, with the growth of life's variety, industry, urbanization and numerous other indicators, the value of the individual skyrocketed - formally expressed as humanism, coupled with and mutually supportive of capitalism.

The brief period between 1610 and 1660 is known as both the baroque era and the "age of giants", alleged by more than a few historians to be the two most fruitful and exciting generations of European history (92). Whether or not this enthusiasm is shared, there is little doubt that Spinoza, Milton, James I, Charles I, Cromwell, Hobbes and other of like stature gave a fresh, though often conflicting tone to an era which saw the irrevocable climax to the drama of medieval dissolution, a phenomenon which began several centuries before. With the crumbling of all feudal restraint, the state by 1660 had become sufficiently reified in common thought that discussions of its "possibility", held in earnest at the beginning of the century, seemed very dated. Although the liberation of intellectual leaders and artistic developments of the era receive more emphasis by historians than the life of the commoners, there is much evidence which illustrates the growing pride of urbanized masses, flaunting ties with the church or the nobles, and turning instead to the state for authority and reward. The very word "statistics" comes from Italy during the 16th century, when it became necessary to tabulate such data, both for taxation and out of general curiosity about population growth (93). The spectacular rise of vernacular literature, from popular drama to penny narratives and the Newgate Calendar records, demonstrates the degree to which commoners partook of "modern" culture and its many outlets, relative to feudal society, for learning and entertainment.

However, Europe at the time was still predominantly nonurbanized (94), and forces behind changing attitudes and behavior originate, of course, in the cities. Only 13 or 14 cities had over 100,000 people, the trading centers still walled in from medieval days, the capitals beginning the familiar urban sprawl. A truly "metropolitan economy", in 1610 barely noticeable, had by 1660 become recognized as an important, advancing mode of financial development. Along with other outcomes of this period, the capitals began for the first time to outdistance trading centers in size and importance, a function of the growing significance of centrally-managed political and economic activities (95).

Patterns which are familiar today originated in this time, the joint-stock companies, trade wars between nations, dare-devil expeditions with solely mercantile ends, and most important, the new and apparently permanent bonds between companies and state military organization were forged. No more was one merchant vying with others in the marketplace; now the finances, prestige and finally, the military might of royalty stood behind the buccaneers. Drake's rape of Spanish shipping in the preceding century was the adventure of a single man, but similar encounters 50 years later a wholly new situation: the English government and its rogues pillaging goods of the Spanish king. In these terms it was difficult to avoid the growth of national sentiment in the populace since the state proved to be the most exciting, honored and fruitful benefactor thus far in European history.

The innovators had torn from the middle ages a social structure dependent upon fealty and trust, man to man, and with their intellectual advances, merchant ventures and industrial inventions, they had perpetrated the formation of central governments with developed bureaucracies.

Three countries, each developing vastly differing modes of social organization, dominate histories of the 17th century - France, England and Holland. The rest of Europe was either in eclipse (Spain and Italy) or in more primitive stages of coalescing (the East). The study of this period provides for the modern sociologist an exercise in reevaluation. The absolutism of Louis and William both served the interests of their countries superbly (Louis so much so that France under him became the most powerful nation of Europe, and the first truly modern one); religious sentiments (in no way attached to economic or other secular incentives) were so virulently alive that Germany was devastated during the Thirty Years War and its opponents' treasuries were emptied in the conflict, a war in which modern scrutiny has all the leaders "doing the wrong things", i.e., operating nonrationally; modern science and the discoveries of those luminaries who motivated Whitehead to label the period "The Century of Genius" (96), had almost no effect upon everyday life. (Newton, the undisputed genius of them all, was absolutely unconcerned about practical applications of his insights, and only in the early 18th century were the implications of his formulations appreciated widely.) To put it succinctly,

this century constitutes the birth of the modern era. With the exception of some obvious technological advances, the Europe of 1700 displayed all the elements of society that had come to typify the West two centuries later. But the incredible variety of the period, both in terms of cultural diversity and intellectual confusion makes problematic any effort at brief characterization. The century of Newton also saw Pascal, Milton, and Locke (each of differing impact upon their contemporaries); the birth of science and scientism shared the period with merciless discrimination against heretics and Dissenters (revocation of the Edict of Nantes, etc.) and the high point of blind faith in absolutistic monarchs; radically innovative literature and popular thought (whether in Shakespeare or the Levellers) in 1600 had by the close of the century degenerated into highly formalized, tedious patronage of the powers that be (Racine, Corneille, etc.); and most astonishing, as late as 1683, civilization in the West was threatened by an overwhelming Turkish invasion (200,000 strong) attacking Vienna, the unified response to which has been labeled the "first" world war. The transitions in every field of human endeavor stand out as amplifications and logical extensions of those in both later medieval and the 16th century renaissance-reformation era. Tawney informs us that life for the common man changed relatively little between 1485 and 1640 in England (97) - in spite of the enclosure controversy and related dilemmas growing out of an agricultural economy changing from subsistence to commercial

scale. But with technological advance (inter alia, the telescope, microscope, thermometer, barometer, pendulum clock, air pump (98)) and the new-born fetish for measurement; with such ambivalent personalities as Lord Praise-God Barebone (99) trying to rationalize Cromwell's Protectorate over Britain, thereby offering into history a unique British construct: the loyal opposition; with feudal remnants all around and modern genius refusing to allow time to stand still, life became so relativized and under-structured for many as to make 18th century absolutism a "logical" outcome.

Holland was peculiar insofar as her hardy and unrestrained bourgeoisie lived with the protection of governmentally-assured freedom to a degree otherwise unheard of at this time. The most limited knowledge of painting in the period tells the tale: court portraits and religious motifs in France and Spain, as opposed to the matchless bourgeois-inspired realism of Rembrandt (1606-1669) and many lesser men in Amsterdam. The burghers' hard-headed acquisitiveness continued unabated, which directly or indirectly assured a degree of popular freedom and democratic achievement unparalleled in Europe, and not emulated until the founding of this country. (The unGodly behavior of these merchant folk so infuriated the more pious Spanish that in 1568, the entire "heretical" population of the Netherlands was condemned to death by Philip II (100).) But, alas, with only 2 million people, the tendencies of the Dutch did not effect a sea change in governmental and civil rights practices throughout the continent.