

# The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century

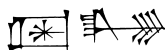


**HUGH TREVOR-ROPER**

# The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century

RELIGION, THE REFORMATION,  
AND SOCIAL CHANGE

HUGH TREVOR-ROPER



LIBERTY FUND  
INDIANAPOLIS

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Frontispiece © 1999 by Ellen Warner

C 5 4 3 2 1  
P 5 4 3

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Trevor-Roper, H. R. (Hugh Redwald), 1914–  
The crisis of the seventeenth century / H.R. Trevor-Roper.  
p. cm.

Originally published: New York: Harper & Row, 1967.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-86597-274-5 (alk. paper)—ISBN 0-86597-278-8 (pbk.: alk. paper)

I. Europe—History—17th century. I. Title: Crisis of the 17th century.  
II. Title.

D246.T75 2001

940.2'52—dc21

00-025945

Liberty Fund, Inc.  
8335 Allison Pointe Trail, Suite 300  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46250-1684

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## PREFACE

These essays were written and first published on different occasions between 1956 and 1967. Most of them began as lectures or were written in tributary volumes. They were first published together, as a book bearing the title of the first essay, *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change*. The book was published by Messrs. Macmillan in London in 1967. An American edition was published in 1968 by Messrs. Harper and Row, under the present title, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*. The book enjoyed a modest success. A second edition, published in London in 1972, was reprinted in 1973 and 1977 and it has been translated, in whole or in part, into German, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese. Individual essays from it have appeared in Polish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Icelandic: the subject of witchcraft evidently arouses particular interest among the tolerant Nordic peoples. A third and revised edition of the English text was published in London by Messrs. Secker and Warburg in 1984. I am naturally delighted that the Liberty Fund has now chosen to publish a new edition of this revised text in America.

It is customary for those who publish collected essays to claim that, however disparate in subject or appearance, they are coherent expressions of a single philosophy or a recurrent theme. That theme—if I may make the same claim—is the problem of a general crisis in the “early modern” period of history; a crisis which was not only political or economic but social and intellectual, and which was not confined to one country but was felt throughout Europe.

Many able historians have devoted themselves to the study of the Puritan Revolution in England, and some of them have ascribed to it a unique importance in modern history, as if it had been the beginning both of the Scientific and of the Industrial Revolution. I venture to think that this is too insular a view, and one which cannot survive a study of comparable developments in Europe. Therefore, in considering the problems raised by the Puritan Revolution, I have looked at them, where possible, in a European context; and for this reason I have placed together, in this book, essays both on European and on English (or rather British) subjects.

The first essay, which gave its title to the English edition of the book, arose from an examination of what has been called “the Tawney-Weber thesis”: the thesis that Calvinism, in some way, created the moral and intellectual force of the “new” capitalism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This thesis has become a sociological dogma in some places and is opposed (as it seems to me) on irrelevant grounds in others. It has been called in to support the theory that English Puritanism was a forward-looking “capitalist” ideology, and also the theory that capitalism had to wait for Calvinist, or at least Puritan, inspiration before it could “conquer the world.” I believe that, if the English experience is seen in its wider historical context, this view will be found to be too simple. If “sociological” historians would look at Calvinism in general—in Switzerland and Heidelberg and Scotland and Navarre and Transylvania as well as in England and Holland—and if they would look at “capitalism” in general—in medieval Italy and Flanders and Renaissance Augsburg and Liège as well as in seventeenth-century England and Holland—I think that they would be obliged to modify the exciting but simple formula which Weber based on narrow and ever-narrowing historical examples. My own modification was originally presented in a lecture delivered in 1961 in Galway, where an audience powerfully reinforced by local monks and nuns gave it an unsympathetic but, I felt, not very critical reception: but I was glad to discover, shortly afterwards, that the Swiss scholar M. Herbert Lüthy had come to conclusions very similar to mine, which he has since published in his volume *Le Passé présent*.<sup>1</sup> M. Lüthy and I were both unaware of each other’s work until after publication. Because of its local origin my essay was first published in the proceedings of the Irish Conference of Historians at which it had been presented.<sup>2</sup>

The second essay, on the General Crisis of the seventeenth century, first appeared in the historical journal *Past and Present* in November 1959. It also excited some controversy, and the essay, together with some of the responses which it had elicited, was reprinted in an anthology of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century essays first published in that journal.<sup>3</sup> In reprinting it here—for it is directly relevant to the cen-

1. H. Lüthy, *Le Passé présent* (Monaco, 1965).

2. *Historical Studies IV. Papers read before the Fifth Irish Conference of Historians*, ed. G. A. Hayes-McCoy (1963).

3. *Crisis in Europe, 1560–1660. Essays from “Past and Present,”* ed. Trevor Aston (1965).



tral theme of this volume—I have taken the opportunity to incorporate in the essay some points which I had previously made separately, in amplification of it, in the discussion which it had provoked.

One of those who took part in that discussion was the distinguished French historian Roland Mousnier. In the course of his contribution he remarked that the general crisis of the seventeenth century was even wider than the crisis in the relation between the State and society in which I had concerned myself. It was, he suggested, “an intellectual mutation” as well as a social crisis; and he referred to the end of Aristoteleanism and the growth of belief in witchcraft as “aspects which would need to be studied if we really want to talk of the crisis of the seventeenth century.” This is the justification which I would plead for the long essay on the witch-craze which was written specially for this collection. The persecution of witches is, to some, a disgusting subject, below the dignity of history. But it is also a historical fact, of European significance, and its rise and systematic organisation precisely in the years of the Renaissance and Reformation is a problem which must be faced by anyone who is tempted to overemphasize the “modernity” of that period. We can no more overlook it, in our attempts to understand the “early modern” period, than we can overlook the phenomenon of anti-semitism in “contemporary” history. Belief in witchcraft, like antipathy to Jews (and other minorities), has a long history, but the “witch-craze”—the rationalization of such beliefs and such antipathies in a persecuting ideology—is specific to certain times, and we need to relate it to the circumstances of those times.

In England the most active phase of witch-hunting coincided with times of Puritan pressure—the reign of Queen Elizabeth and the period of the civil wars—and some very fanciful theories have been built on this coincidence. But here again we must look at the whole problem before venturing general conclusions—especially since the persecution of witches in England was trivial compared with the experience of the Continent and of Scotland. Therefore in my essay I have looked at the craze as a whole, throughout Europe, and have sought to relate its rise, frequency and decline to the general intellectual and social movements of the time, from which I believe it to be inseparable. M. Mousnier, by his juxtaposition of phrases, seemed to imply—I do not know whether this was his intention—that the growth of witchcraft coincided with the decline of Aristoteleanism. It will be seen that I hold a very different view. To me, the growth of the witch-craze is a by-product, in specific social circumstances, of that hardening of Aristoteleanism (or rather, of

the pseudo-Aristoteleanism of the Schoolmen) which had begun in the later Middle Ages and was intensified both by Catholics and by Protestants after the Reformation. I see it as the underside of a cosmology, a social rationalization, which went down in the general social and intellectual revolution of the mid-seventeenth century.

The witch-craze is a haunting problem and no one can claim to have solved it. My essay on the subject, like the essay on the general crisis, provoked lively discussion and was followed by other attempts to grapple with the same subject. One work in particular seems to me of the greatest interest. Christina Lerner had made a particular and detailed study of the hitherto very superficially studied subject of witch-trials in Scotland. Her book *Enemies of God: The Witch-craze in Scotland* (1982) is a fascinating and stimulating sociological study. Her early death, in 1983, was a great blow to scholarship, and one that Scotland, in particular, can ill afford.

If the English Revolution of the seventeenth century cannot be isolated from a general crisis in Europe, equally, I believe, it was affected by individual European thinkers. Then as now, as in the Middle Ages, Europe was indivisible. Anyone who is tempted to see the English Puritans as "the Moderns" might do well to explore the ideological International of which they felt themselves to be a part: that cosmopolitan fraternity of the persecuted Protestants of Europe—of Germany and Bohemia, of La Rochelle and Savoy—whom the Stuarts had betrayed, whom Gustavus Adolphus had intervened to save, and whom Cromwell sought to reunite under his protection. In my essay "Three Foreigners," which is considerably enlarged since it was first published in *Encounter* in 1961, I have dealt with three men who belonged, by experience and ideas, to that European International and who, by wedding antiquated metaphysical notions to vulgarized Baconian ideas, became the philosophers of the English Puritan Revolution in its combination of intellectual reaction and utopian social novelty.

Those who see the Calvinists, or the Puritans, as "the Moderns" insensibly find themselves arguing that it was Calvinism, or Puritanism, which fathered modern science and led to the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. The ideas of the Enlightenment, they sometimes seem to say, were the secularization of the ideas of Calvinism or "radical Protestantism." This view is commonly expressed by Marxist historians, but it also finds favour with some Scottish writers who see it realised in their own country. But the relationship of intellectual movements to religious systems is, I believe, more complex and more variable

than this. Such movements are not linear, or the property of any party or sect; and parties and sects are themselves, under their apparently continuous forms, competitive and sensitive to change. In my essay on "The Religious Origins of the Enlightenment" I express a different view. Believing, as I do, that Calvinism was one form of the general intellectual reaction which accompanied the religious struggles, I have sought to look more closely at the Calvinist societies which undoubtedly contributed to the Enlightenment, and I have suggested that, here too, advance was achieved at the expense, not by the means, of Calvinism. This essay was originally written in honour of that great scholar and patron of scholarship, to whom lovers of the eighteenth century owe so much, Dr. Theodore Besterman. But its natural relation to the other essays in this volume decided me, in the end, to publish it here and to substitute another more purely eighteenth-century essay in the volume which his friends were offering to Dr. Besterman.

The remaining essays in this volume bring us back to Great Britain. All of them were first published in tributary volumes in honour of historians from whom I have learned to enjoy the study of history. The essay on "The Fast Sermons of the Long Parliament," originally published in honour of my Oxford tutor Sir Keith Feiling,<sup>4</sup> describes one method whereby the leaders of the Long Parliament maintained its internal cohesion and defined, from time to time, their party line. The essay on "Oliver Cromwell and His Parliaments," originally presented to that great anatomist, or rather vivisector, of English eighteenth-century parliaments, Sir Lewis Namier,<sup>5</sup> suggests one reason why Cromwell was so much less successful. The essay on "Scotland and the Puritan Revolution" was written for a Scottish historian of England and of Europe, David Ogg,<sup>6</sup> and deals with one of the many neglected episodes of Scottish history: an episode whose impact on England was, I believe, of fatal importance. All historians recognize that the split between "Presbyterians" and "Independents" was decisive in the Puritan Revolution, and many definitions of that split—political, sociological, religious—have been given. But when we look more closely and see how ragged, temporary and variable the frontier between "Presbyteri-

4. *Essays in British History, presented to Sir Keith Feiling*, ed. H. R. Trevor-Roper (1964).

5. *Essays presented to Sir Lewis Namier*, ed. Richard Pares and A. J. P. Taylor (1956).

6. *Historical Essays, 1600–1750, presented to David Ogg*, ed. H. E. Bell and R. L. Ollard (1963).

ans” and “Independents” was, I believe that we should recognize the limits of sociological or doctrinal interpretations and admit that there are times when political parties and political attitudes are not the direct expression of social or ideological theories or interests, but are polarized round political events, in this instance around the fatal Scottish intervention in the English civil war.

Fatal, in its consequences, to both countries: to England, because it saved the rebel Parliament from defeat only to sink it in revolution; to Scotland, because it led, within a few years, to the Cromwellian conquest of the country and the brief, because forced, parliamentary union; which nevertheless pointed the way—fifty years later, in a very different conjuncture—to the mutually beneficial and more lasting union of 1707.

That second union is the theme of the last essay in this book. The seventeenth century saw several attempts, by “modernising” new dynasties, to consolidate their accidental inheritances. The Count-Duke of Olivares sought to make Philip IV king not merely of Castile, Aragon and Portugal but the whole Iberian peninsula. The new Bourbon dynasty sought to unite its kingdoms of France and Navarre. James I of England aspired to “a more perfect union” with his ancestral kingdom of Scotland. In all three countries the attempts required force and led to civil war. Navarre was subjected; Portugal resisted and broke free; Catalonia was reconquered; Scotland, having resisted Charles I and survived Cromwell, settled in the end for a more limited union which saved its economy and gave England its prime need: security. My essay on this subject was written in honour of Jaime Vicens Vives, the Catalan historian of Spain, and after his premature death was published in a memorial volume.<sup>7</sup>

History is a continuing and complex interaction of interests, experiments and ideas, as well as—in Gibbon’s melancholy phrase—the register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind. A volume of essays cannot pretend to solve the problems of a crowded century. I shall be content if I have opened a few oblique slit-windows in the dividing wall between past and present through which some of those problems can be seen anew and provoke the thought, questions and dissent which are the life of historical study.

Hugh Trevor-Roper

7. *Homenaje a Jaime Vicens Vives* (Barcelona, 1965).

# The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century

# 1 Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change

If we look at the 300 years of European history from 1500 to 1800, we can describe it, in general, as a period of progress. It begins with the Renaissance and ends with the Enlightenment; and these two processes are, in many ways, continuous: the latter follows logically upon the former. On the other hand, this progress is far from smooth. It is uneven in both time and space. There are periods of sharp regression, and if the general progress is resumed after that regression, it is not necessarily resumed in the same areas. In the sixteenth century, indeed, the advance seems at first sight general. That is a century of almost universal expansion in Europe. But early in the seventeenth century there is a deep crisis which affects, in one way or other, most of Europe; and thereafter, when the general advance is resumed, after 1660, it is with a remarkable difference: a difference which, in the succeeding years, is only widened. The years 1620–60, it seems, mark the great, distorting gap in the otherwise orderly advance. If we were to summarize the whole period, we could say that the first long period, the 120 years 1500–1620, was the age of the European Renaissance, an age in which the economic and intellectual leadership of Europe is, or seems to be, in the south, in Italy and Spain; the period 1620–60 we could describe as the period of revolution; and the second long period, the period 1660–1800, would be the age of the Enlightenment, an age in which the great achievements of the Renaissance are resumed and continued to new heights, but from a new basis. Spain and Italy have become backwaters, both economically and intellectually: in both fields the leadership has fallen to the northern nations, and, in particular, to

England, Holland and France. Just as the northern nations, in the first period, looked for ideas to the Mediterranean, so the Mediterranean nations, in the second period, looked north.

Now what is the cause of this great shift? Why was the first Enlightenment, the enlightenment of the Renaissance, which spread outwards from Italy, cut short in its original home and transferred, for its continuation, to other countries? Why was the economic advance which, in the sixteenth century, seemed so general, and in which all Europe had its share, carried to completion only in certain areas: areas which, at first, had not seemed best fitted for the purpose? This is a large question and obviously no general or easy answer can be satisfactory. In this paper I wish to consider one aspect of it: an aspect which is not, of course, easily separable, and which is admittedly controversial, but whose importance no one can deny: the religious aspect.

For religion is deeply involved in this shift. We may state the case summarily by saying that the Renaissance was a Catholic, the Enlightenment a Protestant phenomenon. Both economically and intellectually, in the seventeenth century, the Protestant countries (or some of them) captured the lead from the Catholic countries of Europe. Look at Europe in 1620: the date I have chosen for the end of the Renaissance period. With the advantage of after-knowledge we are apt to say that the shift had already taken place: that Holland and England had already usurped the place of Italy and Spain. But of course this was not so. At that time the configuration of power—to a superficial observer at least—must have seemed much the same as it had been in 1520. Spain and the Empire, Italy and the Papacy, these are still the centres of power, wealth, industry, intellectual life. Spain is still the great world power; south Germany is still the industrial heart of Europe; Italy is as rich and intellectually exciting as ever; the papacy is recovering its lost provinces one by one. Now look again in 1700, and how different it is. Politically, economically, intellectually Europe is upside down. Its dynamic centre has moved from Catholic Spain, Italy, Flanders and south Germany to Protestant England, Holland, Switzerland and the cities of the Baltic. There is no escaping this great change. It is general fact; and although we may find special reasons applicable to this or that part of it, its generality is too huge and striking to be exorcised by any mere sum of particular explanations. The Inquisition may have ruined Spain, the blockade of the Scheldt Flanders, the loss of the Levant market Venice, the change of sartorial fashion Lombardy, the difficulties of transport south Germany, the opening of Swedish iron-mines Liège.

All these events may be separately true, but together they fail to convince. A wholesale coincidence of special causes is never plausible as the explanation of a general rule.

How can we explain this extraordinary rise of certain Protestant societies and the decline of Catholic societies in the seventeenth century? It is not enough to say that new discoveries or changed circumstances favoured north Europe as against south (for Catholic Flanders and Liège and Cologne are in the north, and yet shared the Catholic decline), or the Atlantic countries as against the Mediterranean (for Lisbon is better placed on the Atlantic than Hamburg). And even if opportunities did change, the question remains, why was it always Protestant, not Catholic societies which seized these opportunities? Surely we must conclude that, in some way, Protestant societies were, or had become, more forward-looking than Catholic societies, both economically and intellectually. That this was so was a commonplace in the eighteenth century; and in the nineteenth it was elevated into a dogma by those *bourgeois* propagandists—the Germanophil friend of Madame de Staël, Charles de Villers, in 1802; the Protestant statesman François Guizot in 1828; the Belgian economist, who followed his own reasoning and became a Protestant, Émile de Laveleye in 1875—who sought to restore to their own Catholic countries the lead they had lost.<sup>1</sup> The success with which largely Protestant entrepreneurs industrialized France and, through France, Europe under Louis-Philippe, Napoleon III and the Third Republic is evidence that, in their own time at least, there was some truth in their theories. In the nineteenth century, if we may trust appearances, it was by becoming “Protestant”—that is, by accepting the rule of a “Protestant” *élite* and a “Protestant” ideology which convulsed the French Church, alarmed French Catholics and brought papal thunderbolts from Rome—that France caught up, industrially,

1. See Charles de Villers, *Essai sur l'esprit et l'influence de la réformation de Luther* (Paris, 1804); F. P.-G. Guizot, *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe* (Paris, 1828); Émile de Laveleye, “Le protestantisme et le catholicisme dans leurs rapports avec la liberté et la prospérité des peuples,” in *Revue de Belgique*, 1875, and “L'Avenir des peuples civilisés,” in *Revue de Belgique*, 1876. On de Villers, see Louis Wittmer, *Charles de Villers, 1765–1815* (Geneva and Paris, 1908). Both Guizot's and Laveleye's essays were widely translated and republished and had great influence: the former even provoked a Spanish reply from J. L. Balmes, *El protestantismo comparado con el catolicismo en sus relaciones con la civilización europea* (Barcelona, 1844)—a reply considered by the too partial Menéndez y Pelayo as “obra de inmenso aliento . . . es para mí el primer libro de este siglo”; the latter was introduced to the English public with a panegyric by Mr. Gladstone.



with those Protestant neighbours which, two centuries before, had outstripped it.<sup>2</sup> Such empirical evidence from the nineteenth century cannot be overlooked by us, even when we are looking at the seventeenth century.

But even if we admit the obvious fact that, in some way, Protestantism in the seventeenth century (and evidently in the nineteenth too) was the religion of progress, the question remains, in what way? The nineteenth-century French propagandists did not argue the reason: as men of action they had not much time for reasons; they merely stated the fact and pressed the consequence. It was left to the more academic German sociologists to explain the phenomenon. They explained it in several ways. Karl Marx saw Protestantism as the ideology of capitalism, the religious epiphenomenon of an economic phenomenon. Max Weber and Werner Sombart reversed the formula. Believing that the spirit preceded the letter, they postulated a creative spirit, "the spirit of capitalism." Both Weber and Sombart, like Marx, placed the rise of modern capitalism in the sixteenth century, and therefore both sought the origin of the new "spirit of capitalism" in the events of that century. Weber, followed by Ernst Troeltsch, found it in the Reformation: the spirit of capitalism, he said, emerged as a direct consequence of the new "Protestant ethic" as taught not by Luther but by Calvin. Sombart rejected Weber's thesis and indeed dealt it some heavy and telling blows. But when he came to make a positive suggestion he produced a far more vulnerable thesis. He suggested that the creators of modern capitalism were the Sephardic Jews who, in the sixteenth century, fled from Lisbon and Seville to Hamburg and Amsterdam; and he traced the "spirit of capitalism" to the Jewish ethic of the Talmud.<sup>3</sup>

2. Propaganda in favour of Protestantism, not as being true but as being necessary to economic vitality, can be found in the works of Edgar Quinet, Ernest Renan, C. de Laboulaye, L.-A. Prévost-Paradol. See E. G. Léonard, *Le Protestant français* (Paris, 1953), pp. 220 ff., and Stuart R. Schram, *Protestantism and Politics in France* (Alençon, 1954), pp. 59–61. The alarm it caused is shown by Ernest Renauld's *Le Péril protestant* (Paris, 1899), *La Conquête protestante* (Paris, 1900). The Modernist movement in the French Church was in part a new Protestant movement and was specifically condemned as such by Pius X in the bull *Pascendi Gregis*.

3. Sombart's views are first given in *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, 1 (1902), i, 440, and developed in his later writings: see especially *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (Leipzig, 1911); Weber's in *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* (1904–5), *Die protestantischen Sekten und der Geist des Kapitalismus* (1906), and *Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Munich, 1923); also in numerous controversial articles published in *Archiv*

Nobody, I think, would now defend Sombart's positive thesis, but much of Weber's thesis is still firm. It remains the orthodoxy of an influential school of sociologists in America. It has its defenders still in Europe. It is therefore worth while to summarize it very briefly, especially since it has often been misinterpreted. Weber did not argue that Calvin or any other Protestant teacher directly advocated capitalism or capitalist methods. He did not argue that Calvin's teaching on the subject of usury had any effect in the creation of capitalism. In fact, he explicitly repudiated such an idea. Nor did Weber deny that there had been capitalists in the Middle Ages. What he stated was that in the sixteenth century there arose a completely new form of capitalism. In the Middle Ages, as in Antiquity, men had built up great fortunes in commerce and finance; but this, said Weber, had not created even the beginnings of a capitalist system. Such men had been "Jewish adventurer-capitalists," "speculative pariah capitalists," who made money because they loved money and enjoyed making it. But the makers of modern capitalism, he said, were dedicated men who were not animated by love of money: indeed, if they made money, that was an accidental, almost an unwanted by-product of their activity. They were inspired by a moral discipline, an *innerweltliche Askese* or "worldly asceticism," which caused them to place their religion in the methodical pursuit of their "calling," and incidentally to pile up wealth which, since they eschewed all forms of luxury, extravagance and social ambition, they could only re-invest in that "calling." So, indirectly, their moral discipline created that new phenomenon, that "rational bureaucratic capitalism," that "rational organization of citizen labour," which was quite distinct from "Jewish adventurer-capitalism" and which made Europe unique in world history; and this moral discipline, according to Weber, was the Protestant, or rather the Calvinist, ethic. The Protestant ethic thus created the spirit which, when applied to economic affairs, created modern industrial capitalism. For we will not be far wrong in equating Weber's "Jewish adventurer-capitalism" with commercial capitalism and his "rational bureaucratic capitalism" with industrial capitalism.

Now, in spite of all that can be said against it, I believe that there is a solid, if elusive, core of truth in Weber's thesis. The Calvinist ethic did

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*für Sozialwissenschaft u. Sozialpolitik.* Troeltsch, *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen* (1911); *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt* (Munich, 1911), echoes Weber, of whom indeed he can hardly be considered independent (see Walther Köhler, *Ernst Troeltsch*, Tübingen, 1941, pp. 268, 358).

lead, in certain cases, to the formation of industrial capitalism. It is not enough to say that capitalism had a freer field in Protestant countries, because we have to explain why even in Catholic countries, like France or Austria, it was Protestants who thrived and built up industry. And it is indisputable that extreme forms of Protestantism were popular among industrial workers, whether the miners of Bohemia and Saxony or the cloth-workers of Yorkshire and Lancashire. On the other hand, there are certain serious difficulties about Weber's thesis. Any general theory has to take account of exceptions. Since Weber himself limited the Protestant ethic to Calvinism, he had no need to explain the economic stagnation of Lutheran Germany; but what about Scotland? According to Weber's theory, Scotland, with its coal deposits and its strict Calvinist system, should have progressed faster than England, whose Anglican system was regarded by Laveleye as, economically, little better than popery. And why was it Arminian Amsterdam which created the amazing prosperity of the United Provinces, while Calvinist Gelderland remained the reserve of booby squires — that class which, according to the earliest explicit exponent of the theory, Slingsby Bethel, was always the enemy of mercantile progress?<sup>4</sup> Such notable exceptions suggest that even if Calvinism did create or fortify the capitalist spirit it did so in a very uncertain manner.

For these reasons I wish to consider the thesis anew — or rather, not the thesis but the historical facts to which Weber supposed it to apply. I think this is worth doing, because Weber himself merely described a theoretical connection: he never gave a single historical instance of the connection thus described; and Weber's most distinguished successor, R. H. Tawney, confined himself to English examples, thus denying himself the light which may come from a comparative method. In considering the facts, I will begin by a brief glance at Europe in the years of revolution between what I have called the period of the Renaissance and the period of the Enlightenment: i.e., in the years of the Thirty Years War.

Let us start with the Protestant powers. In the late 1620s and early 1630s the political champions of the Protestant cause were not Calvinists, they were Lutherans. They were the two kings of Scandinavia: the extravagant, catholicizing aesthete, Christian IV of Denmark and, after his defeat, the severe, mystical, crusading hero, Gustavus Adolphus of

4. [Slingsby Bethel] *The Present Interest of England Stated, by a Lover of his King and Country* (1671); cf. also his (also anonymous) *The Interest of Princes and States* (1680).

Sweden. In order to intervene in Europe, both these kings found themselves obliged to mobilize new industrial and financial resources, and this meant employing great capitalists. Who were the capitalists whom they found?

Christian IV turned first to a Calvinist firm in Amsterdam, the de Willem brothers. Jan de Willem, in Copenhagen, was one of the founders of the Danish East India Company. His brothers Paul and David sat in Amsterdam and through the international money market provided credit for the purchase of arms. When the de Willem brothers ceased to serve him, Christian IV turned to another Calvinist family, of Flemish origin, the Marcelis family, who had already made a commercial empire in the north. At first it was a cosmopolitan empire. They sought to corner Swedish copper, handled the King of Denmark's Norwegian copper and the Czar of Russia's corn and armour. But in the end they plumped for Denmark. By the 1640s the brothers Gabriel and Celio Marcelis were the King of Denmark's economic advisers, contractors, financiers, munition merchants, timber exporters. They advanced money on the Sound tolls and the copper tithes. They raised fleets. Around them, the native Lutheran aristocracy sank into mere landownership and the native Lutheran merchants became mere agents of Dutch Calvinist merchant houses. The Dutch Calvinists became, in fact, a new capitalist aristocracy in Lutheran Denmark.<sup>5</sup>

The King of Sweden did likewise. What the Marcelis family was for Denmark, the firm of de Geer and Trip was for Sweden. Louis de Geer, indeed, a Calvinist from Liège, settled in Amsterdam, was to become the seventeenth-century Fugger of the north. Driving out all his rivals (also Dutch Calvinists), he became "the indisputable master of Swedish economic life," "the Krupp of the seventeenth century." The whole copper and iron industries of Sweden were in his hands, and from them he supplied the armies and fleets not only of Sweden but also of Holland, France, Venice, Portugal, England, Scotland, Russia and the German princes. He also manufactured brass, steel, tin, wire, paper, cloth. He was a great shipper and shipbuilder: in 1645 he assembled,

5. For the Calvinists in Denmark, see Violet Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam* (Baltimore, 1949), pp. 112-14; H. Kellenbenz, *Unternehmerkräfte im Hamburger Portugal- u. Spanienhandel* (Hamburg, 1954), and "Spanien, die nördlichen Niederlande u. der skandinavisch-baltische Raum," in *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- u. Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1954, pp. 305-6, 311, etc.; Axel Nielsen, *Dänische Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Jena, 1927), pp. 193-96.