

# TUDOR REBELLIONS

REVISED 5TH EDITION



**S**EMINAR  
STUDIES  
IN HISTORY

Anthony Fletcher &  
Diarmaid MacCulloch

## Tudor Rebellions



# Tudor Rebellions

Revised fifth edition

Anthony Fletcher and  
Diarmaid MacCulloch



Harlow, England • London • New York • Boston • San Francisco • Toronto  
Sydney • Tokyo • Singapore • Hong Kong • Seoul • Taipei • New Delhi  
Cape Town • Madrid • Mexico City • Amsterdam • Munich • Paris • Milan

**PEARSON EDUCATION LIMITED**

Edinburgh Gate  
Harlow CM20 2JE  
Tel: +44 (0)1279 623623  
Fax: +44 (0)1279 431059  
Website: www.pearsoned.co.uk

First edition published in 1968  
Second edition published in 1973  
Third edition published in 1983  
Fourth edition published in 1997  
Fifth edition published in 2004  
**Revised fifth edition published in Great Britain in 2008**

© Pearson Education 1968, 2008

The rights of Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch to be identified as authors of this work have been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

ISBN: 978-1-4058-7432-8

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
Fletcher, Anthony.

Tudor rebellions / Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch. – Rev. 5th ed.  
p. cm.  
Includes bibliographical references and index.  
ISBN 978-1-4058-7432-8 (pbk.)  
1. Great Britain – History – Tudors, 1485–1603. 2. Peasant uprisings – Great Britain – History – 16th century. 3. Insurgency – Great Britain – History – 16th century. I. MacCulloch, Diarmaid. II. Title.  
DA315.F56 2008  
942.05—dc22

2008010130

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying in the United Kingdom issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS. This book may not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of trade in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published, without the prior consent of the Publishers.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1  
12 11 10 09 08

Typeset in 10/13.5pt Berkeley Book by 35  
Printed and bound in Malaysia (CTP-VVP)

The publisher's policy is to use paper manufactured from sustainable forests.

# Introduction to the Series

History is a narrative constructed by historians from traces left by the past. Historical enquiry is often driven by contemporary issues and, in consequence, historical narratives are constantly reconsidered, reconstructed and reshaped. The fact that different historians have different perspectives on issues means that there is also often controversy and no universally agreed version of past events. *Seminar Studies in History* was designed to bridge the gap between current research and debate, and the broad, popular general surveys that often date rapidly.

The volumes in the series are written by historians who are not only familiar with the latest research and current debates concerning their topic, but who have themselves contributed to our understanding of the subject. The books are intended to provide the reader with a clear introduction to a major topic in history. They provide both a narrative of events and a critical analysis of contemporary interpretations. They include the kinds of tools generally omitted from specialist monographs: a chronology of events, a glossary of terms and brief biographies of 'who's who'. They also include bibliographical essays in order to guide students to the literature on various aspects of the subject. Students and teachers alike will find that the selection of documents will stimulate discussion and offer insight into the raw materials used by historians in their attempt to understand the past.

**Clive Emsley and Gordon Martel**

Series Editors



# Contents

<i>Preface to the Fifth Edition</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
<i>Chronology</i>	xii
<i>Who's Who</i>	xiv
<i>Maps</i>	xx
PART ONE THE BACKGROUND	1
1 THE SHAPE OF TUDOR SOCIETY	3
2 IDEAS OF SUBMISSION, IDEAS OF JUSTICE	9
PART TWO DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS	17
3 TAXATION AND REBELLION	19
The Yorkshire Rebellion, 1489	20
The Cornish Rebellions, 1497	21
Resistance to Taxation, 1513–25	24
4 THE LINCOLNSHIRE RISING AND THE PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE	28
The Lincolnshire Rising	28
The Pilgrimage, October–December 1536	31
The Causes of the Rebellion	38
Henry VIII and the North, 1537–47	49
5 THE WESTERN REBELLION	54
Riot and Rebellion in the West, 1547–49	54
The Causes of the Rebellion	61



6	ROBERT KETT AND THE 'REBELLIONS OF COMMONWEALTH'	67
	Prelude to Rebellion, 1548	67
	The Commotions, May–August 1549	69
	The Causes of the Commotions	77
7	WYATT'S REBELLION	92
	Conspiracy and Rebellion, November 1553–February 1554	92
	The Rebellion, Religion and the Spanish Marriage	98
8	THE NORTHERN REBELLION	102
	Conspiracy and Rebellion, 1569–70	102
	The Causes of the Rebellion	110
9	EPILOGUE	116
PART THREE ASSESSMENT		121
10	REBELLION AND TUDOR GOVERNMENT	123
PART FOUR DOCUMENTS		139
1	The Duke of Norfolk to Wolsey, 1525	140
2	The Examination of Nicholas Leche, 1536	140
3	The Lincoln Articles, 1536	141
4	The Oath of the Honourable Men, 1536	143
5	Robert Aske to the Lords at Pontefract, 1536	143
6	The Pilgrims' Ballad, 1536	144
7	The Commons of Westmorland to Lord Darcy, 1536	145
8	Advice to the Pilgrims at Pontefract, 1536	145
9	The Pontefract Articles, 1536	147
10	Richard Morison, <i>A Remedy for Sedition</i> , 1536	149
11	The Examination of Robert Aske, 1537	150
12	The Demands of the Western Rebels, 1549	151
13	<i>A Copy of a Letter</i> , 1549	153
14	Philip Nichols's Answer to the Commoners of Devonshire and Cornwall, 1549	154
15	The Council to the Justices of the Peace of Devon, 1549	155
16	The Council to Lord Russell, 1549	156
17	'Kett's Demands Being in Rebellion', 1549	156

18	Nicholas Sotherton, 'The Commoyson in Norfolk', 1549	159
19	William Paget to Protector Somerset, 1549	160
20	Sir Thomas Wyatt's Scheme for a Local Militia, 1549	161
21	The Tower Chronicle, 1554	162
22	The Proclamation of the Earls, 1569	163
23	Sir Ralph Sadler to Sir William Cecil, 1569	163
24	The Examination of the Earl of Northumberland, 1572	164
	FURTHER READING	166
	REFERENCES	170
	INDEX	178

# Preface to the Fifth Edition

I never dreamed that this book would still be in print thirty-six years after its publication. In 1996 Diarmaid MacCulloch kindly agreed to undertake a revision of my dated third edition text of 1983. I am very grateful to him for revising the book again. Rebellion in Tudor England is a subject which has continued to provoke much fine new work. Our knowledge and understanding of its nature and causes continue to advance. Diarmaid MacCulloch brings the experience, skills and perception of an outstanding scholar of Tudor England to this new account for a new generation of readers.

A. Fletcher, 2003

The expansion in format for this series means that I have been able to add new material and extend discussion, as well as taking into account new work since my last revision of this text in 1997. I have also produced new versions of the documents appended to the text. It is pleasing to know that a book whose origins stretch back thirty-six years is still proving helpful to readers in explaining unrest in the age of the Tudors, even though alongside its 1968 version, it may now seem like the proverbial axe with a new head and a new shaft. I have to thank particularly Drs Amanda Jones and John Cooper for their generosity in making available to me unpublished work, and I thank them and Dr Andy Wood for useful discussions; I am very grateful to Professor Richard Hoyle for last-minute assistance. Once more I crave Anthony Fletcher's indulgence for his generous self-denying ordinance in allowing me free range on the text which he first created.

D.N.J. MacCulloch, 2003

# Acknowledgements

The publisher would like to thank the following for their kind permission to reproduce their photographs:

Bridgeman Art Library Ltd: Plate 1, Plate 3, Plate 7 and Plate 8; English Heritage: Plate 2 © Mr Bob Cottrell ARPS AFIAP DRAGB 2; Plate 4 © Paul Eggleston; Plate 5 Crown copyright, NMR; Plate 6 Reproduced by permission of English Heritage, NMR.

Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders and we apologise in advance for any unintentional omissions.

# Chronology

- 1485 Henry Tudor becomes king as Henry VII after defeating Richard III at Bosworth.
- 1485–1547 Sporadic outbreaks of violence against tax collectors.
  - 1487 Lambert Simnel defeated.
  - 1489 Yorkshire Rebellion dispersed.
  - 1497 Cornish Rebellions crushed; Perkin Warbeck defeated.
  - 1509 Henry VIII succeeds to the throne.
  - 1513 Passive resistance in Yorkshire to increased taxation leads to royal concessions.
  - 1525 Amicable Grant announced; nationwide instances of passive resistance and various risings force a royal retreat.
  - 1534 The break with Rome is formalised in the Act of Supremacy, establishing royal supremacy over the Church of England.
- 1536–40 Dissolution of the monasteries.
  - 1536 Lincolnshire rising; Pilgrimage of Grace.
  - 1537 Further outbreaks of unrest in the north are crushed and give Henry a chance to avenge himself on some of the Pilgrim leaders.
  - 1541 Further attempt at unrest, Wakefield.  
Henry visits northern England for the first time.
  - 1547 Edward VI succeeds to the throne; power in the hands of a Lord Protector, the Duke of Somerset, who pursues Reformation policies.
  - 1549 Introduction of the Book of Common Prayer and the Act of Uniformity.  
Western Rebellion.  
The ‘rebellions of Commonwealth’, including Kett’s Rebellion.  
Duke of Somerset overthrown as Lord Protector by his colleagues; the Earl of Warwick (later, from 1551, Duke of Northumberland) becomes Lord President of the Council.

- 1553** Northumberland seeks to establish Lady Jane Grey as queen, but is opposed by Mary Tudor, who gains popular support. Mary I succeeds to the throne.
- 1554** Wyatt's Rebellion.  
Lady Jane Grey executed.  
Mary marries Philip II of Spain and seeks to restore Catholicism to England.
- 1558** Elizabeth I succeeds to the throne; pursues Protestant policies.
- 1568** Mary Queen of Scots arrives in England after defeat in Scotland; a series of Catholic conspiracies ensues.
- 1569–70** Northern Rebellion.
- 1587** Mary Queen of Scots executed.
- 1595–1603** Tyrone's Rebellion in Ireland.
- 1601** Essex's Rebellion.
- 1603** Elizabeth I dies; end of Tudor dynasty.

# Who's Who

**An Gof, Michael Joseph** (d. 1497): Blacksmith from the Lizard in Cornwall and one of the leaders of the Cornish Rebellion in 1497. Executed after the defeat of the rebellion.

**Aske, Robert** (d. 1537): Yorkshire lawyer and a leading figure in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536. Had an exalted vision of the rising and wanted it to be peaceful. Was invited to an audience with Henry VIII and was well received, but Henry used the opportunity of a subsequent uprising to arrest and execute him.

**Audley, John Touchet, 6th Baron** (d. 1497): Impoverished Somerset nobleman and one of the leaders of the Cornish Rebellion in 1497. Executed after the defeat of the rebellion.

**Bedford, John Russell, 1st Russell Earl of** (c.1484–1555): Courtier created Baron Russell by Henry VIII and given many lands in western England. Sympathised with the Reformation, and under Edward VI he was sent to deal with the Western Rebellion. His early efforts were hindered by lack of men, but he was later sent reinforcements and crushed the rebellion. He was made Earl of Bedford as a reward for his efforts.

**Bigod, Sir Francis** (1508–37): Subsequent to the Pilgrimage of Grace, he led a further rising in 1537 which was quickly crushed and gave Henry VIII the opportunity to avenge himself on some of the Pilgrim leaders.

**Body, William** (d. 1548): Government agent under Thomas Cromwell. His appointment to the archdeaconry of Cornwall as a layman was opposed by local figures and his corruption and tactless imposition of Church reforms was received with hostility in Cornwall. Murdered by a mob at Helston whilst checking on the destruction of images in parish churches, an incident which prefigured the Western Rebellion.

**Bowes, Robert** (1495?–1554): Yorkshire lawyer and a leading figure in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536. Presented the Pilgrims' petition to the king at

Windsor. Distanced himself from the later risings in 1537 and thereby managed to avoid reprisal.

**Carew, Sir Peter** (1514–75): Devonian knight. His intervention against the Western Rebellion in 1547 inflamed the situation, and Lord Russell was sent to deal with it instead. He was later a leading conspirator in Wyatt's Rebellion, but his part in it failed and he fled to France.

**Cecil, William, Lord Burghley** (1520–98): Statesman and leading adviser to Elizabeth I.

**Cranmer, Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury** (1489–1556): A Cambridge academic made archbishop by Henry VIII in 1533 to facilitate the annulment of Henry VIII's first marriage. Discreetly encouraged Protestant Church reform under Henry and took a leading role in the reforms under Edward VI, including masterminding the creation of two successive English Prayer Books. Arrested and later burnt at the stake under Queen Mary.

**Croft, Sir James** (d. 1590): Herefordshire knight and a leading conspirator in Wyatt's Rebellion, although his part in the rising never got off the ground. Once more prominent in government under Elizabeth I.

**Darcy of Templehurst, Thomas, Lord** (1467–1537): Commander at Pontefract Castle and a leading religious conservative. After initial hesitation he was persuaded to take one of the leading roles in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536 and was executed as a result.

**Derby, Edward Stanley, 3rd Stanley Earl of** (1509–72): Leading Lancashire nobleman of conservative sympathies in religion. After rumours that he was to join the Pilgrimage of Grace, Henry VIII secured his loyalty by giving him authority over a large area; he subsequently took a firm lead over the rebels.

**Edward VI** (1537–53): King 1547–53. Succeeded his father Henry VIII when young, and so effective power was held by leading politicians, initially the Duke of Somerset as Lord Protector, later the Duke of Northumberland as Lord President of the Council. He encouraged the Reformation in England, establishing the successive Books of Common Prayer of 1549 and 1552, the Act of Uniformity and the Forty-Two Articles.

**Elizabeth I** (1533–1603): Queen 1558–1603, younger daughter of Henry VIII. Restored Protestantism in England and incurred the hostility of the Catholic powers in Europe. Had to contend with the presence within her realm of Mary Queen of Scots, the focus of a series of Catholic conspiracies, and faced increasing unrest and rebellion in Ireland.

**Essex, Robert Devereux, 2nd Devereux Earl of** (1566–1601): English soldier and courtier to Elizabeth I. Lost favour after failing to suppress insurrection



in Ireland in 1599. Subsequently tried to organise an uprising in London and was executed.

**Essex, Thomas Cromwell, Earl of** (c.1485–1540): Statesman under Henry VIII. Arranged Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, the establishment of the Church of England and the dissolution of the monasteries. Lost favour through his arrangement of the Cleves marriage, and was subsequently executed.

**Flamank, Thomas** (d. 1497): Gentleman from Bodmin and one of the leaders of the Cornish Rebellion in 1497. Executed after the defeat of the rebellion.

**Grey, Lady Jane** (1537–54): As great-granddaughter of Henry VII, she was proclaimed queen by the Duke of Northumberland after the death of Edward VI. Without popular backing, a coup by Princess Mary forced her abdication after a fortnight (Tudor propaganda said nine days) and after Wyatt's Rebellion she was executed.

**Henry VII** (1457–1509): King 1485–1509. As Earl of Richmond, defeated Richard III at Bosworth and united the houses of Lancaster and York by marrying Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth of York, thus ending the Wars of the Roses. Presided over increasing administrative efficiency and harsh taxes.

**Henry VIII** (1491–1547): King 1509–47, son of Henry VII. Early in his reign he pursued an ambitious and expensive foreign policy, resulting in increasing taxation for his subjects. Frustrated by the Pope's refusal to declare null his marriage to his first wife Catherine of Aragon, he broke ties with the papacy and established royal supremacy over the Church of England. His reign also saw the dissolution of the monasteries.

**Kett, Robert** (d. 1549): Norfolk yeoman. Led a rebellion in 1549 with early success. Blockaded Norwich with 16,000 men but was ultimately defeated and executed.

**Mary I** (1516–58): Queen 1553–58, elder daughter of Henry VIII. After her successful coup against Queen Jane, she repealed all Protestant laws and sought to re-establish Catholicism in England. Married Philip II of Spain and thus involved England in his foreign policy.

**Mary Queen of Scots** (1542–87): Defeated by a rebellion of Scottish nobles, she arrived in England in 1568, where as heir presumptive to the English throne she became the focus of a series of Catholic conspiracies against Elizabeth. Imprisoned for the rest of her life and eventually executed.

**Melton, Nicholas** (d. 1537): Shoemaker and initial leader of the Lincolnshire rising in 1536. As the rising grew in strength, local gentry assumed leadership roles. He was executed in the wake of the rising.

**Norfolk, Thomas Howard, 2nd Howard Duke of** (1443–1524): Although his father was killed at Bosworth fighting for King Richard III, he gained favour from Henry VII and was restored to the title Earl of Surrey. Sent north in 1489 to crush the Yorkshire Rebellion and to prove his loyalty, and that of his family, to the Tudors, he was later rewarded in 1513 with the restoration of the family Dukedom of Norfolk for leading the defeat of the Scots at Flodden.

**Norfolk, Thomas Howard, 3rd Howard Duke of** (1473–1554): English statesman of conservative religious sympathies. Acted for the king in negotiations to end the Pilgrimage of Grace. Implicated in the charges of treason levied against his son the Earl of Surrey in 1546 and imprisoned in the Tower of London. Pardoned by Mary, and released from the Tower. The army recruited from London which he led against Wyatt's Rebellion ignored his orders and deserted to Wyatt.

**Norfolk, Thomas Howard, 4th Howard Duke of** (1538–72): Imprisoned by Elizabeth I for planning to marry Mary Queen of Scots and subsequently executed for his involvement in the Ridolfi plot.

**Northampton, William Parr, Marquis of** (1513–71): Protestant nobleman initially sent to deal with Kett's Rebellion in 1549. His mishandling of the situation turned a popular demonstration into full-scale rebellion.

**Northumberland, Henry Percy, 4th Percy Earl of** (1446–89): Powerful northern magnate. Assassinated by protesters in Yorkshire in 1489 whilst trying to collect taxes for the year. The only casualty of the Yorkshire rebellion, which dispersed in the face of a large royal army.

**Northumberland, Henry Percy, 6th Percy Earl of** (1502?–37): Great northern magnate at the time of the Pilgrimage of Grace, but, suffering from illness and possibly mentally unstable, failed to take a strong stance, possibly as his family's power in the north had already invited the suspicion of Henry VIII. Nervous after the rising, he made Henry his sole heir in 1537.

**Northumberland, John Dudley, Duke of, and 1st Dudley Earl of Warwick** (1502–53): English statesman. As Earl of Warwick he was sent to deal with Kett's Rebellion in 1549 after the failure of the Marquis of Northampton. He successfully crushed the rebellion with force, and was in a good position to lead growing opposition in the Privy Council to the rule of the Duke of Somerset. From late 1549 he held a powerful position as Lord President of the Council. He arranged the marriage of his son to Lady Jane Grey and in cooperation with the young king tried to establish her as Edward's successor on the throne, but his plan failed and he was executed.

**Northumberland, Thomas Percy, 7th Percy Earl of** (1528–72): Northern nobleman. Was in sympathetic contact with Mary Queen of Scots during her

captivity in England and became a leader of the Catholic northern earls who rose against Elizabeth in 1569–70. The rebellion proved incoherent and failed, and the earl was subsequently executed.

**Philip II of Spain** (1527–98): King of Spain 1556–98. A powerful monarch in Europe and champion of Counter-Reformation. Mary Tudor became his second wife in 1554.

**Russell, Lord:** *see Bedford.*

**Simnel, Lambert** (c.1475–c.1525): Pretender to the English throne during the reign of Henry VII, claiming to be Edward Earl of Warwick, nephew to King Edward IV. Gained support for his claim in Ireland in 1487, then landed in England, but was defeated at the battle of Stoke.

**Somerset, Edward Seymour, Duke of** (c.1506–52): As Lord Protector of England under the young Edward VI, he gained extensive power and pursued Protestant reforms. Following various setbacks in his policies he was ousted by John Dudley, Earl of Warwick (later Duke of Northumberland) and executed after attempting conspiracies to improve his position.

**Suffolk, Charles Brandon, 1st Brandon Duke of** (c.1484–1545): Close friend of Henry VIII and leader of royal army against the Lincolnshire rising in 1536. In negotiation with gentry leaders he managed to disperse the rising without violence.

**Suffolk, Henry Grey, Duke of** (1517–54): Strong Protestant partisan and father of Lady Jane Grey, he initially supported her placing on the throne in 1553 but soon abandoned the attempt and was pardoned by Mary I. However, he went on to join Wyatt's Rebellion, although his part in it was ineffectual. He was executed after the rebellion's demise.

**Surrey, Earl of:** *see Norfolk, Thomas Howard, 2nd Howard Duke of.*

**Sussex, Thomas Radcliffe, 3rd Radcliffe Earl of** (1525–83): Royal agent in the north. Raised forces against the Northern Rebellion in 1569–70, although the rebels were eventually dispersed without much fighting.

**Tyrone, Hugh O'Neill, 3rd Earl of** (1550–1616): Leading Ulster nobleman. Led lengthy campaign against English rule from 1595 to 1603, but was eventually defeated.

**Warbeck, Perkin** (c.1474–99): Pretender to the English throne during the reign of Henry VII. In 1492 declared himself to be Richard Duke of York, presumed killed in 1483. Made landings in England in 1495 and 1497 but was captured and executed.

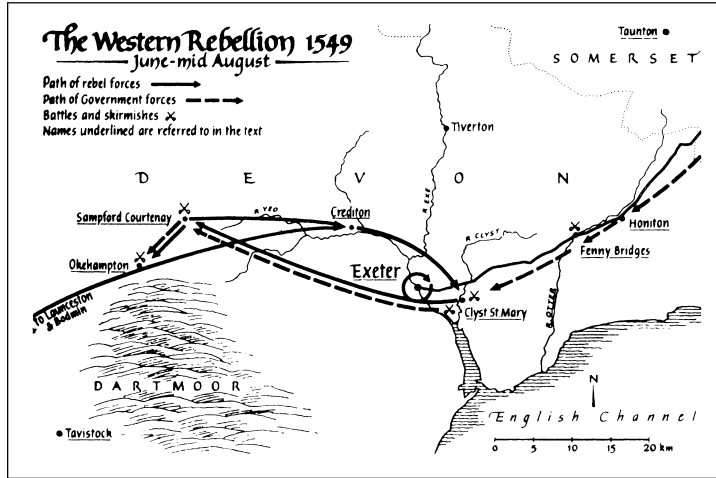
**Warwick, John Dudley, Earl of:** *see Northumberland, John Dudley, Duke of.*

**Westmorland, Charles Neville, 6th Earl of** (1542?–1601): One of the chief leaders in the 1569–70 Northern Rebellion, brother-in-law to Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk. He fled to Scotland and from 1570 spent his life in the Spanish Netherlands in futile plotting.

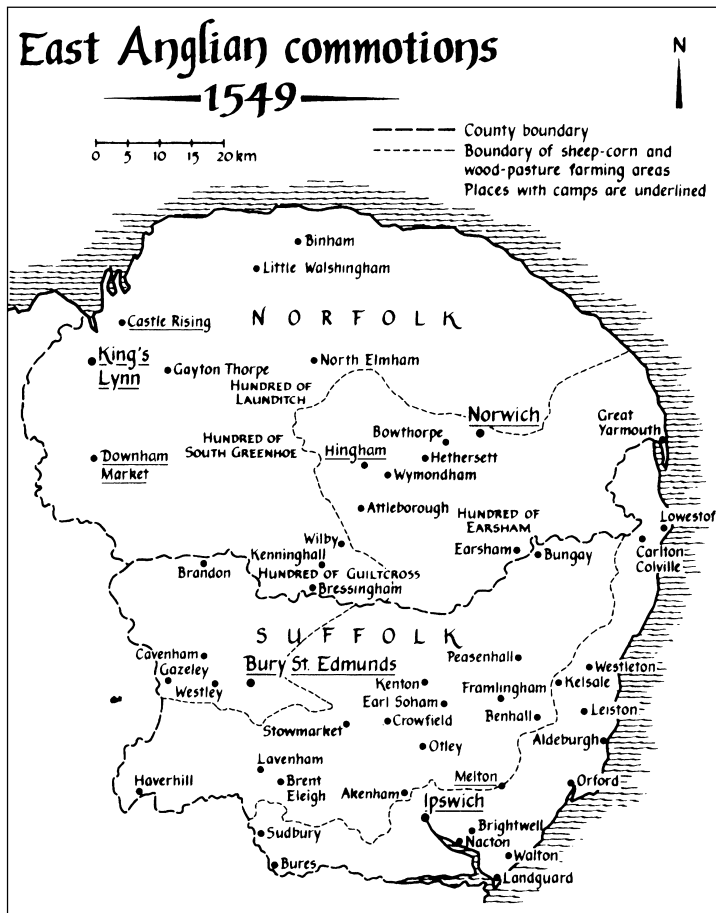
**Wolsey, Thomas, Cardinal** (c.1475–1530): Churchman and statesman under Henry VIII. As Lord Chancellor, 1515–29, his attempts to raise taxes encountered much opposition. Lost favour when he failed to persuade the Pope to agree to Henry's demand for the annulment of his first marriage.

**Wyatt, Sir Thomas** (c.1520–54): Protestant Kentish gentleman. A leading conspirator in rebellion against Mary I in 1554 after the announcement of her intention to marry Philip II of Spain. His allies in other parts of the country were soon dispersed or arrested, but he raised a small army and had early success in Kent, including the disintegration of a royal army under the Duke of Norfolk. Marched on London but was forced to surrender when the queen rallied opposition in the city. Executed.

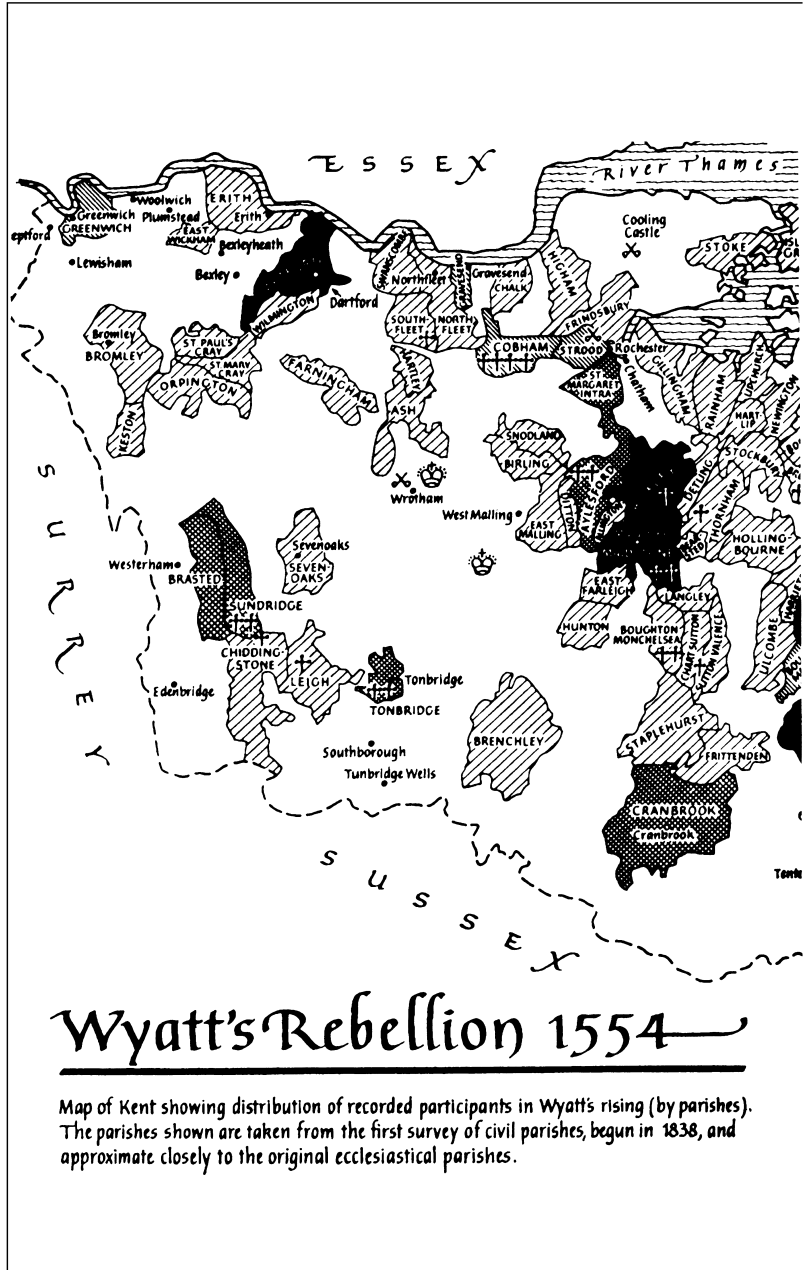




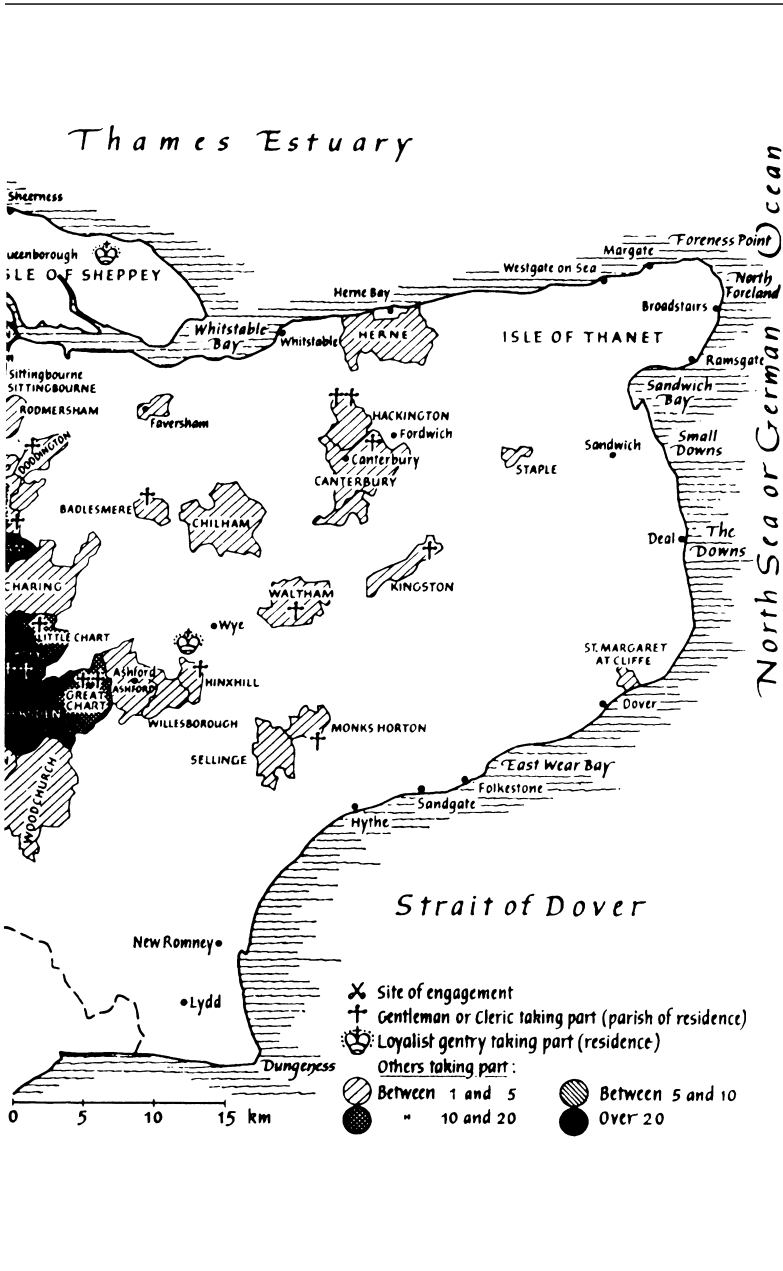
Map 2 The Western Rebellion, 1549



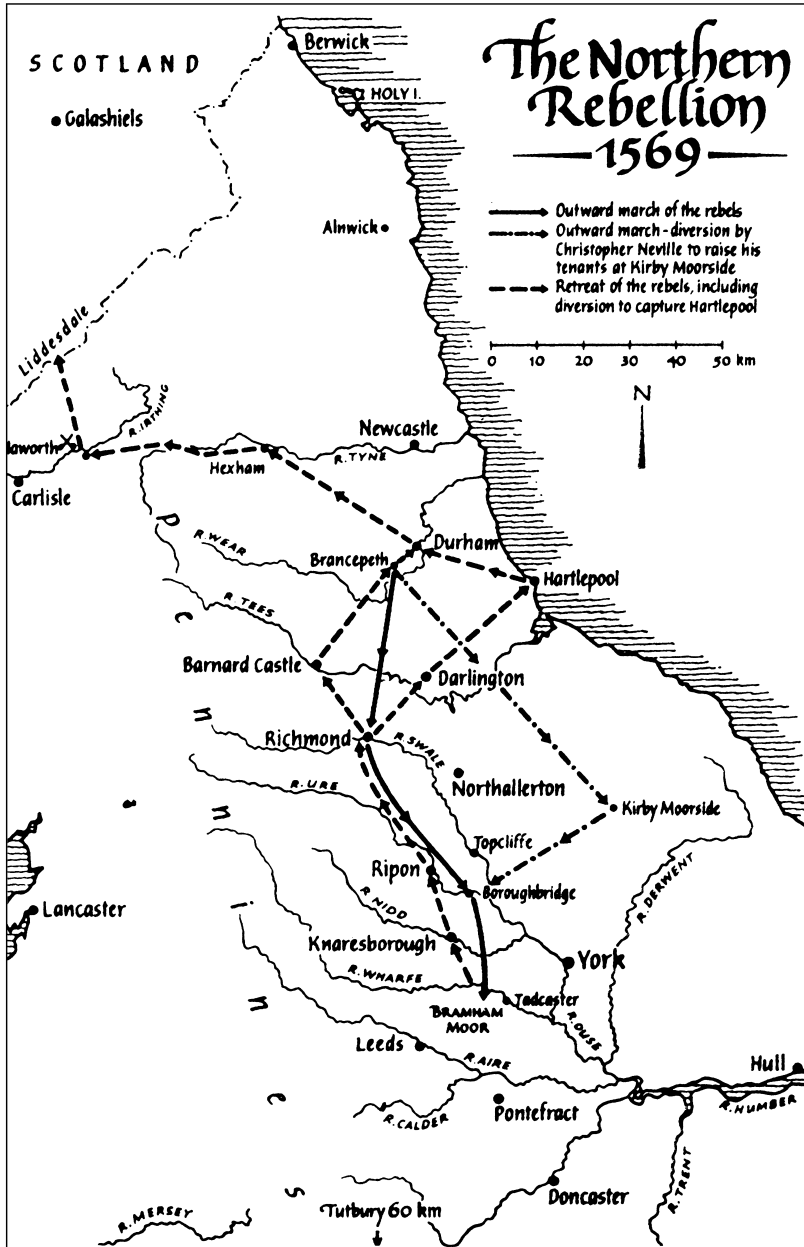
Map 3 East Anglian commotions, 1549



Map 4 Wyatt's Rebellion, 1554







Map 5 The Northern Rebellion, 1569

## Part 1

---

# THE BACKGROUND



# 1

---

## The Shape of Tudor Society

Early modern England was an unequal society, and gloried in the fact. Half a century after **Queen Elizabeth's** death, even the most radical groups in the upheaval of the English Civil War found it very difficult to grasp the concept of equality. The Levellers, for instance, did not conceive of political equality: their commonwealth would have excluded the very poorest sections of society from political life. Only that tiny minority, the Diggers, then began to work out the meaning of the equality of humanity, and they found few sympathisers.

If this was true for an England which had executed its king, it was truer still for the comparatively settled pre-revolutionary world. Class warfare is difficult to find there, because class warfare implies individual classes striving against each other for primacy in society: such a notion was very rare indeed in early modern Europe. The different groups in the social order were fixed for all time; social change meant not a change in the relative positions of those groups, but a change in the status of individuals, who moved from one fixed status group to another. There was only one 'class' to exercise supreme power, standing at the head of this social order; below that level, every status group could rest secure in the knowledge that it had not merely a superior group in the system, but also an inferior. The lowest in the system could hardly be considered a status group, could hardly even be conceded existence.

Consider a contemporary snapshot of early modern society taken by a lawyer and fashionable humanist intellectual, Sir Thomas Smith. Smith wrote his descriptive tract *The Commonwealth of England* in the 1560s; he found a fourfold division in society. The first of Smith's four divisions comprised gentlemen. It was this class of which he spoke most, being a gentleman himself. Indeed he redivided the class into two, beginning with 'the first part of gentlemen of England called *nobilitas major*'. By this Smith meant the parliamentary peerage, that section of the landed elite who, by political accidents which had largely settled down into precedent by 1500, received a

**Elizabeth I:** Queen 1558–1603, younger daughter of Henry VIII. Restored Protestantism in England and incurred the hostility of the Catholic powers in Europe. Had to contend with the presence within her realm of Mary Queen of Scots and faced increasing unrest and rebellion in Ireland.

regular individual summons to attend parliament in the House of Lords. Then there were 'the second sort of gentlemen which may be called *nobilitas minor*'; this could in turn be subdivided in descending status order into knights, esquires and gentlemen.

Second were the citizens and burgesses: the people of the cities and towns, islands of privilege in the middle of the gentry's political world, but islands varying in size from London to some tiny and puny place which had dwindled to a village. Third were the yeomen, the prosperous middle sort of the countryside. Smith recognised their importance, perhaps more than other commentators would: he clearly felt that they were of more account than the townsmen, for he said that after the gentry, the yeoman had 'the greatest charge and doings in the commonwealth'. Last were what Smith flatly said were 'the fourth sort of men which do not rule'. In his brief account of the fourth section of society, Smith said that they

have no voice nor authority in our commonwealth and no account is made of them, but only to be ruled, not to rule other, and yet they be not altogether neglected. For in cities and corporate towns, for default of yeomen, inquests and juries are impannelled of such manner of people. And in villages they are commonly made churchwardens, aleconners and many times constables, which office toucheth more the commonwealth, and at the first was not employed upon such low and base persons.

Particularly from the last statement, one can see that Smith was not making a sociological analysis; he was describing power. Two further things were notable about his description. First, it wanted to be a description of a rural world; it could not ignore the towns, but they spoiled the simplicity. So Smith described the citizens as his second category, but rushed on to the yeomanry who were the natural step down the ladder from gentlemen. And amid the fourth sort, it was the towns which led the way in disturbing the natural order by spreading the load of responsibility because towns did not have yeomen. Second, there is a huge gap in the description even after Smith had talked about his fourth category. There was a large proportion of the population – cottagers, labourers, beggars – who would never come near even to the humble offices he had named. Smith had in any case more or less dismissed the fourth category of people whom he does mention. The political nation, the people who mattered, he implied, were restricted to his first three categories. This might have been just about accurate in 1560; by the eve of the English Civil War, it would be less true.

Nevertheless, Smith was right that his first three categories were the main wielders of power. Each group had its accepted sphere of operation, once more graded in hierarchical fashion. The *nobilitas major* could automatically

command a say in local affairs if they wished, but their place was with the monarch in central government. Not all would wish to take up this role. A peer like Andrew Lord Windsor during the 1530s or the Earl of Derby under Elizabeth might choose to ignore the Court because he did not like the religious atmosphere. In Derby's case, this was despite the fact that he had been named a privy councillor; he preferred to stay in his native Lancashire building up an unchallengeable local power-base. However, there could be very serious trouble if peers who did wish to claim their place in central affairs felt that they were being denied it. This brought Richard Duke of York to the point of staging a *coup d'état* against Henry VI, it provoked the northern earls to rebellion in 1569, and led the fourth **Howard Duke of Norfolk** and the second **Devereux Earl of Essex** to the block. It has even been seen as causing the English Civil War.

The *nobilitas minor*, on the other hand, were the natural governors of the counties, with only a secondary claim on the affairs of central government. They ran the counties as justices of the peace (JPs). The counties which they ruled were groupings of the basic units of Elizabethan administration, the townships and parishes, with in the middle of them, in an uneasy relationship, those troublesome urban chartered corporations. The townships and the parishes were the places where the yeomen held their office, as churchwardens, bailiffs, constables and the like.

Even with greater and lesser gentry reckoned together, the political leadership was a notably small group. In 1587, for instance, there were 1,500 JPs; so counting those out of political favour, plus adult sons, and a handful of powerful widows, there were about 2,500 people who mattered in central and local affairs. It was said that Queen Elizabeth could personally scrutinise the lists of actual and potential JPs for the whole country and decide on their fitness. Certainly **Lord Burghley's** papers show that he tried to do so. The small scale of power politics reflected the small scale of English life generally: most of the population lived in very small rural communities. London was unique in England for its size; by the early sixteenth century it was at least five times as big as Norwich, its nearest rival. Even most county towns, such as Coventry, York, Exeter or Worcester, were in the 6,000–8,000 league. England was much less urbanised than much of western Europe, but across the whole continent, for the most part, the focus of life was the local community: 'the fundamental bond, the first resort in cases of confrontation, and the most potent source of outbursts of collective violence' (Bercé, 1987: viii).

This small scale meant that personal and political relationships were inextricably confused. Much early modern historical writing is obstinately anecdotal, and that reflects the society which wrote it: a face-to-face world. That meant that its elite had to display certain skills which are less important in government today. Tudor politics was ritualistic, and those rituals called

**Norfolk, Thomas Howard, 4th Howard Duke of:** Imprisoned by Elizabeth I for planning to marry Mary Queen of Scots and subsequently executed for his involvement in the Ridolfi plot.

**Essex, Robert Devereux, 2nd Devereux Earl of:** English soldier and courtier to Elizabeth I. Lost favour after failing to suppress insurrection in Ireland in 1599. Subsequently tried to organise an uprising in London and was executed.

**Cecil, William, Lord Burghley:** Statesman and leading adviser to Elizabeth I.

**Henry VIII:** King 1509–47, son of Henry VII. Early in his reign he pursued an ambitious and expensive foreign policy, resulting in increasing taxation for his subjects. Frustrated by the Pope's refusal to declare null his marriage to his first wife Catherine of Aragon, he broke ties with the papacy and established royal supremacy over the Church of England. His reign also saw the dissolution of the monasteries.

**Henry VII:** King 1485–1509. As Earl of Richmond, defeated Richard III at Bosworth and united the houses of Lancaster and York by marrying Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth of York, thus ending the Wars of the Roses. Presided over increasing administrative efficiency and harsh taxes.

for its leading actors to be actors in a literal sense, putting on bizarre costumes, and holding the centre of stages, moving and gesturing in particular ways. Some monarchs were incompetent at this, and lost out accordingly – for instance, Henry VI. Others, like Edward IV, **Henry VIII** and Elizabeth, enjoyed it, were very good at it, and benefited accordingly. Other monarchs simply disliked public theatre: a sensible monarch like **Henry VII** made up for being personally retiring by putting on plenty of expensive public Court display; a foolish monarch like Charles I did not bother, and enjoyed splendour away from the public arena.

The realities of sixteenth-century life increasingly disturbed official attempts to portray a harmonious and static social order. The flood of monastic, chantry and crown lands produced an open and speculative land market. The growth of the London and provincial food markets, galloping inflation and increased commercial activity and litigation offered exceptional opportunities for social mobility in Tudor England. This mobility is supported by statistical evidence for the later part of the century and was noted and commented on by contemporaries (Stone, 1966). In order to preserve the ideal of a static social structure, those who were successful in the competition for social advancement made frenzied efforts to conceal their movement in society by inventing pedigrees or taking arms (Stone, 1965). The attitudes and standards which determined the hierarchy of social status are subtle and difficult to determine. There was sometimes disagreement when a man died as to whether his new house and prosperous farm had entitled him to move up a rung on the ladder. A man might refer to himself in his will as a yeoman but be called a husbandman by his neighbours who made the inventory of his farm. But the most important distinction in Tudor society remained that between gentry and commons. To be accepted as a gentleman a man had to be rich enough not to have to work and he had to be able to display the standard of living expected of the gentry.

The commons of Tudor England, that vast mass of the people who had no formal political role and could only bring their grievances to the attention of the government by riot or rebellion, were conventionally regarded in gentry discourse as fickle, irrational and stupid, and feared as a many-headed monster (Hill, 1966). 'The people', said Archbishop Whitgift, 'are commonly bent to novelties and to factions and most ready to receive that doctrine that seemeth to be contrary to the present state and that inclineth to liberty.' The ruling class commonly claimed to regard the multitude as beneath contempt; since the aim of government propaganda in time of rebellion was to ensure the loyalty of the gentry, it was usual to emphasise the base origins of 'the rascal mob' and make little of such gentry support as the rebels maintained.

Henrician and Edwardian official publicists filled their works with much crude social hostility. There is much less evidence of it in the other direction.

Where there was serious pressure of population on natural resources, or a gentleman exploited the opportunities economic conditions offered at the expense of the commons, envy of the rich might quickly turn to open and violent anger and a sense of injustice [Doc. 18, p. 159]. Expressions of class hatred are mostly isolated outbursts of rage by individuals, who usually could offer no practical course of action to back up their words; repeatedly they invoked some imagined external force, like divine intervention, or a foreign invasion. Rarely was such talk heard amid rebellions or riots (Clark, 1976: 380). Even in time of rebellion the fundamental assumptions of Tudor society persisted: the commons expected the gentry to give the lead. If the gentry closed the gates of their parks and retired to their manor houses the commons went and sought them out. They persuaded or intimidated them into taking their side. The gentry, to their alarm, often found this assertion of their social status in rebellions decidedly provisional. In M.L. Bush's words, 'When they were compliant they were ecstatically appreciated; but the commons treated instances of independence and non-co-operation with deep suspicion and outbursts of rage' (Bush, 1996: 409). Yet only in the case of the 1549 commotions in south-east England was hostility between the orders a major element in sixteenth-century popular disorder [Doc. 18, p. 159]. The tradition of deference survived the upheavals of the century.

However, Tudor central government was conscious that this deference might not necessarily be directed to the monarch. In the north the close bonds of provincial society took additional strength from the survival until towards the end of the Tudor period of the dominance of such families as the Percys, Cliffords and Dacres whose power, once based on livery and maintenance, continued through appointments in their households, as stewards of their lordships and constables of their castles. The idea of faithfulness to a magnate connection survived even into the seventeenth century (James, 1966a). In 1619 Sir Henry Curwen, himself sheriff and knight of the shire in Cumberland, 'humbly tendered his service' to the ninth Earl of Northumberland from Workington, 'that place wherein many of my ancestors have been servants'. 'My ancestors', he wrote, 'alwayes have been employed in service in that noble house of Northumberland, and although I acknowledge myself inferior to the meanest of them, yet none of them have ever borne a more faithful affection to that famous house.'

Nevertheless, England was an unusually centralised country, and became more so in the Tudor age. In the early fifteenth century it had won an epic struggle against the Welsh leader Owain Glyn Dŵr, who had nearly deprived the English of control over the culture and society of Wales; one of the most remarkable political facts of the sixteenth century was the total lack of serious rebellion in Wales, even while the government brought the Welsh more firmly within English government and dismantled their traditional



religion. Nationwide, even in the north, magnates did not pose the convincing alternative to a centralised government which was all too available in France or the Holy Roman Empire. The state of English common law, that is, royal law, is significant. Virtually every subject of the Tudor monarchs could find some way of getting a grievance into the royal courts: even the remaining villeins could usually smuggle in their cases against their theoretical lack of legal existence. This contrasts starkly with other supposedly monarchical states in Europe: in Poland, Bohemia and Hungary, for instance, the monarchy was newly excluded during the sixteenth century from jurisdiction over disputes between lords and tenants (Bercé, 1987: 52).

## Ideas of Submission, Ideas of Justice

Tudor governments lacked an army with which to maintain obedience for most of the century, and even when they gained rudimentary permanent local defence forces from the 1570s, the trained bands, these could not always be relied on against local grievances (Boynton, 1967). They therefore needed to persuade or convince their subjects to remain passive through a generally accepted theory of obligation and submission. The need became more acute with the changes of the 1530s and the dangers attending on them. Thomas Cromwell saw the necessity of organising and directing a group of publicists to elaborate on the theory of non-resistance expressed by William Tyndale in his *Obedience of a Christian Man* (Zeeveld, 1948). He maintained close control of the printing presses, almost entirely suppressing counter-propaganda; in 1538 the import of English books printed abroad was banned (although Cromwell was ready to circumvent this ban when it suited his own policies, importing English Bibles printed in France in order to increase the supply of Bibles in England). The arguments deployed by Henrician publicists, men like Richard Morison, Thomas Starkey and Robert Barnes, were taken up by those who replied to the rebels of 1549: Sir John Cheke, **Thomas Cranmer** and Philip Nichols [Docs 10, 14, p. 149, p. 151]. The pamphlets and ballads of Elizabeth's reign continued to echo the same themes, which were dependent on the assumption that any obligation to rulers such as the kings and queens of England was also an obligation to God.

Modern western societies make a clear distinction between Church and state, but in Tudor England this was not so. The concept of a secular 'state' is not easily applied to the secular jurisdictions of early modern Europe, since they were normally tied to the fortunes and personalities of a great family such as the Tudors, and they also had pretensions to have been created by the providence of God. The idea of a state designed to fit particular human circumstances, rather than being part of a God-given created order, was given currency in political discourse from the beginning of the sixteenth century by the writings of the Florentine politician Niccolò Machiavelli. Machiavelli's

**Cranmer, Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury:** A Cambridge academic made archbishop by Henry VIII in 1533 to facilitate the annulment of Henry VIII's first marriage. Discreetly encouraged Protestant Church reform under Henry and took a leading role in the reforms under Edward VI, including masterminding the creation of two successive English Prayer Books. Arrested and later burnt at the stake under Queen Mary.

open cynicism and his apparently abstract analysis of an amoral method of conducting government shocked European proprieties, and most people felt it wise to speak of him with disapproval, at least in public. Senior English politicians did begin using the word 'state' unselfconsciously in the 1590s, and around that time the more powerful rulers of Europe were evolving the more centralised, bureaucratic systems of government geared towards sustaining war economies, which may be described as states. Yet a more flexible word is needed to describe the enormous variety of secular or civil government, in contrast to the forms of government evolved by the Church, to be met with in sixteenth-century Europe. One word familiar at the time, but which now has a slightly archaic or specialised meaning, is a word we have already encountered: 'commonwealth', or its various cognates (such as the Latin *Respublica*, which did not normally then mean 'Republic'). We will find it repeatedly used in the course of Tudor rebellions, by rebels and rulers alike.

In that society, the Church was intimately linked with civil society and the assumption was that a member of the Church was automatically a member of the commonwealth. All moral sense and political obligation were believed to depend on religion, by which 'the whole of society was thought to be sanctioned' (Russell, 1859) [Doc. 19, p. 160]. As Richard Hooker said:

Men fearing God are thereby a great deal more effectively than by politic laws restrained from doing evil; inasmuch as those laws have no further power than over our outward actions only, whereas unto men's inward cogitations, unto the privy interests and motions of their hearts, religion serveth for a bridle.

This was a commonplace which was made all the more potent when Henry VIII declared himself Supreme Head of the Church of England in place of the Pope. The royal supremacy implied the identification of Church and civil commonwealth. The purpose of the doctrine of the godly prince, elaborated by Tudor writers, was to assert, in Richard Taverner's words, that kings 'represent unto us the person even of God himself'.

The theory of obligation employed most frequently was that of Paul's Epistle to the Romans (13:1): 'The powers that be are ordained of God.' Thus Sir John Cheke in *The Hurt of Sedition* was able to denounce the rebels of 1549 as sinning first against God, second against the king. The doctrine was one of non-resistance rather than obedience because it was usually qualified by a paraphrase of the apostle Peter's statement in Acts 5:29 that 'We ought to obey God rather than men'. Robert Barnes maintained that powers must be suffered 'always provided that they repugn not against the Gospel nor destroy our faith'. But in normal circumstances, little emphasis was put on

this qualification. It was much more common to stress, as Hugh Latimer did in one of his sermons, that it might be the will of God that a sinful man should suffer under tyrants.

If the king should require of thee an unjust request, yet art thou bound to pay it and not to resist and rebel . . . the king indeed is in peril of his soul for asking of an unjust request; and God will in His due time reckon with him for it: but thou must not take upon thee to judge him. . . . And know this, that whensoever there is any unjust exaction laid upon thee it is a plague and punishment for thy sin.

But the powers that be were not just political. Everyone was expected to obey their immediate superior. 'The rule of obedience', said Archbishop Whitgift (echoing exhortations in the epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians), 'that is betwixt the magistrate and the subject holdeth betwixt the husband and the wife, the father and his child, the master and the servant.' It is this idea which connects the theory of obligation, based on Romans, with the doctrine of the Great Chain of Being, the most persuasive foundation for a theory of non-resistance available to the Tudor writer. The idea of the Great Chain of Being was well expressed by the fifteenth-century jurist Sir John Fortescue:

God created as many different kinds of things as he did creatures, so that there is no creature which does not differ in some respect superior or inferior to all the rest. So that from the highest angel down to the lowest of his kind there is absolutely not found an angel that has not a superior and inferior; nor from man down to the meanest worm is there any creature which is not in some respect superior to one creature and inferior to another. So that there is nothing which the bond of order does not embrace.

The Great Chain of Being's existence was a commonplace for those who lived in Tudor England. The metaphor 'served to express the unimaginable plentitude of God's creation, its unfaltering order and its ultimate unity' (Tillyard, 1963: 37–8). The principle of degree dominated people's imaginations. Order among humans corresponded to the order of the cosmos, as traditionally understood. Shakespeare assumed the interconnections of 'the heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre'; in each he saw hierarchy and place.

How could communities,  
Degrees in schools and brotherhoods in cities,

Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,  
 The primogenitive and due of birth,  
 Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,  
 But by degree stand in authentic place?

asked Ulysses in his speech on degree in *Troilus and Cressida*. The Great Chain of Being meant interdependence as well as authority; all authorities in it held their power for the good of their inferiors and subject to their superiors. William Gouge said:

They that are superiors to some are inferiors to others . . . The master that hath servants under him, may be under the authority of a magistrate. Yea, God hath so disposed every one's several place, as there is not any one, but in some respect is under another, and all under the king. The king himself is under God.

**Somerset, Edward Seymour, Duke of:** As Lord Protector of England under the young Edward VI, he gained extensive power and pursued Protestant reforms. He was ousted by John Dudley, Earl of Warwick (later Duke of Northumberland) and executed after attempting conspiracies to improve his position.

This was why, as **Protector Somerset** explained to the western rebels, there must be a difference between 'the harte and wordes of a king enointed that ruleth by counsell and kepeth his Realme in defence and quyetnes' and the 'blinde guides of Sedition and uprore'. The ideal was one of harmony and cooperation: 'We are all members of one body; and we know we have need one of another. The Lord cannot want the help of the toe, though the least and lowest member', wrote Edwin Sandys. The ancient platitude of the commonwealth as a human body, to be found in classical literature as well as the Bible, was a favourite one with Tudor publicists. Morison used it to show the absurdity of rebellion and explained that it was for the welfare of society as a whole that while some must rule others must work: 'These must not go, arme in arme, but the one before, the other behynde' [**Doc. 10, p. 149**]. Here, as so often in Tudor political writing, Morison was paraphrasing and expanding on a biblical passage, in this case 1 Corinthians 12:12.

**Bedford, John Russell, 1st Russell Earl of:** Courtier created Baron Russell by Henry VIII and given many lands in western England. Sympathised with the Reformation, and under Edward VI he was sent to deal with the Western Rebellion. He was made Earl of Bedford as a reward for his efforts.

Rebellion upset both the social and the political order. 'God hath made the pore, and hath made them to be poore', wrote Cheke, 'that he myght shew his might, and set them aloft when he listeth, for such cause as to hym seemeth and plucke downe the riche, to hys state of povertie to shew his power.' 'Where there is any lack of order', said Sir Thomas Elyot, 'needs must be perpetual conflict.' The Great Chain theory was strongly reflected in the *Homily of Obedience*, one of the set of twelve official sermons issued and ordered to be read in churches in 1547: 'Where there is no right order there reigneth all abuse, carnal liberty, enormity, sin and babylonical confusion' (Elton, 1982: 15). A useful appeal could be made to the image of order presented in the family. So **Lord Russell** was urged, in Protector Somerset's orders on the quashing of the 1549 Western Rebellion, to give special charge

to masters and fathers to have 'an earnest continual regard to the good governance of their children and servants'.

At its crudest and most exaggerated, government propaganda appealed to the dread of anarchy with which people were obsessed. The *Homily of Obedience* described the 'mischief and utter destruction' that would ensue without kings and magistrates: 'No man shall sleep in his house or bed unkilld.' Philip Nichols pointed out to the western rebels in 1549 'the universal desolation of your own selves' that they could expect [**Doc. 14, p. 154**]. Morison in his *Lamentation* painted a vivid picture of the results of sedition: virgins ravished, death, robbery and spoil. He went on to ask how anyone could deliberately reduce the country to such a state. Morison's treatises were intended to rally the support of the gentry to government policy in the crisis of the Henrician Reformation. So he appealed directly to their insecurity in the face of the multitude: 'How many gentlemen for lack of their rents shall be fain to lay their lands to mortgage or utterly to sell them away?' Morison saw rebellion in harsh economic terms. His first emphasis in *A Remedy of Sedition* is on the threat to wealth and property 'when every man will rule' (Berkowitz, 1984: 86, 110).

In 1536 and again in 1549 the threat that enemies abroad would use England's weakness to invade caused the government much anxiety. In both cases it became an important argument in their propaganda. 'If Lincolnshire seek to destroy England, what wonder is it if France and Scotland sometime have sought to offend me?', asks a personified England in Morison's *Lamentation*. In these passages Morison appealed directly to the 'men of Lincolnshire', though it was unlikely that copies of his books would come into the hands of the rebels themselves. He used the image of the ship of state, familiar in political theory, to drive home his point: 'What folly, what madness is this, to make an hole in the ship that thou sailest in?' (Berkowitz, 1984: 89, 91). Somerset in a letter to the western rebels in 1549 concentrated on warning them of the disastrous consequences of 'your owne folly and sturdines'. The French were rumoured to be preparing an attack on the Scilly Isles: 'Yf they sholde descend and take place wolde not they then rob and spoile pill and subdue yow?' (Rose-Troup, 1913: 438). He told the Devonshire justices to employ the same argument [**Doc. 15, p. 155**].

Frequently history was used to show (inaccurately) how rebellions had always failed in the past. Archbishop Cranmer provided Old Testament examples in his sermon on rebellion in 1549, describing the fate of the children of Israel who rebelled against Moses. He brought his message home with more immediate cases and maintained that following the failure of the peasants' war in Germany, in 1525, over 100,000 rebels were killed in three months. Richard Morison in his *Lamentation* catalogued the rebels who had failed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He reminded his readers of

the way in which Henry VII had dealt with the western rebels on Blackheath field only thirty-nine years earlier.

The problem for Tudor governments was that such popular clichés could be turned in other directions. The theme of loyalty and obligation worked downwards as well as upwards: the Great Chain of Being imposed duties on superiors as well as inferiors. The relationship of landlord and tenant was a prime cohesive force in Tudor society. It was a relationship involving responsibilities on both sides, and contained a strong moral element. Sir John Gostwick's memorandum of advice to his heir on estate management, written in 1540, shows his concern to retain his credit as a good landlord and to do well by God and the king. He told his successor not to increase his tenants' rents unless they were imposing increases on their own subtenants (Dickens, 1964: 161). Many rebellions saw their task as calling social superiors back to their obligations, often calling on the king to redress the misdeeds of the nobility and gentry. Other commotions, as noted in Chapter 1 above, paradoxically acknowledged the hierarchy of society by intimidating social superiors into playing the roles of leaders in rebellion. There were thus moral pressures to be brought in both directions. A sense of moral obligation affected all actions which affected the community. That is why although this book frequently tries to sift the social and economic from the religious motivations in Tudor rebellions, the exercise is essentially artificial in terms of contemporary understandings of economy, society and religion. Economic and social grievances were seen as moral or religious grievances, because economic and social misbehaviour was an offence to God.

The cliché of 'commonwealth' was dangerously ambiguous in troubled times: did it refer to the whole realm, as when government spokesmen expressed their concern for the commonwealth, and prepared schemes of reform to benefit it? It might equally refer only to the commons without the gentry and nobility, as seems to be the case in the title of 'the Pilgrimage of Grace for the commonwealth' in 1536 (Bush, 1996: 396). Here was a word which the government could only try to reserve for its own purposes, but it was difficult to defuse this explosive idea's power to arouse popular feeling and crystallise indignation. In 1536, one of the Suffolk bailiffs of the **Duke of Suffolk**, Henry VIII's own commander against the Lincolnshire rebels, vowed not to 'fyght ageynst hys cosyns and kyndred . . . the good cristen men of Yngland were in [the] North, and [thei] were than rysyn for common welth' (Gunn, 1989: 76).

The Great Chain of Being was not the only conventional way of viewing the mechanism of the cosmos. Equally compelling was the idea of the wheel of fortune, a circular notion of time, in which the mighty could be brought low and the humble exalted – a theme which was, after all, to be found in the *Magnificat* heard in Cranmer's evensong service. Equally biblical,

**Suffolk, Charles Brandon, 1st Brandon Duke of:** Close friend of Henry VIII and leader of royal army against the Lincolnshire rising in 1536. In negotiation with gentry leaders he managed to disperse the rising without violence.

although common through classical literature as well, was the notion of the golden age in remote time. Through the wheel of fortune this age might be restored, and popular action might help the restoration on its way. Sometimes this could be linked to some figure in the past who represented justice, often a king who had been carried off in the prime of life: so **Perkin Warbeck** and **Lambert Simnel** were able to carry out their impersonations of deceased Yorkist princes, and stories of the return of **Edward VI** circulated in the reign of **Mary**. Finally, one of the most potent and potentially disruptive ideas to be derived from the Bible was that of the Apocalypse or Last Days: the final judgement of God on earthly society. This might, as some passages in the Bible suggested, be preceded by a thousand-year (*millennium*) rule of the saints. Those who believed in some variant of this idea were known as millenarians, and they might well be inclined to help God in his plan of bringing in the radical social transformation and the coming of perfect social justice which the thousand-year rule of the saints implied. But apocalyptic views were not just the property of the discontented or the extreme. There were very good reasons for believing the Last Days to be imminent in sixteenth-century Europe: the Pope's ancient power was being challenged by the Protestant Reformers, while the whole array of western Christian civilisation – 'Christendom' – was under threat from invasion by the Muslim Ottoman Turks. So this was a constant background theme in Tudor society, ready to take unexpected forms whenever society was disrupted or thrown off course. It might form a major challenge to static ideas like that of the Great Chain of Being.

Rarely do we hear coherent schemes of such views expressed in rebellions, for no one had the sort of resources available to the government to publicise them. However, very frequent are reports of prophecies which were attributed to mythical or historical figures and then used to make sense of a contemporary crisis. The government in the religious upheavals in the 1530s even tried to exploit such prophecies to justify what it was doing, but in the end it realised that this was too dangerous a tactic to follow, because prophecies could equally well be a justification for opposition: determined efforts at suppression followed (Janson, 1991; Fox, 1986: 78–81). Popular opinion could take paths of its own, and was not always easily manipulated, despite all the government's advantages in publicity. The vital fact for Tudor monarchs to remember was the price of obedience for those who demanded it: good governance and justice for all the members of the commonwealth. God required nothing less.

**Warbeck, Perkin:** Pretender to the English throne during the reign of Henry VII. In 1492 declared himself to be Richard Duke of York, presumed killed in 1483. Made landings in England in 1495 and 1497 but was captured and executed.

**Simnel, Lambert:** Pretender to the English throne during the reign of Henry VII, claiming to be Edward Earl of Warwick, nephew to King Edward IV. Gained support for his claim in Ireland in 1487, then landed in England, but was defeated at the battle of Stoke.

**Edward VI:** King 1547–53. Succeeded his father Henry VIII when young, and so effective power was held by leading politicians. He encouraged the Reformation in England, establishing the successive Books of Common Prayer of 1549 and 1552, the Act of Uniformity and the Forty-Two Articles.

**Mary I:** Queen 1553–58, elder daughter of Henry VIII. After her successful coup against Queen Jane, she repealed all Protestant laws and sought to re-establish Catholicism in England. Married Philip II of Spain and thus involved England in his foreign policy.





## Part 2

---

# DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS



## Taxation and Rebellion

It was an accepted principle that the king should only tax his people for the needs of war or in other exceptional circumstances, and through the consent of parliament. In fact an Act of 1483 declared that non-parliamentary taxation was illegal. Parliamentary opposition to taxation concentrated on restricting the total amount granted and the way in which the money should be levied and spent. However, in their search for ways of extending England's antiquated tax system beyond the fifteenth and tenth, the early Tudors determinedly pressed parliament into granting a new form of taxation levied not by the traditional fixed valuations of whole communities, worked out for the fifteenth and tenth back in 1334, but on regular reassessments of individuals: these taxes were known as subsidies. It was easy for individuals to feel angry at an apparently arbitrary demand made under the new system: it is significant that in 1489 and 1497, and again in 1536, it was a subsidy rather than a fifteenth and tenth that caused anger.

The House of Commons' growing distrust of the crown's financial motives is illustrated by its insistence in 1497, following the Treaty of Etaples five years earlier, that parts of its grants should be dependent on the crown actually undertaking specified military expeditions. In 1523 the opposition to **Wolsey's** subsidy demands was prolonged and heated. But even then no one, unless **Cromwell** did actually deliver the speech which survives in the hand of one of his clerks, went so far as to question Henry VIII's grand design against France (Guy, 1987: 15–18).

At the local level popular dislike of taxation was expressed in sporadic outbreaks of violence against tax collectors – the murder at Taunton in late 1497, for instance, of the man widely seen as Henry VII's West Country agent in the taxes which had provoked open rebellion earlier that year (Arthurson, 1987: 9). In the period 1485–1547 there were eleven recorded cases of assaults on tax collectors, concentrated around London and the south coast, and there were probably others which never reached the courts. More common and more widely spread geographically are cases of the forcible rescue

**Wolsey, Thomas, Cardinal:** Churchman and statesman under Henry VIII. As Lord Chancellor, 1515–29, his attempts to raise taxes encountered much opposition. Lost favour when he failed to persuade the Pope to agree to Henry's demand for the annulment of his first marriage.

**Essex, Thomas Cromwell, Earl of:** Statesman under Henry VIII. Arranged Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, the establishment of the Church of England and the dissolution of the monasteries. Lost favour through his arrangement of the Cleves marriage, and was subsequently executed.

of goods, seized by a tax commissioner from a man who had refused to pay; at least 112 such cases are recorded (Schofield, 1963). It is against this background that we must examine the more determined resistance to taxation in this period. Twice, in 1489 and 1497, this amounted to rebellion and was ruthlessly crushed. Twice, in 1513 and 1525, the resistance was passive and succeeded.

## THE YORKSHIRE REBELLION, 1489

**Northumberland, Henry Percy, 4th Percy Earl of:** Powerful northern magnate. Assassinated by protesters in Yorkshire in 1489 whilst trying to collect taxes for the year. The only casualty of the Yorkshire Rebellion, which dispersed in the face of a large royal army.

**Norfolk, Thomas Howard, 2nd Howard Duke of:** Although his father was killed at Bosworth fighting for King Richard III, he gained favour from Henry VII and was restored to the title Earl of Surrey. Sent north in 1489 to crush the Yorkshire Rebellion he was later rewarded in 1513 with the restoration of the family Dukedom of Norfolk for leading the defeat of the Scots at Flodden.

The rebellion in Yorkshire in April 1489 arose from the efforts of the fourth **Percy Earl of Northumberland**, who was Lieutenant General of the Middle and Eastern Marches, to collect the subsidy for that year. This was a new levy, which had been granted by parliament to enable Henry VII to intervene on behalf of Brittany against the French crown (Hicks, 1986: 51–2). Northumberland heard of a gathering of people from Cleveland who were resolved to protest, and he marched to meet them; he was assassinated near Thirsk – the only person killed in the entire rising (Hicks, 1986: 44). The growing armed crowds which coalesced under the leadership of Sir John Egremont galvanised the king into raising a large army to march north. The massive scale of his reaction unnerved the rebels, who dispersed as the advance guard under **Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey** arrived at York, and further action became unnecessary (Bennett, 1990: 38–41, 52–5).

For all Henry's fears of another dynastic attempt to destroy him, the rising seems to have been a genuine expression of popular anger about war taxation. Other elements are more fugitive in the record. Polydore Vergil and the Great Chronicle of London mention the rebels' sympathy with the Yorkist cause, which is indicated by the participation of Egremont. A quotation from a proclamation which survives among the Paston Letters says that the rebels intended 'to geynstonde such persons as is abowtwarde for to dystroy owre suffereyn Lorde the Kyng and the Commons of Engeland for suche unlawfull poyntes as Seynt Thomas of Cauntyrbery dyed for'. 'Unlawfull' is probably a hostile addition by Paston, but this is probably evidence that Becket was remembered in popular folklore for his stand against the king for church privilege. The reference might be to the Act of 1489 on benefit of clergy, but is more plausibly explained by popular anger at Henry VII's increasing infringements of northern sanctuaries in order to round up his political opponents (Hicks, 1986: 52–3). M.L. Bush, however, suggests that it may be yet another reference to unlawful taxation; St Thomas was commonly associated with resistance to Henry II's plans for taxes on the poor (Bush, 1991a: 395).

The accounts of the assassination in Skelton's elegy on Northumberland and William Peiris's Percy chronicle emphasise the nobility's horror at

servants' treachery: the earl was abandoned by his retinue, 'those to whom he gave fees and was right special lord'. Northumberland had been left dangerously exposed to the anger of his social inferiors by the king's ruthless determination to impose his will on the provinces in order to raise the cash he wanted; Northumberland may also have been the victim of an effort by the king to undermine the position of suspect northern magnates by associating them with the collection of unpopular royal taxation; but Henry may have been less subtle in his motives (Cunningham, 1996: 66–9). The first Tudor, his formative years spent in Brittany and France, was unfamiliar with the careful compromises and structures of consent on which English government rested, and took some time to find effective ways of maintaining royal authority. It was now left to him to pick up the pieces of northern government during the minority of the next Percy earl, by establishing a council for the north in the name of his own baby son Prince Arthur. The young prince's real lieutenant, Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, had been released from imprisonment and sent north to prove his loyalty, after his family had shown the poor taste to back King Richard III as late as the Battle of Bosworth. He was eager to restore Howard standing in royal eyes; despite being a southerner, he proved a great success in binding the north to the Tudor dynasty. In effect, he enabled the king to become head of the Percy affinity (Bennett, 1990: 48; Cunningham, 1996: 73).

## THE CORNISH REBELLIONS, 1497

In spring 1497 Cornwall sparked the first of two new rebellions: in the first, taxation was a major issue. Henry wanted money for an army to deal with Perkin Warbeck, who had received a ready welcome from James IV of Scotland. In all, in one subsidy and two fifteenths and tenths, parliament granted the king £120,000. This was far more than was paid in any other year of the reign, and additionally a forced loan had just been levied. Only in 1492, when £56,311 was paid in taxation, did the yield of parliamentary grants exceed £31,000 (Schofield, 1963; Arthurson, 1987: 4). The burden affected most of the population, who could see no overwhelming threat from Scotland, and yet the West Country had provided more than its fair share of soldiers and sailors to the northern campaign against Warbeck, at a time when Henry had forfeited local goodwill. The king rashly presumed too much on the support which he had enjoyed among prominent Cornishmen before he had seized the throne (when he had actually thought of landing in Cornwall rather than Wales). After 1485, his favour to certain Cornish gentry and his creation of his heir as Duke of Cornwall were offset by his

**Flamank, Thomas:** Gentleman from Bodmin and one of the leaders of the Cornish Rebellion in 1497. Executed after the defeat of the rebellion.

**An Gof, Michael Joseph:** Blacksmith from the Lizard in Cornwall and one of the leaders of the Cornish Rebellion in 1497. Executed after the defeat of the rebellion.

**Audley, John Touchet, 6th Baron:** Impoverished Somerset nobleman and one of the leaders of the Cornish Rebellion in 1497. Executed after the defeat of the rebellion.

confrontation with wider Cornish society: in 1496, after arguments about new regulations for the tin-mining industry, he suspended the privileges of the Stannaries, which were central to the Cornish economy (Stoyle, 1997: 24–5). In 1497, resentment boiled over against royal demands and the misdeeds of some local gentlemen favoured by the king and associated with his exactions. Angry people from St Keverne in the Cornish far west were encouraged in their protest by a gentleman from Bodmin, **Thomas Flamank**, whose father was actually one of four commissioners whom the king had chosen to levy the subsidy on the county (Cooper, 2003: 55–6). Soon other places in the county were joining in.

Persuaded by Flamank to direct their resentment against the king's 'evil advisers' Cardinal Morton and Sir Reginald Bray, the Cornishmen became the first movers in a remarkable march across England to present their grievances to the government. They were led by Flamank and **Michael Joseph An Gof**, a blacksmith from the Lizard area; clergy and well-established Cornish gentry joined them. The march was orderly. Devon seems mostly to have remained aloof, perhaps because of its traditional antagonism to the Cornish, but prominent Somerset gentry and clergy aided the rebels, judging by the royal fines afterwards (Arthurson, 1987: 6, 10). At Wells they gained the support of **Lord Audley**, an impoverished and discontented nobleman, whom, says Polydore Vergil, they 'with acclamation accepted as their chief'. They met with little resistance as they marched across England: no doubt many sympathised with their protest, and once more the fines after the rebellion suggest that many more joined them. It was the most frightening variety of rebellion for a Tudor monarch: a cry of anger which crossed social barriers in the West Country.

Henry had been caught unawares; by 13 June the west countrymen and their allies, said to number 15,000, were at Guildford. The army of 8,000 that was being prepared against Scotland under Lord Daubeney had to be rapidly diverted. After a brief encounter between 500 of Daubeney's spearmen and the rebels near Guildford, the insurgents continued their march round the south of London. Meanwhile the king himself gathered forces at Henley and on 16 June was able to join Daubeney, who was protecting the approaches to the city. The London chronicler tells how 'the king was seen in the feelde, and abrewyng and comforyng of his people'. The same day the rebel army came up to Blackheath where at last they could look down on London. Many were disillusioned by their failure to attract support in Kent, and lost heart when they found the leaders were preparing for battle. Guns were placed to defend the passage of the river at Deptford. The London chronicler relates how the rebel camp was 'all that night in greate agony and variaunce; ffor some of thym were mynded to have comyn to the Kyng and to have yolded theym and put theym fully in his mercy and grace; but the

smith was of the contrary myende'. A large number did desert and only about 10,000 were left to face the army, said to number 25,000, that the king had mustered.

Henry not only concentrated overwhelming forces but planned his attack meticulously, sending a force of archers and cavalry round the back of the rebels. Ten years earlier he had only defeated Lambert Simnel at Stoke after a stiff three-hour contest. This time he wanted a quick and crushing victory. After Daubeney had gained the Deptford bridge he was taken prisoner, but released almost at once. Francis Bacon concludes the story, or at least the sanitised official version which the Tudors allowed to survive: 'The Cornishmen, being ill-armed and ill-led and without horse or artillery, were with no great difficulty cut in pieces and put to flight.' The king entered the city over London bridge and was received by the mayor, 'to whom he gave cherefull thanks for his good diligence of kepyng and orderyng of the Citie . . . and from thens rode unto Powlis and there offred'. Many of the rebels died on the field. Audley was executed and Flamank and Joseph were hanged, drawn and quartered.

Quite apart from these exemplary deaths, the king proceeded to fine all those involved in the rebellion with systematic and unprecedented severity. The fines probably played their part in a second attempted Cornish rebellion later in the same year. This had a very different cause, support for the pretender Perkin Warbeck. In the latest and as it proved the last attempt to repeat Henry Tudor's success in invading the kingdom, Warbeck landed in west Cornwall in September and was proclaimed as King Richard IV at Bodmin. He tried and failed to capture Exeter, and by the time that he had reached Taunton, his nerve failed him and he was arrested and taken to London. His attempt seems pure opportunism, after he had heard of the disturbances in the West Country; he did not arrive until eleven weeks after the Blackheath defeat. Yet still initially he managed to raise at least 6,000 men to besiege Exeter (Cooper, 2003: 57). It was a wise move on King Henry's part to cancel an order that the dismembered bodies of Audley, Flamank and Joseph should be exhibited throughout Cornwall through fear of the rumours that the country was 'still eager to promote a revolution if they were in anyway provoked'. Henry took in all from the Cornishmen and Devonians, including Warbeck's adherents later in the year, about £15,000, and more from a swathe of counties on the rebels' route to London (Arthurson, 1987: 6–9, 12–13). 'The less blood he drew', said Bacon of the first Tudor king, 'the more he took of treasure.' The trauma of 1497 was not forgotten: after having never risen against the English monarchy before 1497, Cornwall caused the Tudors further serious trouble between 1537 and 1549, and its militancy revived against the Westminster government in 1642 (Stoyle, 1999: 22).



## RESISTANCE TO TAXATION, 1513–25

It was not until 1513, as Henry VIII resumed a costly series of wars with France and Scotland, that people again found themselves expected to pay a subsidy and a fifteenth and tenth in the same year. The total yield of parliamentary taxation levied in this year was £62,126. Polydore Vergil provides the only account of the passive resistance in Yorkshire. He noted that the 'sudden new upheaval of the north country folk' was caused 'by the heaviness of the tax imposed a little earlier'. As in 1497, the burden imposed by the government was exceptional. According to Vergil, 'these north country folk volunteered their personal services in waging war, but they refused the money because they have so little of it'. His account is confirmed by evidence that the commissioners for collecting the subsidy in the West Riding wapentakes of Staincliffe and Ewcross had difficulty in making their assessments, which ought to have been returned by early summer (Smith, 1970: 198–9). They were not finally returned until 1515 and the towns of Dent and Sedbergh still refused to appear in January of that year. The general poverty of these wapentakes is not in doubt. The king accepted a petition from nineteen towns and villages and remitted entirely their payment of the fifteenth and tenth.

In 1523, in order to pay for the king's grandiose foreign policy, Wolsey put before parliament heavier financial demands than the House of Commons had ever faced or envisaged: £800,000. The House of Commons, Hall relates, said 'the sum was impossible to be levied'. They argued with some sense that if such a sum of ready money was taken by the king the economy would collapse: 'Then men must barter clothe for vitaille and bread for cheese and so one thyng for another.' In fact Wolsey had probably pitched his demand high as a bargaining ploy (Guy, 1987: 1–5). The subsidy, phased over four years and collected at much lower rates than first sought, yielded £151,215. The major part of this, £136,578, had been collected by the spring of 1525. It was at this moment, when the country had just paid out the largest grant in taxation of the whole period 1485–1543, that Wolsey sent out commissioners to collect the Amicable Grant. He was desperate for money to satisfy the king's urge to grasp the opportunity offered by the defeat of France at Pavia.

The Amicable Grant belied its name, and the name's novelty was an unhappy witness to the tax's novelty. It was a levy of between one-sixth and one-tenth on the goods of the laity and one-third on the goods of the clergy. Wolsey's idea was to extend the benevolences which Edward IV had extracted from the wealthy, and which (as a London councillor had reminded him) the Act of 1483 had forbidden, to the country as a whole. Commissions to collect the grant were sent out on 21 March 1525 to senior lay or clerical figures in each county, and they ordered that the bulk of the money should

be collected by Whitsuntide (4–6 June): a startlingly short time. Moreover, the second instalment of the 1523 subsidy had not fully been collected yet (Bernard and Hoyle, 1994: 191–2).

Trouble was inevitable and was indeed anticipated in the commission. Archbishop Warham reported on 12 April that he found the Kentish clergy ‘not inclined to the grant’ and that heads of religious houses had answered ‘that they cannot contribute as they are required’. People who said they simply had not the money may have been honest. At Ely they said they would gladly sell their cattle and goods ‘but no man in the country has money to buy or lend’. ‘Some who at the first loan were well off now are not worth a goat when their debts are paid.’ At Norwich the wealthy aldermen could offer plate but not money. The **Duke of Norfolk** explained to Wolsey the plight of the large population of the poor who depended on worsted and strawmaking and were paid weekly (Pound, 1966).

In a letter of 5 April Warham gave Wolsey a full account of the arguments and attitudes he had encountered, and with which he may have sympathised. The whole policy of the French war was now called in question. There was no enthusiasm for continental expeditions. People regretted the captivity of Francis I, the money that had been spent to no purpose on futile expeditions and the king’s ambition to win France: Henry VIII ‘hath not one foot of land more in France than his most noble father hadd, which lakked no riches or wisdom to wyne the kingdome of France if he had thought it expedient. . . . And if the King win France, he will be obliged to spend his time and revenues there.’ Wolsey was the scapegoat but resentment also fell on Warham. He had been called an old fool behind his back for consenting to the grant, he told Wolsey. Anticlericalism was an element of danger: ‘Some malicious persons say that it would be better for an old fool like him to take his beads in his hand, than to meddle in temporal business pertaining to war and general undoing of this country’ (Bernard, 1986: 99).

The collection of the grant made no progress during April. One of the counties where passive resistance was strongest was Warwickshire. On 28 April the government granted the whole shire remission from the grant, admitting that the people’s ‘powers and abilities’ there ‘be not correspondent and egall to their good willes . . . nor ther be able to make unto us payment of the sayd grannte without their extreme detryment and excessive hinder-auce’ (Phythian-Adams, 1979: 63).

Reports from East Anglia, Berkshire, Wiltshire and Kent were equally depressing. On 26 April Wolsey told the London councillors that, on the king’s advice, he would demand no fixed sums but such as they would willingly grant. When the rumour of his retreat spread in East Anglia the mood of the people hardened. On 8 May the Earl of Essex reported from Stanstead that he had met with determined resistance. After an assembly of 1,000

**Norfolk, Thomas Howard, 3rd Howard Duke of:** English statesman of conservative religious sympathies. Acted for the king in negotiations to end the Pilgrimage of Grace. Implicated in the charges of treason levied against his son the Earl of Surrey in 1546 and imprisoned in the Tower of London. Pardoned by Mary, and released from the Tower.

persons on the Suffolk border, he had suspended proceedings till he heard the king's pleasure: 'Some fear to be hewn in pieces if they make any grant, and there is great danger of more insurrections'.

The most serious rising was in the Lavenham and Sudbury area of Suffolk. Faced with a band of 4,000, the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk treated the affair cautiously and leniently [**Doc. 1, p. 140**]. Lavenham had paid a total of £354 1s 4d (£354.07) in the subsidy payments of 1524 and 1525 but a large proportion of this was contributed by rich clothiers, including the Spring family. The wage-earners there numbered just over half the taxable population yet owned less than 3 per cent of the property. In 1525 it seems many of these men were out of work so it was impossible for them to answer the king's demand. The bulk of those involved in the cloth-producing communities around Lavenham were the poorest inhabitants, revealing a social gap between them and the wealthy minority. However, they joined with purely agricultural villages, from which an impressive cross-section of society from wealthy to poor took part in the protest (MacCulloch, 1986: 294–6; Pound, 1999).

Wolsey replied to the duke's report by urging strong measures. However, when the four 'principal offenders' he had arrested were brought to London Henry showed his political sense by bowing before the storm. He abandoned the grant. At 'a great counsaill', relates Hall, 'he openly said that his mind was not to ask anything of his commons which might sound to his dishonour or to the breach of his laws'. When the king inquired how the commissioners' demands came to be so strict, 'the Cardinal excused himself'. At the end of May the ringleaders were brought before Star Chamber and pardoned after they had been 'shown their offences, with terrible words'. Wolsey led an ostentatious ceremony of reconciliation, begging the king for pardon for fellow-Suffolk men, and even supplying them with more than enough cash to cover their time in gaol (Scarisbrick, 1968: 135–9; MacCulloch, 1986: 293).

The resistance to the Amicable Grant made Henry realise that in the last resort his kingship rested on his partnership with the tax-paying classes. He found himself up against the vocally expressed public opinion of south-east England, of the counties on which the strength of Tudor monarchy rested. The affair had begun with propaganda. The commissioners had been told to make solemn processions and bonfires in celebration of the French king's defeat before they began collecting the money. It ended in open retreat. Tudor monarchs always found it needed discussion and concession to obtain taxes from parliament. On this occasion the government found itself proceeding from persuasion to concession in face of extra-parliamentary opinion. It may not be entirely irrelevant that Hall noted in his chronicle for 1525 that 'in this troublous season the uplandish men of Germany rose in a great number, almost an hundred thousand, and rebelled against the princes of Germany'.

Popular opinion had made a significant impact on foreign policy. Henry was forced to abandon his schemes for European hegemony, and peace with France was the only course. When in the 1540s he again became involved in large-scale continental commitments, the gentry made large grants of taxation. But, if Henry had not been dispensing monastic lands to attract their loyalty, he might have found the taxpayers unwilling again then. The total yield of parliamentary taxes in the period 1541–47 was £656,245. Even bearing in mind the beginnings of the inflation, this is an astounding figure. In the whole of Henry VII's reign the country had paid only £282,000, and in the period 1509–40 the total came to £520,463. Despite the resistance to taxation that has been discussed in this chapter, the development of the subsidy must be rated a spectacular (if temporary) achievement by the early Tudors. The historian of parliamentary taxation in this period has concluded of Henry VIII's demands in the 1540s, probably the heaviest taxation since the fourteenth century, 'such was the political cohesion between the leading social classes and the crown that the former displayed an unparalleled willingness to operate a system of taxation, which, for its sophistication and attention to the principles of distributive justice, was several centuries ahead of its time' (Schofield, 1987: 255). However, he also notes that after 1547, when Henry's powerful personality was no longer regulating the system, standards of assessment rapidly dropped, particularly for the wealthier classes. Moreover, in other respects, in his lifetime Henry tried the patience of the governing class to the limit. Not only did he effect a revolution in the relation of royal government to the Church, and fitfully collaborate with the religious revolution known as the Reformation, he was even prepared to threaten the property interests of the landed class in the pursuit of royal feudal rights, by forcing through parliament in 1535 the Act known as the Statute of Uses (Ives, 1967) [**Doc. 2, p. 140**]. This tweaked the law in order to render invalid a widespread evasion of royal feudal exactions on landowners who still held their lands as feudal tenants-in-chief of the crown – that embraced a wide cross-section of the gentry as well as the nobility. Such landowners had commonly put their lands in the hands of trustees, or 'feoffees to uses', and thus transferred legal ownership of estates to the trustees, blocking the normal interference of a feudal lord in the affairs of a tenant who might be a minor. The Statute of Uses simply reallocated the tenancy back to the beneficiary of the trust, and so made estates once more vulnerable to royal feudal interference. The Statute was a major cause of anger among the gentry in the mid-1530s, and was an incentive for many of them to feel little inclination to defend the crown in the great explosion of popular feeling which broke out in 1536.

# The Lincolnshire Rising and the Pilgrimage of Grace

## THE LINCOLNSHIRE RISING

Three government commissions were at work in Lincolnshire at Michaelmas in 1536. That for dissolving the smaller monasteries had been in the county since June, a second commission was assessing and collecting the subsidy and a third was appointed to enquire into the fitness and education of the clergy. They worked in an atmosphere of rumour and alarm. It was said that jewels and plate were to be confiscated from parish churches, that all gold was to be taken to the mint to be tested, and that taxes were to be levied on all horned cattle, and on christenings, marriages and burials. There were even wilder rumours: 'that there shall be no church within five miles, and that all the rest shall be put down', that people would not be allowed to eat white bread, goose or capon without paying a tribute to the king. It was said that every man would have to give an account of his property and income and a false return would lead to forfeiture of all his goods. There is evidence that these rumours had spread to many parts of the eastern and midland counties by the autumn of 1536. But they were strongest in Lincolnshire. The rising there, based on the three towns of Louth, Caistor and Horncastle, was an outburst by people who, as Wriothesley told Cromwell, 'think they shall be undone for ever' (James, 1970).

The rising began at Louth, where the people were immensely proud of the magnificent spire of their church completed only twenty years before. When the Bishop of Lincoln's registrar arrived there on 2 October to carry out the visitation of the clergy, he was seized by some townsmen who had been guarding the treasure house of the church all the night before. They were led by the shoemaker **Nicholas Melton** ('Captain Cobbler'), whose armed supporters were paid from church funds. These men made the registrar and the assembled priests swear on oath to be true to them, and burnt the registrar's

**Melton, Nicholas:** Shoemaker and initial leader of the Lincolnshire rising in 1536. As the rising grew in strength, local gentry assumed leadership roles. He was executed in the wake of the rising.

papers. Then they marched to Legbourne nunnery and captured the royal commissioners who were at work there.

The Louth outburst was the signal for a rising throughout the county. Melton disregarded a message that reached him on 2 October that Yorkshire was not ready to rise and ordered a muster for the next day. On 3 October the commission for the subsidy was due to meet at Caistor. The priests of the neighbourhood were there also to attend the commissary's court. The commons were alarmed by a rumour that their weapons were going to be confiscated and the priests feared their examination. The commissioners hoped to reason with the people but when the commons of Louth, 3,000 strong, came in sight they turned their horses and fled. Some of the commissioners then joined the rising. That evening four of them signed a letter to the king requesting a general pardon for the assembly caused by the 'common voice and fame . . . of newe enhaunsements and other importunate charges'.

By 4 October the gentry had assumed leadership roles in the rising. Their involvement gave the movement an air of legitimacy, transforming it from a plebeian riot into a demonstration, constrained throughout by respect for established authority including that of the king, against certain of his policies (James, 1970). By 10 October the gentry leaders were writing to the king's commander, the Duke of Suffolk, claiming that their strategy was to divert the commons' energy into petitioning and waiting for an answer at Lincoln, rather than marching further south (Hoyle, 1985: 58–9, 65–6). Nevertheless, willingly or unwillingly they were at first deeply implicated in the spreading troubles. In north Lincolnshire gentry mobilised their own wapentakes through the machinery of musters; at Horncastle gentlemen appeared at a rebel rally 'well harnassed with their tenants'. When Dr Raynes, the hated chancellor of the Bishop of Lincoln, was brought to the Horncastle muster on 4 October the frenzied mob set upon him and murdered him with their staves. It was left to the sheriff to divide his clothes and the money in his purse among the crowd. It was on this occasion that the first manifesto of the rising was drawn up [**Doc. 2, p. 140**].

At least 10,000 marched to Lincoln. Lord Hussey, one of the county's senior noblemen, hoped to mediate between the dissidents and the Court, manoeuvred, hesitated and finally on 7 October fled the county; younger peers, Lord Clinton and Burgh, had already found that their tenants would not fight against the insurgents, and so had made their escape (James, 1970; Gunn, 1989: 73–7). Since many other heads of ancient landed families, who as JPs were responsible for order in the shire, had thrown in their lot with the rising, there was no one to stop its progress. The parish clergy played a crucial role in mobilising the movement and monks from Barlings, Bardney and Kirkstead joined the rebel host horsed and armed.

At Lincoln a new set of articles was drawn up and sent to London [**Doc. 3, p. 141**]. The gentry had difficulty in restraining the commons' impatient demand to proceed south to the general muster planned to take place at Ancaster, near Grantham, on 8 October. When the king's reply, threatening extreme punishment if the rebels did not disperse at once, reached Lincoln on 10 October, the royal army under the Duke of Suffolk was already only forty miles away at Stamford. For the principal gentry involved this was the moment of choice. Any further resistance was treason. They decided to sue for pardon and told the commons they would not go forward. At this there was bitter recrimination against the gentry and the rising faltered. When Lancaster Herald arrived at Lincoln on 11 October, he persuaded the commons to go home: the Duke of Suffolk's refusal to negotiate while they were still in arms had caused general dismay (Hoyle, 1985: 66). Nevertheless, the crowds only dispersed after promises from the gentry to muster them again if the royal pardon did not become operative, and there was serious unrest in the county for several weeks after the dispersal (Gunn, 1989: 66).

When the people of Horncastle reached home they placed the banner they had designed for themselves in church; its complex symbolism is difficult for us to unravel with certainty. The Five Wounds of Christ proclaimed that the commons fought in Christ's cause, but what of the other symbols, a chalice with the host, a plough, a horn? These might be taken as emblems of grievance: the chalice standing for the commons' fear that church plate was going to be confiscated, the plough for the impact of enclosure for pasture on the husbandman, the horn for the rumoured tax on horned cattle. Alternatively we could read these as claims of support from all three estates: the clergy (chalice), the commons (plough) and nobility (hunting-horn). One could plausibly also refer the horn to Horncastle's community name. Perhaps we should not seek one single meaning.

Accounts of the balance of leadership in the rising are precisely contradictory. One eyewitness described how the people 'did nothing but by the gentlemen's commandment, and they durst never stir in the field from the place they were appointed till the gentlemen directed them what to do'; yet another said that 'as farforth as he knows, the gentyllmen ware taken ageynst there willys, and was fayne to go with commons and to do as they dyd for fere of there lyvys' (Gunn, 1989: 54). The deposition of Nicholas Leche seems to show that at Horncastle the gentry took the lead in 'harnessing' themselves, as well as in drawing up the first set of articles, but he had compelling self-interest in saying this [**Doc. 2, p. 140**]. Nicholas Melton, another rebel leader below the level of the gentry, apparently always had his suspicions of his gentry allies. He exclaimed in prison: 'What whorsones were we that we had not killed the gentlemen, for I thought allwayes that they would be traytors' (Hoyle, 1985: 72). The gentry claimed to the Duke of Suffolk that

they were deliberately delaying the rebels' progress, and if this was indeed their deliberate strategy, the collapse of morale at Lincoln would seem to have vindicated them.

## THE PILGRIMAGE, OCTOBER–DECEMBER 1536

The first stirrings in the north actually predated the Lincolnshire explosion: around 25 September oath-taking began among the commons in the Lordship of Dent in the West Riding of Yorkshire, the same area where there had been such resistance to taxation in 1513. However, the Dent oath-taking only gradually spread its catchment area over three weeks (Bush, 1996: 249), and the gatherings which eventually far outclassed the Lincolnshire stirs in their range and seriousness began far to the east of Dent, at Beverley in the East Riding. This was on 8 October, a week after Lincolnshire had risen. Already prominent was the name of **Robert Aske**: a letter from Aske was made public at Beverley bidding every man to swear to be true to God, the king and the commonwealth and to maintain the Holy Church.

Aske was an astute and successful lawyer who had a number of grievances against the Cromwellian regime, and who had already become one of the gentry captains in Lincolnshire (Bush, 1996: 28, 81). He was very probably involved in some kind of a conspiracy to mount a northern rising before Lincolnshire stirred. On 10 October the ringing of church bells brought out West Riding Marshland and East Riding Howdenshire, and Aske took authority as the chief captain there: forming the people into companies, he organised the daily musters. Other local gentry were persuaded by popular pressure to follow his lead. On 13 October the companies from the East Riding and Marshland joined up on their march to York. It seems to have been during the advance to York that Aske began to speak of the rising as a pilgrimage, telling two messengers 'they were pilgrims and had a pilgrimage gate to go'. The full title of the rising became 'The Pilgrimage of Grace for the commonwealth': the grace which it sought was not primarily grace from God, but grace from the king for his poor subjects (Bush, 1996: 119).

On 16 October, already possibly 10,000 strong, the Pilgrims made a triumphant entry into the city (see Map 1) where the commons had declared for them several days before. When the mayor yielded, Aske sent him a copy of the Articles which had been drawn up at Lincoln [**Doc. 3, p. 141**]. Aske's exalted conception of the rising emerged fully in his second proclamation issued once he was in possession of York:

For thys pylgrymage, we have taken, hyt is for the preservacyon of Crystes Churche, of thys realme of England, the Kynge our Soverayne Lord, the

**Aske, Robert:** Yorkshire lawyer and a leading figure in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536. Had an exalted vision of the rising and wanted it to be peaceful. Was invited to an audience with Henry VIII and was well received, but Henry used the opportunity of a subsequent uprising to arrest and execute him.



Nobylyte and Comyns of the same, and to the entent to macke petycion to the Kynges Highnes for the reformacyon of that whyche is amysse, within thys hys realme.

Aske emphasised the Pilgrims' peaceful intentions, saying they meant no 'malys dysplesure to noo persons but suche as be not worthy to remayne nyghe abowte the kyngre oure soverayne lordes personne'; yet he maintained also their determination to 'fyght and dye agaynst all those that shalbe abowte towardses to stope us'.

Once in the city, Aske took careful precautions against spoil, not allowing any footmen within the walls. He ensured that goods obtained were paid for. He posted on the door of the Minster a plan agreed by the captains for the restoration of religious houses. In the city, this meant restoring two small Benedictine houses suppressed that summer: Holy Trinity and the nunnery of St Clement's, together with the nearby Augustinians at Healaugh Priory (Palliser, 1979: 50, 235). Hull capitulated to the rebels on 19 October. Meanwhile **Lord Darcy** in Pontefract Castle, known as 'the key to the north', did nothing. He wrote long and desperate appeals to Henry. The castle, he reported on 13 October, had 'not one gun in it ready to shoot' and was 'much out of frame'. Four days later he found himself cut off from the town, which had risen in sympathy with the Pilgrimage.

During the same week that the East Riding rose, about 11 October, Richmondshire, Mashamshire, Sedbergh and Nidderdale also mustered, occupying Jervaulx Abbey and restoring Coverham Abbey. The North Riding company held a series of assemblies at Richmond, at which they swore in various gentlemen as their leaders. These included the natural leaders of local society, Lord Latimer and Sir Christopher Danby, but the major figure emerging by 15 October was **Robert Bowes**. As a lawyer and younger son of a gentry family, Bowes was of similar status to Robert Aske, and he seems to have had a similar dynamic influence on what became the most influential of all the various regional hosts. The Richmond assemblies were responsible for instigation and coordination of the risings to the north, issuing calls to the commons in the Palatinate of Durham, Westmorland and Cumberland, and obtaining the potent relic of St Cuthbert's banner from Durham to lead the Pilgrim army (Bush, 1996: 136–7, 146, 427–8). Barnard Castle (garrisoned by several of Bowes's relatives) easily yielded to them, and they spoiled Bishop Tunstall's palace at Bishop Auckland before sending off a major part of their force on 18 October to join Aske at York, retaining a central organisation at Jervaulx Abbey (Bush, 1996: 179). By 21 October they were beginning a week-long siege of Skipton Castle, trapping Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, and other refugee gentlemen who refused to join them (Hoyle, 1986: 84–7).

**Darcy of Templehurst, Thomas, Lord:** Commander at Pontefract Castle and a leading religious conservative. After initial hesitation he was persuaded to take one of the leading roles in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536 and was executed as a result.

**Bowes, Robert:** Yorkshire lawyer and a leading figure in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536. Presented the Pilgrims' petition to the king at Windsor. Distanced himself from the later risings in 1537 and thereby managed to avoid reprisal.

The first musters in Westmorland were at Kirkby Stephen, on 16 October, probably in response to a summons from Richmond. The vicar of Brough, Robert Thompson, emerged as the local leader and soon companies were coming in from the surrounding villages to march westward to muster at Penrith in Cumberland. Here, on 19 October, four captains were appointed and took the names of Charity, Faith, Poverty and Pity. The rebels hoped to recruit the only city of their area, Carlisle, but the city authorities, perhaps influenced by the arrival of the fugitive Lord Clifford at Carlisle Castle, remained cool. The insurgent army ignored the Pontefract truce of late October and made repeated attempts to break the city's resistance by force until persuaded to a truce by Sir Christopher Dacre: the Dacre name could command respect where the unpopular Cliffords could not (Bush, 1996: 354–5).

The chances of Pilgrim success in central and south Lancashire depended on the **Earl of Derby**. After rumours that he would join the rebellion, the king secured his loyalty by sending him a commission, giving him authority over a large area of Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales, and after receiving this on 23 October, Derby took a firm lead against the rebels. Rather than sending a company to join Aske, Lancashire rebels concentrated their thousands of supporters on restoring the Cistercian abbey of Sawley and containing the threat from Derby. Given Derby's attitude, it proved impossible to coerce Lancashire gentlemen into supporting the insurrection (Haigh, 1969; Smith, 1970: 175; Bush, 1996: 231, 432). By contrast, the Dent rebels (the first oath-takers in all the north) had succeeded in recruiting local gentry to their cause, after extending their area of operations to the region round Kendal in north Lancashire. Now they marched south to take Lancaster on 28 October, in order to confront the earl (Bush, 1996: 253–4, 434).

Altogether, by late October nine well-armed 'hosts' had gathered and formed coherent organisations which had reduced opposition north of central Lancashire and the River Don to a few isolated outposts held by loyalist notables (Bush, 1996: 3). All of them, from either side of the Pennines, looked to Aske as 'Grand Captain' of the enterprise (Hoyle and Winchester, 2003: 124, 127). The government was caught unawares; on 19 October the king had disbanded his large army gathered in the south at Amptill to march on Lincolnshire, thinking that it was no longer needed. The Duke of Suffolk was too busy quietening Lincolnshire to cope with Yorkshire, and the Earl of Shrewsbury still awaited the king's orders with his forces at Nottingham. For three weeks the rising was allowed to proceed unimpeded, but there was a hesitation in rebel strategy which in the long term gave the government its chance. Aske's intention throughout the campaign he directed was to overawe the government into granting the demands of the north, by presenting a show of force, while doing everything possible to

**Derby, Edward Stanley, 3rd Stanley Earl of:** Leading Lancashire nobleman of conservative sympathies in religion. After rumours that he was to join the Pilgrimage of Grace, Henry VIII secured his loyalty by giving him authority over a large area; he subsequently took a firm lead over the rebels.

avoid the use of force. Only one man was killed during the Pilgrimage, and that was an accident. Aske did not want to advance south unless Henry refused the Pilgrims' petition and he had no plan to form an alternative government or remove the king. Nevertheless, his aims to give the north a say in the affairs of the nation, to remove Cromwell and to reverse the thrust of the Henrician Reformation could not possibly have been achieved without the exercise of massive force.

Aske knew that to make a decisive impact on Henry it was essential to have the backing of the great men of the north; by 19 October he knew also that much of the country beyond the Don was behind him. That day he appeared before Lord Darcy, Edward Lee, Archbishop of York, and forty or so knights and gentlemen who had taken refuge with Darcy at Pontefract Castle. Aske explained to them the Pilgrims' cause, boldly blaming them for not advising the king of the spread of heresy and the abuses of the monastic visitors. He argued, on practical grounds, that the abbeys should stand, maintaining that they were essential to the economy of the north [**Doc. 5, p. 143**]. He told the archbishop he expected him to mediate for the Pilgrims. Two days later Darcy surrendered the castle.

The Pontefract gentry now joined in the discussions as to the strategy to be pursued against the approaching royal army. Darcy and Sir Robert Constable quickly became leaders among the rebels. Meanwhile the government's plans were falling into confusion. It welcomed a defensive strategic plan suggested by the Duke of Norfolk on 20 October: the armies which he and the Earl of Shrewsbury led should form a line on the River Trent to block the rebels' advance south. However, contradictory government orders to Shrewsbury had already sent the earl (after some hesitations) marching further north towards the River Don and Pontefract; the defensive plan was wrecked. Norfolk, who had only just reached Newark-on-Trent from the south on 23 October, now had little option but to negotiate; the royal armies were dangerously far apart and vastly outnumbered by the Pilgrims. He sent a message to the Pilgrims by Lancaster Herald suggesting that bloodshed might be avoided if four of the Pilgrims met him at Doncaster to explain the causes of their rising. This letter was delivered to the rebel vanguard just to the south of Pontefract on 24 October (Bush, 1996: 374–86).

There was disagreement among the Pilgrims as to whether they should treat with Norfolk. Their army of 30,000 was well disciplined and overwhelmingly strong beside the 8,000 men at the most that Shrewsbury had with him across the Don. But Aske argued that Norfolk, remembered and respected in the north as a hero of Flodden, might use his influence at Court on their behalf. He wanted to trust Norfolk and, with Darcy's backing, he won. Those who doubted Norfolk's intentions were more realistic, as before the meeting on Doncaster Bridge he wrote to Henry: 'I beseech you to take

in gode part what so ever promes I shall make unto the rebells for sewerly I shall observe no part thereoff.'

The leaders decided to make their petition to Norfolk very general, leaving the maximum room for negotiation. Their five articles were in substance those drawn up at Lincoln; but instead of mentioning the Acts for the subsidy and the suppression and the Statute of Uses by name they merely asked that 'unpopular statutes might be repealed' and 'the Faith truly maintained' (Davies, 1968) [Doc. 3, p. 141]. Aske did not go to the bridge himself but ordered a general muster of the Pilgrims on the plain beyond it: they stood as a menacing background to the truce which was signed on 27 October. This first 'appointment' was the climax of the northern demonstration.

No full account of the 27 October meeting survives, but from a conversation between Darcy and Somerset Herald a few weeks later it appears that Norfolk did his utmost to bring the gentry to treachery. Lord Darcy indignantly refused:

I had rather my hed stryken of [he told the herald], than I wold defyle my cote armor, for it shall never be sayd that old Thome shall have one treators tothe in his hed. . . . For my part I have byn and ever wylbe true both to kyng henry the vii and to the kyng our soverayn lord and I defye hym that wyll say the contrary, for as I have ever say one god one feth and one kyng.

But when it came to giving up his captain whose cause was the unity of the commonwealth he could not do it: 'For he that promysseth to be true to one, and deseyveth him, may be called a traitor: whych shall never be seyde in me for what is a man but is promysse'. Here is the central dilemma of the Pilgrim leaders, a dilemma that faced Aske when in his examination he was asked how he could reconcile his duty of obedience to the king with the oath he swore on 4 October. It was a dilemma that neither Darcy, Aske, nor any of the Pilgrims could solve.

Darcy had other good reasons to refuse to betray his captain on Doncaster Bridge. He had come to be afraid of his own men, who, he told the herald, 'bycause wee tarried a whyll abowght the entreatie wold have ronned upon us to have kylled us sayng that we wold bytray them'. Yet even more he feared going to London. 'Hold up thy longe clee and promyse me that I shall have the Kynge's favor and shalbe indeferently hard, and I wyll come to Dancastre to yow', he told Shrewsbury. 'Than ye shall not come it', the earl replied. Darcy knew he had committed himself too far.

The agreement reached on 27 October was that Sir Ralph Ellerker and Robert Bowes should carry the Pilgrims' petition to the king and a truce should be observed until they returned. Norfolk had failed to detach the gentry from the commons, so he compromised. He had no choice. It was 'not

possible', he reported to the Council, 'to have yeven batayle but upon appar-  
aunt los theroff'. He had 'no horsemen and they all the floure of the north'  
and most of his own soldiers 'thought and think their quarells to be gode  
and godly'. But the bond between gentry and commons was still fragile.  
Beacons were left ready for firing to call to a new summons if necessary, just  
as the promise of further musters had been made in Lincolnshire. As in  
Lincolnshire, some murmured that the gentlemen would betray them as they  
waited for the return of the negotiators.

Ellerker and Bowes reached Windsor on 2 November. The same day the  
king, in his own hand, wrote a reply to the rebel petition. It was a long  
justification of his rule, emphasising his 'good discretion' in choosing coun-  
cillors and reproving the Pilgrims for rising 'upon false reports and surmises'.  
One passage displays Henry's characteristic self-righteous indignation:

What King hath kept you all his subjects so long in wealthe and peace . . .  
so indifferently ministered justice to all, both high and low; so defended  
you all from outward enemies; so fortified the frontiers of this realm, to  
his no little and in a manner inestimable charges? And all for your wealths  
and sureties.

Finally he declared his intention through the 'pity and compassion' of 'our  
princely heart' to pardon all but ten ringleaders.

Henry thought that the rebellion would now collapse as it had done in  
Lincolnshire. His paramount concern was to claim victims and display his  
victory. He knew he could not afford to make concessions to this challenge  
as he had to the passive resistance of 1525. Nevertheless his blustering self-  
confidence was misplaced. Norfolk realised that the best policy was to tem-  
porise, so he persuaded the king to delay proclaiming his reply in the north,  
and make as many apparent concessions as possible. When Ellerker and  
Bowes laid the king's message before the chief captains of the Pilgrimage at  
Darcy's home at Templehurst on 18 November, it contained no reply to the  
articles but an offer of further negotiations between 300 of the Pilgrims,  
under safe conduct if they wished, and the Duke of Norfolk.

Henry's original reply had in fact been released and read at Skipton a  
few days before. It had increased the already extreme uneasiness of the truce.  
The movements of royal troops, particularly just south of the Humber, and  
rumours of a siege of Hull and a plot to capture Aske, alarmed the north  
throughout November. The delay in the return of Ellerker and Bowes was  
regarded with the utmost suspicion by the commons: 'the Lords and  
Gentlemen have noe such power as they had among them, they will not suf-  
fer two of them to talk together in private', reported Norfolk to the king  
(Hoyle, 1985: 75). There were continual complaints on both sides of threat-  
ening moves and breaches of the truce.

On 21 November the council of the Pilgrims met at York and Robert Bowes gave the captains a detailed account of his visit to Windsor, assuring them that he was satisfied as to the king's good faith and mercy. In the discussions which followed, one group, led by Sir Robert Constable, was moved by such violent hatred of Cromwell and such fear of his influence over the king that it wanted to 'have all the country made sure from the Trent northwards' and then 'condescend to a meeting'. The rest wanted conference. It was Constable who read to the council a letter, dated 10 November, from Cromwell to Sir Ralph Eure, who had stood siege through October at Scarborough. If the rebellion continued, Cromwell had said, it would be so crushed, that 'their example shall be fearful to all subjects whiles the world doth endure'. Despite this glimpse of the government's deviousness, the peace party's argument prevailed. Nothing, they maintained, could be lost by treating with Norfolk, whose influence it was hoped might rise as Cromwell's waned. Messages were sent to all the counties of the north summoning the Pilgrims' representatives to a second meeting or 'appointment' at Doncaster.

In his message to the rebels, discussed at York, Henry told them that he found their articles 'general, dark and obscure'. The purpose of the council held at Pontefract from 2 to 4 December was to clarify the issues which the Pilgrims should debate at Doncaster and to draw up a definitive statement of their programme. This twenty-four article manifesto was written out by Aske in consultation with Darcy. Each item was then approved by the Pilgrim captains. Aske was genuinely concerned to gather the views of all parts of the north. His notices of the Pontefract meeting brought in representatives from all the hosts of the northern counties, and in form the assembly at Pontefract was like a parliament of 'lords, knights and esquires and the commons', with a parallel meeting of clergy in Pontefract Priory, just as parliaments were always accompanied by meetings of the two provincial convocations for the Church in England (Shagan, 2003: 97–8). In the final document Aske was able to combine articles based on the petitions of the commons with the grievances of the gentry as expressed in the statements that several of them drew up, and he regarded it as of the greatest importance that the Pilgrims should have the sanction of the Church for their stand. Archbishop Lee was allowed to preach in the parish church on Sunday 3 December in the hope that he would support their cause. But when he told a crowded congregation of gentry and commons that the sword was given to none but a prince the commons exploded in fury. Lee's rebuff was a nasty jolt to the rebels' confidence.

Until almost the last moment Henry insisted that Norfolk must except the ringleaders from the pardon; his final instructions (sent on 2 December) were that the duke should grant a general pardon, prolong the truce and promise a parliament wherever the rebels wished it. Norfolk received these orders just before the ten knights, ten esquires, and twenty commons appointed came to him at the White Friars in Doncaster on 6 December. Aske and his

companions fell to their knees to beg the king's pardon and favour. Norfolk said that Henry would grant this, and a free parliament. This put him in a strong position when it came to discussing the articles. He was able to argue that most of the acts the Pilgrims objected to could be considered at that parliament. He avoided committing himself as to when and where the parliament should be held. On one point the rebels were adamant: the suppressed abbeys should stand until their case had been brought before parliament again. Norfolk had no power to grant this but saw that it was essential if a settlement was to be reached. He compromised by insisting that the abbeys should make a formal surrender to the king's commissioners but that they should then be restored again by the king's authority until the parliament met.

The next morning Aske announced the terms for peace to the 3,000 commons waiting at Pontefract. He was back at Doncaster when he heard that they were not satisfied and threatening to raise all Yorkshire again. He had to return to Pontefract to persuade them that all would be well. When Lancaster Herald had read the king's pardon on 8 December the commons began to go home. The gentlemen meanwhile rode to Doncaster once more and there, in the presence of Norfolk, Aske knelt down and humbly asked the assembly that they should no longer call him captain. They agreed and the Pilgrims tore off their badges of the Five Wounds, saying 'We will all wear no badge nor sign but the badge of our sovereign lord'.

Aske thought he had won. Everyone in the north expected Norfolk's speedy return with the king's confirmation of the terms agreed. But for several weeks nothing happened. The king neither ratified nor repudiated the terms that had been made. His policy throughout had been marked by vacillation and inconsistency but now he could await the excuse to exact his revenge and vindicate the honour of his house in bloodshed. How close the Pilgrims came to success! It must have been intoxicating for their leader Robert Aske when Henry invited him down to London to spend Christmas with him, and afterwards sent him home full of good cheer and high hopes: what an achievement for the rebels that a Tudor monarch made their Grand Captain his house-guest. In the end Henry only won with false promises, playing for time and provoking a second series of rebellions; that gave him excuse to take savage revenge, while scrupulously observing the general pardon which he had granted first time round.

## THE CAUSES OF THE REBELLION

The causes of the Lincolnshire rising and the Pilgrimage of Grace have become highly controversial. One crucial question at issue is whose risings they were. The rebellions have commonly been seen as an authentic expression of the

grievances of the north as a whole, a massive popular indictment of the Henrician regime. They have also sometimes been viewed as a feudal or neo-feudal phenomenon, a reaction by the old-established and overmighty families of the north to Tudor centralisation. A deliberately provocative reinterpretation was that of Sir Geoffrey Elton: 'in the main the northern risings represent the effort of a defeated Court faction to create a power base in the country for the purpose of achieving a political victory at Court' (Elton, 1980: 212). Equally controversial is the debate over the real motivation of those involved: were the central grievances really about religion, or primarily economic and social?

Margaret and Ruth Dodds, who first told the full story of the Pilgrimage in an exciting and dependable narrative, undoubtedly took the evidence presented by men implicated in the rising too much at face value (Dodds and Dodds, 1915). Aske was bound to paint the Pilgrimage as a popular movement that he was powerless to halt, in order to shift blame from himself. Additionally, the Dodds introduced a misleading division in their analysis, trying to distinguish between a religious movement directed by gentlemen and a social movement directed against gentlemen. Thomas Cromwell may also have contributed his own misleading gloss in the aftermath of the rebellion. Loth to make serious concessions on the official policy of religious change which he was sponsoring, he may have emphasised the agrarian grievances in certain areas of rebellion because he was more prepared to meet local concerns on those issues. Distortions such as these have led commentators to make false distinctions between the primary motivations in different components of the risings (Bush, 1996: 186, 277).

How far then was the Pilgrimage authentic – how far, that is, do the protests that appear in the rebel articles represent the genuine grievances of those who left their homes as winter was approaching in order to march to Pontefract? In certain cases there is little cause for doubt. Recent taxation was much disliked and the new subsidy, uniquely, had come in peacetime. Some historians have seen the 1534 Subsidy Act as an attempt at fiscal revolution, because it justified parliamentary taxation primarily in terms of the civil benefits conferred on the realm by the king's government (Hoyle, 1994; MacCulloch, 1995: 5–6, 46, 82–3). This point was not missed in the north. When Holland rose to support the rest of Lincolnshire, the articles there stated that the king should demand no more money of his subjects except for the defence of the realm. Coming after two years of dearth, following bad weather and poor harvests, resentment at the new subsidy may have been particularly important in prompting support for the rising in the Yorkshire Dales and in Marshland: the evidence of the tax assessments in the early Tudor period has shown that these were the poorest areas of the West Riding.



The final manifesto at Pontefract contained two articles relating strictly to economic matters. Enclosure was almost certainly the less important of the two. It was only a grievance in the valley communities of the West Riding, in Lake County uplands and in certain densely populated areas such as the Vale of York, Furness, the Eden Valley and parts of the Cumberland coast (Palliser, 1979: 49, 80; Harrison, 1981: 60–6). Entry fines (that is, payment on taking up a tenancy by inheritance or sale, and locally known as gresssums) were a far more serious matter of complaint west of the Pennines than enclosures. The Westmorland commons mentioned other economic grievances, not taken up by Aske, in their letter to Lord Darcy, and a surviving fragment of one of their proclamations reinforces the impression of popular grievances against local gentry: it proclaims that it was they and ‘not our prince nor our king’ who ‘do take our commonwealth from us’. Offending landlords who had taken gresssums, put up rents or unjustly deprived poor men of tenant rights should be sworn on a mass-book not to repeat such offences ‘against the faith of Christ, the church profit and the commonwealth’, the penalty for refusal being death (Hoyle and Winchester, 2003: 128–9). Other Westmorland complaints were about tithes, and there were attacks on tithe-barns, but these were not an assault on the Church, but rather an element in the bitterness against unpopular landlords (usually in this case absentees, and represented by lay agents), an attempt to modify a system which both laymen and clerics had corrupted (Harrison, 1981: 47–60; Bush, 1996: 173).

The hardest problem, in relation to the question of authenticity, is how far the Pilgrimage was a spontaneous or popular religious rising. Certain articles at Pontefract can be attributed with no great difficulty to clerical pressure. Attacks on benefit of clergy and the privileges of sanctuary, the recent abolition of the liberties of Beverley, Durham, Ripon and St Peter of York, were predictably resented among the clergy themselves. But the religious attitudes of the mass of the laity are more difficult to determine. Their allegiance may have owed something to cleverly mounted propaganda designed to present official religious change as endangering the whole fabric of religious life. It was, after all, quite plausible to represent what was happening as a threat to parish life, which was what would concern most people. If monasteries were dissolved, what did that mean for parish churches which were appropriated to them, and which in some cases were part of the monastery church building? Traditional rituals, practices and beliefs appeared to be threatened. In the East Riding the people grumbled that they were no longer allowed to keep St Wilfrid’s day. At Kirkby Stephen there was fury when the priest failed to bid St Luke’s day; at Kendal on the Sunday after Christmas some of the rebels ‘stirred up suddenly at bedes bidding and would have had the priest bid the bedes the old way and pray for the Pope’. A month later they forced the curate to observe the time-honoured way of prayer. ‘Fundamentally’,

Penry Williams has written, 'the Pilgrims were protesting against an unprecedented intrusion by the Crown into their local communities and traditional ways' (Williams, 1979: 321).

Scott Harrison and Michael Bush have both suggested that the rebels in the Lake Counties were far more concerned with religious grievances than has been previously acknowledged. The risings there were characterised by ritual processions, and there were the same rumours about confiscation of church jewels and taxes on christenings, marriages and burials as were common elsewhere (Harrison, 1981: 72; Bush, 1996: 372–3). In any case, the wording of the Westmorland proclamation already quoted shows how closely the rebels saw local social and economic grievances as being connected with the welfare of both 'commonwealth' and Church, and demonstrates their conviction that abuses would best be stopped by the swearing of solemn religious oaths. From the earliest outbreaks in September, in the Lordship of Dent, one of the most striking characteristics of the rebellion was its insistence on the swearing of oaths. The example had been set by the national campaign of oath-swearing to the new royal succession in 1534. Now the oaths were to wider concepts than simply dynastic succession: Holy Church, the commonwealth, as well as the preservation of the king's person [Doc. 4, p. 143]. Aske's achievement in building on all this to create a demonstration that had an atmosphere of honour and chivalry was remarkable. For a few weeks his vision and purposefulness gave the movement an almost mystical aura. However, even before his intervention, the most constructive act of the rebels was a religious one: to affirm the place of monastic life in their own communities, by restoring dissolved religious houses.

Perhaps sixteen of the fifty-five monasteries that had been dissolved under the Act of Suppression passed in March 1536 were restored by the Pilgrims. It is hard to determine the initiative behind these restorations. There is good evidence for popular support for the restoration of Cartmel, Conishead and Sawley: in fact all four suppressed in Cumbria were re-opened, in areas remote from Aske's initiative and before the hosts had publicly made contact (Haigh, 1969). William Hungate, the farmer of Nunburnholme in Yorkshire, held the local inhabitants responsible there as well. Aske maintained that St Clement's Priory in York was restored 'because the commons would needs put them in', but he certainly organised it himself. Elsewhere parish priests, monks and friars probably played a leading part. For Aske, the essence of the rising was that it was a spiritual protest by the laity on behalf of the Church. From the time that he entered York, he exalted the cause of the monasteries into the rallying cry of the movement: it was summarised for most of the participants by the intensely emotional symbol of the badge of the Five Wounds of Christ.

The case for the monasteries that Aske put forward so ably under examination probably includes most of the motives which made the abbeys (as

Norfolk wrote in 1537) 'greatlie beloved with the people' [Doc. 11, p. 150]. It is interesting to compare this with the much less sentimental case Aske argued to the lords at Pontefract [Doc. 5, p. 143]. He then emphasised the social and economic role of the monasteries. There is no doubt that the day-to-day gifts of food and clothing and hospitality to northern travellers that the houses in the Pennines offered made them valuable to the community as a whole (Harrison, 1981: 12). Their importance to the laity was by no means limited to the 3 per cent of their income allowable in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* as charity (Knowles, 1961: 264). It was the usefulness of the abbeys to the gentry and substantial tenantry that Aske was particularly concerned to emphasise to his Pontefract audience. Abbeys acted as the focal point of the social life of a neighbourhood: they provided some rudimentary education, safe deposit for valuable documents, tenancies for farmers, and a place to dispose of unmarried daughters or, through the system of corrodies, aged relations. Aske persuasively maintained that not only would all these services be lost, but that the future economic effects of the appropriation by southern landowners of northern monastic lands would be disastrous. Though exaggerated, his argument that shortage of coin could drive the north into either rebellion or treaty with the Scots was probably not without foundation (Haigh, 1969: 53–60).

Aske saw the religious role of the monasteries as twofold: they maintained by their 'gostly liffing' an exalted ideal that was to him an essential element of the Christian tradition and they provided 'speritual informacion, and preching' to a people 'not well taught the law of God'. The extent to which the monastic ideal was in fact being realised at the dissolution has been argued over at length by historians. David Knowles has provided a comprehensive and balanced survey of the evidence and dealt with the grosser allegations of the monastic visitors (Knowles, 1961). How did people other than Aske himself regard the monasteries in 1536? The Pilgrims' Ballad makes it evident that the commons did not make a distinction between religious and economic usefulness [Doc. 6, p. 144]. They simply identified the threat to the Church with the threat to the poor. In the same way an anonymous petitioner to Aske linked the relief of poverty and 'the prayer for the founders and service of God maintained' (Davies, 1968: 67).

What should we make of the involvement of the north's great families? **Henry Percy, sixth Percy Earl of Northumberland**, was a crucial figure in the crisis of the 1530s in northern England, though his behaviour during the actual rising was ambivalent. The Percys' extensive estates in Northumberland, Yorkshire and Cumberland made them the most powerful family in the north, despite the blow to their power and prestige represented by the lynching of the fourth Percy earl in 1489 (see Chapter 3 above). By the 1530s the sixth earl had rebuilt what seemed an impregnable hold on the area, through

**Northumberland, Henry Percy, 6th Percy Earl of:** Great northern magnate at the time of the Pilgrimage of Grace, but, suffering from illness and possibly mentally unstable, failed to take a strong stance, possibly as his family's power in the north had already invited the suspicion of Henry VIII. Nervous after the rising, he made Henry his sole heir in 1537.

his wardenship of the East and Middle Marches and his lieutenancy in Yorkshire. He was also sheriff of Northumberland for life. But his position in relation to the crown was in fact perilous. He was regarded with the deepest suspicion in London because of his northern prestige. A precontract of marriage with Anne Boleyn made him insecure when the divorce became an issue; in his last years he was certainly in poor health, and perhaps even mentally unstable. In 1535 he made approaches to the imperial ambassador Eustace Chapuys, who was always on the lookout for dissidents to Henrician government policy; throughout the previous decade he had tried to fortify his position in the north by the multiplication of offices and fees. He was estranged from his wife and had no heir; he was also on bad terms with his brother, Sir Thomas, to whom Henry in any case objected as his heir in 1535. This is the background to Northumberland's eccentric and sensational gesture of 1537: he made the king his sole heir. This was his means of escape from the appalling dilemma of the great magnate faced with a suspicious master (Smith, 1970: 171–2; Hoyle, 1986: 79).

After this it was impossible for Northumberland to emerge as a leader of the Pilgrims. Publicly he remained aloof throughout the rising; in fact he passively accepted it, surrendering Wressle Castle to Aske and recognising him as 'captain of the baronage'. While the earl was still in London in early October the commons had shouted 'thousands for a Percy' at the castle gate; elsewhere in the north his family quickly became leaders. Sir Ingram Percy, constable of Alnwick Castle, swore Northumberland people to the Pilgrims' cause. Sir Thomas, who marched to York with 5,000 from east Yorkshire, was referred to as 'the lock, key and wards of this matter'. When he entered York the commons 'showed such affection towards him as they showed towards none other. Gorgeously he rode through the city in complete harness with feathers trimmed as well as he might deck himself at that time.' Not surprisingly, a significant number of leading Yorkshire gentry brought into leadership roles in the rebellion turn out to be Percy tenants. Four were actually members of Northumberland's council: Aske was his legal adviser, Sir Robert Constable was Lord of Flamborough and thirty-six other manors, and Robert Lascelles and William Stapulton were holders of important Percy estates. Even so, M.L. Bush's detailed examination of the various hosts concluded that even the army from the heartland of Percy estates in east Yorkshire was primarily 'a movement of the commons'. None of the nine hosts was in fact organised in a feudal manner: their organisation was generally done on a parish basis (Bush, 1996: 210).

In other respects, the Pilgrimage is unconvincing as a neo-feudal rising. The Earl of Derby, as we have seen, became an aggressive champion of the king. The traditional magnate of the north-west, Lord Dacre, was first besieged by the rebels at Naworth and later kept so far out of the conflict as

to disappear temporarily from the records. The Earl of Westmorland was captured by the rebels in his castle, and in the years after the Pilgrimage he remained deeply traumatised by the disloyalty of his household and tenants (Hoyle, 1985: 63–4, 70–1). Similarly, the Clifford Earl of Cumberland found himself deserted by his gentry retinue when the rebellion broke out and besieged in Skipton Castle. Some historians have exaggerated and misunderstood the evidence for the Cliffords' relations with their tenants. It was said that after the Pilgrimage 'no man was worse beloved' in the north-west than Cumberland, but that may well have been a retrospective reflection of resentment at his refusal to join his tenants in support of the risings. If the Cliffords were indeed unpopular with their fellow-notables, it was because they had threatened the balance of power in the north by their dynastic good fortune: the earl's son married the king's niece in 1535 (Hoyle, 1986: 74, 78, 90–1; Bush, 1996: 155). Apart from Lord Darcy at Pontefract, the peers who gave more or less equivocal support to the rebels were lesser figures: Barons Lumley, Latimer, Scrope of Bolton and Conyers. Moreover, there was nothing feudal about the Pilgrims' oath [**Doc. 4, p. 143**].

Prominent landed families did not even stand together. Lord Darcy's two sons failed to take up their father's cause. Robert Aske's own brother Christopher defended Skipton Castle for the Earl of Cumberland against Robert's rebels, while their younger brother John was among those who were constrained to watch the traitor's execution of Robert at York (Moorhouse, 2002: 127–8, 182–3, 305). The Duke of Norfolk commented upon the familial divisions that came into the open when the die was cast: 'Fie, fie upon the Lord Darcy', he declared, 'the most arrant traitor that ever was living and yet both his sons true knights; old Sir Robert Constable as ill as he is and all his blood true men'. Likewise, it is difficult to accept M.E. James's picture of a united Lincolnshire gentry community rising in opposition to Court policy, embodied by the Duke of Suffolk, whom they resented as a new force in county politics imposed on them from outside. Suffolk in fact had very little to do with the county until after the collapse of the 1536–37 com-motions (James, 1970; Gunn, 1989: 56).

Professor Elton's revisionist interpretation of the risings had as its avowed agenda the reassertion of political history's importance over and against economic and social history. By 'political', Elton meant politics at a national level, so his account implicitly also condemned localist interpretations, and any political analysis which took popular politics seriously. This produced some strange results. One of his chief supposed proofs for 'upper-class' leadership was that rebellion was spread by 'wild rumours and stories', yet characteristically in early modern Europe countryside rumours are the stuff of mass politics, not of aristocratic intrigue. Nor could Elton bring himself to believe that ordinary people were capable of the planning which he

acknowledged must lay behind the rapid outbreaks of trouble, despite repeated evidence to the contrary in Tudor England (Elton, 1980: 193–4). His general interpretation can hardly stand. Particularly thanks to the new primary source evidence provided by Richard Hoyle, it is clear that the initiative lay with popular unrest, and that the shape of the rising particularly in Lincolnshire caught off-guard even those gentry who became deeply involved (Hoyle, 1985). The continued mistrust between the crowds and the gentry leadership which they had coopted is equally unmistakable.

Given this mistrust, why did the commons insist so repeatedly on gentry and noble families assuming leadership roles? M.L. Bush plausibly explains their behaviour as a reflection of their belief in a 'society of orders', nobility, commons and clergy: all the nine main hosts tried to recruit noble leaders because they felt that gentry ought to lead them, and most of the hosts succeeded. Some of these leaders were purely symbolic representatives of ancient families who because of their youth could hardly act as practical military figures: the thirteen-year-old Lord Neville or the nineteen-year-old George Bowes, for instance (Bush, 1996: 64, 75, 158). Equally significant is the way in which the hosts generally did not allow the clergy to take an active fighting role in their armies; they were relegated either to providing funds, or to taking appropriate symbolic roles as leaders of processions or chaplains. Each order had its characteristic and particular role to play.

Many leading gentry became leaders of the hosts because they saw it as a form of damage limitation: as local magistrates, they had a duty to maintain order, and in the face of huge demonstrations and no means of coercion at their disposal, this was the only route left to them. There was good reason for them to fear popular violence, at least against property if not against life. S.J. Gunn makes a significant connection between the actions of prominent Lincolnshire gentry in 1536 and the memories which several of them would have of military commands in the generally dismal English campaigns of the 1510s and 1520s in France. There they frequently faced army mutinies. 'When common soldiers mutinied, they could be neither ignored nor left to their own devices. Some semblance of order had to be maintained, if necessary by a partial or total concession of the mutineers' demands, while the king's instructions, and pardon for any departure from orders, were obtained as a matter of urgency' (Gunn, 1989: 70). This looks very like what happened in the Lincolnshire rising, and eventually also in Yorkshire.

Equally important to note is what M.L. Bush terms 'an aristocratic conspiracy of inaction'. It is likely that many leading gentry could have done much to stem the tide of popular disaffection by taking a decisive stand against it, as in fact they had done successfully against Yorkshire agrarian unrest in the previous year. Instead, strongly disapproving of a range of government initiatives in legal and religious change, they stood aside and allowed

events to develop. Only when Pontefract Castle was forced to yield did the leading figures of Yorkshire who had taken refuge there find it impossible to maintain this stance of benevolent neutrality; the commons made it clear that now they must become positively involved (Bush, 1996: 131–3, 408).

Elton did raise questions which should warn us against taking any one simple explanation of the risings. He drew attention to those he saw as key figures: Aske himself, Lord Darcy and Lord Hussey. Aske's story of how he was forced to join the rebels makes no sense at all. In fact his confessions taken as a whole, a brilliant exercise in special pleading, have probably done more than anything else to confuse historians about the actual nature of the rebellion. Darcy, as we have seen, pretended at first that he was opposed to the rising. By 1 October he had his extensive following of knights, esquires and gentlemen ready 'to serve the King's grace' upon an hour's warning. Yet he surrendered Pontefract quite extraordinarily quickly. Moreover, when he did so he was ready to distribute to the rebels numerous badges of the Five Wounds of Christ, badges which had presumably been stored in his castle since his retinue wore them on an expedition against the Moors in Spain more than twenty years before. None of these men, Professor Elton argued, can seriously be thought to have been taken entirely by surprise in October 1536. But can we see this as a decisive argument that their political disaffection lay at the heart of the rising?

From around 1530 to 1535 Darcy and Hussey were prominent members of the 'Aragonese' faction at Court which had supported Queen Catherine of Aragon and her daughter Mary, and opposed the king's campaign to replace Catherine with Anne Boleyn. Hussey indeed was Mary's chamberlain. In 1534 it seems that Hussey and Darcy seriously contemplated a resort to arms: in a conversation with Chapuys, Darcy spoke of organising an insurrection of the people and subsequently bringing in the nobility and clergy. Although Darcy returned to Yorkshire in 1535, in London new prospects opened up for the 'Aragonese' grouping. With Catherine's death in January 1536, Henry was in their eyes free to marry again, and then the Boleyn marriage collapsed and Anne was executed. However, Hussey's hopes of restoring the succession to Princess Mary were thwarted by the machinations of Thomas Cromwell, who proved the real winner in the disgrace of the Boleyns. Hussey lost his office in Mary's household and his wife was imprisoned in the Tower, after he was alleged to have encouraged the Princess to resist Cromwell's demands that she fully accept the royal supremacy.

Besides the commons of the north, plenty of northern gentry were also grieved at the policies of the Cromwellian regime. No one made this discontent more explicit than Sir Thomas Tempest, who asserted in a paper that he sent to the Pilgrims at Pontefract that Cromwell had turned parliament into a mere puppet of the king's chief minister. Tempest provided a thoughtful

and forthright exposition of the responsibilities of kingship that neither Cromwell nor the king would have found agreeable reading. Thus it is possible to see one element of the rebellion as a last-ditch attempt by those who were out of favour at Court to restore their political fortunes by seizing on the discontents and puzzlements of others. These men sought to promote a cause – the restoration of Mary – in which they sincerely believed. The intention, according to this interpretation, was ‘to create a power base in the country for the purpose of achieving a political victory at Court’ (Elton, 1977: 260–71; Elton, 1980: 211–14).

Elton’s focus on central politics also seemed to make sense of many articles in the Pontefract manifesto which historians have found most puzzling. Thus the Second Succession Act is likely to have made its appearance among the articles because this for Aragonese politicians was the crux of the matter. The clause about Scotland in the article relating to the succession may be attributed to Aske himself: he was concerned that unless it was definitely established that Mary should succeed, the king might look seriously at the Scottish claim through his sister Margaret. Aske was determined that ‘if the crown were given by the King’s highness to an alien . . . it is a void gift, because he is not born under the allegiance of this crown’. The attack on Cromwell, Audley and Rich was for the commons probably no more than a search for scapegoats, but for those with an eye on high politics in London, it can be seen as a deadly serious campaign against a rival faction. The 1534 Treason Act, the royal supremacy and the spread of heresy were given close attention by Darcy and Aske because they were the obvious manifestations of Cromwell’s rule.

The supremacy article was confessedly included on Aske’s initiative and little interest was shown in it even by the other leaders. Aske, perhaps alone, saw an overriding principle at stake, a principle which he was ready to state under interrogation: the supremacy ‘could not stand with Goddes law’. His claim that it was ‘in al menz mouthes that the Supremacy should sound to be a measure of a division from the unite of catholyke church’ is almost certainly exaggerated. The rebel lists of heresies and heretics suggest confusion and uncertainty, even among the gentry at the head of the rising, about exactly which representatives of religious change to denounce. The York list lumps together Protestants like Bishop Nicholas Shaxton of Salisbury with the Orthodox Bishop Longland of Lincoln whose administration had alienated many in his diocese. At Pontefract, continental reformers like Oecolampadius and Bucer, very little of whose works had been translated into English and certainly not under their own name, were mentioned together with Wycliffe, Tyndale and Barnes.

We are left, when the articles so far discussed are set aside, with a medley of demands that can be attributed to one or other group or individual among



the northern gentry implicated in the rising. A complaint about the newly enacted Statute of Uses was taken over from the first set of articles formulated by some of the Lincolnshire gentry led by George Stones. He had encountered some difficulty in getting the countrymen to understand why this statute was something that the commonwealth as a whole should resist. The concerns of the landed gentry coincided with professional grievances of the lawyers of the north, ably represented by Aske himself, and they appear in such pronouncements as the call for a ban on summoning people on subpoena to Westminster from beyond the Trent, and an attack on certain practices of the escheators (the royal officials who looked after the feudal rights of the crown). The Pilgrims' manifestos were highly eclectic documents.

Nevertheless, there are clear weaknesses in Elton's account even of the national political dimension. Hussey's and Darcy's conversations with Chapuys in 1534 may be only marginally relevant: there was always talk in Chapuys's lodgings of risings and foreign invasions, but nothing came of it before 1536, and there is no evidence that Chapuys was involved in the events of this year to any degree (Hoyle, 1985: 79n). More seriously, Elton relied too much on M.E. James's account of Hussey's centrality to rebellion in 1536: Hussey was a very elderly politician whose importance was in decline not just nationally but locally, and his main contribution to events seems to have been to stay on the sidelines and dither too long (Gunn, 1989: 54). His execution in 1537 is not a clear demonstration of his subversive role in 1536.

The safest conclusion about the stirs of 1536 is that several disparate social groupings and concerns came together because of disparate provocations, and pooled their grievances in the lists of demands which survive. The first outbreaks of open protest look as if they were planned, but the planning does not seem to come from the ranks of national politicians; rather leadership was initially from yeomen, skilled craftsmen and the lower clergy, given their opportunity by the nobility's 'conspiracy of inaction'. Their grievances were fears for their religion, their community life and their prosperity. When the northern gentry and nobility cooperated it was in order to contain and channel the anger as best they could. The one clear exception is Robert Aske, in any case not a county gentleman, but a curiously marginal figure in Yorkshire society, a man who because of his London links could mediate between centre and locality outside the normal communication channels of early Tudor government. He channelled this ability into a direct challenge to all aspects of government policy.

Given this combination of protest from a wide geographical and social spectrum of northern society, it is easy to see why the Pilgrimage could have been fatal for Henry's government: it came perilously close to succeeding, and was 'the largest "popular revolt" in English history' (Davies, 1985: 63). If more leading noblemen of the north had backed it, all would have been

lost for the evangelical clique around Cromwell in London. This was the most dangerous of all the unsuccessful rebellions of the Tudor period. Yet in the end, not enough of the north's natural leaders were prepared openly to support the movement: they were probably frightened by the fact that too many leaders had emerged from outside their charmed circle, and by the very provisional nature of the deference which they discovered in the lower orders. With many of those gentry and noblemen who did assume leadership roles using their position to slow the momentum of the rebel crowds, the Westminster government was given its chance to play for time and take the initiative. As C.S.L. Davies suggests, 'the end result of the Pilgrimage may have been to sow such distrust between clergy and commons, and between gentry and commons, as to prevent any repetition for a generation' (Davies, 1985: 85).

## HENRY VIII AND THE NORTH, 1537–47

After the negotiations at Doncaster and all the apparent royal concessions, the policy pursued by King Henry and Cromwell was to divide the gentry from the commons, and harry the north with propaganda on the sinfulness of rebellion (Hoyle, 2001b: 365–6). Henry was waiting for his chance for revenge. This was provided by a rising in the East Riding on 16 January, a symptom of a widespread feeling of bewilderment and betrayal among the commons at the lack of action following the lavish royal promises, and increasing worries about the ambiguous character of the December pardon. Religious traditionalists were now divided about how far they might accept some version of the royal supremacy over the Church; there is far more evidence of argument on this subject in early 1537 than in the earlier phase of the troubles (Shagan, 2003: 119–20). A mark of the separateness of the renewed rising from the previous gentry leadership of the Pilgrimage was that one of its captains was not a Catholic but an enthusiast for the evangelical 'new learning': **Sir Francis Bigod**, working in collaboration with one of the earlier Pilgrim captains of the commons, John Hallam of Calkeld, near Beverley. Aske at this time was telling the northern gentry of the promises he had been given in London of a parliament in the north and a visit by the king, but popular captains like Hallam were beginning to suspect that the king wished to betray them. It was Hallam who approached Bigod, who was familiar with the Court and, despite his religious convictions, shared the popular suspicions; Bigod seems also to have his own particular preoccupation, a horror shared by other radical evangelicals that the king was claiming the cure (we would say 'care') of body and soul over his subjects – as indeed

**Bigod, Sir Francis:** Subsequent to the Pilgrimage of Grace, he led a further rising in 1537 which was quickly crushed and gave Henry VIII the opportunity to avenge himself on some of the Pilgrim leaders.

he had done in the text of the pardon issued at Doncaster (Hoyle, 2001b: 377). Bigod and Hallam evolved a plan to capture Hull and Scarborough. If Norfolk came north he could be taken and used as an intermediary with the government.

The outcome was pathetic and disastrous. Bigod had failed to make the minimum of contacts necessary among the local gentry, who were appalled by the renewal of violence and kept severely away from the attempt. The few hundred commons who mustered briefly managed to hold Beverley, after failing to capture Hull or Scarborough. Within a few days Bigod was a hunted fugitive. He was captured in Cumberland on 10 February 1537, but the attempt in the East Riding acted as a catalyst for widespread popular anger at the lack of tangible result from the events of November and December. There were risings during February in the West Riding, Lancashire, Cumberland and Westmorland, and some renewed stirrings of unrest in the Palatinate of Durham (Bush and Bownes, 1999: chs 3–6). The people of Dent, where the first stirrings of rebellion had been seen back in September 1536, were prominent in the renewed violence, and the centrepiece proved to be a renewed assault on Carlisle. On 16 February a large popular force of rebels was smashed outside Carlisle by a force led from Eskdale by Sir Christopher Dacre. Here the commons had mustered on their own initiative because their patience with the gentry had finally run out, and so the gentry turned on them.

These widespread outbursts of disorder gave Henry the excuse he needed to pursue a systematic policy of punishment. The Duke of Norfolk declared martial law in the West March, and rebels were hanged at Carlisle and in the Cumberland villages; it was noticeable that prominent leaders of the autumn risings, Sir Ralph Ellerker and Robert Bowes, conducted the trials under the duke's supervision, emphasising the gulf which had now opened up between much of the former gentry leadership and the renewed popular uprisings (Bush and Bownes, 1999: 282). During the spring, the gentry leaders were gradually rounded up, brought to London and tried: still carefully observing the legal niceties, the government prosecuted people only for their actions after the second Doncaster conference, although in cases of supposed offenders like Darcy or Aske, this meant virtually creating evidence of conspiracy and treason which bore little relation to what had actually happened. We know of a minimum total of 144 executions, excluding those who died on charges connected with the Lincolnshire rising (Bush and Bownes, 1999: 363 and appx 2). Among the gentry who were executed were Sir Thomas Percy, Sir Stephen Hammerton and Sir Francis Bigod. Lord Hussey was executed on 29 June, Lord Darcy was beheaded the following day. And on 12 July Robert Aske was drawn to his execution on Clifford's Tower in York. On the scaffold he made a confession characteristic of Henrician subjects about to die for treason: 'The King's Majesty, he said, he had greatly offended in breaking his

laws whereunto every true subject is bounden by the commandment of God.' Henry's vicious pettiness when he decided to please God by punishing rebellion is at its most chilling in the story of Margaret Cheyney, Lady Bulmer, whose husband Sir John Bulmer had panicked when in late January he received a summons to London and had canvassed his neighbours about a third rebellion. She was burned at the stake for treason because her husband lost his nerve (Hoyle, 2001b: 397–9, 406–7, 410). What seems a worse injustice still is the fate of Thomas Miller, Lancaster Herald, a royal agent who by all accounts was effective in negotiating with the Pilgrims during the autumn, but who was hanged for treason in August 1538, accused of having encouraged the rebels by pointing out their military superiority over the king (Bush and Bownes, 1999: 394).

In May 1537 Northumberland, unhappy under the shadow of treason, made over all his lands unconditionally to the crown. With his death in July, Henry had achieved the object for which he had been striving: the destruction of the Percy interest. But it might have been inferred from the Duke of Norfolk's harping on the need to have 'men of estimation and nobility' to rule the Marches that he too had ambitions to be an overmighty subject. Rather than take any such risk, Henry now accelerated his policy of building up a royal interest in the north, by giving increased authority to gentry families who had served him loyally. 'If it shall please his majesty', wrote the Council to Norfolk, 'to appoynt the meanest man to rule and govern in that place, is not his Graces authoritie sufficient to cause al men to serve his Grace under him without respect of the verie estate of the personage.' Henry added a note to this himself: 'For surely we woll not be bound of anecessitie to be served with lordes. But we woll be served with such men what degree soever as we shall appoint to the same.' In the appointment of Sir Thomas Wharton to the wardenry of the West March in 1544 we can see this argument for the claims of virtue above rank being put into practice. Wharton's qualification was that the king trusted him and he was an able administrator. He had already obtained the substance of the warden's authority in 1537, thus curtailing the power of the Earl of Cumberland in the wake of the earl's less-than-triumphant actions during the Pilgrimage (James, 1965).

In 1537 also the Council of the North was reorganised and put on a permanent footing (Brooks, 1953; Reid, 1921). Many of the Pilgrim leaders, men like Sir Thomas Tempest, Sir Ralph Ellerker and Robert Bowes, were among its first members. Thus, through the new council and the rule of men like Sir Thomas Wharton, the Henrician government tried to counteract the endemic violence and lawlessness of the north. Bowes and Ellerker, in a survey of the borders made in 1542, wrote that the borderers 'most prayses and cheryshes suche as begynne sonest in youthe to practise themselves in theftes and robberies contrary to the kinges graces lawes'. In the first decade of its

existence the new council not only had to cope with the persistent border feuds, but with the widespread discontent and antagonism to the regime which simmered in the years following the Pilgrimage (Dickens, 1939a). The north's faith in the Percys did not die. While the substance of their power had passed to the king, numerous prophecies circulated foretelling the reawakening of their prestige: 'The moon shall kindle again, and take light of the sun, meaning by the moon the blood of the Percys.' The belief in their return to power was seen in almost magical terms. If anything happened to the king, a Yorkshire tiler told some friends in Kent in 1538, a Percy would inherit and 'he would cause England to shyne as bryght as seynt George' (Elton, 1972: 61–4).

Throughout 1537 popular sedition was always near the surface. In March Dr Dakyn, the vicar general of the diocese of York, told the Privy Council that since the rising he had exhorted the people of Richmond to accept the royal supremacy only at the risk of his life. The Duke of Norfolk found it necessary to attend the suppression of Bridlington and Jervaulx in person because the neighbouring country was populous and the houses were 'greatly beloved'. Then in 1541 a new plot emerged, led by a small group of gentry and clergy in the Wakefield district. The plan was to kill the evangelical cleric Robert Holgate, the president of the Council of the North, and hold Pontefract Castle till help came from Scotland. The plot was caused by resentment at the punishments following the 1536 rising and the government's continuance of policies obnoxious to the north. The drive against the great abbeys and the seigniorial franchises in the years 1537–41 meant that by 1541 Aske's fears that the north would be drained of currency were being at least partially realised [**Doc. 5, p. 143**]. Fifty to a hundred people seem to have been involved in the plot, of whom about fifteen were executed. There is little evidence that it engaged popular feeling on any scale (Smith, 1970: 210).

The swift discovery and crushing of the Wakefield plot demonstrated the utility of the new Council of the North. Yet, coinciding with new Scottish border raids, it caused Henry serious concern. He started to adopt a more friendly attitude to France. He took measures to strengthen the border towns against the Scots. Then in the summer at last he made a lavish progress to the north, hoping to overawe it with his royal person (Manning, 1987: 50; Palliser, 1979: 427–8). The government also took care not to push northern sensibilities too far: as major chantry colleges were dissolved in the south and west of England during Henry's last years, it was noticeable that no such colleges were dissolved in the north (Cross et al., 1987: 61).

This combination of personal attention and absence of further government provocation seems to have worked. For the last six years of Henry's reign there were no further plots and no cases of treason, and the north failed to rise for the old religion alongside the West Country in 1549. Temporarily

at least the north was tamed. But the absence of internal unrest in this period is only one side of the picture. The experiment of choosing wardens not from the nobility but from old border gentry, Sir Thomas Wharton and William Eure, was a failure. Since both had difficulties in securing military cooperation from the English borderers, the Henrician government was driven to rely increasingly during the 1540s on paid garrisons and foreign mercenaries to defend its northern frontier. The far north remained a pressing military and administrative problem.

## The Western Rebellion

### RIOT AND REBELLION IN THE WEST, 1547–49

**Body, William:** Government agent under Thomas Cromwell. His appointment to the archdeaconry of Cornwall as a layman was opposed by local figures and his corruption and tactless imposition of Church reforms was received with hostility in Cornwall. Murdered by a mob at Helston, an incident which prefigured the Western Rebellion.

The first insurrections of Cornishmen against the Edwardian Reformation, in 1547 and 1548, sprang from fear of the loss of church goods and the intense unpopularity of the government's agent, **William Body**. Body was an unscrupulous and avaricious careerist, and also a former close friend and agent of Thomas Cromwell (Arthurson, 2000: 70–1). Although not an ordained clergyman, Body had obtained the archdeaconry of Cornwall in 1537 from Thomas Winter, Wolsey's illegitimate son, who was in debt to him. The Bishop of Exeter challenged Winter's right to transfer the archdeaconry to Body for a term of thirty-five years, and in 1541 the bishop's agents tried to prevent his collection of the clergy's procurations at Launceston. Body replied by a writ of praemunire against the bishop's official, which was successful.

When Body returned to the county in 1547 and summoned the clergy to hear the Edwardian injunctions, he met with a hostile demonstration at Penryn which thoroughly alarmed the authorities. The college of St Mary and St Thomas at Glasney just outside Penryn was the largest religious foundation remaining in the county, with a revenue of £221 a year. The commissioners who were surveying the chantries were taking inventories of church goods, and it seems that Body gave the impression that the goods would be confiscated. The government dealt mildly with the disturbance on this occasion, and showed itself anxious to appease the commons.

The next year Body was back in Cornwall visiting parish churches to ensure that the government's orders on the destruction of all images were being carried out. When Body arrived at Helston on 6 April, a mob, led by Martin Geoffrey, the priest of St Keverne (a large and repeatedly rebellious parish), set upon him and killed him. The Cornishmen had demonstrated their readiness to take the law into their own hands against an official they

disliked and with whom they identified the new religious policy. The murder of Body was the first violent expression of their hostility to Protestant demolition of traditional rituals. John Reseygh, the yeoman leader of the mob, took his stand on the 'laws and ordinances touching the Christian religion' as they existed at the death of Henry VIII 'of blessed memory'. He challenged the right of a Protector to alter these laws. This could only be done by the king when he had come of age, which, so far as Reseygh was concerned, was when he was twenty-four. That was thirteen years away. Meanwhile, Reseygh proclaimed defiantly in Helston market place, 'whosoever dare defend this Body and follow such new fashions as he did, we will punish him likewise'.

Such was the temper of the commons that the JPs cancelled the sessions to be held at Helston and arranged for those of the ringleaders whom they had managed to arrest to be tried at Launceston. The leading local gentry were unpopular or inept in their administration of local government; one, Sir William Godolphin, was a convinced Protestant, while another, John Reskymer, was known to have collected money to pay for troops for the French war which had never actually been used and yet had not been returned to the taxpayers (Arthurson, 2000: 87, 91). They called on Sir Richard Edgecombe, one of the principal Devon gentry, to come to their aid. He collected people from the parishes in the east of the county on his way. But the victimisation of Body had for the moment satisfied the commons. The trouble died down and people returned to their homes. The government issued a general pardon excepting twenty-eight of the ringleaders. Only ten of these were in fact hanged (Cooper, 2003: 60–1).

During the next year the religious policies initiated by Protector Somerset continued to make their impact on the county. The government made some attempt to be constructive: when the chantries were dissolved, arrangements were made for the continuance of four schools and four curacies in the larger parishes. Yet its positive actions were also determinedly confrontational: the strongly evangelical royal chaplain Roger Tonge was sent to St Keverne itself to preach the Reformation message in autumn 1548 (Arthurson, 2000: 91), and he was not alone in a government campaign of commandeering local pulpits for evangelical preaching. It was not surprising that the atmosphere remained unsettled: even the boys of Bodmin school divided themselves into two factions, those who supported the old religion and those who supported the new. Their escapades led to their shooting dead a calf and all being beaten. Local gentry leadership remained weak, with Lord Russell's power-base narrow and dependent on a clique of Protestant gentry like the Carews; such favouritism angered traditionalist families and made them less eager to cooperate in keeping order (Speight, 1996).

It was the announcement in early spring that the new liturgy in the Prayer Book must be uniformly used on Whitsunday 1549 that turned the Cornish



opposition into full-scale rebellion. The commons from the villages around Bodmin persuaded Humphrey Arundell, a gentleman with extensive estates in that area, to be their leader. Arundell was a cousin of Sir John Arundell of Lanherne, who was Cornwall's greatest gentleman, and deeply conservative in his faith; Sir John had indeed apparently been dropped from the commission of the peace in Cornwall after Edward's accession. Humphrey later claimed that he acted under duress (Cooper, 2003: 62), but he was clearly a troublemaker, since he had appeared in a number of Chancery cases charged, among other things, with forcible entry upon other people's lands. The only other gentleman involved was John Winslade of Tregarrick. The rebels collected at Bodmin from 6 June where they formed a camp. The articles drawn up there were very likely the work of the small group of priests whose influence held the rebels together and with Arundell's organisation gave the rising a defined purpose. Early in June the rebels advanced into Devon leaving a small force to besiege Plymouth.

In Devon a rising began independently and spontaneously at Sampford Courtenay. Here the priest, following the orders of the government, said the new service on Whitsunday, 10 June. But the next day the villagers persuaded him to defy the government. John Hooker, who wrote the only detailed contemporary account of the rebellion, recounts that he 'yielded to their wills and forwith ravessheth [clothed] himself in his old popish attire and sayeth mass and all such services as in times past accustomed'. The Devonshire JPs lacked the confidence to impose the government's will; they could do nothing to prevent such outrages as the murder of one of the gentry who urged the people to remain peaceful and obedient. The Sampford Courtenay group and others from villages around joined the Cornishmen at Crediton, where by 20 June a considerable force had gathered.

**Carew, Sir Peter:** Devonian knight. His intervention against the Western Rebellion in 1547 inflamed the situation, and Lord Russell was sent to deal with it instead. He was later a leading conspirator in Wyatt's Rebellion, but his part in it failed and he fled to France.

News of the rebellion brought the Devonian knight **Sir Peter Carew** hastening back from his wife's estates in Lincolnshire. It is not certain whether Carew was acting on the government's orders or on his own initiative. He had served Henry VIII at Court and in France, had sat as MP for Tavistock in 1545 and been sheriff of Devon in 1547. But he was a known evangelical and a most unsuitable choice to deal with a rebellion that was founded on religious conservatism. Whether as government agent or self-appointed agent of the godly cause, Carew's intervention literally inflamed the situation. After his arrival at Exeter, Carew discussed the situation with the sheriff and JPs on 21 June. He then rode to Crediton with a small company to try to pacify the rebels. He found the town defended and the rebels refused to negotiate. However, one of Carew's force set fire to the barns which formed part of the rebel defences. Wild panic ensued and the town was abandoned. This incident merely increased the distrust between gentry and commons: 'the noise of this fire and burning', related Hooker, 'was spread through the villages and

the common people noised and spread it abroad that the gentlemen were altogether bent to overrun, spoil and destroy them'. Carew was later reprimanded in London for his provocative action.

The main army of the rebels moved round Exeter to Clyst St Mary (see Map 2), where by 23 June they had made camp and fortified the bridge on the Exeter road. The gentry then made another attempt to open negotiations. This time two of them, Sir Thomas Denys and Sir Hugh Pollard, were allowed into the village – significantly, the rebels refused to negotiate with Carew (Speight, 1996: 12). They showed some sympathy with the rebels' demand that religion should remain as Henry VIII left it until Edward came of age. They extracted a promise from the commons that they would pursue their grievances by petition in an orderly manner. But Sir Peter Carew and Peter Courtenay, the sheriff, were dissatisfied with this, blaming Denys and Pollard 'for their slender or rather synester dealinges'. That night, the commons, encouraged by this disagreement between the gentry, started to block the highways into Exeter. They were now determined to force Carew to hear their case. They took and imprisoned some of the Exeter merchants and gentry. Others left the city or 'secretelie kepte theirselffes close in certeyne howses then unknowne'. Carew himself escaped and took the road for London to impress on the government the gravity of the situation.

As late as 29 June Protector Somerset's response to the rising was still based on hopelessly inadequate information: his letter that day to Lord Russell, who had then just set out to attempt to restore order, was based on an impression that the rebellion was still confined to Sampford Courtenay. He knew nothing of the joint advance of Devonshire and Cornish contingents to Exeter. Somerset's resources were already strained. He was faced with enclosure riots in the midlands and south-east and feared that the French might take advantage of the opportunity offered by internal disorders to invade [Doc. 15, p. 155]. He was only able to provide Russell with a small and inadequate force. Russell found it difficult to enlist forces in Wiltshire and Somerset and dared not advance to Exeter. It seems that at this time a force determined to march on London would have had little difficulty in passing to the north of Russell by Bruton or to the south through Dorset. It might have received considerable additional strength as it approached the capital. Russell even talked of retreat: 'if we be driven to retire it standeth uncertayn to us hitherto by what quarter we shall most conveniently use the same until their determinations of proceeding more evidently appear'.

But the rebels were more concerned to demonstrate their seriousness by controlling the West Country than to appear in person before London. Perhaps the memory of Blackheath frightened them or perhaps the leaders' nerve failed at the prospect of advancing into unknown country. From Clyst, between 24 June and 2 July, they turned their faces back to Exeter. They sent

a further and more detailed set of articles to the Council and coordinated their plans for a full-scale siege of the local capital [Doc. 12, p. 151]. The leadership now consisted of three Cornish gentry, three Devon gentry and three commoners. On 2 July the rebels, 2,000 in number according to Hooker, advanced in procession on Exeter. They carried the banner of the Five Wounds, censers and the pyx for the consecrated eucharistic host; when the mayor refused their demand for support they surrounded the city. Somerset's letters show that at this time he was hopelessly out of touch with the situation. He continued to insist on appeasement. The siege of Exeter began while the government still hoped to remedy the situation by such stratagems as sending spies among the rebels to emphasise 'the terror of comytting treason, the feare of a kyng's execution'.

It was not until about 10 July that Somerset took the rebellion seriously enough to begin trying to divert some of his forces to help Russell. His answer to their articles, written on behalf of the king on 8 July, was a last attempt to persuade them of the error into which they had been led and to overawe them by the threat of vengeance. Meanwhile Exeter was under siege and because the government's forces were so heavily committed elsewhere six weeks went by before Russell could relieve it. The city was able to defy the rebels during that time because loyalty to the crown overcame religious conviction. There was a tradition of religious conservatism in Exeter. Hooker, who provides an eyewitness account of the siege, explains that the party 'of the old stamp and of the Romish religion' was larger than the Protestant group; on the other hand,

the magistrates and chieftains of the city albeit they were not fully resolved and satisfied in religion yet they not respecting that but chiefly their dutifulness to the king and commonwealth, nothing liked the rebellion . . . but . . . do all things to defend the city and themselves against their rebellious attempts.

During the siege the citizens maintained contact with Russell through spies, but they were always in danger of being betrayed by one of their own number. A hundred citizens made a covenant to be about the city day and night to prevent any treachery. A plan by the Catholic party to allow the rebels in at a postern gate of the castle was only just discovered in time and two days before the city's deliverance the Catholics tried to raise a riot in the streets. Hooker emphasises the tension between the two religious groups: when the mayor held a muster of all the commons in armour at the Guildhall rioting nearly broke out.

There were several violent clashes with the besiegers. When they tried to set fire to the gates the citizens used their ordnance against them charged with

'greate bagges of flynte stones and hayle shote'. A mine laid by the rebels under the city wall had to be flooded by a tinner. By the beginning of August there was danger of famine and the commons were 'verie impaciente to endure the countynual barking of their hungrie bellies'. Morale was maintained by careful provision for poor relief organised by the mayor and aldermen.

Early in July Russell had advanced to Honiton, but, short of money and men, he felt thoroughly insecure; 'having but a very small guard about him', says Hooker, 'he lived in more fear than was feared, for the rebels daily increased and his company decreased and shrank away and he not altogether assured of them which remained'. On 12 July Somerset had to report to Russell that the horsemen and footmen under Lord Grey that he had promised had been sent instead to deal with a 'sturr here in Bucks and Oxfordshire by instigacon of sundery preists for these matyers of religion'. Somerset was now alarmed; the rebellion in the west took second place to the new (and as we shall see, frighteningly widespread) disturbances nearer the capital. But he no longer underestimated the extent of disloyalty in the west and appreciated Russell's anxiety and caution. He advised him not to trust the local gentry 'onles ye knowe them fully perswayded for the matier in contraversie of relygon'; he should 'wink at the matter' of Sir John Arundell, who refused to bring forces to Russell's assistance from Dorset.

Russell, left to fend for himself, managed to get backing from three Exeter merchants to raise money through merchants of Taunton and Bristol. But his most serious problem remained the unwillingness of the men of Dorset and Somerset to join his army [Doc. 16, p. 156]. He maintained in a letter to the Council on 18 July that, with only 1,000 footmen and 700 horses at the maximum, he could neither relieve the city nor resist a rebel advance. He constantly urged Somerset to send more forces. The Protector returned promises of assistance but again was forced to change his plans: the 'mayne force', at one time intended for the west under **Lord Warwick**, went instead to deal with Kett. By the end of July Somerset's attitude was hardening, or perhaps he was giving way to those on the Council who pressed him to abandon his policy of leniency [Doc. 19, p. 160]. A harsher tone entered his letter to Russell on 27 July [Doc. 16, p. 156].

Russell began his advance on 28 July. He forced an advance party of rebels to retire from Fenny Bridges after two engagements by the River Otter. The second, says Hooker, was 'sharp and cruel': Russell's men were caught at spoil by a new contingent of Cornishmen and 'many of them paid deerlie for their wares'. The rebels lost about 300 on this day. Russell continued his advance on 3 August when Lord Grey at last arrived from Buckinghamshire with his horsemen and 300 Italian mercenaries. This time the rebels defended Clyst St Mary with about 6,000 but again they were forced to abandon their position when the mercenaries fired the houses. The next day the final

**Corthumberland, John Dudley, Duke of, and 1st Dudley Earl of Warwick:** English statesman. As Earl of Warwick he was sent to deal with Kett's Rebellion in 1549 after the failure of the Marquis of Northampton. From late 1549 he held a powerful position as Lord President of the Council. He arranged the marriage of his son to Lady Jane Grey and in cooperation with the young king tried to establish her as Edward's successor on the throne, but his plan failed and he was executed.

battle was fought on Clyst Heath, the besiegers of Exeter were drawn off and defeated, and those who escaped vanished quickly into the West Country lanes.

On 6 August Russell reached the walls of Exeter. The mayor came out to greet him and the king's standard of the red dragon was set up on the city walls. Hooker describes the city's joy; some died, he says, of overeating. Now at last Sir William Herbert arrived with 1,000 men, mainly Welshmen, and they helped gather in food and cattle for the city from the surrounding countryside. Russell followed Somerset's orders that he should make an example of the ringleaders, the more important of whom were to be sent to London, but pardon the common people involved in the rebellion. So Robert Welsh, the vicar of the church of St Thomas, was hanged on a gallows erected on his church tower in his vestments, with 'a holy-water bucket, a sprinkle, a sacring bell, a pair of beads and such other like popish trash hanged about him'. For the next two hundred years, the city commemorated the lifting of its siege with sermons and civic pageantry (Cooper, 2003: 16).

Russell could proclaim victory in Exeter, but, despite his now formidable army, he did not feel sufficiently confident to advance into the disordered far west. The breakdown of local government in Devon and Cornwall had now lasted almost two months. Russell wrote to Somerset that to restore control it would be necessary to land 1,000 men at Plymouth 'at the backs of the rebels'. Then, while he delayed in Exeter during the second week of August, beset by problems of money and supplies, he heard that the rebels had re-established their camp at Sampford Courtenay. He was by this time being pressed by Somerset to dismiss at least some of his forces so that the gentry might be at home to defend the south coast counties. With both the West Country and East Anglia in rebellion, the French declaration of war on 8 August had come at a moment of disturbing internal weakness. In a letter of 14 August Somerset warned that 'yf you shall suffer those rebels to breathe' they might make a further stand or even cooperate with a French invasion.

Somerset was unnecessarily worried since the rebels lacked the organisation to hold Plymouth, which they had taken earlier in the summer, and were not even in contact with the French. But they showed courage and determination in facing the overwhelming royal army of about 8,000 men that marched west from Exeter on 16 August. The final struggle at Sampford Courtenay was prolonged. Arundell caught the royal troops in the rear and it required a threefold attack by Russell, Grey and Herbert in the evening to force the rebels to retire. Many were captured and killed in the chase that followed that night and in the engagements when groups of rebels turned to fight in Somerset and at Okehampton; about 4,000 West Country folk are said to have died at the hands of the royal army.

The rebellion never had a real chance of forcing the government to make concessions in its religious policy, and its suppression was only so prolonged because the western rising coincided with the various 'rebellions of Commonwealth' to the east and north. At another time forces could have reached Exeter much more quickly and the rebellion might not have achieved the proportions or significance it did. Russell certainly faced a difficult task when he was sent to the west in June 1549, though there remain differences of view about how his performance there should be assessed (Willen, 1975: 35–8; Speight, 1996: 1).

## THE CAUSES OF THE REBELLION

The various sets of rebel demands need to be considered in relation to the chronology of the rising. The first list of complaints, drawn up independently of the Cornishmen at Sampford Courtenay, can be reconstructed from the Protector's reply, which was printed on 8 July. The Devon rebels disliked being expected to receive 'common bread' rather than wafers at the mass and they objected to the new form which services took in the Prayer Book. They expected Latin to be retained. They did not want their children to have to wait until they reached years of discretion to be confirmed. They wanted the Act of Six Articles reimposed and all Henry VIII's statutes to be enforced until Edward VI came of age. This first manifesto, in other words, was a lay protest against changes in religious practices and rituals that touched deep emotions in a small inland market town.

Yet already, at this stage of the rebellion, there is good reason to think that more than just religion was involved. In his letter of 26 June Somerset responded to a request from the Devon magistrates for a delay in the execution of a new statute imposing new taxes on goods, including a poll tax on sheep and a tax on the sale of woollen cloth [**Doc. 15, p. 155**]. These taxes had both a fiscal and a social purpose: Somerset needed money for his intended war against the Scots and he wanted to discourage the enclosure which went with large-scale sheep farming. Devon, long an enclosed county, was likely to be hit particularly hard because the rate of the tax on sheep kept on enclosed pasture had been set higher than on those kept on commons. Most Devon farmers kept some sheep. The census of sheep had been scheduled to start on 1 May 1549 and there is evidence that, in some parishes near Exeter at least, the numbering had begun before the rising broke out. 'He had heard of rumours circulating in Devon', Somerset told Russell on 29 June, that 'after the payment for shepe they should paie for theyre geese and pigs and such like'. Rumour-mongering of the kind that affected Lincolnshire in 1536 also seems to have played its part in Devon in 1549.

The second set of articles was drawn up by the combined Devon and Cornish host, probably very soon after the beginning of the siege of Exeter on 2 July (Youings, 1979: 108–9). Its content can be reconstructed from a draft answer written in London. The programme by this stage had become broader and there was an interesting drift away from a purely traditionalist agenda, in particular an emphasis on some of the inadequacies of the parish clergy. They were accused of failing to explain the new liturgy to their flocks and it was implied that their concern to gather fees had led to some withholding baptism and burial services. The Cornish demanded a liturgy neither in English nor in Latin, but in their own language (which was still widely spoken), and it was suggested that the Treason Act of 1534 should be restored. The tax on sheep and cloth was now explicitly mentioned and measures were requested to counter dearth of victuals.

The final version of the rebels' manifesto was prepared later in July. In this case we do have a reliable copy [**Doc. 12, p. 151**]. These articles were sent up to London on 27 July by the correspondent Mr R.L., a gentleman who was at that time at Lord Russell's camp near Ottery St Mary. R.L.'s letter, part of which is reproduced in this volume [**Doc. 13, p. 153**], is a vital source because it gives us some impression of the disputes and confusions which were evidently rife in the rebel camp: 'such diversities of heades there were amonges them that for every kynde of brayn there was one maner of article'. He insisted that the common people were grieved by the impact of inflation, that the priests had their own very specific interests to pursue and that the rebellion had attracted a considerable number of lawless people, those he called the 'seedmen of sedicion'. Some at least regarded the gentry as part of the problem: one King's Bench indictment quoted a very mixed message from some rebels, who in a different manifesto had cried 'kyll all the gentlemen and we wyll have the act of six articles uppe againe and ceremonies as were in kinge henrye theights tyme' (Cooper, 2003: 11). Probably most of those sympathetic to such a message were thinking of outsiders and absentees like Sir Peter Carew, or gentry traitors to the old world like Sir William Godolphin.

It is the impact of the conservative clergy that shows through most clearly in the final manifesto itself. Their dislike of the new theology is evident in the demand that all books of scripture in English should be called in, their sacerdotalism in the insistence on exclusion of laymen from communicating except at Easter and then only in one kind. Whereas there was a new reference to the restoration of abbey lands, three earlier items – the Treasons Act, the sheep tax and food prices – were now omitted. The demand that has caused most debate is number 13, the call for a limitation on the number of servants to be employed by gentlemen. This may have been an expression of resentment at the influence which some gentry, perhaps particularly those who were Protestants, exercised over those they employed. 'They understand

that servynge men be comenly brought up in such civillite that hardly they be made traytours', wrote R.L., 'yt is a comon proverbe that trust servynge man trust gentyll man.'

Later the German exile reformer Martin Bucer told a correspondent abroad that the rebels had gathered up all the copies of the Prayer Book which they could find and burnt them in their camp (MacCulloch, 1996: 430). Dr Mattingly's recent documentary rediscovery of articles setting up a gild in Helston which can quite plausibly be dated to June 1549 would intriguingly suggest that in this key Cornish town rebels were preparing to restore a symbol of traditional lay activism, complete with gild services and prayers for deceased members' souls and a mass in honour of the Five Wounds of Christ, that newly popular late medieval cult which featured on rebel banners in 1536 and 1549 (Mattingly, 1998). It was therefore not surprising that the Council regarded the rebellion as primarily religious in purpose, and that this was the preoccupation of various replies to the rebel demands. The most lengthy was written by an evangelical Devon layman, Philip Nichols: in his most emotive passage Nichols rehearsed the familiar argument that rebellion leads to anarchy. Archbishop Cranmer's tirade was full of his anger at the rebels' presumption in addressing their sovereign so brazenly, as well as their superstitious ignorance about religion (MacCulloch, 1996: 440–1).

The voice of the convinced Protestant who sincerely believed in the new order sounds most clearly in Nichols's tract. In answer to the ambiguous reference to 'our forefathers' in the first article, he put forward the authority of Moses and the prophets; to the councils of the medieval church he opposed the Councils of the Apostles [**Doc. 12, p. 151**]. He then derided the rebels' rash pronouncements against heresy, which he said they did not understand. Cranmer maintained that the first article was traitorous and contradicted in its support for Rome 'the old ancient laws and customs of this realm'. It was inspired, he said, by the priests' desire for benefit of clergy: 'If a priest had slain one of your sons or brethren, that you should have no remedy against him, but only before the bishop.' Nichols took up the theme of the self-interest of the priesthood in his comments on the Six Articles which the rebels would have had restored (article 2). He attacked the 'mischief wrought' by 'their confession auricular' and 'their sacrament of the altare' and descended quickly to crude anticlerical propaganda: with the end of auricular confession 'is cut from them all opportunity of moving men's wives to folly, of enticing men's daughters to lewdness and vice'. Nichols then contrasted the chasteness of clerical marriage, advocated in the scriptures as 'holy and honourable afore God', with the fornication practised by priests. He argued that the Six Articles constituted a temporary measure now abrogated by consent of the whole realm through parliament.



It was not difficult for Cranmer to ridicule the conservatism expressed by articles 3 and 8. 'Had you rather', asked Cranmer, 'be like pies or parrots, that be taught to speak, and yet understand not one word what they say, than be true christian men that pray unto God in heart and faith?' Surely, they both scornfully asked, there were more Cornishmen who understood English than Latin. Nichols by contrast recognised and commented on the earlier Cornish demand for a Cornish liturgy: if they had made a petition in humble terms to the king to have the new service translated into Cornish, he told the rebels, they might have achieved their purpose. 'But', he went on, harking back to their presumption, 'we Cornishmen utterly refuse this new English were too much for a parishioner to say to his curate, or a neighbour to his constable; much more too much it is for subjects so to say to any rulers or governors.' Cranmer tried to show the rebels that the Catholic rituals they were used to were much more like the games and pastimes of the Christmas season than the new service which was based on scripture: 'the priest speaking aloud in Latin, and some walking up and down in the church, some saying other prayers in Latin, and none understandeth other'.

The government writers set about condemning the ceremonial conservatism (article 4) and supposed superstition (article 7) of the rebels by citing biblical passages and decrees of the early church. Pope Honorius III, Cranmer agreed, had decreed that the sacrament should be reserved in order that the priest could take it to the sick, but he had not mentioned hanging it over the altar. This, Nichols maintained, was merely a convenient solution to the problem of keeping the sacrament when 'by negligence of the curates and parsons, some times it moulded and putrified, sometimes it was eaten up with myce or other vermin'. It was never 'decreed by any constitution of the Church'. Yet the western rebels would have had all who would not consent to this practice to 'dye lyke heretykes'. To refute the demand for communion by the laity no more than once a year (article 5) Nichols quoted extensively from the decrees of general Councils to show that 'Christian men ought to go very often to the most holy communion'. Cranmer attacked holy water (article 7) as a superstition fabricated by the papacy. He quoted the second commandment to show that image worship was idolatry. The ninth article, on masses for the dead, touches on a crucial doctrinal issue. It is interesting that it relates to a belief that impinged closely on the lives of both laity and clergy. For laypeople the naming of lost friends and relations in church offered comfort and hope; for clergy the dissolutions of 1548 had deprived them of a valuable vested interest. Nichols answered this article by expounding predestination doctrine: 'As for change of God's sentence and judgment there can none be after this life. But (as the scripture saith) where every tree falleth there shall it bee.'

The rebels' objection to the open Bible (article 10), clearly inspired by the priests, provided Nichols with another opportunity to display his militant evangelical faith. He vigorously attacked the Catholic priests who had led the people to 'embrace superstition and idolatory for true worship of God, the puddleway and suddes of mennes tradicions for the pure and clere fountain of the Apostles' ordinances'. The rebels' insistence that Dr Moreman should be sent to minister to them (article 11) was probably due to the energy he had shown when, as vicar of Menheniot in Henry VIII's reign, he had kept a school there. He had been active in teaching the people the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Creed in accordance with Cromwell's injunctions. But Cranmer severely reminded the rebels that it was not the office of a godly prince to give the people teachers who through their Catholicism would corrupt them. In the 1530s it had been possible for Cromwell to activate both conservatives and radicals in improving the people's religious knowledge. But by 1549, as the attitudes on both sides of this conflict illustrate, the lines of division had hardened.

Analysis of the rebel articles, then, suggests that this rising was principally religious but that economic discontents were also involved. A closer look at the leadership of the rising in the context of the social and religious structure of western society will enable us to extend this argument. It is worth noting first that Professor Youings claims very plausibly that she may have discovered 'the real leader of the rebels for whom we have hitherto sought in vain, the compiler of the fifteen articles and the one man capable of holding the disparate company together' (Youings, 1979: 121). This was Robert Welsh, the vicar of the parish of St Thomas just outside Exeter. He was a strong man, a good wrestler and a good shot with the longbow and the crossbow. More important he was a Cornishman, a native of Penryn; thus he was the ideal man to bridge the traditionally wide gap between the people of Cornwall and of Devon, and unite them in a common cause. He was clearly a man to whom the rebels looked, most of them far from home, during the long and arduous siege of Exeter. Lord Russell singled him out for trial by martial law and execution. He was charged, John Hooker tells us, with persuading 'the people to the contemnyng of the reformed religion accordinge to the kinges proceedinges' and with being a 'captayne and pryncypall dealer in the cause of the rebellion'.

Clearly there were others besides Welsh who directed the siege of Exeter. It is impossible to account for the length of the siege and the effectiveness with which Russell's soldiers were beaten off unless one supposes a degree of yeoman and minor gentry leadership. Some of the leading men of this kind of status, like Humphrey Arundell and John Winslade, have already been mentioned. Among the others were Thomas or William Underhill (accounts

of his first name differ) and William Segar, who both came from families of some substance in Sampford Courtenay. Little more can be discovered about such men but there are tantalising hints that the leadership of the rebellion bore some relation to the Courtenay affinity, the clan whose conservative manoeuvrings in the south-west had come to nothing in the 1530s. Robert Smyth of St Germans, for example, who was allegedly involved shortly before 1549 in an assault on the house of the Protestant vicar of St Stephens-by-Saltash, was married to a Courtenay.

Some of the rebel articles may be adduced in favour of the argument that, though it is now hard to document, there may have been a polarisation in the West Country in 1549 between a clique of convinced evangelical gentry on the one hand and the remains of the Courtenay clan on the other. Philip Nichols enjoyed the patronage of Sir Peter Carew and was the antagonist in print of the Exeter canon Richard Crispin, whose release from the Tower was sought in the rebel articles. Why did the rebels call for the pardon and recall of Cardinal Reginald Pole? He had been closely associated with Henry Courtenay, the Marquis of Exeter, who was executed in 1538, ostensibly for sedition, but in reality for being a possible national rallying-point against the changes of Henry's Reformation (Cooper, 2003: 148–60). Crispin had been a chaplain to the marquis and had been involved in 1534 in the affair of the nun of Kent. John Bury, one of those who signed the articles, had been in the marquis's service. According to R.L., he 'setteth forth the matter of the Cardinal so much, as indeed he maketh no other matter'. Two gentry from the magisterial class, who did their utmost to treat with the rebels and certainly regarded them very differently from Carew, also had Courtenay connections. Sir Thomas Denys was accused by Thomas Cromwell in 1537 of hanging at the Courtenay sleeve. Anthony Harvey was a former surveyor of the marquis and some time after the rebellion was to be the dowager marchioness's sole executor.

The division of West Country society in 1549 undoubtedly ran deep. It seems very likely that family alliances and political memories played a part in sustaining this rebellion. But there seems little doubt also that it drew its popular strength from people's fears that the government was deliberately destroying traditional spiritual ways and from rumours about new taxes which had either been enacted or were simply imagined.

# 6

---

## Robert Kett and the ‘Rebellions of Commonwealth’

### PRELUDE TO REBELLION, 1548

Traditionally the story of the other commotions of 1549 was told about an event in Norfolk, which was portrayed as having echoes elsewhere but was essentially a single tale of a rising called ‘Kett’s Rebellion’ after the leader of the great camp on Mousehold Heath near Norwich, **Robert Kett**. The story was thus told in isolation, partly because of its dramatic and uniquely tragic outcome outside Norwich, partly because we have a flood of detailed if mostly hostile narrative about it, and partly because, as we will see, there were good reasons deliberately to forget the scale and range of what happened. This, however, hides the real shape of events, which might more properly be called by a name which contemporaries used for them in the immediate aftermath of the turmoil: the ‘rebellions of Commonwealth’. Their most recent historian, Amanda Jones, is the first person since the sixteenth century successfully to take an overview of the whole phenomenon, and what she reveals is an astonishingly widespread crisis which involved twenty-five counties beyond Devon and Cornwall: in effect, all lowland England as far north as Seamer overlooking the valley of the Derwent in the North Riding of Yorkshire, with the interesting exception of the capital, London. Jones has unearthed evidence of no fewer than eighteen other camps besides the great assembly at Mousehold (plus two further camps set up by the Devon and Cornwall rebels), and we know of nine popular petitions drawn up by such assemblies, in addition to the six which survive from the Western Rebellion and the petition from Kett’s assembly at Mousehold. Given the fragmentary nature of the evidence, this list of camps and petitions is likely to be far from complete (Jones, 2003: 1–5). It was not surprising that in the wake of such a catastrophe for England’s governors, Protector Somerset was forced to resign power by his infuriated colleagues.

**Kett, Robert:** Norfolk yeoman. Led a rebellion in 1549 with early success. Blockaded Norwich with 16,000 men but was ultimately defeated and executed.

Just as in the West Country stirs, the very widespread commotions of summer 1549 in southern and eastern England had their origins in unrest in 1548, and also, as Jones argues, probably in one specific incident, the equivalent of Body's murder at Helston. This was a major outbreak of riot which centred on the Hertfordshire village of Northaw, but which had a wide catchment area in Hertfordshire, Essex and Middlesex. It began on Whitsunday (20 May in 1548), six weeks after Body's murder at Helston, and only four days after most of the Cornish rebels had been pardoned. It was directed against the lord of the manor of Northaw and government financial official, Sir William Cavendish (auditor of the court of Augmentations, and ancestor of the present Duke of Devonshire): Cavendish had made himself unpopular over the previous few years and had now obtained a royal commission to enclose the very extensive common land in the area. Over the next few days large crowds protested against his scheme and also devastated his rabbit warrens, allegedly killing nearly two thousand rabbits and even blowing up the burrows with gunpowder. Just like John Reseygh in the 1548 commotions at Helston and anticipating the 1549 Devon rebels, the protesters claimed that such a far-reaching commission had no validity while King Edward was still a minor; according to one prosecution witness, they also anticipated the events of 1549 by setting up a camp on the disputed commons. The royal commissioners (who included such prominent figures as Sir Roger Cholmeley, Chief Baron of the Exchequer) fled the scene, but not before Cholmeley had promised the protesters further investigation and action. There is no evidence of serious consequences for the participants, even though ninety-five of them were indicted in the courts of King's Bench and Star Chamber; there is evidence that the prominent evangelical government officials John Gates and Anthony Denny favoured their cause. Many of them had already been involved in a major confrontation with Cavendish in 1544 over the same common land (Jones, 2003: ch. 2, appendices 1–3). The eighteenth-century historian John Strype anticipated Dr Jones in seeing the Northaw riot as 'the first insurrection' in the rebellions of Commonwealth, although his vague phrasing in talking about it gave the impression that it had actually happened in 1549 (Jones, 2003: 79n; MacCulloch, 1996: 429n). The affair was certainly remembered as significant by Tudor politicians and administrators. Thirty years later in 1579 another enclosure riot broke out in Northaw, and attracted an extraordinary degree of worry and a flurry of action from the Privy Council and local justices; this time, two men were hanged (Jones, 2003: 334–9).

Little more than a week after the Northaw confrontation of Whitsun 1548, Protector Somerset decided on issuing a commission for investigating illegal enclosures in the Midlands counties to the north, led by the idealistic evangelical civil servant John Hales, who introduced three bills on enclosure

into parliament in 1548. By July, Hales was in turn having to defend himself against charges that his commission was stirring up unrest in the Midlands. There were several other stirrings of riot and disorder from Hampshire to Northamptonshire during the summer and autumn; at Glaphorn in Northamptonshire, there were repeated disturbances which like those in Cornwall centred on protests against religious change (Jones, 2003: 79n, 190–2). All this set the scene for the mayhem of spring and summer the following year.

## THE COMMOTIONS, MAY–AUGUST 1549

In May 1549, trouble about the enclosure of common land started breaking out in Wiltshire, Somerset and Bristol; the protests were enlarged by crassly violent retaliation particularly by Sir William Herbert of Wilton. A mark of how widespread and sudden they then became is that different contemporary commentators confidently said that they first began variously in Northamptonshire, Suffolk or Kent (MacCulloch, 1996: 429–31). Protector Somerset then frantically tried to undo the harm done through the initial harshness of the local authorities by ostentatiously seeking conciliation with the protesters; a royal proclamation at the end of May promising redress of grievances may have been one factor in producing a temporary calm. The government's attention was then abruptly diverted to the far more threatening outbreak in the West Country.

Throughout a dangerously sunny June, southern England outside the new Devon–Cornwall rebellion remained in what the Earl of Arundel in Surrey described as 'a quavering quiet', but this peace suddenly and dramatically collapsed at the beginning of July. On 1 July the government summoned a long list of nobility and gentry from the Thames Valley and the Home Counties to meet at or send representatives to Windsor Castle, probably in order to create an army to go westward. It may have been popular observation of these agitated preparations among the better sort that precipitated what happened next. By 3 July the chronicler Wriothesley records that the lord mayor of London took part in special watches in the city 'because of the rebellion in divers places of this realme'. By 5 July, Protector Somerset was having to write a personal letter in reply to a petition prepared for crowds in Essex by a leader who had taken the representative name 'William Essex'. By 7 July Somerset was sending a letter to 'divers unlawfull assemblies' in Oxfordshire, desperately offering pardon for their actions (Shagan, 1999: 62–3).

It was too late. By the end of that nightmare first week of July, the action taken in the Essex assemblies was being imitated further north in Norfolk,

the area which would leave the lasting record in the history of the events. On 20 June 1549 a crowd from three villages around Attleborough in Norfolk had thrown down the hedges of a local landlord who had enclosed part of their common land. This proved not to be the last echo of the May stirs, but the local foretaste of the new wave of national unrest. The former abbey church in the nearby market town of Wymondham had been dedicated to Our Lady and Thomas Becket, and between 6 and 8 July the whole neighbourhood gathered at Wymondham for a play which had once commemorated the feast of the translation of Becket's relics (now abrogated by Henry VIII's orders, as part of his break with the Pope). Crowds threw down hedges in nearby villages, including those of John Flowerdew, one of many successful lawyers among Norfolk gentry. Flowerdew was unpopular in Wymondham because at the dissolution of the abbey he had begun demolishing the eastern parts of the abbey church, those not used by the town-folk. The inhabitants wanted to preserve the whole church for the town's services, and had in fact bought the eastern parts from the crown.

The manor of Wymondham was held of John Dudley, Earl of Warwick by Robert Kett, whose family had settled there in 1483. He was a tanner by trade but he and his brother William, a butcher, were also substantial landowners. Flowerdew hoped to exploit the commons' mood of aggressiveness by persuading them to throw down the hedges of an enclosure of common land Kett had made nearby. His intention was to pursue his feud with the Ketts, who were closely associated with the church he had looted. But the commons found in Robert Kett a leader rather than another victim. Kett agreed that the common land he had enclosed should be thrown open again and, though his own interest in the enclosure conflict clearly lay with the landlords, said he would stand by the rioters until they had obtained their rights. He now showed himself an inspired leader. He decided to march to Norwich and rapidly gained support on the way. He arrived outside the city on 10 July to find that the news of his coming had led some of the poorer citizens to destroy the hedge round the town close, where the freemen grazed their cattle. By 12 July he had set up camp on Mousehold Heath, a large open hillside just outside the city walls. Within a few days the camp was said to number 16,000.

So with astonishing speed from 7 July and during the following week, mass uprisings had swept through precisely the areas from which gentry had been summoned to Windsor on 1 July – the Thames Valley, the Home Counties, and also north to the Midlands and the furthest reaches of East Anglia. Much will probably remain concealed from us for ever. We only know of the northernmost rising, that during July and August at Seamer near Scarborough, because the martyrologist John Foxe was given papers about it and chose to write it up in his *Book of Martyrs* as an example of the disorder

which popish rebels could cause – he could do so because unusually for 1549, four people were murdered by the rebels, who also proclaimed their hatred of the new evangelical religion (Jones, 2003: 294–301). Similarly, it was only the recognition of the notebook of a Buckinghamshire JP or Clerk of the Peace from 1549 by the second of the authors of this book which revealed the scale of events in Buckinghamshire. It has now been thoroughly analysed by Dr Jones, revealing that 134 men from twenty different parishes in the county and a few from elsewhere were bound over to keep the peace late that July (Jones, 2003: 201–5). Their rising was paired with the rising in Oxfordshire, and a large number of those involved seem to have marched on Oxford just as the westerners marched on Exeter and the East Anglians did on Norwich (see Map 3). The rising in this area was (as we have seen) serious enough to cause the government to divert the army intended for the West Country under Lord Grey to quell the disturbance. The only comparative success for the government was in keeping London quiet: here the city authorities were experienced in quelling disturbances in this uniquely large and volatile city. There was also a good deal of support in London for the programme of religious reformation which the government was promoting, and there were none of the agrarian grievances like enclosures which could rally popular anger. Dr Jones notes one very significant feature of summer 1549 in relation to London: we have an abundance of records about the administrative measures taken and the general situation in the capital. Clearly there was little to conceal afterwards in London, in contrast to the generally very scanty survival of information from elsewhere (Jones, 2003: 264–78).

Mousehold camp was only one of several in East Anglia. In Norfolk, another camp in the north-west at Castle Rising moved to Downham Market, where a camp was in existence by 15 July; a further camp, apparently short-lived, was set up in central Norfolk at Hingham (Russell, 1859: 72–3). In Suffolk, by 14 July a camp had been set up outside Ipswich and was dispensing justice to the people. Another camp at Bury St Edmunds probably came into existence about the same time. In East Anglia, it was only at Cambridge and Great Yarmouth that the authorities were at once able to halt the rising. In Kent 'the rebellion of Commonwealth' set up camps at Canterbury and outside Maidstone, under a leader called Latimer (no connection with Bishop Hugh Latimer), who styled himself 'the Commonwealth of Kent', and his influence extended to stirs in Surrey and Sussex (Alsop, 1985). These camps were so characteristic of the commotions that already on 19 July, in the Thames Valley, Sir Thomas Smith described those involved as 'the camp men' (MacCulloch, 1984a: 47).

The gentry were caught unawares: many were away in London or had obeyed the royal summons to Windsor. Those who were at home were



powerless in the face of massive demonstrations that show unmistakable signs of coordination and planning right across lowland England. The sites chosen for the camps were predictable ones often associated with government. Bury was the capital of west Suffolk, as Norwich was of eastern and central Norfolk and Canterbury of Kent. The insurgents in east Suffolk moved their original camp outside Ipswich, at some stage in July, to the village of Melton near Woodbridge, a long-established administrative centre of the dean and chapter of Ely's liberty of St Audrey. More than a thousand people seem to have camped at Melton: one foraging expedition brought back 320 sheep and 4,000 rabbits (MacCulloch, 1984a: 44). Led by tradesmen and yeomen, the countrymen of Norfolk and Suffolk set up a remarkable quadrilateral of camps in July 1549, challenging the traditional rulers of these shires: unlike the Pilgrims of 1536, or even the Devon and Cornwall rebels of 1549, they did not seek local gentry or nobility to front their cause. For many years after there was talk of 'the camping time' of 1549: indeed, as late as 1596, Kentish people were talking of setting up a camp to remedy local grievances (Walter, 1985: 92). Kett's Norwich camp was the best organised, but the full national dimensions of the movement need to be understood if we are to see its real significance.

In Norwich Nicholas Sotherton's narrative provides us with our main account of events, but its very detail may be deceptive: throughout it, his account is designed to minimise, explain away or obscure the close involvement of the city authorities with the commotions. In default of much alternative account, much of what follows is seen through Sotherton's eyes. He tells of disagreement about how to deal with a camp of demonstrators who were perhaps greater in numbers than the population within the walls. Those who, like Thomas Codd the mayor, urged moderation, argued that it was unlawful to collect a force without the king's command even to put down rebellion; it was also impractical, since within the city a substantial number were sympathetic to Kett. So Codd, the popular evangelical preacher Robert Watson and Thomas Aldrich, a man much respected and, says Sotherton, 'of good wisdom and honesty', did their best to cooperate with Kett in his demands for provisions for his camp from the city. Sotherton naturally emphasises the restraining influence they were able to have on the hotheads of the camp who looked for further chances to riot, but the reality may have been somewhat different, and now hidden from us. The organisation of the camp and its commissariat depended on the authority of Kett. Codd, Aldrich and Watson, though, also signed his commission to men to bring in all manner of cattle and provision of victual, and Codd and Aldrich signed the list of demands which Kett drew up to present to Protector Somerset [**Doc. 17, p. 156**]. It was specifically to Watson, as the city accounts reveal, that the government in Westminster addressed a 'comysson . . . under the gret sele

of England for reformation of dyvers thyngs' which arrived on 13 July: this occupied the city council thereafter a whole day and night of discussion (Russell, 1859: 39).

On 21 July York Herald arrived from the government to offer pardon to the rebels if they dispersed. Now the city authorities, says Sotherton, felt strong enough to act on their own. The mayor and gentry prepared to defend the city. Aldermen and their servants kept watch at the gates and six pieces of ordnance were hauled into position on the walls. The insurgents meanwhile had brought in cannon from coastal defences. On the night the herald arrived they began their bombardment. This was ineffective because they could do little harm from the top of the hill and when they brought the cannon down nearer the city walls the next morning they feared to use it as they were within range of the city shot. The next day (22 July), the camp men called for a truce. But when the aldermen refused this they made a full assault armed with spears, swords and pitchforks. Sotherton's attempt to excuse the failure of city archers to repel this attack may seem unconvincing, a reflection of his characteristic desire to vilify the rebel camp, but it may also reflect a real terror of the time, that suddenly all social conventions were being questioned amid the rapid march of events:

So impudent were they and so desperate that of they vagabond boyes (wyth reverens spoken) brychles and bear arssyde came among the thickett of the arrows and gathered them up when some of the arrows stuck fast in theyr leggs and other parts and did therewith most shamefully turne up their bare tayles agenst those which did shoote, which soe dysmayed the archers that it tooke theyr hart from them.

By that evening Norwich was in the insurgents' hands and the herald had left for London, after a second failure in proclaiming pardon to the contemptuous crowd. Kett ordered the arrest of Codd, Aldrich and Watson, who were now kept prisoner at Surrey Place, the late Earl of Surrey's mansion on Mousehold Heath of which they had taken possession. But in view of their influence in the city, they were allowed some liberty and were treated decently.

The government had much less difficulty in quelling the Suffolk rising. Sir Anthony Wingfield, a local magnate who was also a privy councillor, managed to persuade those encamped at Melton that the king would pardon them. They went home full of hopes of better times. Most of those taken prisoner were soon discharged and the only execution in Suffolk was in connection with the bridgehead that the people at Downham had established at Brandon on the Norfolk border. Yet twenty years later a Lavenham man spoke bitterly of the events of 1549: 'we wyll not be deceyved as we were at

the laste rysinge, for then we were promised ynoughe and more then ynoughe. But the more was an hawltier' (MacCulloch, 1984a: 45–7).

**Northampton, William Parr, Marquis of:** Protestant nobleman initially sent to deal with Kett's Rebellion in 1549. His mishandling of the situation turned a popular demonstration into full-scale rebellion.

Neutralising Kett and his camp was not so simple. An expeditionary force under the **Marquis of Northampton** reached Norwich on 30 July: his mishandling of the situation was unique in the various confrontations with the south-eastern rebels that summer. The presence in his company of several of the leading Suffolk gentry suggests that he had succeeded in neutralising the Bury St Edmunds camp on his way: they would hardly have left their own neighbourhood if western Suffolk was still in commotion. Northampton wasted time: he did not take any immediate initiative towards Mousehold but allowed himself to be feasted and entertained by Augustine Steward, the deputy acting for Mayor Codd during the emergency. The Italian mercenaries Northampton had brought with him 'rested in their armore uppon cushions and pillows'. Meanwhile the camp men managed to capture one of these Italians, 'gorgeously apparellled', who was hanged over the walls of Surrey Place, stripped naked to show both contempt for his foreign finery and fury at the employment of mercenaries against Englishmen.

After frantic strengthening of the city defences during the night, Northampton's trumpeter declared a pardon from the walls to any who would give themselves up. Only about twenty came down the hill. The Mousehold army then made a determined attack into the city and a bloody battle followed around the precincts of the cathedral close. St Martin-at-Palace parish register records the burial of thirty-six men who died; among them was Lord Sheffield, killed by a butcher named Fulke. Northampton left the city in disarray. He had succeeded in turning a vast popular demonstration into a full-scale rebellion, when everywhere else the commotions had been defused.

Panic followed among the gentry: 'Some fled in theyr doublets and hosen and some in there lightest garments beste to escape and make haste away', relates Sotherton. Once more the rebels were in control of the city and during the next three weeks Kett maintained his camp at Mousehold with the enforced cooperation of the Norwich city leaders. He was sufficiently confident to try to extend his support by winning over Yarmouth. First he sent a small force to persuade the residents to join him. When they refused, he attacked the town, but he achieved little apart from the destruction of some harbour work in progress; thirty rebels were taken prisoner and six of their guns were lost. It was Kett's first setback.

Meanwhile the government had issued commissions to all shires around Norfolk for levying troops; the Earl of Warwick was put in command of the new force, said to be of 12,000 men, again including many mercenaries, which arrived outside Norwich on 23 August. A band of rebels met Warwick's herald and rode with him through the city to Mousehold where

the camp was ready in good order to hear his speech. 'They put of their caps and cryed God Save King Edward', says Sotherton. The herald offered pardon to all except Robert Kett himself. Despite this the rebel leader was prepared to go with the herald to meet the Earl of Warwick. But some of his followers pulled their leader back, saying, according to Holinshed, that the man 'was not the king's herald but someone made out by the gentlemen in such a gaie coate, patched together of vestments and church stuffe, being sent only to deceive them, in offering them pardon'. Distrust of the herald turned to anger and tumult when the cry went up that a boy had been killed by one of the soldiers. The moment when peace had seemed possible had passed.

The next day Warwick and his army entered Norwich and hanged some of the rebels whom they found in the city. The rebels in a daring coup on the night of 23 August captured some of Warwick's ordnance, attacking the carts with staves and pitchforks, and they were able to use these guns for the next three days. Otherwise, their tactics against the army in Norwich were arson at night and back-street skirmishing in the daytime, and at first Warwick's army seemed as vulnerable and confused as Northampton's had been. However, on 26 August more than a thousand more foreign mercenaries arrived and Warwick had by then cut some of the camp's supply lines. Kett perhaps then realised that the tide was turning against him. According to Sotherton, he became desperate and 'trusted uppon faynid prophecies which were phantastically devised':

The countrie gruffes, Hob, Dick and Hick  
with clubs and clowted shoone,  
Shall fill up Dussindale with blood  
of slaughtered bodies soon.

This was the prophecy, Holinshed reports, which Kett followed on the evening of 26 August, although it foretold the disaster which was to overwhelm the rebels at Dussindale the next day. The well-fortified positions at Mousehold were abandoned and fired and the ordnance was moved to Dussindale, where trenches were dug and a defensive position prepared. Warwick was thus presented with a magnificent chance to use his cavalry. Sir Edmund Knyvet was sent to ask the rebels to yield, but their defiance was emphasised by shots which wounded the royal standard-bearer and killed his horse from under him. However, this was their last success. Professional soldiers quickly broke their front line, and Sotherton reports that Kett panicked and fled, only to be quickly arrested next morning. When the news of his capture spread, the continuing desperate rebel resistance crumbled. Perhaps as many as 3,000 of Kett's forces were killed.

Kett was condemned for treason on 26 November and hanged at Norwich Castle on 7 December. His brother William was hanged from Wymondham steeple. Although Neville states that 300 in all were executed, there is only clear evidence of forty-nine paying the penalty for rebellion. For Kett the turning-point had been the arrival of the herald on 21 July, with his summons to the camp to disperse. Up till then he believed in the government's sympathy. In the disillusion that followed he could not prevent the unprovoked attack on the city. The extinction of the rebellion became only a matter of time (Land, 1977: ch. 19).

The disorders of Edward VI's reign did not end at Dussindale. Popular unrest continued: the Privy Council register reveals commotions in 1550 in the west, Nottinghamshire, Kent and elsewhere, which were serious enough for the men of the dissolved Boulogne garrison to be distributed in the disaffected counties. In spring 1551 there was more widespread trouble, and in August 1551 insurrection began in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland, by certain 'light knaves, horsecoursers and craftsmen', as was reported to Lord Admiral Clinton. In the short term, the summer commotions led to a very different sort of upheaval: the overthrow of Protector Somerset by his colleagues on the Privy Council. His efforts to bring the commotions to an end by conciliating the rebels of eastern England had been bitterly resented by many local rulers, and events seemed to prove that his habitual arrogance was not balanced by success in government. The Earl of Warwick's return from Norfolk provided a convincing leader for opposition from a curious combination of evangelicals and religious conservatives, united only by their conviction that Somerset must go.

Matters were brought to a head at the end of August by French raids which captured various forts around Boulogne, a symbol of national pride and of old King Henry's victory over the hereditary national enemy. There were even strong rumours that, after this defeat, Somerset was willing to hand back the whole of Henry's great prize to France. Late in September Somerset made the bad mistake of quarrelling with Warwick. He brusquely refused extra rewards above their wages to the English and foreign troops who had been operating in East Anglia; he had already annoyed Warwick by the tight financial rein which he had kept over the expedition. This was coupled with a proclamation in the name of King, Protector and Council on 30 September peremptorily ordering all the soldiers out of London to various assigned posts, now that their wages had been paid. Within a day or two, Warwick had summoned dissident councillors to meet without Somerset, and he had also ensured that if necessary he would have the backing of the foreign mercenaries whom he had brought from East Anglia. Sensing the build-up of forces against him, Somerset panicked; in the end it was he rather than the dissident councillors who escalated the situation when on 5 October he

openly tried to use force to maintain his position. After that, it took just over a week to persuade him that he had gone too far and that he had no substantial backing: the end of his Protectorship followed, to general relief that yet more blood had not been spilled (MacCulloch, 1996: 443–6).

What survived in public memory about the events of 1549 in south-eastern England was an emphatically partial account in more senses than one. They were largely reduced to the account of a single rebellion in Norfolk which was given a name to preserve it as a historical event: Kett's Rebellion. This was fixed by Alexander Neville's published narrative, encouraged by Archbishop Parker, which represented a hugely successful gamble by the Elizabethan Privy Council: in 1582 it ordered the bishops to make sure that the new second edition of Neville should be used in all grammar and free schools in the kingdom to teach Latin prose style, in tandem with two other works of patriotically Protestant Latin historical verse by the schoolmaster Christopher Ocland which were designed to teach poetical composition. This was an imaginative idea, to interest school pupils in their Latin through what was in effect contemporary history (one of Ocland's poems included detailed praise of current privy councillors!). It was also a bold attempt to impose an official view of the three-decades-old crisis on the schoolchildren of England, complete with stern abuse of the rebels and careful exoneration of the Norwich civic authorities, and the effort paid off. It took a modern historian's chance encounters with fleeting backward glances in later legal cases to begin revealing the true scale of events, an investigation which has subsequently been much extended by Ethan Shagan and Amanda Jones (MacCulloch, 1984a; Shagan, 1999; Jones, 2003). This does not simply reflect the fact that the other components of the events were resolved largely without bloodshed and so were less memorable: this was more like a deliberate communal act of forgetting. The events of 1549 were deeply traumatic for all those who claimed leadership in English society, from the Privy Council down to those who had led the camps. Alliances in Tudor politics would never be the same again (see below, Chapter 10).

## THE CAUSES OF THE COMMOTIONS

One major cause of the commotions was very specific to the times: the character and policies of Protector Somerset himself. Somerset's real concern to protect the commons from exploitation is proved by the private Act of Parliament he promoted to give security to copyholders on his own estates, and by his repeated action against his own financial interests in reversing enclosures and other administrative measures which had aroused local protests in several different places (Jones, 2003: 97, 251, 285; Shagan, 1999:

276). He also established a court of requests in his own house to give justice to the poor. The idea that the government supported the commons in redressing their own grievances, that the 'Good Duke' was on their side, encouraged them to take action into their own hands: the apparently muted outcome of the great stirs around Northaw in 1548 would not have gone unnoticed.

Ethan Shagan's publication of a sequence of nine letters addressed in July 1549 to various gatherings of protesters in southern England sharpens our understanding of the extraordinary nature of Somerset's policy, and explains why his fellow-councillors felt that he had to be removed (Shagan, 1999). The letters are written variously in the name of the king, the whole Privy Council or of Somerset himself, but unmistakably they were all created by the Protector's secretariat, and all reflect his policy towards what was going on. They reveal Somerset spearheading an astonishing series of concessions to the July 1549 insurgents. Before Shagan's insight into the importance of these letters, glimpses of the concessions had been easy to dismiss or minimise in other surviving sources; they are to be found most explicitly in the charges laid against the Protector by his fellow-councillors after his fall in October 1549, and hence they have often been dismissed as hostile propaganda.

The letters used a traditional rhetoric of hierarchy and obedience, and they said much about the monstrousness of rebellion, yet this rhetoric was in fact radically redeployed to provide boundaries for constructive dialogue between the crown and its people. Dialogue involved the presentation of lists of grievances from the various camps, like those sent from Mousehold. When the Suffolk commotioners sent up their demands, Somerset replied 'indeed we will not dissemble with you, we see them for the most part founded upon great and just causes'; he even claimed that he had already thought of most of the demands himself. Given this robust affirmation that the insurgents had a point in their protests, another central feature of the dialogue was Somerset's insistence in various letters that the commons amply deserved pardon for their risings. This was not the disingenuous offer of pardons which Henry VIII had made back in 1536–37 in the Pilgrimage of Grace; that had been the prelude to betrayal by government. Now the reality of the pardons was an urgent, even obsessive theme of the letters. A collective Privy Council letter offered Suffolk camps the option of an extra pardon just in case they did not disperse by the date stated in their first pardon. This was especially significant, because it was precisely the technicality which had enabled Henry VIII to justify much of his punitive cruelty in the north in 1537, and it implies there was a widespread popular memory of that betrayal. Some Hampshire insurgents were nervous because there were rumours that their collective pardon did not cover them individually.

Somerset reassured them in the most extravagant language: 'if his Majesty might gain a million of gold to breake one jot of it with the poorest creature in all his realm, he would never' – 'million' was not a common word to use at the time. The Protector promised a twenty-crown reward for the arrest of any rumour-bearer (Shagan, 1999: 53–63). Pardons issued in July extended as far north as Northamptonshire (Jones, 2003: 196).

One might dismiss this as window-dressing by a politician who liked to talk a lot. But there was much more than pardons: there was new direct action to meet the issues raised by the demonstrators. It was precisely at the beginning of July, as the letters flurried out from the capital to the rebel camps, that a new enclosure commission was created for Hales, this time with real powers. The previous commission had merely been enquiring about violations of previous parliamentary enactments against enclosure: it had no power to hear and determine. On 8 July 1549, the final clause of the new commission's enquiry articles gave it the power directly and immediately to 'reform' any enclosures of commons and highways, and this was duly pointed out to the camp of demonstrators at St Albans three days later. Moreover, Hales and his colleagues went on busily working where they could on collecting material for their commission all through summer 1549, in places as far removed as Warwickshire and Kent (Jones, 2003: 196n). Concession piled on concession. To the commotioners at Thetford, Somerset promised to restore the lordship of the town to the crown, so that the townsfolk could lease the profits of tolls once more: this was especially remarkable, since the present lessee of the manor who had caused the grievance was the duke himself. The Thetford camp was also dissatisfied with the makeup of the local enclosure commission: after a snarl at their 'obstinacy', Somerset suggested that they forward 'such names as be required . . . either to be added to the others or put in stead of their places'. The Mousehold rebels had asked for a commission under the Great Seal 'to such commissioners as your poor commons hath chosen' [Doc. 17, p. 156]. The Thetford letter shows that this was not just some hopelessly idealistic rustic pipedream, but a reflection of what the government had actually been doing. This cannot but increase our respect for the rebels in the face of the unsympathetic portrait which survives of them in most contemporary narrative sources; and certainly Somerset treated them with a respect unusual among his colleagues.

In the most dramatic of all concessions made in the nine letters, Somerset promised to bring forward the calling of parliament by a month, from 4 November to 4 October, so that all the rebel grievances could be discussed quickly; the king was made to ask the Norfolk commotioners to choose four or six shire delegates to present new bills of grievance to the Protector in preparation for it. In the end the Norfolk men would lie dead at Dussindale rather than elect a parliamentary delegation. It is tempting, though perhaps



too neat, to see this looming October deadline for parliament as a trigger which in late September made it essential for the councillors to launch their action against Somerset. For what all this re-emphasises is the deep rift in political outlook by summer 1549 between the Protector and the other members of the Privy Council and of the evangelical establishment, revealed for instance in the extraordinarily candid letter which William Paget wrote to the duke at the height of the negotiations with the camps, on 7 July 1549 [Doc. 19, p. 160].

Protector Somerset had isolated himself from all those who mattered in English high politics, and Paget in effect prophesied that they would seize back the power which they had surrendered to Somerset back in 1547. It is remarkable, and a tribute to the force of Somerset's personality, that the bewildered politicians of England let his plans go ahead for so long. Gentlemen ran errands back and forth to the camps throughout July, privy councillors put their signatures to excitable letters which embodied his policy. Somerset divided gentleman against gentleman, allowing the commons to decide who they thought was suitable to be in commission for the king, recognising the ability of ordinary people outside the charmed circle of the gentry to make moral and political decisions. It nearly worked; after all, every commotion in the south, east and the Midlands dispersed without much bloodshed, except the Mousehold camp. The Protector might indeed have got away with the gamble, if the Marquis of Northampton had not blundered when he led his expeditionary force from London into Norfolk, combining lack of local knowledge with political ineptitude: his mishandling transformed the Norwich encounter from negotiation to bloody battle. Once Norfolk exploded into really murderous violence, Somerset's strategy came crashing down, and the privy councillors could vent their feelings on him and on the commons of England.

Somerset's regime was hyper-active and gloried in the fact: no single area was immune from alteration. This was because everything was linked: all the fuss about enclosures merged with the issue of religion. Somerset's evangelical client and publicist, the government servant John Hales, spelled that out when in embarking on the enclosure commission of 1548 he connected the enclosure issue intimately to the furtherance of godly reformation: 'If there be any way or policy of man to make the people receive, embrace, and love God's word, it is only this, – when they shall see that it bringeth forth so goodly fruit, that men seek not their own wealth, nor their private commodity, but, as good members, the universal wealth of the whole body' (MacCulloch, 1999: 50). The Protector uneasily combined the reforming zeal of Thomas Cromwell, the *chutzpah* of Cardinal Wolsey and the flashy populism of Queen Elizabeth's doomed Earl of Essex. This leader of English high politics paid an extraordinary degree of respect to the concerns of the

world of low politics, or at least that section of low politics which shared his own evangelical enthusiasm.

This idiosyncratic strategy was admittedly more than just a matter of temperament: as Ethan Shagan has observed, it was almost a political necessity – a consequence of the Protector's decision to step beyond the status of first among equals which the Council had ceded to him in government (Shagan, 1999: 47–8). He had injured his colleagues' self-esteem; his formal authority came from his relationship to a boy whose future attitudes were an unknown quantity; where else could he turn but the people? He persisted in the same course after his fall: during his attempted fightback against his fellow-councillors in their coup of early October 1549, he appealed directly to the commons. Several of the surviving handbills which sought to recruit a people's army for Somerset around London breathe open animosity to the gentry and nobility, as having indulged in extortion and murdered the king's subjects. One handbill, particularly singled out by the Privy Council for condemnation, specifically praised the duke's policy of issuing pardons during the summer. Even when Somerset's fellow-councillors had humbled him and admitted him back to their ranks on sufferance, they still paid him the grudging compliment of trading on his popularity, for it was he who was selected to ride off as a roving trouble-shooter to tame the commons over the next two summers, when there were further threats of insurrectionary trouble in the south and the Midlands. And when Somerset's increasing political inconsistency and folly finally made him too dangerous to tolerate, his execution in January 1552 was an extremely difficult affair where crowd hysteria came close to a disastrous explosion (MacCulloch, 1999: 51–2).

This is not to say that the rebellions of Commonwealth would not have happened if Somerset had not been in power. Three long-term factors demand analysis: protest against bad government, agrarian grievances and religion (MacCulloch, 1984a). First, government. The rebellions of Commonwealth were led by men just outside the orbit of the governing classes in town and countryside. Both the behaviour of those who camped and the surviving articles issued by Kett show that one of their prime objects was to express their dissatisfaction at the way the localities were being governed by gentry and nobility. Kett acted as if he believed the government in London was on his side. The Mousehold articles included the demand that the 'good lawes, statutes, proclamacions' made for the people were no longer disregarded by the JPs (article 27). The Mousehold Heath camp sought to demonstrate, and did so remarkably effectively for a few weeks, that Norfolk could be fairly governed. Local officers responded. The churchwardens of Carlton Colville collected monies and carried them off to the new administrative centre at Mousehold; the parish officers at North Elmham kept a careful record of their payments about business under Kett's direction (as

indeed did the Morebath parish authorities in Devon as they went off to the rebel camp outside Exeter) (Duffy, 2001: 133–43). When the rebels combed the Norfolk villages for food they carried commissions signed by Kett and sent out in the king's name. 'John of Great Yarmouth' was ordered 'to repair home and bring with you, with as much speed as may be, a last of beer, to maintain your pour neighbours withal, and if any man disturb or let you in this business, he shall suffer imprisonment of body'.

The activities of the Suffolk camps confirm the impression that the rebellion was an attack on self-interested and irresponsible men in local government and that its leaders exhibited a concern for justice. The captain of the Bury camp put George Swinbourne, whose stepchildren's property was claimed by another, into possession. What is clear is the sense of alienation felt by the leaders of the rising from their immediate social superiors; moreover, Kett's manifesto leaves a strong impression of the desire to recapture a past world where everyone knew their place and function. The leading gentry were recognised as having certain privileges, such as those of keeping their own dovecots and rabbit warrens (articles 10 and 23). In return they were expected to preserve traditional social boundaries: lords of manors should not be bailiffs to other lords (article 25), gentry should not be holders of spiritual livings (article 26). Two articles were aimed at lawyers, men like John Flowerdew of Hethersett and John Corbet of Sprowston, who had his home and dovecot pillaged by the rebels. The offices of feodary and escheator gave men exceptional opportunities for benefiting interested parties. The escheator for the past year had been Flowerdew, whose feud with Kett has already been mentioned. Article 12 is actually a demand that royal rights should be protected against corrupt local officials: the feodary, the county representative of the Court of Wards responsible for all matters relating to land held of the king by knight service, must not enter collusive agreements with tenants in chief when he 'found the office', in other words, declared what estate the tenant held. If he was popularly elected (a striking demand in the case of a royal official), an honest man would be chosen. The intention behind article 18 was to save poorer tenants from the expenses involved in an inquisition into their property such as the escheator or feodary might demand.

The events at Norwich in July and August 1549 indicate one of the most extreme breakdowns of trust which Tudor England experienced between the governing class and the people who normally sustained local government. Distrust between the western rebels and a Protestant section of the gentry was an element in the protracted dislocation of Devon in the same year, but there social and governmental relationships did not become the central issue that they were in East Anglia. In that sense, as Amanda Jones has emphasised, the rebellions of Commonwealth were much more dangerous to the regime

than the 'Prayer Book Rebellion' of Devon and Cornwall (Jones, 2003). Social tension was undoubtedly very strong in Norwich at the time of the rebellion. The city's marked inequality of wealth made it vulnerable to class antagonisms when times seemed bad. About 6 per cent of the population owned approximately 60 per cent of the land and goods. The subsidy assessment of 1525 shows that this group included the men whose viewpoint Sotherton represented, like Thomas Aldrich and Augustine Steward. While Thomas Aldrich was assessed as worth £700 and was the second wealthiest man in the city, about 35 per cent of the citizens were too poor to pay even the minimum of four pence. By the 1540s the worsted industry was in decline and some craftsmen were emigrating: in May 1549 the Common Council complained that 'foreigners' and beggars were replacing those who were leaving. The instability of Norwich society at a time of economic readjustment helps to explain the ease with which Kett took control of the city.

East Anglia's social tension by and large found its expression through the humiliation of local gentry rather than through direct violence. Four men whose fathers had been or currently were JPs in Suffolk were rounded up and kept as prisoners at the Melton camp. The story of Richard Wharton's uncomfortable return to the city of Norwich [**Doc. 18, p. 159**] may be somewhat dramatised in Sotherton's account but it captures the atmosphere of the rebel camp. There were also specific outbreaks of uncontrolled popular anger, like the killing of the Italian mercenary captain; the door of the city's treasure house, someone noted in the Chamberlain's accounts drawn up after the rebellion, was 'sore hewyn and mankyld by traitor Ket and his Kytlings' (Russell, 1859: 67). One systematic way of expressing contempt for gentlemen was to seize and consume food which was considered a symbol of gentry privilege, especially rabbits and deer. It will be remembered that rabbits had been a main victim of Hertfordshire's 1548 stirs at Northaw, as they had been during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, when a rabbit was symbolically hung up at the gate of that great Hertfordshire landowner, St Albans Abbey. So they were again in East Anglia in 1549, with the great haul of rabbits for the Melton camp from the warrens of the unpopular gentleman Robert Browne – this was rather at odds with the Household articles' recognition that the ownership of rabbit warrens was indeed a privilege of being a gentleman. Likewise, deer parks were frequently pillaged during the rebellions of Commonwealth (Jones, 2003: 59, 209, 244n).

In a proclamation of 14 June 1549 trying to deal with the stirs of the spring, Edward VI's government pardoned the 'great number of rude and ignorant people' who had 'riotously assembled themselves, plucked down men's hedges' and 'disparked their parks'. The issue of landholding and enclosures was clearly central to events throughout 1549, but one has to be careful in understanding what was going on. Traditionally explanations

emphasised the grievances arising from enclosure of communally managed arable land or communally exploited wasteland for sheep farming, but enclosure was only one issue, and not always what it seemed. The agricultural structure of Norfolk and Suffolk reveals the ambiguous role of enclosure in that section of the rising. There were two regions of light soils where a combination of pastoral and arable farming was practised: dung from large sheep flocks provided the necessary fertility to the soil for high grain yields. One sheep-corn area lay along the east Suffolk coast from Landguard Point to Yarmouth; the other stretched from north-west Suffolk into northern Norfolk (see Map 3). Between these two areas of light soils was one of heavier soils: this ran across central Suffolk into south-eastern Norfolk. This area was heavily wooded and was largely devoted to pasture farming. It was here that enclosure was a prominent grievance – specifically the enclosure of common land, echoing the Northaw disturbances of 1548. For instance, in 1539–40 the inhabitants of Hingham (where a camp was briefly established in 1549) became involved in a Star Chamber case with their landlord Sir Henry Parker about his alleged infringement of their rights of common pasture on an area of open land in the village. Failing to receive satisfaction, they threatened him (he claimed) with violence and said they would kill the sheep with which he had overstocked the commons. Significantly they used the now familiar word ‘commonwealth’ in telling Star Chamber that Parker and his allies had regard only to their ‘private lucre and peculiere commoditye . . . to the decay and utter destruccione of the Comon welthe of the seid Towne’ (Moreton, 1992: 188–9). The defence of common land emerges clearly as a crucial issue in Kett’s manifesto (articles 3 and 11). It can be related particularly to the resentment felt against landlords in the East Anglian wood-pasture region where the recorded incidents of throwing open enclosures all took place, but it was also a reflection of the way in which the dissolution of the monasteries had disturbed many long-standing arrangements between monastic landlords and tenants. Such had been the case at Northaw (Jones, 2003: 39).

In the East Anglian sheep-corn districts people’s attitude to enclosure was quite different from that in wood-pasture areas. A tenurial custom known as the foldcourse made it possible for gentry to establish and sustain large sheep flocks by using their tenants’ holdings. The custom had developed from a medieval right of foldage, by which landlords could demand that tenants should manure their demesne land by folding flocks of sheep on it at night. Through the foldcourse, the obverse of this, they had a right to pasture their own flocks on their tenants’ lands and on common land. This system was likely to reverse the attitude of the manorial lord and his tenant towards enclosing. There were obvious advantages for the tenant in enclosing his land as a means of excluding the landlord’s sheep from using his pasture. Thus

Robert Browne of Leiston in Suffolk was involved in litigation with his tenants at the time of the 1549 rebellion over enclosures they had made. The rebels at the Melton camp made Browne one of their main targets. Some 320 of his sheep were carried off besides his rabbits, his servants were imprisoned and his wife and family had to hide in the woods; Browne only escaped molestation himself because he was away from home at the time (MacCulloch, 1984a: 50–3). Popular detestation of the effects of the gentry's rights in the foldcourse system was expressed in a renewed Norfolk petition of 1553 to the new Queen Mary, in which the yeomen petitioners also significantly stressed that they had not joined in the recent effort of their gentry opponents to put **Queen Jane Grey** on the throne in usurpation of Mary's rights (Hoyle, 2001a).

It is no surprise to find that the rebel articles in 1549 included a demand that the wealthier gentry should not be allowed to 'graze nor fede eny bullocks or shepe . . . but only for the provicion of his house'. Many Norfolk gentry families invested very heavily in sheep farming, bringing substantial profits at the expense of tenant rights. At the height of Sir Roger Townshend's sheep farming in 1516, he had 18,000 sheep in 26 flocks, making him probably the owner of the largest flocks in his generation: still in the 1540s the Townshends had more than 4,000 sheep, with profits rising from £99 in 1544/45 to £143 in 1547/48. Sir Richard Southwell owned between 12,000 and 15,000 sheep in the 1540s and 1550s (Moreton, 1992: 166–7, 176). The Townshends used the foldcourse system as a first step towards purchase of their tenants' rights, often in dubiously legal ways, or eviction. In this way they expanded their own permanent pasture (Moreton, 1992: 184–9). The large proportion of freeholders and copyholders by inheritance on many Norfolk manors sometimes made eviction difficult. Article 21, on the conversion of freehold land to copyhold, clearly refers to one method of circumventing this hazard in establishing a sheep run.

The great emphasis given by the rebels to enhancement of rents is more understandable in the light of Professor Phelps Brown's price index for the Tudor period, measuring the comparative cost year by year of a basketful of consumables such as an ordinary family might use (Phelps Brown and Hopkins, 1956). The years 1451–75, a period of stability in prices, are taken as a base period, with the index for these years as 100. There was rapid inflation during Henry VIII's reign caused at least partially by his currency debasements and military expeditions; by 1548 the index had climbed to 193 and during the years 1548 and 1549 it rose sharply again to 262 in 1550. As prices went up so did rents. The Norfolk rebels had some reason to look back to the 1480s as a golden age before inflation and rackrenting began [**Doc. 17, articles 5, 6, 14 and 17, pp. 157 and 158**]. In the 1540s landlords tried to pass on as many of their financial obligations as possible. Among

**Grey, Lady Jane:** As great-granddaughter of Henry VII, she was proclaimed queen by the Duke of Northumberland after the death of Edward VI. Without popular backing, a coup by Princess Mary forced her abdication after a fortnight (Tudor propaganda said nine days) and after Wyatt's Rebellion she was executed.

these were payments to the crown or superior landlords for lands held of them, referred to in article 2, and such traditional dues, taking their origin in medieval obligations of military service, as 'castillward rent' (article 9).

Rackrenting was certainly felt to be a major and long-standing grievance in Norfolk but there is insufficient evidence to be sure whether rents were ahead of, or merely keeping up with, prices. The figures for the Herbert estates in Wiltshire show that rents per acre on new takings increased more than fivefold in the sixteenth century and it has been suggested that the Herbert rent index 'may be taken as generally applicable to lowland England' (Kerridge, 1962: 226). If this is so it would appear that Norfolk landlords had no difficulty in keeping pace with such increased expenses as they had to meet; and where landlords were harsh their tenants undoubtedly suffered hardship.

The discontents that made up the rebel programme were very diverse. Some, such as the request for fishing rights in article 19, were of purely local significance. This was fulfilled in a grant by charter of all fishes royal, as porpoises, grampuses and whales reserved to the crown by prerogative were called, made by Elizabeth to Yarmouth in 1559. The rebellion provided an opportunity to pursue long-established conflicts in local politics. The corporation of Orford had been at odds for many years with Lord Willoughby of Parham, who claimed that Orford was his seigneurial borough. In July 1549 the leading townsmen, who maintained that a medieval royal charter gave them effective independence, carted Willoughby's bailiff off to Melton gaol to the sound of a drum. They had previously kept him in the Orford stocks for three days and nights. Not surprisingly, Willoughby was prominent in the expeditionary force which defeated Kett (MacCulloch, 1984a: 50–1).

A more exalted political ghost haunted the Norfolk stirs. No other article in Kett's manifesto has puzzled historians as much as article 16: the request that 'all bonde men may be made fre for god made all fre with his precious blode sheddyng'. The clue to understanding it lies in the political situation in East Anglia after the fall of the house of Howard in 1547. The attainder of the third Howard Duke of Norfolk in that year brought to an end a long period of family supremacy. 'The East Anglian risings of 1549 were a popular response to, even a celebration of, the overthrow of the Howard sway' (MacCulloch, 1984a: 58). Highly conservative landlords, the Howards had retained bondage on such estates as Earsham, Kenninghall and Bressingham in Norfolk and at Earl Soham, Framlingham, Kelsale, Peasenhall and Walton in Suffolk. Soon after their master's downfall, bondmen on four of those Suffolk manors had joined in a petition to Protector Somerset for manumission. One of the reasons that they claimed freedom was 'the charitee of Christe'. They also declared that the third duke had used 'muche more extremitie than his auncestoures did' towards them. The

Howards' late headquarters at Kenninghall Park, in an area of south Norfolk from which the rebels drew much strength, had its fences destroyed. Richard Wharton, who was given such a rough passage at Mousehold Heath, had long been deeply hated locally for his repressive rule as the Howards' bailiff of their lordship of Bungay and Earsham.

No rebellion which rejoiced at the downfall of the Howards was likely to have much sympathy for the old religion of which the third duke had been such a champion. This is where the chief contrast can be found between rebellions in the far east and the far west; from the Midlands, the indicators are more ambiguous. There is evidence for the involvement of traditionalist priests in the Oxfordshire commotions on the far western edge of the 1549 south-eastern movement; indeed it looks as though the leader of the Oxfordshire stir was a priest, James Webbe, the vicar of Barford St Michael, who seems to have played the same sort of role as Robert Welsh in Devon and Cornwall, and who like him was hanged. In these and the midland and Yorkshire stirs there is indeed a good deal of evidence of protest against religious change, although no positive evidence that the rebels rejected the new Prayer Book or demanded the restoration of the Mass (Jones, 2003: 212, 218, 301). There was also good reason for the government to try to shift the blame for such disruption on to papist clerical plotters.

Even in Norfolk, some apparent connections with traditionalist religion may be noted. Kett had personal links and was involved in negotiations with the conservative Bishop of Norwich, William Ruge, and with the devious national and local politician Sir Richard Southwell. These involvements were sufficient to bring Ruge's forced resignation in 1550 and Southwell's disgrace. Other religious conservatives, like the Lady Mary, with her base at Kenninghall Palace, also tried to get involved (MacCulloch, 1984a: 60–1; MacCulloch, 1996: 437, 451–2, 456). However, these were probably efforts to jump on a bandwagon rather than a fundamental element of the stir. What is far more striking about the commotions in the Home Counties and East Anglia is their explicit and whole-hearted adaptation of the language and practice of the emerging evangelical Reformation which Somerset's regime was helping to forward – and hints also of still more radical forms of religion. This went beyond mere rhetoric designed to please an evangelical government. A significant contrast is the petition of 1553 in which a consortium of Norfolk yeomen petitioned Catholic Queen Mary with similar agricultural grievances against leading gentry to those expressed by Kett's rebels in 1549. They made no attempt to window-dress their appeal to her with any suggestion of enthusiasm for traditional religion; they even managed to discuss the social and economic benefits of the dissolved abbeys without giving any hint to the queen that they wanted to see monastic life restored (Hoyle, 2001a: 238). It would have made good political sense to



make Catholic noises to Mary, but amid all their elaborate display of deference in their petition, the Norfolk yeomen did not deign to do so.

In fact much of the apparent evidence of religious conservatism in Kett's rising is ambiguous or fades on closer scrutiny. Kett named one of his sons Loye after the last Prior of Wymondham, Loye Ferrers, but Ferrers was a definite evangelical in his last years, and the parish during his time as parish priest and under his successors showed little sign of traditionalism. The Wymondham disturbances broke out on what had once been the parish's patronal festival of St Thomas Becket, but there is no reason to suppose that the people of Wymondham still made much connection between their summer enjoyment and the saint whom Henry VIII had comprehensively discredited fifteen years before. The people of the little village of Heydon took their parish banner to Mousehold Heath, but participants in the German Peasants' War of 1525 had similarly marched behind their parish banners, and no one has ever suggested that they had much sympathy for traditional religion (Duffy, 2001: 130–1; Land, 1977: 23; MacCulloch, 1999: 37–8). If Heydon took banners, North Elmham took two 'saulter books' (the new psalm-books in English) to the Mousehold camp along with beer, victuals and armour (Moreton, 1992: 181–4).

The seven articles in the Mousehold manifesto which may be classified as religious show attitudes to the clergy in society which followed the mainstream of the English Reformation: they should be competent and instruct their flocks in religion. The complaint in article 15 that priests preferred the comfort of residing in aristocratic households to the simple living of the average benefice, and the dislike of their grasping attitude to tithes expressed in article 22, echo grievances expressed in the parliament of 1529. The insistence that richer clerics had a duty to 'teche pore mens chyldren of ther parisshe the boke called the cathakysme and the prymer' (article 20) was in line with Cromwell's injunctions of 1536, and the catechism of which they spoke was that of Edward's government, issued the year before, 1548. The idea that preaching was the essential qualification for the ministry (article 8) reiterated Cromwell's emphasis on the need for quarterly sermons in his injunctions of 1538. More important, it looked forward to the popular Protestantism of Elizabeth's reign when the 'godly' showed themselves critical of the quality of their clergy and willing to take the initiative in seeking out ministers who were educated and regular preachers. But in this article the Mousehold petitioners made a much more revolutionary suggestion. When a non-preaching minister was replaced 'the parisheners there' might choose another. This was what Martin Luther had suggested in his early Reformation writings, before the events of the Peasants' War in 1525 had changed his mind. In this idea we may distinguish an early indication that 'the character of popular Protestantism inevitably tended towards congregational independency' (Collinson, 1967: 229).

Clerical involvement in the active Norfolk land market (article 4) may have been a particularly sore local grievance at a time when beneficed clergy who could afford it were offered tempting chances of increased wealth and therefore comfort. For instance Robert Ullathorne, parson of Stockton, was continually acquiring land in his village between 1543 and 1555 and died in possession of the greater part of the manor of Geldeston (Hammond, 1934). Kett was also aware of the continuing and growing problem of the exploitation of the economic foundations of the Church by the gentry (articles 26 and 15).

There is no question of the Protestant tone of the Mousehold camp. Thomas Conyers, incumbent of a church in the cathedral close in Norwich, St Martin-at-Palace, daily used the new English Prayer Book, which had only been officially in use a few weeks, at the services held at the Oak of Reformation. A succession of local evangelical star preachers officiated at Mousehold, including Dr John Barrett and Robert Watson (who was a servant of Archbishop Cranmer), and we know that Cranmer also sent his preachers into the Kentish camps. Revealing was the case of Matthew Parker, a leading evangelical Cambridge don later to be Queen Elizabeth's first Archbishop of Canterbury. Parker's message of submission did not go down well at Mousehold, but he was able to escape when the mood turned ugly. Conyers called on some of his attendant church officers to sing the *Te Deum* in English: the crowd's delight at this religious novelty diverted their attention from Parker! (Land, 1977: 74–6).

Norfolk had a long-standing heretical tradition: Lollards there in Henry VI's reign had tended towards the more radical forms of belief and there were several heresy cases in the early sixteenth century, leading to three burnings there in the years 1507–11 (Thompson, 1965). Now Lollardy was fusing with the new evangelical movement to produce a vigorous popular Protestantism. This was a real problem for the evangelical government clique surrounding Cranmer and the Duke of Somerset: they could not treat the commotions of south-east England with the same blanket hostility which they showed to the westerners. So evangelical preachers were sent in to talk the rebels round, and Robert Watson played his curiously prominent role in the Norwich camp. So Somerset negotiated with Latimer 'the Commonwealth of Kent' and gave him substantial sums of money. This very rhetoric of 'commonwealth' was part of the government's embarrassment. As the widespread use of the label proclaimed, it was a traditional theme in popular rebellions; we have already heard it in the 1536 'Pilgrimage of Grace for the commonwealth'. But from the 1530s, 'commonwealth' was at the centre of the reformist jargon which was so freely heard in the entourage of Thomas Cromwell and then among the evangelical chattering classes who were patronised by Somerset. The commons had made the connection between evangelical religious reform and social reform which had also been made in

the Cromwell and Somerset circles, and it is likely that they were aware of this coincidence (Shagan, 2003: 273–6). John Cheke might sneer at the Norfolk rebels in *The Hurt of Seditio*n because ‘ye pretend a commonwealth’, but he also had to admit the rebels said that they rose for ‘religion’, by which they meant the same evangelical faith which he himself professed.

However, there was worse still in the south-eastern and East Anglian stirs of 1549. Looking back (defensively) at the whole spectrum of mayhem in 1549, John Hales saw ‘thre sondry causes’ across the country. Those involved included ‘papistes . . . who wold have agen ther olde poperye’ and ‘certain poore men’ who sought relief from ‘the great dearthe’, but there were also ‘Anabaptistes and lybertynes’, who ‘wolde have all thinges common’ (Jones, 2003: 322). Fears of real religious radicalism fuelled the panic of the nobility, gentry and political leadership in Westminster. The leadership of the camps were able to use the mainstream rhetoric of evangelical reformation, just like Edward’s Privy Council or Cranmer’s preachers (and Hales carefully left them out of his analysis of participants), but amid the rank and file there may have been far more radical echoes of the radicalism which had already begun to arrive in England from central Europe in the reign of Henry VIII – the people who were abusively labelled by their frightened enemies ‘Anabaptists and libertines’. It is sometimes forgotten that the Protestant government of Edward VI executed no one simply for being a Roman Catholic, but just like Catholic regimes throughout mainland Europe, it burned Anabaptists as heretics: we know of three, one of whom was burned in the Essex town of Maldon on the very eve of the outbreak of the summer 1549 stirs, during a major government crackdown on religious radicalism in the south-east. This reflects a deep fear of popular radical religion, which was also strongly reflected soon afterwards in the anxious questions of church commissioners sent into East Anglia by Archbishop Cranmer in winter 1550 while the diocese had no bishop. They charged parish clergy and churchwardens to reveal if anyone in the parish condemned infant baptism, affirmed that all goods should be in common, or said that there should be no ‘magistrates, gentlemen, or riche menne, in christian realmes’, or that it was not lawful to swear oaths, or that ‘private personnes may make insurrections, uprors or sedition’. This was a gathering of the most extreme radical positions which had haunted European politics since the 1520s, and it is clear that Cranmer’s commissioners seriously believed that they would find such beliefs in East Anglia (MacCulloch, 1999: 96–9). Robert Kett’s own nephew Francis was to be burned at Wymondham in 1588 for proclaiming the same sort of ‘Anabaptist’ heresies about the Trinity for which radicals were burned in the reign of Edward VI (Land, 1977: 145–7).

These were terrifying ideas, which promised an exciting new world freed of the old social structures. We have had some glimpses of the mood of

exultant celebration and overturning of the world from that summer: the drum which beat Lord Willoughby's bailiff of Orford to a rebel prison, Sotherton's extraordinary story of the Mousehold boys who turned to the arrows of the city defenders 'brychles and bear arssyde', and sapped their resistance by such appallingly irrational defiance. Such deliberate public nakedness recalls other radical moments, such as the naked demonstrations of radicals amid the next great breakdown of English society in the 1650s, or in much more recent times, the armies of the dispossessed and desperate led by prophets in modern Africa who will confidently and sometimes rightly believe that they can face guns unarmed and even naked and still emerge victorious. We have heard some hints of similar social radicalism in the assemblies of the Western Rebellion, even though there it was allied to a very different religious outlook. The camps of 1549 were places of fiesta, and even evangelically minded 'camp men' in eastern and southern England listened to the evangelical preachers only up to the point where they started preaching obedience. The radical cause was not the same cause which took churchwardens and parish officials marching to the camps, carefully recording their expenses en route. Something more anarchic, more wild in its celebration of change and renewal, had been released, and the leaders of the camps did not forget that over the decades to come.

It was easy for government propagandists like Sir John Cheke to proclaim their scorn for the East Anglian protesters of 1549. But this massive demonstration against the local governing class, based firmly on a mixture of social, economic and religious discontents, was coherent and well organised, and it spoke the language of Somerset's regime. The shrill denunciations by official publicists reveal an alarm that people outside the magisterial class were able to sustain such an effective protest. The government's final answer in Norfolk, where the rising showed its most determined face, was brute force.

# Wyatt's Rebellion

## CONSPIRACY AND REBELLION, NOVEMBER 1553–FEBRUARY 1554

**Philip II of Spain:** King of Spain 1556–98. A powerful monarch in Europe and champion of Counter-Reformation. Mary Tudor became his second wife in 1554.

**Croft, Sir James:** Herefordshire knight and a leading conspirator in Wyatt's Rebellion, although his part in the rising never got off the ground. Once more prominent in government under Elizabeth I.

**Wyatt, Sir Thomas:** Protestant Kentish gentleman. A leading conspirator in rebellion against Mary I in 1554. His allies in other parts of the country were soon dispersed or arrested, but he raised a small army and had early success in Kent. Marched on London but was forced to surrender when the queen rallied opposition in the city. Executed.

On 16 November 1553, the House of Commons petitioned Queen Mary to marry within the realm. In her reply she made it clear that she was determined to stand by her decision to marry **Philip of Spain** rather than Edward Courtenay, heir to the earldom of Devon and a great-grandson of Edward IV, but who had been a prisoner in the Tower of London since childhood and hardly surprisingly had left a reputation for being a weak and unstable man. A conspiracy was then formed by a group of gentry who aimed to persuade Elizabeth to marry Courtenay. The intention was to put her on the throne in Mary's place. With sufficient support among the nobility and at Court a political coup might have achieved this. When it was obvious that the Privy Council had accepted Mary's decision, plans were made at the end of the year for a national and popular rising. The leading conspirators were William Thomas, former clerk of the council to Edward VI, **Sir James Croft**, Sir Peter Carew and **Sir Thomas Wyatt**. The three knights had served Henry VIII in his French campaigns in the 1540s. Wyatt had been a member of the English council in France and Croft had been Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1551–52. Carew, having acted for Somerset against the western rebels in 1549, had sat in Edward VI's parliament as knight of the shire for Devon in 1553. He was also closely connected to the Courtenays by both blood and service, and was the most likely go-between between the imprisoned Earl of Devon and the plans which were now made: his part in leading the whole conspiracy has almost certainly been underestimated (Cooper, 2003: 163–4, 166).

The rising was planned to take place on Palm Sunday, 18 March 1554, just before Philip was due to start for England. The French (who had already dabbled unsuccessfully in backing Queen Jane, back in the previous summer) were now to provide naval support in the Channel and secure the

south-western ports against the Spanish. Wyatt would hold the south-east against imperialist intervention from the Netherlands. A fourfold rising consisting of Croft from Herefordshire, Carew from Devon, Wyatt from Kent and the **Duke of Suffolk** from Leicestershire would converge on London.

The success of the rising depended on secrecy. In the counties it also depended on the energy and enthusiasm the gentry could inspire in the commons for a nebulous political cause. It was midwinter, the worst time to stir people from their homes, and there was no economic crisis to force them on to the road. Prices were much steadier than they had been in 1549. But scattered pieces of evidence suggest that in the West Country at least there was spontaneous local feeling against the arrival of Philip. This seems to have sprung from wild rumours of Spanish intentions towards the country. At Christmas the French ambassador heard that Plymouth was preparing to resist a Spanish landing. John Cowlyn, a Cornishman, had heard the rumour that 'before New Year's Day outlandish men will come upon our lands, for there be some at Plymouth already'.

In early January news of the conspiracy was leaking out. Simon Renard, the imperial ambassador and leader of the Spanish faction, knew of it. He was suspicious of the failure of Carew to appear before the Council when summoned, and told the queen as much as he knew. The conspirators hoped to retain the initiative by acting at once. Wyatt had left the capital when, on 21 January, Gardiner, the Lord Chancellor, managed to worm the gist of the plot out of the foolish and unreliable Courtenay.

Abortive risings followed in the west and the Midlands. Croft, caught out by the speed with which events had moved, never attempted to raise Herefordshire. The Duke of Suffolk found little support for his cause at Leicester where, in Holinshed's words, 'few there were that would willingly hearken' to his proclamation against the Spanish marriage. Leicester was apathetic; Coventry was hostile. Holinshed relates how the people there 'had put themselves in armour and made all provision they could to defend the city against the said Duke'. When Suffolk heard this news he gave up. He went into hiding but was found and arrested two days later by the Earl of Huntingdon, whom the government had sent north after him. He was escorted to London by the earl and 300 horses. It was only a week since Suffolk had left London and he had never gathered round him more than about 140 men, most of whom were his own retainers.

Sir Peter Carew had reached his Devon home before Christmas and, in his anxiety to raise support for his cause, made little effort to conceal his plans. His anti-Spanish propaganda gained him the help of a few Protestant gentry but no group of substantial and influential men joined him. For the most part he seems merely to have caused rumour and alarm. The sheriff, Sir Thomas Denys, was determined to safeguard the county from rebellion

**Suffolk, Henry Grey, Duke of:** Strong Protestant partisan and father of Lady Jane Grey, he initially supported her placing on the throne in 1553 but soon abandoned the attempt and was pardoned by Mary I. However, he went on to join Wyatt's Rebellion, although his part in it was ineffectual. He was executed after the rebellion's demise.

and retained the confidence of most of the gentry. Carew lacked sufficient influence to carry the county behind him. The commons remembered too well his suppression of the 1549 rebellion. The Devon gentry had mostly acted with the government in 1549 and were associated in the popular mind with the Protestant regimes of Somerset and Northumberland.

So it was Carew's own servants who paraded a wagon-load of armour through Exeter and prepared to defend his manor at Mohun's Ottery, near Honiton. Meanwhile Sir Thomas Denys was active in garrisoning Exeter against attack. Carew began to see that with such insubstantial support his chances of seizing and holding the county town as a demonstration, or organising a force to march on London, were very small. He became convinced he was about to be arrested and on 25 January abandoned the rising and sailed for the safety of Normandy. The rising in the west had failed before Wyatt had even assembled his army at Rochester.

The crown always had reason to be sensitive to the rise of powerful families in Kent, strategically placed as it was between London and the Continent. Partly for reasons of security, the crown tended to reward its servants and administrators with lands there. Sir Thomas Wyatt came of a family who had served the first two Tudors loyally. The estates he inherited in 1542 made him one of Kent's largest landowners. He was well placed to act as a local leader since from 1550, when he was sheriff of the county, he had taken a particular interest in the defence of Kent and of the Edwardian regime against disorder and unrest. Wyatt took a keen interest in military matters; alarmed by the rebellions of 1549, he had drawn up a scheme to protect the government in time of crisis with a hand-picked militia [**Doc. 20, p. 161**]. His leadership helped to collect a force quickly when the need arose in January 1554. His success, compared with the dismal failure of Carew and Suffolk, was remarkable. Arriving home at Allington Castle, near Maidstone, on 19 January, he spent the next few days coordinating his plans with the small group of his friends whose help he knew he could count on. The government was uncertain of the connection between the news it heard of unrest in Devon and in Kent, but it was bound to treat as serious a threat so near the capital, when there was no army to defend it. It sent a herald to Allington with an offer of negotiations, though there was never a chance of Mary meeting the rebels' grievances. Wyatt dismissed him. On 25 January he raised his standard at Maidstone and proclamations were simultaneously issued there and in other towns. Wyatt then set up his headquarters at Rochester, where by 27 January he had collected a force of around 2,000. Further forces had gathered at Tonbridge and Sevenoaks. It was then only just over a week since Wyatt had come home.

John Proctor relates how the rebel leader went about his highly effective anti-Spanish propaganda. His main theme was the immediate danger to the realm of Spanish control. He dramatised the arrival a few weeks before of the emperor's envoys for the marriage treaty:

lo, now even at hand Spaniards be now already arrived at Dover, at one passage to the number of a hundred, passing upward to London, in companies of ten, four and six, with harness, arquebuses, and morions, with matchlight, the foremost company whereof be already at Rochester.

Wyatt appealed to patriotism. 'Because you be our friends and because you be Englishmen that you will join with us, as we will with you unto death, in this behalf protesting unto you before God . . . we seek no harm to the Queen, but better counsel and councillors.' Like other rebel leaders, Wyatt allayed the fears and consciences of many by posing as the rescuer of the queen from foolish advice. He concealed from the majority that he aimed at the deposition of the queen; Proctor claims that when he revealed his true intentions at Rochester to those of his captains who were not already in his confidence, some of them 'wished themselves under the earth for being so unhappy as to be so much as acquainted with so damnable an enterprise'.

But by then Wyatt's propaganda had been sufficiently decisive to ensure that many of the gentry who did not join the rebels at least sympathised with them enough to be unwilling to oppose them. In these circumstances the most active royalists, Sir Robert Southwell, the sheriff, and Lord Bergavenny, found it difficult to raise forces in the county. On 28 January they took up a position at Malling with about 600 men. Here they were well placed to intercept Sir Henry Isley, who set out that day from Sevenoaks to join Wyatt at Rochester. Isley had about 500 men. The two forces met near Wrotham and after a fierce skirmish Isley's men fled the field, leaving the sheriff sixty prisoners. The news of this setback reached Wyatt about the same time that he heard that the royal force of Whitecoats, consisting of 500 hastily mustered Londoners under the Duke of Norfolk, had arrived at Gravesend. Norfolk was now over eighty and past his prime as a military leader. He failed to make contact with Southwell and ignored warnings from Lord Cobham, who had collected 300 loyalists to join him at Gravesend, that the Londoners were not trustworthy. Their disloyalty was dramatically proved when they came down the hill to Rochester shouting 'We are all Englishmen'; according to a prearranged plan, they deserted to the rebels. Norfolk retreated to London and the Tower chronicler describes the tattered arrival of his few remaining men: 'You should have seen some of the guard come home, their coats turned and all ruined, without arrows or string in their bow, or sword, in very strange wise'.

Wyatt now had a magnificent opportunity. He had been able to seize some of the queen's ships ready in the river below Gravesend for the escort of her bridegroom, and some cannon as well. His forces had grown to about 3,000 and the Whitecoats urged him to make a rapid advance: 'London', they said, 'longed sore for their coming'. Everything now depended on the attitude of the city and this still lay in the balance. The Whitecoats' desertion suggested



that Wyatt had a real chance of gaining the sympathy and active support of the capital. But he moved too slowly. Leaving Rochester on 30 January, he wasted time in an assault on Lord Cobham at Cooling Castle. Cobham was captured and a day lost. On the 31st the government repeated its offer to Wyatt. The Council had rejected Renard's suggestion of an appeal for troops to the emperor, and the queen still had no adequate military forces. The queen played for time by offering a committee to discuss grievances arising out of the marriage settlement and a pardon to all those who returned home at once. The ploy worked in that Wyatt was delayed at Blackheath. When in his reply he demanded the custody of the Tower and the queen as a hostage as security for an agreement, any chance of peaceful settlement was finally ended.

Mary, like many unimaginative people, kept her nerve in crises better than more subtle thinkers, and she rose to the occasion. Proclaiming Wyatt and his company 'rank traitors', she made a rousing appeal for loyalty to the citizens of London. She was convinced that her enemies must be heretics, and that, as she told them, 'the matter of the marriage seemed to be but a Spanish cloak to cover their pretended purpose against our religion'. She was unscrupulous in claiming that she would follow parliament's advice on her marriage. Then she appealed to her citizens' hearts: 'Certainly if a prince and governor may as naturally and earnestly love her subjects as the mother doth love the child, then assure yourselves that I, being your lady and mistress, do as earnestly and tenderly love and favour you.' Here Mary showed some of the Tudor skill in flattery of which her sister Elizabeth was to make such good use. After the cheers and demonstrations of loyalty that followed her speech at the Guildhall, she felt secure enough to trust herself to the citizens and the forces that the Earl of Pembroke was raising, and her determination not to leave the capital grew.

By the time Wyatt arrived at Southwark on the morning of 3 February there were 'men in harness night and day' guarding every gate, and, more important, London Bridge was held against the rebels. At Southwark, however, as the chronicler relates, the rebels 'were suffered peaceably to enter and the said inhabitants most willingly with their best entertained them'. They waited there three days, uncertain what to do next. Apart from looting the Bishop of Winchester's palace and library, they remained orderly throughout. Wyatt still hoped for support within the city. He realised it was important to maintain a reputation for good behaviour.

On 6 February Wyatt gave up hope of a southern entry into London. He suddenly left Southwark and marched west along the south bank of the river to Kingston-on-Thames. Thirty feet of the bridge there had been broken down but his men rigged it up sufficiently to take them and the cannon across. It was ten o'clock at night when the rebels started their march back

along the north bank to surprise the city, still hoping friends might open the gates to them. On the way the carriage of one of the great guns broke down and precious time was lost before Wyatt was persuaded to abandon it. When they reached Knightsbridge before dawn the next morning they were hungry and weary and Lord Clinton's cavalry successfully attacked the main body of the rebel army at St James's Fields. But nearby other government forces put up a craven performance: when Wyatt reached Charing Cross with the remains of his forces, troops nearly a thousand strong under Sir John Gage's command turned tail at the first shots fired against them and scattered to the safety of the gates of Whitehall palace and the city. There was panic, confusion and misleading reports of defeat in the palace: only Mary seems to have kept her nerve (Beer, 1988: 364; MacCulloch, 1984b: 282).

The Londoners were out early and ready to defend the city, but their behaviour, as Wyatt's dwindling force struggled on up to Ludgate, was strangely unlike the resistance of loyal subjects to a band of rebels. There must have been considerable sympathy for Wyatt and his cause, because it seems likely that the reason why Pembroke's men did not attack until Wyatt was past was that Pembroke could not control them. And some of the citizens lining Fleet Street even drew back to let Wyatt pass [**Doc. 21, p. 162**]. It may be that the rebels' cries that the queen had granted their requests and pardoned them were believed. As Wyatt approached Ludgate the mood of the populace remained indecisive, but there the gate was closed. He knew then that he was defeated. The people now came down on the side of the government. Some of those who had watched Wyatt advance attacked him as he retreated. The rebel leader soon surrendered and the small band of 300 who had kept with him till the end put up little resistance. About forty people were killed.

The government had survived, but there was no agreement in the Council on a coherent policy of punishment which might ensure the stability of the regime. Mary convinced herself that her fragile victory meant she had the country's support and that it would be strengthened by the return to Rome that she longed for. Gardiner, reading the rebellion along the same religious lines, believed that the only safe course was the extermination of heresy. But Philip, when he arrived, opposed this. Renard pressed the queen to rid herself of Courtenay and Elizabeth, the obvious rallying points for further discontent. He saw no safety for Philip in England with them still alive. Elizabeth was held prisoner in the Tower for some weeks, but no evidence could be found to incriminate her (Neale, 1934: 44). In her speech to parliament on the succession in 1566, she made it clear that she had not been ignorant of the practices against her sister, but hinted that she had disapproved of them (Neale, 1953: vol. 1, 148).

Mary as usual was the victim of confusing advice, but Lord Paget, whose faction had gained considerably in influence from Wyatt's defeat, had the

bulk of influential opinion behind him in advocating leniency. No punitive campaign like that of 1536 followed the rebellion. A number of the conspirators were charged with levying war against the queen, but only two were brought to trial. One was acquitted and the other was pardoned after a period of imprisonment.

With public opinion so strongly against severity it was sensible for the government to be lenient. By the end of February about 480 of those who took part in the rebellion had been convicted, but the vast majority were pardoned at once or after a period of imprisonment. Six hundred men who were in custody were brought before the queen 'coupled together two and three, a rope running between them'. After she had pardoned them they were released, to the rejoicing of the city. Less than a hundred executions took place and they were not distributed in an even way to overawe the people of Kent. The Kentish men lost less than thirty out of 350 convicted, eight or nine of whom were gentry. The Londoners suffered more heavily, losing forty-five out of the seventy-six convicted. It was perhaps inevitable that the Duke of Suffolk should be executed, and Mary made the decision also to end the lives of the helpless spectators of the affair, Lady Jane Grey and Lord Guildford Dudley. There is conflicting evidence as to whether Suffolk had actually proclaimed Jane queen during the rebellion, but in any case it made sense to pre-empt any further attempts on Jane's behalf. Wyatt himself went to the block on 11 April and the French ambassador reported that the people pressed to dip their handkerchiefs in his blood. His legend was quickly being established.

## THE REBELLION, RELIGION AND THE SPANISH MARRIAGE

D.M. Loades argued that 'the real reasons which lay behind the conspiracy were secular and political' (Loades, 1965: 88). No one will doubt the political character of the plot: it was led by prominent former members of the Edwardian regime who had done their best to keep Queen Jane on the throne, and who at the very least would not have been sorry to see her back. However, the religious agenda of the rebellion deserves more attention than Loades gave it. Jane in her proclamation against Mary's attempt to steal her throne back in July 1553 had emphasised the religious dimension of events: Mary would bring England once more under the tyranny of the Pope (Loach, 1991). It seems curious to overlook the fact that John Ponet, recently deprived Bishop of Winchester and thus one of the most prominent Protestant clergy still at large in England, was among Wyatt's advisors during

the rebellion (Beer, 1988: 363–4). It is also deeply symbolic that the only real violence in Southwark was against the property of Bishop Gardiner, Ponet's predecessor and a symbol of all that was traditional in English religion. Not a single prominent figure in the affair can be claimed as having Catholic sympathies.

Of the leading conspirators, all were Protestants, with the possible exception of the shadowy prisoner the Earl of Devon – even he, however, had translated in prison an Italian evangelical devotional tract, the *Beneficio di Cristo*, one of the most famous Protestant texts of its day. William Thomas was certainly an enthusiastic evangelical. Carew was notorious as a promoter of Protestantism in the west and was indicted in 1554 '*impie et errone religionis*'. Croft, the ringleader, had been entrusted with introducing the Protestant liturgy to Ireland in 1551. The Duke of Suffolk and his wife were major patrons of Protestant clergy under Edward VI. The evidence for Sir Thomas Wyatt's Protestantism is only complicated by the considerations that he repudiated any Protestant motive in public for his rebellion, and that the defence of his actions written in the 1590s by an admirer emphasised that 'religion was not the cause of his rising'. Yet this defence came from an age of full-scale war with Spain, and probably exaggerated the patriotic aims of the conspiracy as anti-Spanish propaganda (Loades, 1968; Clark, 1977: 89; Thorp, 1979: 363–73).

There is evidence of religious radicalism, including anti-trinitarianism, among the Kentish commons in the area around Tonbridge, Maidstone and Cranbrook, and there was certainly a strong mainstream Protestant tradition in Maidstone, where evangelical local notables had seized dominance from traditionalists in Edward's reign. One of the leaders of this group had already gone into exile by 1554, but another, William Smith, a yeoman, was before the Privy Council for distributing heretical literature only a few weeks before the rising took place. Smith himself was among the rebels whose fines were recorded in the Exchequer, and Maidstone provided by far the largest number of recorded participants in the rising. While seventy-eight Maidstone men are recorded, the next largest contingent, Smarden, provided only thirty-two (Clark, 1977: 76, 91–2).

The rising in the Midlands was ineptly executed and that in the west was inadequately based. Only in Kent was the leadership sufficiently capable to make success possible. As Map 4 of recorded participants in the rebellion shows, the strongest contingents came from parishes where there was a gentleman who supported Wyatt. Wyatt had the loyalty of a number of influential gentry in the central and western part of the county but hardly any support in the east, which remained largely unaffected by the rebellion. Men like Sir Henry Isley, Sir George Harper and Thomas Culpepper had been closely associated with Wyatt in county government during Edward VI's

reign. Successively these men had been sheriff in the years 1548–52 and a family like the Culpeppers, long established in Kent, enjoyed a network of family connections.

One element in the conspiracy of 1553 to depose the queen was undoubtedly the ineffectiveness of constitutional methods of opposition to the royal marriage policy. Mary was exercising her rightful prerogative when she expressed her annoyance at the commons' petition in November 1553 and told them 'she found it very strange' that they should interfere in such a personal matter; for 'to force her to take a husband who would not be to her liking would be to cause her death'. The rebellion could draw on the agitation against the Spanish marriage that had grown after Mary's intentions became clear earlier in the autumn. Opposition to the marriage was not merely based on fear of foreigners: a powerful motive was the strong suspicion that the marriage would be linked to a restoration to the Church of its lost lands. Catholic landowners could be as worried as Protestants about this.

The rising exploited other fears and rumours of what Philip might do: would he dominate the Court and government and involve the country in the European conflict, with all the heavy expenditure this would entail? The Habsburg grip might be strengthened if there were a child of the marriage, or if childbearing proved fatal. The marriage treaty prepared by the Privy Council and signed on 12 January 1554 in theory safeguarded the country's laws and customs. Only Englishmen were to fill offices in Church and state. If Mary died childless, all Philip's rights in England would die with her. But people could not be sure Philip would keep his promises. And in fact when he first heard the terms of the treaty he registered a secret protest that he would not consider himself absolutely bound by them.

Yet there is no evidence that Philip intended through the marriage to try to impose on England a more centralised administration on the Spanish pattern, such as might have weakened or excluded the local power of the gentry, or that he even wanted to rule the country himself. His brief experience of England made him unwilling to come back. The purpose of the marriage from Philip's point of view is more likely to have been primarily dynastic. The Emperor Charles V had been attracted by its diplomatic possibilities in the great struggle of Habsburg and Valois. Its impact on English politics was complicated by Mary's political incompetence. Her distrust of her people was well known, and increased the suspicions of the gentry. Girolamo Soranzo wrote that she scorned to be English and boasted of her Spanish blood.

We lack the evidence to chart the other grievances and discontents which, although irrelevant to the Spanish marriage, may have led particular individuals to follow Wyatt. The largest contingent with no gentry leader came from Cranbrook, the centre of the Wealden cloth industry. Those who were

clothworkers may have been more ready to rebel because of unemployment following the depression in the cloth trade since 1551. But it is impossible to impose any pattern of economic causation. Over thirty different trades are represented among the recorded rebels and no one group predominated. Any attempt to explain the rebellion in terms of vested interests, or 'ins' against 'outs', also breaks down. The backgrounds of rebel and royalist gentry were very similar. Both Wyatt and Southwell, for instance, had benefited from the sale of Kentish monastic lands.

The most plausible motivation of those who led Wyatt's rebellion and its associated conspiracies was an attempt to restore the Protestant ascendancy of the reigns of Edward VI and Jane. Why did the conspirators not publicise this religious and political motivation? For the same reason that the Lady Mary remained silent about the religious theme during the July 1553 *coup d'état* which successfully overturned the reign of Queen Jane. England was a deeply divided country in terms of religion in 1553: it made no sense to limit the appeal of any rebellion by appealing to only one side of the religious divide. It was much better to find a uniting theme, such as the satisfying motif of hating and fearing foreigners, in order to maximise support: hence the concentration on the Spanish marriage. There can be no better proof than Wyatt's own words. 'You may not so much as name religion, for that will withdraw from us the hearts of many', he warned a Protestant supporter. To a doubter who asked 'Sir, is your quarrel only to defend us from overrunning by Strangers?', he replied: 'We mind nothing less than any wise to touch her Grace.'

The foundation of Tudor authority was the dynasty's hold on the confidence of London and the south-east. The Londoners' attitude at Rochester showed that Mary had temporarily lost it. Wyatt came nearer than any other Tudor rebel to toppling a monarch from the throne. Yet in the political development of the century the rebellion's significance is that it failed. This demonstrated the bankruptcy of rebellion as a way of solving this kind of political crisis. The critical issue posed by the Spanish marriage and the succession of a Catholic queen was the question as to who should rule. It appeared that the only sanction, if Mary changed national religion or Philip and Mary broke the terms of the marriage treaty, was rebellion. This was a weapon that, after the social disorders of 1549, few were prepared to risk using. So the gentry learnt to channel their opposition through parliament. They prevented Philip's coronation and frustrated Mary's plans to disinherit Elizabeth by statute. Any plans which Mary cherished to trigger a large-scale return of lands to the Church had to be forgotten. Foreign policy, marriage and religion were all important causes of conflict between Elizabeth and her parliaments; they were also the issues which caused the greatest crisis of Mary's reign.

# The Northern Rebellion

## CONSPIRACY AND REBELLION, 1569–70

**Mary Queen of Scots:** Defeated by a rebellion of Scottish nobles, she arrived in England in 1568, where as heir presumptive to the English throne she became the focus of a series of Catholic conspiracies against Elizabeth. Imprisoned for the rest of her life and eventually executed.

**Northumberland, Thomas Percy, 7th Percy Earl of:** Northern nobleman. Was in sympathetic contact with Mary Queen of Scots during her captivity in England and became a leader of the Catholic northern earls who rose against Elizabeth in 1569–70. The rebellion proved incoherent and failed, and the earl was subsequently executed.

The arrival of **Mary Queen of Scots** in England after her Scottish defeat in 1568 led to a long series of conspiracies. These broke out in the wake of the crisis caused not only by Mary's sudden eruption on the English scene but by a new diplomatic débâcle: the Elizabethan government, desperate for cash, seized an Italian fleet laden with bullion intended for the Spanish government in the Netherlands. This proved a landmark in the slow breakdown in relations between Spain and England which culminated in the sailing of the Spanish Armada in 1588. The first complex of attempts to destabilise Elizabeth's Protestant government were overlapping in purpose but disconnected. They developed in the tense atmosphere of the spring and summer of 1569. There was now a critical situation in Elizabethan Court politics. At the end of a decade of Elizabethan government, Protestantism was not yet secure in its hold on the country and the question of the succession remained open and disturbing. In the intrigues and schemes of this year it is necessary to disentangle the roles of Mary and of two groups of nobles – those at Court who disliked the prestige and policies of William Cecil, and the Catholic earls in the north.

When Mary crossed the border as a deposed queen she came expecting support in the north. Three years earlier she had told a Catholic priest that she 'trusted to find many friends when time did serve, especially among those of the old religion'. Among those who paid Court to the exiled queen at Carlisle was **Thomas Percy, seventh Percy Earl of Northumberland**. During the months of her captivity which followed, Mary exchanged letters with the earl and encouraged his loyalty by sending him and his wife rings and tokens. Northumberland was in sympathy with a group of his friends' efforts to release Mary from South Wingfield Manor in Derbyshire in summer 1569. They failed because of the difficulty of obtaining cooperation within the house.

Mary's future had rapidly become the catalyst of Court politics in 1568–69 (Neale, 1934: chs 10 and 11). The plan for a marriage between the Duke of Norfolk and the Scottish queen made him the central figure in a conspiracy that gained the support of a group of substantial nobility (Williams, 1964: chs 8 and 9). The match was suggested to Norfolk by Secretary Maitland, one of the Scottish regent Moray's commissioners, at a conference held at York in October 1568 to try to settle Mary's future. It was taken up by Protestants such as the Earl of Leicester and Sir Nicholas Throckmorton as a sensible solution to two related problems: what to do about Mary and about the succession. By early 1569 it had become part of a Court intrigue to overthrow Cecil, who seemed to more conservative nobles like Arundel and Pembroke to be leading England too close to a confrontation with the Catholic powers. A Norfolk–Mary marriage would enable the queen to settle the succession and make a lasting peace with France and Spain.

But Elizabeth refused to consider letting her leading nobleman marry the most dangerous claimant to her throne. Furthermore she dealt firmly with Leicester's attack on Cecil for mishandling policy in February 1569. After this the Court conspirators delayed broaching their plans to Elizabeth throughout the spring and summer because they were afraid of her answer. They hoped that Moray would do it for them as part of the negotiations for Mary's restoration to the Scottish throne. But, late in July, Moray decided against Mary's restoration on any terms. Norfolk spent the summer progress during August in an agony of indecision. He lacked the courage to be open with the queen, who was by now well aware of the rumoured marriage. Finally on 6 September Leicester confessed. Ten days later Norfolk found he could bear the atmosphere of suspicion no longer and left the Court without leave. When, afraid to obey Elizabeth's summons to Windsor, the duke then left London for his home at Kenninghall in Norfolk, it was assumed that he had gone to raise the north. Elizabeth, expecting a general rising, quickly took precautions to ensure that Mary's captivity was secure.

There is no evidence that any coherent plan for a rebellion in the north did in fact exist at this stage. Certainly Mary had been tireless in her letters of encouragement to all whose help she hoped for both in England and abroad. Certainly the Italian banker Roberto Ridolfi had been active in maintaining contact between the southern nobility and the papacy, and the Spanish ambassador Guerau de Spes had regularly written to Philip II in wildly optimistic terms about the success of a rebellion. But until almost the last moment the weakest link was the Earl of Northumberland. His resistance to the marriage plan coloured his negotiations with both Mary and de Spes. He had told Mary 'how her marriage with the Duke was disliked he being counted a Protestant, and if she looked to recover her estate, it must be by advancing the Catholic religion'. He had suggested to de Spes that Mary



might marry Philip of Spain but had found the ambassador uncommunicative; he suspected 'from my small affection to the Queen of Scots marriage with the Duke'. There is no reason to doubt Northumberland's own account: he was prepared to bring his tenantry to support a Catholic rising but he never intended 'to hazard myself for the marriage' [Doc. 24, p. 164]. The Court conspiracy and the Northern Rebellion were only tenuously linked; the uncertainty and confusion when Elizabeth outwitted the former provided just sufficient encouragement to activate the latter.

Back in his own country Norfolk's nerve failed him. Instead of raising his East Anglian tenantry and clientage, he spent a week of indecision. He gave no firm lead to the bewildered local gentry. Then on 1 October, sending a message north to the **Earl of Westmorland**, his brother-in-law, telling him not to rise, he set out for London to throw himself on Elizabeth's mercy. Within a fortnight he was in the Tower.

That August and September the north had been full of rumours, spread, as Sir George Bowes later reported, 'by the assemble and conference of people at fares'. There were rumours of the Norfolk–Mary marriage and their succession and there was 'the bruit of altering religion'. The earls had read Norfolk's withdrawal from Court as a signal for action and turned from vague scheming to more deliberate planning. The duke's sudden and unexpected capitulation, at the moment when all their hopes had been built on his support and cooperation in the south, forced them to abandon the rising fixed for 6 October. The north was left aroused and confused. News of the abortive rising inevitably reached the **Earl of Sussex**, who as president of the Council of the North was responsible for the security of the northern counties. The previous month the earls and 'all the principal gentlemen and their wives of this country' had been staying with him and hunting at Cawood near York. Though sceptical of the rumours he now heard, he was forced to treat the earls as potential rebels. Sussex knew that because of his friendship with Norfolk his loyalty was already in doubt at Court. In his letters at this time he was anxious to emphasise his activity in enquiring into rumours of sedition.

On 9 October the two earls appeared before the Council of the North at York. They agreed that they had heard the same rumours as Sussex but maintained disingenuously that they did not know their origin. They even said they would 'make diligent enquiry for the first authors'. Sussex accepted their word but reported to the Privy Council that he had plans ready to take York, Hull, Pontefract and Knaresborough if there were a rebellion. In Yorkshire control of these towns was crucial in an open conflict, just as further north control of the country depended on holding the strongholds of such places as Barnard Castle, Brancepeth, Alnwick and Naworth (see Map 5). But on 13 October Sussex was confident enough to report 'all is very quiet here and the time of year will shortly cool hot humours'.

**Westmorland, Charles Neville, 6th Earl of:** One of the chief leaders in the 1569–70 Northern Rebellion, brother-in-law to Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk. He fled to Scotland and from 1570 spent his life in the Spanish Netherlands in futile plotting.

**Sussex, Thomas Radcliffe, 3rd Radcliffe Earl of:** Royal agent in the north. Raised forces against the Northern Rebellion in 1569–70, although the rebels were eventually dispersed without much fighting.

Elizabeth was not satisfied about the loyalty of either the earls or Sussex himself. On 24 October she demanded full accounts of the 'bruits' from all the members of the Council of the North; the earls were to be summoned to Court. New and disturbing stories were by now reaching Sussex, that a large meeting was planned at Northumberland's estate at Topcliffe, where he was then staying, and that he would be the first taken. Northumberland himself in fact remained hesitant at this time and had received discouraging replies from Mary and de Spes about the chances of a rebellion succeeding [**Doc. 24, p. 164**]. Even the local gentry had 'answered coldly'. But by the first week in November the Neville tenantry were flocking in to the Earl of Westmorland's castle at Brancepeth, while gentry who were determined to remain loyal were gathering round Sir George Bowes at Barnard Castle. Durham was in a turmoil as people suddenly found themselves caught in cross-currents of bastard feudal and national loyalties. Their instinct in such a situation was to move to the safety of towns and castles.

Sussex rightly feared that the summons to the earls would force them into open rebellion, but he had to carry out the queen's commands. Towards midnight on 9 November his messenger, about to leave Topcliffe, heard the church bells ring backwards as the signal to raise the county. Northumberland had been forced into activity by his more enthusiastic followers, who made him believe a force had come to take him. He went to Brancepeth where he was persuaded to join the rebellion [**Doc. 24, p. 164**].

By 13 November Sussex was sending out commissions for raising forces against the earls. He hoped to collect 1,500 footmen at Darlington by 21 November but he was to be sorely disappointed. Sir George Bowes's almost daily reports to Sussex from Barnard Castle provided a dismal account of the state of the bishopric. It was effectively in the control of the earls and the 300 of their men who had already come in to Brancepeth. Their mounted tenantry terrified the neighbourhood, threatening to spoil any gentry who would not join them: 'They passe in troppes, armed and unarmed, so fast up and down the contrethe that no man dare well stirre anywhere.' Despite all this activity disagreement continued among the leaders and there does not seem even now to have been a clear plan of campaign. On 7 November Bowes had written to Sussex: 'Sewre I take this assembly to be more done for fear, than there ys any evil pretendyt to be done.' He continued to think the earls' purpose was more 'theire owne saifety than to annoye'.

On 14 November the earls made their first demonstration, marching to Durham Cathedral where they tore down all evidences of Protestantism and celebrated Mass. They returned to Brancepeth for the night but the next day began a march south which they continued till they reached Bramham Moor near Tadcaster a week later. Their progress was slow because they stopped to make proclamations and raise the North Riding on the way [**Doc. 22, p. 163**].

Durham was the heart of the rebellion: the cathedral had acted as a focus for its emotions and the bishopric provided 794 of the recorded participants. But large numbers also joined the rising from Richmondshire, when their support was demanded with promises of money and under the threat of spoil and burning. Away from their own estates the earls were ready to force the commons to join them. Bowes says that most of the 'poore rascall footemen' were unarmed and 'brought forwards by coercion'. Further additions to the rebels' strength resulted from Christopher Neville's diversion east to raise the Earl of Westmorland's tenants around Kirby Moorside, where he 'threw down the communion board' in the church as the earls had done at Durham.

Sussex, who had only 400 ill-equipped horsemen, dared not leave York and face the rebels in the field. On 16 November he had written bitterly to the Privy Council of his difficulties in levying men: 'Every man seeks to bring as small a force as he can of horsemen and the footmen find fault with the weather.' On 22 November the rebels paused for two days at Bramham Moor. At their musters there they had 3,800 footmen, mostly 'artificers and the meanest sort of husbandmen', and 1,600 horsemen. It was in the horsemen that their real strength lay: they were, according to Bowes, 'for the most part gentlemen and their household servants and tenants and the head husbandmen'.

For a short time the country around York was paralysed by the rebels' presence. A vanguard of horsemen patrolled the Ouse. Sussex stopped sending letters to London for fear they would be intercepted. Lord Hunsdon, coming south to assist Sussex from Newcastle, cautiously approached York by way of Hull. All the country east of the Pennines was at this time at the earl's command. 'All things are here out of order and my dealing and good wyll can not amende yt', wrote Bowes in despair on 23 November. Yet on 24 November the rebels turned back to Knaresborough.

Why did their resolution crack? They may have feared the rumours of the massive force being organised in the south by the Earl of Warwick and the Lord Admiral Clinton or have known that Hunsdon had sent a message warning Cecil to move Mary from Tutbury. However serious they had been in their intention to reach Mary and release her, they now abandoned the plan. It depended on the support of Lancashire and Cheshire and this had not been forthcoming. In fact the appeals the earls had made to the Catholic nobility had failed completely. Beyond the Aire and the Don was unknown country, a land where the names of Neville and Norton meant little, and a land more firmly linked to the capital by the tentacles of Elizabethan government. At Bramham the rebel leaders realised their weakness outside the north and their nerve failed. As they turned again towards their own estates the wavering and uncertain country at their backs began to doubt and distrust them. To their north, hope of backing from Scots supporters of Mary was cut off by the resolute action of Regent Moray, who first forbade Scots

participation, and then by mid-December was policing the border in person with 200 horses (Pollitt, 1985: 2–3).

Once the retreat had begun, the rebels did not stop until they reached Brancepeth on 30 November. Meanwhile Sussex found the tide of loyalty turning in his favour: 'The soldiers wax more trusty', he reported to Cecil on 26 November. He began to speak of the rebels as men with 'their hearts broken'. But a desperate lack of armour and horsemen still detained him in York. The southern army was slow in coming north and with 10,000 men was unnecessarily large and expensive anyway, as Sussex and Hunsdon continually pointed out to Cecil. In vain they pressed the government for 500 horses and 300 shot that they might pursue the rebels, but the Lord Admiral, writing from Lincolnshire, could only offer 100 horsemen.

Although some of the rebel footmen, 'who were promised wages and not paid', deserted and went home on the way through Yorkshire and Durham, 3,200 foot and 1,500 horse came to besiege Sir George Bowes in Barnard Castle in the first week of December. Meanwhile a contingent went and took Hartlepool, hoping that Spanish troops might land there to help them. But Northumberland later said that the message promising Spanish support was very likely a ruse by Richard Norton, the veteran rebel of 1536, to encourage them. The earls had certainly not maintained regular contact with any foreign powers. Philip II's attitude in his letters to de Spes had never been more than lukewarm and the Duke of Alva showed no interest in the conspiracy. The Spanish king was hardly likely to be enthusiastic about a plan to put Mary on the throne, because of her Guise connection.

On 14 December Bowes reported to Cecil how, with the castle near starvation, 226 of his men had leaped the walls to join the rebels. He had been delivered into their hands by another 150 who 'suddenly set open the gate'. The siege was a burst of revenge on the man who had stood most firmly against the rebels in their own country and whose demesnes and crops they had already destroyed. When Bowes surrendered he was allowed to depart into Yorkshire with 400 men. Yet on 16 December, with the royal army at last near the Tees, the earls disbanded their infantry and fled to Hexham. Here they were approached by the forces of Sir John Forster, the Lord Warden of the East March, coming across from Newcastle. On 19 December there was a skirmish with his scouts. This was the nearest approach to an engagement between the rebel and royal armies. From Hexham the earls, with a smaller body of horsemen, crossed the Pennines to Naworth, the Dacre stronghold. Sussex, Hunsdon and Sir Ralph Sadler reached Hexham (complaining of 'extreme of frost and snow') the day after they had left. Here they spent a bitterly cold Christmas; the earls were first reported to be protected by 'two notable thieves of Liddesdale'. They then fled again across the Scottish border and sought haven among Scots sympathisers, who promptly sold

Northumberland to Moray. The pursuers turned their attention to the possibilities of gifts and rewards. Cecil was beset by 'cravers' for the Percy and Neville lands. Only the twenty-year-old Earl of Rutland, who had enthusiastically brought his tenants all the way from Belvoir, seems to have been sorry that the action had never begun. He wrote to Cecil for advice rather than estates: 'I am most willing to serve but all is at an end here.'

The rebellion had failed primarily because of its incoherence and aimlessness, but also because its support remained geographically limited. It had not even mobilised the full resources of the two earls, since Northumberland never had an opportunity to organise the raising of his own tenantry and only a mere eighty horsemen came to him on their own initiative. Across the Pennines several vital men failed to stir. Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland was a keen supporter of Mary but lacked vigour at the crucial moment. Leonard Dacre spent much of the autumn in London fighting a lawsuit against Norfolk over the duke's wardship of the Dacre children and his claim to their inheritance. When he returned to the north he fortified Naworth and gathered 3,000 men under the pretence of resisting the rebellion. But by January 1570 his loyalty was under suspicion and Elizabeth ordered his arrest. In February Hunsdon was attacked between Hexham and Carlisle by Dacre but defeated him in a pitched battle; 500 rebels were killed or captured but Dacre himself escaped to Scotland. If he had been at home earlier the response of Cumberland to the rising in November might have been much more energetic. As it was, Lord Scrope, who had preserved order in Cumberland during the rising, excused his failure to bring troops to Sussex's assistance on 30 November by explaining that the county had 'for a few days stood in great peril'.

The rebellion was contained through the efforts of a small number of active men like Scrope, Sir Thomas Gargrave, the vice-president of the Council of the North, who held Pontefract and organised the mustering of royal troops in south Yorkshire, and Sir John Forster, who was hard pressed to maintain his hold on Northumberland and the Berwick area. Sussex did everything he could with the resources available to him and cannot be blamed for allowing the rebellion to last five weeks. On 26 November Hunsdon, commending him to Cecil, pointed out that 'yf hys dyllygence and carfulness had not been gret, her Majestye had neyther had Yorke nor Yorksher at thys ower att hyr devocyon and commandment'. Sadler held the same view [**Doc. 23, p. 163**].

The rebellion, like the Pilgrimage of Grace before it, had been almost bloodless. Apart from the skirmish between Dacre and Hunsdon, the only loss of life was in the siege of Barnard Castle when five men were killed and some more killed themselves leaping over the walls to desert. The rebels had contented themselves with destroying the barns, crops and cattle of those

gentry who would not join them. The bloodshed in the government's orgy of revenge was in marked contrast to the rebels' attitude to their victims. Elizabeth ordered that 700 of the rank and file should be executed by martial law. The evidence is too incomplete for it to be possible to reach a precise estimate of the number of executions actually carried out, but it is clear from the papers of Sir George Bowes, the provost marshal, that the queen's intentions were not fulfilled (McCall, 1887). For Richmondshire and for eighteen townships of the Darlington ward of County Durham the list of those who were executed has survived, as well as the list of those picked by Sussex to suffer. These lists show that Bowes, who found the whole task distasteful, did not adhere to the letter of the Lord President's orders. He was prevented from doing so because, as he explained to Sussex, 'although I have both by day and night caused to search their towns they be wholly fled'. In Darlington ward only twenty-four of the forty-one appointed died. In Richmondshire the proportion was 57 out of 215.

Although there is less evidence about what happened in the rest of Yorkshire it would not be surprising if many escaped elsewhere, considering that Bowes, urged on by Sussex and the queen, had to carry out his circuit of the whole area affected by the rebellion in three weeks in terrible winter conditions. He complained of his difficulties to Sussex on 8 January: 'The circuit of my commission is great, the several places where the prisoners were taken far distant, the weather extreme and the country (except in the bottom ways) impassable for snow.'

Sussex's letters to the queen about the executions are certainly untrustworthy evidence because, in order to satisfy her drive for severity, he tended to report that they were complete for a particular area before Bowes could possibly have had time to carry out orders which Sussex had himself only just despatched. Bowes later wrote in his general memorandum on the rebellion that he did not know how many executions were carried out in Bywell lordship, Hexhamshire and Northumberland since Sir John Forster was responsible for these areas. But the number condemned in the Marches was anyway small; even if Forster carried out his orders more thoroughly than Bowes, the maximum number of those who suffered by martial law seems to have been about 450.

Sussex noted the aptness of the 'occasion not only to settle all these parts in surety but to frame good government along the whole borders'. The long presidency of the Council of the North by the energetic puritan Earl of Huntingdon from 1572 to 1595 went some way towards doing this (Cross, 1966). Huntingdon's rule was a reflection of the national triumph of Cecil and his Protestant colleagues, who after the 1568–70 rebellion were never seriously challenged in government again. Moreover, the rebellion's defeat had strengthened England's links with Scotland because of the strong backing

which Regent Moray had given to the English authorities. Reacting to Moray's murder in 1570, the English used their pursuit of rebels as an excuse to launch three successful military strikes into Scotland; the main result was to throw Mary's partisans into confusion, and strengthen their Protestant, anti-French opponents. England never thereafter ceded the dominant influence in Scottish politics which in times past had normally been enjoyed by the French (Pollitt, 1985). In particular, the two countries were tied together by the continuing problem of what the English should do with the former Queen of Scots. As John Knox put it to William Cecil about the first two years of Mary's captivity in England: 'If you strike not at the root, the branches that appear to be broken will bud again with greater force.'

A number of the rebel leaders escaped abroad. The Earl of Westmorland, Richard Norton and three of his sons, and Thomas Markenfeld reached the Netherlands where they lived as pensioners of Spain. Northumberland was less lucky. The Scots government handed him over to Lord Hunsdon at Berwick in June 1572. He made no attempt to evade the searching questions on his part in the rebellion that Hunsdon put to him [**Doc. 24, p. 164**]. He was beheaded at York in August 1572. Eight of the leaders captured immediately after the rebellion, including two of the Nortons, had suffered at Tyburn in 1570, but many of the gentry involved had been allowed to purchase their lives by handing over their lands and possessions to the crown: a major concern for Cecil and Sussex was to recoup the expenses of the vast army that had marched north to no purpose.

## THE CAUSES OF THE REBELLION

Too often what happened in the north has been seen as an appendage to the conflicts at Court about the Norfolk marriage proposal. By contrast, commentators on the rebellion David Marcombe and S.E. Taylor emphasise the regional crisis which lay behind it (Marcombe, 1987; Taylor, 1981). The ancient northern nobility felt a justifiable insecurity after the successive assaults on their power undertaken by Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth, assaults whose local agents had been successive bishops of Durham. The latest in this sequence of mitred royal servants was the enthusiastic former Protestant exile James Pilkington, whose low opinion of his flock in Durham diocese was mirrored by the magnates' opinion of him. One can imagine what the Nevilles and Percys thought of Pilkington's rhetorical questions in one sermon: 'And to rejoice in ancient blood, what can be more vain? Do we not all come from Adam our earthly father?' (Marcombe, 1987: 123).

Pilkington, the inheritor of episcopal powers unique among his fellow-bishops, gathered around him a clique of Protestant senior clergy who were

unusually aggressive in their promotion of change and who thus aroused much local fury, particularly because of their fierce assault on religious imagery and church furniture from the past. Their innovations were not simply theological; they sponsored a ruthless legal drive to regain full control of church lands which had been leased out by the older generation of clergy to various local families, usually close relatives or friends. Additionally, Queen Elizabeth put selected trustworthy members of her Protestant courtier circle into positions of power in the north: she had put her cousin, Lord Hunsdon, in charge of Berwick and the East March and had deliberately built up the gentry clientele of Northumberland's rival, Sir John Forster. The significance of this became apparent in the rebellion itself, when the areas controlled by these loyalists failed to provide support for the rising, particularly in Northumberland. Altogether there had been a rapid and formidable assault on local vested interests. The only half-way acceptable interloper was the Earl of Sussex (president of the Council of the North from 1568): rather than defusing the tense situation, his cool attitude towards Protestantism may have encouraged the earls to make their move in 1569.

Northumberland in his confession explained how the earls were persuaded that they must rebel or flee [**Doc. 24, p. 164**]. At Brancepeth he resisted those who were 'earnest to proceed', until he saw he had no alternative but to join them. Francis Norton's account confirms that there was no definite plan until Norfolk's departure from Court, when the north heard of 'the Queen's displeasure towards him and others of the nobility': 'We thought there would be some great stir, which caused us to confer together at divers times.' The earls did not take the initiative in these discussions. When it came to action they were in fact only leaders by virtue of their position as feudal superiors. Northumberland's timidity was commented on by Hunsdon, writing to Cecil, on 26 November: 'He ys very tymerus, and yt ys affyrmd, bothe ment, twyse or thryse, too sybmytt hymselfe, but that hys wyfe beyng the stowter of the too, dothe hasten hym, and yncorage hym to persever.' Neither of the earls had the energy of their wives. The Countess of Northumberland rode with the army through Yorkshire and later proved herself an inveterate plotter with Don John of Austria on behalf of Mary Queen of Scots (MacCaffrey, 1969: 225).

Four men can be identified as the main agitators who instigated the rebellion: Richard Norton, the eighty-one-year-old sheriff of Yorkshire; Christopher Neville; Thomas Markenfeld, Norton's son-in-law; and Dr Nicholas Morton, a Catholic ex-canon of Canterbury Cathedral who had returned from exile abroad. It was Christopher Neville, Westmorland's uncle, who was largely responsible for securing the young earl's participation in the rising. Bowes emphasised Neville's influence over his nephew in his letters to Sussex. Christopher Neville's motives may have been genuinely religious, but he



was of a violent nature anyway. In 1554 he had been involved in a riot with three northern families, the Rokebys, the Bowes and the Wycliffes, at Gatherley Races. The feud was evidently still alive in 1569; while Neville was prominent among the rebels, the heads of all these three families were involved in the defence of Barnard Castle.

There is no doubt that the other three agitators acted from an enthusiastic belief in the Catholic cause. Markenfeld and Morton had gone to the Continent earlier in Elizabeth's reign and returned in 1568 fired with the enthusiasm of the Counter-Reformation. Northumberland tells of an interview with Morton, during which he spoke of the need to awake the lethargic north and 'lamented the want of sound Catholic priests to whom he might give authority to reconcile such people as would seek it'. Francis Norton later said that Morton was 'the most earnest mover of the rebellion'; he drove them on by warning them of 'dangers touching our souls and the loss of our country'. Richard Norton, who had worn the badge of the Five Wounds of Christ in the Pilgrimage of Grace, certainly seems to have been influenced by Morton's arguments. Markenfeld answered those who doubted the legitimacy of rising before the promised Papal Bull had been published by maintaining that 'the Queen was excommunicated when she refused to suffer the Pope to send his ambassador to her presence'.

Northumberland felt a deep and passionate concern for his faith [Doc. 24, p. 164]. Sir Thomas Gargrave reported in 1572 that 'at or before his dethe he contynewed obstynate in relygyon' and 'affermyd this realme was in a scysme'. He also had bitter personal grievances against the queen. Northumberland had suffered severely from Elizabeth's reassertion of the policies of her father, aimed at weakening the hold of the great magnate families on the marches. Mary had made him lieutenant-general of the north in 1558, as part of her policy of restoring those ancient noble families which had suffered under her father and half-brother. Elizabeth, by contrast, immediately allowed the earl's commission of lieutenancy to lapse, deprived him of his wardenship of the Middle March and allowed him no part in the custody of Mary. In 1568 the crown had ignored his claim for compensation over the rights to the copper mine discovered at Newlands on one of his estates. Northumberland had declined in wealth as well as status. In 1562 he had written to the Earl of Pembroke that he was forced to 'humble request her highnes to disburs unto me a thousand pounds, or more, if it may be conveniently granted . . . otherwise in good faieth I knowe not what shift I shal be able to maik'. The Earl of Westmorland was also suffering from poverty. In 1568 he had to borrow eighty pounds from Sir George Bowes. Yet despite all these grievances the earls were most unwilling to rebel; Northumberland maintained in his confession that he 'was drawn into it per force'.

Many of the gentry involved in the rebellion were retainers of the earls. An analysis of the geography of gentry support for the rising shows that the largest groups came from Brancepeth and Topcliffe, the seats of the Nevilles and Percys, while several gentry came from Raby, the other seat of the Nevilles. The custom under which the sons of northern gentry families served in the households of the great magnates enabled the earls to obtain the support of such men as John Sayer and Marmaduke Redman, servants to Northumberland. Redman's father remained neutral but Sayer's actively assisted Bowes in the defence of Barnard Castle. Both Sadler and Hunsdon comment on the way the rebellion split family loyalties [Doc. 23, p. 163]. The Council of the North mentioned this to the queen: 'Many gentlemen show themselves ready to serve your Majestie, whose sons and heirs, or other sons, be on the other side.' It seems likely that heads of families were too cautious to risk losing their material possessions in the hope of a return to Catholicism.

The strength of the rebel army lay in their horsemen, who were 'gentlemen and ther household servants and tenants'. Such men joined the earls through bastard feudal allegiance. Tenant loyalty goes some way towards explaining the participation of the commons as well. 'The Erle of Northumberland hathe the keepinge of Myddleham, and steward of Rychmond', wrote Lord Hunsdon to Cecil, 'whereby he hathe nowe a grete part of hys force too serve agaynst the Queen.' The lists of rebels pardoned show that Richmond and Middleham were among the towns which contributed the largest number of the commons. But the appeal to bastard feudal loyalty was insufficient in itself to raise a large army; the rebel leaders resorted to religious propaganda, the offer of wages and the threat of spoil in their recruitment drive. Sir John Forster wrote, on 24 November 1569, that he had just heard that 'the Earls have offered wages of sixteen pence a day to all that will come'. Many undoubtedly joined the rebellion because they feared for their lives and goods. On 17 November Bowes reported to Cecil: 'They have constreined, by force, sundrie to followe them; as the people of Bishopton, tenants of John Conyers, my sonne-in-law . . . they not only forced them to go with them, but compelled the rest of the towne, armed, and unarmed, to go to Darneton.' He told Cecil two days later that 'the people compelled to go against their wills, are all ready to mutiny, and many stealethe away'.

The earls' proclamations consistently emphasised the religious issue [Doc. 22, p. 163]. The official ground of the rebellion was to resist the 'new found religion and heresie' imposed since Elizabeth came to the throne. The earls gave a nationalist as well as a Catholic slant to their propaganda. Sussex wrote to Cecil on 17 November: 'They persuade that their cause of seeking to reform religion is that other princes have determined to do it, and this entering of strangers should be troublesome to the realm, and therefore they

seek to do it before their coming.’ The proclamations were part of a carefully planned campaign to attract the support of the commons. At the Durham demonstration Richard Norton led the rebels into the city carrying that emotive symbol of northern discontent, the banner of the Five Wounds of Christ. But Bowes’s report of an incident at Darlington on 16 November may reveal the hollowness of this campaign: ‘Masse was yesterday at Darnton; and John Swinburn, with a staffe, drove before him the poor folks, to hasten them to hear the same.’

The Earl of Sussex was convinced that the people flocked to the earls because they ‘like so well their cause of religion’. But Sussex, unable to leave York, was not in a position to form an accurate impression of the commons’ motives. It was natural that a man like Sir Thomas Gargrave, vice-president of the Council of the North, should see the rising in religious terms. He was a convinced Protestant, anxious about the future of his faith in the north. In his account of how the rebellion began he emphasised the failure of the religious settlement to take hold in the north. Sir Ralph Sadler wrote of the deep religious conservatism of the people, gentry and commons alike [**Doc. 23, p. 163**]. ‘The ancient faith still lay like lees at the bottom of men’s hearts and if the vessell was ever so little stirred came to the top’: this was how he thought the conspirators gained their support.

The Elizabethan religious settlement had made little impact in the north during the 1560s. Cecil estimated in 1566 that two-thirds of the northern JPs were Catholic. In November 1568 the Earl of Sussex and his council reported that many churches had had no sermons for years past; it was difficult to get preachers to travel and the ignorance of the people was the main cause of their backwardness in religion. Professor Dickens concluded, from a study of the visitation books for the years 1567–68, that ‘there existed no recusant problem in the diocese of York’; but he did find plenty of evidence of vague conservatism and popular uncertainty about giving up long-practised rituals (Dickens, 1941). There were cases of the use of holy water, images and candles; in the Vale of York some priests were prepared to defy the government by saying the communion for the dead.

The demonstration which was organised and maintained at Durham during the rebellion over several weeks shows how responsive the people could be to a revival of Catholic ritual and practice; also how willing they were to take revenge on the Protestant clergy who had destroyed potent symbols of local pride like Durham Cathedral’s banner of St Cuthbert. A group of determined priests gave a strong lead, gaining control of the cathedral services and openly saying Mass to large congregations. William Holmes, one of the leading spirits, claimed that he had authority to reconcile the people to the Church of Rome and pronounced absolution to the kneeling congregation. But the variety of militant Counter-Reformation Catholicism which Holmes

represented appealed to the gentry more than to the population at large. Professor Dickens concluded from his investigation of early Yorkshire recusancy that the characteristic of northern Catholicism was one of 'survivalism . . . withdrawal from the Elizabethan order in favour of something older' (Dickens, 1941). The popular Catholicism which Morton and Markenfeld found in the north was habitual and uninformed: 'a set of ingrained observances which defined and gave meaning to the cycle of the week and the seasons of the year, to birth, marriage and death' (Bossy, 1962). The earls found that religious propaganda alone was not enough because rebellion contradicted such a tradition. Without the element of fear of the unknown which in the earliest stages of the English Reformation had galvanised the Pilgrimage of Grace, it was a tradition that led to inertia not activity, grudging obedience not resistance.

So secular as well as religious tensions in northern society deserve consideration as the context of this rebellion. It may be that political resentment at the extension of Tudor authority in the north was more important in attracting support to it than hatred of Protestantism. Bowes was hated not for his religious feelings but for his notorious loyalty. The rebellion has been interpreted as 'the last episode in 500 years of protest by the Highland Zone against the interference of London' (Stone, 1965: 251). Yet unlike the Pilgrimage of Grace, the rebellion failed to find a wide basis in society. The gentry and their grievances dominated it; Dr Marcombe comments that 'there were very few truly "popular" grievances evident in 1569 outside of the religious sphere' (Marcombe, 1987: 130). When Elizabeth summoned the earls to Court she precipitated a crisis in northern society, but the cause of Catholicism proved inadequate to sustain the rising that followed (Wood, 2002: 74–9). In the aftermath of the rebellion, there were bitter recriminations against the earls for leading humble people into disaster, feelings expressed in contemporary northern ballads. With the leaders fled abroad or (like Lord Lumley and the Percys) removed from their northern estates, the structure of good lordship and military service based on great aristocratic estates decayed for ever (James, 1974: 78–9). The failure of the rebellion, its feebleness and its disorganisation, all proved that northern feudalism and particularism could no longer rival Tudor centralisation.

## Epilogue

The defeat of the northern earls represented a turning-point for the Elizabethan government; afterwards Protestant dominance was not seriously challenged. For twenty years, despite many alarms about Catholic intentions, and genuine Catholic plotting, there was no attempt at rebellion. Yet in the last decade of Elizabeth's life, there were plenty of reasons for her and her ministers to feel anxious. Even the climate seemed to conspire against them, with a run of disastrous harvests resulting in full-scale famine in some regions. The price of food nearly doubled while the real value of wages declined (Clark, 1985: chs 1–3).

This was against a background of much higher government expenditure (and hence much higher taxation) caused by war. During the 1580s England and Spain had drifted into full-scale confrontation: the Armada's defeat in 1588, though immediately trumpeted as a famous victory for Protestant England, was not decisive. When the English went on the attack, they proved as unsuccessful as the Spaniards: witness the failed English raid on Spanish-ruled Portugal in 1589, and the lack of any lasting result from such expensive ventures as the naval raid on Cadiz (1596). At least English military assistance to the United Provinces of the Netherlands helped to contain Spanish armies there; however, English intervention in France during 1589–91 was hopelessly mismanaged, and the Spanish defeat by 1598 was thanks to the French themselves.

At Court, the queen was ageing and losing her sureness of touch amid her leading politicians' jostlings for power (Guy, 1995: 1–19). She refused to name her successor: the chief contender was Mary Queen of Scots' son, James VI of Scotland, but the Catholic Infanta of Spain also had a claim, at a time when England and Spain were at war. The queen's trusted if occasionally troublesome old friends were dying: the Earl of Leicester in 1588, Francis Walsingham in 1590, Sir Christopher Hatton in 1591. Lord Burghley survived until 1598, but he was old and ill, and he devoted his energy to passing on his power to his equally talented son Robert Cecil. A new political generation

was emerging: members of the Howard family were now reviving their fortunes after the 1569–72 disaster, particularly thanks to Charles, Baron Howard of Effingham, victor against the Armada (he became the first Howard Earl of Nottingham in 1597). Most destabilising was the emergence of Robert, second Devereux Earl of Essex. He was Leicester's step-son by Lettice Knollys; he had all Leicester's restless intelligence, love of splendour and drive to assert his dominance, without the element of restraint which had in the end made his step-father one of the cornerstones of the queen's regime. He automatically saw the Cecils as enemies who usurped the natural aristocratic government of England, but he also clashed with the rival aristocratic house of Howard (Guy, 1995: 65–86).

Both popular economic distress and Court intrigue produced rebellions in 1590s England. Both were tragi-comic in their lack of success. In Oxfordshire in 1596, a carpenter and two millers turned up on a hilltop to march on London, but they were rounded up, tortured and executed (Walter, 1985). This extreme reaction to an event which was absurdly trivial shows just how nervous the authorities were about their situation. In London in 1601, the Earl of Essex, close to a nervous breakdown and facing financial ruin, gathered up a collection of disaffected gentry and younger noblemen (Southampton, Rutland, Sandys, Cromwell, Mounteagle) and tried to make himself master of London (Stone, 1965: 481). Although he failed to win any wider support, this was profoundly serious as the first attempt to challenge government in its capital for nearly half a century. Essex may have been mentally unstable by this time, but he had articulated real anxieties: the Court was widely seen as increasingly corrupt, and Elizabeth was not only keeping silent about the succession, but withholding power from the aristocratic younger generation.

Essex's catastrophe had both immediate and long-term consequences. James VI, who had relied on Essex as his confidant on English affairs, reversed his policy and reconciled himself to Robert Cecil. Essex (who had posed as a Puritan warrior-nobleman, in the mould of his step-father and of his wife's first husband Sir Philip Sidney) had identified himself with the war party in fighting the papist Spaniards and Irish. His conduct severely questioned the wisdom of these policies and gave greater confidence to those (like Cecil) seeking a comprehensive peace. Political instability continued to worry those in government into the opening years of the next reign, surfacing in the complex Catholic-dominated intrigues of the Bye and Main Plots against James I, and culminating in the spectacular failure of Guy Fawkes to destroy parliament in 1605.

Whereas England nevertheless weathered the troubled 1590s without producing major rebellions, the situation was very different in Ireland. This book has been about Tudor England, but the Tudors ruled two realms, which

**Tyrone, Hugh O'Neill, 3rd Earl of:** Leading Ulster nobleman. Led lengthy campaign against English rule from 1595 to 1603, but was eventually defeated.

now in the last years of the dynasty found their futures inextricably linked because of the major rising staged by **Hugh O'Neill, third Earl of Tyrone** (MacCaffrey, 1992: pt 5; Morgan, 1993). From the moment when Henry VIII had arranged for the 1541 Irish parliament to proclaim him King instead of Lord of Ireland, the Tudors had a fatefully contrasting choice of policies for their second kingdom. They could cooperate with Irish Gaelic and Anglo-Norman nobility as they did with the nobility of England, or they could begin confrontation and colonisation. First colonial efforts in Leix/Offaly were undertaken by Philip and Mary's agents in 1556–58. In view of her Catholicism, this was ironic, because in Elizabeth I's reign the Irish who were furious at continuing colonisation policies increasingly allied with Elizabeth's Catholic enemies.

Hugh Earl of Tyrone was the major power in Ulster, that part of Ireland where English rule was most fictitious and Gaelic culture strongest. Increasingly, despite English efforts to detach him from his background and Anglicise him, he saw the only hope for Ireland as lying in a complete break with the Tudors, with the help of Spain and the Pope. He would lead what was for the first time a truly island-wide campaign against the English presence. He seized the English fort at the Blackwater (Armagh) in February 1595; the English government in Dublin declared him a traitor in June 1595. The English were defeated at the Yellow Ford in 1598; the Tudor regime now realised that it faced a battle for the very survival of its rule in Ireland. Essex achieved his ambition of a spectacular military command by being sent with the almost unprecedented powers of Viceroy in 1599, but he destroyed himself as a result. He returned home after making unilateral peace with Tyrone, and his subsequent fearsome row with the queen was the beginning of the road which led him to his own attempted revolt. Instead, Charles Blount, eighth Lord Mountjoy, defeated Tyrone by grim military persistence, ending up by routing a joint Spanish–Irish force far from Ulster at Kinsale in 1601. By then the war had turned into a genocidal conflict, in which English forces saw themselves as fighting a barbaric race who deserved no mercy. By 1603, as the queen lay dying, Mountjoy took Tyrone's surrender. It was the beginning of the end for Gaelic Ireland's political freedom; its leaders, Tyrone and O'Donnell, chief of Tyrconnell, would leave Ireland for ever in 1607. Organised settlement of Protestant English and Scots began in Ulster in 1609.

There was a certain relief in England when Elizabeth died, and even greater relief when it became apparent that James VI would easily succeed to the throne as James I. In fact, as the anxieties of the 1590s faded into history, it became apparent how much had been achieved. The dangers of the decade were in the end overcome. At Court, Essex had self-destructed, for all the continuing fears that his revolt was a symptom of a drift back to fifteenth-century style aristocratic conflict. Robert Cecil guided the affairs of James's

government until his death in 1612, very much as he had done since the mid-1590s. He failed to solve the government's perpetual financial problems, but it took a further century of national upheaval before that happened. For the moment, the Church of England was secure; it had silenced opposition, and was increasingly accepted as the spiritual expression of the Protestant nation-state. Spain had been contained, the Protestant Dutch preserved and France kept out of Spanish hands; these had certainly been the aims of English foreign policy in the 1590s, even if the English could only take partial credit for the actual achievement. Ireland had been cowed; this had terrible consequences for the future, but at the time it seemed a great reward after years of miserable guerrilla warfare. Ireland now became the first English colony, the beginning of a world empire, the first hint that England would be something more than a minor European power. Looking back from new troubles in the reign of James I, the last years of Elizabeth's reign seemed full of dogged achievement, and were soon made golden as part of the myth of Gloriana, standing at the head of a united English Protestant nation.





## Part 3

---

# ASSESSMENT



## Rebellion and Tudor Government

If one describes Tudor rebellions, at first sight it seems strange that anyone bothered to rebel: the record of failure looks so consistent, the odds seem so heavy. However, this ignores the truth of Sir John Harington's maxim:

Treason doth never prosper: what's the reason?  
For if it prosper, none dare call it treason.

Successful Tudor rebellions have been ignored precisely because they were successful. There were in fact four. The first was Henry VII's takeover in 1485, the second was the rejection of the Amicable Grant in 1525, the third was the overthrow of Protector Somerset in 1549 and the fourth was Princess Mary's seizure of power in 1553. There is one obvious fact about these successes: they all occurred in the first half of the Tudor age. In fact Elizabeth I had to face far fewer rebellions than her predecessors, and none of them deflected her from her chosen policies. She bequeathed to her successor King James one of the most trouble-free kingdoms in Europe, which was a pleasant change for James, after forty years of coping with Scotland. What was the secret of Elizabeth's success? Was it in fact thanks to her?

If we try to assess the sequence of Tudor rebellions, we have two questions of success to raise. First, what was the recipe for making a rebellion work? Second, what was the recipe for neutralising the rebellious instinct? To answer these, we must see that Tudor politics operated on two levels, which we can crudely label the high and the low. It is the interaction between the two which makes the sequence of early Tudor rebellions so complex to unravel, and which we must also seek to understand.

First, high politics: the world of the nobility and gentry, the people who directly advised the king, or even on occasions became king. The issue here was who would run the country. Particularly in the fifteenth century, this meant that high politics was a peculiarly personal or dynastic business. No

great ideological issues separated Lancastrians from Yorkists; what turned their struggles into civil war was the complete incompetence of Henry VI and the regional favouritism and ruthlessness of Richard III. Henry Earl of Richmond's takeover in 1485 was a perfect example of this sort of politics. For all his high words about his just title, it was in fact as shaky as it could be without being non-existent. His victory came, even though his army was tiny, because few aristocrats were willing to fight for Richard. Henry VII was the most unlikely occupant of the English throne since William the Bastard back in 1066, with only a smidgen of royal blood, and like William he claimed brutal justification for his rule from having won a battle (at the time it was called God's mark of favour).

Thereafter, most revolts which the newly minted Henry VII faced were similar pieces of high politicking about which family to put on the throne. The most serious of them also had an international character which is absent from Tudor rebellions in England thereafter: they involved both the great dynasties of Europe and an interplay between the two realms of the English crown, England and Ireland. Their dynamic came from the ludicrously weak dynastic claim of the Tudors; two successive pretenders to the throne put forward claims to be part of the Yorkist royal family who more straightforwardly possessed royal blood, and even if the pretenders were both fakes, their attempts gained ballast from the contempt with which Europe's great dynasties regarded the upstart Tudor dynasty. Both young men appealed to great lords in Ireland, where Richard Duke of York had been well-regarded as a representative of English government back in mid-century. First in 1487 an English youth, Lambert Simnel, claimed to be the imprisoned Edward Earl of Warwick; he won the support of the Irish Lord Deputy, Gerald Fitzgerald, eighth Earl of Kildare, and was crowned Edward VI in Dublin. With an invasion force, he was defeated in the English Midlands at the last major battle in the sequence of the Wars of the Roses, near Stoke in Nottinghamshire, and it was comparatively easy to ignore him thereafter because King Henry had possession of the real Earl of Warwick. More serious, and more mysterious, was the imposture of a young man from Flanders, Perkin Warbeck, a story often regarded as a harmless extra to the story of the Tudors, a minor distraction for the dynasty which produced Bluff King Hal and Good Queen Bess. That impression was sedulously created by a family who needed no professional spin-doctor to help them in self-presentation: the reality was that Perkin was a very serious threat indeed to a family of adventurers with hardly more claim to the English throne than a boatman's son from Flanders (Arthurson, 1994; Wroe, 2003).

Perkin, like Lambert Simnel, sought and won support in Ireland. He graduated from a second brief claim in Ireland to be the Earl of Warwick to a much less vulnerable story, that he was Richard Duke of York, son of King

Edward IV, snatched from his would-be murderers in the Tower of London when his elder brother was slaughtered, and brought up in Flanders safely away from his treacherous kingdom. Perkin's imposture is made more puzzling and ambiguous by the curiously contradictory stories put about by Henry Tudor as to the 'real' identity of the pretender, including puzzling variations in the names which his detractors bestowed on him, from Warbeck to Osbek. The blond boy from Flanders with the manners of a prince and mysteriously impeccable English speech and handwriting had won the devotion of Edward IV's sister Margaret Duchess of Burgundy. He held the imagination of her step-son by marriage, Maximilian, the future Holy Roman Emperor; he persuaded King James IV of Scotland to find him a bride from the highest Scots nobility – and that wife, poor lady, seemed to love him and remember him all through her three later marriages and her own new-made career as an English country gentlewoman.

Warbeck (if that was his name) travelled from Flanders to Portugal to Vienna to Ireland to Scotland and at last to England in a last unsuccessful invasion of Cornwall in late 1497, in the end dying on a scaffold in London at a particularly paranoid and panic-stricken moment of King Henry's reign in 1499, when genuine members of the Yorkist dynasty were also eliminated. The key to the mystery is hidden from us for ever, because that lay in the mind of Margaret of Burgundy, Perkin's chief support and sponsor. Other monarchs supported Perkin because they despised the Tudors, but this great lady of two realms had a childless marriage, and lavished her frustrated mother's love on a series of boys, of whom Perkin seems to have been the most lasting. In his cause she was happy to ignore the royal claims of her niece and Perkin's supposed sister Elizabeth of York, who had been married to Henry Tudor in an effort to boost Tudor power. Duchess Margaret was strikingly like her contemporary, another Margaret: Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, who had spearheaded her son Henry Tudor's campaign for the throne since the 1470s up to the great gamble and success at Bosworth in 1485. Unlike Burgundy, Richmond had one son, but she had borne Henry at the age of thirteen, and the trauma left her incapable of more children in her four marriages: hence her fierce determination to bring her only child to the unlikely pinnacle of King of England. These two great women were well-matched, both to be numbered among the most successful politicians of fifteenth-century Europe, and the story of Perkin Warbeck can be read as a duel between them – some of the ambiguities and hesitations in the tale of Warbeck told by the Tudors may result from a wish not to confront the Duchess of Burgundy too directly and expose her part in the whole affair. Just a little more will-power from Perkin in his successive invasions of the Atlantic Isles – Henry's first efforts were just as farcical – and all might have been over for the Tudors.

Henry VII's answer to these very real terrors was to murder or neutralise as many likely rivals as possible, a policy which his son took up in mid-life: the last major round of blood-letting was as late as 1538–41, when there were executions first of Henry Courtenay, Marquis of Exeter and his political associates, and then of the aged Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury. In the second case, the execution was carried out with wholly unnecessary brutality, but also as a symbolic gesture of spite against the last member of the Yorkist family not at the mercy of King Henry, the countess's son Cardinal Reginald Pole, by now an exile in Italy. The Tudors' policy of eliminating rivals would be familiar to any modern Mafia boss or totalitarian dictator. But as the death of the Countess of Salisbury demonstrated, the threat to the Tudors was not merely from fellow-political thugs: the hereditary principle meant that any representative of a better-qualified dynasty must be eliminated.

One cannot imagine that a White Rose political programme would have differed much from that of a Tudor, that Montague, Stafford, Courtenay or Pole would have been a very different king from Henry VIII in the 1520s. The complication came with the Reformation. Suddenly a real issue was injected into this aristocratic game, the most important issue of all in an age which could hardly conceive of a world without God: how should God be worshipped, and how did one attain to eternal life in his presence? That meant that dynastic murders could double as ideological murders, and Cardinal Pole could at once be a symbol of defiance to Henry VIII's religious policies and the grandson of Edward IV's brother the Duke of Clarence, much better descended than Henry. Ireland showed the way in this by a rebellion which as early in the Reformation changes as 1534 proclaimed itself as an act of total opposition to what was happening. It was led by the temporary vice-deputy of Ireland, Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, son of the ninth Earl of Kildare and so heir of the island's greatest magnate family, who was left in charge of Ireland when his father was summoned to London to give an account of his stewardship as royal deputy. Lord Thomas, distrustful of the Westminster government's intentions towards his father, staged a rebellion, but he gave it a new and much more dangerous edge than any of the Fitzgeralds' previous tense dealings with the English crown. He demanded that the Irish take an oath to the Pope, Charles V and himself, and a substantial part of the community even in the Pale was willing to make this complete transfer of allegiance away from the Tudor crown. Such an ideological component had no precedent in medieval Ireland's frequent rebellions, and this was perhaps the first incident in Europe to reveal how the Reformation or those who hated it might unseat a dynasty. Fitzgerald was only defeated with difficulty; thereafter Henry's administration was very cautious about alterations to Irish religion. Until the king's death, the island enjoyed

Catholic religious practice without the Pope – there was none of the continued innovation which England and Wales experienced (Ellis, 1981).

Even so, the third successful rebellion, the overthrow of the Duke of Somerset in October 1549 (a perfect example of pure high politics, in essence a quarrel within the Privy Council), was not a Catholic *coup d'état*, even though it came in the aftermath of Henry's Reformation and in the middle of a far more drastic and Protestant Reformation, and even though conservative noblemen and politicians were eager to cooperate with Somerset's removal. Indeed, adroitly steered by John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, it proved to anchor England's course to full Protestantism even more firmly. Even Tudor England's fourth successful rebellion, the *coup d'état* which put Catholic Princess Mary on the throne in 1553, carefully avoided the religious theme throughout the whole operation, just like Sir Thomas Wyatt in his near-success in winter 1554. It is only in the one major rebellion which Elizabeth faced, the rising of the northern earls in 1569, that we find a direct and unequivocal attempt to harness traditional aristocratic power to traditional religion – and it failed. The last rebellion of the age, Essex's effort in February 1601, was a return to classic pure high politics, or at least a classic parody of them. Essex simply wanted to seize power and influence for himself; there were Catholics among his followers, but that merely reflected the presence of Catholics in any group of foolish and frustrated young gentlemen at the time.

Now low politics. 'Low' is a rather patronising adjective, but at least it acknowledges that there was a second world of politics, which many Tudor noblemen and gentry would be loth to admit. Leadership qualities and experience were much more widely distributed in sixteenth-century England than social convention suggested. Conventionally, the people who ran the country were the nobility, higher clergy and gentry, plus a handful of career lawyers and, in the special sphere of towns, great merchants. In fact, at a local level, a good deal of power and responsibility was held by people who were not 'one of us'. England was made up of a few large cities, hundreds of medium-rank and small towns, but thousands of villages. Of these villages, only between a half and a third could claim a resident gentleman. Otherwise, their leading figures were prosperous farmers, who took their turn as churchwardens, bailiffs, jurors and gildholders. As a piece of shorthand, we can style them yeomen, but they might run businesses as well as farms. Particularly if they were involved in the cloth or the meat trade, they might travel round the country a good deal; they were well-informed, independent-minded, and used to dealing with a wide variety of people, and used to running their own and other people's affairs. These were the people who led popular Tudor rebellions.

Politically astute noblemen were quite aware of this reality; leading yeomen could be seen as a good investment for a rebellion. Take a significant



speech of a great magnate gone to the bad, Lord Thomas Seymour; either he actually said these words to the Marquis of Dorset in 1548, or his enemies thought that they could plausibly be put into his mouth as a recipe for his planned rebellion:

trust not to much to the gentlemen, for they have sumwhat to loose; but I wold rather advise you to make mucche of the head yeomen and franke-lynes of the cuntreie, speceally those that be the ringeleaders, for they be the men that be best hable to perswade the multitude and may best bring the number; and therefor I would wishe you to make mucche of them, and to goo to their houses, nowe to oon and nowe to an other, caryeng with you a flagon or two of wyne, and a pasty of veneson, and to use a familiaritie with them, for soo shall you cause them to love you, and be assured to have them at your commaundement; and this maner, I may tell you, I entende to use meself. (Russell, 1859: 15)

We can also note that this yeomen class which led rebellions was also the class which provided England with most of its clergy, right up to the bishops. It was therefore likely to be a class much prone to righteous indignation. What were the issues which made yeomen angry? If high politics was about *who* should run the country, low politics was about *how* the country should be run. High taxes, perversion of justice, aristocratic high-handedness, hoarding of food supplies: these were the issues which brought periodic eruptions of fury. Taxation was one of the chief symbols of chronic misgovernment. The Earl of Northumberland was murdered in 1489, when he turned into a royal tax collector. Back in 1381, the same thing had happened to an Archbishop of Canterbury, while the Duke of Suffolk had fallen victim to lynch law in 1450 because he had become the symbol of general misgovernment. However, taxation became an even more bitter issue from the 1520s because Henry VIII was demanding much more money to fight his succession of French wars. Henry made things much worse because as part of his fund-raising he introduced the most cruel and irresponsible form of indirect taxation possible: debasing the coinage. War and taxation lurked behind practically the whole sequence of mid-Tudor rebellions.

Religion mattered in low politics as well as high during the Reformation. Indeed, it had been a live issue in low politics throughout the fifteenth century, at a time when the gentry had ceased to quarrel about religion. Lollardy took refuge among yeomen when the Lancastrian kings persecuted it out of high politics. As a result, low politics was hospitable to new religious dissidence when it appeared from the Continent in the 1520s; this new reformism gradually merged with Lollardy. Some yeoman leaders, however, reacted with horror at the prospect of change in the society in which so many

were church and gild wardens, and which meant much to so many in terms of happiness, religious satisfaction and personal status. So in 1549 the world of low politics divided sharply in religious allegiance: although both sides shared many grievances (particularly against the misgovernment of their social superiors) and both gathered in camps, the western rebels demanded the withdrawal of the new English Prayer Book while the eastern and home counties rebels happily used the same Prayer Book in their camps. Much may have turned in these local decisions on the local object of their righteous indignation: in the West Country in 1548–49 they were interlopers who were also symbols of evangelical Reformation like William Body or Sir Peter Carew, and in the south-west and the southern Midlands they were members of the government or royal officials like Sir William Herbert or Sir John Williams of Thame and Rycote Park (Jones, 2003: 208, 321). In East Anglia, by contrast, the most obvious target was the imprisoned Howard Duke of Norfolk, symbol of rapacious estate management, but also of loyalty to traditional religion.

Low politics, even the low politics of rebellion, was a world of order. Most rebellions, after all, started as riots, and riots were a constant feature of English life, as much controlled by certain conventions as a violent game of rugby. Yeomen were fully familiar with the courts of law, and devoted a significant part of their spare income to using them. The processes of English common law actually encouraged formalised acts of violence, such as symbolic trespass on land, in order to get a legal case started, while in order to get a grievance into the most effective court in the land, Star Chamber, it was absolutely necessary to construct a riot, which might be collusive between the two sides just as much as a random piece of angry violence (Wall, 2000: ch. 9).

What is at first sight surprising in mid-Tudor violence is to find a battle between two individuals scamper between the lawcourt and the rebellion. To adapt Clausewitz, rebellion could be a lawsuit by other means: that is to say, rebels were not afraid of threatening violence, but they did so within a framework of ideas about what was justified and what was not justified. A cry comes down to us from one of the East Anglian rebel camps of 1549: a merchant confronted a gentleman who had been captured by the rebels as a hostage, and demanded compensation for an old trespass, saying 'Nay, I will have it now, ere I go, or I will complain, for I know I shall have remedy here' (MacCulloch, 1984a: 48). The same merchant went on to seek 'remedy' elsewhere, for he had the cheek to sue the gentleman for the same compensation in the court of King's Bench. At Norwich, the 1549 rebels were careful to observe the proper legal forms when they issued commissions for collecting cut-price grain for their enterprise; they claimed that they were doing so under the crown's traditional provisions for purveyance for royal needs, which was a legal but also a highly unpopular exaction. In 1536, the Pilgrims

had not only punished looters, but they had done so in highly ritualised ways which threatened them with death, but nevertheless spared their lives: a fletcher called Barton, for instance, was tied up, suspended over water and several times ducked before being banished from the Host (Shagan, 2003: 96–7). This was to do justice like royal judges, but also temper it with mercy.

It is worth remembering the useful generalisation of Yves-Marie Bercé: ‘The trigger of revolt is not destitution, but injustice – and not objective injustice, but the conviction of it’ (Bercé, 1987: 221). Rebels were seeking to do what was right. The main reason that they were rebelling was that they felt that their social superiors were not doing what was right. In fact most would have hated to be called rebels, and the participants in the 1549 ‘rebellions of Commonwealth’ behaved in a very distinctive way when they staged their actions. They formed camps and sat in them; their rebellion became known as ‘the camping time’, and it has become clear that the Devon and Cornwall rebels of 1549 likewise set up camps (Duffy, 2001: 138). There is a clear contrast with the urgent movement in the rebellions staged by practitioners of high politics: Henry Tudor’s invasion of 1485, Lambert Simnel’s invasion of 1487, Perkin Warbeck’s rather less resolute invasions in the 1490s, or Mary Tudor’s East Anglian coup of 1553. Other Tudor and earlier rebellions display the same lack of mobility as in the 1549 ‘camping time’: the Lincolnshire rebellion of 1470, the events surrounding the assassination of the Earl of Northumberland in 1489, even the Pilgrimage of Grace. In the distress of the 1590s, the suffering poor saw the formation of camps as an end in itself, in places as widely dispersed as Essex and Norfolk – in order to secure justice (Walter, 1985: 92).

The point was that camps had an analogy in ordinary times which spoke precisely of justice and remedy. Well into the sixteenth century, many meetings of the assizes nationwide were held in the open air; several camps in 1549 were set up at traditional assize centres, such as Bury St Edmunds or Melton Heath. One of the reasons that the people rose in 1549 is that they had caught a rhetoric of remedy, reform and social criticism from high politics: the rhetoric of commonwealth, which gave its name to the Kentish section of the stirs. At Norwich, the camp had an Oak of Reformation to dispense justice: an open-air court. The 1549 camps were probably more like a rough and ready garden fête or assize meeting than the savage centres of misrule which the government later tried to portray.

Low politics was a world of order: it was also a world of tradition, which could draw strength in a rising from exploiting well-established patterns of popular protest, just as the Lollards came to express their dissidence over generations in certain communities and certain families (Clark, 1976: 378). The recurrence of one community, St Keverne, in Cornish disturbances in 1497, 1537 and 1548–49 is notable. It has a significant combination of

characteristics: it was a large parish encompassing several scattered townships and hamlets, had no single landlord, and was also a key component in Cornwall's military capacity, containing a tenth of the county's maritime resources in Elizabeth's reign (Arthurson, 2000: 84). It is true that Cornwall was a culture to itself with a recurrent pattern of independent political behaviour from the fifteenth century to the Civil War (Stoyle, 1997), but such examples of recurrent community restlessness can be found all over England: Seamer in Yorkshire in 1319, 1549 and 1640–41, Cheshunt in Hertfordshire, with incidents ranging from 1548 to 1799, or Herne Hill in Kent, from 1595 to 1818 (Jones, 2003: 263, 295, 340). One remarkable south-eastern example of a linked pair of communities is from Suffolk: Lavenham and Brent Eleigh. The pairing is especially striking because of their apparently contrasting characters: Lavenham an important town and a centre of the cloth industry; Brent Eleigh then as now a very small agricultural village. After the protest in 1525 against the Amicable Grant the two communities were particularly singled out as places where the inhabitants should do penance for their resistance. In 1549 Lavenham and Brent Eleigh gave particularly solid support to the Bury camp. Moreover in 1569, in an abortive East Anglian popular rising, the Lavenham leaders again planned to go to Brent Eleigh to recruit support before they showed their hand (MacCulloch, 1984a: 52). Many disorders were associated with the traditional rhythms of the year which brought people of a region together to trade, to play and generally to feel good – notably the 1549 commotions in the south-east. Whitsuntide, around May to June, was a slack time of the farming year, an obvious moment to relax and have a good time, and perhaps indulge in troublemaking: the Northaw riots of 1548 and the Sampford Courtenay troubles of 1549 both began at Whitsun (Jones, 2003: 57). In 1533 the imperial ambassador reported that Henry VIII's government was nervously trying to suppress traditional summer meetings of armed men on St John's and St Peter's Eve; while the vicious riot against foreigners in 1517, the most serious disturbance to start in London all century, is known as Evil May Day. Well into the seventeenth century, Londoners could expect serious trouble on that other great popular holiday, Shrove Tuesday (Lindley, 1983: 109–10).

It was difficult for the world of high politics to accept that low politics existed, let alone had its own ideas about good government and competent administration. Lord Thomas Seymour saw the reality, but he was an unusually cynical and indiscreet nobleman. Most of his fellows would not admit what he is alleged to have said in 1548, and the idea of political competence among their inferiors filled them with horror and indignation. Their horror led to a fantasy picture of Tudor rebellions. Repeatedly, the people of later Tudor high politics saw the reality of low-casualty, semi-orderly English

commotions in terms of the mad violence which the militant Anabaptists had inflicted on the German city of Münster from 1533.

Faced, for instance, with a remarkably efficient takeover of East Anglia in 1549, the official commentators tried to turn the story of the whole venture into a monstrous rising of crazed wretches, and it was only left to observers on the sidelines to give a more balanced account, like the chronicler in far-off Bristol who described Kett's Norfolk army as 'full of courage and skillful'. In fact during the sixteenth century, popular violence was remarkably restrained compared with the previous century. During the fifteenth century, five English noblemen were murdered by mobs; the only noblemen to die in sixteenth-century rebellions were killed in active combat against rebels. A rare exception to the general rule was the abortive rising at Seamer in Yorkshire against the Edwardian Reformation in July and August 1549. This consisted, according to Foxe, of a plan 'at first rushe to kill and destroy such gentlemen and men of substance about them, as were favourers of the kynges procedynges, or which would resiste them'. Foxe says that four gentry were taken and murdered: 'After they had strypped them of their clothes and purses, they left them naked behynd them in the playne fields for crowes to feede on' (Dickens, 1939b). Acts of violence against the nobility, such as the killing of Lord Sheffield by Kett's rebels, were useful material to men like Sir John Cheke, employed to paint a picture of traitors who presumed to usurp the political role of their superiors. In general, however, time and again far more acts of violence were committed by the government in reprisals than were ever committed by rebels. So government reaction to rebellions repeatedly revealed the gulf between the two worlds of politics, and the fear which the high had of the low.

It is this gulf which helps us to explain both success in staging rebellions and success in preventing them. It came from bridging the gulf between the two politics. Consider once more a successful rebellion. The lesson of repeated attempts at popular rebellion was that they could not succeed on their own. The second successful Tudor rebellion was the defeat of the Amicable Grant in 1525. The Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, the only two dukes in England, were prepared to restore order by ritually humiliating the demonstrators, but they also advised against any actual violence, and they forcefully advised the king and Cardinal Wolsey that the tax should be dropped. This affair was the first major mistake that Wolsey had made in government, and it showed the power of combining popular and aristocratic discontent. Not enough people in power believed in the tax to push for its enforcement, and many of them saw it as the particular idea of a minister whom they disliked and envied. Similarly, in the Pilgrimage of Grace, massive success came to the rebels in autumn 1536 when commons and nobility combined, bringing the government to make humiliating concessions.

When mistrust overcame this frail cooperation, the attempts at renewed rebellion by the commons alone in winter 1537 were a fiasco.

A further sequence of eastern risings makes the same point about the necessity of cooperation. The rebellions of eastern and southern England in 1549 were paradoxical, because on the one hand they enthusiastically took up hints that the Duke of Somerset was intending radical reform, and on the other they showed real anger at the local misgovernment of the gentry. This was a rebellion of churchwardens appealing against justices of the peace to the Lord Protector. But the rebels soon found that Somerset was a false friend, interested only in their dispersal and, when things went wrong in Norfolk, in their suppression. The Norfolk folk made no gentry friends, had no one to listen to their grievances. Once they had been bloodily suppressed, the country's leadership staged their own high-political rebellion against Somerset to punish him for his clumsy encouragement of the lower orders.

The next great rising in eastern England, in 1553, was a complete contrast. In it, a group of gentlemen, Mary's small circle of loyal supporters and advisers, reacted to an eruption of popular anger against the Westminster leadership in order to overthrow Queen Jane and put Henry VIII's daughter on the throne. All over England and as far away as Ireland, the kingdom's local governors proclaimed Queen Jane; they were contradicted by their social inferiors. Ordinary East Anglians flocked to Mary's palace before the gentry did; sailors in a fleet off the Suffolk coast mutinied against their officers. One nobleman of ancient lineage, the sixteenth Earl of Oxford, found himself unceremoniously bundled on to his horse by his own servants to go and swear loyalty to Queen Mary (MacCulloch, 1984b: 214–15, 263–4). Faced with this, all over the country local gentry and urban leaderships were forced to do a reverse turn; the leaders of high politics in Westminster did not have enough conviction about what they had done to keep up resistance against both their own kind and against ordinary people. Proclamations of Jane were hastily forgotten and the evidence destroyed (it has taken much effort by recent historians to gather the fragments together). Popular satisfaction at the turn of events was probably heightened in East Anglia because it was a revenge on the Duke of Northumberland for his destruction of Kett's Rebellion; but the victory was a triumph of partnership between high and low politics: a success where similar cooperation in the Pilgrimage of Grace had only narrowly failed.

Equally, to neutralise a rebellion, one must seek a meeting and understanding between the two worlds: create once more the trust which had been lost. If Lord Thomas Seymour recommended pasties and wine for the ringleaders among the yeomen, that combination could be used just as much to stop trouble as to start it. Take once more the 1549 commotions in eastern England. The rising covered Kent, Sussex, the Thames Valley,

Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk, but most of it was sorted out without a fuss, and only the Norfolk section became a rebellion. The strategy adopted was to choose leading figures at Court who were respected in their home counties to go and talk to the rebels and offer them pardons and money. There are traces of this happening all over the south-east; Thomas Lord Wentworth of Suffolk was actually made a privy councillor just at this time, presumably so that he would be more impressive to the rebels back home, and he and his local magnate cousin Sir Anthony Wingfield succeeded in pacifying the Suffolk stirs without bloodshed. In Sussex the Earl of Arundel, a nobleman of the most ancient lineage, stopped trouble by inviting prominent malcontents round to dinner (Stone, 1974). Only in Norfolk did the scheme go wrong, for the simple reason that there was no one convincing to do the job. The Duke of Norfolk would have been the obvious person in the past, but he had been locked up in the Tower for two years. The government had to send in an outsider, the Marquis of Northampton, and he wrought havoc, involving bitterness, expense and many more deaths. Sir Peter Carew, a similarly unsympathetic figure to the western rebels of 1549 because of his religious views, had a similar effect on the situation in Devon (Speight, 1996). It seems to have been in 1549 that the first plans were drawn up for a nationwide system of lords lieutenant: a great nobleman was appointed by the crown for groups of counties, or if there was no such local figure, a consortium of leading local gentry would be appointed as muster commissioners in each county. The system was obviously useful for the organisation of local military forces which could contribute to sudden national emergencies or form the basis of a royal army in wartime, but it was also very useful in filling the gaps in county government which became apparent in the 1549 'rebellions of Commonwealth'. The national structure of lords lieutenant was complete and continuous from the middle of Elizabeth I's reign, and provided leadership for county government down to the nineteenth century.

Prevention, then, was better than cure when a rebellion broke out. The best prevention was to watch for any build-up of righteous indignation in low politics and use all the resources of the Tudor state to head it off before it got to the point of open demonstration. The government must show that it was responsive, that it could listen; it must also show that it was powerful, and ought to be obeyed. If petitions were presented, then there must be a response which was not merely a heavy-handed act of repression (Hoyle, 2002). There should be both carrot and stick.

First, the monarch should be seen, and in the best light possible. Monarchs should go on progress, and use all the theatre at their disposal to delight and overawe their subjects. Henry VII knew this, and within a year of winning his throne at Bosworth, he boldly embarked on a great triangular tour of the north and the west Midlands, just the areas where he was facing

open armed rebellion, making sure that he was met with the greatest magnificence which the provinces could provide (Cavell, 2002). Oddly enough, the extrovert Henry VIII was bad at using progresses effectively. He usually toured the counties nearest London, and was highly reluctant to go north. That may be one reason why the Pilgrimage of Grace happened; it is interesting to remember the Pilgrimage of Grace which did not happen in 1536, in the highly conservative and prosperous West Country. One reason that the west did not rise may well be that Henry actually stirred himself to visit it in summer 1535. He made a major tour of the west as far as Salisbury and the Bristol Channel. This was an occasion of major royal spectacle and feasting, and it is noticeable that Henry gave particular attention and favour to gentlemen of reforming sympathies. It would have been very difficult for West Country people to claim that the government had been seized by a reformist clique without the king knowing, which is what much of the Pilgrims' propaganda said in the north.

It took Henry five more years before he could be persuaded to go to Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, and that was after the small-scale renewal of rebellion by northerners in spring 1541. Even then, the main reason for Henry's going north that summer was his arranging an important diplomatic meeting with the Scottish king at York. James did not turn up, with fateful consequences for Anglo-Scottish relations, but the progress was by no means a waste of time. What is significant is that the king's journey was punctuated by formal and abject apologies in words and cash from the people of Lincolnshire and Yorkshire for their region's participation in the Pilgrimage five years before. Hall's Chronicle records that towns, cities, the 'Parts' of Lincolnshire, gentry and clergy each made representative gifts as reparations for what they had done. The progress was a symbolic reconciliation of king and country, and it worked; there was virtually no further trouble from the north, even in the religious ferment of Edward VI's reign.

Obviously the progress could only be an occasional asset to government. The state must contain a whole galaxy of what Sir Geoffrey Elton called 'points of contact': government must be seen to be accessible, sympathetic. In the provinces, people must be able to feel that they had access to the king's Court through the great men of their area; they must have confidence in royal courts of justice; they must also be confident that their views would be heard in parliament. Parliamentary representation much increased under the Tudors, both in the number of borough seats, and in the area which representation covered. Through the sixteenth century the overall number of Commons representatives increased by more than 50 per cent, from around 300 to 462 in 1603.

However, contact by itself was useless if it did not lead to action: the public must feel that it was getting something in return for its complaints. Clearly



that happened in 1525, when Wolsey joined in the theatre of reconciliation and sued for pardon for the ringleaders of the demonstration because they came from his native Suffolk. Even in the Pilgrimage of Grace, the public could see results. From a religious point of view, the rebellion was a disaster for the Pilgrims, with the religious world which they tried to defend all the more hastily destroyed; but their grievances on taxation and agricultural levies were heard. At a national level, threatened tax reforms were withdrawn for good, and at a local level, landlords in Cumbria toned down their attempts to get maximum financial advantage from gressums and other customs of tenure (Bush, 1991b: 314–15, 417). Gentry worries about the effect of major legal changes affecting their inheritance were accommodated when the 1535 Statute of Uses was modified by the Statute of Wills in 1540. In 1549, the Norfolk rebels prayed that 'bonde men may be made fre for god made all fre with his precious blode sheddyng': scores of them were indeed made free by royal grant over the four years after the rebellion ended (MacCulloch, 1984a) [Doc. 17, p. 156]. Moreover, after 1549, Tudor government gave a wide berth to taxes on livestock and excises which had caused such fury in the West Country (Bush, 1991a: 397). So rebellion could produce results; that showed that the government did listen. This was a difficult and delicate issue, given that public ideology was that rebellion was a blasphemy against God whose only reward could be punishment.

In 1558 Elizabeth I inherited a country which had seen four successful rebellions in seven decades, and which had been seething with disturbances for the entire previous decade. The queen then pushed through a religious settlement which many of her subjects disliked and of which only a minority positively approved. The prospects were gloomy, and there was plenty of continuing minor local trouble; yet in the end, Elizabeth faced only one serious internal challenge, in 1569. Elizabethan and early Stuart lawcourts even came to recognise the lessening violence of the age. After 1569 they had to deal with riot and disorder rather than rebellion, and in response, from the end of the century they evolved a new legal offence to deal with these situations: sedition. The penalties for sedition were serious enough, but did not involve the full savagery of the law of treason. It was a clear acknowledgement that a lesser crime demanded a lesser punishment (Manning, 1980).

Why did the situation change after 1569? First, Elizabeth was better at public theatre than her father. She played up all the rhetoric of obedience to divinely appointed royal power which her predecessors had developed. Famously, she built up an image of herself which even included appropriating some of the verbal imagery associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary (Hackett, 1995). This was helped by the accidents of international politics. The Protestant cause of Elizabeth's regime increasingly stood out against foreign Catholic great powers and a Pope who had actually ordered her own

Catholic subjects to kill her. Although a handful tried, and failed, nearly all Catholics were as horrified as Protestants at the idea. The deep loyalty to the children of Henry VIII which had served Mary well in 1553 and 1554 became all the stronger towards Elizabeth.

Elizabethan national loyalty was also strengthened by the government's cowardice. After all the debate and argument about the Tudor revolution in government, we can be safe in seeing the first half of the sixteenth century as an age of enormous change in English society and government: obviously at the religious level, but also in the way that England was governed both locally and centrally. Those changes could have been even more sweeping, but Elizabeth's government gave them up. Above all, Elizabeth failed to tackle the most vital and the most dangerous area of English government: taxation. Henry VIII had made many efforts to reform England's antiquated tax system, and most of them failed. Above all, he failed to convince English people that taxation should be a normal part of their peacetime lives, that it was not an unpleasant extra forced on them when England was at war. Elizabeth did no better. In administrative change, she was a complete coward. The actual amount of the subsidy fell: the real value fell even more sharply, undercut by inflation. The assessment of the wealthy became a 'farce' (Schofield, 1987: 254), and the burden fell increasingly and disproportionately on the middling and the poor. By not dealing with these problems, she avoided facing an Amicable Grant demonstration or the tax grievances of the Pilgrimage of Grace, but she also left a huge problem for her Stuart successors to sort out.

National loyalty was also strengthened by the fact of the government's success against the 1569 rising. If any challenge could have brought down the Elizabethan Protestant regime, it was this: the perfect combination of aristocratic power and conservative religion which had also made the Pilgrimage of Grace so potentially dangerous. The reasons for its failure lay in a combination of irresolution, hopeless planning and changing times. The 1569 failure showed that the Tudors had persuaded enough people even in the remote north that the most important political loyalty in their lives was to the crown and the central government at Westminster. Even in the desperate 1590s, Elizabeth faced only two risings in England: one from low politics, one from high politics. The efforts of the pathetic Oxfordshire conspirators and the Earl of Essex proved to be a far cry from Bosworth Field, or indeed from Naseby.

Nevertheless, can the Elizabethan regime take all the credit, both negative and positive, for the decline in rebellions in Tudor England? There is a wider explanation, which takes us back to low politics. We have seen the sort of people who led rebellions. These 'yeomen' sustained the Lollards, marched to Lavenham to shout down the Amicable Grant, became the captains of the 1536 and the 1549 risings. They would remain part of the complacent

English myth of self-identity, as in the military regiments which in the twentieth century still proudly called themselves the Yeomanry. But yeomen changed during the sixteenth century. Their world came closer to that of their gentry superiors, and in one particular respect: literacy. By the 1580s, for instance, David Cressy's findings are that in Exeter diocese yeoman illiteracy had fallen from 75 to 35 per cent in the previous thirty years, and in the diocese of Norwich it had fallen from about 60 to about 30 per cent (Cressy, 1980: 162–8). From then on, a majority of the middling sort of craftsmen and small farmers even in small villages were literate, the result of increased schooling in mid-century. At the same time, their social inferiors, the husbandmen and labourers, remained steadily illiterate at between 75 and 100 per cent right up to the nineteenth century.

Thus in the reign of Elizabeth the yeomen leadership of low politics was becoming closer to the gentry than to the class below. Literate culture was the culture of the powerful. Yeoman society began taking on the ways of the world of power; for instance, the inventories of their possessions on their deaths and their wills reveal musical instruments like virginals in their homes. Relabelled as the 'better sort' of the parish, they became the backbone of the system of select vestries and poor law administration which made the parishes of England increasingly tightly defended against disorder and the selfassertion of the lower orders from the end of the sixteenth century (Hindle, 2000). Many of them took with enthusiasm to the new respectable activism of Puritan religion. They were less inclined to use violence to express their anger; they would take their grievances to the royal lawcourts, and turn up in their hundreds or even thousands to vote in county elections to parliament. There might be plenty of excitement and brawling on an Elizabethan election day, but it was a far cry from the slaughter of Kett's army on Mousehold Heath. And the trauma of the events of 1549, which had brought such slaughter to the people in both the West Country and the south-eastern counties, and which had revealed a new and worrying radicalism among the crowds in the camps, stands as a defining moment in helping the yeoman leaders of England reassess how they should best use their political leadership.

So the emphasis in the conflicts of low politics moved from direct action in the countryside to alternative arenas: the lawcourts, the High Court of Parliament. These were traditional arenas, but all the more effective because of that in siphoning off popular protest. Each embodied the majesty of the law, and Tudor low politics showed perhaps even more respect than high politics for law and justice. It would take Charles I to unlearn all the lessons that his Tudor predecessors had learnt from their rebellions: to combine the leaders of high and low politics once more in open violence against the English state.

## Part 4

---

# DOCUMENTS

## TRANSCRIPTION

In these extracts the spelling and punctuation follow the source used. Words in brackets are conjectural interpretations where a manuscript is torn or unreadable.

**Document 1** THE DUKE OF NORFOLK TO WOLSEY, 1525

*The Duke of Norfolk made this report from Lavenham on 11 May 1525. The gathering of the Suffolk commons was the nearest approach by those who resisted the Amicable Grant to open rebellion.*

Pleas it your grace to bee advertised that this day at x a clock we the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk mett to gethers at a place appoyntid ii myles on this syde Bury with all the company of bothe the shires whiche was a right goodly company to loke upon at the leste iiii thousand whiche were gatherd sithins Tuisday in the mornynge. And unto us cam the inhabitauntes of the towne of Lavenham and Brant Ely whiche were offenders to a great nombre. They cam all in their shirttes and kneling before us with pitious crying for mercy shewed that they were the kinges moste humble and faithfull subgiettes and soo wold contynu during their lyves saying that this offence by them comitted was only for lack of worke soo that they knewe not howe to gett their lyvinge. And for their offence moste humbly besought us to bee meanes to the kinges highnes for pardon and remission, unto whome we made a long rehersall the beste we coulede to agravate their heynous offence declaring the same to be highe treason and laying the soreste we could to their charges as well of their evell demeanour againste the kinges highnes as of their rayling wordes. Finally we tryed out iiii of the pryncipall of the offenders . . . we gave all the reste leave to departe save thouse iiii with as sharp and sore lessons any more to do like offence as we could devyce.

Source: B.L. Cotton MSS, Cleopatra FVI. fol. 325; *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, iv (1), 1323.

**Document 2** THE EXAMINATION OF NICHOLAS LECHE, 1536

*Nicholas Leche, the priest of Belchford, took the initiative in raising the commons around Horncastle. He was tried for treason and executed at Tyburn in March 1537. His examination throws interesting light on the cooperation of the gentry and commons in Lincolnshire but it should be treated with caution*

*since it is likely that Leche did his utmost to dissociate himself from the leadership of the rising.*

The gentlemen were always together commonly a mile from the commons. What they did he knows not, but at length they brought forth certain articles of their griefs, of which one was that the King should remit the subsidy, and another that he should let the abbeys stand, which articles George Stanes openly proclaimed in the field, and the sheriff and he, about Langwith field, said to the commons, 'Masters ye see that in all the time we have been absent from you we have not been idle. How like you these articles? If they please you say Yea. If not, ye shall have them amended.' The commons then held up their hands and said with a loud voice, 'We like them very well.'

Amongst other articles there declared, Mr Sheriff and other gentlemen said, 'Masters, there is a statute made whereby all persons be restrained to make their wills upon their lands, for now the eldest son must have all his father's lands, and no person to the payment of his debt, neither to the advancement of his daughters' marriages, can do nothing with their lands, nor cannot give his youngest son any lands.' Before this he thinks that the commons knew not what that Act of Uses meant. Nevertheless, when that article was read to them, they agreed to it as to all other articles devised by the gentlemen. He thinks all the exterior acts of the gentlemen amongst the commons were done willingly, for he saw them as diligent to set forward every matter as the commons were. And further, during the whole time of the insurrection, not one of them persuaded the people to desist or showed them it was high treason. Otherwise he believes in his conscience they would not have gone forward, for all the people with whom he had intelligence thought they had not offended the King, as the gentlemen caused proclamations to be made in his name. He thinks the gentlemen might have stayed the people of Horncastle, for at the beginning his parishioners went forward among the rebels only by command of the gentlemen. The gentlemen were first harnessed of all others, and commanded the commons to prepare themselves harness, and he believes the commons expected to have redress of grievances by way of supplication to the King.

*Source: Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, xii (1), 70 (xi); James, 1970: 21, 24–5.*



THE LINCOLN ARTICLES, 1536

Document 3

*These articles were drawn up at Lincoln on 9 October 1536; Richard Hoyle argues that they were responsible for converting Robert Aske to the rebellion.*

*They survive only in the archive of York, and have often wrongly been associated with the Pilgrimage's activities there.*

To the Kyng our Sovereign lorde.

1. The suppression of so many religiose howses as are at this instant tyme suppressed, whereby the service of our God is not wel [maintained] but also the [commons] of yor realme by unrelieved, the which as we think is a gret hurt to the common welthe and many husars [*sic, ?for 'housers', inhabitants*] [put] from theyr levynges and left at large.
2. The second article is that we humbly beseche your grace that the acte of use may be suppressed be cause we think by the sayde act that we your true subjectes be clerely restraynyd of ther liberties in the declaration of our wylles concerning our landes, as well for payment of our dettes, for doeing of yor grace service, as for helping and elevying of our children, the which we had by the suffering of yor lawes by a long continuance the which as we think is a gret hurt and discomforth to the common welth.
3. The iiide article is that wheyr your grace hath a taxe or a quindeyne granted unto you by act of parliament payable the next yere, the which is and hath been ever leveable of shepe and catalis, and the shepe and catalis of yor subjects within the sayde shire are now at this instant tyme in manner utterly decayed and . . . whereby your grace to take the sayde tax or quindeyn yor sayde subjects shalbe constraigned to paye iiiid for oon beast and xiid for xxtie shepe, the which wold be an importunate charge to theym considering the povertie that they be in all redye and losse which they have sutayned these ii years by past.
4. The iiiith article is that we yor true subjects thinkes that yor grace takes of yor counsell and being a bowte you such persons as be of low byrth and small reputation which hath procuryd the premisses most especially for theyr own advantage, the which we suspect to be the lord crumwell and Sir Richard Riche Chancellor of the augmentation.
5. The vth article is that we your true subjects fyndes us grevyd that there be diverse bisshoppis of England of yor graciose late promosion that hath falsid [*made false*] the faith of Crist, as we thinke, which are the bisshop of Canterbury, the bisshop of Rochester, the bisshop of Worcester, the bisshop of Salisbury, the bisshop of Saint Davys, and the bisshop of Devlyn [*Dublin*], and in especial as we thynk the begynyngs of all the trouble of this relm and the vexation that hath been takyn of yor subjects the bisshop of Lincoln.

Source: National Archives, S.P. 1/108, fol. 50; *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xi, 705 (1); Hoyle, 2001b: 197, 203, 455–6.



## THE OATH OF THE HONOURABLE MEN, 1536

## Document 4

*Robert Aske later explained that he ‘made and devised the Oath . . . without any other man’s advice’ before the council of the Pilgrim captains held at York on 17 October 1536. Here it was administered to the gentlemen and it was then taken by all the Pilgrims.*

Ye shall not enter into this our Pilgrimage of Grace for the commonwealth, but only for the love that ye do bear unto almighty God, his faith, and to holy church militant [and for] the maintenance thereof, to the preservation of the king’s person [and] his issue, to the purifying of the nobility, and to expulse all villain blood and evil councillors against the commonwealth from his grace and his privy council of the same. And that ye shall not enter into our said Pilgrimage for no particular profit to yourself, nor to do any displeasure to any private person, but by the counsel of the commonwealth, nor slay nor murder for no envy, but in your hearts put away fear and dread, and take afore you the Cross of Christ, and in your hearts his faith, the restitution of the church, the suppression of these heretics and their opinions, by the holy contents of this book.

*Source: Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, xi, 705 (4); the version followed here is that in the Derby correspondence, Lancashire Record Office, DDF/1 (unfoliated), printed in Hoyle, 2001b: 457–8.*



## ROBERT ASKE TO THE LORDS AT PONTEFRACT, 1536

## Document 5

*Robert Aske wrote this account of his interview with the lords and gentry at Pontefract on 19 October 1536 when he was in London in December 1536. It was written at Henry’s request.*

And to the lordes temporall, the said Aske declared, they had misused them selves, in that thay, semblable, had not so providently ordered and declared to his said highnes the povertie of his realm, and that parte specialy, and wherin ther greves might insew, wherby al dangers might have been avoided; for insomuch as in the north partes, much of the relief of the comyns was by sucur of abbeys, and that befor this last estatut thereof maid, the Kinges highnes had no money out of that sheyr, in a maner yerly, for his grace’s revenews ther yerly went to the finding of Berwyke. And that now the profites of abbeys suppressed, tenthes and furst frutes, went out of thos partes. By occasion wherof, within short space or [of] yeres, ther should be no money nor tresor in thos partes, nether the tenant to have to pay his rentes to the lord,



nor the lord to have money to do the King service with all, for so much as in thos partes was nether the presence of his grace, execucion of his lawes, nor yet but little recours of merchaundisse, so that of necessite the said contrey should eyther patysssh [*make terms*] with the Skotes, or for of vary povertie enforced to make commocions or rebellions; and that the lordes knew the same to be trew and had not down ther dewtie, for that they had not declared the said povertie of the said contrey to the Kinges highnes, and the dangers that otherwise to his grace wuld in sew, alleging the holl blame to them the nobilitie therin, with other lyke reasons.

Source: *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xii (1), 6; Dodds and Dodds, 1915: 186.



**Document 6** THE PILGRIMS' BALLAD, 1536

*The Pilgrims' Ballad is thought to have been composed by the monks of Sawley Abbey in Lancashire. It has sixteen verses in all. This is only one of a number of rhymes circulated during the rising which combined the themes of the Church in danger and the material needs of the commons.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>I Crist crucifyd!<br/>For thy woundes wide<br/>Us commens guyde!<br/>Which pilgrames be,<br/>Thrughe godes grace,<br/>For to purchache<br/>Olde welth and peax<br/>Of the Spiritualltie.</p> | <p>II Gret godes fame<br/>Doith Church proclame<br/>Now to be lame<br/>And fast in boundes,<br/>Robbyd, spoled and shorne<br/>From catell and corne,<br/>And clene furth borne<br/>Of housez and landes.</p> |
| <p>X Alacke! Alacke!<br/>For the church sake<br/>Pore comons wake,<br/>And no marvell!<br/>For clere it is<br/>The decay of this<br/>How the pore shall mys<br/>No tong can tell.</p>           | <p>XI For ther they hadde<br/>Boith ale and breyde<br/>At tyme of nede,<br/>And succer grete<br/>In alle distresse<br/><br/>And hevynes<br/>And wel intrete.</p>   |
| <p>XII In troubil and care,<br/>Where that we were<br/>In maner all bere<br/>Of our substance,</p>  | <p>XVI Crim, crame, and riche<br/>With thre ell and the liche<br/>As sum men teache<br/>God theym amend!</p>   |

We found good bate	And that Aske may,
At churche men gate,	Without delay,
Withoute checkmate	Here make a stay
Or varyaunce.	And well to end!

Source: *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xi, 786 (3); Bateson, 1890: 344–5.



THE COMMONS OF WESTMORLAND TO LORD DARCY, 1536

Document 7

*This letter of the Pilgrim captains in Westmorland on 18 November 1536 to ask Lord Darcy's advice is the only evidence of their demands.*

. . . consirnyng the gyrsums for power men to be layd a parte but only penny farm penny gyrsum, with all the tythes to remayn to every man hys owne, doynge therfor accordynge to their dewtye, also taxes casten emongst the benefest men, as well tham in abett with in us as tham that was nott incument for the comenwelthe wich we dyssyre of your lordchep to brawth your plesur thairin qwatt we may doo in all these causes for we thynke in our oppyneons that we may putt in thair rowmes to serve God oders that wald be glad to keep hospytallyte for sum of thaim are no preestes that hath the benefyce in hand and oders of thaim is my lord Crumwell chapplynes. Now as we doo accept no gentyllman of our counsel because we be affrayed of thaim . . . we besuche your noble lordchep of your goodnes and dyscreeet consell wat may doo in the sayd premysses for the comen welthe . . .

Source: *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xi, 1080; Harrison, 1981: 138.



ADVICE TO THE PILGRIMS AT PONTEFRACT, 1536

Document 8

*The anonymous petition of advice to the Pilgrims assembled at Pontefract from which these extracts are taken has been convincingly attributed to Sir Thomas Tempest, who was ill and unable to attend in person. He had sat in the parliament of 1529–36 as member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Aske seems to have been influenced by it at several points in drawing up the final articles.*

My powre advyce to my lorde captayne, baronage and comynaltie at Pomf[rete] ondyr ynsurreccyon that may be resavyd with sysche of the Kyng's counsell as cummythe to Duncaster, where by me semys the Kyng schuld [condescend to] owr petecyon agaynst the Lowler and [tra]itur

Thomas Crumwell, hys dyscypyles and adherentes or at leste exyle hym and them furthe of the relm.

Firste, where yt ys a legyd that we schulde not tayke upon us to assyne his Gr[ace's Council] yt ys ne[ce]ssary that vertuus men that luffythe the comunwelthe schulde be of his [counci]l . . . susche vertuus men as woylde regarde the comunwelthe abuffe their princys . . . in this nobyll reym who reydes the crownakylls of Edwarde the ii what juperdy he was in for Peres de G[ave]stun, Spenseres, and susche lyke cunsellars and . . . Rycharde the ii was deposed for folowing the cunsell of susche lyke.

Item, a prynce schulde be mayde Kynge to defende the realme, and rewle hys subietes vertuus[ly] be iutece myxyd with mercy and pyty, and not undur dysplesur by rygore to [p]u[t] men to de[the], for thowghe yt ys sayde that our bodes [be] the Kynges when he hayse kyllyd a man he [cannot] mayk a man a lyffe ayene. . . .

Item, where yt ys alegyd that the Kynge haythe [au]toryte grantyd hym by parlamente to suppres theys abbays, I thynke that theys parlamentes was of nune actoryte nor vertu, for yff theys schulde be trewly namyd, thay schulde be callyd counsylles of the Kynges [a]poyntment, and not parlaments, for parlamentes owyt to have the knyghtes of the schyar and bur[gesses for the t]owyns [at] ther owyne electyon that colde resun for the wellthe of the schyar or towyn . . . a parlament they have devysyd that men may not speke off the Kynges vycys whysch men may say trewly had moste nede to be spokyn on, and reformyd off [all] thyng, [for if] the hede ayke how can the body be hole . . . but what so ever Crumwell says ys ryght and noyne but that.

[Item, the] fals flaterer onder the coller of luffe saythe that he schall make the Kynge the rychest prynce in Crystyndom . . . , but . . . the kynge can have no more off hus then we have whysche in manner he hathe al redy, and ys not satsysffyd, and therefore I thynke he goythe abowyt to mayke hym the poryste pryntse in crystyndom for when he by susche pyllage hath loste the hartes of hys baronage and poyre communes and the rychys off realme spent and hys othe and faythe brokyn who then wyll belyffe hym . . .

. . . hys servandes ye and hys servandes servandes thynkes to have the law in every playse here oyrderyd at their commandment, and wyll tayk upon thaim to commande scheryffe, justysys of peyse, coram, and of secyon in their mayster's name at their plesure, wytnes Brabsun and Dakynes, so that what so ever thay wyll have doyne must be lawfull, and who contrarys thaim shall be accusyd off tresun, be he never so trew a man. . . .

Source: National Archives, S.P. 1/112, fol. 138rv; *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xi, 1244.



## THE PONTEFRACT ARTICLES, 1536

## Document 9

*The document is headed 'Copie of the articles to the Lordes of the King's Cownsell at our comyng to Pontefract'. It can therefore be dated to 2–4 December 1536. There are two versions of the articles, and material included only in the second is printed in brackets. Item numbers have been added here.*

1. The fyrst touchyng our faith to have the heresydes of Luther, Wyclif, Husse, Malangton, Elocampadius [*corrected to Ecolampadius*], Bucerus, Confessio Gemaniae Apologia Malanctonis, The Works of Tyndall, of Barnys [of Firth, Pandiae Unio Dissidencium], of Marshall, Raskell [*corrected to Rastall*], Seynt Germayne [in Englishe] and such other heresies of Anibaptist clerely within this realm to be annulled and destroyde.
2. The iid to have the supreme head of the church towching cure animarum to be reserved unto the see of Rome as before it was accustomed to be, and to have the consecracions of the bisshops [to be restoryd to the clargie] from hym with owt any first frutes or pencion to hym to be payd owt of this realme or els a pension reasonable for the owtward defence of our faith.
3. Item we humbly beseche our moost dred sovereign lorde that the Lady Mary may be made legitimate and the former statute therein annulled, for the danger of the title that myght incurre to the crown of Scotland [to this realme and other], that to be by parliament [by laudable custome].
4. Item to have the abbayes suppressed to be restoryd unto ther howses land and goodes.
5. Item to have the tenth and fyrst frutes clerely discharged of the same, onles the clergy wyll of them selvys graunte a rent charge in generality to the augmentation of the crown.
6. Item to have the Freres Observauntes restorid unto ther houses agayn.
7. Item to have the heretiques, bisshoppis and temporall, and ther secte to have condigne punyshment by fyer or such oder, or els to trye ther quareles with us and our parte takers in batell.
8. Item to have the lord Crumwell, the Lorde Chancelor, and Sir Richard Riche knyght to have condigne ponyshment, as the subverters of the good laws of this realme and maynteners of the false sect of those heretiques and the first inventors and bryngars in of them.
9. Item that the landes in Westmorland, Cumberland, Kendall, Dent, Sedber, Fornes and the abbayes landes in Mashamshire, Kyrkbyshire, Notherdale may be by tenant right, and the lord to have at every change ii yeeres rent for gressom and no moore according to the grante now made by the lordes to the comons theyr under ther seall. And this to be done by acte of parliament.

10. Item the statutes of handgunnys and crossboyes to be repellid, and the penaltie therof onles it be in the Kinges Forest or parkes for the kylling of his graces deer red and fallow.
11. Item that doctor Ligh and doctor Layton . . . have condigne ponyshment for theyr extortions in theyr tyme of visitacions, as in bribes of sume religiose hou[s]es xl li, xx li, and so to nieyer summys, horses, avousons, leaces under convent seall brybes by them taken, and other theyr abhominable actes by them comytted and done.
12. Item reformation for the election of knightes of shire and burgess, and for the use amonge the lordes in the parliament hows after theyr ancient custome.
13. Item statute for inclosors and intackes to put in execution, and that all intakes and inclosors sith Anno iiii h. vii to be pulled down except montans, forest and parkes.
14. Item to be discharged of the quindyne and taxes now granted by acte of parliament.
15. Item to have the parliament in a convenient place at Nottyngham or York and the same shortly somonyd.
16. Item the statute of the declaracion of the crown by wyll, that the same may be annullid and repellyd.
17. Item that it be inactid by acte of parliamente that all recognisances, statutes, penalties new forfayt during the tyme of this comocion may be pardonyd and discharged as well agaynst the King as strangers.
18. Item the privlages and ryghtes of the church to be confirmyd by acte of parliament, and prestes not suffre by sourde on les he be disgradid, a man to be savid by his book, sanctuary to save a man for all causes in extreme nede, and the church for xl daies and further according to the laws as they weeyr usid in the begynnyng of this kinges dayes.
19. Item the liberties of the church to have ther old customys as the cownty palatyn at Durham, Beverlay, Rippon, Sant Peter of York and such other by acte of parliament.
20. Item to have the statute that no man shall wyll hys landes to be repellid.
21. Item that the statutes of tresons for wordes and such lyke made sens Anno xxi of our soveraign lord that now is to be in lyke wyse repelled.
22. Item that the common lawes ma have place as was usid in the begynning of your grace is Reign and that all iniunctions may be clerely denyed and not to be granted on les the mater be hard and determyned in the chancery.
23. Item that no man uppon subpoena is from Trent north apeyr but at York or by attorney on les it be directid uppon payn of allegiance and for lyke maters concernyng the kyng.

24. Item a remedy ageynst escheators for fyndyng of fals offices and extorsious fees, taking which be not holdyn of the kyng and ageynst the promoters thereof.

Source: National Archives, S.P. 1/112, fols 143–4; *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xi, 1246; material in brackets from National Archives, S.P. 1/112, fol. 149rv. Modernised text: Hoyle, 2001b: 460–3.



RICHARD MORISON, *A REMEDY FOR SEDITION*, 1536

Document 10

*In 1536 Richard Morison returned to England after living in the household of Reginald Pole at Padua. His passage home was paid by Thomas Cromwell and he at once became one of the leading Cromwellian publicists (Elton, 1972: ch. 4; Zeeveld, 1948). His book A Remedy for Sedition was printed by Berthelet, the king's printer, within a few weeks of the outbreak of the Pilgrimage of Grace: this is taken from the second edition of 1537, sigs. A2rv, B3v (but see also Berkowitz, 1984).*

Whan every man wyll rule, who shall obeye? Howe can there be any common welthe, where he that is welthyest, is mooste lyke to come to woo? Who can there be ryche, where he that is richest, is in moste daunger of povertie? No, no, take welth by the hande, and say farewell welthe, where luste is lyked, and lawe refused, where up is sette downe, and downe sette uppe: An order, an order muste be hadde, and a waye founde, that they rule that beste can, they be ruled, that mooste it becommeth so to be. This agreement is not onely expedient, but also most necessary in a common welthe, those that are of the worsor sort, to be content, that the wyser reule and governe theym, those that nature hath endewed with synguler vertues, and fortune without breache of lawe, set in hyghe dignitie, to suppose this done by the great provydenche of god, as a meane to engender love and amitie, betwene the highe and the lowe, the small and the great, the one beyng so necessary for thothers safegarde welthe and quietnes. For as there must be some men of polycie and prudence, to discern what is metest to be done in the goverment of states even so there muste be other of strength and redynes, to do that the wyser shall thinke expedient, bothe for the mayntenance of them that governe, and for theschewyng of the infinite joperdies, that a multitude not governid fallith into: These must not go, arme in arme, but the one before, the other behynde. . . .

A comune welthe is lyke a body, and soo lyke, that it can be resembled to nothyng so convenient, as unto that. Nowe, were it not by your faythe, a

madde herynge, if the fote shuld say, I wyl weare a cappe, with an ouche, as the heade dothe? If the knees shulde say, we woll carie the eyes, an other whyle: if the shulders shulde clayme eche of them an eare: if the heles wold nowe go before, and the toes behind? This were undoubted a mad heryng: every man wold say, the fete, the knees, the shoulders, the heles make unlau-full requestes, and very madde petitions. But if it were so in dede, if the fote had a cap, the knees eies, the shulders eares, what a monstrous body shuld this be? God sende them suche a one, that shall at any tyme go about to make as evil a comune welth, as this is a body. It is not mete, every man to do, that he thynketh best.



**Document 11** THE EXAMINATION OF ROBERT ASKE, 1537

*Aske was examined about every aspect of his part in the Pilgrimage during his imprisonment in the Tower in April and May 1537. This is an extract from his replies to the interrogatories.*

To the statut of subpressions, he dyd gruge ayenst the same and so did al the holl contrey, because the abbeys in the north partes gaf great almons to pour men and laudable servyd God; in which partes of lait dais they had but smal comforth by gostly teching. And by occasion of the said suppression the devyn service of almightie God is much minished, greate nombre of messes unsaid, and the blissed consecracion of the sacrament now not used and showed in thos places, to the distreas of the faith, and sperituall comforth to man soull, the temple of God russed and pulled down, the ornamentes and releques of the church of God unreverent used, the townes and sepulcres of honorable and noble men pulled down and sold, non hospitalite now in thos places kept, but the fermers for the most parte lettes and taverns out the fermes of the same houses to other fermers, for lucre and advauntage to them selves. And the profites of thies abbeys yerley goith out of the contrey to the Kinges highnes, so that in short space little money, by occasion of the said yerly rentes, tenementes and furst frutes, should be left in the said country, in consideracion of the absens of the Kinges highnes in thos partes, want of his lawes and the frequentacion of merchandisse. Also diverse and many of the said abbeys wer in the montaignes and desert places, wher the people be rud of condycions and not well taught the law of God, and when the said abbeys stud, the said people not only had worldly refressing in ther bodies but also sperituall refuge both by gostly lifving of them and also by speritual informacion, and preching; and many ther tenauntes wer ther feed servaundes to them, and serving men, wel socored by abbeys; and now not only theis

tenauntes and servauntes wantes refreshing ther, both of meat, cloth and wages, and knowith not now wher to have any liffing, but also strangers and baggers of corne as betwix Yorkshir, Lancashir, Kendall, Westmoreland and the bishopreke, was nither cariage of corne and merchandise, greatly socored both horsse and man by the said abbeys, for non was in thes partes denyed, nether horsemeat nor manesmeat, so that the people was greatlie refreshshyd by the said abbeys, wher now they have no such sucour; and wherfor the said statut of subpression was greatly to the decay of the comyn welth of that contrei, and al thos partes of al degreys greatly groged ayenst the same, and yet doth ther dewtie of allegieance alwais savyd.

Also the abbeys was on of the bewties of this realme to al men and strangers passing threw the same; also al gentilmen much socored in their nedes with money, their yong sons ther socored, and in nonries ther doughters brought up in vertue; and also ther evidenses and mony left to the usses of infantes in abbeys handes, alwas sure ther; and such abbeys as wer ner the danger of see bankes, great mayntenours of see wals and dykes, mayntenours and bilders of briges and heghwais, and such other thinges for the comyn welth.

Source: *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xii (I), 852, 900, 901, 945, 946, 1175. Bateson, 1890: 550–73 prints in full nos 900, 901 and 945; this is from 900 (pp. 561–2).



#### THE DEMANDS OF THE WESTERN REBELS, 1549

#### Document 12

*There are a number of different versions of the rebel articles. That printed here from A Copy of a Letter [Doc. 13] is the most complete and represents the final manifesto drawn up outside Exeter.*

The Articles of us the Commoners of Devonshyre and Cornwall in divers Campes by East and West of Excettor.

1. Fyrst we wyll have all the general counsell and holy decrees of our forfathers observed, kept and performed, and who so ever shal agayne saye them, we holde them as Heretikes.
2. Item we will have the Lawes of our Soverayne Lord Kyng Henry the viii concernynge the syxe articles, to be in use again, as in hys time they were.
3. Item we will have the masse in Latten, as was before, and celebrated by the Pryest wythoute any man or woman communycatyng wyth hym.
4. Item we wyll have the Sacrement hange over the hyeghe aluter, and there to be worshypped as it was wount to be, and they whiche will not therto consent, we wyl have them dye lyke heretykes against the holy Catholyque fayth.



5. Item we wyll have the Sacrament of the aulter but at Easter delyvered to the lay people, and then but in one kynde.
6. Item we wil that our Curattes shal minister the Sacrament of Baptisme at all tymes aswel in the weke daye as on the holy daye.
7. Item we wyl have holy bread and holy water made every sondaye, Palmes and asshes at the tymes accustomed, Images to be set up again in every church, and all other auncient olde Ceremonyes used heretofore, by our mother the holy Church.
8. Item we wil not receyve the newe servyce because it is but lyke a Christmas game, but we wyll have oure olde service of Mattens, masse, Evensong and procession in Latten not in English, as it was before. And so we the Cornyshe men (whereof certen of us understande no Englysh) utterly refuse thys newe Englysh.
9. Item we wyll have everye preacher in his sermon, and every Pryest at hys masse, praye specially by name for the soules in purgatory, as oure fore-fathers dyd.
10. Item we wyll have the whole Byble and al bokes of scripture in Englysh to be called in agayn, for we be enformed that otherwise the Clergye, shal not of long time confound the heretykes.
11. Item we wyll have Doctor Moreman and Doctor Crispin which holde our opinions to be savely sent unto us and to them we requyre the Kinges maiesty, to geve some certain lyvings, to preach amonges us our Catholycke fayth.
12. Item we thinke it very mete because the lord Cardinal Pole is of the kynges bloode, should not only have hys free pardon, but also sent for to Rome and promoted to be first or second of the kinges counsayl.
13. Item we wyll that no Gentyelman shall have anye mo servantes then one to wayte upon hym excepte he maye dispende one hundreth marke land and for every hundreth marke we thynke it reasonable, he should have a man and no mo.
14. Item we wyll that the halfe parte of the Abbey landes and Chauntrye landes, in everye mans possessyons, how so ever he cam by them, be geven again to two places, where two of the chief Abbeis was with in every Countye, where suche half part shalbe taken out, and there to be establyshed a place for devout persons, whych shall pray for the Kyng and the common wealth, and to the same we wyll have al the almes of the Churche box geven for these seven yeres, and for thys article we desire that we may name half of the Commissioners.
15. Item for the particular grieffes of our Countrye, we wyll have them so ordered, as Humfreye Arundell, and Henry Braye the Kynges Maior of Bodman, shall enforme the Kynges Maiesty, yf they maye have salve-conduct

under the Kynges great Seale, to passe and repasse, with an Heroalde at Armes.

16. Item for the performance of these articles we will have iiii Lordes viii Knightes xii Esquyers xx Yomen, pledges with us until the Kynges Maiestie have graunted al these by Parliament.

The articles are signed by the five 'chiefe captaynes' and 'the foure Governours of the Campes'.

*Source:* Transcript from Lambeth Palace Library copy with the addition of the sixteenth article and extra phrases from the copy in Corpus Christi College, Oxford; Rose-Troup, 1913: appx K and 222–3.



A COPY OF A LETTER, 1549

Document 13

*Extract from A Copy of a Letter, printed tract of 1549. The letter was written by a gentleman of Devon on 27 July and gives a first-hand account of the rebellion and an analysis of its causes. There is some evidence to suggest that the recipient at Court, Mr C., can be identified as Secretary Cecil. The letter comments on the price rise, the attitudes of gentry to their livings and the rebels' article on abbey and chantry lands.*

And if the common people shalbe eased of their griefes, the gentelmen shall be relieved of them, for se how much the fermour crieth out hys rent, so maye the gentleman wel crye out of the market, the one as muche greved as the other, and one remedye I trust shal serve both. For me thinketh it is no more difference for me, to have xx pound, spendyng xx pound, than to have xx marke spendinge xx marke, so that my estate be kept like with both, you wyll thynke I wryte now at my wyl, because yf ye remember the last yere in the parke at Wynsour when the Court was there, thys question made great argument betwyxte you and me, whether for the amendment of thinges in the common wealth the fermour should fyrst abate hys pryce, and then the Landed man his rent, or in contrary order, at whyche tyme, I remembre you stode upon one poynte, which I could not denye, that the Gentyلمان by deere byeng, was dryven to let deere, and I upon the other poynte (not al untrew) that the deere hyrynge made a deere sellynge. But where the fault fyrst beganne, neyther of us woulde graunt to the other, neverthelesse, so wayghty a matter it is, as no wayes to be discussed but by Parliament. Where when the argument is at an ende, it may be establyshed by a lawe, wherof there was never more lykelyhood, because the amendement therof, wyl helpe so many as well Lordes and Gentilmen, as al other Commoners, no man

havyng cause to repyne agaynst it, but suche as gather, not to spende and improve their lyvinges not for their charges, as many Gentilmen have done, but for their coffers. So that to conclude, improvement alone maketh no man ryche, but improvement and sparynge. But what medle I wyth thys matter, and yet what dare I not to you my fryende, by Sayncte George I saye to you merely out of bourde, no one thing maketh me more angry with these rebelles then one article, which toucheth me on the quicke, and I believe, there be few in the realme but it will make them smart, to forgoe his Abbey and Chauntrye landes wherein I for my part am so heated, that if I should fight wyth those traitours, I wold for every two strokes to be stricken for treason strike on to kepe my lands, the which I bought to suerlye, to deliver it at a papistes appoyntement.

Source: Transcript from Lambeth Palace Library copy; Rose-Troup, 1913: appx K.



**Document 14** PHILIP NICHOLS'S ANSWER TO THE COMMONERS OF DEVONSHIRE AND CORNWALL, 1549

*This tract, which had long been attributed to Nicholas Udall, has now been convincingly shown to have been written by the Devon Protestant Philip Nichols, a skilled controversialist who was at that time also involved in debate with the canon of Exeter, Richard Crispin (Youings, 1979: 115).*

What other fruit or end may hereof ensue unto you but devouring one another and an universal desolation of your own selves, besides the extreme peril of God's high wrath and indignation, besides the undoubted plague of mortality which (unless ye call for mercy in season) must needs light upon you by the severe rod of princely justice in our realm. Ye do in the meantime neglect your husbandry, whereby ye must live: your substance and catall is not only spoiled and spent upon unthriftes, who but for this your outrage know no mean nor way to be fedde: your houses falle in ruin, your wives are ravished, your daughters defloured before your own faces, your goods that ye have many long years laboured for lost in an hour and spent upon vagabonds and idle loiterers. Your meat is unpleasant, your drink unsavoury, your sleep never sound, never quiet, never in any safety. What must befall to your children hereafter when your own living is thus through your own folly brought to penury and famine? . . .

What shall be said of you an hundred years hereafter when cronycles shall report that a certain portion of the English people called Devonsheir men and Cornishmen did for popery (which if God be God will long ere that day be utterly confounded and defaced and the name thereof throughout all the

Christen world abhorred and detested) did rebel against their natural sovereign lord and king, most earnestly travailing to set forth and publish the true word of God and the true religion of Christ unto them.

Source: B.L. Royal MS 18, B. xi, fol. 1; N. Pocock, 'Troubles connected with the Prayer Book of 1549', Camden Society, new series, xxxvii, 1884, pp. 145–6.



THE COUNCIL TO THE JUSTICES OF THE PEACE OF DEVON, 1549

Document 15

*This letter (of which only the much-corrected draft survives) and the one following show how the government's attitude to the Western Rebellion changed as its seriousness became apparent.*

We require you to travayll by fayr meannes eyther openly with the hole world, or els apart with the ringleaders by all the best ways yow can devise to induce them to retyre to ther howses, putting them and especiall the cheff doers amonges them in remembrance whatt an onnaturall dealing this is of subjectes to rise against ther soveraigne lord. What onkindness his Majesty may herafter justly conceyve herof sens these thinges be attempted in his mynorite. Whatt dyshonor and onsuertie to the hole realme may grow by these attemptates. Whatt courage the hearing therof shall administer to the Frenchmen, Scots our enemyes, to putt them in remembraunce thatt the partes of good and obedient subjectes hadd byn ffyrst to have sued for remedie att the handes of ther soveraign lord, and nott to take uppon them selfs the swerd and autorite to redresse as they list, especially those maters which being allredye established by a law and consent of the hole realme can nott (if anything was to be reformed) bee otherwise altered then by a law agayn. By these or such other good wordes yow may fyrst assay to asswage then wherin if yow shall not be hable to satisfie them, yett shall yow by these meannes somewhat mitigatt their furor, and use the meannes you possibly can best devyse to stay the commyng of gretter nombors un to them, and in the mean tyme putt your selves with such of your tenauntse and servantes as yow best trust, secretly order t'attend such further direction as our very good lord, the lord pryvey seall, who is now in jurnay towards yow, shall furthar prescribe. As for the delay of a tyme for th'execution of the statute for the liev [Ievy] of the sheep and cloth we have wryten more amply to you by our former letters, and thus eftsones requiring yow to joyn wysely and manly together in these things, we bydd you hartely farewell.

From Syon.

To Sir Thomas Denys, Peter Courteney and Antony Harvy, Justices of Peax in Devon, xxvith of June 1549.

Source: National Archives, S.P. 10/7/42 (*Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Edward VI*, revised edn, no. 289); N. Pocock, 'Troubles connected with the Prayer Book of 1549', Camden Society, new series, xxxvii, 1884, pp. 12–13.



**Document 16** THE COUNCIL TO LORD RUSSELL, 1549

Frome my L. protector and the Consell to my L. Pryvie Seall, lieutenant to the Kyngs Majestie in the west parties.

Where ye declare that thoccasyon of being able to levie so fewe in Somersetshire is the evill inclynation of the people, and that there are amongs them that do not styck openly to speak such traterous words agaynst the kyng and in favour of the trayterous rebels. Ye shall hang two or three of them, and cause them to be executed lyke traytors. And that wilbe the only and the best staye of all those talks.

As to them that maketh dyverse excuses and will not serve the kyngs Majestie, ye shall cause them to be noted especially the chiefe doers, and in your retorne thay may be ordered according to theyr deserts. Though ye think proclamations can do no great good, so as we wrote unto you made, yet thay may do you some good. Hurt they can do none. . . . We do lyke well yor ordering of the ringleaders, and recon no lesse then you do that sharpe justice must be executed upon those sondrie traytors which will learne by nothing but by the sword.

Frome Westminster the x[x]viith of Julii.

Source: Inner Temple Petyt MS 538, vol. 46, fol. 444; N. Pocock, 'Troubles connected with the Prayer Book of 1549', Camden Society, new series, xxxvii, 1884, pp. 40–2.



**Document 17** 'KETT'S DEMANDS BEING IN REBELLION', 1549

*The only surviving copy of the articles headed as above has attached to it the names of the representatives of twenty-two hundreds in Norfolk, together with those of Suffolk and the city of Norwich.*

1. We pray your grace that where it is enacted for inclosyng that it be not hurtfull to suche as have enclosed saffren groundes for they be gretly charge-ablye to them, and that frome hensforth noman shall enclose eny more.

2. We certifie your grace that where as the lordes of ther manours hath byn charged with certen fre rent, the same lordes hath sought meanes to charge ther freholders to pay the same rent, contrarye to ryght.
3. We pray your grace that no lord of no mannor shall comon uppon the Comons.
4. We pray that prestes frome hensforth shall purchase no londes neyther ffre nor Bond, and the londes that they have in possession may be letten to temporall men, as they wer in the fyrst yere of the reign of Kyng henry the viith.
5. We pray that Rede ground and medowe grounde may be at suche price as they wer in the first yere of Kyng Henry the viith.
6. We pray that all marshysse that ar holden of the Kynges majestie by ffre rent or of eny other, may be ageyn at the price that they wer in the first yere of King henry the viith.
7. We pray that all Bushelles within your realme be of one scice, that is to sey, to be in mesure viii gallons.
8. We pray that [any prest] or vicars that be nat able to preche and sett forth the woorde of god to hys parisheners may be clerely putt from hys benyfice, and the parisheners there to chose an other or elles the pateron or lord of the towne.
9. We pray that the paymentes of castillward rent, and blanche ferme, and office londes, whiche hath byn accostomed to be gathered of the tenamentes, where as we suppose the lordes ought to pay the same to ther balyffes for ther rentes gatheryng, and not the tenantes.
10. We p[r]ay that noman under the degre of a knyght or esquier kepe a dowe howse, except it hath byn of an ould anchyent costome.
11. We pray that all freholders and copieholders may take the profightes of all comons, and ther to comon, and the lordes not to comon nor take profightes of the same.
12. We pray that no Feodarye within your sheres shalbe a counceller to eny man in his office makyng, wherby the Kyng may be trulye served, so that a man beeng of good consyence may be yerely chosyn to the same office by the comons of the same sheyre.
13. We pray your grace to take all libertie of lete into your owne handes whereby all men may quyetyly enjoye ther comons with all profightes.
14. We pray that copiehold londes that is onresonablie rented may go as it dyd in the first yere of Kyng henry the vii and that at the deth of a tenante or of a sale the same landes [to be] charged with an esey fyne as a capon or a reasonable [ . . . ]ss some of money for a remembraunce.
15. We pray that a prest [shall be a chaplain] nor no other officer to eny man of honor or wyrshypp but only to be resydent uppon ther benefices whereby ther paryssheners may be enstructed with the lawes of god.

16. We pray thatt all bonde men may be made fre for god made all fre with his precious blode sheddyng.
17. We pray that Ryvers may be ffre and comon to all men for fyshyng and passage.
18. We pray that no man shallbe put by your Eschetour and Feodarie to fynde eny office unles he holdeth of your grace in cheyff or capite above x li [£10] by yere.
19. We pray that the pore mariners or fysheremen may have the hole profightes of ther fyshynges as purpres grampes whalles or eny grett fysshe so it be not prejudiciall to your grace.
20. We pray that every propriatorie parson or vicar havyng a benefice of x li or more by yere shall eyther by themselves or by some other person teche pore mens chyldren of ther parisshe the boke called the cathakysme and the prymer.
21. We pray that it be not lawfull to the lordes of eny mannor to purchase londes frely and to lett them out ageyn by copie of court roll to ther gret advaunchement and to the undoyng of your pore subjectes.
22. We pray that no propriatorie parson or vicar in consideracon of advoydin[g] trobyll and sute bet[w]yn them and ther pore parissners whiche they daly do procede and attempt shall from hensforth take for the full contentacon of all the tenthes which nowe they do receyve but viiid of the noble in the full discharge of all other tythes.
23. We pray that no man under] the degre of a [esquyre] shall kepe any conyes upon any of his owne frehold or copiehold onles he pale them in so that it shall not be to the comons noysoyns.
24. We pray that no person of what estate degre or condicion he be shall from hensforth sell the adwardshyppe of eny chyld but that the same chyld if he lyve to his full age shalbe at his owne chosyng concernyng his marriage the Kyngs wardes only except.
25. We pray that no manner of person havyng a mannor of his owne shall be no other lordes balyf but only his owne.
26. We pray that no lord knyght nor gentleman shall have or take in ferme any spirituall promocion.
27. We pray your grace to gyve lycens and authorite by your gracious comysson under your grett seall to suche comyssoners as your pore comons hath chosyn or to as many of them as your majestie and your counsell shall apoynt and thynke mete, for to redresse and refourme all suche good lawes, statutes, proclamacions, and all other your procedynges, whiche hath byn hydden by your Justices of your peace, Shreves, Escheatores, and other your officers, from your pore comons, synes the first yere of the reigne of your noble grandfather King Henry the seventh.

28. We pray that those your officers w<sup>h</sup> hath offended your grace and your comons and so provid by the compleynt of your pore comons do gyve onto those pore men so assembled iiiid every day so long as they have remayned ther.

29. We pray that no lorde knyght esquier nor gentleman do g[rase] nor fede eny bullockes or shepe if he may spende forty pou[nds] a yere by his landes, but only for the provicion of his howse.

By me Robt Kett Thomas Cod

By me Thomas Aldryche

Source: B.L. Harleian MS 304, fol. 75; text now missing supplied from Russell, 1859: 48.



NICHOLAS SOTHERTON, 'THE COMMOYSON IN NORFOLK', 1549

## Document 18

*Nicholas Sotherton's account was written from the viewpoint of the gentry. It emphasises the element of class conflict in the rebellion.*

. . . they appoynted a place of ascemblye emonge them in an oken tre in that place, which they bordid to stand Uppon which tre at ye first did none come but Kett and the rest of the governours where the people oute of wer admonishid to be ware of their robbinge, spoylinge and other theyr evil demeanors and what accompte they had to make. But that lytil prevailid for they cryd out of the gentlemen as well for that they would not pull downe their enclosid growndis, as allsoe understood they by letters fownd emonge theyr sarvants how they sowl by all weyes to suppres them, and whatsoever was sayde they would downe with them soe that within a ii or iii wekes they had so pursuyd the gentlemen from all parts that in noe place durst one gentleman keepe his house but were faine to spoile themselves of theyr apparrell and lye and keepe in woods and lownde [*quiet*] placis where no resorte was: and some fledd owte of the countrys and gladd they were in theyr howses for saving of the rest of theyr goods and cattell to provide for them daiely bred, mete, drinke, and all other viands and to carry the same at their charge even home to the rebellis campe, and that for the savinge theyr wyves and chydren and sarvants.

. . . All other municion they gatt by force owt of the cytie and commanded every cytezin to bee to them assistent, setting their face to bee the kings freinds and to defend the Kings laws soe impudent were they now become: yea now they would noe more bee advertizid by their governours but theyr governours must concent to them and by this farr had they not only all gentyllmen and yeomen att theyr commandment but for the most of estimacion



in the cyttie whereuppon dyvers of the best cytezens with theyr wyves, children, were faine to depart the citty for that they would by noe meanis obey them and spare up their occupyeng and otheyr theyr substance in secret wyse which understandid, from thence furth were accompid of the rebellis as traytors and they in the campe made havock of all they could gett . . . when the state of the cyttie begon to bee in most mysserable case, that all men looked for utter destruction both of lyfe and goods . . . and the Gentyllmen they tooke they browte to the Tree of Reformacion to bee seene of the people to demande what they would doe with them: when some cryide hang him and some kill him and some that heard noe word cryid even as the rest even when themselvis being demandid why they cryid answerd for that theyr fellows afore did the like, and indeede they did presse theyr weapons to kyll some of those gentyllmen browte to them which they did of such malice that one Mr Wharton being garded with a lane of men on both sydes from the said tre into the cyttie they pricked him with theyr spears and other weapons on purpose to kill him had they not had greate helpe to withstand theer malice and creweltye, and further the rest of the gentyllmenne imprisoned they fettrid with chenis and locks and pointid divers to ward them for escapinge and in the mean tyme with Kett's authority both constables and other officers enforcid with theyr company to keepe the Gates that the cytezens shuld not soe fast range furth the cyttie as allsoe that noe gentyllmenne shuld escape.

Source: B.L. Harleian MS 1576, fols 252–3; Beer, 1976: 83–5.



**Document 19** WILLIAM PAGET TO PROTECTOR SOMERSET, 1549

*William Paget was one of Somerset's closest advisers. This letter, written on 7 July 1549, is one of a series in which Paget warned the Protector of the dangers of his policy.*

I told your Grace the trouthe, and was not beveled: well, now your Grace seithe yt. What seythe your Grace? Mary, the King's subjects owt of all discipline, owt of obedience, caryng neither for Protectour nor King, and much lesse for any other meane officer. And what is the cause? Your owne levytie, your softnes, your opinion to be good to the pore.

. . . I knowe, I saye, your good meaning and honest nature. But I saye, Syr, yt is great pitie (as the common proverbe goeth in a warme sommer) that ever fayre wether should do harme. Yt is pitie that your so muche gentlenes shuld be an occasion of so great an evell as ys now chaunced in England by these rebelles. . . .

Consider, I beseeche youe most humbly, with all my harte, that societie in a realme dothe consist, and ys maynteyned by meane of religion and lawe . . . Loke well whether youe have either lawe or religion at home, and I feare youe shall fynde neither. The use of the olde religion is forbydden by a lawe, and the use of the newe ys not yet prynted in the stomackes of the eleven of twelve partes in the realme, what countenance soever men make outwardly to please them in whom they see the power restethe. Now, Syr, for the lawe: where ys it used in England at libertie? Almost no where. The fote taketh upon him the parte of the head, and comyns ys become a kinge, appointing condicions and lawes to the governours, sayeng, 'Graunt this, and that, and we will go home' . . . I knowe in this matter of the commons every man of the Counsayle hath myslyked your procedings, and wyshed it otherways.

Source: National Archives, S.P. 10/8/4 (*Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Edward VI*, revised edn, no. 301).



#### SIR THOMAS WYATT'S SCHEME FOR A LOCAL MILITIA, 1549

#### Document 20

*Wyatt's scheme for a militia to protect the government, following the rebellions of 1549, was described by his son George.*

. . . my father, and divers of good sort (for it concerned the nobillitie and Gentelmen many wise) concideringe here upon, conceavid that the most suer and proper remedie for this headstronge mischife wouldbe to strengthen the kings part with a power of the choise of his most able and trusty Subjectes, which might be upon a very short warninge in a reddiness, wel armed and ordered against all suddin attemptes either at home or abrode, and whereby he might not doubt to use with out danger his other subjectes armed and trained . . . against any mightie prince that should make invation upon this realme . . .

. . . This thinge thus in general was movid and propounded to the Lord Protector's grace then beinge and to divers others of their Honours of the privie Counsel then unto the King and was withe greate likinge aproved and allowed of but not concluded upon, either for the newnes of the thinge, or for that it was not at that season thought so convenient t' have the subjectes armed, whereof the greater numbers were evel affected to the Religion then professed, or for that sum divition then beinge amongst thos that bare the sway, sum hindered that that others liked of. Where upon, my Father not withstandinge partly for his private exersise partly that he might have sumthinge reddey for this purpose when a better opertunitie might serve the first waye not taking place, conceived that he with sum of his familiers and

companions at many Martial bankets, men that had seene and experiensed muche in their travels and servisesse abrode and at home might doo sumwhat that shuld not be unworthy their travel. . . . Thes for the better accomplishinge of this millitary exercise did distribute amongst them selves the sundry parts of this business, to thos that were best acquainted with the same, which after was by the rest perused and perfected by one common consent and opinion, in such sort as it grew to a large volume . . .

Source: B.L. Wyatt MS 17; text as in Loades, 1968: 55–8.



**Document 21** THE TOWER CHRONICLE, 1554

*‘The Chronicle of Queen Jane, and of two years of Queen Mary’ is a pocket diary written by an officer in the royal service, resident in the Tower of London at the time of Wyatt’s Rebellion.*

The said Wyat, with his men, marched still forwarde, all along to Temple barre, also thoroghe Fleete Street, along tyll he cam to Ludgate, his men going not in eny goode order or array. It is saide that in Fleet street certayn of the lorde treasurer’s band, to the number of ccc men, mett theym, and so going on the one syde passyd by theym coming on the other syde without eny whit saying to theym. Also this is more strandge: the saide Wyat and his company passyd along by a great company of harnessyd men, which stoode on both sydes, without eny withstandinge them, and as he marched forwarde through Fleet street, moste with their swords drawne, some cryed ‘Queene Mary hath graunted our request, and geven us pardon’. Others said, ‘The quene hath pardoned us’. Then Wyat cam even to Ludgate, and knockyd calling to come in, saying, there was Wyat, whome the quene had graunted their requestes; but the lorde William Howard standing at the gate, saide, ‘Avaunt, traytour! thou shalt not come in here’. And then Wyat awhill stayed, and, as some say, rested him upon a seate [at] the Bellsavage gate; at last, seing he coulde not come in, and belike being deceived of the ayde which he hoped out of the cetye, retourned backe agayne in arraye towards Charing crosse, and was never stopped tyll he cam to Temple barre, wher certayn horsemen which cam from the felde met them in the face; and then begann the fight agayne to waxe hot . . .

Source: B.L. Harleian MS 194; text taken from ‘The Chronicle of Queen Jane and Queen Mary’, Camden Society, old series, xlviii, 1850, pp. 49–50.



## THE PROCLAMATION OF THE EARLS, 1569

## Document 22

*In this proclamation, issued at Darlington on 16 November 1569, the earls used the cause of Catholicism to rally the north. Similar proclamations were issued at Staindrop and Richmond. They all emphasised the earls' determination to restore the 'ancient customes and usages' in religion.*

Thomas, Earl of Northumberland and Charles, Earl of Westmoreland, the Queens most trewe and lawful subjects, and to all her highness people, sendeth greeting:- Whereas diverse newe set upp nobles about the Quenes Majestie, have and do dailie, not onlie go about to overthrow and put downe the ancient nobilitie of this realme, but also have misused the Queens Majesties owne personne, and also have by the space of twelve years nowe past, set upp, and mayntayned a new found religion and heresie, contrarie to Gods word. For the amending and redressing whereof, divers foren powers doo purpose shortlie to invade thes realmes, which will be to our utter destruction, if we do not ourselves speedilie forfend the same. Wherefore we are now constreyned at this tyme to go aboute to amend and redresse it ourselves, which if we shold not do and forenners enter upon us we shold be all made slaves and bondsmen to them. These are therefore to will and require you, and every of you, being above the age of sixteen years and not sixty, as your dutie towards God doth bynde you, for the settinge forthe of his trewe and catholicke religion; and as you tender the common wealth of your contrie, to come and ressort unto us with all speede, with all such armour and furnytire as you, or any of you have. This fail you not herein, as you will answer the contrary at your perills. God save the Quene.

Source: B.L. Harleian MS 6990, fol. 44; text taken from C. Sharp, *Memorials of the Rebellion of 1569*, London, 1840, pp. 42–3.



## SIR RALPH SADLER TO SIR WILLIAM CECIL, 1569

## Document 23

*In this passage of a report to Cecil from York on 6 December 1569, Sadler explained why Sussex could not trust his forces in open conflict with the rebels.*

I perceive Her Majesty is to believe that the force of her subjects of this country should not increase, and be able to match with the rebels; but it is easy to find the cause. There are not ten gentlemen in all this country that favour her proceedings in the cause of religion. The common people are ignorant, superstitious, and altogether blinded with the old popish doctrine, and therefore so favour the cause which the rebels make the colour of their rebellion, that, though their persons be here with us, their hearts are with them.

And no doubt all this country had wholly rebelled if, at the beginning, my Lord Lieutenant had not wisely and stoutly handled the matter. If we should go to the field with this northern force only, they would fight faintly; for if the father be on this side, the son is on the other; and one brother with us and the other with the rebels.

Source: National Archives, S.P. 14/15/77 (*Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Addenda, 1566–79*, pp. 139–40).



**Document 24** THE EXAMINATION OF THE EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND, 1572

*This is the Earl of Northumberland's own account of the purposes and planning of the rebellion, given in answer to a series of questions put to him by Lord Hunsdon in 1572, when he had been handed over by the Scots. It reveals his hesitancy in entering the conspiracy and shows the extent to which he acted at the instigation of others. The first section transcribed here is Northumberland's account of what happened after the conspirators had received Norfolk's message not to stir.*

Then old Norton and Markenfeld came to me and said we were already in peril, through our often meetings, and must either enter the matter without the Earl, or depart the realm; and it would be a great discredit to leave off a godly enterprise that was looked for at our hands by the whole kingdom, many of whom would assist us. I bade them take time to consider; they were away 14 days, and then returned with other gentlemen of the bishopric, and some belonging to the Earl, who were forward in the matter. I objected that my Lord President suspected us, and would not let us escape; but I offered to write to the gentlemen of the country to know their mind. They answered coldly and that stopped us awhile. . . . I wished to consult the Earl of Derby, Queen of Scots and Spanish ambassador. The first did not answer; the other two thought it better not to stir.

Then our company was discouraged. I left my house on a false alarm, and went to Lord Westmoreland's on my way to Alnwick. I found with him all the Nortons, Markenfeld, his two uncles, the two Tempests, John Swinburne, and Sir John Nevill, all ready to enter forthwith. We consulted; my Lord, his uncles, old Norton, and Markenfeld were earnest to proceed. Fras. Norton, John Swinburne, myself, and others thought it impossible, so we broke up and departed, every man to provide for himself. Lady Westmoreland, hearing this, cried out, weeping bitterly, that we and our country were shamed for ever, and that we must seek holes to creep into. Some departed, and I wished to go . . . but when I found I could not get away, I agreed to rise with them.

When did you first enter into this conspiracy? . . . Ans., We first began to talk of these matters when the Duke went in displeasure from Court to his house in London, and it was bruited in Yorkshire that the Council was wonderfully divided about the succession, that the Duke and other noblemen had retired to their houses, and that the realm would be in a hurly-burly; so I sent to the Duke and assembled my friends, to know their inclinations. I and many gentlemen intended to join the Duke, if the quarrel were for reformation of religion or naming a successor, but not to hazard myself for the marriage. This I fear made my enemies about Her Majesty pick a quarrel with me. On the Duke's repair to court, hearing that the reports about naming a successor were untrue, I sought to forbear to stir . . .

What was the intent and meaning of the rebellion? Ans., Our first object in assembling was the reformation of religion and preservation of the person of the Queen of Scots, as next heir, failing issue of Her Majesty, which causes I believed were greatly favoured by most of the noblemen of the realm. I hoped my Lord Leicester, and especially Lord Burghley, with his singular judgment, had by this time been blessed with godly inspiration to discern cheese from chalk, the matters being so evidently discoursed by learned divines, and they have sway about the Prince, and would bring Her Majesty to the truth; but being deceived, I can only pray God to indue her and them with His grace to know and fear Him aright.

Source: Extracts from *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Addenda, 1566–79*, pp. 404–7, calendared from National Archives, S.P. 46/21/56.10; full text in C. Sharp, *Memorials of the Rebellion of 1569*, London, 1840, pp. 189–206.



# Further Reading

## Chapters 1 and 2

Sir Thomas Smith's description of English society can be found in *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. L. Alston, Cambridge, 1906 (reprinted Irish University Press, 1972), pp. 31–47. The attitude of Tudor governments to rebellion can best be studied through the more important propaganda works of 1536, 1549 and 1570. Among these are: Richard Morison, *A Remedy for sedition concerning the true and loyal obeysance that commons owe unto their prince*, Berthelet, 1536, and *A Lamentation in which is shewed what ruin cometh of seditious rebellion*, Berthelet, 1536 (see Berkowitz, 1984); John Cheke, *The Hurt of Sedition how grievous it is to a commonwealth*, J. Daye & W. Seres, 1549; R.B. Bond (ed.), *Certain Sermons or Homilies (1547) and A Homily against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion (1570)*, Toronto U.P., 1987. The anthology in Williams, 1967 provides a comprehensive survey of contemporary attitudes to social obligations and to rebellion.

## Chapter 3

The standard account of the Cornish rising of 1497 is in 'The Anglica Historia of Polydore Vergil', ed. D. Hay, Camden Society, third series, 1950, vol. lxxiv (see also Williams, 1967: 133). Later accounts, such as Bacon's, were based on Vergil, who wrote not many years after the events he described, albeit from a London-based and official viewpoint. The London Chronicle, which is in the Cotton manuscripts in the British Library, Vitellius A xvi, is printed in C.L. Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, Clarendon Press, 1905. New material is presented in Arthurson, 1987.

Edward Hall's Chronicle provides the most useful account of the Amicable Grant. A number of the reports to Wolsey from the provinces are printed in the *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. iv (I). New East Anglian material is used in Bernard, 1986; MacCulloch, 1986; Woods, 1983.

## Chapter 4

The main body of documentary material on the Pilgrimage of Grace is conveniently assembled in the *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vols xi and xii (I). Important documents relating to Robert Aske's examination are printed in Bateson, 1890.

Dodds and Dodds, 1915 is a comprehensive and indispensable account of the Pilgrimage. It is based on a careful analysis of the State Paper material. A valuable supplementary source from Bodleian Library, MS Jesus 74 consists of summaries of State Papers now lost, made in the early seventeenth century by Lord Herbert of Chirbury's secretary, Thomas Master: it has been published in Hoyle, 1985. Another interesting new discovery, a poem by William Calverley, is announced in Liedl, 1994.

## Chapter 5

The only full contemporary description of the Western Rebellion is by John Hooker, who was an eyewitness of the siege of Exeter. It is detailed and vividly written. There are several versions of it, the most available being that in Hooker's *Description of the City of Exeter*, published by the Devon and Cornwall Record Society in two volumes in 1919 (Preface and Index 1947). Hooker was twenty-four in 1549. He was educated at the school kept by Dr John Moreman, the vicar of Menheniot [**Doc. 12, article 11, p. 152**], and then at Oxford. He was converted to Protestantism when visiting Strasbourg where he met Peter Martyr, and his bias is evident in his narrative.

Nicholas Pocock's 'Troubles connected with the Prayer Book of 1549', Camden Society, new series, vol. xxxvii, 1884, is a useful collection of sources. Somerset's reply to the rebels can be found in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, vol. v, and Cranmer's in his *Works*, Parker Society edn, vol. ii.

Cornwall, 1977 makes use of muster returns and Exchequer papers to elucidate the military scene, and of lay subsidy rolls for the social and economic background. The previous standard account, that of Rose-Troup, 1913, is still worth consulting, for it prints a number of important sources. Youngs, 1979 suggests new directions of inquiry in original sources. Mattingly, 1998 has located a tantalising document about the possible foundation of a guild at Helston in 1549.

## Chapter 6

The most important source is Nicholas Sotherton's narrative 'The Commoysen in Norfolk, 1549', printed in Beer, 1976. The sole manuscript



copy is in the British Library. It is impossible to be certain which of two or more Nicholas Sothertons living in Norwich in the mid sixteenth century wrote the account: very likely the Nicholas Sotherton whose father was mayor of Norwich in 1539. The account was probably written a few years after 1549: although it is extremely vivid, Sotherton makes it clear that he did not witness the events.

In 1575 Alexander Neville, one of the younger secretaries of Archbishop Parker, was the first to publish an account of the rebellion, *De Furoribus Norfolciensium Ketto Duce*. Parker was the son of a Norwich worsted weaver and lived his early life in East Anglia. He visited the rebels' camp in 1549 and the ecclesiastical historian John Strype maintained in his *Life* of the archbishop, published in 1711, that 'he supplied the author with many instructions and remarks, while he was writing, being himself so well acquainted with the subject'. For remarks about the bias displayed by both Sotherton and Neville against the rebels see MacCulloch, 1981. A statement of the case for the commons and an analysis of 'covetousness' as the cause of the rebellion, in Hugh Latimer's last sermon before Edward VI, is printed in Williams, 1967: 354–6. Very important new material concerning the Duke of Somerset and the stirs is published in Shagan, 1999, and an interesting petition of 1553 reflecting continued agricultural tensions can be found in Hoyle, 2001a.

Studies by MacCulloch (1981, 1984a, 1986) draw on new sources; Russell, 1859, although difficult to obtain, is also still useful. Judicial records have been used to throw light on the local economic factors which caused the rebellion, and have been used to particularly good effect by Amanda Jones in her 2003 doctoral thesis, which will be published in due course. See also Bindoff, 1949; Hammond, 1934; Moreton, 1992.

## Chapter 7

The only detailed contemporary account of Wyatt's Rebellion is by John Proctor, a Tonbridge schoolmaster, who in his patriotic treatise *The Historie of Wyate's Rebellion* intended, by showing that it was a heretical movement, to present 'the lamentable image of hateful Rebellion for the increase of obedience'. Proctor's work is reprinted by E. Arber in *An English Garner*, London, 1877–96, vol. viii, and by A.F. Pollard in *Tudor Tracts, 1532–1588*, Westminster, 1903. There are shorter accounts of the rebellion in the 'Greyfriars Chronicle', Camden Society, liii, 1852, the 'Tower Chronicle', Camden Society, xlvi, 1850, and in Holinshed's Chronicles.

## Chapter 8

A large proportion of the state papers relating to the Northern Rebellion are in print and can be found in *State Papers Domestic, Addenda, 1566–79*; *Sir Ralph Sadler's State Papers and Letters*, ed. A. Clifford, Edinburgh, 1809; and the Cecil Manuscripts, Historical Manuscripts Commission. There are also important manuscript sources, such as Humberston's survey of the estates of the attainted earls (1570), in the Public Record Office. In 1840 Sir Cuthbert Sharp printed documents from the Bowes Manuscripts, which contain many of Sir George Bowes's letters written during the rebellion, his memorandum on the rebellion and the rebel proclamation. In 1846 J. Raine printed depositions made in the court of Durham respecting the rebellion, in the Surtees Society, vol. xxi. In 1887 H.B. McCall printed and analysed the material in the Bowes papers concerned with the executions following the rebellion.

## Chapter 9

The quotation from Lord Thomas Seymour in 1549 is taken from National Archives, S.P. 10/6/7, fol. 19r (*Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Edward VI*, revised edn, no. 182; see Russell, 1859: 15).

# References

- Alsop, J.D., 'Latimer, the "Commonwealth of Kent" and the 1549 rebellions', *Historical Journal*, 28, 1985.
- Arthurson, I., 'The rising of 1497: a revolt of the peasantry', in *People, Politics and Community in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. J. Rosenthal and C. Richmond, Alan Sutton, 1987.
- Arthurson, I., *The Perkin Warbeck Conspiracy, 1491–1499*, Stroud, 1994.
- Arthurson, I., 'Fear and loathing in West Cornwall: seven new letters on the 1548 rising', *Journal of the Royal Institute of Cornwall* new series 2, vol. 3, parts 3 and 4, 2000.
- Bartlett, K.R., 'The misfortune that is wished for him: the exile and death of Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon', *Canadian Journal of History*, 14, 1979.
- Bateson, M., 'The Pilgrimage of Grace and Aske's Examination', *English Historical Review*, 1890.
- Beer, B.L., "'The Commoysen in Norfolk, 1549": a narrative of popular rebellion in sixteenth-century England', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 6, 1976.
- Beer, B.L., *Rebellion and Riot: Popular Disorder in England During the Reign of Edward VI*, Kent State U.P., 1982.
- Beer, B.L., 'John Stow and Tudor rebellions 1549–1569', *Journal of British Studies*, 27, 1988.
- Bennett, M.J., 'Henry VII and the Northern Rising of 1489', *English Historical Review*, 105, 1990.
- Bercé, Y.-M., tr. J. Bergin, *Revolt and Revolution in Early Modern Europe: An Essay on the History of Political Violence*, Manchester U.P., 1987.
- Berkowitz, D.S., ed., *Humanist Scholarship and Public Order: Two Tracts Against the Pilgrimage of Grace by Sir Richard Morison with Historical Annotations and Related Documents*, Folger Shakespeare Library, 1984.
- Bernard, G.W., *War, Taxation and Rebellion in Early Tudor England*, Harvester, 1986.

- Bernard, G.W. and Hoyle, R.W. 'The instructions for the levying of the Amicable Grant, March 1525', *Historical Research*, 67, 1994.
- Bindoff, S.T., *Kett's Rebellion*, Historical Association, 1949.
- Bossy, J., 'The character of Elizabethan Catholicism', *Past and Present*, 21, 1962.
- Boynnton, L., *The Elizabethan Militia*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967.
- Brooks, F.W., *The Council of the North*, Historical Association, 1953.
- Bush, M.L., *The Government Policy of Protector Somerset*, Arnold, 1975.
- Bush, M.L., "Enhancements and importunate charges": an analysis of the tax complaints of October 1536', *Albion*, 22, 1990.
- Bush, M.L., 'Tax reform and rebellion in early Tudor England', *History*, 76, 1991a.
- Bush, M.L., "Up for the Commonweal": the significance of tax grievances in the English rebellions of 1536', *English Historical Review*, 106, 1991b.
- Bush, M.L., 'Captain Poverty and the Pilgrimage of Grace', *Historical Research*, 156, 1992.
- Bush, M.L., 'Tenant right under the Tudors: a revision revised', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 77, 1995.
- Bush, M.L., *The Pilgrimage of Grace: A Study of the Rebel Armies of October 1536*, Manchester U.P., 1996.
- Bush, M.L. and Bownes, D., *The Defeat of the Pilgrimage of Grace: A Study of the Postpardon Revolts of December 1536 to March 1537 and their Effect*, University of Hull Press, 1999.
- Cavell, E., 'Henry VII, the north of England, and the first provincial progress of 1486', *Northern History*, 39, 2002.
- Clark, P., 'Popular protest and disturbance in Kent, 1558–1640', *Economic History Review*, 29, 1976.
- Clark, P., *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution*, Harvester, 1977.
- Clark, P., ed., *The European Crisis of the 1590s*, George Allen & Unwin, 1985.
- Collinson, P., *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, Cape, 1967.
- Cooper, J.P.D., *Propaganda and the Tudor State: Political Culture in the West Country*, Oxford U.P., 2003.
- Cornwall, J., *Revolt of the Peasantry*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977.
- Cornwall, J., 'Kett's Rebellion: a comment', *Past and Present*, 93, 1981.
- Cressy, D., *Literacy and the Social Order*, Cambridge U.P., 1980.
- Cross, C., *The Puritan Earl*, Macmillan, 1966.
- Cross, C., Loades, D. and Scarisbrick, J.J., eds, *Law and Government under the Tudors*, Cambridge U.P., 1987.

- Cunningham, S., 'Henry VII and rebellion in north-eastern England, 1485–1492: bonds of allegiance and the establishment of Tudor authority', *Northern History*, 32, 1996.
- Davies, C.S.L., 'The Pilgrimage of Grace reconsidered', *Past and Present*, 41, 1968.
- Davies, C.S.L., 'Popular religion and the Pilgrimage of Grace', in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. A. Fletcher and J. Stevenson, Cambridge U.P., 1985.
- Dickens, A.G., 'Sedition and conspiracy in Yorkshire during the later years of Henry VIII', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 34, 1939a.
- Dickens, A.G., 'Some popular reactions to the Edwardian Reformation in Yorkshire', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 34, 1939b.
- Dickens, A.G., 'The first stages of Romanist recusancy in Yorkshire', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 35, 1941.
- Dickens, A.G., *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York*, Oxford U.P., 1959.
- Dickens, A.G., *The English Reformation*, Batsford, 1964.
- Dickens, A.G., 'Secular and religious motivation in the Pilgrimage of Grace', in *Studies in Church History*, ed. G.J. Cuming, 4, 1967.
- Dodds, M.H. and Dodds, R., *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Exeter Conspiracy*, Cambridge U.P., 1915.
- Duffy, E., *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village*, Yale U.P., 2001.
- Ellis, S.G., 'Henry VIII, rebellion and the rule of law', *Historical Journal*, 24, 1981.
- Elton, G.R., *Policy and Police*, Cambridge U.P., 1972.
- Elton, G.R., *Reform and Reformation*, Edward Arnold, 1977.
- Elton, G.R., 'Politics and the Pilgrimage of Grace', in *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, 4 vols, Cambridge, 1974–92, vol. 3, repr. from *After the Reformation*, ed. B. Malament, Yale U.P., 1980.
- Elton, G.R., *The Tudor Constitution*, Cambridge U.P., revised edn, 1982.
- Fletcher, A. and Stevenson, J., eds, *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, Cambridge U.P., 1985.
- Fox, A., 'Prophecies and politics in the reign of Henry VIII', in *Reassessing the Henrician Age*, ed. A. Fox and J. Guy, Basil Blackwell, 1986.
- Gunn, S.J., 'Peers, commons and gentry in the Lincolnshire Revolt of 1536', *Past and Present*, 123, 1989.

- Guy, J., 'Wolsey and the Parliament of 1523', in *Law and Government under the Tudors*, ed. C. Cross, D. Loades and J.J. Scarisbrick, Cambridge U.P., 1987.
- Guy, J., ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, Cambridge U.P., 1995.
- Hackett, H., *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, Macmillan, 1995.
- Haigh, C., *The Last Days of the Lancashire Monasteries and the Pilgrimage of Grace*, Chetham Society, 17, 1969.
- Hammond, R.J., 'The social and economic circumstances of Kett's Rebellion', London PhD thesis, 1934.
- Harrison, S.M., *The Pilgrimage of Grace in the Lake Counties, 1536–7*, Royal Historical Society, 1981.
- Hicks, M.A., 'The Yorkshire rebellion of 1489 reconsidered', *Northern History*, 22, 1986.
- Hill, C., 'The many-headed monster in Tudor and Stuart England', in *From the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation*, ed. C.H. Carter, Cape, 1966.
- Hindle, S., *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, c. 1550–1640*, Macmillan, 2000.
- Hoyle, R.W., 'Thomas Master's narrative of the Pilgrimage of Grace', *Northern History*, 21, 1985.
- Hoyle, R.W., 'The 1st Earl of Cumberland: a reputation reassessed', *Northern History*, 22, 1986.
- Hoyle, R.W., 'Crown, parliament and taxation in sixteenth century England', *English Historical Review*, 109, 1994.
- Hoyle, R.W., 'Agrarian agitation in mid-16th century Norfolk: a petition of 1553', *Historical Journal*, 44, 2001a.
- Hoyle, R.W., *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the Politics of the 1530s*, Oxford U.P., 2001b.
- Hoyle, R.W., 'Petitioning as popular politics in early sixteenth-century England', *Historical Research*, 75, 2002.
- Hoyle, R.W. and Winchester, A.J.L., 'A lost source for the rising of 1536 in north-west England', *English Historical Review*, 118, 2003.
- Ives, E.W., 'The genesis of the Statute of Uses', *English Historical Review*, 82, 1967.
- James, M.E., *Change and Continuity in the Tudor North*, Borthwick Papers, 27, St Anthony's Press, York, 1965, repr. in James, M.E., *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England*, Cambridge U.P., 1986.

- James, M.E., *A Tudor Magnate and the Tudor State*, Borthwick Papers, 30, St Anthony's Press, York, 1966a, repr. in James, *Society, Politics and Culture*.
- James, M.E., 'The First Earl of Cumberland (1493–1542) and the decline of northern feudalism', *Northern History*, 1, 1966b, repr. in James, *Society, Politics and Culture*.
- James, M.E., 'Obedience and dissent in Henrician England: the Lincolnshire rebellion 1536', *Past and Present*, 48, 1970, repr. in James, *Society, Politics and Culture*.
- James, M.E., 'The concept of order and the Northern Rising', *Past and Present*, 60, 1973, repr. in James, *Society, Politics and Culture*.
- James, M.E., *Family, Lineage and Civil Society*, Oxford U.P., 1974.
- Janson, S.L., *Political Protest and Prophecy under Henry VIII*, Cambridge U.P., 1991.
- Jones, A., "'Commotion time": the English risings of 1549', Warwick PhD thesis, 2003.
- Kerridge, E., 'The movement of rent 1540–1640', *Economic History Review*, 6, 1953, repr. in *Essays in Economic History*, vol. 2, ed. E.M. Carus-Wilson, 3 vols, Arnold, 1962.
- Knowles, D., *The Religious Orders in England*, vol. 3, Cambridge U.P., 1961.
- Land, S.K., *Kett's Rebellion: The Norfolk Rising of 1549*, Boydell, 1977.
- Liedl, J., 'The penitent pilgrim: William Calverley and the Pilgrimage of Grace', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 25, 1994.
- Lindley, K., 'Riot prevention and control in early Stuart London', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 33, 1983.
- Loach, J., 'A close league with the King of France: Lady Jane Grey's proclamation in French and its part in a planned betrayal', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 25, 1991.
- Loades, D.M., *Two Tudor Conspiracies*, Cambridge U.P., 1965.
- Loades, D.M., *The Papers of George Wyatt*, Camden Society, 4th series, 5, 1968.
- MacCaffrey, W., *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime*, Cape, 1969.
- MacCaffrey, W., *Elizabeth I: War and Politics*, Princeton U.P., 1992.
- MacCulloch, D., 'Kett's Rebellion in context', *Past and Present*, 84, 1979, repr. in *Rebellion, Popular Protest and the Social Order in Early Modern England*, ed. P. Slack, Cambridge U.P., 1984a.
- MacCulloch, D., 'Kett's Rebellion: a reply', *Past and Present*, 93, 1981 (reply to Cornwall, 1981).

- MacCulloch, D., 'The "Vita Mariae Angliae Reginae" of Robert Wingfield of Brantham', *Camden Miscellany* 28, Camden Society, 4th series, 29, 1984b.
- MacCulloch, D., *Suffolk and the Tudors: Politics and Religion in an English County 1500–1600*, Oxford U.P., 1986.
- MacCulloch, D., ed., *The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy and Piety*, Macmillan, 1995.
- MacCulloch, D., *Thomas Cranmer: A Life*, Yale U.P., 1996.
- MacCulloch, D., *Tudor Church Militant: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation*, Allen Lane, 1999.
- Manning, R.B., 'Violence and social conflict in mid-Tudor rebellions', *Journal of British Studies*, 16, 1977.
- Manning, R.B., 'The origins of the doctrine of sedition', *Albion*, 12, 1980.
- Manning, R.B., *Village Revolts: Social Protest and Popular Disturbances in England 1509–1640*, Oxford U.P., 1987.
- Marcombe, D., 'A rude and heady people: the local community and the rebellion of the northern earls', in *The Last Principality: Religion and Society in the Bishopric of Durham, 1494–1660*, ed. D. Marcombe, University of Nottingham, 1987.
- Mattingly, J., 'The Helston Shoemakers Guild and a possible connection with the 1549 rebellion', *Cornish Studies*, 6, 1998.
- McCall, H.B., 'Executions after the Northern Rebellion', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 18, 1887.
- McConica, J.K., *English Humanists and Reformation Politics*, Oxford U.P., 1965.
- Menmuir, C., *The Rebellion of the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland, 1569*, Cochrane & Co., 1907.
- Moorhouse, G., *The Pilgrimage of Grace: The Rebellion that Shook Henry VIII's Throne*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002.
- Moreton, C.E., 'The Walsingham conspiracy of 1537', *Historical Research*, 63, 1990.
- Moreton, C.E., *The Townshends and their World*, Oxford U.P., 1992.
- Moreton, C.E., 'Mid-Tudor trespass: a break-in at Norwich, 1549', *English Historical Review*, 108, 1993.
- Morgan, H., *Tyrone's Rebellion: The Outbreak of the Nine Years War in Tudor Ireland*, Boydell, 1993.
- Neale, J.E., *Queen Elizabeth*, Cape, 1934.
- Neale, J.E., *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments*, 2 vols, Cape, 1953.
- Palliser, D.M., *Tudor York*, Oxford U.P., 1979.
- Phelps Brown, E.H. and Hopkins, S.U., 'Seven centuries of the prices of consumables compared with builders' wage rates', *Economica*, 1956, repr.



- in *Essays in Economic History*, vol. 2, ed. E.M. Carus-Wilson, 3 vols, Arnold, 1962.
- Phythian-Adams, C., *Desolation of a City*, Cambridge U.P., 1979.
- Pollitt, R., 'The defeat of the northern rebellion and the shaping of Anglo-Scottish relations', *Scottish Historical Review*, 64, 1985.
- Pound, J.F., 'The social and trade structure of Norwich 1525–75', *Past and Present*, 34, 1966.
- Pound, J.F., 'Rebellion and poverty in 16th century Suffolk: the 1525 uprising against the Amicable Grant', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, 39, 1999.
- Reid, R.R., 'The rebellion of the northern earls', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 2nd series, 20, 1906.
- Reid, R.R., *The King's Council of the North*, Longman, 1921.
- Rose-Troup, F., *The Western Rebellion of 1549*, Smith, Elder, 1913.
- Russell, C.S.R., 'Arguments for religious unity in England 1530–1650', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 18, 1967.
- Russell, F.W., *Kett's Rebellion in Norfolk*, Longman, 1859.
- Scarisbrick, J.J., *Henry VIII*, Eyre & Spottiswode, 1968.
- Schofield, R., 'Parliamentary lay taxation 1485–1547', Cambridge PhD thesis, 1963.
- Schofield, R., 'Taxation and the political limits of the Tudor state', in *Law and Government under the Tudors*, ed. C. Cross, D. Loades and J.J. Scarisbrick, Cambridge U.P., 1987.
- Shagan, E., 'Protector Somerset and the 1549 rebellions: new sources and new perspectives', *English Historical Review*, 114, 1999.
- Shagan, E., *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, Cambridge U.P., 2003.
- Simpson, A., *The Wealth of the Gentry*, Cambridge U.P., 1963.
- Slack, P., ed., *Rebellion, Popular Protest and the Social Order in Early Modern England*, Cambridge U.P., 1984.
- Smith, R.B., *Land and Politics in the England of Henry VIII*, Oxford U.P., 1970.
- Speight, H., 'Local government and the South-Western Rebellion of 1549', *Southern History* 18, 1996.
- Stone, L., *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, Oxford U.P., 1965.
- Stone, L., 'Social mobility in England 1500–1700', *Past and Present*, 33, 1966.
- Stone, L., 'Patriarchy and paternalism in Tudor England: the Earl of Arundel and the Peasants Revolt of 1549', *Journal of British Studies*, 14, 1974.
- Stoyle, M., 'Cornish rebellions, 1497–1648', *History Today*, 47, 1997.

- Stoyle, M. 'The dissidence of despair: rebellion and identity in early modern Cornwall', *Journal of British Studies*, 38, 1999.
- Taylor, S.E., 'The crown and the north of England 1559–1570', Manchester PhD thesis, 1981.
- Thirsk, J., ed., *The Agrarian History of England*, vol. 4, Cambridge U.P., 1967.
- Thomas, P., *Authority and Disorder in Tudor Times 1485–1603*, Cambridge U.P., 1999.
- Thompson, J.A.F., *The Later Lollards*, Oxford U.P., 1965.
- Thorp, M., 'Religion and the Wyatt Rebellion of 1554', *Church History*, 48, 1979.
- Tillyard, E.M.W., *The Elizabethan World Picture*, Chatto & Windus, 1943 (reprinted by Penguin, 1963).
- Underdown, D., *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603–1660*, Oxford U.P., 1985.
- Wagner, J.A., *The Devon Gentleman: The Life of Sir Peter Carew*, Hull U.P., 1998.
- Wall, A., *Power and Protest in England 1525–1640*, Arnold, 2000.
- Walter, J., 'A "rising of the people"? The Oxfordshire rising of 1596', *Past and Present*, 107, 1985.
- Willen, D., 'Lord Russell and the western counties 1539–1555', *Journal of British Studies*, 15, 1975.
- Williams, C.H., *English Historical Documents*, v, 1485–1558, Eyre & Spottiswode, 1967.
- Williams, N., *Thomas Howard, Fourth Duke of Norfolk*, Barrie & Rockcliff, 1964.
- Williams, P., *The Tudor Regime*, Oxford U.P., 1979.
- Wood, A., *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England*, Palgrave, 2002.
- Woods, R., 'Individuals in the rioting crowd: a new approach', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 14, 1983.
- Wroe, A., *Perkin: A Story of Deception*, Jonathan Cape, 2003.
- Youngs, J., 'The South-Western Rebellion of 1549', *Southern History*, 1, 1979.
- Zagorin, P., *Rebels and Rulers 1500–1660*, 2 vols, Cambridge U.P., 1982.
- Zeeveld, W.G., *Foundations of Tudor Policy*, Harvard U.P., 1948.

# Index

- abbeys and monasteries 41–2, 52, 87  
Act of Six Articles 61, 63  
Act of Suppression 41  
Aldrich, Thomas 72, 73, 83  
Allington Castle 94  
Alnwick Castle 43  
Amicable Grant 24–6, 123, 131, 132, 137  
An Gof, Michael Joseph 22  
Anabaptists 90  
Ancaster 30  
Apocalypse 15  
Aragonese faction 46, 47  
Armada 102, 116  
Arundell, Humphrey 56, 65  
Arundell, Sir John 56, 59  
Aske, Christopher 44  
Aske, John 44  
Aske, Robert 31–2, 33–4, 35, 37–8, 39, 41–2, 48  
    confessions 46, 150–1  
    execution 50–1  
    interview with the Lords at Pontefract 143–4  
    Oath of Honourable Men 143  
    and the succession 47  
assaults on tax collectors 19  
Attleborough 70  
Audley, John Touchet, 6th Baron 22
- Bacon, Francis 23  
Barnard Castle 32, 105, 107, 108  
Barnes, Robert 9, 10  
Barrett, Dr John 89  
Beaufort, Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond 125  
Bedford, John Russell, 1st Russell Earl 12  
Bercé, Yves-Marie 130
- Bergavenny, Lord 95  
Beverley 50  
Bigod, Sir Francis 49–50  
Bishop Auckland 32  
Blackheath field 14, 22–3  
Bodmin 55, 56  
Body, William 54–5, 68, 129  
Boleyn, Anne 43, 46  
books 9  
Boulogne 76  
Bowes, Robert 32, 35–6, 50, 51  
Bowes, Sir George 45, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109, 112, 115  
Bramham Moor 105, 106  
Brancepeth 105, 111, 113  
Bray, Sir Reginald 22  
Brent Eleigh 131  
Bridlington 52  
Brown, Phelps 85  
Browne, Robert 83, 85  
Bucer, Martin 63  
Bulmer, Sir John 51  
burgess class 4  
Burgh, Lord 29  
Burghley, Lord *see* Cecil, William, Lord Burghley  
Bury, John 66  
Bury St Edmunds 71, 72, 74, 130, 131  
Bush, M.L. 7, 20, 41, 45  
Bye Plot 117
- Cadiz 116  
Caistor 28, 29  
camping time 130  
    *see also* Rebellions of the Commonwealth

- Carew, Sir Peter 56–7, 62, 66, 92–3, 94, 99, 129, 134  
 Castle Rising 71  
 Catherine of Aragon 46  
 Catholicism 114–15, 116  
 Cavendish, Sir William 68  
 Cawood 104  
 Cecil, Robert 116–17, 118–19  
 Cecil, William, Lord Burghley 4, 102, 103, 107, 108, 110, 114, 116  
     Sadler's letter 163–4  
 chantry colleges 52  
 Chapuys, Eustace 43, 46, 48  
 Charles I, King 6  
 Charles V, Emperor 100  
 Cheke, Sir John 10, 12, 90, 91, 132  
 Cheshunt 131  
 Cheyney, Margaret, Lady Bulmer 51  
 Cholmeley, Sir Roger 68  
 Church and state distinction 9–10  
 churches 28, 40, 41, 54  
 citizen class 4  
 class hatred 7  
 class warfare 3  
 clergy 40, 62  
 Cleveland 20  
 Clinton, Lord Admiral 29, 76, 106  
 cloth tax 61, 62  
 Clyst St Mary 57, 59–60  
 Cobham, Lord 96  
 Codd, Thomas 72, 73  
 colleges 52  
 common law 8, 129  
 commonwealth 10, 14, 84, 89  
     *see also* Rebellions of the Commonwealth  
*The Commonwealth of England* 3–4  
 Constable, Sir Robert 34, 37, 43, 44  
 Conyers, Thomas 89  
 Cooling Castle 96  
 Corbet, John 82  
 Cornish Rebellion (1497) 21–3, 130–1  
 Cornish Rebellion (1547–49) 54–6  
 Council of the North 51–2, 108, 109, 113  
 Councils of the Apostles 63  
 Courtenay, Edward 92  
 Courtenay, Henry, Marquis of Exeter 66, 126  
 Courtenay, Peter 57  
 courts 138  
 Cowlyn, John 93  
 Cranmer, Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury 9, 13, 63, 64, 65, 89, 90  
 Crediton 56  
 Crispin, Richard 66  
 Croft, Sir James 92, 93, 99  
 Cromwell, Thomas 9, 19, 37, 39, 46–7, 49, 54, 65  
 Culpepper, Thomas 99–100  
 Cumberland, Henry Clifford, Earl of 32, 33, 44, 51, 108  
 Curwen, Sir Henry 7  
  
 Dacre, Leonard 108  
 Dacre, Sir Christopher 33, 43–4, 50  
 Danby, Sir Christopher 32  
 Darcy of Templehurst, Thomas, Lord 32, 34, 35, 40, 44, 46, 48  
     execution 50  
     Pilgrims' letter 145  
 Darlington 109  
 Daubeney, Lord 22–3  
 debasing the coinage 128  
 deer 83  
 deference to the gentry 7  
 Denny, Anthony 68  
 Dent 31, 33, 41, 50  
 Denys, Sir Thomas 57, 66, 93–4  
 Derby, Edward Stanley, 3rd Stanley Earl 5, 33, 43  
 Devon, Earl of 99  
 Devon rising 56–61  
 Diggers 3  
 Dodds, Margaret and Ruth 39  
 Doncaster Bridge 34–5  
 Downham Market 71  
 Dudley, Lord Guildford 98  
 Durham 105, 106, 110, 114  
 Dussindale 75, 76  
  
 East Riding rising 49–50  
 Edgcombe, Sir Richard 55  
 Edward IV, King 6, 15, 24  
 Egremont, Sir John 20  
 Elizabeth I, Queen 3, 5, 6, 92, 97, 116–17, 119, 136–8  
     and the Northern Rebellion 103, 105, 111, 112  
 Elizabeth of York 125  
 Ellerker, Sir Ralph 35, 36, 50, 51  
 Elton, G.R. 39, 44–5, 46, 47, 135  
 Ely 25  
 Elyot, Sir Thomas 12

- enclosure 68–9, 70, 79, 83–4  
 entry fines 40  
 equality of humanity 3  
 escheators 48, 82  
 Essex, Robert Devereux, 2nd Devereux Earl 5, 117, 118, 127  
 Essex, Thomas Cromwell, Earl of 9, 19, 37, 39, 46–7, 49, 54, 65  
 Etaples, Treaty of 19  
 Eure, Sir Ralph 37, 53  
 evangelical preachers 89–90, 129  
 Evil May Day 131  
 Exeter 23, 58, 60, 62, 65
- Fawkes, Guy 117  
 Fenny Bridges 59  
 feodary 82  
 Ferrers, Loye 88  
 fifteenth and tenth 19  
 fishing rights 86  
 Fitzgerald, Lord Thomas 126  
 Five Wounds of Christ 63  
 Flamank, Thomas 22  
 Flowerdew, John 70, 82  
 foldcourse system 84–5  
 food markets 6  
 Forster, Sir John 107, 108, 109, 111  
 Fortescue, Sir John 11  
 fourfold division in society 3–4  
 Foxe, John 70, 132
- Gage, Sir John 97  
 Gardiner, Bishop 97, 99  
 Gargrave, Sir Thomas 108, 112, 114  
 Gates, John 68  
 Geoffrey, Martin 54  
 gentlemen class 3–4, 6  
 Godolphin, Sir William 55, 62  
 Gostwick, Sir John 14  
 Gouge, William 12  
 Great Chain of Being 11–12, 14, 15  
 gressums 40  
 Grey, Lady Jane 85, 98, 101, 133  
 Grey, Lord 59  
 grievances of commoners 6, 8, 14, 129  
 Guildford 22  
 Gunn, S.J. 45
- Hales, John 68–9, 79, 80, 90  
 Hallam, John 49–50  
 Hammerton, Sir Stephen 50  
 Harington, Sir John 123  
 Harper, Sir George 99  
 Harrison, Scott 41  
 Hartlepool 107  
 Harvey, Anthony 66  
 Hatton, Sir Christopher 116  
 Helston 54, 55, 63, 68  
 Henry VI, King 6, 14, 124  
 Henry VII, King 6, 20, 21–3, 123, 124, 126, 134–5  
 Henry VIII, King 6, 126, 135  
     debasing the coinage 128  
     north of England policy (1537–47) 49–53  
     relations with the governing class 27  
     reply to the Pilgrims of Grace 36, 37  
     revenge for the Pilgrimage of Grace 38, 50–1, 52, 78  
     Second Succession Act 47  
     Statute of Uses 27, 35, 48, 136  
     Supreme Head of the Church of England 10  
     and taxation 25–7, 128  
 Herbert, Sir William 60, 69, 129  
 Herne Hill 131  
 Hexham 107  
 Heydon 88  
 high politics 123–7, 132–3  
 Hingham 71  
 Holgate, Robert 52  
 Holmes, William 114  
*Homily of Obedience* 12, 13  
 Honiton 59  
 Honorius III, Pope 64  
 Hooker, John 56, 58, 65  
 Hooker, Richard 10  
 Horncastle 28, 29, 30  
 Howard family 117  
     *see also* Norfolk dukes  
 Hoyle, Richard 45  
 Hull 32, 50  
 Hungate, William 41  
 Hunsdon, Lord 106, 108, 110, 111  
 Huntingdon, Earl of 109  
*The Hurt of Sedition* 10, 90  
 Hussey, Lord 29, 46, 48  
     execution 50

- individual taxation 19  
 inflation 62, 85  
 Ipswich 71, 72  
 Ireland 117–19, 124–5, 126–7  
 Isley, Sir Henry 95, 99  
  
 James VI of Scotland 116, 117, 118, 123, 125  
 Jervaulx 32, 52  
 Jones, Amanda 67, 77, 82–3  
 justices of the peace (JPs) 5  
  
 Kendal 40  
 Kenninghall Park 87  
 Kett, Robert 59, 67, 70, 72–6, 81–2, 90  
     demands 156–9  
 Kett, William 70, 76  
 Kingston-on-Thames 96  
 Kirkby Stephen 33, 40  
 Knowles, David 42  
 Knox, John 110  
 Knyvet, Sir Edmund 75  
  
*Lamentation* 13–14  
 land market 6, 89  
 landlord and tenant relationship 14, 40  
 Lascelles, Robert 43  
 Last Days 15  
 Latimer, Hugh 11  
 Latimer, Lord 32  
 Lavenham 26, 131, 137  
 lawcourts 138  
 Leche, Nicholas 30, 140–1  
 Lee, Archbishop 37  
 Legbourne nunnery 29  
 Levellers 3  
 Lincoln Articles 141–2  
 Lincolnshire Rising 28–31, 130  
     causes 38–9  
 literacy 138  
 Loades, D.M. 98  
 Lollards 89, 128, 130, 137  
 London 5, 71, 97, 101, 131  
 Longland, Bishop of Lincoln 47  
 Louth 28, 29  
 low politics 127–32  
 Luther, Martin 88  
  
 Machiavelli, Niccolò 9–10  
 Maidstone 99  
 Main Plot 117  
 Maldon 90  
 manumission 86–7  
 Marcombe, David 110  
 Margaret of Burgundy 125  
 Markenfield, Thomas 110, 111–12  
 Mary I, Queen 15, 85, 87–8  
     seizure of power 123, 127, 133  
     Spanish marriage 100–1  
     and Wyatt's rebellion 92, 96, 97–8  
 Mary, Queen of Scots 102–3, 106–7  
 Melton 72, 73, 83, 85, 130  
 Melton, Nicholas 28–9, 30  
 millenarians 15  
 Miller, Thomas 51  
 Mohun's Ottery 94  
 monasteries and abbeys 41–2, 52, 87  
 moral obligation 14  
 Moreman, Dr. 65  
 Morison, Richard 9, 12, 13–14  
     remedy for sedition 149–50  
 Morton, Cardinal 22  
 Morton, Dr. Nicholas 111–12  
 Mountjoy, Charles Blount, 8th Lord 118  
 Mousehold Heath 67, 70, 71, 73, 74–5, 78, 81–2, 88  
 Mush, M.L. 43  
  
 naked demonstrations 91  
 Naworth 108  
 Netherlands 116  
 Neville, Alexander 77  
 Neville, Christopher 106, 111–12  
 Nichols, Philip 9, 63, 64, 65, 66  
     answer to the commoners 154–5  
*nobilitas major* 3–4, 4–5  
*nobilitas minor* 4, 5  
 Norfolk agricultural structure 84  
 Norfolk, Thomas Howard, 2nd Howard Duke 20, 21  
 Norfolk, Thomas Howard, 3rd Howard Duke 25, 50, 51, 52, 86–7, 134  
     and the Pilgrimage of Grace 34–6, 37–8, 44  
     report to Wolsey 140  
     and Wyatt's rebellion 95  
 Norfolk, Thomas Howard, 4th Howard Duke 5, 103, 104, 111

- North Elmham 88  
 Northampton, William Parr, Marquis of 74, 80, 134  
 Northaw 68, 78, 83, 84  
 Northern Rebellion 102–19  
   causes 110–19  
   Proclamation of the Earls 163  
 Northumberland, 4th Percy Earl 20–1, 42, 128  
 Northumberland, 6th Percy Earl 42–3, 51  
 Northumberland, 7th Percy Earl 102, 103, 105, 107, 108, 110–13  
   examination 164–5  
 Northumberland, John Dudley, Duke *see* Warwick, Earl of  
 Norton, Francis 111  
 Norton, Richard 110, 111–12, 114  
 Norwich 5, 25, 67, 70–1, 73–5, 80, 82, 83, 129–30
- oath-swearing 31, 41, 143  
*Obedience of a Christian Man* 9  
 obligation theory 9, 10–12  
 Ocland, Christopher 77  
 O'Neill, Hugh, 3rd Earl of Tyrone 118  
 Orford 86  
 Oxfordshire rising 71, 117
- Paget, Lord 97–8  
 Paget, William 80  
   letter to Somerset 160–1  
 Parker, Matthew 89  
 Parker, Sir Henry 84  
 parliamentary peerage 3–4  
 parliamentary representation 135  
 Paston Letters 20  
 Peasants' Revolt (1381) 83  
 Pembroke, Earl of 96, 97, 112  
 Penrith 33  
 Penryn 54  
 Percy family 52  
   Sir Ingram 43  
   Sir Thomas 43, 50  
   *see also* Northumberland dukes  
 Philip II of Spain 92, 93, 97, 100, 101, 103–4, 107  
 Pilgrimage of Grace 14, 31–8, 129–30, 132–3, 136, 137  
   advice to the Pilgrims 145–6  
   causes 38–49  
 Pilgrims' Ballad 42, 144–5  
 Pilkington, James 110–11  
 Plymouth 3, 60  
 Pole, Cardinal Reginald 126  
 Pole, Margaret, Countess of Salisbury 126  
 political leadership 5–6  
 poll tax 61  
 Pollard, Sir Hugh 57  
 Ponet, John 98, 99  
 Pontefract 32, 34, 37, 40, 46, 47  
 Pontefract Articles 147–9  
 Prayer Book 55–6, 61, 63, 83, 87, 129  
 printing presses 9  
 Proclamation of the Earls 163  
 Proctor, John 94  
 Protector Somerset *see* Somerset, Edward Seymour, Duke of  
 Protestantism 99, 102, 116, 119, 127  
 publicists 6–7, 9, 12–13
- rabbits 83  
 rackrenting 85–6  
 radicalism 90–1, 99  
 Raynes, Dr., Bishop of Lincoln 29  
 Rebellions of the Commonwealth 67–91, 130, 133–4  
   causes 77–91  
   commotions (1549) 69–77  
   Kett's articles 156–9  
 Reformation 54–5, 63–5, 87–8, 126, 128, 132  
 religion 14–15, 128–9  
   Anabaptists 90  
   Catholicism 114–15, 116  
   Church and state distinction 9–10  
   churches 28, 40, 41, 54  
   clergy 40, 62  
   evangelical preachers 89–90, 129  
   monasteries and abbeys 41–2, 52, 87  
   Prayer Book 55–6, 61, 63, 83, 87, 129  
   Protestantism 99, 102, 116, 119, 127  
   radicalism 90–1, 99  
*A Remedy of Sedition* 13  
 Renard, Simon 93, 97  
 Reseygh, John 55, 68  
 Reskymer, John 55  
 Richard, Duke of York 5, 124  
 Richmond 32, 52

- Ridolfi, Roberto 103  
 riots 129  
 Rochester 101  
 royal feudal exactions 27  
 Rugge, William 87  
 rural communities 5  
 Russell, Lord 57–61, 65  
 Rutland, Earl of 108
- Sadler, Sir Ralph 107, 114  
   letter to Cecil 163–4  
 St Albans 79  
 St James's Fields 97  
 St Keverne 55, 130–1  
 Sampford Courtenay 56, 60, 61, 66  
 Sandys, Edwin 12  
 Scarborough 50  
 Scrope, Lord 108  
 Seamer 70, 132  
 Second Succession Act 47  
 secular state 9–10  
 sedition 13, 52, 136  
   remedy for sedition 149–50  
 Segar, William 66  
 seizure of goods 19–20  
 servants 62–3  
 Seymour, Lord Thomas 128, 131, 133  
 Shagan, Ethan 77, 78, 81  
 Shakespeare, William 11–12  
 Shaxton, Nicholas, Bishop of Salisbury 47  
 sheep farming 84–5  
 sheep tax 61, 62  
 Sheffield, Lord 74  
 Shrewsbury, Earl of 33, 34  
 Simnel, Lambert 15, 23, 124  
 Six Articles 61, 63  
 Skipton 32, 36, 44  
 Smarden 99  
 Smith, Sir Thomas 3–4, 71  
 Smith, William 99  
 Smyth, Robert 66  
 social change 3  
 social mobility 6  
 Somerset, Edward Seymour, Duke of 12, 13, 57,  
   127, 133  
   and the commotions (1549) 69, 77–80  
   execution 81  
   resignation 67, 76–7  
   and the Western Rebellion 55, 57–61  
 Sotherton, Nicholas 72, 73, 75, 91, 159–60  
 Southwark 96, 99  
 Southwell, Sir Richard 85, 87  
 Southwell, Sir Robert 95, 101  
 Stannaries 22  
 Stanstead 25  
 Stapulton, William 43  
 Star Chamber 129  
 Starkey, Thomas 9  
 status groups 3  
 Statute of Uses 27, 35, 48, 136  
 Statute of Wills 136  
 Steward, Augustine 74, 83  
 Stoke 23  
 Stones, George 48  
 Strype, John 68  
 submission and obligation theory 9, 10–12  
 subsidies 19, 27, 39, 83, 137  
 Sudbury 26  
 Suffolk agricultural structure 84  
 Suffolk, Charles Brandon, 1st Brandon Duke 14, 29,  
   30–1, 33, 44, 128  
 Suffolk, Henry Grey, Duke of 93, 98, 99  
 Surrey Place 73, 74  
 Sussex, Thomas Radcliffe, 3rd Radcliffe Earl 104,  
   105, 106, 107–9, 111, 114  
 Swinbourne, George 82
- Tadcaster 105  
 taxation 19–27, 28, 128, 137  
   Amicable Grant 24–6, 123, 131, 132, 137  
   amounts raised 21, 24, 27  
   assaults on tax collectors 19  
   Cornish Rebellions (1497) 21–3, 130–1  
   fifteenth and tenth 19  
   of individuals 19  
   parliamentary consent 19  
   poll tax 61  
   royal feudal exactions 27  
   seizure of goods 19–20  
   sheep tax 61, 62  
   subsidies 19, 27, 39, 83, 137  
   and trusts 27  
   wool and cloth tax 61, 62  
   Yorkshire Rebellion (1489) 20–1



- Taylor, S.E. 110  
 Tempest, Sir Thomas 46–7, 51, 145–6  
 Thetford 79  
 Thirsk 20  
 Thomas, William 92, 99  
 Thompson, Robert 33  
 Throckmorton, Sir Nicholas 103  
 tin-mining industry 22  
 tithes 40, 88  
 Tonge, Roger 55  
 Topcliffe 113  
 Tower Chronicle 162  
 Townshend, Sir Roger 25  
 Treason Act 47, 62  
 trusts 27  
 Tudor society 3–8  
     Church and state distinction 9–10  
     class hatred 7  
     class warfare 3  
     common law 8, 129  
     deference to the gentry 7  
     equality of humanity 3  
     fourfold division in society 3–4  
     grievances of commoners 6, 8, 14, 129  
     landlord and tenant relationship 14, 40  
     literacy 138  
     moral obligation 14  
     political leadership 5–6  
     publicists 6–7, 9, 12–13  
     rural communities 5  
     social change 3  
     social mobility 6  
     status groups 3  
     submission and obligation theory 9, 10–12  
 Tyndale, William 9  
 Tyrone, Hugh O'Neill, 3rd Earl 118  
  
 Ullathorne, Robert 89  
 Ulster 118  
 Underhill, Thomas or William 65–6  
  
 Wakefield plot 52  
 Wales 7–8  
 Walsingham, Francis 116  
 Warbeck, Perkin 15, 21, 23, 124–5  
 Warham, Archbishop 25  
 Warwick, John Dudley, 1st Dudley Earl 59, 70, 74–5,  
     76–7, 127  
 Warwickshire 25  
 Watson, Robert 72, 73, 89  
 Webbe, James 87  
 Welsh, Robert 60, 65, 87  
 Wentworth, Lord Thomas 134  
 West Riding rising 50  
 Western Rebellion 12–13, 54–61, 91  
     A Copy of a Letter 153–4  
     articles 151–3  
     causes 61–6  
     in Cornwall 54–6  
     in Devon 56–61  
     government attitude to 155–6  
 Westmorland, Charles Neville, 6th Earl 104, 105,  
     106, 110, 112  
 Westmorland, Earl of 44  
 Westmorland proclamation 40, 41  
 Wharton, Richard 83, 87  
 Wharton, Sir Thomas 51, 53  
 wheel of fortune 14–15  
 Whitecoats 95–6  
 Whitgift, Archbishop 6, 11  
 Williams, Sir John 129  
 Willoughby of Parham, Lord 86, 91  
 Wingfield, Sir Anthony 73, 134  
 Winslade, John 56, 65  
 Winter, Thomas 54  
 Wolsey, Thomas, Cardinal 19, 24–6, 132, 136  
     Norfolk's report to 140  
 wool and cloth tax 61, 62  
 worsted industry 83  
 Wressle Castle 43  
 Wyatt, Sir Thomas 92–8, 99–100, 101, 127  
     local militia scheme 161–2  
 Wymondham 70, 76, 88, 90  
  
 Yarmouth 74  
 Yellow Ford 118  
 yeomen 4, 5, 127–9, 137–8  
 Yorkshire  
     1489 Rebellion 20–1  
     East Riding rising 49–50  
     West Riding rising 50  
 Youngs, J. 65