London on the eve of war 1642

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At the beginning of his reign the City of London was well-disposed toward King Charles I. Yet, in early January 1642, he felt compelled to flee the environs of the capital. This essay seeks to describe the cause of alienation between King and capital, concluding that Charles' policies so abused the City and its leaders that their natural royalist predisposition was shattered and London became the engine of Parliament's victory in the Civil War.

Chapter One describes the physical appearance of the City of London at the time. The second chapter is a demographic survey portraying the City fathers' as they wrestled with the problems of poverty, over-population, and social unrest. Chapter Three is an examination of the Constitution of the City. The final section is a survey of the relationship between City and Crown from the accession of Charles I to the election of the first thorough-going Puritan Lord Mayor, Sir Isaac Penington, in July 1642.
I certify that I have read this thesis and find that, in scope and quality, it satisfies the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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LONDON
ON THE
EVE OF WAR
1642

By

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Richmond
in Candidacy
for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
in
History

May, 1990
Richmond, Virginia
To my friend

John Robert Rilling

In his classroom ages, not my own, came alive. His work gives lie to those who would deny the intimacy of inspired teaching and dedicated scholarship.
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Introduction

Mary Tudor was mightly exercised. The City was not being cooperative and like most of her predecessors she was discovering that living and working in close proximity to the largest urban center in England was a mixed blessing. In frustration she threatened to move Parliament and the law courts to Oxford where she was certain she would find a more receptive and pleasing environment. This would show those recalcitrant Londoner's. If it did not actually do them economic harm, surely the departure of the seat of government would wound the City's invincible pride. One of the municipal leaders, hearing of the Queen's intent, irreverently asked whether she also intended to divert the Thames.¹

It is a historical cliche to assert that London dominated the nation's life. Indeed, long before the precincts of Westminster reverberated with the murmur of Parliamentary debate, the City of London was predominant in the land. It

¹ J.B. Stow, Survey of London, ed. C.L. Kingsford (Oxford: The University Press, 1908), i, p. 200. Stow imputed this delightful story to Queen Mary. James Howell, did so to to James I (James Howell, Londonopolis: an historickall discourse; or, Periustration of the city of London, the imperial chamber, and chief emporium of Great Britain: whereunto is added another of the city of Westminster, with the courts of justice, antiquities, and new buildings thereunto belonging. London: Printed by J. Streater, for H. Twilford, etc., 1657). While the insult is probably more satisfying when attributed to the brutal Queen, the sentiment surely occurred to both. No matter who said it, the reality of London's greatness was inescapable.
derived this greatness from a complex set of factors not the least of which was its location in the estuary of the foremost river of the island kingdom. Mary Tudor surely realized what the waggish Alderman knew almost by instinct that great political institutions do not exist in isolation but seat themselves close to sources of economic and social power. London could manage well enough alone. It was "a mighty arm and instrument to bring any great desire to effect, if it may be won to a man's devotion;" a profundity Charles I was to only belatedly to discover, to his ruin.

Within this comparatively small area, surrounded by open fields and forests lay the center of England's political, social, economic and religious life. Here men governed, played, and conspired against one another; here fortunes were made and lost; and here in the seventeenth century, a struggle for municipal control ensued which, in many ways, presaged the Civil War, and went a long way to determine the outcome of that conflict.

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Chapter One

A Portrait of London

in the

Seventeenth Century

Anyone wishing to understand Stuart London must examine the works of John Stow, a sixteenth century working tailor with a literary bent. While studying the maps of John Norden he conceived the idea of recording in written form a description of the City.³ His masterpiece, Survey of London, along with successive editions of this and his Annales of England, give a faithful and remarkably accurate⁴ portrait of the City in the seventeenth century.⁵ After presenting a brief narration of the history of London Stow then works through the municipality, ward by ward, describing it as he knew it. Stow and his successors provided scholars with indispensable details about London in that vital era and scholars have derived great benefit from this journey through the city.

³ Stow, i, p. xxxvi.


Writing in the twilight of Elizabeth's reign, Stow rehearsed Geoffrey of Monmouth's torturous story of the city's ancient past. Emerging from veiled antiquity is a fanciful account of gods and demi-gods who established a settlement on the north banks of a river now called Thames. Of scarcely more reliable fabrication is the legend of King Lud who repaired this "town," increased its size and strength and named it for himself, Caire-Lud or Lud's town. Following the conquest of Britain by Julius Caesar in the century prior to Christ's birth the town became a center of commerce and government. By A.D. 62, according to the far more accurate Tacitus, this Londinium, was most famous for a great multitude of merchants, provision, and intercourse.

6 Stow, i, p. 1.


8 While Stow speaks of the early name of London as an ancient designation, Kingsford points out in an editorial caution that "Luds-town" is a Saxon term. Ibid., i, p. 3.


In the waning years of Rome's power a wall was erected to protect the town.\(^ {11}\) Until that time the mere presence of Roman troops was enough to keep the City safe but faced with relentless pressure from eastern European tribes, Rome had withdrawn its legions from Britain to protect the heart of the Empire.\(^ {12}\) In this power vacuum northern tribes such as the Picts and Scots moved south against the Britons and attacked Londinum.\(^ {13}\) The City fathers sent desperate messages to Rome and finally, for the last time, reinforcements were dispatched to their aid, routed the invaders and began bolstering the defenses of the City.\(^ {14}\) Over the next several years a wall was constructed eight feet thick and twelve feet in height, running along the northern tier of the City. Comparable structures were then pushed south on the east and west to complete the shield of the City.\(^ {15}\)

From his special perspective, the Venerable Bede recorded the history of the City as a downhill slide into trage-


\(^{13}\) P.H Sawyer, *From Roman Britain to Norman England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), p. 84.


dy. Focusing on moral questions and their consequences, he asserted that after a period of peace, the citizens lapsed into a long season of moral decay and those whom plague did not carry away, the northern tribes returned, in vengeance, to persecute. In desperation, the Britons invited the continental tribes (Saxons) to come to their rescue. This they did but after driving out the hated Picts and Scots, these would be rescuers turned on their allies, assumed the role of invader, drove the Britons west into the mountains of Wales and Cornwall and divided the country among themselves. For four centuries these Saxons, with varying degrees of success, endured successive waves of attacks from other European invaders. London itself, repeatedly the victim of plunderous assaults at the hand of Saxon enemies, chiefly the Danes until Runnymead, experienced nothing akin to stability. From the Norman conquest forward London began to take the shape described by Stow in the successive editions of his Survey.

Seventeenth century London was a comfortable country town with a reputed population of between 100,000 and

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17 Sawyer, p. 88.

18 Stow, i, p. 10.

19 Gray, pp. 63-69.
200,000 inhabitants. They congregated in a settlement of varying depth for five miles north and south of a lazy bend in the Thames River, some sixty miles from the sea. Many gardens were kept within its boundaries and open country was within a twenty minute walk of anyone in the City.²⁰

Stretching north from the main mass of living area was a complex network of roads, barely improved lanes, many originating as City streets, which came together in a maze of interconnecting paths in the district of Islington.²¹ There the basin of the Fleet River, one of the three tributaries of the Thames flowing through the City, wound its way first north, then sharply west, then north again, finally to leave the City by a northwesterly path.²² As the explorer moved east there was plenty of clear territory until one reached the villages of Stepney, Whitechapel, Limehouse, and, as they approached the river, the wharf districts of Wapping, Shadwell and Radcliffe.²³ The settlements south of the Thames, accessed over London's single bridge, were moderately populated. Only a thin layer of houses formed a


²¹ Charles Harris, Islington (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), pp. 14ff. See Map II.

²² Stow, i, p. 9-10.

²³ Brett-James, p. 36.
barrier between the water and open country.24 Westward, "a man could walk along Holborn, and by the time he reached St. Giles's Church...he would be in the fields."25 At that point, one could turn east, back to the City, or sharply south, parallel the now northerly flowing river and seek the suburb of Westminster, wherein lay the royal residences, Westminster Abbey, and the houses of Parliament.26

**Important Landmarks**

Except for a steadily expanding population and the transformation brought about by the dissolution of the monasteries, London had changed little since the middle ages. The medieval wall, built to surround the most primitive precincts, was still in good shape. The ditch facing the wall was in some places 200 feet wide but, in others, it had become a filthy sewer or filled in to accommodate gardens or houses.27 In the East, near the Tower, lay Aldgate, made famous by Chaucer, then in disrepair, but still remain-

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27 Stow, i, p. 19.
ing an imposing edifice.\textsuperscript{28} Newgate, built in Roman times and used as a prison since the middle ages, Ludgate, Fleet Bridge and Holborn Bridge were the chief means of access to the old City from the west.\textsuperscript{29} The most imposing natural landmark in City the was, of course, the river Thames. It was the highway of the City and was used for the transport of commerce and the easy movement of population from one district to another. In the seventeenth century the river was deep and wide enough for the fleet to anchor close at hand.\textsuperscript{30} Roads were so narrow, poorly maintained, and so infested with the criminal element, that the Thames functioned as the route of choice for a large part of the population.\textsuperscript{31} If one discounted the ocean-going vessels and transport barges, over 2000 small boats plied the river between Westminster, London, and Southwark employing over 3000 workmen.\textsuperscript{32}

Three tributaries flowed into the Thames in or near London. The Walbrook was covered over for much of its

\textsuperscript{28} Stephenson, pp. 182-183.

\textsuperscript{29} Ordish, p. 5.


\textsuperscript{31} Brett-James, p. 29.

\textsuperscript{32} Stow, i, pp. 59-60.
The Lea was far to the east near the old ford at Stratford-atte-Bowe and formed a part of the water supply system of the City. The most important of the three was the Fleet River a "considerable stream along which boats with fish and fuel were" taken to the bridges that breached the Wall and its ditch on the westward side.34

By 1600 laymen had taken over, developed, and inhabited most of the monastic structures and property in London. The religious houses, once some twenty-three in number, long recognized as being among the most important features of the medieval City had nearly vanished. In some instances, the church had been turned over to the parish for worship services; others were torn down completely. Of the remaining monastic buildings, some were remodeled to become the homes of wealthy citizens, some fell into disuse and decay and others were demolished to make way for tenements or businesses.35 Their availability tended to slow the westward movement of the homes of the wealthy and well-connected. There was a tendency for officials of the Court to congregate in Westminster close to the king or Queen but these new properties made available by the Tudor monarchs, were too

33 Holmes, Elizabethan..., p. 38.
34 Brett-James, p. 31.
35 Davies, "The Transformation..." pp. 287 ff.
reasonable to pass up. Sir Francis Walsingham and the Earl of Essex lived in converted monastic buildings as did the Earl of Oxford and Sir John Hart, Alderman.

Other distinguished persons remained close to the City as the century passed. Over a hundred families of gentlemen maintained townhouses of substantial size in addition to their homes in the country. Among the more prominent scattered throughout the wards were the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Countess of Warwick, the Marquess of Winchester and the Earl of Kent. Civil War, plague and the Great Fire were to drive out many of those associated with the Court, and by the end of the century the drift westward became almost irresistible -- first to Drury Lane and St. Giles's, and then to St. James's and the Haymarket.

Many of the homes with considerable grounds were converted to centers of recreation. Northumberland House became a gaming center and its gardens bowling alleys. This application did not sit well with many citizens. Stow, for instance, resented the bowling alleys, thinking that this pastime diverted the citizens from the "manly" sport of

36 Gray, p. 142.
37 Stow, i, p. 146.
38 Brett-James, p. 37-38.
archery. He would surely have approved the visit to Northum­berland House by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs in the 1620s who brought the fury of official London down upon this place of revelry and dug up the alleys with mattocks.40

A noted feature of seventeenth century London was the large number of parish churches.41 Stow surveyed 125 churches in the 26 wards of the City and the suburbs42 many of which were later destroyed in the Great Fire. Among those which escaped that conflagration very few survived the wear and tear of the years and a vandalism which ignored their aesthetic value.43 The most imposing of these was, of course, the massive Cathedral of St. Paul's whose Norman architecture dominated the City skyline. Its outdoor pulpit, Paul's Cross, which jutted out into the northeastern church­yard, was a vital center of the City's religious and politi­cal life.44 Here large crowds of citizens and their leaders gathered to hear Sunday morning preachers explore the impor-

40 Stow, i, p. 151; Brett-James, p. 37.
41 Brett-James, p. 57.
42 Stow, i, p. 151.
44 Stephenson, p. 84.
tant issues of the day. The nave of the Cathedral was one of the City's most important meeting places; there all sorts of business was transacted and gossip exchanged -- all to the scandal of the more scrupulous.

One of the serious problems facing the City fathers was the unsanitary conditions of church yards. The deceased remains would be buried in shallow graves in land that was raised some feet above the surrounding level. Seepage from these graves made for unpleasant condition in the streets. The solution, in some cases, was to halt the interment and begin burying parishioners in the Churchyard of St. Paul's Cathedral, but this was, at best, a temporary palliative. As a result of serious outbreaks of the plague in 1603, 1625, and 1636, very little burial ground was left by the beginning of the Civil War. Several churchyards bore testimony to the vigorous growth of the City around them. They became the sites of storehouses for City merchants eager to warehouse their goods close to their place of


46 Manley, p. 13.


48 Brett-James, p. 57.
business. Other parishes yards were simply purchased, ripped up and converted to tenements for the poor.

Acute Municipal Problems

If one had accompanied Stow on his tour, the lack of any organized urban planning would have been obvious. In fact, until the Great Fire (1666) there was little systematic design to the City at all. Even the main streets such as Westcheap or Thames wandered from east to west between houses and businesses rather than forcing construction to conform to certain pattern. Twentieth century travelers, accustomed to a uniform gridwork of streets would be taken aback by the haphazard layout of City thoroughfares. One of the most odious institutions confronting persons trying to make their way through London was the ubiquitous laystall. Common traders, including the particularly offensive butchers, conducted regular business in these booths and streets throughout the City were lined with them. Only the cleansing effect of rainstorms removed waste from these establishments and other debris from the streets.


50 Brett-James, p. 39.

Wards such as Whitechapel and Moorfields earned Stow's special condemnation for the disgusting condition of their laystalls but there, as elsewhere, citizens had grown accustomed to the unsanitary living conditions, having no choice but to ignore the smell and adroitly avoid the most repulsive obstacles.  

Street lighting was irregular and nights, particularly in winter, were quite dark and dangerous. Some attempts to relieve this gloom were made by the City such as the stone lanterns on Fleet Bridge but, for the most part, street illumination was dependent on the rather meager efforts of private institutions or individuals who would on occasion endow the City with funds to light some of the streets.

Periodically, generous individuals would also make attempts to pave certain streets. This was an almost futile gesture; except for the bridges over the barrier ditch of the old City, the streets of London were unpaved and, despite the glowing description by contemporary observer Paul Hentzner and other City partisans, awaited only the next rainstorm to become vir-

52 Gray, p. 133.

53 As an example of this charitable activity, the Bow Church placed lanterns in its steeple. Stow, i, pp. 26, 265; ii, p. 171.

tually impassable. The layout of the City was equally undesirable. Many streets originated as narrow paths between adjacent gardens. Coleman Street, for instance, led nowhere until the tenements blocking its path, were torn down to open a passage north into Moorfields.

In no feature of London life was the lack of planning more obvious than in the ill-considered construction of public buildings. On the continent, municipal buildings and the headquarters of City companies were usually congregated around a public square. Such was not the case in seventeenth century London. Most trading took place in the open air on Lombard Street or in the nave of St. Paul's Cathedral. It fell to Sir Thomas Gresham, after many years of effort, to establish the Royal Exchange. Land was secured in the wedge between Cornhill and Threadneedle Street in east central London and in 1570 the Queen inspected the new structure. Other than the Exchange there were very few public buildings; three of the most important were the Guildhall, Leadenhall and Bakewell Hall. The Guildhall, thanks to the generosity of company and citizen alike, over the years took

55 Paul Hentzner, quoted in Manley, p. 40. For a decidedly different opinion see, Stow, i, pp. 264-265.
56 Brett-James, p. 42.
57 Manley, p. 13.
58 Holmes, p. 43; Stow, i, pp. 192-193.
shape, but only fitfully, in stages.\textsuperscript{59} The Leadenhall was the scene of all kinds of economic activity. Therein was conducted the weighing of meal on the public scales and also wool merchants wound and packed their wool.\textsuperscript{60} Bakewell Hall hosted a weekly clothing market for merchants who came from throughout the kingdom to buy and sell.\textsuperscript{61}

The growth of the City's population posed enormous problems for the City government. One of the most persistent was the diminishing quality and quantity of London's water supply. The City sat on layers of soil of a gravelly nature packed on a sub-stratum of hard clay.\textsuperscript{62} Until the press of population during Elizabeth's reign underground, water was easily pumped to the surface and was sufficient for the needs of the City. But these supplies began to run low as the century drew to a close and other sources were soon required.\textsuperscript{63} Within the City, the Fleet River, the underground and covered Walbrook and, of course, the Thames were the obvious sources of fresh water. Natural springs were found at various places around the City; Holywell, also said to


\textsuperscript{60} Stephenson, pp. 173, 210.

\textsuperscript{61} Brett-James, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{62} Gray, pp. 24-25.

\textsuperscript{63} Brett-James, p. 44.
have miraculous properties,\textsuperscript{64} Dame Annis the Clear, Perilous Pond, Horsepool in West Smithfield, and a pool by St. Giles's Churchyard in the northwest district were among the most prominent. There were cisterns in Cheapside and a variety of conduits bringing water from the north to different wards. Among others, the old conduits at Tyburn, northwest of Westminster, brought water from the country and the City maintained a channel which fetched supplies from Hampstead northwest of the City proper.\textsuperscript{65}

Before 1600 most water was hand-carried from cisterns or public reservoirs into private homes.\textsuperscript{66} In the late sixteenth century, technological advances made it possible to pump water from conduits or the Thames through lead pipes and then into individual homes. A significant milestone in the City's search for water came as a result of this new technology in 1582 when Peter Morris, a Dutch engineer, created a pump powerful enough to shoot a stream of water over the steeple of St. Magnus Church and thus secured the rights to supply water to a section of London east of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{64} Harrison, p. 274.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Stow, i, pp.16-17.
\item \textsuperscript{66} W.H. and H.C. Overall, \textit{Analytical Index to the Remembrancia} (London: The Corporation of the City of London, 1878), p. 553n. Hereinafter the \textit{Index} will be referred to as "Overall."
\end{itemize}
Bridge. Morris and his family held those rights until 1701. Gradually, other districts received this piped water. Usually, the conveyers were entrepreneurs who built the lines on their own or obtained financing from City companies. Morris himself was financed by the Fishmongers Company and, after much difficulty, brought water to Old Fish Street. As can be expected, the misuse of piped water became a problem; citizens including many prominent people would use vast quantities for improper purposes. Lady Essex, for instance, had her water cut off in 1608 because Essex House was consuming water indiscriminately during a period of drought. The Lord Mayor felt that water for laundry and cleaning the stables might more properly be conveyed from the river manually. Eventually, the solution to the City's supply of water required a whole new water system. In the years following 1613 the New River Company under the leadership of Sir Hugh Myddleton, brought water in from Chadwell and Amswell east of the City.

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67 Gray, p. 144.
68 Stow, i, p.88.
70 Ibid., ii, p. 321.
Education, Acts of Charity and Immigration

Stow writes with pride of the importance attached to the educational institutions in London. Stow, i, pp.71-73. From the earliest times schools were associated with major churches such as St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey. With the dissolution of the monasteries some of these schools closed but, fortunately, others were built to take their place. It was also common for citizens of London upon their death to leave certain amounts to endow grammar schools. Some were wealthy enough to establish schools on their own. Adult education usually took the form of public lectures. Thomas Gresham established a famous series which came to bear his own name in 1597. These were given weekly and dealt with divinity, astronomy, music, law, physics and rhetoric. In the morning they were delivered in Latin, and in the afternoon in Eng-

72 Stow, i, pp.71-73.
73 The school at St. Paul's was re-established in the early sixteenth century after a period of inactivity by Colet.
74 Manley, pp. 20-21.
76 Jordan, Charities..., pp. 206-211.
77 Brett-James, p. 45.
lish.\textsuperscript{78} Of primary importance among London's educational institutions were the Inns of Court and Chancery. Over a period of seven years students were trained using moots and readings so that they might practice law.\textsuperscript{79}

One of the serious consequences of the dissolution of the monasteries was the disappearance of organized works of charity by these institutions. Every monastery, in addition to its religious duties, assumed charitable obligations to the poor but funds to support this work were declining. Even before this era, the number and amount of gifts to monastic foundations had been dwindling. The medieval system, which centered on alms-giving, was too "casual and ineffective, never seeking to do more than relieve" immediate suffering.\textsuperscript{80} With the disappearance of the regular clergy, even this system was gone and England was faced with an important social deficit, a fact Stow laments as the diminishing disposition towards charity in his time. He speaks longingly of a day, sometime past, when "all noble persons,...without grudging" shared their fortunes with the poor.\textsuperscript{81}


\textsuperscript{79} Holmes, Martin, pp. 38-40.


\textsuperscript{81} Stow, i, p. 89.
examining too carefully this idealistic view of the past, it is sufficient to say that the absence of the monasteries vastly increased the opportunity of the City government and private citizens to take care of the poor.\textsuperscript{82} The establishment of the Elizabethan Poor Law system was a sign that the national government recognized poverty as an egregious problem and was determined to do something about it.

Despite the lack of sophisticated contemporary economic analysis, it became apparent, as the sixteenth century progressed, that economic conditions were deteriorating; the years following 1594 were particularly severe. Suffering was widespread and there is evidence of outright starvation in the summer of 1596. Attempts by the government to prevent hoarding, forestalling, and to control prices met with little success. Bread riots in the cities and rampant vagrancy in rural areas were the order of the day.\textsuperscript{83}

As Parliament met in 1597 it was mindful of its past failure to ameliorate these social conditions. What existed, at that time, was a patchwork of statutory "solutions" dealing mostly with symptoms which, indeed, may have contributed to the severity of the situation. After long and sometimes angry debate, Parliament passed, over the next several years, a series of laws designed to help relieve

\textsuperscript{82} Jordan, \textit{Philanthropy...}, p. 18.

\textsuperscript{83} Jordan, \textit{Charities}, p. 91-92.
poverty and contain social unrest. The central statute in
this family of legislation was An Act for the Relief of the
Poor (Revised, 1601).\textsuperscript{84} Containing nothing really novel or
unique it simply formulated a system based on the experienc-
es of the previous half century's struggle in dealing with
the seemingly intractable problem of poverty. Each parish
was charged with providing relief for the poor. "Overseers,"
a committee of churchwardens and other freeholders were to
have the power to set to work destitute children and others
who had no visible means of support. This, and additional
help for the lame, blind or old who could not work, was to
be funded out of an assessment of all citizens in the com-
munity.\textsuperscript{85}

In its struggle against poverty, London faced a par-
ticularly acute problem. The City was growing at a frighten-
ing pace during most of seventeenth century. Men from all
classes and with all sorts of ability were attracted to the
metropolis because of its prosperity, excitement, oppor-
tunities and, perhaps, its anonymity as well. London's
distinctive character, plus the generosity of its citizens
served to lure, along with many solid citizens, large num-

\textsuperscript{84} E.M. Leonard, \textit{The Early History Poor Relief} (Cam-

\textsuperscript{85} Jordan, \textit{Charities...}, p. 96.
bers of the unemployed, but also the unemployable.\textsuperscript{86}

The City livery companies maintained a number of charitable homes for the poor. Stow mentions nearly two dozen of these homes throughout the City and the suburbs. Near the Tower on Hog Street several almshouses were established by the Merchant Tailors for poor women.\textsuperscript{87} The Leatherseller's had one in Little St. Helen's Street\textsuperscript{88} and on the north side of Beech Lane, in Cripplegate Ward, the Drapers' Company built several for poor widows of their own company.\textsuperscript{89}

Not only were the companies generous with the poor but the population, as a whole, possessed conspicuous charitable instincts. From 1480 to 1660 the citizens of London poured the prodigious sum of £664,600 14s into various forms of poor relief.\textsuperscript{90} Considering this reflects only the amounts that can be corroborated by evidence, their giving demonstrates a sincere tendency on the part of Londoners to reach out to those in need; despite these efforts, the enigma of poverty and accompanying social dislocation continued to vex the City fathers and occupy much of their time and energy.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{86} Ibid., p. 86.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Jordan, \textit{Philanthropy...}, p. 18.
\item \textsuperscript{88} Jordan, \textit{Charities...}, p. 144.
\item \textsuperscript{89} Stow, i, p. 301.
\item \textsuperscript{90} While the aggregate sum is large and W.K. Jordan characterizes it as "enormous" it represents only £3692 per year. Jordan, \textit{Charities...}, p. 87.
\end{itemize}
Further complicating the City's difficulties was immigration. From the beginning of its history, London was the destination of a steady influx of foreign and domestic immigrants. English merchants, anxious to avoid feudal dues or royal taxes established their businesses and made their homes in the City. The native immigrants were supplemented by a growing number of aliens who combined to provide an exotic ambience of ethnic personalities, peculiar languages and advanced business practices.\(^91\) Jewish merchants gathered in a small 'ghetto' before their expulsion by Edward I;\(^92\) Italian bankers from their Lombard Street redoubt\(^93\) financed the Scottish and French adventures of the Edwards;\(^94\) German traders represented the Hanseatic League in the Steelyard.\(^95\) Each made a significant contribution to the cosmopolitan atmosphere of London but also, of more importance, to the economic health of the prior to the seventeenth century.

\(^{91}\) Brett-James, p. 47.


\(^{93}\) A redoubt is a refuge or enclave (Oxford English Dictionary: A New English Dictionary on a Historical Basis, James A.H. Murray, founding editor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928), "R," p. 308. Hereinafter this multi-volume, exhaustive dictionary will be referred to as *OED*.


\(^{95}\) Gray, p. 112.
Perhaps the most important were the Germans. From their warehouses located between Candlewick Street and the River west of London bridge, the Hanse merchants traded in wheat, rye and other grains, cables, ropes, masts, pitch, tar, linen, wax, and, of course, raw metal or steel.96 During the early stages of the Reformation, the Steelyard became the conduit through which a flood of Lutheran literature found its way into England. This veritable hemorrhage of religious material is counted by many as a principal fountainhead of the English Reformation.97 Lutheran tracts on a wide variety of subjects packed in with the hemp and flax were soon to found to fueling intense learned discussions over ale in neighborhood taverns.98 Despite its success, the steelyard lost its license in 1598 after jealous English merchants complained that it was interfering with their business. Elizabeth expelled the merchants and turned the Steelyard over to the Navy.99

As one might expect, the constant influx of foreigners was the source of much social unrest. Waves of resentment would periodically wash over the City producing riot and oc-

96 Stow, i, p. 232.


98 Manley, p. 15.

casional legal sanctions against the immigrants. Englishmen were torn between their desire to help those genuine victims of religious and political persecution and their fear that foreigners represented a real threat to English trade and prosperity.100

Customs officials, in the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, recorded foreign goods worth thousands of pounds imported by immigrant merchants but concluded that this whirlwind of trade produced very few jobs for native Englishmen. They complained that even though these strangers brought many useful goods into the Kingdom, foreigners tended to employ their own kind and did not hire local workmen. They also noted that the immigrant practice of making goods in England denied the government valuable import duties that would otherwise fill the Queen's coffers.101

The presence of so great a number of emigres became a point of heated political controversy. Leaders were variously divided on the value of this immigration. Some abhorred this alien influx while others believed it to have great benefits. When Sir Walter Raleigh introduced a bill excluding aliens, John Wolley, the Queen's Latin secretary, vigo-

100 John Strype (ed.), John Stow's A Survay of the Cities of London and Westminster and the Borough of Southwark (London: Printed for W. Innys and J. Richardson (etc.), 1754-55), pp. 291, 299. This was one of the many editions that corrected or expanded Stow's work over the years.

101 Brett-James, pp. 48-49.
rously opposed the measure. "Such a restraint upon strangers would be ill for London itself; for the riches and renown of the City came by the entertaining of strangers and giving liberty unto them. That Antwerp and Venice could never have been so rich and famous but by entertaining of strangers; and by that means had gained all the intercourse of the world." In his *Annales*, Edmund Howes was convinced that these foreigners were the main engine of England's prosperity in the early seventeenth century. "Refugees from France and the Netherlands, population growth among native Englishmen, the growth of commerce, and intermarriage with foreigners...are the main cause of our increase of wealth and great ships, the undiscernible and new building of goodly houses, shops, sheds and lodgings within the City." In most cases, those who favored immigration had the best of the dispute and were able to stifle the most egregious forms of xenophobia. Despite the debate swirling around them, foreigners continued to arrive in large numbers and, even in the face of occasional bursts of hostility, made a valuable contribution to the growth of London's population and prosperity.

102 Strype, p. 291.

Arts and Leisure

The immediate proximity of open fields provided many opportunities for amusement. In medieval London one of the most important forms of recreation was martial arts competition but, as the seventeenth century dawned, patterns were changing. Many were concerned that these skills were falling into decay. This was a trend that, in direct proportion, affected London's defense. Armorers were out of work, soldiers were idle and their weapons were falling into disuse. Archery, fencing, wrestling, and close order drilling all were on the wane and the authorities were convinced this needed correction. Three hundred merchants were commended for encouraging regular drills for the common soldiers in the City. The decline of archery was, of course, primarily due to the obsolescence of the bow as an implement of war, but that and other skills declined due to the absence of an immediate enemy threat. As in other long periods of peace, people had begun to take up other pursuits and in Stow's lifetime London's citizens were turning to "bowling allies and dicing-houses, which in all places are increased

104 Stephenson, p. 217.
105 Brett-James, p. 50.
106 Stow, i, p. 166.
May Day festivities figured prominently in the life of the citizens. Londoners, seeking to shake off the wet, dreary London winter, each spring on the first of May, poured out of the City into meadows and woods filled with flowers and green with the year’s new growth. This practice attracted severe criticism by those of less than liberal inclination. Puritan Philip Stubbes, in his Anatomie of Abuses, stresses the potential for mischief with "young men and maidens, old men and wives, (spend[ing] the night in the woods) in pleasant pastime, and in the morning return, bringing with them birch and branches of trees and to deck their assemblies." 

Theater was a vital part of the life of London in the seventeenth century. The City played host to a number of theatrical companies who played in buildings, which for the first time in London’s history were constructed specifically for theatrical productions. On the southside of the river there were three: the Rose on Bankside, another in Newington Butts, and, of course, the famous Globe which had two edi-

107 Strype, v, p. 291.
108 Gray, p. 131.
Theaters playing to the most sophisticated audiences were on the north side of the Thames. During the reign of Charles I these were Blackfriars and the Cockpit or Phoenix in Drury Lane. The concentration of theaters in the south brought trade to the City's boatmen and they were to suffer a great loss when places of amusement on the north of the river grew in popularity.

While the present study is not designed to examine in detail the place of the theater in the life of the City, it would be re-miss if mention was not given to the social problems generated by the growing popularity of theatrical productions. Many Londoners derived great pleasure from regular theater attendance. Many others clearly did not. The most obvious and vocal critics of playhouses were the Puritans whose objections were both theological and social. William Prynne's panegyric, Histriomastix, outlined the heart of the Puritan argument in strident terms and earned its author brutal punishment because of, among other things, his rather tactless and un-recanted comparison of actresses (one of whom shared the throne of England with Charles I)


111 Bentley, pp. 107-108.

112 Ibid., p. 52.
with certain ladies of the evening. But the Puritan argument was not a simple one: theater played with the social order and represented cultural and ideological instability. The Puritans were not alone in their condemnation of theaters. Sir Nicholas Woodrofe, Lord Mayor in 1580, complained to the Queen's chief minister, Lord Burghley, that theaters represented a kind of organized anarchy which festered just beyond the reach of authority, "Some things have double the ill, both naturally in spreading the infection (plague), and otherwise in drawing God's wrath and plague upon us, as the erecting and frequenting of houses very famous for incontinent rule out of our liberties and jurisdiction." Actors and playwrights were considered very low on the social scale and despite the prominence and generosity of some, were excluded from many parts of polite society.


116 Edward Alleyn, the most famous actor of the Elizabethan stage, with his considerable wealth, established an almshouse in early seventeenth century (Jordan, Charities, p. 155).

117 Bentley, p.
The conviction that theaters were a social evil created an unintended alliance between the City fathers and the emerging Puritan consensus in London. Antitheatricality was a fundamental tenet of Puritanism but it struck a responsive chord in other parts of society as well. Though a large number of City dwellers innocently frequented the playhouses, many leaders, Puritan and not, came to see theaters places where "all masterless men and vagabond persons that haunt the highways, (could) meet together and recreate themselves.\textsuperscript{118}

Close to theaters in the public imagination were a variety of animal sports. Bulls, bears, mastiffs and other animals were kept to be fed, baited and fought. Cock-fighting was regular amusement for men of all social levels and expensive pits were maintained wherein spectators wagered large amounts for their favorite birds.\textsuperscript{119} In the summer, men took to the river, rowing against one another in small boats. This usually ended in one or both being thoroughly soaked.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{118} Mullaney, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{119} Leys and Mitchell, pp. 115-117.
\textsuperscript{120} Stow, i, pp. 93-94.
The Liberties and the Suburbs

A cause of great concern for the City fathers was the explosive growth of London's liberties and the suburbs, areas which were legally beyond the City's jurisdiction. This increase reflected the population spillage of a city bursting in size; people simply had no place to go.\(^{121}\) The planning of these areas was almost non-existent. Stow's own district of Radcliff was almost "a continual street or filthy straight passage with alleys of small tenements or cottages built and inhabited by" wintering seamen or their suppliers.\(^{122}\) In the liberties the municipal government was excluded from exercising its power. These sections of the City had been controlled by religious houses before the dissolution and, after the Reformation, by their lay successors and were lucrative source of income for the Crown. These sections enjoyed 'liberty' from the control of the City which meant that, whether found inside or outside of the town limits, their inhabitants were free from the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor and Common Council.\(^{123}\) In the early days, after dissolution, the King took over these sections and distributed them according to his own conve-

\(^{121}\) Mullaney, p. 6.

\(^{122}\) Stow, ii, p. 71.

\(^{123}\) Davies, pp. 299.
nience.124 Despite the compounded problems of governing these districts, successive monarchs, beginning with Henry VIII, resisted the desire of the City to assume control of these areas.125 Because they were on existed in an obscure legal posture with judicial parameters "equivocally defined"126 and were free of the burden of City taxation, they attracted many low-income residents from London but also 'foreign'127 and alien craftsmen and traders. During the remaining Tudor years this convergence of population intensified and brought with it much accompanying social evil such as overcrowding, bad sanitation, vagrancy and disorder.128

124 Henry Calthrop, The Liberties, Usages and Customes of the City of London; confirmed by especiall Acts of parliament, with the time of their confirmation. Also, Divers ample, and most beneficiall charters granted by King Henrie the 6, King Edward the 4, and King Henrie the 7th not confirmed by Parliament, (London: Printed by B. Alsop for Nicholas Vavasour, 1642), p. xviii.

125 Gray, p. 152.

126 Mullaney, p. 21.

127 Englishmen not originating in London. One would think this referred to those immigrating from outside England, but, as the population exploded, resentment turned on provencial citizens settling in the city. This usage is indicated in the 1638 Privy Council order which referred to "forreigne Bakers which bring their Bread to be sold in the market of any Citie" ("Foreign," OED, "F", p. 434).

Except for the collection of royal subsidies and taxes and raising the militia, the Crown refused to allow the City to intrude into the life of the liberties.\textsuperscript{129} This caused enormous problems; for instance, the liberty of the Mint was sold to Alderman Edward Bromfield for £1700, a terrific bargain. The rents in the Mint were twice as high as elsewhere because its borders were an absolute block to municipal jurisdiction and, therefore, its inhabitants were immune from arrest by the City Sheriffs. One can see how all parties but the City government came out ahead. The Crown got the subsidy from Bromfield, he in turn received a huge return from his investment, and his "constituents" could avoid taxes, and, the criminally inclined among them could artfully elude the local constabulary.\textsuperscript{130}

The suburbs did not affect London in the same way as did the liberties. Usually their population was cut off from the City by natural barriers such as the Thames River or open country-side.\textsuperscript{131} The only access to London by foot from Middlesex, Lambeth, and Southwark was by London Bridge.

\textsuperscript{129} Gray, p. 152.


\textsuperscript{131} Holmes, pp. 14-15.
Poplar, and Blackwell.\textsuperscript{135} They were so filled with "filthy cottages and with other pur presture, inclosures and laystalls (notwithstanding all proclamations and Acts of Parliament made to the contrary) that in some places it scarcely remaineth a sufficient highway for the meeting of carriages and droves of cattle, much less is there any fair pleasant or wholesome way for people to walk on foot." To Stow, this was a deplorable way for "so famous a City " to present itself. It was hardly a propitious welcome for weary travelers to require them to negotiate this squalor simply to gain entrance to the nation's premier City.\textsuperscript{136}

To the north the same kind of development arranged houses and commercial buildings in ribbon-like rows along the roadway which began to encroach upon open spaces. Therefore, these had been reserved for recreation and archery practice. St. John's Street, incorporating land once held by the giant priory of St. John of Jerusalem, was being lined with many homes for fine gentlemen.\textsuperscript{137} Gray's Inn Lane was filling on both sides with tenements.\textsuperscript{138} While these areas were still open to the fields to the north and west,

\textsuperscript{135} Stow, i, p.126.

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., ii, p. 72; i, p. 126.

\textsuperscript{137} Brett-James, p. 59.

although there was a large amount of water traffic. Nevertheless, this distance complicated the task of the City fathers. If the suburbs were farther away from London, these areas were also less responsive to its authority. This was an even more severe problem when the City was called on to enforce edicts of the national government. The Privy Council was constantly putting pressure on the municipality to make sure Royal proclamations and statutes were observed in the liberties and suburbs. This insistence came despite the Crown's reluctance to yield overall jurisdiction. The device used by the Crown to mollify the City was to invest its Recorder as Justice of the Peace in a certain area such as Middlesex and Southwark. This allowed London to insure that criminals would not escape into these areas without pursuit, but it also spared the City administrative responsibility when it really had no legal jurisdiction. This was not an unacceptable arrangement for the City but was not entirely satisfactory either.

In the east "fayre hedges, long rows of elms and other trees" had given way to small tenements built along the road. This ribbon development was characteristic of Wapping, Southwark and the City (London: Oxford University Press for the Corporation of London, 1969), pp. 115ff.

133 Pearl, p. 30.
134 Johnson, p. 122.
the complete disappearance of common areas was feared to be only a question of time. This unrestrained construction reflected, in Stow's mind, a change of character among the well-to-do. They seemed all too willing to encroach upon the common areas by building large and elaborate homes and estates. In his mind, this attitude marked a shift in social sensitivity. They seemed to be unlike their ancestors "who delighted in the building of hospitals and almshouses for the poor."\textsuperscript{139}

A single span of ancient construction linked the ward of Southwark to the main City north of the Thames. Though technically a ward of the City, Southwark functioned almost as if it was a disconnected suburb. In 1550, Edward VI granted full possession to the City of London. This was the culmination of a series of charters granted by Edward III (1327), Henry IV (1406), Henry VI (1444), and Edward IV (1462) which settled full control of the precincts of Southwark on the municipality. The practical enforcement of such jurisdiction was not as easily affected.\textsuperscript{140} It was densely packed in population and hugged the river for two miles on

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{139} Stow, ii, p. 81-87. Yet, according to W.K. Jordan, Stow's estimation of his contemporaries is a bit too severe (Jordan, Philanthropy..., p. 18).
\item \textsuperscript{140} Johnson, pp. 387-406.
\end{itemize}
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either side of the bridge. Tenements lined the river upstream in the section known as Bankside, alleys and lanes ran upwards from the bank downstream. The borough was a place of churches, five in number, and prisons, but of primary importance, it was a residence community; homes, temporary and permanent, housed those who worked in the mother City, just across the Thames. Southwark had numerous inns; the Spurr, Christopher, Bull, Queenes Head, Tabarde, George, Hart, and the King's Head were just a few of the resting places where important people, from all over England, stayed while in London for Parliament or other vital business.

This ward was also the site of many beautiful homes and residences. The Bishops of Winchester and Rochester had town houses there. After the dissolution, the Earl of Sussex had transformed the Abbey of Bermondsey to a home of great distinction. Suffolk House was a magnificent structure, built by the grandfather of Lady Jane Grey, given by Mary

142 Hodges, p. 91.
143 Stow, ii, pp. 58, 67.
144 Brett-James, p. 56.
145 Stow, ii, p. 60.
146 Stephenson, p. 272.
Tudor as spoils to the Archbishop of York to make up for her confiscation of Whitehall (York House) and eventually sold to make room for rows of cottages for beggars and others of the lower classes.\footnote{147}{See Map IV. Stow, ii, p. 60.}

To the southwest of London lay the suburb of Westminster. Many years before it had been absorbed into the City of London and lost its distinction as a separate entity,\footnote{148}{Loftie, p. 66.} Westminster and its larger neighbor enjoyed a closeness unparalleled among the urban centers of England.\footnote{149}{Walter Besant, Westminster (London: Chatto and Windus, 1897), p. 228.} Though the national seat of government was actually found in the smaller township, it was difficult to dissociate her from the immense community just downstream.

The countryside opened only slightly as the traveller proceeded west from the City and then south along the Strand as it paralleled the river. One never got the impression of leaving one populated area before reaching the other. Many of the houses were homes of the wealthy or well-connected, but the streets also bore their share of low-income tenements.\footnote{150}{Stow, i, p.} Along the river, on the south side of the Strand, lay a chain of large, impressive town houses. Originally,
these were Bishops' residences, but with the dissolution of the monasteries they became homes of prominent laymen or royal retainers.151 The first was Exeter House, which became, successively, Paget, Leicester and finally, Essex House with its name changing to reflect each aristocratic occupant.152 Milford Lane, running down to the Thames was filled with houses of ill-repute relying on the town government's averted gaze to be able to operate.153 Next along the river was Arundel House, then Somerset House and then the Savoy Palace. This last was a hospital and house for the indigent and destitute.154

North of the Strand, Drury Lane stretched westward into the fields. Along its open concourse were inns and houses for "gentlemen and men of honor."155 South along the river toward the Royal precincts the Palace of Whitehall and the great abbey which dominated the skyline.156 Here was the

151 Loftie, pp. 68-85.
152 Irvine, p. 248.
153 Those houses south of the Strand but east of Ivy Lane along the Thames were actually a part of the Liberty of the Duchy of Lancaster. Brett-James, p. 61-62.
155 Brett-James, p. 56.
156 Stow, ii, p. 97-102.
seat of power and the focus of national attention but as Mary Tudor realized, to her chagrin,157 should these have been withdrawn, London would have gone on dominating the nation's economic, social and political life and exerting an unequalled influence on the commerce and imagination of England.

London, in the seventeenth century, was a filled with restless, aggressive people; a metropolis unequalled in all the land. As the destination of thousands of new residents and the center of the nation's focus, the City was undergoing pangs of social discomfort associated with rapid growth and economic expansion. The presence of so great a press of population created a social maelstrom that helped create the atmosphere in which Revolution, if not inevitable was clearly possible.

157 See page one.
Chapter Two

The Demography of London

in the

Seventeenth Century

Prior to the reign of the Tudors the area surrounded by the medieval walls of London was sufficient to contain the population of the City. Expansion occurred all around the walls, but this growth had not been large. With the coming of peace at the end of the Retainer Wars and the accession of Henry VII the first signs of major growth appeared in the City. As the sixteenth century passed, observers began to notice a growth in urban congestion and, had not the dissolution of the monasteries released large tracts of City land for development, this problem might have become more severe. One area that was marked for significant growth of population was Southwark; it was of such strategic importance that the City authorities moved to make


2 Pearl, p. 10.
it the twenty-sixth ward during the reign of Edward VI.  

This expansion was rapid and indiscriminate. John Stow lamented the consequences of this growth. In the middle of a description of the growth of the City northward into precincts formerly occupied by the monastic order of St. Mary Spital, Stow condemns the disappearance of pleasant lovely fields, places for walking and other forms of recreation. These had given way to garden houses and small cottages. Fields on either side were turned into garden plots, tenteryards, and bowling alleys. In the east wards, small tenements were being raised in place of open fields and elm groves to house those involved in overseas trade. Stepney, Deptford, and Radcliffe were filling up with seamen and their dependents.

Because the growth was unplanned, these areas were to later become great slums. By the Restoration, legal restrictions on the length of leases created a population in flux. Stepney, for instance, refused to allow copyholders to make leases for longer than thirty-one years. Thus, the building that did take place was of cheap, shoddy construction and

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4 Tenteryards were plots used for drying and shaping of cloth.

5 Stow, i, p. 127.

6 Brett-James, pp. 196-197.
attracted large numbers of transient dwellers. This, in turn, created the environment for the growth of disease and disorder. The plague of 1665 took its greatest toll in that district.  

West of the City the aristocracy and upscale businessmen were building commodious, brick veneered town houses arranged in spacious squares designed by or under the guidance of Inigo Jones. Covent Garden, Lincoln's Inn Fields, Long Acre and Great Queen Street were planned and constructed in the early seventeenth century. At the same time the wealthy were constructing the new districts, slums were developing hard on their heels. The Fleet River, one of three rivers flowing through the City, had, by the time it reached the western suburbs, become little more than an open sewer. In the course of its journey to the Thames, the Fleet contaminated the parishes on its banks. St. Brides's, St. Sepulchre's, and St. Giles', Cripplegate, were already scarred with disease infested slums. The parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields was said to be the place from which the great plague of 1665 was to have started. Though the precincts of Westminster were still mostly marshlands, the City was ex-

7 Stryke, iv, p. 87.
8 Howes, p. 1048.
panding quickly in its direction chiefly with the homes of the well-to-do.  

Most authorities agree that the growth of London's population was of an orderly nature, but they would also doubt that accurate estimates of the size of this growth are possible to secure. No census was taken until 1801 and though various estimates have been made, usually they were revealed to be mere guesses. The Bills of Mortality are a possible source but are less valuable than they could be because they make no record of Roman Catholics or non-conformists. Some contemporaries as well as later writers calculated that the population had nearly doubled in the first sixty years of the seventeenth century, rising from a quarter of a million at the beginning of the century to nearly half a million at the Restoration. These figures were probably exaggerated. Gregory King, an early demographer, calculated a generation later, at the end of the century, that Greater London's population was around half a million. This figure, according to modern scholars, should be reduced by about one fifth. The disputes about accurate figures

10 Pearl, p. 13.
11 Brett-James, p. 493.
12 Pearl, p. 24.
are useful and interesting but can not dim in any way the fact of London's overwhelming impact on national life. The predominance of the metropolis and its phenomenal growth are not in doubt. It was simply in a class of its own. For instance, in 1695, at the time of King's survey, Norwich, which had long contested with Bristol the honor of being the second City of the kingdom, is believed to have had about 29,000 inhabitants, and Bristol, 20,000.\textsuperscript{14}

The territory made available by the dissolution of the monasteries did not reach capa until early in the reign of Elizabeth\textsuperscript{15} and from that time the inexorable growth of City, liberty, and suburb was a source of enormous consternation to the town fathers. They rightly feared that the press of population increased the possibility of famine, plague, and disorder and expended great energy in trying to control this growth, an effort that was, at times, draconian but, in the end, generally unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{16}

The City's problems were complicated by the fact that much of this explosive growth occurred in areas not under the direct control of the City government.\textsuperscript{17} The nearly ex-


\textsuperscript{15} Davies, "Transformation..., p. 293.

\textsuperscript{16} Brett-James, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{17} Pearl, p. 14.
clusive control of business by the livery companies plus high City taxes tended to drive domestic industry into the suburbs. The leather tanners moved south into Lambeth and Southwark. Sugar-refining and glassmaking moved out to Stepney, dye works developed to the north and east, copper and brass mills in Isleworth, shipbuilding at Deptford, brewing in Clerkenwell and brick and tile makers also in the Islington area.\textsuperscript{18}

These transplanted industrial employers tended to attract workers who joined the population already living in the district. This influx brought with it much social evil: famine, overcrowding, rack-renting and plague which would frequently lead to riot which could not always be prevented from spilling over into the City.\textsuperscript{19} This spillage was primarily because the suburbs were not adept at handling their poor population. Whereas the City had made great strides in this area, the suburbs were ill-equipped to deal with the mounting social problems associated with the poor and indigent people in their midst.\textsuperscript{20}

Over the years the City had developed methods for


\textsuperscript{20} Leonard, pp. 97-99
dealing with the vagrant poor. Marshals would watch the gates from dawn to dusk to prevent beggars from coming in. Sick beggars were taken to St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's Hospitals. The children of beggars were taken to Christ's Hospital, sturdy beggars to Bridewell to be set to work, and lunatics sent to Bedlam.21 Trained Bands could suppress riots in the City but, unfortunately, the police system in the suburbs was inadequate for this work. The City's system of poor relief was more highly organized. Shipments of coal were brought in from Newcastle by the municipal government and resold to the poor at subsidized prices22 and livery companies were instructed to store up corn to be sold cheaply during times of shortage.23 Thus, the City fathers regarded the growth of the population in the suburbs with foreboding, knowing no matter how well they handled the problem of the City poor they were almost helpless to do the same for their close neighbors.

The rapid growth of the suburbs was accompanied by an enormous increase in the number of cheap, shoddy dwellings. Some of these were newly constructed buildings, the result of a search in which

21 Strype, vi, pp. 431-433.

22 Overall, p. 84.

every man seeketh out places, highways, lanes and overt corners to build upon, if it be but sheds, cottages, and small tenements for people to lodge in... These sort of covetous builders exact great rent, and daily do increase them in so much that a poor handicraftsman is not able by his painful labor to pay the rent of a small tenement and feed his family. 24

John Stow gives many examples of the conversion of mansions, houses and palaces into tenements and pleasure gardens, amongst them Oxford Place, Worcester Place and the Garland in Little Eastcheap. 25

At first the City sought to deal with this growth by edict. It persuaded the Privy Council to issue orders prohibiting the erection of any new house or tenement on sites vacant within living memory and prohibited any increase in the number of families already inhabiting houses. 26 As drastic as this may seem, it may have made matters worse. For one thing, it permitted only the patching up of old buildings which might have otherwise been rebuilt in healthier surroundings. 27 In addition, since the Crown refused

24 Anonymous, 'A brief Discoverie of the great pur- presture of newe Buyldinges neere to the Cittie with the meanes how to restraine the same...', Landowne MSS. 160, fol.90. Printed in, Archaeologia 1831, XXIII, pp. 121-129.

25 Stow, i, p. 149.


27 Pearl, p. 19.
the Lord Mayor and City officials jurisdiction in the sub-
urbs, the enforcement of this Proclamation was almost impos-
sible. This royal policy became a matter of tension between
the Crown and the City because it gradually evolved, espe-
cially under James I, into a means of increasing royal re-
venue. This prohibition was supposed to apply to rich and
poor alike but James developed a system of "compounding" or
assessing fines which would allow wealthier subjects to pay
a certain amount and be exempted from the restriction. The
policy of compounding continued to be a source of grievance
between the City and the Crown and was not relieved until
the Civil War.28

The poor crushed together in their tenements and bru-
talized by the environment, were, for these reasons, also
subject to unifying factors which exposed them to manipula-
tion by clever agitators. Riot and sedition were common and
huge crowds could be swept along into an emotional frenzy.29
The presence of many Catholics was both a source of and
cause for discontent. Catholics themselves were disaffected
by the religious shift in the land and ardent Protestants,
fearful of "popish intrigue" 30 poured out their resentment

28 Ibid., pp. 19-20.
29 Smith, p. 154.
30 Robin Clifton, "Fear of Popery," The Origins of the
English Civil War, edited by Conrad Russell (New York:
on their Catholic neighbors. Many of these Catholics were tradesmen and their presence was thought to mean a loss of jobs for native Englishmen. To these normal economic fears and rivalries was the added fear that these Catholics were disloyal to the Crown. They were distrusted as if they were a Fifth Column ready to spring up and strike a blow against English liberty.\textsuperscript{31}

To all this social ferment in the metropolitan area was added the catalyst of religious agitation. While it is not the purpose of this paper to examine the sources and extent of religious discontent, it would be a mistake to fail to indicate that certain of the suburbs and some of the liberties began to earn the reputation for being centers of Puritanism. This was perhaps due to the fact that the magistrates of these areas, being not so well-organized, were less aggressive in reporting instances of Puritan preaching to the Privy Council. Stepney, Blackfriars, Whitefriars and Southwark were all centers of Puritanism.\textsuperscript{32}

This curious blend of religious radicals living side by side

\textsuperscript{31} Pearl, pp. 38-39.

\textsuperscript{32} Southwark is an excellent example of the close proximity in which disorder and Puritan religious agitation existed. In that district, the tanners, glovers and brewery workers were notorious for lawlessness activity. They joined with the salors of Bermondsey in May, 1640 in a great demonstration against Archbishop Laud (see Chapter Four). John Rushworth, \textit{Historical Collections of Private Passages of State, Weighty Matters in Law, and Remarkable Proceedings} (London: D. Browne Printers, 1721-1722), iii, p. 1173.
side with social malcontents served, in the years following 1640 to threaten the peace of the City. The leaders of the Puritan faction began to congregate in homes near each other in the suburbs. John Pym lived in Grey's Inn Lane and later Chelsea. Oliver Cromwell took up residence in Holborn as did Robert Grenville, the Second Lord Brooke. Hackney was the home of Lady Mary Vere and the seat of a Puritan living. In Westminster Lord Saye took a home near Sir Richard Manly not far from Hampden House home of John Hampden and his mother Elizabeth. Covent Gardens was the home of the Bedford family and in the 1640s of the younger Sir Henry Vane.

Thus, the City faced an almost intractable administrative problem. Its officers were amateurs, full-time bus-

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36 Brett-James, p. 42.

37 Pearl, p. 42.
inessmen drafted, sometimes against their better judgment, for civic duty. To the ordinary demands of working were added the increasingly serious problem of governing a metropolis seething with discontent. They were prevented from exercising jurisdiction in the outlying districts by a jealous monarch, but, at the same time, reluctant to seek the absorption of the suburbs due to the administrative workload it would mean. These leaders knew that trade would flourish only under stable conditions. This required a strong municipal government but, increasingly, they were faced with a powerful, aggressive Puritan opposition, capable and willing to generate social upheaval to further their goals. The torment of the City's elite was even more intense because their opponents were able to operate in the liberties and suburbs, just beyond control.

All during the 1620s and 1630s, Charles refused to yield the power the City required effectively govern and surrendered it only when it was too late. Thus, City and Crown were driven apart; in 1641 and 1642, when they needed each other, the Privy Council and the royalist aldermanic majority, who shared so much social and political commonality, stumbled toward destruction without efficient and unified governmental institutions at their disposal. Instead, the municipal structure, a weakened institution susceptible to outside manipulation, was seized by popular
action and turned against them.
Chapter Three

The Constitution
of the
City of London

The government of London, as it evolved over the centuries, was an intricate mechanism designed to preserve the privileges of the wealthy and well-connected. London was a artfully disguised commercial oligarchy. Whereas in the rest of the nation, one's place in society was determined largely by blood and the circumstances of birth, position and power in London could be attained, theoretically at least, by talent and hard work. To have an aristocratic name in seventeenth century London was certainly not valueless but real power in the City flowed from wealth and commercial prowess. The structure of the City was arranged so as to maintain the authority of those who had risen to control the main mercantile organs of the City, the livery companies. This "constitution" was not well defined either in theory or practice and the form of the constitution was not of universal interest. To those most involved in the daily working of the City government the issue was practicality not theory. When faced with problems, they adopted means and methods that best suited their immediate purposes.
The executive government and legislature of the City of London in the seventeenth century was organized into three main Courts or Councils. The Court of Lord Mayor and Aldermen served as the executive branch of government. The Court of Common Council formed the legislative arm. The Court of Common Hall, in theory at least, acted as the voice of the people as it elected the members of the other two bodies.¹

The Court of Common Hall was the largest and most broadly based of the assemblies of the City. Its membership in the mid-seventeenth century was made up of approximately 4000 liverymen.² With the expansion of the number of guilds in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, thereby including numbers of craftsmen in the less important trades, Common Hall was somewhat more representative than before; this was reflected in its common designation, until the eighteenth century, the "Congregation."³

Unfortunately, the voting system in the Common Hall was subject to abuse. The body was rarely polled during voting and, thus, it was possible for ineligible voters to cast ballots. Clarendon, writing of the year 1643, said that the "meanest person(s)" were let into the meeting because unless

¹ Pearl, p. 49.
³ Pearl, p. 50.
there was a disputed election, one in which a poll was demanded by the electors, there was no way of discerning who was present.⁴ On those occasions when a poll was requested, the lists were checked according to the method demanded by the rules and the Common Sergeant was to eject those not possessing the right to vote.⁵ Apparently only on rare occasions were attempts made to enforce this requirement and, frequently, illegitimate voters remained and participated. Thus, at times of great crisis, Common Hall could become a forum for a much wider body of opinion than its membership suggests.

As indicated, the function of Common Hall was electoral in nature. It made nominations to the Court of Aldermen for several key municipal posts. The most important of these posts was that of Lord Mayor. His was the most important executive office with which the City could honor one of its citizens.⁶ Common Hall would send up two nominations to the Court of the Alderman. Custom dictated that one of these be the senior ranking Alderman behind the incumbent Mayor. This


⁶ Manley, p. 3.
man would then be automatically elected. On September 29th of each year the Sheriff would rehearse the procedure before the Common Hall, the Recorder would remind them of the precedents and customs. After the nomination the sheriff would carry the nominations to the Aldermen and return with the result, requiring the liverymen of the Common Hall to affirm the election as a free one. The City Chamberlain, two Bridgemasters, Aleconners and Auditors of Accounts were chosen on June 24th in the same manner as the Lord Mayor. They were chosen by the Aldermen from four nominations sent up by Common Hall.

Of the two Sheriffs of London one was nominated by the Mayor, the other by the Common Hall. The Mayor summoned and dissolved Hall meetings but the Sheriff conducted the proceedings during the election of City-wide offices. This

7 Stow, ii, p. 652.
8 Irvine, pp. 244-245.
9 "An examiner or inspector of ale." Four of them are chosen annually by the common-hall;" The office evidently fell in to disuse because, by Samuel Johnson's time (1755), "whatever might be their use formally, their places (were) regarded only as sinecures for decayed citizens" ("Aleconner," OED, Volume "A," p. 213).
10 Pearl, p. 51.
12 Stow, ii, p. 651.
control of the mechanism of the Hall was a source of great friction between the Aldermen and the liverymen. The latter saw the Mayor using this power to suppress their legitimate grievances and, in the years just before civil war, reacted against this repression. As we shall see, the Puritan leadership in parliament manipulated this resentment in the Common Hall to whip up resistance to the Mayor and other royalist Aldermen.\textsuperscript{13} There, instead of in the more ridgedly controlled Common Council, they began their campaign to shift the City away from its support for the Crown.\textsuperscript{14}

In addition to the officers already mentioned, Common Hall, early in the sixteenth century, began electing the four City members of Parliament. Up to that point, the Aldermen and Common Hall would each submit two candidates to the Common Council for confirmation. Now, the Common Hall controlled this election completely, making the choice of the London representatives far more susceptible to popular influence.\textsuperscript{15}

During the crisis of 1641 and 1642 this Court began to assume deliberative functions and, as a result, the power of the Common Hall began to grow. Most often, the issue leading

\textsuperscript{13} Mildmay, pp. 15-16.

\textsuperscript{14} Pearl, p. 52.

to this gradual shift in power was money.\textsuperscript{16} For instance, Common Hall was summoned in January 1641 to debate the subject of a City loan to Parliament; this occurred again in November and December of that year in response to a need for credit to suppress the Irish Rebellion.\textsuperscript{17} Prevailing in these struggles its members resolved to take on more power and that same year Common Hall claimed the right to elect both sheriffs and, in 1642, the Court gained its own Journal; previously its meeting had been recorded together with the Council.\textsuperscript{18}

The next level of government in the City was the Court of Common Council. This was a smaller body with representatives drawn from all over London whose members were elected each year at the wardmote, the annual meeting of all the householders and males over the age of 15 in each ward. At this assembly the ward's officers (clerk, beadles, constables and the inquest) were elected. A special election, with only the freemen voting, nominated the Alderman and selected Common Council representatives.\textsuperscript{19} Each ward was divided into precincts which did not always exactly match the boundary of

\textsuperscript{16} Irvine, pp. 242-243.


\textsuperscript{18} Pearl, p. 53.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{The Corporation of London}, p. 29.
the local church parish, but many times the vestry of nearest parish assumed authority in the precinct, selecting the ward officers and Common Council members before the wardmote ever met by simply declaring them elected.\textsuperscript{20} This type of informal arrangement created confusion and, as the century progressed, presented a situation ripe for exploitation. During the years following the Restoration, an attempt was made to suppress the popular and sometimes stormy wardmote meetings. The Aldermen, his deputy and a few prominent citizens simply selected the common councilmen on their own.\textsuperscript{21}

Membership in the Common Council was traditionally reserved to prominent liverymen who held office for life or until elected to higher office.\textsuperscript{22} In London's early history, each Aldermen would select a number of these "better" men and bring them periodically to the Guildhall to discuss important community affairs. This gradually evolved into the powerful body that rose to challenge the power structure in the 1640s. Nevertheless, the Aldermen continued to have strong influence over the Council until well into the seven-


\textsuperscript{21} Pearl, p. 55 and p.56 n.42.

\textsuperscript{22} Mildmay, p. 52.
teenth century. 23

As it evolved, the Council began to see itself as a brake on the financial pretensions of the Aldermen. They reserved the right to pass judgment on municipal assessments such as royal loans and established a committee to supervise transactions involving City property. 24 Beginning in 1592, any City property to be sold had to be transferred in the presence of this committee, four aldermen and six men elected from the Common Council. 25 Over the years this Lands Committee came to be the most important committee in the City government. Often it was authorized to act in place of the entire Council as well as to review important issues prior to debate. It was made up of the most prominent and wealthy members of the Court and tended at times to usurp the parent body's functions. 26

The Lord Mayor and Aldermen were members of the Common Council and, by their mere presence, exercised great power over its deliberations. On matters of importance they voted separately and could veto any by-law passed by the coun-

23 The Corporation of London, pp. 29, 23, 49.


26 Pearl, pp. 56-57.
This meant that only the Bills agreed to by the Mayor and Aldermen were considered. Until 1642, disputed elections to the Council were resolved by the Aldermen and it was not until that year that the Council could discuss any matter without receiving permission from the Aldermen. The Lord Mayor was the only official who could convene and dissolve Common Council and, during the years of personal rule, he did so only five or six times a year at the most. At times, on highly sensitive matters, the Mayor would refuse to even call the Council. Instead, a hybrid assembly, made up of the Mayor, Aldermen and certain carefully selected wealthy commoners and liverymen would meet in its stead. The size of the Council varied over the years from about 100 during the reign of Richard II, to 187 under Edward VI, to 196 at the time of Stow's Survey, and to 237 in 1646.

The Alderman's Court was the most powerful of the three

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27 Guildhall Record Office, Small MS, Box 4, number 3, Pearl, p. 57.


29 Pearl, p. 58.


31 Guildhall Record Office, MS 169:9, Pearl, p. 56.
levels of City government. This was, in part, due to the informal arrangement whereby members were selected by the Court itself. Officially, they were chosen from nominations made by the wards. Names were supposed to be submitted by freemen meeting in the wardmote with the Lord Mayor presiding, but, since, by the seventeenth century, the wardmote was virtually impotent, the ward's Common Councilmen were choosing the Alderman nominees.\textsuperscript{32} The Aldermanic Bench would, in turn, chose the one they wanted from that list, but, if the nominations were unsuitable it could reject them all. If three sets of nominees were unacceptable, the Aldermen could chose their own candidate.\textsuperscript{33} Vacancies were filled by the Lord Mayor and, if a Alderman proved himself unworthy, the Court could and did depose him, override the wardmote, and install its own choice.\textsuperscript{34}

Personal qualifications were of primary importance. Aldermen had to be native born freemen, sons of Englishmen, who served in their office for life. While there were no residency requirements, they traditionally had to be livery members of one of the 12 great livery companies, although this was relaxed in the seventeenth century. Aldermen had to

\textsuperscript{32} Strype, iv, p. 156.


\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
possess property worth £10000. Those who wished to avoid the office faced large fines for non-service.\textsuperscript{35} In addition to the honor that accompanied the office, there were financial advantages. Members of the Court enjoyed the right to wardship of orphan's estates, borrow large sums of City funds at minimum rates of interest,\textsuperscript{36f} and lease and sublease City property which many did, securing a handsome profit.\textsuperscript{37}

While they enjoyed much influence in the Royal Court and were often given the chance to secure the lease of customs farms, patents and monopolies, this proximity to the throne had a downside as well; on more than a few occasions the Privy Council pressed the Aldermen to make generous and often unsecured loans to the King, generate enthusiasm for the Crown and execute unpopular Royal edicts. The duties of Alderman were also time consuming; these generally successful merchants did not always have the necessary time needed to oversee their businesses. In addition, the requirements of entertaining also meant large expenses.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{35} Beavan, ii, p. 322.

\textsuperscript{36} In the financial crisis of 1640-1641 it was discovered that there were large outstanding debts owed to the City Chamber. An investigation determined that the chief debtors were the Aldermen themselves. When the decision was made to call in the loans several Aldermen, including Henry Garway and Edward Bromfield, were placed in severe financial straits. Pearl, p. 338.

\textsuperscript{37} Pearl, p. 62.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p. 62.
As a self-perpetuating, oligarchic body with extensive judicial and executive functions, the Court of Aldermen was involved in many areas of municipal life. It directed the care of City orphans, administered the licensing of ale-houses, supervised the training of apprentices, approved of guild ordinances, managed minor's estates, and, above all, bore responsibility for keeping order in the City.\textsuperscript{39} The Aldermen had petitional access to the throne and through the Sheriffs could seek redress in the House of Commons.\textsuperscript{40}

This Court exercised control over a large number of patronage positions. By the Civil War there were 140 offices which were controlled by the Lord Mayor and the Aldermen. Despite the growing revulsion to the practice, these offices were typically sold to supporters of Aldermen, sometimes by means of reversion being allowed to pass from father to son.\textsuperscript{41} The King paid great attention to these offices, putting considerable pressure on the Court to secure appointments for his favorites and seeking the creation of new offices when the present ones were already filled.\textsuperscript{42} As one

\textsuperscript{39} Henry Calthrop, \textit{The Reports of speciall cases touching severall customs and liberties of the City of London} (London: Printed for Abel Roper, 1655), p. 153.

\textsuperscript{40} Pearl, p. 61.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{List of By-laws...}, no. 194.

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1635}, vol. 289/2, 302/121, 299/80. Pearl, p. 61-62.
can readily see, the system tended to establish a large corps of persons directly dependent on the Lord Mayor and the Aldermen and highly resistant to any change in the status quo.

The principal executive officers of the City were the Lord Mayor, the Sheriffs, the City Chamberlain, the Recorder, and the Remembrancer of which the most important was the Lord Mayor. James Howell, writing late in the Protectorate, compared the Lord Mayor to analogous municipal figures throughout Europe and found the others wanting.

... concerning the magnificence, gravity and state of the chief magistrate, neither the Praetor of Rome or the Prefect of Milan, neither the Proctors of St. Mark in Venice or their Podestas in other cities, neither the Provost of Paris or the Margrave of Amsterdam, can compare with the Lord Mayor.

The office ranked next to membership on the Privy Council in a nation that put great emphasis on status; because of this the Lord Mayor was called on for important ceremonial duties, such as helping entertain distinguished foreign visitors.

As chief executive he controlled the meetings of the Common Council and Court of Aldermen and, by privilege, could choose one of the City's Sheriffs. So powerful was the Lord Mayor that in the years approaching and during the

43 Harrison, Description..., p. 132.
44 Howell, p. 395.
Civil War, Pearl notes that the "policy of the City varied from one year to the next, according to the opinions of the Alderman who held the mayoralty."\(^{45}\) The Lord Mayor had large financial advantages which more than offset his expenses. He appointed City bureaucrats and received a gratuity equal to 80% of the official's first year salary. The Lord Mayor received a portion of the profits from rent farms and market leases, he could establish his family in lucrative City positions, and he and his wife had the right to sell the "freedom" or citizenship of the City to four people during his year of service. The Webbs estimate that in 1697 the profits of the Mayor's office amounted to L3527 per year.\(^{46}\)

Not so lucrative was the position of Sheriff; the financial requirements of the office were quite taxing. It usually cost L3000 to hold the shrievalty for a year and sheriffs were given very little with which to meet this expense. Particularly unpleasant was the requirement that Sheriffs entertain the Aldermen on a regular basis.\(^{47}\) Shrieval duties were both judicial and executive with the Sheriffs acting as judges but also executing the decrees of the Lord Mayor and the King; in the case of the latter an in-

\(^{45}\) Pearl, p. 63.

\(^{46}\) Webb, p. 673.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., p. 680.
creasingly distasteful task in the 1630s.\textsuperscript{48} They empaneled juries and presented petitions of Common Council and the Court of Aldermen to the House of Commons. Because of the demands of time, the loss of reputation and the absence of income offsetting expenses, citizens were increasingly hesitant to take the office and paid heavy fines in order to avoid it. So desperate was the City to secure Sheriffs that in 1592 it began offering a bounty of £100 to citizens who would take the office.\textsuperscript{49}

London's Chamberlain was the City treasurer. He served for life without official compensation but profited by having the City's cash accounts at his disposal. He also supervised the estates of orphans and acted as administrative judge in apprenticeship disputes.\textsuperscript{50}

The Recorder was the City government's chief lawyer and, therefore, the Mayor's legal advisor. Elected for life, the Recorder represented the City before the Privy Council and the king.\textsuperscript{51} Because of these duties the Crown usually pressed for the appointment of a royal courtier or partisan

\textsuperscript{48} W. Bohun, \textit{Privilegia Londinis} (London: Printed for D. Browne, etc., 1723), pp. 51-54.
\textsuperscript{49} Pearl, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{50} Strype, v, p., 162.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 159.
and, for the most part, got its wish.52

Assistant to the Recorder and personal attendant to the Lord Mayor, the Remembrancer's main work was to be an agent of the City at the Royal Court. Thomas Wiseman served in this capacity from 1638-1642, but when the party allied with the Puritan majority in the House of Commons assumed power in the City in 1642 it dismissed Wiseman and abolished the post as expensive and unnecessary. An official lobbyist was hardly essential when the King, with whom he was to treat, was making war on Parliament and the City in which it met.53

The constitution of the City of London militated against social upheaval and political manipulation. Every level of government was designed to maintain the power of the ruling oligarchy. Because the Lord Mayor and Aldermen controlled the Common Council and to a lesser degree, the Common Hall, any challenge to their rule was checked. For years the Puritan leadership met with defeat and rejection in the City. But, once they were able to orchestrate popular sentiment, they took over the government of the City. Having prevailed, it was equally hard to dislodge them or prevent them from using the City and its resources in the service of Parliament.

52 Remembrancia, viii, p. 21; iv, p. 49; v, pp. 95, 97, 99. Pearl, p. 66.

53 Ibid., vi, p. 163.
The City of London and the English monarchy were closely tied by geographical proximity but more than that chief personalities in each institution were united by commonly held views of the world. Both the king and the City fathers had a vested interest in supporting the oligarchic system that sustained their own power. The monarchy had granted monopoly rights of external commerce to the trading companies whose base of operations was in London. The City supplied the Crown with troops in times of crisis and merchant ships during war. The king frequently prevailed on the City to appoint his retainers, friends and supporters to its lucrative offices.\(^1\) The Recorder and Remembrancer, as we have seen, were nearly always the nominees of the Crown,\(^2\) and regularly the king appointed the Recorder as Speaker of

\(^1\) Pearl, p. 70.

\(^2\) In 1631, the King recommended Edward Littleton to be City Recorder. In 1635, Henry Calthorpe was the royal nominee. Calthorpe was replaced by Thomas Gardiner, later that year when the former was assigned to a new position by Charles. Remembrancia, viii, pp. 87, 174, 177.
the House of Commons. It was the testing grounds for new fiscal measures and administrative techniques. Before the Crown would impose them on the rest of the country it would try them on the nation's premier City. Municipal officials sat on royal commissions and served in embassies abroad. The Lord Mayor regularly entertained foreign dignitaries and led the City in celebrating royal anniversaries.

The need for close collaboration between City and Crown should have been obvious; neither needed to take the other for granted, yet during years prior to the English Civil War the monarchy made the serious mistake of doing just that. Under the second of the Stuarts, the Crown pursued a policy of exploitation so blatant and so callous to London's sensibilities that it can only be called reckless. The Earl of Clarendon, as Edward Hyde during the years prior to the war, was a frequent critic of the monarch he was to later raise to beatific dimensions, considered Charles' neglectful treatment of the City irresponsible. He believed the King foolishly treated London as a "Common Stock (considered) not easily to be exhausted, and as a body not to be grieved by ordinary acts of injustice." 

The years leading up to the election of a Lord Mayor

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3 Pearl, p. 71.

4 Irvine, p. 130.

5 Clarendon, History, i, p.499.
truly hostile to the King witnessed a sorted history of misuse and manipulation. Charles laid excessive requirements on the City government to help finance and manage the nation during his period of personal rule. It is indeed remarkable that, despite years of unprecedented demands, assaults on its privileges, and flagrant abuses, the City only reluctantly drew itself up to oppose the King's demands for loans in 1639 and 1640 and only then on technical grounds; the loans were considered a bad risk. Why did the ruling class of the City demonstrate such powerful reluctance to stand up to the king? How is it that the campaign of the parliamentary Puritans to snatch the City government from the hands of the King's unequivocal supporters took so long to suc-

6 Irvine, p. 208.

7 For the purpose of this discussion, the term parliamentary Puritans is a general reference, originating with Valerie Pearl, and refers to "all those citizens who supported the parliamentary opposition from 1625 until the outbreak of war. She developed the concept because other terms were imprecise. "Puritan" is not a useful designation because of its heavy religious overtones. Many people who supported the parliamentary opposition did so for political reasons. Some were Puritan in the religious sense some were not (Pearl, pp. 5-6). These parliamentary Puritans were those denounced as the "Puritan faction" and were far more radical than many members who, while opposing the king on this issue or that, were basically loyal to the monarchy. This last group found itself in the minority of the Long Parliament and increasingly offended by the extreme posture and tactics of those who generally followed the lead of John Pym. Since the scope of this paper does not extend beyond 1642, it will not examine the complex arguments over the intricate sub-divisions of that parliamentary majority those which developed in the wake of Pym's death.
ceed? In the late 1630s and early 1640s, London was the scene of a political revolution no less intense and no less vital than that which was to follow. In many ways, the City was a harbinger of things to come. The study of this struggle can give a measure of understanding for the wider conflict that, in a few years, was to engulf the nation as a whole.

Charles I and the City of London

Part One: 1626–1638

At the beginning of his reign, the City of London was well-disposed toward the King. He requested and received an initial loan of £60000 and, in return, guaranteed payment of principal and interest on that note and the those secured by his father. This 'honeymoon' was of short duration, however, and soon relations between Crown and City began to sour. Small wonder as Charles refused to pay the interest.⁸ In June 1626 London turned down a request by the king for an advance of an additional £100,000. This refusal came at a time the Crown was enduring the bitter aftermath of the failed Cadiz expedition, although the City fathers were less concerned about foreign disgrace than they were about secu-

rity of the loan.9 London was in no position to take funds from general revenue or the restricted accounts and was also reluctant to pledge its bond for repayment unless the guarantee was absolute. As all too often was the case, should the Crown default, the City was liable in any suit by creditors. However, the King was desperate; he treated with them, this time on a new set of terms.10 In exchange for a new loan (L120,000) and re-payment for old paper (L160,000), the City received a large grant of Crown lands.11 When this arrangement, later known as the 'Royal Contract,' became public knowledge in December, 1627, there was anger and dismay among the parliamentary Puritans and their allies.

For some time they had been been agitating for a new Parliament to circumvent the Crown's extra-parliamentary revenue schemes. In the autumn of 1626 the nation had been roused to resistance by the government's attempt to raise a forced loan whose title, the Loan of Five Subsidies, was not-too-skillfully disguised attempt by Charles conduct


11 Journal of the Common Council, 34, fol. 80v.
national business without reference to Parliament. The five knights whose incarceration for refusing to pay gave rise to one of the most celebrated constitutional struggles of Charles' reign had comrades in the City. Seamen living in the eastern suburbs of Wapping, Ratcliffe and Limehouse, while declaring their willingness to contribute to a parliamentary subsidy, refused to have anything to do with a forced loan.

This national resentment coupled with embarrassment over military setbacks and the general conviction that Buckingham's policies were incompetent had generated great public protest and a Parliament was seen as the natural forum to address these issues. In the wake of the Royal Contract, parliamentary Puritans feared the chances of a summons were remote but their fears were misplaced. Their judgment that the King was reluctant to call any Parliament at anytime was well-founded, but they had not accounted for the enormity of his financial requirements; charles was insatiable. Only six weeks after the Royal Contract was in place and the money from it had begun to flow, he was forced to

13 Gardiner, vi, pp. 143-144.
14 Sharpe, ii, pp. 100-101.
When the members bestirred themselves to Westminster in the winter of 1628, the Royal Contract was one of the first controversial issues. This transaction came under intense fire in the Commons. The House was incensed that London should offer the King succor before he had agreed to summon Parliament. The opposition, challenging his policies, had hoped to use this meeting to press its case. Many members also were grieved that the City magistrates should make a regular habit of offering only token resistance to Royal financial demands. For instance, two years before, the Crown required that the City produce twenty ships, fitted out and victualed, to fight the French. This measure, similar in theory to those which later convulsed the nation during the great "Ship Money" controversy, originated in the Privy Council. The decree met stiff resistance among the citizens of London who regarded the aldermanic rush to comply a bit unseemly. The City fathers could raise little or no enthusiasm for the cause and eventually they were forced to

15 Gardiner, vi, p. 226.


17 Williams, i, p. 130.
dip into City reserves to build the ships.18

It was not only in Parliament that the King found himself under siege. The early years of Charles' reign were marked with growing agitation and resistance to royal authority in London. Sailors whose pay from the ill-fated expedition to Cadiz was in arrears attacked the home of Sir William Russell, Treasurer of the Navy, to protest their plight. He barely escaped with his life.19 Dr. John Lamb, Buckingham's confidant and astrologer was not so fortunate; his brutal death at the hands of a mob pointed out the intensity of opposition to Buckingham.20 Hatred for the Duke generated much rioting in London until his assassination cut off that campaign. Yet, even after his death, Charles' plans for an impressive state funeral had to be shelved for fear of demonstrations and rioting.21 Opposition to Charles' policies was not confined to the ranks of the "meaner sort." Some City merchants were beginning to resist revenue impositions. The levy of tonnage and poundage without parliamentary sanction was particularly odious to the business community and by the end of 1628 thirty of them were under ar-

19 Williams, i, p. 175.
20 Loftie, i, p. 341.
21 Pearl, p. 77.
rest for their refusal to pay.\textsuperscript{22} This resistance was not imitated by the elders of the City. During this period, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen willingly complied with the demands of the Crown and imprisoned any citizens who did not. By this the City fathers crushed the first burst of collective resistance against Charles' authority. When it became clear that successful resistance could no longer succeed, the majority of merchants, following the municipal leaders, abandoned their campaign and paid up.\textsuperscript{23}

If the City authorities thought that compliance with royal demands would protect the City from further demands, they were quickly disappointed; their acquiescence simply whetted the royal appetite. The King and his advisors knew that it was easier to extract revenues from the City government than from the merchants as a group. In this manner the Crown made the City government its informal revenue agent.\textsuperscript{24}

During the 1630s, every possible device was utilized by the royal authorities to fill the king's coffers without calling a Parliament. One device it used was to challenge the validity of aristocratic and municipal privileges. For instance, if there was any question about the bestowal of a title on a particular noble or if the said Lord had fallen out of the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{22} Williams, i, p. 432.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Pearl, p. 79.
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royal grace, the Privy Council would extort a further payment to "confirm" his title.

The City of London was particularly vulnerable to this ploy. Over the years it had secured many privileges and concessions from royal mendicants temporarily squeezed for cash. One of the largest gift of the kings had been vast acreage in Ireland which were administered by the City's Irish Society. 25 Disputes between the municipality and Crown over these estates had intensified since they were given to London by James I in 1609. 26 In that year, large tracts of Irish land were turned over to the City by James I to increase the settlement of native Englishmen and, thereby, to better secure Ireland for the Crown. In exchange for populating these lands with English settlers and clergymen, the municipality was to receive the rents and profits that were the normal due any landlord. 27 In 1625, the Crown alleged that the City was not living up to its part of the bargain and sequestered the Irish funds. 28 During the late 1620s, negotiations over the fate of the Irish lands continued but by 1630 the financial motive of the Crown was becoming all

25 Ibid., p. 81.


27 Irvine, p. 207.

28 Johnson, Drapers, iii, p. 132.
too transparent; the King was determined to make the City pay dearly for keeping them or take them back; in the meantime, the rents continued to flow into the national treasury.29

At this point, the City realized its legal agreement with the king over Ireland was too vague to protect it from a sustained attack from the Crown. The dispute had dragged on for so long and was such a drain on municipal energy and funds that the City fathers were inclined to strike a final bargain with the King; perhaps they appeared a bit too inclined. In the subsequent negotiations, the magistrates proved themselves positively eager to get the matter over with and, thus, were ripe for picking. In April 1633 they offered the Privy Council L20000 in return for a settlement. Negotiations continued until, by January 1634 the figure had reached L30000 and, for the next year, the two parties were frozen in a stand-off.30 The Crown, which wanted much more money, finally brought suit against the City in the Star Chamber and, not surprisingly, prevailed. The City was to be fined L70000 and lose the Irish estates as well.

The Aldermen, in panic, scrambled to accommodate the

29 Pearl, p. 81.

King, but after several months of negotiation during which the Crown relentlessly turned up the pressure and raised the price, the City gave up. Its negotiators decided that the fine of £125000 was too steep and that it would rather surrender its Irish holdings than pay it. This it proposed to do and even pay an additional £12000 to secure a complete settlement of all the claims of the King.

The resulting agreement became the Royal Charter of 1638. In it, the King confirmed and expanded the privileges of the City but in the process had secured a clear Royal victory; almost everyone else lost. From the City's point of view, the price paid for settlement was, by all reckoning, a dear one. While many of the older privileges had been re-affirmed most of them were rights and revenues that were either feudal in nature and, therefore, playing out, or already being farmed by individuals. The livery companies were levied £12000 to pay for the passage of the new Charter; in addition, they had to pay large bribes to

33 Ibid. 37, fol. 345.
34 Pearl, p. 86.
members of the Privy Council to facilitate its passage.\textsuperscript{35} The Irish Society lost vast properties and had to pay the City's fine as well.\textsuperscript{36} These losses were a lingering source of enmity between the City and the Crown and when the King returned for a loan in November, 1640, one of the City members of Parliament reminded the Commons that the business of the Irish "sticks heavy upon them to L160,000."\textsuperscript{37} It is important to remember, that during these negotiations the City government studiously avoided any discussion of matters beyond those directly affecting the City's estates and privileges; these leaders were not inclined to challenge the Crown's prerogatives, at least, not at that point.

When the issue of "Ship Money" began to arouse the nation, the silence from the City was deafening; curiously, the most powerful municipal body in England avoided serious participation in the premier constitutional struggle of the pre-war decade. This battle, chosen by the parliamentary Puritans as their place to stand, was, for the most part, ignored by the City's magistrates.\textsuperscript{38} In December of 1634, the Common Council feebly protested that this levy was

\textsuperscript{35} The Corporation of London, \textit{The Accounts of the City Chamberlain}, 1638-1639, fol. 49v.

\textsuperscript{36} Pearl, p. 87.

\textsuperscript{37} D'EWes, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{38} Pearl, p. 88.
unconstitutional, incompatible with "their ancient liberties and charters," but its efforts went nowhere. From that point on, ship money revenues were vigorously collected. Succumbing to royal pressure, the City authorities set aside their scruples and incarcerated those who refused to pay their assessment.

Despite their aggressive approach the Aldermen still experienced difficulty in raising ship money. Originally, the king demanded £35000 but eventually settled for £32,000. The reduction certainly did not help collection efforts. The Sheriffs and officers were then given specific authority to search the homes of the recalcitrant, seize their property and sell it to satisfy their obligation. This was no avail as resistance on the part of a large number of citizens finished the activities of the magistrates and by the end of 1639 the City was still in arrears by more than £13000.

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39 Gardiner, vii, p. 376.
40 Irvine, p. 207.
41 Pearl, p. 89.
42 Gardiner, viii, p. 280.
Charles I and the City of London

Part Two: 1639 - 1640

As has been demonstrated, until the Scottish War officials of the municipality had, for the most part, championed royal policy. Close ties between the aldermen and the Crown tended to downplay significant opposition; too many were royal relatives, customs farmers, lenders to the Crown and holders of monopoly patents. As senior leaders they had been involved in executing unpopular policies, collecting ship money,\textsuperscript{44} forcing conformity to Archbishop William Laud's program,\textsuperscript{45} and accepted appointment to Royal commissions.\textsuperscript{46} As a result, by inclination, they were wedded to the future of Stuart rule, but the Bishop's War put too great a strain on this close relationship and, during the political and financial crisis of March 1639, cracks began to show. The Crown, its Scottish policy in tatters, desperately turned to the City government for troops and money and there met the first real signs of sustained official resistance; but, significantly, this came not from the Aldermen, but from the

\textsuperscript{44} Repertories, 55, fol. 32v.

\textsuperscript{45} Rushworth, iii, p. 301.

\textsuperscript{46} Sir Henry Garway was later attacked as a member of the Commission for New Buildings, the subject of popular resentment as demonstrated by its inclusion in the Grand Remonstrance. Pearl, p. 91.
Initially, the Council agreed that the citizens of every ward should be urged to contribute to the war effort, but this only raised L5000.\textsuperscript{48} No agreement could be reached on the matter of the troops. The Crown had requested 3000 men from the City's trained bands for service in Scotland, but the Council would not agree whether to send the troops and, in the aftermath of the debate on the issue, embarked on a revolutionary course.\textsuperscript{49} It sought to use the king's current distress to advance a petition of grievance along with the L5000. The petition complained of the rampant shortages in the City, the plethora of patents and monopolies, and of the infringement of the City charters in requiring that citizens should be compelled to march out and fight other than in the defence of London.\textsuperscript{50} The failure of this effort was probably due to the influence of the City Recorder, Sir Thomas Gardiner, after whose warning the King refused to see the Council's representatives or even to receive the petition.\textsuperscript{51} Blocked in this attempt to bring up

\textsuperscript{47} Gardiner, ix, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{48} Irvine, pp. 207-208.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p. 209.
\textsuperscript{50} Edward Rossingham, "Rossingham's Newsletters," (London: The British Museum), MSS. 11,045, fol.6.
\textsuperscript{51} Pearl, pp. 93-94.
matters of popular concern, the parliamentary Puritans could not but realize how little power they had, to influence affairs in the City government. However, this was a remarkable series of events; despite the opposition of a solid majority of aldermen and a not insignificant number of 'conservatives' among the commoners, they were able to pass a measure highly critical of the king and his government.

The City leaders' loyalty to the Crown was beginning to wear thin. Three months later, when the King sought a loan of £100,000, even some of his most staunch supporters were hesitant about raising the money. The Privy Council sought to soften any opposition to the loan in the City by first approaching individual aldermen and wealthy citizens. The response was less than enthusiastic. In view of the king's unpopularity, security for a loan of this magnitude had to be unequivocal; political and economic times were so bad that serious doubt was growing as to the City of royal promise. The City money men were afraid they would not be paid back. Not even the Aldermen, usually extremely pliable in royal hands, were willing to throw away their funds in this manner. Since the Crown's revenues were pledged until the end of 1644, it did not take a deeply perceptive busi-

52 Irvine, p. 204.
nessman to recognize a poor deal.\textsuperscript{53} It is important to keep in mind that the reason given for this refusal was economic and dealt with the doubtful security for the loans, but this hesitation had been overcome before. That the City's leaders would risk the Crown's disapproval, even for economic reasons, indicates how far loyalty to the king had decayed. Fifteen aldermen, besides the Lord Mayor, failed to lend him money, an example of unprecedented resistance.\textsuperscript{54}

In the spring of 1640, when the King tried again, the response was also in the negative and the excuse offered was the same: the doubtful security of the Crown's promises, but, this time, the Privy Council began to increase the pressure. Lord Mayor Henry Garway\textsuperscript{55} was ordered to provide


\textsuperscript{54} Pearl, p. 98.

\textsuperscript{55} The scion of one of the wealthiest merchant families in the city Sir Henry Garway or Garraway (1575-1646), as a young man, travelled widely in Europe and the Middle East. He was elected to the Bench in 1627 and served in various offices leading up to his tenure as Lord Mayor in the late 1630's. Except for a short period after 1627 he participated in the Custom Farm to one degree or another until the war years. His time as Lord Mayor was characterized by increasing conflict between the Crown and its opponents and Garway was an emphatic partisan of the King. He was active in distraining those who refused to pay Ship Money and responsible for the severe punishment of those who attacked Lambeth Palace in May, 1640. According to rumour, Garway and Lord Mayor Gurney attempted to persuade Charles from fleeing Whitehall on the night of January 10, 1642. In later years, Garway's conspicuous royalism made him an regular target of
the King an inventory of the richest men in the City; this he presented at a meeting of the Privy Council which, in turn, summoned each of the Aldermen, individually interrogated them and squeezed them for a contribution.56

Since very little was raised using this method and they were called back and given instructions to prepare lists of the wealthiest of their fellow citizens. All but seven of the Aldermen complied but again the results of the canvass were meager.57 It required considerable courage to publicly refuse to comply with such an order but those who did were elevated to great prominence in the City's struggle to protect its rights. Thomas Soames,58 in particular, became


56 Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 16/450/88.

57 Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 16/453/75.

58 Thomas Soames (1584-1671), wealthy and well-connected, from one of the premier commercial families in the city. He had extensive trading interests in the Levant and increased those after 1640. He was somewhat of a political maverick. In the 1620's he refused to pay the forced loan and as Sheriff he took no action against citizens who refused to pay Ship Money. As Alderman, in the spring of 1640, he and three of his colleagues refused to list the wealthiest members of his ward so the Crown could approach them for contributions. As a result, he enjoyed immense popularity among the common people who selected him as an opposition candidate in the Mayor's election in 1640. Though Alderman Wright was elected, Soames grew in public statue and affection until the revolutionary years. At that time, he grew increasingly disenchanted with Parliamentary government,
somewhat of a popular hero for his reputed assertion that "he was loth to be an informer, [that] he was an honest man before he was an Alderman, and desired to be an honest man still."59

It is important to note the severe measures that were now being used by the Crown against even its friends. That the ministers of the King of England should resort to the use of such tactics against their natural allies, the proud magistrates of a proud citizenry, reveals the desperation of the Crown's situation. More than that, it demonstrates just how severely judgment at the highest levels was beginning suffer.

By the time of the Long Parliament, the Crown was also finding it difficult to bring pressure on the popular assemblies of the City, Common Hall and Common Council. In these bodies, with increasing boldness, the parliamentary Puritans exercised a veto over the king's program.60 In June 1640, a request for 4000 men with coat and conduct money for the war was answered in the negative.61 At the same time, became associated with the "peace party," was excluded during Prides' Purge and found himself in political eclipse until, in 1660, he was restored to Parliament and the aldermanic bench. Bevan, ii, p. 63.

59 Pearl, p. 100.
60 Calendar of Venetian State Papers, 1640-1642, p.25.
61 Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 16/457/36.
another petition calling for a Parliament and correction of grievances circulating in the City was received by the Council and endorsed with enthusiasm.62

Once Charles had acquiesced in summoning a Parliament, the City agreed to help raise money for the king. Lord Mayor Garway and his fellow royalist Aldermen were aggressive in their support for these loans.63 At this point, however, the parliamentary Puritans began to demonstrate unexpected strength. They were determined not to allow the King to fulfill his obligations to the Scots under the Treaty of Ripon64 before he had to deal with an aroused Parliament. In retrospect, it appears as though they were able to retard the progress of the collections.65 This was not the only way the opposition was utilizing its power. Thomas Gardiner, the Recorder and thus in line to be the Speaker of the House, was again rejected by Common Hall, the four Puritans elected to the Short Parliament were returned with little opposition.66 William Acton,67 a supporter of the king, was by--

62 Pearl, p. 102.
63 Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 16/463/33; 16/469/22.
64 Coward, p. 155.
65 Ibid., 16/469/85.
66 Pearl, p. 104.
67 Sir William Bartholomew Acton (1593-1651) was a prominent member of the Merchant Taylors' Company. He was elected from Aldersgate Ward to the Aldermanic Bench in 1628
The Crown and the Privy Council increasingly found themselves on the horns of a dilemma -- a harbinger of those events that were to overwhelm them late in 1641. The City government, even when it was sympathetic to the King's program, in its weakened state could not long control the clamor of an aroused citizenry. At the same time, the Crown feared that if it strengthened its allies in the City and gave authority to loyal magistrates so as to control the dissidents, the plan might backfire. There could be no guarantee that, on some future day, the machinery of government would not fall into hostile hands and be used against the monarchy. There was also the danger that should the Scots push south, an attempt to provide weapons for the City against their approach, risked the creation of an armed...

and almost immediately became one of the city's sheriffs. During his shrieval term he became an ally of the Court and was imprisoned by the House of Commons for his jailing of merchants detained by the Crown for their refusal to pay customs duties. His failed election as Lord Mayor was an indication of his own unpopularity but more importantly that of the King (Rushworth, i, pp. 429-420). The years after 1642 were troubled ones for Acton. He was harrassed repeatedly by various revolutionary tribunals for his failure to support the war effort, his assets were confiscated to raise money for refused assessments and he died in poverty in 1651 (Repertories..., 56, fol. 164).

68 Ashton, pp. 244-205.

69 Pearl, p. 104.
"fifth column" capable of threatening the King. The problem for the Aldermen was made even worse by the composition of those troops available. The trained bands, London's militia, were citizen-soldiers and, therefore, highly susceptible to popular pressure.

Pearl argues that the Crown was the author of its own troubles. By bringing on the Scottish War it upset the delicate balance of power in the City. Their compliant behavior during the years 1631-1638 suggests that absent the crisis of an unpopular war, the City magistrates might well have gone on providing the revenues necessary to finance many more years of personal rule.

From 1625 onward an ominous pattern began to emerge, one repeated more powerfully after 1640. The City fathers, ready to accommodate the Crown, were reluctant to place political conditions on their cooperation with the King, but this brought them into direct conflict with the King's opponents in the City. The latter appealed to the House of Commons whose parliamentary Puritan majority joined them in a stand against what both groups considered to be the Crown's unconstitutional behavior. This partisan minuet became an oft-repeated feature of London's political life during the first two years of the Long Parliament.

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70 Calendar of State Papers, ii, p. 95.
71 Pearl, p. 105.
The submissiveness of the magistrates at first confused the King and his advisors. Thinking the leaders represented the heart and mind of the City, the King turned up the pressure on these leaders. Charles needing money and needing it badly, demanded the vigorous enforcement of unpopular measures and the collection of repulsive levies. The City fathers were successful, to a certain degree, but this further discredited them with the masses and, as time passed, their efforts were openly resisted. The King, dissatisfied with the results, resorted to even greater coercion and the process was repeated. Tension grew until the City was in political gridlock and, finally, repulsed by the Scottish War, a large number of citizens turned to a group of leaders openly hostile to the King and his program.72

By 1640 London was a political cauldron. Deepening economic depression, unemployment, the plague and periodic bouts of destruction by the youthful apprentices73 were a regular part of life. All that was needed to transform these disparate elements into a revolution was a catalyst. This came in the form of religious discontent and was unwittingly provided by the hands of William Laud. The Archbishop's ecclesiastical program, in the diplomatic understatement of the Venetian Ambassador, "finally disturbed the peace of the

72 Ibid., pp. 105-106.
73 Smith, p. 151.
As if Charles' troubles at home were not enough, the indefatigable first vicar pressed his sovereign into a tragic scheme of force-feeding the covenanting Scots with a solid dose of Anglican conformity. The resulting war brought new upheavals as the City Puritans rose to defend the cause of their northern compatriots.

In May 1640 placards appeared throughout the City urging the apprentices to rise and free the land from the rule of the bishops. May Day witnessed a riot on the grounds of Lambeth Palace. About five hundred angry citizens converged on the home of the archbishop only to find that their quarry had escaped. The rioting continued through that month with the City magistrates proving themselves incapable of or unwilling to prevent the unrest. Their inertia finally prompted the Privy Council to call up militia from other counties to quell the disturbances. With these troops the Crown arrested several Puritan leaders, tortured and executed (on the flimsiest evidence) John Archer, a glover from Southwark, one thought to be a ringleader of the apprentices. Generally, the government approached its repression in a half-hearted manner. Prudence demanded the

74 Calendar of Venetian State Papers, 1636-1639, p. 242.
75 Gardiner, vi, p. 329.
76 Rushworth, iii, p. 1173
77 Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 16/454/39.
pression in a half-hearted manner. Prudence demanded the King continue to cultivate the good will of a City increasingly set against him.79

Charles I and the City of London

Part Three: 1640 - 1642

The disaster in Scotland and the King's decision to call a Parliament provided the opposition with the opportunity it needed to begin taking over the City government. The parliamentary Puritans first had to determine how they could take the campaign off the streets and into the houses of power. London's citizenry enjoyed a fairly wide franchise, but popular influence was severely limited by veto power in the Common Council held by the royalist Aldermen.80 Occasionally in the past citizens had challenged the Aldermen, but usually this tactic failed.81

Common Hall was another matter entirely and it was here the parliamentary Puritans pursued their attack. Indeed, here was the ideal place to begin. In Common Hall there was no Aldermanic veto and the informality of its voting procedures made it ripe for manipulation by a determined and

80 See Chapter III.
81 Webb, ii, p. 631.
organized minority. Since it was primarily an electoral body any dispute was surely to involve the elections of the Lord Mayor, sheriffs and the City representatives to Parliament. In September 1640 the candidate next in line for Lord Mayor, Sir William Acton, an exceedingly unpopular courtier, was denied nomination by a strong majority and the names of Edmund Wright⁸² and the Puritan, Thomas Soames, were placed before the Aldermanic bench.⁸³ This was a wrenching shift in the election process. Tradition dictated that Acton should be elected and he had already redecorated his home to prepare for the extensive entertainment that would be required.⁸⁴ Neither of the others were anywhere near being in line for elevation to the Mayoralty and Soames was a par-

⁸² One of the most committed of royalists, Sir Edmund Wright (?-1643) pursued his political prejudice with enthusiasm. As Sheriff, he was alleged to have invaded the home of Alexander Leighton and confiscated the clergyman's papers. During his term as Lord Mayor he was knighted by Charles I and showed his loyalty by attempting to slow the collection of Poll Money, a Parliamentary tax. From that point, he was almost continually in conflict with the puritan majority in the House of Commons. Wright refused to recognize the deposition of Mayor Richard Gurney in 1642 and was repeatedly rebuked in the revolutionary years for failure to pay Parliamentary assessments. He was an influential member of the Grocers' Company and was honored in 1642 with the presidency of St. Thomas' Hospital. After his death in 1643 two daughters married prominent royalists, but another daughter became the wife of Sir James Harrington, the Regicide and Republican. Bevan, ii, pp. 180, 234.

⁸³ Rushworth, i, pp. 419-420.

⁸⁴ Rossingham, fol. 122.
particularly odious choice from the royalist viewpoint.85 Just a few months earlier, he had been imprisoned for his failure to cooperate in the collection of a forced loan to the king.86 Shocked by this unprecedented break with tradition, the Privy Council ordered the Lord Mayor to hold another election at which time, to the obvious relief of the Crown, Soames was rejected and Wright became the Lord Mayor.87

For all the furor over the election of the Mayor, the choice of the city's representatives to Parliament would prove to be of greatest danger to the Crown. As it has been shown, Common Hall also had chosen to defy tradition by passing over the Recorder, Sir Thomas Gardiner, for election to Parliament. Further, it elected four strong parliamentary Puritans to represent the City at Westminster.88 Instead of reflecting the views of the City fathers, these partisans frequently did just the opposite. They represented the City with decidedly Puritan overtones, thereby acting as a circumventing link between the citizens and the parliamentary

85 Levine, p. 215.
86 Pearl, p. 111.
88 Irvine, p. 216.
It is clear that, in the fall of 1641, only a minority of the Common Council members supported the policies of Pym and the parliamentary opposition. No challenges to aldermanic vetoes were entered into the record for 1639-40, no measures in support of Pym were introduced and that body displayed a studied lack of eagerness in support of the citizens petitions that were so abundant at this juncture. In November, 1641, the Common Council joined with the Aldermen to prepare a royal banquet in honor of the king on his return from the north. This is not to say that the parliamentary Puritans had no support in the Common Council, but until the revolutionary months of early 1642, it was impotent. At that point, the presence of new members, elimination of former leaders, and the vigorous support of the House of Commons shifted the balance of power. Such was also the case in the Court of Aldermen which continued to demonstrate decidedly Royalist sympathies. Ironically, in late 1640, the most important municipality in the nation spoke with two voices, each purporting to represent the heart of the City. The "official" government was emphatically royal-

89 Pearl, p. 113.
90 Journal of the Common Council, 40, fol. 2v.
92 Pearl, pp. 114-116.
ist, but the parliamentary delegation was allied with the king's opponents.93

The circumstances in the House of Commons were almost exactly reversed. Here the parliamentary Puritans held the upper hand; unofficial citizen petitions such as the Root and Branch petition, an additional one calling for the execution of Strafford, and another to exclude the Bishops from the House of Lords, were well received by the opposition leaders and given lengthy consideration.94 In vivid contrast, little debate and no action at all was taken on some of the petitions originated by the Aldermen. Granted, most of these were administrative petitions submitted to a Parliament grappling with far weightier matters, but the Aldermen could not but be somewhat perplexed that whatever they submitted, whether it dealt with poor relief, City jurisdiction over Southwark or illegal housing construction within the wall,95 their concerns seemed to be ignored.96

The most vivid example of Parliament's lack of concern for City priorities was that body's continued tolerance of the abuse of Parliamentary Protection. This was one of the ancient privileges of Parliament retained to preserve the

93 Ibid., p. 113.
94 Coward, pp. 165-166.
95 Accounts of the Chamberlain, 1640-1641, fol.51.
96 Pearl, p. 116.
integrity of that body and protect its members from coercion while in the line of duty. The Houses granted their members immunity from arrest for any offense save treason while Parliament was in session. Members and their servants routinely used this as a means of avoiding payment of debts. As long as Parliament sat, the bills accumulated and then, if the member was adroit enough he could slip out of town, delay payment even longer or avoid it altogether. By May of 1641, the amount owed by members to the merchants of London was astronomical. Parliaments were usually of short duration but this (the so-called Long Parliament) showed no signs of coming to an end. A Committee set up to consider the petition of the City's grievances on the subject found that members were over a million pounds in arrears and gave no sign of stopping their delinquency. The committee recommended that protection be suspended but after heated debate both Houses rejected the proposal and the bills continued to mount.

In addition, many Aldermen found themselves under attack. The parliamentary Committee for Grievances began to investigate their actions as City magistrates. It found, for instance, that Sir Edward Bromfield, Lord Mayor from 1636 to 1637, had 'violated the law and liberty of the subject' 

97 Irvine, p. 218.
98 D'Ewes, pp. 42-43.
by imprisoning two collectors of Ship Money, for negligence in performing their office. Alderman William Abel was condemned for having obeyed the order of the Court of High Commission, breaking into Henry Burton's house and using force to carry him off to prison.

The Lord Mayor and Aldermen also found that it was increasingly difficult to preserve law and order. The parliamentary opposition was positively eager to show favor to citizens' petitions and demonstrations in support of their program. The Trained Bands were proving themselves almost useless in controlling their neighbors. Therefore, when the Mayor would forbid citizens from going down to Westminster to demonstrate, he was ignored with impunity.

Throughout the summer of 1641, the factions of the City government were locked in a struggle over another important election. The office of sheriff formed an important link in the control of affairs in London. Traditionally, the Common Hall would appoint its own choice as the first of the sheriffs and then, as a courtesy to the Lord Mayor, appoint his candidate as the second. As time passed, this proce-

99 Repertories of the Aldermanic Bench, 55, fol 32v.
100 D'Ewes, pp. 218, 194. Rushworth, iii, p. 301.
101 Pearl, p. 119.
102 Bohun, pp. 51-52.
103 Stow, ii, p. 651.
dure evolved until the Lord Mayor came to consider the second appointment as an unimpeachable right.\textsuperscript{104} This time the Common Hall claimed the right to elect both and, after weeks of dispute the King referred the matter to the House of Lords. The peers attempted a compromise. The Common Hall was affirmed in its rights of election; the upper house asserted that the congregation had the power to nominate and elect both. The Lords probably hoped this would placate popular feeling and, in return, Common Hall would respond in generosity and elect the Lord Mayor's candidate, George Clarke. The congregation did just that, but offered no guarantee that such would be the case in the future.\textsuperscript{105} The Lord Mayor and Aldermen were highly displeased with the decision of the Lords for they correctly surmised that tradition had been violated and their authority successfully challenged.\textsuperscript{106}

As their power to influence events began to shrink, the Aldermen, still unrepentedly royalist in sympathy, increasingly began to play the Stuart card. The Crown remained the sole ally that would permit them to retain their positions and authority without compromising with the opposition. By late summer, it was clear that, under their influence,

\textsuperscript{104} The History of the Sheriffdom..., pp.17-18.
\textsuperscript{105} Journal of the House of Lords, iv, p. 292, 373.
\textsuperscript{106} The History of the Sheriffdom..., pp. 17,18.
certain parts of the City government was becoming more and more sympathetic to the Crown and Charles, awakening almost as if from a sleep, was, at long last, willing to cultivate such impulses. It seems the king and his advisors were finally beginning to realize that London was seriously divided and that, if the monarchy was to retain the City's support, it must encourage the King's natural allies. At just the right moment, Charles intervened to secure a very lucrative tax credit being denied to the City merchants by Parliament in its passage of a new grant of tonnage and poundage. The grateful City leadership responded by preparing a public reception and banquet for Charles when he returned from the north in the fall. Unfortunately, this re-awakened spirit of unity had its disadvantages as well. Perhaps because of their more pronounced support for the King, the officers of the City found it increasingly difficult to govern the City. The summer months of 1641 brought growing disorder to the streets of London. Plague had returned and upset the balance of life. Disbanded soldiers found themselves without work and an easy target for agita-

107 Pearl, p. 122.

108 Ashton, pp. 208-209.


110 Coward, p. 171.
tors. To these the House of Lords and then, in September, the House of Commons, added a series of controversial religious measures that upset life in the parishes. The Houses permitted the removal of communion rails, abolished the display of images, and ordered that worshipers should discontinue bowing at the name of Jesus. These ordinances provoked powerful and sometimes violent disputes between Puritans and some of the more conservative clergy a conflict which added to the already tense atmosphere that gripped the city.

The election of Lord Mayor in September of 1641 proved to be the last great attempt by the royalist leaders to stem the tide of Puritan sentiment. It was successful but only because the new sheriff, George Clark, used pure coercion. After the summer long battle to install him as the shrieval choice of the Lord Mayor, he proved his loyalty and, ignoring the cries of the opposition, rammed through the nomination of two candidates. They were Richard Gurney, a traditionalist, and Thomas Soames, the popular Puritan.

111 Cornford, VHL, pp. 328-329.
112 Evelyn, p. 768.
113 Pearl, p. 124.
114 Sir Richard Gurney (1577-1647) came to power by following true city tradition. Apprenticed as a silkman in Cheapside, he made his way to fortune and prominence as a member of the Clothworkers, Company, serving as Sheriff in 1633 and Master of his guild in the same year. By the fall
Their names were submitted to the Aldermen who, to no one's surprise, elected Gurney. Amidst the cries of "No election," the Lord Mayor's sheriff, following the ancient tradition, brought the news of Gurney's selection back to the Common Hall, broke that tradition by refusing to even consider a re-vote, declared Gurney as elected and dismissed the meeting without so much as a word of explanation.

In the face of parliamentary opposition, unrest in the City, and a determined minority of Aldermen, the dominant party moved ahead with its fete for the King. On November 25, 1641, he made his entry into the City and was greeted with elaborate pomp and ceremony. There is no evidence that demonstrations took place, indeed, there is every reason to believe that, because the planning committee's preparations were superb, the king was received with enthusiasm. He was entertained lavishly by the Lord Mayor and presented with a gift of L20000. In his welcoming

of 1641 Gurney was clearly marked as one of the King's men and his election as Lord Mayor was seen as a Royalist triumph. Until he was removed from office in 1642, Gurney did all he could to impede the growth of Parliamentary pretension and paid dearly for it in the revolutionary years. DNB, viii, pp. 807-808.

115 Irvine, p. 219.
116 Clarendon, History, iv, p.78.
117 Ashton, p. 209.
118 Irvine, p. 219.
speech, the City Recorder pled with King to strengthen the authority of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen so that they might better serve him.\textsuperscript{119} The King's reply was designed to take advantage of the divided loyalties in the City and to encourage those who would support the Crown. He promised to restore the City's lands in Ireland (when the current Rebellion had been suppressed) and to support the Protestant faith in the manner of his two predecessors.\textsuperscript{120}

It is perhaps not surprising that the entertainment and enthusiasm of his welcome convinced the King that he had won a decisive battle, that the City was with him and that he could make a resolute stand against the demands of Parliament. The demonstrations of the citizens of London against the Bishops in December revealed his grievous error and dashed the hopes of his supporters in the City.\textsuperscript{121} Enthusiasm for the King, they saw at last, was confined to the majority of Aldermen, some City officials and several of the wealthiest citizens.\textsuperscript{122}

By the end of the month it seemed that the government of the City was dissolving. Petitions and demonstrations,

\textsuperscript{119} *Journal of the Common Council*, 40, fol. 49.
\textsuperscript{120} Coward, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{121} *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, 16/488/30.
\textsuperscript{122} Coward, p. 102.
despite their alleged dubious origin,\textsuperscript{123} were a feared but regular part of everyday life,\textsuperscript{124} the commands of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen were routinely ignored by the trained bands,\textsuperscript{125} and in the Common Council elections on December 21, several key supporters of the King were excluded,\textsuperscript{126} and men of active Puritan sympathies were chosen to take their place.\textsuperscript{127} This was a change of significant proportions. Prior to January 1642 the Common Council was a pale reflection of the Court of Aldermen. Whether through the influence of royal supporters in its leadership or fear of the aldermanic veto, the Council played a secondary but supportive role in backing the king. It took an enthusiastic part in banqueting Charles upon his return from the north and routinely denounced City demonstrators.\textsuperscript{128} Soon after the new year, a decidedly different atmosphere prevailed in that body. It is important to determine what happened to bring this about.

\textsuperscript{123} John Nalson, \textit{Impartial Collection of the Great Affairs of State from the Beginning of the Scotch Rebellion in the Year 1639 to the Murder of King Charles I} (London: Printed for S. Mearne, 1682-1683), ii, p. 763.

\textsuperscript{124} D'Ewes, pp. 271, 319-320.

\textsuperscript{125} Pearl, p. 131.

\textsuperscript{126} Cornford, \textit{VHL}, p. 330

\textsuperscript{127} Loftie, p. 342.

\textsuperscript{128} Pearl, p. 132.
This issue has stirred a not inconsiderable debate. Contemporaries, whether of royal or parliamentary sympathies, attribute this change to the results of the annual elections which took place in late 1641.\textsuperscript{129} Clarendon asserted that many "grave and substantial citizens were left out and [those chosen] were most imminent for opposing the government and most disaffected to the church, though of never so mean estates."\textsuperscript{130} The actions of the Council after the turn of the year, certainly give rise to speculation that something significant took place in those December elections.\textsuperscript{131}

Some have asserted that the change in Council sentiment was not quite so abrupt, that few changes took place and that Common Council's opposition to Charles had been growing steadily since 1625.\textsuperscript{132} Yet, whatever the timing of the Council disaffection, something of substantial proportions surely took place in those elections. While, only a small percentage of the returns are available for examination,\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{129} Gregg, p. 342.

\textsuperscript{130} Clarendon, \textit{History}, i, p. 175.

\textsuperscript{131} Nehemiah Wallington, \textit{Historical notices of events occurring chiefly in the reign of Charles I}, edited by R. Webb, (London: R. Bentley, 1869), i, p. 274.


\textsuperscript{133} Evidence is extant for only 57 elections out of a total membership of 257. Pearl, pp. 134, 344-345.
remarkably, in half of those there was dispute or changes in personnel.\textsuperscript{134} Such a churning of membership was rare and indicates that, in 1641, these elections aroused great controversy all over the City and, in at least four wards, the voters returned a completely different slate of representatives to the Common Council.\textsuperscript{135}

Perhaps the most obvious indication of a shift in orientation for that body was the new disposition of its committees. Not all commoners were members of committees and those who were exercised great influence over the assembly. Any change at that level might be as significant, if not more so, than changes in the membership as a whole. Indeed, it is clear that is exactly what happened. Several of the key leaders of the Common Council, men who had asserted powerful leverage prior to 1642, were simply defeated.\textsuperscript{136} Several men who sat on the City Lands Committee, served as Auditors of the Chamberlain's and Bridgемaster's Accounts, and acted as members of every other important committee were no longer weren't listed as members of the Council. Roger Clark, Sir George Benion, Roger Drake, Roger Gardiner, and

\textsuperscript{134} Wren, "The Disputed Election...",p. 48.

\textsuperscript{135} Pearl, p. 135.

Deputy John Withers were important committee members in 1642 and suddenly disappear from the pages of the Council Journal.\textsuperscript{137} Those who understand the effect the absence of even a single key individual has on a committee or group, will be able to grasp the changes brought about by the exclusion of a large number of royalist leaders in late 1641. The transformation was profound.

The Common Council was not the only place the parliamentary Puritans sought to extend their influence. The anonymous author of \textit{Persecutio Undecima} acknowledged a determined campaign to install those of Puritan sentiment in a large number of City positions great and small. "Not an office in the City," he wrote, [was] "thought chargeable and troublesome; yet how ambitious were the faction of those places, even to a constableship."\textsuperscript{138} As a result of these changes, official London visibly shifted toward open hostility to the king's interests.

With their supporters in place the House of Commons directed the Common Council to form a Committee of Safety on January 4, 1642.\textsuperscript{139} This was not an idle gesture; the previous day witnessed the King's attempt to seize the five

\textsuperscript{137} Pearl, pp. 136-137.


\textsuperscript{139} Ashton, p. 206.
members. They escaped but their destination was not some foreign redout. The parliamentary fugitives fled into the City of London and refuge, probably in Coleman Street. When the king appeared the next day in Common Council seeking their extradition, he was forced to endure a ride through hostile streets and, at the meeting, the statements of some rather impertinent Council members, only to fail in his mission. The Court of Common Council of the City of London flatly refused to the honor the request of the King of England.

In this time of crisis in the City, the new Committee of Safety, made up of some of the strongest supporters Parliament had in the City, pressed through the Common Council a petition criticizing the king for, among other things, the attempt to seize the five members. It was the first anti-Royalist petition issued by the Council and

140 Gregg, pp. 343-344.
141 Pearl, p. 139, 141.
142 Loftie, ii, p. 343.
143 At this meeting the King permitted the members to speak their minds. "It is the vote of this Court that your Majesty hear the advice of your Parliament," cried one. "It is not the vote of this Court," cried another; "it is your own vote." Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1641-1643, vol. 488/19.
144 Irvine, p. 221.
reflects the radical shift in its membership and a powerful indication that the "unofficial" citizens and their parliamentary Puritan allies had won the day.\textsuperscript{146}

The shift in sympathy in the Common Council did not mean the City of London was now, officially, a bastion of Parliamentary support. There is no evidence that the Royalist sympathies of Court of Aldermen had diminished in the slightest. The majority of the Aldermen remained loyal to Charles for the early months of 1642 even though it was not an easy posture for them. The King's political ineptitude had made supporting him extremely difficult. So intense was the strength of popular feeling, so great was hostility to the Crown at this point, that the Lord Mayor found it extremely difficult to even issue the royal proclamation impeaching the five Members.

The disposition of the recalcitrant Aldermanic majority did not block the plans of the parliamentary Puritans. They quickly moved in the Common Council to neutralize the royalist Aldermen\textsuperscript{147} and place the City into a state of defence. The regiments of the Trained Bands were put on combat footing and placed under the command of several leading City

\textsuperscript{146} Pearl, p. 144.

\textsuperscript{147} Manley, p. 11.
Puritans, one of whom was the future Lord Mayor, Issac Penington. These developments prompted the King to ignore the pleas of the Lord Mayor and several of his leading supporters and flee from Whitehall during the night of January 10th. The king's men were fearful lest his cause


149 Though he was a substantial citizen, Isaac Penington (1587-1661) was not one of London's prominent merchants. He held a small share of the East India Company, did extensive trading in Levant commodities, and, by marriage, became a brewer, but he owed his political ascendency to popular pressure, not the through the traditional path of commercial, family or social connections. In a way, Penington was a perfect example of the new sort of leader that was to dominate the affairs of the city during much of the revolutionary period. His reputation and popularity arose from activities as a Puritan leader. He and his second wife Mary, kept an ordinary in Whitefriars which, because of their hospitality and that ward's traditional rights of sanctuary, may have been a refuge and organizing center for the Puritan movement (Persecutio Undecima, p. 57). Penington, elected sheriff in 1638 and Alderman the following year, was chosen by Common Hall as a city representative to Parliament in 1640. His election to Lord Mayor (July, 1642) was the climax of the campaign by parliamentary puritans to secure support of the municipal government for their cause. He fully justified the confidence of his radical colleagues and used all his offices to further their mutually held convictions, but in doing so, generally demonstrated high character and integrity (Clarendon, History, i, p. 284). During the time of greatest danger to the city, in 1642 and 1643, he led citizens from all ranks of society, men and women, in digging the perimeter fortifications. Penington was not a vengeful man and certainly had little of the self-serving avarice of which many of the revolutionary leaders were accused. After the Restoration, his memory, as preserved by Royalist ballad writers and historians, emerged unbesmirched by the savage attacks used to describe many other prominent Puritans. DNB, xv, pp. 740-742.

150 Gregg, p. 345.
and their power be compromised if he left the scene. This analysis proved correct as the five members, sheltering since January 4th in Coleman Street, returned in triumph to a huge reception in Westminster.

On January 24th, the City presented a petition to Parliament expressing the political demands of the Pym majority in the Lower House. It urged the Houses to take up the sword in defense of their prerogatives and sharply attacked the Peers for refusing to exclude the Bishops from their body.

One might assume from this that the City government had totally surrendered to Parliament's cause, but, such was not the case. The Court of Aldermen and a large minority of Common Council had not been converted, but the House of Commons had given the Puritans a powerful means of out-maneuvering their opponents -- the newly formed Committee of Safety. It not only had been granted vast powers and authority but its composition was strongly sympathetic to the Puritan cause and, eventually, it was responsible for important City business. The tax voted for the defense of


152 Wallington, pp. 291-292.


154 Ashton, p. 206.
London was paid directly to the Committee of Safety\textsuperscript{155} and on January 8, it became the municipal agent dealing with the lower House on matters concerning the defense of the kingdom.\textsuperscript{156}

On January 13, the House of Commons gave the Committee of Safety a radical new power which further struck at the authority of the Lord Mayor. From time in memorial, the Lord Mayor had the exclusive right to call the Common Council into session. Now, he was required to call a Council meeting as often as the Committee demanded.\textsuperscript{157} On January 19 the panel was authorized to judge disputed elections of the Common Council. Finally, January 22 saw ultimate power in the City pass to the Committee of Safety when its members assumed control of the City militia.\textsuperscript{158}

Not inappropriately, the assumption of militia control by the Committee of Safety stirred the royalist Aldermen to counter-attack. Jealous of their prerogatives but perhaps even more, fearful of the consequences of inaction, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen refused to submit to these changes without a struggle and chose as their vehicle a fight for the control of the Militia. As it developed the battle became a

\textsuperscript{155} Journal of the Common Council, 40, fol. 12.  
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 40, fol. 14.  
\textsuperscript{157} Journal of the House of Commons, i, p. 376.  
\textsuperscript{158} Journal of the Common Council, 40, fol. 17v.
contention over the use of the Aldermanic veto as much as a fight over the Trained Bands. The veto was one of the more odious means by which the Aldermen controlled the Common Council. Since, historically, the Lord Mayor controlled the Militia, when the action of the Commons entrusting the troops to the Committee of Safety came up in the Council the Aldermen attempted to block it. When that failed, a majority of the Court of Aldermen petitioned Parliament protesting the new provisions.159 When the petition came before Common Council that body refused to hear it even though a majority of the Aldermen present voted to send it. The Journal of the Common Council records that the votes of Commoners and Aldermen were enmeshed. Instead of acknowledging the clear Aldermanic veto, for the first time, the total votes on each side were recorded together, the distinction between the two was obscured and the veto nullified.160

The petition was signed by over 300 of the most prominent and wealthy citizens of the City.161 It complained that in agreeing to establish the Committee of Safety, the Court of Aldermen had not intended to settle on it the power of

159 Repertories of the Aldermanic Bench, 55, fol. 373.


161 Despite its having failed to secure a majority in the Common Council vote, because this petition originated with the Aldermen acting in concert, it went to Parliament anyway.
the Militia, which traditionally had been under the rule of the Mayor and the Aldermen.162

The participation of so many important citizens in on the petition effort caused Parliament to be cautious in its response. To avoid the arousing the City's elite, only the alleged authors, Sir George Benion and Sir Thomas Gardiner were punished; both were tried (in essence) for their long-term opposition to parliament and imprisoned.163

Eventually, on this issue the Lord Mayor and the Aldermen were forced to capitulate, but they were not about to surrender easily. On March 10th they forbade the presentation of any petition in the Common Council before it was read and approved by the Court of Aldermen.164 By this, the upper house reaffirmed its traditional power and hoped to prevent a new petition currently circulating, condemning its attitude toward the Militia, from reaching Parliament. In pursuit of this goal the Aldermen were not above political subterfuge. On March 13th the Lord Mayor, feigning illness, refused to call the Common Council into session as requested by the Committee of Safety. That body, in turn, reported his action to the House of Commons which then directed that the

162 Mercurius Civicus, p. 413.
164 Repertories of the Aldermanic Bench, 55, fol. 393 v.
meeting take place.  

When the Council met, the Aldermen allowed the petition to be read but refused to permit a vote. Two days later, the majority of the Common Council, now openly seeking to break the power of their antagonists, protested this action to the House of Commons. Moving quickly to support its City allies, the Pym faction in the House ordered an investigation. Not surprisingly, after much debate, the Committee conducting the probe determined that since traditionally in times of paramount crisis the Common Council was allowed to discuss matters without the permission of the Court of Aldermen, the upper house had subverted the rights of the Council.

On March 18th, the petition was read and voted on in Common Council. That body had now condemned the petition of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen for their action concerning the Militia and, by this dispute, severely restricted the power of the upper house. It was now apparent that decision making authority in the City had shifted to Common Council. Recognizing their peril, the Aldermen appealed to Parliament.
but this made matters even worse. Both Houses of Parliament went on record ordering the Lord Mayor to call the Common Council into session as often as directed by the Committee of Safety.\textsuperscript{170} Still, Lord Mayor Gurney refused to submit and on July 9th a petition was read in the Lords complaining of various obstructions that he placed in the way of the work of the Council.\textsuperscript{171} The Lord Mayor was already under attack in Parliament for his aggressive Royalism and on July 5th the Commons sent up a request to the Lords to join them in his impeachment.\textsuperscript{172} His trial began later that month and despite the substantial support he received from many of his fellow Aldermen, his conviction was a foregone conclusion. On August 12th Gurney was found guilty, deposed and imprisoned.\textsuperscript{173} Defiantly, he refused to surrender his insignia of office; these and the City sword had to be taken from him by force.\textsuperscript{174} Richard Gurney whose loyalty to his king went much further than was politically reasonable, died, penni-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{170} Journal of the House of Lords, iv, 510. Journal of the House of Commons, ii, 662-663.
\item \textsuperscript{171} A True Diurnal of the Passages in Parliament, March 18, 1642.
\item \textsuperscript{172} Journal of the House of Commons, ii, p. 653. Pearl, p. 156.
\item \textsuperscript{173} Clarendon, History, ii, p. 246.
\item \textsuperscript{174} Loftie, p. 344.
\end{itemize}
less, in the Tower, in 1647.\footnote{175}

In the subsequent Common Hall election, Issac Penington received the nomination and was elected Lord Mayor over the heads of many senior Aldermen. It was evident from his career in Parliament that, if not totally committed to radical religious and political precepts, he would be strongly subject to its influence.\footnote{176} His election was the climax of a steady process whereby the parliamentary Puritans in the City obtained control of London's governmental machinery and made it a servant to their ends and those of the Pym faction in the Parliament. Their victory was by no means complete at Penington's election. Only the passage of time and the elimination of Royalist Aldermen by death, illness, fatigue or deposition would make London a source of support for Parliament and its key to victory in the war that was to follow.

\footnotetext{175}{M.A.E. Green, ed., Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding, 1889, ii, pp. 858-60.}

\footnotetext{176}{Pearl, p. 158.}
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SOUTHWARK AND THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS IN 1600