Revival and Revolution

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John Wesley

(born June 17, 1703, Epworth, Lincolnshire, England—died March 2, 1791, London) was an Anglican clergyman, evangelist, and founder, with his brother Charles, of the Methodist movement in the Church of England.

John Wesley, detail of an oil painting by Nathaniel Hone, 1766; in the National Portrait Gallery, London

In 18th century England,

social class was determined by wealth and occupation, and it influenced a person's lifestyle. The social classes were:

•**Nobility**: The wealthiest and most powerful class, including royalty

•**Gentry**: The wealthy aristocracy, including knights, squires, and gentlemen

•**Middle class**: Made up of merchants, priests, and land-owning farmers

•**Poor**: Made up of laborers, workers in manufacturing, and those without money, food, or shelter

According to writer **Daniel Defoe** there were seven different categories of social heirarchy:

1. The great, who live profusely.
2. The rich, who live plentifully.
3. The middle sort, who live well.
4. The working trades, who labour hard, but feel no want.
5. The country people, farmers etc., who fare indifferently.
6. The poor, who fare hard.
7. The miserable, that really pinch and suffer want.

Daniel Defoe, engraving by M. Van der Gucht, after a portrait by J. Tavrner, first half of the 18th century.

In 1703, Defoe, a nonconformist, (later author of the well-known novel *Robinson Crusoe in 1719),* was imprisoned for having written a pamphlet criticizing High Church supporters of the Church of England and Torie Party.

George I (born May 28, 1660, Osnabrück, Hanover [Germany]—died June 11, 1727, Osnabrück) was the elector of Hanover (1698–1727) and the first Hanoverian king of Great Britain 1714–27.

George I, detail of an oil painting after Sir Godfrey Kneller, 1714; in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

The state of Britain in 1714

When **George Ludwig**, elector of Hanover, became king of Great Britain on August 1, 1714, the country was in some respects bitterly divided. The new king was a Lutheran by upbringing and wanted to establish wider religious toleration in his new kingdom.

Fundamentally, however, it was prosperous, cohesive, and already a leading European and imperial power. Abroad, Britain's involvement in the War of the Spanish Succession had been brought to a satisfactory conclusion by the Treaty of Utrecht (1713). It had acquired new colonies in Gibraltar, Minorca, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Hudson's Bay, as well as trading concessions in the Spanish New World.

By contrast, Britain's rivals, France, Spain, and the Dutch Republic, were left weakened or war-weary by the conflict. It took France a decade to recover, and Spain and Holland were unable to reverse their military and economic decline.

As a result Britain was able to remain aloof from war on the Continent for a quarter of a century after the Hanoverian succession, and this protracted peace was to be crucial to the new dynasty's survival and success.

Agriculture was still the bedrock of the economy, but trade was increasing, and more men and women were employed in industry in Britain than in any other European nation. Wealth, however, was unequally distributed, with almost a third of the national income belonging to only 5 percent of the population.

From 1700 to the 1740s Britain's population remained stable at about seven million, and agricultural production increased. So, although men and women from Defoe's 6th and 7th categories could still die of hunger and hunger-related diseases, in most regions of Britain there was usually enough basic food to go around. This was crucial to social stability and to popular acquiescence in the new Hanoverian regime.

Robert Walpole

Walpole has often been referred to as Britain's first prime minister.

There is no doubt that from 1722 to his resignation in 1742 Walpole stabilized political power in himself and a section of the **Whig** party. Nor can there be any doubt that his foreign and economic policies helped the Hanoverian dynasty to become securely entrenched in Britain.

But it should not be forgotten that Walpole inherited a nation that was already wealthy and at peace.

He built on foundations that were already very strong. And, although he was to dominate political life for 20 years, he never succeeded in stamping out political, religious, and cultural opposition entirely, nor did he expect to do so.

The supremacy in the Commons was maintained by Walpole until 1742.

His power was based on the loyal support given to him by George I and George II. This enabled him to use all royal patronage for political ends, and Walpole's appointments to offices in the royal household, the church, the navy, the army, and the civil service were, whenever possible, made with an eye to his voting strength in the House of Commons.

By these means he built up the court and treasury party that was to be the core of Whig strength for many generations.

These methods, however, never gave him control of the House of Commons. His majorities at Westminster came about because his policy of peace abroad and low taxation at home appealed strongly to the independent country gentlemen who sat in Parliament.

Also, Walpole possessed remarkable powers in debate: his knowledge of the detail of government, particularly of finance, was unmatched, and his expression was clear, forceful, and always cogent. He never underestimated the powers of the Commons, and no minister, before or since, has shown such skill in its management.

Religious policy

Walpole's religious policy was also designed to foster social and political quiescence. Traditionally the Whig party had supported wider concessions to the Protestant dissenters (Protestants who believed in the doctrine of the Trinity but who refused to join in the worship of the state church, the Church of England).

They had been given freedom of worship under the Toleration Act of 1689 but were barred from full civil rights and access to university education in England.

In 1719 the Whigs had repealed two pieces of Tory legislation aimed against dissent, the Schism and the Occasional Conformity acts. These concessions ensured that Protestant dissenters would be able to establish their own educational academies and hold public office in the localities, if not in the state.

Walpole Legacy:

Although Walpole rejected the title of prime minister, which he regarded as a term of abuse, his control of the treasury, his management of the Commons, and the confidence that he enjoyed of the two sovereigns whom he served demonstrated the kind of leadership that was required to give stability and order to 18th-century politics. He used his power to maintain the supremacy of the Whig Party, as he understood it, and his prime concern was to forestall the machinations of the Jacobites, which he took very seriously, by securing the Hanoverian succession. He thought that this could best be achieved by prosperity and low taxation, which in turn depended on peace and on freedom from foreign entanglements. In order to achieve strong support for this policy he created as many obligations as possible among the politically powerful groups in the country. The Jacobite rebellion in 1745 demonstrated both the reality of his fears and the success of his policy.

George II, detail of an oil painting by Thomas Hudson, *c.* 1737; in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

George II (born November 10 [October 30, Old Style], 1683, Herrenhausen Palace, Hanover—died October 25, 1760, London) was the king of Great Britain and elector of Hanover from 1727 to 1760. Although he possessed sound political judgment, his lack of self-confidence caused him to rely heavily on his ministers, most notable of whom was **Sir Robert Walpole**.

George III

king of Great Britain and Ireland 1760–1820 and elector (1760–1814) and then king (1814–20) of Hanover, during a period when Britain won an empire in the Seven Years' War but lost its American colonies and then, after the struggle against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, emerged as a leading power in Europe. During the last years of his life (from 1811) he was intermittently mad, and his son, the future George IV, acted as regent.

The 1st Industrial Revolution (1760 – 1840) of Great Britain, transformed the country from an agrarian economy to an industrial one. This shift was driven by technological innovations, population growth, and a supportive government.
Key events and inventions
•**Spinning jenny**
Invented by James Hargreaves in 1764, this machine increased the quantity of yarn that could be produced
•**Power loom**
Invented by Edmund Cartwright in 1787, this machine increased the speed of cloth weaving
•**Steam engine**
Invented by James Watt in 1782, this machine powered factories and the first train
•**Winnowing machine**
Invented by Andrew Rodgers in 1737, this machine separated wheat from chaff
•**Steam-powered threshing machine**
Invented by Andrew Meikle in 1787, this machine separated grain from husk

Social and economic impacts

The Industrial Revolution led to urbanization, pollution, slums, and difficult working conditions. It also created new social concerns, such as politics and economic issues.

Other contributing factors
•Agricultural productivity increased, making it possible to feed the growing population
•The government encouraged innovation within the gun industry
•There was a pool of managerial and entrepreneurial skills
•There were available ports, rivers, canals, and roads to move raw materials and outputs

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