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A Refinement on the Principle of Resistance:

The Puritan Roots of Political Resistance in America

A Dissertation Submitted

By

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Abstract

Puritanism was a religious movement that historically developed with an innate tendency toward political resistance. Birthed out of the complexities of the English Reformation, Puritan non-conformity caused tensions between dissenters and the English monarchs. These tensions followed non-conformists when they chose to emigrate to Massachusetts Bay in order to establish a church and government favorable to their ideas of Congregationalism. Their experience in New England continued to demonstrate the Puritan penchant toward political resistance as they strove to develop and maintain a virtual independent, sovereign republic despite attempts by the royal government to bring the Northern colonies into conformity consistent with imperial colonial policies. The structure of government imposed upon Massachusetts with the second charter emphasized and enhanced the political divisions that had grown within the colony. These divisions developed into rebellious tendencies directed against the loyalist component of the colonial government and the royal government in Great Britain that eventually built up to the open hostilities of the American Revolution under the influence of the Puritan clergy of New England. This dissertation traces the persistence of Puritan political resistance and argues that it was a result of the history of English dissenters that produced and maintained it as a characteristic of Puritanism both in England and America and was one of the reasons why revolutionary hostilities of the latter half of the eighteenth century began first in New England.

The people are Protestants, and of the kind which is the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion. This is a persuasion not only favourable to liberty, but built upon it. I do not think, Sir, that the reason of this averseness in the dissenting churches from all that looks like absolute government, is not so much to be sought in their religious tenets as in their history…But the religion most prevalent in our Northern Colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent, and the protestantism of the Protestant religion.

- Edmund Burke, *Speech on Conciliation with America,* March 22, 1775

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Chapter 1

Introduction

With revolutionary tensions rising in Boston on the eve of the Revolution, loyalist John Mein, writing as "Sagittarius," published his scathing criticism of the local rebels: "In the days of George the third the Puritans of New England are exactly the same people as their forefathers were in the days of Charles the first. They are factious and turbulent, and ever in opposition to legal government."[1] Mein was echoing a sentiment long held by England and royalist sympathizers in the American colonies that regarded New England's penchant for radicalism as being associated with its Puritan past. He also argued that this extended back to the very founding of the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay Colonies: "From the first moment of their settlement they displayed their fractious and refractory spirit, as appears by an order of the Lords of Council in 1632."[2] This association of resistance and radicalism with dissenting Calvinists was not a creation on the soil of the New World. Rather, political resistance had its roots all the way back to the Protestant Reformation, continuing through the English Reformation, and was an innate characteristic of Puritanism itself at its Elizabethan inception.

When delving into the realm of political history, political scientists label this idea of noncompliance with governing authorities as political resistance theory. This term is a more recent academic construct that the Puritans and their contemporaries would have been unfamiliar with, but it is a useful term for historians nevertheless and one that this dissertation will use throughout. Political resistance theory as a concept was not a creation of early modern Europe, rather, the idea of resistance to tyranny had its roots in antiquity. Yet when Europe was wreaked

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[1] John Mein "Sagittarius", "Letter VI," *Sagittarius's letters and political speculations. Extracted from the Public ledger. Humbly inscribed to the very loyal and truly pious Doctor Samuel Cooper, Pastor of the Congregational Church in Brattle Street.* (Boston, 1775), 23.

[2] Ibid., 24.

with turmoil in the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation, political resistance became particularly relevant and its meaning and relevance expanded.[3] The history of ideas is a challenging approach to historiography because of the underlying reality that one cannot read the thoughts of historical figures, only the documents they left behind. However, exploring concepts such as political resistance is feasible because we can know the ideas that were prevalent during a particular era and how those ideas impacted societal groups and history. For the historian of Puritanism, the job is made a little easier due to the fact that Puritans left an impressive amount of documentation in letters, journals, printed materials, government records, and sermons.

Puritanism was primarily a religious movement in England and America that had a profound social and political impact. Born in the Elizabethan Era, Puritanism was birthed in an atmosphere of resistance to the monarchial imposition of conformity. While most Puritans claimed loyalty to the Crown, the beliefs that drove their actions had strong political implications that to conformists seemed dangerously close to treason. There was no Puritan tenet that stipulated active resistance against governmental authority (in fact, there were no "Puritan tenets" at all); however, when Puritans put what they believed into practice, friction with monarchial authority inevitably resulted. When given an opportunity to fashion government to their own liking, they tended toward republicanism in the absence of a monarch. This was true on both sides of the ocean. While the English experiment in a Puritan commonwealth was relatively short-lived, the Puritan government in New England proved to have a more enduring impact. Throughout the first few decades of rule in New England, Puritans created a virtual republic under what historians have considered the "benign neglect" of the monarchy.

[3] George Klosko. *History of Political Theory: An Introduction.* Vol. II: Modern. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 73.

Puritans throughout their transatlantic history had been reminded that the monarchy was not always benevolent to their cause. In England, Puritans were subjected to persecution (or at least prosecution) because of their non-conformity leading a significant number to emigrate to America. They carried their apprehensions regarding the monarchy and oppressive government with them to the New World. Throughout New England history, there were events that brought their fear of governmental tyranny to the forefront and impacted the evolution of Puritan political thought. New Englanders promoted certain political ideals: their representative form of government, the rights and liberties of Englishmen, their freedom to worship as they desired, and their personal property rights. These political ideals were shaped by circumstances in New England but had their roots in the essence of historical Puritanism.

The history of New England has been a favored one in American historiography. Simultaneously with the earliest events themselves, early New Englanders began histories of the northern colonies. Such authors as William Bradford, John Winthrop, Edward Johnson, Cotton Mather, and Thomas Hutchinson contributed to an impressive corpus of historiography that chronicled the establishment and evolution of Puritan settlement. More recent historiography has carried on this tradition. One of the notable characteristics of the New England Puritans, aside from their faith and theology, was their expression of political thought. As was true to their pragmatic bent, Puritans, in crafting a colonial society, spoke in the political language of their day out of the necessity of their challenges. Out of their experience there emerged a core of political ideals that New Englanders held to throughout their history. Puritan political thought, therefore, became a branch of historiography related to Puritan New England that has sought to explain its nature and relevance to later American historical developments.

The challenge to the historian seeking to study Puritan political ideas lies in the documentary evidence. There is certainly a wealth of extant primary sources from Puritans in England and America related to theology and ecclesiology. There are also numerous sermons, journals, and governmental records available both in archives and in print. The problem is that there is little documentation of the thinking that went into the political decisions made by the Puritan settlers of New England. There are records that show specific problems and the outcomes but rarely did the major players of the events take time to journal their thoughts and where their ideas came from.[4] John Winthrop's journal does provide some insight into his thoughts but then only on rare occasions and only concerning major issues confronting the colony government. Nevertheless, there was ample political activity in Massachusetts that allows the student of Puritan political thought to draw some conclusions and note trends.

Historians have identified the impact of Puritan political thought in the American Revolution and the creation of the Constitution. Many have identified the Puritan doctrine of the covenant as the primary ideology that impacted American political evolution. This point is highlighted in such works as Bernard Bailyn's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* in which the Puritan contribution to the American political landscape was mentioned but limited to covenantal theology and its relation to the idea of the social contract.[5]
While this certainly has validity, the idea of the covenant does not adequately explain the entirety of the history of New England political thought. Few historians have considered the specific role of Puritan political resistance in the formation of American government. The fact that full-

[4] J. S. Maloy. "Bodin's Puritan Readers and Radical Democracy in Early New England," *Journal of the History of Ideas.* 78, No. 1 (January, 2017), 16-18.

[5] Bernard Bailyn. *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution.* Fiftieth Anniversary Edition. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2017), 32.

fledged resistance to the English government in the years leading up to the Revolution began, grew, and disseminated from New England makes this point particularly relevant.

One of the common mistakes that historians of Puritanism make is treating it as monolithic, not taking into account the spectrum of beliefs and practices that could be included under the Puritan umbrella.[6] The same is true of the political history of Colonial New England. While many of the core values persisted throughout, the politics of the founding Puritans was markedly different than the politics of New Englanders on the eve of the eighteenth century. This was largely due to the challenges they faced during successive generations. More significantly, change in politics came as a result of the evolving need for the role of government in New England. At its beginnings, government was needed to erect institutions and, at times, for the mere survival of the emigrants. Later, government was needed to protect the rights of New Englanders and to preserve the way of life they had come to know in the colonies. T. H. Breen highlighted this challenge for historians of New England politics when he argued, "The failure to take account of the evolution of Puritan political ideas not only has made it difficult to explain long-range intellectual shifts, but also had obscured the political flexibility and originality of each generation."[7]

The trajectory of New England Puritan political thought seemed to come to maturity in the era following the establishment of the second charter. The government that was mandated by William III retained the same institutions and components, with all its inherent tensions, up to the time of the American Revolution nearly a century later. Some historians argue that

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[6] This has been one of the criticisms of Perry Miller who, although he produced a monumental work on Puritan intellectualism, failed to reflect the diversity of thought present within Puritanism.; Perry Miller. *The New England Mind: The 17th Century*. (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1954).

[7] T. H. Breen. *The Character of the Good Ruler: A Study of Puritan Political Ideas in New England, 1630-1730*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), xii-xiii.

Puritanism, as it existed from the time of the founding of New England, was experiencing declension or fell prey to Enlightenment thinking. While the Puritan legacy continued, it was true that it was no longer the determining political force that it once was. However, the establishment of societal institutions by the previous generations of Puritans had created a home for political resistance in the New World that would later bear fruit on the eve of the Revolution. Furthermore, Puritanism in New England had been effective in creating a cultural milieu that continued to bear traits of its Puritan heritage that included a penchant for political resistance long after the waning of the Puritan hegemony.

One of the underlying controversies regarding Puritan political thought is whether or not it even existed. As historian Charles George has commented, "Puritan political thought is almost as non-existent as puritan theology, but it flourishes in the canon of modern historiography."[8] George is expressing the widespread opinion among historians that there was no original body of political thought that could be uniquely ascribed to Puritanism. T. H. Breen agrees with this, acknowledging that the notable figures of Puritan New England "were not great political theorists" in the same vein as Hobbes, Harrington, Sidney, or Locke.[9] Nevertheless, from their Elizabethan origins, Puritan belief and practice carried with them political implications. To be a non-conformist was to challenge the ruling powers. Conformists regarded religious dissent as being akin to treason. Judging from later English history, that opinion was justified. Whether they chose to be or not, Puritans were political and they had definite opinions as to what government was and what it should be.

[8] C. H. George, "Puritanism as History and Historiography," *Past and Present,* 41 (1968), 101.
[9] Breen. *The Character of the Good Ruler*, xx.

Historians have documented the development of Puritan political thought as it originated in England and as it was carried to the New World.[10] Historians who delve into the details of early New England politics acknowledge that emigrating Puritans were the products of English society, culture, and political thought. There is an expansive body of historiography that covers the myriad of English Puritan politics, particularly as it pertained to the eventual English Civil Wars. While New Englanders interacted with and sympathized with Puritan revolutionaries in the mid seventeenth century on the other side of the Atlantic, Puritan politics forged a unique path in the New World. Sharing similar origins as their Puritan brethren back in the homeland, New England Puritans were a relatively more homogenous group and their circumstances in establishing a society in New England created a different expression of Puritanism. By the mid-seventeenth century, Puritans in the colonies and back home shared many similarities but had become two different groups. Puritans back in England expressed their Puritanism by destroying existing institutions, Puritans in New England by creating new ones.

While New Englanders have revered their Puritan heritage and honored it with numerous historical chronicles, writings on Puritan political thought were not noted until the nineteenth century. This first generation of historiography has been identified as the Whig interpretation of Puritan political thought. Like the Whig historians of British history, these historians saw New England Puritans as the progenitors of modern liberal political thought in America. The consensus of these historians was that the fountainhead of these political beliefs lay in their Christian faith. Therefore, the unyielding nature of Puritan religion was a help and not a hindrance to religious freedom. Historians of this school of thought included George Bancroft in

[10] Kenneth Shipps. "The 'Political Puritan'," *Church History.* 45, No. 2, (June, 1976), 196-205; Nicholas Tyacke. "Revolutionary Puritanism in Anglo-American Perspective," *Huntington Library Quarterly.* 78, No. 4, (Winter, 2015), 745-769.

his *History of the United States,* John G. Palfrey in his *History of New England,* and Williston Walker's *History of the Congregational Churches*.[11] Later critics of this Whig interpretation indicate the overt bias and oversimplification of this school's conclusions. Furthermore, they claimed that, despite the commendable details of research these historians present, they failed to recognize Puritan politics for what it was in the context of its own time but instead saw it as an inevitable connection to the American founding.[12] This Whig approach to historiography was critiqued by historian John M. Murrin when he called it a "venerable conceptual scheme that is now senile." He explained that "the authors explain the period in categories radically different from those invoked by contemporaries…by focusing on signposts pointing ahead."[13]

Whig political interpretations were inspired by such writings as Henry Care's *English Liberties* in the latter part of the seventeenth century that coincided with the time of the second Massachusetts charter. While unpopular with royalists in England, Care's writings found a welcome reception within Puritan and eventually revolutionary political thought in America. Care propounded the idea that English liberties were inherent within English history and culture extending back to the Magna Carta. The implication that caused concern to the royalists was that the monarchy was constrained by English rights and liberties. The New Englanders that participated in the Andros Rebellion shared this political view, often referring to the Magna Carta when looking to support their contention that English liberties followed them in their emigration across the ocean.[14] This Whig interpretation of Puritan political thought is clearly

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[11] Allen Carden. "God's Church and a Godly Government: A Historiography of Church-State Relations in Puritan New England," *Fides et historia: official publication of the Conference on Faith and History.* 19, no. 1 (1987).

[12] Jane H. Pease. "On Interpreting Puritan History: Williston Walker and the Limitations of the Nineteenth-Century View," *The New England Quarterly.* 42 (2), (June, 1969), 232-252.

[13] John M. Murrin. "The Myths of Colonial Democracy and Royal Decline in Eighteenth-Century America: A Review Essay (Book Review)." *Cithara* 5, no. 1 (1965 Nov 1), 54.

[14] Increase Mather. "A Narrative of the Miseries of New-England, by Reason of an Arbitrary Government Erected there Under Sir Edmond Andros," in W.H. Whitmore, ed. *The Andros Tracts: Being a Collection of*

seen in Palfrey's *History of New England.* Palfrey, in studying New England Puritanism, begins by looking at the political background of English Puritans, even extending into the Interregnum. Palfrey claimed that "in politics, the Puritan was the Liberal of his day." Puritan religious and political beliefs "impelled him to limit the assumption of human government." English Puritans were the "architects of a new system" that was based on "public consent, and to be administered for the public benefit." [15] New England's political institutions, according to Palfrey, were the future confederacy of states in microcosm.[16] With an obvious bias, Palfrey's three volume work served to defend every aspect of New England Puritanism and made a case on their behalf even in instances of their religious intolerance.

The Whig historians sought to make the Puritans into the progenitors of modern liberties. This is understandable in that the Puritan movement certainly contributed to the political landscape of the seventeenth century, a time when momentous political thought was being created that greatly impacted the radical political shifts of the eighteenth century. However, if one were to look for champions of early democratic politics and individual rights and freedoms, Puritans, in many aspects, would be poor candidates for this historical role. This is where the Whig approach to Puritan history breaks down and has led to it having a poor duration into more recent historiography. Whig historians' approach failed to examine Puritanism and its relationship with political thought in its own historical context. Rather, in their haste to connect Puritan thought with later political developments, they glossed over many of the idiosyncrasies

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*Pamphlets and Official Papers Issued During the Period Between the Overthrow of the Andros Government and the Establishment of the Second Charter of Massachusetts.*Vol. II. (Boston: The Prince Society, 1869), 34.

[15] John Gorham Palfrey. *History of New England.* Vol. II. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1865), 277-278.

[16] Ibid., 12.

of Puritans and the uniqueness of their circumstances that led them to embrace politics to begin with.

The backlash against the nineteenth century Whig interpretation mirrored an overall shift in how Americans regarded their Puritan forebears. In the years leading up to the 300th Anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, historians began to take a more critical view of the New England founders. Nowhere was this seen more clearly than in Boston as it geared up for the festivities and ceremonies. Despite the advocacy of the descendants of the Puritan founders, city officials and dignitaries began to regard the Puritans' faults as overshadowing their virtues. Puritans were something to be apologized for rather than praised.[17] One descendant, Charles Francis Adams, Jr., presented such an apology in *Three Episodes in Massachusetts History* (1892), in which he identified the Puritans as "a persecuting race."[18] It was during this time that journalist and satirist, H. L. Mencken, crafted his famous commentary on Puritans as people who were "haunted by the fear that someone, somewhere may be happy."[19] As similar attitudes began to gain popularity, the reputation of New England Puritans became tarnished and anniversary celebrations were amended to reflect this apologetic stance.[20]

While not delving into Puritan politics exclusively, one work by a progressive, Marxist historian added to the growing criticism of New England Puritans. Max Weber in his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) argued that Calvinists such as the Puritans contributed to the growth of capitalism.[21] Weber had further tarnished the reputation of the New

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[17] Francis J. Bremer. "Remembering – and Forgetting – John Winthrop and the Puritan Founders," *Massachusetts Historical Review*, 6 (2004), 38-69.

[18] Charles Francis Adams, Jr. *Three Episodes of Massachusetts History.* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), 465-466.

[19] H. L. Mencken quoted in Francis J. Bremer, introduction to Samuel Eliot Morrison, *Those Misunderstood Puritans.* (North Brookfield, Mass., 1992), 3.

[20] Bremer, "Remembering," 60.

[21] Max Weber. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (New York: Scribner, 1958).

England Puritans by suggesting that their motives were financial rather than religious and made them even less admirable. This gave further academic support to the waning of Puritan scholarship during the Progressive Era.

Just when it seemed that the Massachusetts Puritans would forever be relegated to the dustbins of history, a historian produced a watershed work that decidedly rescued their reputation and indelibly changed the landscape of American Puritan historiography. Perry Miller, in his work, *The New England Mind: The 17th Century* (1939), recast the Puritan image from hyper-religious killjoys into that of profound intellectuals.[22] For the first time, someone had delved into the origins and life of Puritan intellectual thought and revealed it to be far richer and more complex than what had previously been understood. Miller followed this up with his *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* in 1953. This work was less a sequel than it was revisiting the ideas presented in *The 17th Century* only placing them in their historical context.[23] Miller inspired a new generation of Puritan historiographers and the intellectual approach has been carried on in such works as Robert Middlekauff's *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals 1596-1728* (1971), and Darren Staloff's *The Making of an American Thinking Class: Intellectuals & Intelligentsia in Puritan Massachusetts* (1998).[24]

In the wake of Miller's work, Puritan historiography enjoyed something of a Renaissance. Notable historians such as Edmund Morgan and Francis Bremer became prolific in examining Puritan life and thought. While Morgan made an important contribution to the study of Puritan politics by editing a collection of primary sources on the topic, he nevertheless threw a

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[22] Miller. *The New England Mind: The 17th Century*.

[23] Perry Miller. *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province.* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1998).

[24] Robert Middlekauff. *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals 1596-1728*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); Darren Staloff. *The Making of an American Thinking Class: Intellectuals & Intelligentsia in Puritan Massachusetts*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

damper on the increasing popularity of portraying Puritan New England as future America in microcosm in his review of Alan Heimert's work.[25] In this newer era of historiography, historians did not whitewash the Puritans' shortcomings but neither did they disregard their accomplishments and legacy. Unlike their nineteenth century precursors, more recent historians did not declare their unqualified admiration but, rather, presented a more objective and guarded view of New England Puritans.

In examining the historiography of Puritan political thought, some notable works have been produced that re-examine the political life of Puritan New England while attempting to distance themselves from the Whig interpretation of previous generations. T. H. Breen, in his *The Character of the Good Ruler: A Study of Puritan Political Ideas in New England, 1630-1730* (1970), presents an examination of Puritan political thought not as monolithic but, rather, as evolving over the course of a century.[26] Breen's approach is more pragmatic and the relevance of this work has made it the inspiration for this present study. However, Breen portrays the Puritan quest to define the good ruler as the driving force behind the evolution of Puritan political thought. The present study will not seek to contradict Breen's argument, but rather highlight an aspect of the topic that Breen did not examine in depth, namely, the important role of Puritan political resistance in shaping New England's government and the political responses of its people.

Most notably and pertinent to this present study is Michael Walzer's study of the Puritan origins of radical political thought in *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of*

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[25] Edmund S. Morgan, ed. *Puritan Political Ideas 1558-1794.* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003); Mark Peterson. "Why They Mattered: The Return of Politics to Puritan New England," *Modern Intellectual History*, 10, No. 3, (2013), 685; Edmund S. Morgan, review of Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind from the Great Awakening to the Revolution. William and Mary Quarterly*, 24, No. 3, (July, 1967), 459.

[26] Breen. *The Character of the Good Ruler*.

Radical Politics (1965). In it, Walzer presents a more objective and politically nuanced examination of Puritan political thought, particularly that of political resistance and its radical manifestations, while bolstering many of the claims of the Whig historians. He argues that Calvinist Puritans were primarily responsible for "the appearance of revolutionary organization and radical ideology."[27] Ultimately, the triumph of Puritan politics coincided with the emergence of modern political thought. His compelling arguments will be examined in detail later in this study.

Two more recent works have revisited the realm of Puritan political thought: David D. Hall's *A Reforming People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England* (2011), and Michael P. Winship's *Godly Republicanism: Puritans, Pilgrims, and a City on a Hill* (2012).[28] Hall and Winship have been two of the more prolific historians of Puritan New England in recent years. Interestingly, these are not the only titles that they have produced on the heels of each other. Both historians examined the transatlantic nature of Puritanism in Winship's *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America* (2018), and Hall's *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (2019).[29]

While both historians look at Puritan political thought, they each focus on different eras with different emphases. Winship examines the earlier years of New England political development, making the argument that the Separatists at Plymouth had significant influence on Massachusetts as a whole, contrary to the way they have been regarded by such historians as

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[27] Michael Walzer. *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 1.

[28] David D. Hall. *A Reforming People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England*. (New York: A. A. Knopf, 2011); Michael P. Winship. *Godly Republicanism: Puritans, Pilgrims, and a City on a Hill*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012).

[29] Michael P. Winship. *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018); David D. Hall. *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2019.

Perry Miller.[30] Hall picks up from where Winship leaves off demonstrating how later Puritan politics built upon the republican values that originated from within their Calvinist Christianity. Pertinent to this dissertation, Winship ends his book referring to the loyalist writings of Joseph Galloway who wrote during the American Revolution. In it, Galloway attributed American rebelliousness and anti-monarchism to English Puritan roots and the 1629 Massachusetts charter.[31]

It is inevitable that, by reviving the study of Puritan political thought, modern day historians would make comparisons with Winship and Hall's Whig historian predecessors. The difference lies in the fact that, while both historians examine political developments originating from Puritan ecclesiology, neither portray them as the direct precursors of the Revolutionary Founders. Neither do either of them display the sycophantic bias of nineteenth century Whig historians. Nevertheless, this is where some historians find the weakness in Winship and Hall's revival of Puritan politics. Some comment that in their conclusions, they conflate Massachusetts with America and come dangerously close to Whig history.[32] However, Winship ends his account too chronologically early to extend his conclusions to the Revolution. Hall certainly discusses the relevance of New England Puritan politics to modern political issues, however, he ends his detailed examination of New England history in the 1660s long before the more rebellious behavior had manifested. In all fairness, while both delve deeply into Puritan politics, Whig history is difficult to find in either of their accounts.

This brings up an important point about more modern studies of Puritan political thought. This realm of historiography has largely been neglected in more recent years which is the reason

[30] Winship, *Godly Republicanism*, 134.
[31] Ibid, 249.
[32] Peterson. "Why They Mattered," 683-696.

why Winship and Hall's works are so noteworthy. The reason that is often given is that the combining of Protestant Christianity with political thought had fallen out of favor with the advent of American fundamentalism and the rise of the New Right. Scholars who may have been interested in approaching this topic hesitated for fear of appearing that they were bolstering patriotic fundamentalist rhetoric that was popular in the latter part of the twentieth century.[33] This line of thinking is still present in the writings of academicians such as sociologist Milan Zafirovski who seek to squelch the arguments that Puritans promoted any concept of rights and liberties or republican form of government. In his article, "The Most Cherished Myth: Puritanism and Liberty Reconsidered and Revised," Zafirovski redefines Puritan government as being totalitarian and conflates this totalitarianism with more modern fundamentalism. His conclusion is that Puritan governmental repression is lurking just around the corner today if we are not on our guard to counter it.[34] As Winship, Hall and others have shown, making this judgement on the Puritans requires dismissing a significant amount of documentary research. In fact, Hall emphatically states in his conclusion that it is not "easy to find authoritarians and authoritarianism (as we understand these words) among the colonists."[35]

The history of New England has been a favored subject over the course of American history. On a number of occasions, individuals carefully gathered documentary evidence and compiled histories that have shown a light on New England's Puritan past. The earliest notable works included Edward Johnson's *Wonder-Working Providence* that related New England history from 1628 to 1651 and the classic, William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*.[36] In the

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[33] Ibid., 685-686.

[34] Milan Zafirovski. "The Most Cherished Myth: Puritanism and Liberty Reconsidered and Revisited," *The American Sociologist,* 38, No. 1, (March, 2007), 23-59.

[35] Hall, *A Reforming People*, 193.

[36] Edward Johnson and John Franklin Jameson. *Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence, 1628-1651.* Modern facsimile reprint. (New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1910); William Bradford. *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*. (New York: The Modern Library, 1981).

nineteenth century, historians edited John Winthrop's original manuscripts into a two-volume work on the history of New England covering the years 1630 to 1649.[37] Early in the eighteenth century, Cotton Mather published his work of New England history, *Magnalia Christi Americana.*[38] Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson, a descendant of Anne Hutchinson, compiled a collection of primary sources that were extant in New England in the years leading up to the American Revolution. Utilizing these sources, he completed his own account of New England history, despite the fact that his work was interrupted by rebellious Bostonians protesting the Stamp Act who burned his home and many of the documents he had collected.[39] These histories have proven useful for this present study.

This dissertation will engage the historiography in several ways. First, it will adopt the pragmatic approach of T. H. Breen by demonstrating that Puritan political thought came primarily as a result of specific events that prompted a political response. While the Puritans were an erudite people and appreciated their legacy of intellectual thought, when it came to government, the Puritans were influenced primarily by their faith and necessity. Second, it will highlight an aspect of Puritan political thought that has been discussed by historians but not given the prominence it deserves, namely, political resistance. Much of New England political thought can best be interpreted with an understanding of this concept. Third, it will consider the arguments of the Whig historians in a new light while avoiding their over-simplification of

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[37] John Winthrop, James Savage, ed. *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649.* Vols. I and II. (Boston: Phelps and Farnham, 1825).

[38] Cotton Mather. *Magnalia Christi Americana.* Vol. I and II. Modern reprint of 1853 edition. (Seattle, Washington: The Library of Early American Literature, 2020).

[39] Thomas Hutchinson. *A Collection of Original Papers Relative to the History of the Colony of Massachusetts-bay.* Vols. I & II. (Boston: Thomas and John Fleet, 1769); Thomas Hutchinson. *The History of the Colony of Massachuset's Bay.* Vols. I and II. Second edition. (London: M. Richardson, 1765).

American political history and the conflation of Massachusetts political developments with that of America overall.

In more recent years, institutional academics has shied away from what it considered outdated or narrowly focused historical research that seeks to revive the idea of the Protestant Christian roots of American politics.[40] However, to neglect the valuable political contributions of the Puritan forefathers is to lose an important perspective on where the Revolutionary Fathers obtained many of their biases and ideas when it came to nation-making. It is unlikely that John Winthrop would have welcomed an invitation to sit with the delegates of 1776 to declare their independence from the monarchy nor to proclaim individual rights and freedoms. However, hidden in between the lines of the U. S. Constitution are the remnants of the political thoughts and structures Winthrop and his Puritan brethren used to build a society in the rugged wilderness of Massachusetts Bay, one of the most obvious being the fact that a written Constitution was something of value at all. This present study will examine another of those important contributions: the ideas Puritans embraced regarding political resistance. By their nature, Puritans were resisters to political and religious forces. They were not passive, willing to practice their piety in peace and solitude. Rather, they were non-conformists and the "hotter sort of Protestants." They actively engaged politically and pushed back when their convictions were confronted. This skill set, honed in the tumultuous political atmosphere of England and strengthened on the shores of the New World, came in handy when colonial revolutionaries needed political weaponry for their cause.

This research study is a work of religious and political history. Puritanism was noted for its depth of the connectedness between these two concepts and any attempt at dissecting one

[40] Peterson. "Why They Mattered," 685-686.

away from the other fails to consider historical context. However, while Whiggish interpretations of Colonial American history lack the luster they once had, there is merit in re-examining the intersection of religion and politics based on empirical research. Research to support the arguments of this dissertation have been obtained through an extensive survey of published and unpublished primary sources. In particular, the writings of prominent New England Puritans who had much to say about politics and government have been pertinent and useful. In addition, government records from the colony and its townships as well as those from the Royal Court have provided insight on the subject.

This present study will attempt to address the issue of the role of political resistance in Puritan political development. It will first consider: How did the idea of Puritan political resistance develop historically and politically? It will examine the English Reformation origins of Puritanism and why, from its inception, Puritanism had political implications regarding the institution of the monarchy that were dictated by their religious beliefs. In examining New England Puritanism, this study will discuss how historical events elicited the manifestation of the Puritan aversion to tyranny and oppressive government and how this impacted the evolution of Puritan political thought. In order to provide a better understanding of Puritan political thought, it will consider the following: Did Puritan political development arise out of theoretical political ideology or was it a pragmatic response to specific events and circumstances? Or was the reality something that was a product of the two? Historians such as Perry Miller based their work on the idea that Puritans were deeply intellectual which dictated their social and political behavior.[41] On the other hand, T. H. Breen demonstrated that Puritan politics followed and was shaped by their

[41] Miller. *The New England Mind: The 17th Century*.

reaction to specific events.[42] This study will demonstrate that Puritans understood the political thought of their time but adapted and shaped it to suit their immediate needs.

The convergence of religious and political belief in Puritanism is a key concept in the study of Puritan political thought. However, it is an important distinction that this present study, by connecting Puritanism to the American Revolution, is not making the argument that it was religion that caused the rebellion. There is an entire body of historiography devoted to that discussion with opinions that span from the idea that the Revolution was born out of purely secular ideology to those that identify religion as the catalyst for the conflict.[43] That historical debate only connects tangentially to this present study. Rather, this discussion argues that the political resistance present at the outset of the American Revolution owed much to the historical past of the Puritan milieu of New England. It is for that reason that an examination of the historical experiences of Puritans from their inception up to the American Revolution will be a key focus of this present study. As Edmund Burke argued before Parliament, the reason for the political resistance of the Puritans of New England "is not so much to be sought in their religious tenets as in their history."[44]

This study will be based on several assumptions. First, it will consider political resistance as any resistance or pushback against government authority. This can be passive such as when persons or people groups chose not to comply with the dictates of government. For example, this will be seen in instances when colonists refused to comply with imposed taxation or the Massachusetts General Court ignored royal demands to send delegates to London or surrender its

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[42] Breen. *The Character of the Good Ruler*.

[43] For a thorough discussion of the historiography on this topic, see the Introduction of J. Patrick Mullins. *Father of Liberty: Jonathan Mayhew and the Principles of the American Revolution.* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2017), 7-18.

[44] Albert S. Cook, ed. *Edmund Burke's Speech on Conciliation with America* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), 23.

charter. Political resistance could also be active such as when individuals or groups performed actions that violated the mandates of governmental authority. For example, this was the case when non-conformists chose to preach their own sermons instead of using the Book of Common Prayer or published sermons that presented ideas contrary to what the official church promoted. There was also the observed political resistance in the form of protest. This will more commonly be related to the unrest related to the actions of the Andros administration or the mob actions that protested the Stamp Act. An extreme form of political resistance involves the taking up of arms in order to overturn government entities or structures that will be observed during the Andros Rebellion and the outset of the American Revolution. This study will also consider another form of political resistance that will be termed preemptive resistance. This type of resistance identified the potential for arbitrary or overreaching government and pushed for ways to circumvent or control that potential so that more active forms of resistance would not be necessary. This type of resistance is key to understanding the creation of government checks and balances and the insistence on representative government in colonial Massachusetts. Preemptive resistance is different than the normal processes of government functioning in that these safeguards had to be agitated for rather than passively waiting for them to happen. This will be observed during the time of the push for positive laws in Massachusetts.

This study will also concentrate almost exclusively on the colony of Massachusetts. While some of the events that occurred in Massachusetts were mirrored in other Northern colonies such as Connecticut, Massachusetts dominated the political landscape of Colonial New England. Massachusetts was also the primary instigator of political resistance in the Northern colonies at the time of the American Revolution as identified by contemporaries, both American and British. Furthermore, the documentary evidence is most plentiful and easily accessible for

Massachusetts than the other colonies. It is for these reasons that this dissertation will assume that the story of Puritan political resistance in American can best be told through the history of the colony of Massachusetts.

This dissertation follows the chronological trajectory of historical Puritanism from its Reformation origins all the way up to New England political thought on the eve of the Revolution. The second chapter will examine how Protestantism from its inception during the Reformation and the English Reformation carried with it political implications that cast a wary eye toward governmental repression. It will examine the origins of radical political thought among the Marian exiles and how those ideas eventually found a home among Elizabethan Puritans. The third chapter will look at the emergence of the politically oriented Puritan that emerged from the political and religious conflicts under the first two Stuart kings. It will examine the political background of those who chose to emigrate to Massachusetts and created a colonial government. The fourth chapter will look at the establishment of government in Massachusetts and how political resistance persisted even when Puritans held the reins of power. The fifth chapter will examine the political events of the colony following the Restoration and the assertion of royal power in the colony. The Andros Rebellion will be characterized as a defining moment when Puritan political resistance boiled to the surface resulting in the most dramatic manifestation of resistance to royal government in the colonies prior to the Revolution. The sixth chapter will then consider the political landscape of New England under the second charter and the expression of revolutionary political resistance inspired by the Congregational ministry at the beginning of the American Revolution. Massachusetts, in many ways, served as the political soul for the colonies and other colonies looked there for its ideas in creating an independent nation. Writing in the early nineteenth century, De Tocqueville commented on the influence of New

England when he wrote, “The principles of New England spread at first to the neighboring States; then they passed successively to the more distant ones; and at length they imbued the whole Confederation.”[45]

In concluding this dissertation, the issue of relevance of this study will be discussed. The Puritan idea of political resistance found its way into the fabric of the U. S. Constitution with its system of checks and balances. Furthermore, this topic has relevance to the present day since few times in American history has there been such outspoken concerns by the American people regarding government tyranny from both sides of the political spectrum.[46] There is value in reminding a new generation why our predecessors shared these same concerns.

[45] Alexis de Tocqueville in John Gorham Palfrey. *The History of New England.* Vol. I. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1865), x.

[46] Michael Kelley. “Growing State Tyranny: Foretaste of the End Time?” *Beyond Today.* https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-magazine/growing-state-tyranny-foretaste-of-the-end-time; Waller R. today, look to the past,” *The Conversation.* https://theconversation.com/to-defeat-tyranny-today-look-to-the-past-81014

Chapter 2

"The prince may be resisted and yet the ordinance of God not violated": The Reformation Origins of Puritan Political Resistance

The Puritans that left England in order to set up a new life in America brought with them religious and ideological thought inherent in their Puritan heritage. What was novel about the New England endeavor was the opportunity, free from the pressures from English authorities who were adversarial to their cause. The ecclesiastical and governmental structures they erected there were derivative and found their roots in the English Reformation that had created Puritanism. Even further back, one can trace elements of Puritan political thought to the very founding of Protestantism itself. As historian T. H. Breen has noted, the founding Puritans were not political theorists with original thought.[47] The story of New England is the story of what emigrating Puritans chose to do with those borrowed ideas.

The Puritans' aversion to tyrannical government can more formally be identified as political resistance theory. While many writers of political thought trace political resistance back to antiquity, it became most relevant in early modern England with the dawn of the Reformation. Notable reformers from the continent as well as Huguenots during the era of the French Wars of Religion made significant contributions to the Puritan justification for resistance to magisterial tyranny. As the relationship between Englishmen and their monarch changed over the centuries, so too did their thinking regarding political resistance and the concept of sovereignty. In the aftermath of the English Civil Wars the scales of thinking regarding sovereignty tipped in favor of the people and Parliament. Although the monarchy was reinstated during the Restoration, England continued to invest significant sovereignty onto Parliament and the English people. So

[47] Breen. *The Character of the Good Ruler*, xx.

much so that when the American colonies assigned blame for repressive taxation on the eve of the Revolution, they pointed to Parliament first and only later faulted the King.[48] With the tumultuous relationship between the English people, Parliament, and the monarch constantly evolving over the course of the seventeenth century, this proved to be fertile ground for the proliferation of ideas by political theorists. In America, the ideas produced in the mother country during this era had even greater ramifications in the latter eighteenth century. New England Puritans, while not directly contributing to the body of political thought, played a significant role in those ideas taking root on American soil.

In discussing political resistance theory as it pertains to the Puritans of New England, it is important to delineate exactly what political resistance theory is being discussed according to current scholarship on the subject. Political scientists have identified the political resistance theory at the time of the American Revolution as being primarily Lockean, however, more recent scholarship has recognized the significant influence by Reformed Protestantism. This amalgamation of these two lines of thinking has been identified as Lockean-Reformed Political Resistance Theory. While acknowledging the important contribution of John Locke to Revolutionary political thought, this present study will concentrate on the Reformed Protestant aspect of political resistance theory since that is the most relevant to Puritan political thought. Scholars have furthermore delineated a dichotomy within Reformed Protestant Political Resistance Theory. One vein of thought can be identified as Continental Reformed, which represents the political resistance theory that was promulgated by John Calvin, French Huguenots, and other Reformed Protestants on the Continent. Continental Protestant Political Resistance Theory came to have a different and more radical flavor when introduced onto

[48] Brendan McConville. *The King's Three Faces: The Rise & Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776.* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 281-282.

English soil. This has been identified as Anglo Protestant Political Resistance Theory and is the most pertinent when discussing Puritanism and its political implications.[49] As this present study will indicate, the Puritans were the heirs of Continental Protestant Political Resistance Theory by taking it and adopting it to their own needs creating the Anglo tradition of Protestant Political Resistance Theory. Throughout this dissertation, these distinctions will remain academic and more often will only be referred to generically as political resistance theory.

To trace the evolution of political resistance theory, it is relevant to begin with the Protestant Reformation and its immediate aftermath. By necessity, Protestantism was indelibly married to regional political structures both as a result of contemporary norms as well as for its very survival. Without some form of governmental protection, Martin Luther's movement would have met an early death at the hands of Catholic reprisals. Instead, he and his early Reformation teachings enjoyed the protection of Frederick III in Saxony. John Calvin found a safe haven in Geneva away from the dangers faced by the Huguenots back in France. Their magisterial alliances were the primary reason that the more radical theories of political resistance did not arise directly from the teachings of Luther or Calvin.

Nevertheless, Luther has been traditionally associated (both during his lifetime and in the historiography) with presenting ideas that led to fomenting social unrest and removing the lid off of the status quo that encouraged resistance against governmental authority. Within a few years of the birth of the Reformation, the notorious Peasants' War of 1524 erupted that eventually resulted in the loss of approximately 100,000 peasants.[50] Catholics of the time immediately

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[49] William T. Reddinger. "The American Revolution, Romans 13, and the Anglo Tradition of Reformed Protestant Resistance Theory." *American Political Thought* 5, no. 3 (2016): 359–90. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26543267.

[50] Jarrett A. Carty. *God and Government: Martin Luther's Political Thought*. (Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 90.

blamed Luther and his radical ideas for the tragedy and used it to demonstrate the danger of undermining the authority of the Roman Catholic church. Luther responded to these accusations by vehemently condemning the peasants' uprising in his *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants.*[51] In it, Luther not only condemned the actions of the peasants but considered them "highwaymen and murderers" and asserted that they "doubly deserved death in body and soul."[52] As if this were not emphatic enough, he also encouraged authorities to "stab, smite, slay" in their attempt to put down the rebellion.[53] This approach was not a new one for Luther. He showed the same contempt for radicalism in his *Letter to the Princes of Saxony Concerning the Rebellious Spirit.* In it, Luther condemned the radical heretic Thomas Müntzer and encouraged the authorities to put down his rebellious actions since "only thus can we eliminate the causes of sedition, to which the mob is otherwise all too much inclined."[54]

It is clear from these early writings where Luther stood when it came to political and religious radicalism. Above all, good Lutherans respected the temporal authorities that God had placed over them in compliance with the scriptural admonition in Romans 13:1: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities."[55] In his *Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed* of 1523, Luther explained that there were "two classes, the first belonging to the kingdom of God, the second to the kingdom of the world."[56] If everyone were a true Christian, there would be no need for temporal authorities. However, in this world, there are those who are not of the spiritual kingdom and their tendency for lawlessness makes the temporal authorities necessary. In such a world of two kingdoms, "neither one is sufficient in the

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[51] Ibid., 94.
[52] Jarrett A. Carty, ed. *Divine Kingdom, Holy Order: The Political Writings of Martin Luther*. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012), 377.
[53] Ibid., 381.
[54] Ibid., 352.
[55] Ibid., 377.
[56] Ibid., 111.

world without the other."[57] God had ordained the temporal kingdom and Christians should comply with that authority and "esteem the sword or governmental authority as highly as the estate of marriage, or husbandry, or any other calling which God has instituted."[58] But what if that authority were to command one to obey the Pope or do something that violated their convictions as a Protestant? Luther identified those rulers as tyrants and they were "commanding where [they] have neither the right nor the authority."[59] Those under such a tyrant could refuse to comply and then receive whatever repercussions that may result from that response. However, at no point does Luther condone individuals taking up arms to resist that temporal authority.

Luther's teaching was challenged when the Holy Roman Empire sought to forcefully bring the renegade Protestant German electorates into compliance with Rome in 1530. The response was armed resistance by the Protestant states, a response that effectively preserved Protestantism within the electorates. Yet, if the Protestant authorities had taken Luther's teachings literally, armed resistance to the authority of the Holy Roman Empire was not justified. However, Luther did what many historians considered an "about face" and supported the actions of the Protestant princes. In his *Dr. Martin Luther's Warning to His Dear German People,* Luther framed the resistance as self-defense in the face of actions by the Catholics that he considered a violation of the law.[60] As historian Jarrett Carty has contended, this apparent change of Luther's mind was consistent with his two kingdoms teaching. By resisting the Holy Roman Empire, the Protestant princes were restoring temporal authority (the duty of every Christian) back to the world.[61]

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[57] Ibid., 114.
[58] Ibid., 120.
[59] Ibid., 130.
[60] Carty. *God and Government,* 102.
[61] Ibid., 104-105.

While not a seedbed of radical political thought, Lutheranism contributed to political resistance theory through its lesser magistrate doctrine and its delineation of what constitutes tyranny. In 1548, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V enacted the Augsburg Interim that sought to quell Protestantism and force compliance to the Catholic Church. In defiance of this, a group of Lutheran pastors, shielded within the city of Magdeburg, penned and signed the Magdeburg Confession. In it, the pastors felt compelled to "distinguish different degrees of offense or injury" by a higher magistrate.[62] Of the four levels they described, the third and fourth levels were the only ones in which the higher magistrate was deemed a tyrant and resistance to authority was justified. In the third level, following the command of a higher magistrate would lead to the commission of sin. Only noncompliance and not armed resistance was justified, "lest in beating back injury, other higher laws be violated."[63] However, with the fourth and most egregious form of tyranny, the higher magistrate was considered to be mad since his aim was to eradicate the true gospel entirely. These tyrants the pastors called "a very Devil himself" and "such a leader or monarch ought to be curbed by everyone in his most wicked attempt, even by the lowest of the lowest magistrates with whatever power they have."[64] However radical these ideas may have seemed at the time, in light of later historical events, these were relatively conservative thoughts and limited resistance to be carried out only by lower magistrates and never condoned popular uprisings.

If radical political resistance failed to be justified in Luther's writings, even less may they be found in John Calvin's words. This is surprising given the fact that political theories of resistance and "either limited monarchy or outright republicanism" based on religious principles

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[62] Matthew Colvin, trans. *The Magdeburg Confession, 13th of April 1550 AD.* (North Charleston, SC: Matthew Trewhella, 2012), 58.

[63] Ibid., 59.

[64] Ibid., 59-60.

was promoted more within the ranks of the Reformed Protestants than within the Lutheran.[65] However, this more radical political ideology was not authored by Calvin himself. As Jarrett Carty explains, the Reformed Protestant movement had already started prior to Calvin's advent onto the public stage. Furthermore, it was Calvin's successors that promoted more radical political thought that could more directly be connected to modern republicanism.[66]

Calvin's relative comfort and safety within a sympathetic city-state led him to take the less radical approach to governmental authority. Writing from the safety of Geneva, Calvin acknowledged the authorities that existed by dedicating his *Institutes* to the French king, Francis I. Some scholars have accused Calvin of being anti-monarchial. This stems from the fact that in his political writings, he expressed a bias for elected rulers and a system of mixed government of aristocracy and democracy.[67] However, Calvin is careful to avoid any hint of encouraging political revolution, regardless of the behavior of the sovereign.[68] Despite the claims that Calvin's movement has encouraged confusion and lawlessness, Calvin affirms that "man contains, as it were, two worlds, capable of being governed by various rulers and various laws." Men should not misapply their spiritual liberty to political regulations, "as though their freedom of spirit necessarily exempted them from all carnal servitude."[69] As for "those who rule in an unjust and tyrannical manner," God has ordained this ruler to "punish the iniquity of the people."[70] Calvin acknowledges the sovereignty of God over that of earthly rulers and believers

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[65] Carty, *God and Government*, 151.
[66] Ibid.
[67] John Calvin. *On God and Political Duty*. Edited by John T. McNeill. 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1977), 53.
[68] Ibid, xx-xxii.
[69] Ibid., 41.
[70] Ibid, 74.

can never condone blind obedience that would cause them to commit evil behavior contrary to God's will.[71] Like Luther, at no point does Calvin advocate *individual* armed resistance to rulers.

Although Calvin shared Luther's political conservatism and radical political resistance was not explicit in his teachings, Calvin left the door ajar for later Reformed Protestant political radicalism. Calvin portrayed the life of the saint as a constant battle with Satan. Warfare and violence were common themes in his writings. The more righteous the cause, the greater the violence Satan incited against it. Over the course of the next century, this aspect of Calvinism proved to be effective in encouraging a manifestation of spiritual battles into physical ones.[72]

While he was a contemporary of and heavily influenced by John Calvin, the reformer John Knox has often been considered the most politically radical of the earlier reformers. Much of this reputation stems from the fact that it was under his influence that a militant Protestant movement rose up in Scotland that resulted in it joining England in the Protestant fold. Some scholars have argued that Knox's *Letters to the Commonalty* propounded a populist theory of resistance that fanned the flames of resistance in Scotland. However, a careful study of Knox's writings reveal him to espouse a political resistance theory akin to that of Luther and Calvin's lesser magistrate doctrine.[73] This is borne out by the fact that Knox tended to limit his political instigation to the Scottish nobility. Knox contributed to the evolution of political resistance in a more subtle way by introducing the idea that "the power given unto man is one thing, and the person clad with the power or with the authority is another…that the prince may be resisted and

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[71] Ibid, 81-82.

[72] Walzer. *The Revolution of the Saints*, 64-65.

[73] Roger A. Mason. "Introduction," in John Knox. *On Rebellion.* ed. Roger A. Mason (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xxi.

yet the ordinance of God not violated."[74] This concept allowed for political resistance while still obeying the biblical admonition of Romans 13:1.

Unfortunately, the timing of a publication tended to hurt Knox's hopes for his more radical brand of reformation to materialize in England. Knox's *The First Blast of the Trumpet* presented his opinion that "it is more than a monster in nature that a woman shall reign and have empire above man."[75] Although written in order to show his contempt for the "Jezebel," Mary I of England, its publication coincided with the ascension of Elizabeth I to the throne. With the savior of Protestantism rising to power and ending the reign of Catholicism in England, the timing could not have been more inopportune. This did not sit well with Elizabeth and most likely contributed to her distaste for the burgeoning Puritan movement and the changes they sought for the Church of England.

To find the source of slightly more radical political thought, one needs only to look to France and the persecution of the Huguenots. The staunchly Catholic French monarchy had little tolerance for religious dissent, despite the growing ranks of Protestants. At various times it appeared that France would tolerate Protestantism, however, these were illusory episodes that were eventually followed by violent repression. The prime example was the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572 when Catholic leaders assassinated thousands of Huguenots. It was only natural, then, that some of the earliest and most clearly articulated political thought in the Early Modern era regarding resistance to tyranny would arise from this source. If history, both past and contemporary, had been replete with examples of purely good and noble monarchs, there would have been little need to contemplate tyranny. However, as Theodore Beza stated in his discussion about the monarchy, "Nevertheless, it is a fact, which neither can nor ought to be disguised, that

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[74] John Knox, "The Debate at the General Assembly," in Knox, *On Rebellion,* 191-192.
[75] Knox, "The First Blast of the Trumpet," in Knox, *On Rebellion,* 4.

ever since the world began, there has never been a single monarchy (even if we take the best) who has not abused his office."[76] As this illustrates and this present study will revisit in Puritan New England, it was the real threat of tyranny that encouraged a more radical political thought concerning tyranny.

Three of the more notable Huguenot political writings of the latter half of the sixteenth century were *Francogallia* by François Hotman, *Right of Magistrates* by Theodore Beza, and the pseudonymous *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*. These authors presented the idea that the biblical mandate of Romans 13 was indeed true, however, the Pauline epistle was not giving a complete picture of the origins of political power. They used arguments from antiquity, French history, and scripture to demonstrate that the power of the supreme magistrate originated not only with God but with the people as well. They went further to show that above all was the rule of law, something that the magistrate as well as the people were beholden to. Beza articulated this by explaining that "to say that the sovereign is not subject to the law is surely the false maxim of detestable flatterers, not of a subject loyal to his prince. On the contrary, there is not a single law to which the ruler is not bound in the conduct of his government."[77] The Huguenots were reminding their contemporaries of the concept of constitutionalism and the controversy over where sovereignty was located. As will be discussed later, this concept found a welcome reception among the English who had espoused this concept in some form or fashion since their Magna Carta.

As for the problem of tyranny, these writers cautiously put forth the idea that the people could make or unmake a sovereign magistrate. Beza defined tyrannical behavior as "commands"

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[76] Francois Hotman, Theodore Beza, and Philippe du Plessis-Mornay. *Constitutionalism and Resistance in the Sixteenth Century*. ed. Julian H. Franklin (Indianapolis: Pegasus, 1969), 116.

[77] Ibid., 113.

that "are irreligious or iniquitous."[78] While he did not advocate the overthrow of a lawfully installed monarch by the people, he opened the door for a more forceful resistance when he stated, "the authority of magistrates cannot be stabilized, nor that public peace, which is the end of all true governance, preserved unless tyranny is prevented from arising or else abolished when it does…by force of arms if need be."[79] Hotman cast indirect criticism at contemporary France by highlighting France's heritage of investing the power of government in the people by way of their elected assembly, which roughly corresponded to the French Parliament. He showed that from ancient times, the French people embraced a form of constitutionalism that was a guard against tyranny. The lesson was that "the people reserved to itself supreme power not only to make but also to remove a king."[80] This was a slightly more radical departure from Luther's and Calvin's instructions to patiently endure the tyrannical behavior of a magistrate and to leave resistance to lesser magistrates only.

The Huguenot writing that cast the longest shadow was the *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*. This 1579 publication was written under the name of Stephen Junius Brutus but has been attributed to a possible collaboration of two French Huguenots, Hubert Languet and Philippe de Mornay.[81] This writing has proven to be especially popular in the ensuing centuries because of its detailed discussion regarding monarchial authority, the rule of law, and the proper response to tyranny. During the era of the United States' Founding, John Adams cited the *Vindiciae* as contributing to his thoughts regarding the U. S. Constitution.[82] It relies on both biblical and historical examples to support its arguments. Following in the heritage of the Lutheran two

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[78] Ibid., 101.
[79] Ibid, 103-104.
[80] Ibid, 65.
[81] Glenn Sunshine. "Introduction," in Stephen Junius Brutus, *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos: A Defense of Liberty Against Tyrants.* trans. William Walker. (Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2020), v.
[82] Ibid., viii-ix.

kingdoms doctrine and as echoed in Calvin's teachings, the *Vindiciae* describes the relationship between a king and his people as consisting of two covenants: "the first between God, the king, and the people…the second, between the king and the people."[83] Both the people and the king are subject to the law and there is "nothing which exempts the king from obedience which he owes to the law."[84] The purpose of the king is to "maintain by justice and to defend by force of arms both the public state and particular persons from all damages and outrages."[85] A king becomes a "tyrant by practice" when a king governs a state "not according to law and equity, or neglects those contracts and agreements, to the observation whereof he was strictly obliged at his reception."[86] In the event that the king fails in his duty to fulfill his obligations, "the people are exempt from obedience, the contract is made void, the right of obligation of no force." It then befalls the duty of the lesser magistrates "to suppress a tyrant, and it is not only lawful for them to do it, but their duty expressly requires it."[87] The *Vindiciae* also argues that laws are to be made, not by the king, but by the people or their representatives (lesser magistrates), and personal property is inviolate from the king.

Huguenot political thought proved to be influential to the development of English political thought. French Protestant exiles found refuge within England from the outset of the English Reformation during which time Huguenots became a well-established subset of English Protestantism. They continued to settle communities and churches in England, however this trend abated with the Edict of Nantes and greater religious tolerance in France. Exiles resumed their immigration to England after 1685 with the revocation of the Edict. By that time,

[83] Brutus, *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*, 10.
[84] Ibid., 98.
[85] Ibid., 92.
[86] Ibid., 150.
[87] Ibid., 170.

Huguenots had had a presence in England for over a century. More than 50-70,000 Protestants fled France for England over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. More importantly, Huguenots spread throughout England within the homes of the nobility and the wealthy as tutors to their households. This came at a time when French language and culture was rising in popularity among English elites and French tutors were in demand. Their interaction with those in the highest echelons of English politics proved to be effective at disseminating Huguenot political ideas as well as presenting the opportunity for these concepts to be available to religious dissenters in England. [88] While this was one of the ways in which French Huguenot political thought reached English shores, it was also introduced through a more indirect route. Political theorists on the continent, such as Althusius, Arnisaeus, and Grotius, tweaked French resistance theory to a slightly more radical tone. It was this form of political thought that appealed to the English intelligentsia. For example, Althusius carried the idea of popular sovereignty to its logical extreme by placing sovereignty entirely within the people and, ultimately, with the individual citizen.[89]

From Luther to the Huguenots, this era of political writing draws a distinct line where resistance to tyranny is itself restrained, despite these sharing what was considered at the time to be relatively radical political thought. The *Vindiciae* delineates this most clearly when it explains that "particular and private persons may not unsheathe the sword against tyrants, but by the whole body of the people."[90] The people "have no power; they have no public command…therefore…God has not put the sword into the hands of private men."[91] The political

[88] Michael Green. "Bridging the English Channel: Huguenots in the Education Milieu of the English Upper Class," *Paedagogica Historica.* 54, No. 4, (2018), 391-392, 408-409.

[89] J. H. M. Salmon. *The French Religious Wars in English Political Thought*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 41.

[90] Ibid., 185.

[91] Ibid., 53.

writers of the sixteenth century were no advocates of democracy or individual rights. One of their greatest fears was that resistance to authority would devolve into mob rule and anarchy, such as the kind that Luther denounced. Nevertheless, the idea was planted that monarchs were answerable to a higher authority and sovereignty ultimately resided with the people. This opened the door to resistance of royal authority based on Calvinist religious belief and scriptural authority.[92] Although the more radical portions of the *Vindiciae* that dealt with resistance to the monarchy were edited out in English editions until 1648, the implications of these writings led to the emergence of Monarchomachs and, within a few generations, fueled large scale resistance to what would be considered tyranny.[93]

It is important to mention a French political theorist of the Huguenot era whose writings directly impacted Puritan political thought. Jean Bodin was an unlikely source of thought for the Puritans since he was a staunch believer in absolute monarchy and was not a French Protestant (he lived and died a Catholic despite unsubstantiated rumors of a Calvinist conversion).[94] Bodin contributed to political theory when he formulated the most articulate writing on the concept of sovereignty of his era. He certainly was not the first to write about royal sovereignty, however he was the first to seek to define it and its parameters. He expanded the usual scope of the writings of many of his contemporaries by looking at a number of governments over time to see what they had in common. Bodin's political dogma regarding sovereignty stated that sovereignty was indivisible within a government and governments were only of three types: monarchy,

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[92] Andrei Constantin Salavastru. "Sacred Covenant and Huguenot Ideology of Resistance: The Biblical Image of the Contractual Monarchy in *Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos*," *Religions.* 11, No. 589, (Nov. 6, 2020), 16-17.

[93]Salmon. *The French Religious Wars*, 17; E. Armstrong. "The Political Theory of the Huguenots," *The English Historical Review.* Vol. 4, No. 13, (Jan, 1889), 39-40.

[94] Julian H. Franklin. "Introduction: An Outline of Bodin's Career," in Jean Bodin. *On Sovereignty: Four Chapters from the Six Books of the Commonwealth*. ed. Julian H. Franklin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), ix.

democracy, and aristocracy.[95] He emphatically denied that there were any more than three which would have included mixed governments of various combinations of the three. He reasons, "For if sovereignty is indivisible, as we have shown, how could it be shared by a prince, the nobles, and the people at the same time?"[96] On this point, later history would reveal Bodin's ideas as being naive.

Bodin was immensely popular with the Puritans of New England and his writings could be found in many of the colonists' libraries. Bodin was useful to the New England Puritans when it came to concepts regarding the types of governments, where sovereignty lay, and how administration differs from sovereignty.[97] The Puritans would never have looked to Bodin for ideas regarding political resistance since he allowed for no assault upon the legally installed sovereign, "even if he has committed all the misdeeds, impieties, and cruelties that one could mention."[98] The Bodinian concepts the Puritans borrowed will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter when examining their political beliefs, however, suffice it to say that it was Bodin's discussion of these topics that appealed to New Englanders more so than Bodin's emphatic conclusions. He was essentially "creatively adapted" to the formation of governmental institutions in the New World.[99]

It is likely that had Puritanism developed as a purely ideological movement, it would have had little concern for political resistance theories at all. However, Puritanism was birthed out of specific circumstances related to its interaction with monarchial authority. Their rocky history with the English monarchs drove Puritans to articulate justification for resistance to

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[95] Bodin, *On Sovereignty*, 90.
[96] Ibid., 92.
[97] J. S. Maloy. "Bodin's Puritan Readers and Radical Democracy in Early New England," *Journal of the History of Ideas.* 78, No. 1 (January, 2017), 24.
[98] Bodin, *Sovereignty*, 115.
[99] Maloy, "Puritan Readers," 24.

authority. In fact, it was this friction that stimulated Puritanism's birth and growth. It is clear from their history that political resistance was present in the very DNA of Puritanism. Any discussion of Puritan political thought cannot be understood apart from its development within sixteenth and seventeenth century English religious history.

The history of Puritanism is inseparable from the history of the English Reformation. England's experience with Protestantism, while borrowing from and being influenced by Protestant theology and practices on the continent, was never truly Lutheran or Calvinist and, instead, forged its own unique path. The primary reason for this was because England's initial conversion to Protestantism was not based on theology but politics. It was the expedience of the elimination of papal authority in England that prompted Henry VIII to create his own religious alternative and Protestantism fit the bill for his needs at the time. There was no religious epiphany or intellectual enlightenment for Henry, it was purely politics and the need to justify the annulment of his marriage to Katherine of Aragon. Because the English Reformation lacked a theological anchor at its outset, English Protestant theology and practice under Henry vacillated between evangelical and conservative throughout his reign and was alternately influenced by those in either camp.[100]

The birth of Puritanism is generally accepted to be located within the reign of Elizabeth I.[101] However, there is ample evidence that a movement for more radical religious reform was present during the Henrician Reformation. Throughout the 1530s and 1540s, there were opponents of the English Church's policy under Henry that maintained and expanded the episcopacy and the supremacy of the King over the Church. A number of these advocated for

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[100] A. G. Dickens. *The English Reformation.* Second edition. (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 192-199.

[101] Karl Gunther. *Reformation Unbound: Protestant Visions of Reform in England, 1525-1590.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 9.

more radical reforms that would eliminate any semblance of Catholicism and popery.[102] The final Council Henry had formed specifically excluded the conservative Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester.[103] This effectively elevated the influence of those sympathetic with further Reformation which, most importantly, included the Seymours. Edward Seymour, the Duke of Somerset, was sympathetic toward Calvinism and was positioned to be able to take the reins as Protector to the heir to the throne, Edward.[104] Henry's final breath was breathed while holding the hand of another similar reformer, Thomas Cranmer. As historian Diarmaid MacCulloch concluded, "the king had left evangelical politicians in an unassailable position to take over at his death."[105]

It was under Henry's son, Edward VI, that England took a decidedly more Reformed Protestant turn. While there was an incessant theological pendulum during Henry's reign, there is evidence to suggest that momentum was headed toward greater reforms in the area of the elimination of the mass and clerical celibacy when he died.[106] As early as 1533, Hugh Latimer, Thomas Cromwell, and Thomas Cranmer, along with other reformers, had been pushing for more and more radical reforms.[107] However, under Henry, success for the reformers was in fits and starts and had been under constant pressure from traditional clergy such as Archbishop Lee, Stephen Gardiner, and John Longland as well as a significant portion of the laity. Under Henry, traditional religion still retained many of its expressions in England. With the advent of the Edwardian reign, the lid was taken off and radical reformation was allowed nearly free rein.

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[102] Ibid., 54.
[103] Dickens, 220.
[104] Ibid., 227.
[105] Diarmaid MacCulloch. *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation.* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 2002), 7.
[106] Ibid., 57-58.
[107] Eamon Duffy. *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580.* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005), 379-380.

More so than during any other Protestant reign, the Edwardian Reformation emphasized an interconnectedness to continental Reformed Protestantism and adopted its radical approach to the elimination of all things quasi-Catholic.[108] Theologically, the English Church had shifted toward a justification by faith alone doctrine. There was also a militant approach as reformers encouraged the stripping of statuary and other Catholic symbols from its churches across the country. Iconoclasm made extensive headway in most English communities. Attitudes toward the eucharist and clerical celibacy were changing to mirror that of reformers from the continent. In essence, evangelical reformers were getting much of what they wished for under Edward VI.[109] Edward was the re-embodiment of the biblical King Josiah, who was also a young king and turned Israel back toward a worship of God, as indicated by Thomas Cranmer's homily given at Edward's coronation.[110]

The only thing that restrained the Edwardian reformers was the fear of mass resistance from the people. While Reformed Protestantism made great inroads into much of the English Church, this success was different in the varying regions of England. In some communities there was still strong resistance to the elimination of many of the traditions they had practiced for generations and resentment toward the reforming preachers to whom Edward VI and Cranmer had given greater liberty.[111] It was for this reason that radical reforms were often mixed with the retention of more traditional practices, despite the voiced disapproval of Edwardian reformers.[112] For the proto-Puritans of the Elizabethan reign, it was the perceived intent of those reformers that

[108] MacCulloch, *Boy King* 79.
[109] Ibid., 81.
[110] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* 448-449.
[111] Ibid., 399.
[112] Ibid., 448-449.

would motivate their desires for more radical reforms more so than what was actually accomplished.

The influence of Reformed Protestantism in England had a profound impact politically as well. Contemporary churchmen during the reign of Edward VI had definite ideas as to the role of the king and the boundaries of his power. Two influential ministers who were particularly prominent during his reign were Hugh Latimer and John Hooper. They suggested a template that would eventually resonate with Puritans. Royal power was absolute and to be respected and obeyed in accordance with the Pauline mandate regarding government authorities. This was especially true of Edward VI who was their champion in the faith. However, as these ministers explained, there was a spiritual sword to be wielded that checked the power of the monarch. This sword held the king accountable to assure that he lived up to his mandated role as the defender of the true (Protestant) faith. Most interesting, it was wielded, according to Latimer and Hooper, by the spiritual leaders of the realm who were primarily clergy such as themselves.[113] In many ways, this belief sowed the seeds that would eventually sprout during the reign of Charles I when Puritan ministers were not hesitant to wield their own swords, both spiritual and physical.

It is no wonder that Puritans in the seventeenth century fondly remembered the reign of Edward VI in glowing terms. In several of his writings, John Milton frames the reign as being the one true Tudor that ushered in the Reformation into England. Edward's goals of reform were thwarted by "obdurate Papists" and no fault was attributed to the King for the incomplete results of his reign.[114]

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[113] Stephen Alford. *Kingship and Politics in the Reign of Edward VI.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 41-43.

[114] David Walker. "'That Godly and Royall Childe': Milton and the Edwardian Reformation," *Bunyan Studies*. 16, (2012), 71-88.

The monarch that can arguably be considered to be the most instrumental in stimulating the birth of Puritanism and Puritan resistance was Mary I. Mary's Counter-Reformation, that sought to reconvert England back to Catholicism, forced Protestantism to the periphery of English religious life. While historian Eamon Duffy has demonstrated how Marian reformers sought to encourage a voluntary conversion among the English people, eventually the carrot was dropped in favor of the stick.[115] It was this aspect of her reign that earned her the title of "Bloody Mary." This reign prompted an embryonic Puritanism by making political resistance immediately relevant to English Protestants and by inadvertently creating a group of religious exiles on the continent that proved essential to the development of later dissenting ideas. The other contribution of the Marian reign was that it served as a cautionary tale of monarchy gone wrong and stimulated the birth of Protestant martyrology. It was the "Jezebel" queen that served as a warning to later generations of Puritans and made them leery of fully submitting their trust to their monarch. Even with the return of Protestantism, the specter of Catholicism was an ever-present threat to Puritans and they looked for it in every aspect of the English state and church.

It is hard to overestimate the impact of the Marian exile on the English Reformation and the birth of Puritanism. Consequently, its impact on political resistance theory was just as great. Michael Walzer suggested that it was so momentous a historical phenomenon that "modern politics begins in England with the return of the Genevan exiles."[116] Exile not only preserved future Elizabethan church leadership, but also preserved and encouraged some fairly radical political ideas. Some nearly 800 exiles left England under Mary to cities such as Strasbourg, Zurich, Frankfort and Geneva.[117] The commonality was that these cities were all safe havens for

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[115] Eamon Duffy. *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor*. (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 2009), 18-19, 79-101.

[116] Walzer, *Revolution of the Saints,* 113.

[117] Christina Garrett. *The Marian Exiles*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 32.

Protestants with a strong representation of Reformed Protestantism. Returning exiles carried with them ideas of church reform based on their experiences with Reformed churches abroad and many sought to reproduce those experiences on home soil. Some also returned with some of the most radical ideas regarding political resistance that had been developed up to that time.

Before understanding the significance of what the Marian exile was, it is important to understand what it was not. Contrary to much of the traditional historiography, the Marian exile was not the incubator for Puritanism that it was been attributed. This present study will argue that there were certain political ideas that grew out of the exile experience that would later be adopted as needed by the Puritans. However, historians have noted that the returning exiles at the ascension of Elizabeth I were a mixed lot of churchmen. A number of these, such as Edmund Grindal, staffed Elizabeth's reborn Church of England. Others eventually bore the title of Puritan and leaned toward non-conformity. A large group of returning moderates conformed to the Church while harboring some quietly voiced reservations about the need for further reform. However, to draw a direct line from the Marian exile to the birth of Puritanism is to ignore the complexity of the return of Protestantism to England. Historian Angela Ranson has noted, for example, that three of the returning exiles that later came to be associated with Puritan opinions (James Pilkington, John Jewel, and Laurence Humphrey) were vocally supportive of church unity and never extended their reform opinions to outright non-conformity but, rather, sought a continuity with Edwardian reforms. On the other hand, overt non-conformists like Henry Barrow in 1592 were never exiles at all.[118] The more recent historiography has overall refuted the idea that the returning radical Marian exiles were proto-separatists. This is true of the Marian exile

[118] Angela Ranson. "The Marian Exile and Religious Self-Identity: Rethinking the Origins of Elizabethan Puritanism" *Perichoresis* 13, no.1 (2015): 19-38. https://doi.org/10.1515/perc-2015-0002

overall, however, the exception that appears to give credence to the more traditional narratives is the Genevan exile that will be discussed in more detail. [119]

While the direct link between the exile and the birth of Puritanism is not a simple one, the exile served later Puritanism by providing valuable experiences that could not have been gained in England. For example, the group of exiles at Aarau was a community that was organized and led by a pastor. This provided a model of corporate colonization that would be useful for Puritan migration in the seventeenth century.[120] The important point to be made here is that, while historians have argued over just what role the Marian exile played in the birth of Puritanism, it was the radical ideas that were spawned during this era and the experiences that were gained that would have the most impact in later English history.

Dan Danner, a historian and theologian, has identified some distinctive theological developments that rose out of the exile experience at Geneva. The Geneva exile, he explains, played a crucial role in later English non-conformity. Those theological developments had ramifications that extended well into the seventeenth century and the Puritans that left for the New World. They are mentioned here because of their particular relevance to the flavor of Puritanism that would come to be associated with that of the early New England Puritans. The first was a modification of the doctrine of *sola scriptura.* While Luther and Calvin certainly adhered to the authority of scripture alone when it came to issues of salvation, the proto-Puritans of Geneva took it a step further to extend scriptural authority to all matters of theology, church practice and governance, and even to the everyday conduct of the godly. This elevated scripture to being more of an Erasmian ultimate authority for all matters of life and spirit and could be

[119] Dan G. Danner. *Pilgrimage to Puritanism: History and Theology of the Marian Exiles at Geneva, 1555-1560.* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1999), 7.

[120] Garrett, *Exiles*, 53.

described, according to Danner, as "primitivist or restitutionist."[121] In this way, the Bible took on a constitutional characteristic that would prove to be the paradigm of the New England Puritans.

Another theological distinction that arose from the Marian exile in Geneva was the development of the doctrine of predestination that differed from that of John Calvin. This development was surprising given that the English exiles were in direct contact and influence of Calvin himself. However, the Puritan doctrine of predestination was influenced more by Beza than it was Calvin. Without dissecting out the theological hairs on this point, the result was a greater emphasis on righteous conduct and ecclesiastical discipline among the predestined elect.[122] Here again one can see the ramifications of this that eventually manifested among the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay. It is particularly evident in the Puritan characteristic of being Calvinist while selectively adhering to Calvin's teachings on matters of church governance.[123]

One of the more consequential theological developments among the exiles was an alteration of how they understood and practiced corporate church worship and liturgy. There was a renewed and stricter adherence to church worship that emphasized "simplicity, order, intelligibility and fidelity to the scriptures" and made the congregation more participants and less spectators. This manifested a restorationist impulse to edify the simplicity of the apostolic church.[124] It was this development, more so than any other, that was responsible for the development of Elizabethan Puritanism, and one of the primary reasons that drove Puritans to seek a home in New England.

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[121] Danner. *Pilgrimage*, 105.
[122] Ibid., 110-118.
[123] Miller. *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 93.
[124] Danner. *Pilgrimage*, 124.

When it comes to political thought, the Marian exile proved to be the seedbed for some of the more radical ideas up to that time.[125] This was primarily because it was hard to argue a moderate, accommodating political stance when confronting a militant Catholic movement back home in England that sought to extinguish all opposition. Many of the exiles left England carrying with them a bias against the episcopacy, and so it was only logical that some would extend this to the monarchy itself while living in a non-monarchial society. Many of the exiles refused to comply with the oaths of allegiance to local government jurisdictions, reinforcing the perception that exiles answered to virtually no earthly ruler during their time in exile.[126] In Frankfort, there was even a move toward ecclesiastical democracy when church members rejected rule or influence by a bishop or even the minister himself, becoming self-governing and placing local church sovereignty entirely within the congregation (which would eventually become a distinguishing characteristic of New England Congregationalists).[127] There was also a strongly political component to the exodus from England that was barely connected to Protestantism at all. This was the case with the later migration to France after Wyatt's Rebellion. This aspect of exile was inherently radical and was responsible for the seditious movement to oust Mary from her throne.[128] So regardless of the primary force that drove some to abandon Marian England for the continent, political radicalism seemed to be inevitable. Historian Christina Garrett makes the argument that, more than a separate religious group, the returning exiles resembled more of a political party than anything else.[129]

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[125] Ibid., 131.
[126] Garrett. *The Marian Exiles*, 18.
[127] Ibid., 22.
[128] Ibid., 32-33.
[129] Ibid., 59.

Probably the most notoriously radical of the exiles was John Knox, as previously discussed, whose political agitation eventually led to the entrenchment of Protestantism in Scotland. Knox's most prolific time of authoring publications was during his time in exile at Geneva.[130] However, two exiles had published works that proved to particularly resonate with later generations of political radicals. If one were to select one individual whose life, theology and political thought most represented the connection between the Marian exile and the emergence of Elizabethan Puritanism, it would have to be Christopher Goodman. Goodman during his time in exile in Geneva developed close ties with both Calvin and Knox. He was selected as one of the ministers of the English congregation in Geneva by the congregation itself. Goodman's publication, *How Superior Powers Ought to be Obeyed* (1558) is, by far, the most radical of the publications that came out of the exile experience. Its promotion of the idea of tyrannicide was deemed so radical that it was condemned by some of his sympathetic colleagues and its printing forbidden by Elizabethan presses. Goodman's name came to be associated with non-conformity and he even played a role in the *Second Admonition to Parliament.*[131]

Christopher Goodman was straightforward when it came to his opinion of the rule of Mary I. Whereas writers like John Foxe and John Ponet cushioned their criticisms of Mary, Goodman identified the English Queen as a Jezebel and a bastard and, like John Knox, condemned her rule as illegitimate because she was a woman. He laid out his arguments for political resistance based on scriptures and their context. Like other writers of the time, he explained Romans 13 as only applying to rulers who uphold the Word of God and His laws. All others were tyrants and to be resisted. His political radicalism became apparent when he explained that the common people were not exempt from God's judgement in tolerating ungodly

[130] Danner. *Pilgrimage,* 86-91.
[131] Ibid., 41-43.

rulers. He delineated the boundaries of the just rule when he further explained that the ruler should not afford too much liberty to the people lest it lead to disorder, however a ruler should respect the people so as not "to suffer all power and libertie to be taken from them, and thereby to become brute beastes."[132] The people have the obligation to administer punishment to an unjust ruler when the lesser magistrates fail to do so. Goodman stated that "God geveth the sworde in to the peoples hande, and he him self is become immedialty their head…and hath promised to defende them and blesse them."[133] He further defended the right of the people to rise up against a ruler:

> And although this seeme a strange doctrine, perilous, and to move sedition amongest the people, and to take from the lawfull Rulers all due obedience; yet whoso will consider the matter a right, shall finde it sounde and true doctrine, and the onley doctrine of godly peace and quietnesse, and means to avoyde all strief and rebellion, by whiche onely Superiors shall rule in the feare of God.[134]

While he did not overtly say it, implied in his words was the encouragement of the English people back home to overthrow the Queen. It is not hard to see how this language of the protection of the peoples' liberties and their God-given right to rise up against an unjust ruler was considered radical for its time. It is no wonder that later Puritans found Goodman useful to justify their militant causes.

The other notable political writing to come out of the exile era was John Ponet's *Short Treatise on Political Power.* As the Bishop of Winchester, Ponet was one of the more higher-ranking Marian exiles. From where he settled in Strasbourg, Ponet responded to conditions back in England that had necessitated exile. What sets Ponet apart from Knox and Goodman was that, while he certainly was motivated by his abhorrence of Mary's false religion, he voices his

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[132] Christopher Goodman. *How Superior Powers Ought to Be Obeyd*. 1558 edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), 148.

[133] Ibid., 185.

[134] Ibid., 191.

opposition in primarily political terms using arguments based on historical and scriptural examples rather than purely on theological ones.[135] It is for this reason that Ponet's work proved to be useful and enjoyed rediscovery for Puritans in the era of the Civil Wars and Americans at the time of the Revolution and Founding.

Ponet reiterates what many of the Protestant political thinkers had accepted as fact. Namely, that God imbued authority to govern upon the king who was charged with godly governance compatible with the teachings of scripture. The king ruled by consent of the governed who were then to obey the ruler as they obeyed God, pursuant to Romans 13. The king was subject to the same rule of law that applied to the people. The king who deviated from godly rule was a tyrant and tyrants were to be at the least disobeyed or, in extreme cases, opposed. Ponet pointed out that according to scriptural and historical precedent, opposition to a tyrant could justifiably include the deposing or killing of the ruler. Althought Ponet did not make it his primary emphasis, he goes a step further than the "lesser magistrate" doctrine when he opened the door for "private men" to exercise violent resistance against a tyrant when all other recourses had failed to act. In his arguments for this, he used the scriptural example of Ahud who killed King Eglon by his own devices. He points out that "the text does not say that Ahud was sent of the people to kill the king, not that he told them what he intended."[136] Ponet treads carefully with the implication that he was advocating treason by encouraging the assassination of Queen Mary back in England. While he had no kind words for the Catholic reign, he emphatically clarifies in his opening to his readers that within the ensuing pages "you will find neither felony, nor

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[135] Barbara Peardon. "The Politics of Polemic: John Ponet's Short Treatise of Politic Power and Contemporary Circumstance 1553-1556," *Journal of British Studies.* Vol. 22, No. 1, (Autumn, 1982), 48.

[136] John Ponet. *A Shorte Treatise of Politike Power, and of the True Obedience Which Subjects Owe to Kings and Other Civil Governors, with an Exhortation to all true and natural English men*. ed. Patrick S. Poole. (1556), 91. https://archive.org/details/AShorteTreatiseOfPolitikePower/mode/2up

treason."[137] This practice of overtly denying treason while at the same time subtly implying it was a common one among writers like Ponet and later non-conformists.

Any discussion of political thought that arose out of the Marian exile would be incomplete without considering two publications that proved to be historically influential. This is despite the fact that neither of these books were primarily written as political documents but both had political impact nonetheless. The first is John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (also known as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*) and the other is the Geneva Bible. Both works were subtly political and found some of their most devoted readership among the non-conformists. They helped to buttress the more radical political resistance ideas that were burgeoning among some of the returning exiles.

Approximately a year after Mary I began her reign, John Foxe set sail from Ipswich headed to the city of Basle and eventually made his way to the congregation at Frankfurt. Foxe had been an active part of the evangelical community in London and maintained those connections throughout his career. *Acts and Monuments* was not his first foray into martyrology; by the time he left England he already had published the *Commentarii* that chronicled proto-Protestant martyrs through the Middle Ages but stopped short of the more contemporary examples.[138] Foxe's exposure to other evangelical intellectuals on the continent as well as news of Protestant martyrs back in England fueled the motivation for him to revisit martyrology by updating and expanding it to include more recent events. *Acts and Monuments* was a massive, multi-volume undertaking, the largest that had been attempted up to that time. In it, Foxe presents a sweeping history of the church that spanned antiquity to the present and provided

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[137] Ibid., i.

[138] Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman. *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of John Foxe's "Book of Martyrs."* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 54-56.

Protestants with a much-needed historiography that had mostly been owned by the Catholics. Protestants were no longer the neophyte movement as the Catholics portrayed them, but Foxe had shown them to be the protagonists of the epic battle between the false and the true church that spanned all of Christian history.[139]

The political bent came in when Foxe and his exiled colleagues saw the need to include current events in this epic story. By highlighting the recent persecution of Protestants in England, the exiles hoped to curry sympathy for their plight and portray the Catholic reign of Mary as the latest in a long line of persecuting villains. This political element became even more evident when the exiles returned under the reign of Elizabeth I. Foxe's first edition was dedicated to the Queen and received the sponsorship of William Cecil.[140] It was the patronage and the monopolies granted to printer John Day by the Elizabethan government that had allowed the financial feasibility for it to be printed in the first place.[141] The reason for Elizabethan support for Foxe's work is clear. With Elizabeth's reign facing stiff Catholic opposition, Foxe's anti-papist tone in *Acts and Monuments* was useful for its political propaganda value.

However, in reading *Acts and Monuments* in its different editions that were published in the sixteenth century, oppositional political content is subtle. Surprisingly, the contemporary controversial element was not directed at the most likely candidate, Queen Mary. While Foxe did not hesitate to relate the horrific events Protestants endured during the Marian reign, at no point, either in the transcripts of its many documented interrogations or in its editorial comments, was the Queen herself maligned. Since the work was first being published during the early years of Elizabeth's reign, *Acts and Monuments* had to tread a careful path to avoid suggesting treasonous

[139] Ibid., 78-79.
[140] Ibid., 102-103.
[141] Ibid., 15.

thoughts toward the previous queen since in some minds those could be extrapolated onto the new one. Failure to respect the role of the monarch, even one as treacherous as Mary, was not tolerated. The martyr Laurence Saunders, when questioned about the insinuation that he was calling the Queen a bastard responded, "we (sayde he) do not declare or say that the Quene is base or misbegotten, neyther goe about any suche matter."[142] Foxe clarifies, after delving into the calamities that befell the Marian reign (because of the loss of the favor of God), that he means nothing against the God-ordained station of the Queen: "I thought to insinuate, touching the unlucky and ruefull reigne of Queene Mary: not for any detractatio to her place and state Royall, whereunto she was called of the Lord."[143] To reconcile this respect for her position with the atrocities he describes, Foxe blames the impetus for the persecution on her advisers. In response to a bishop's accusations, one martyr responded in the transcripts of his interrogation that "the Queenes maiestye (God save her grace) woulde have done well inough, if it had not bene for hys counsel."[144] While the Queen was certainly complicit in the persecutions, at the root of it was the fact that she "had gueven over her supremacie unto the Pope" and "the Byshops…and Priestes of the Clergy, to who Queene Mary gave all the execution of her power."[145]

Although it was not apparent in the first editions of *Acts and Monuments*, later editions introduced some subtle yet profound concepts that would eventually have serious implications. In the 1576 and 1583 editions, Foxe includes "An Oration to Queene Elizabeth" that served as both praise and warning to the monarch. He warns that "if the body of a Realme be corrupt and out of order it shall neither be able to do anything abroad, if necessitie should require." The

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[142] John Foxe. *Actes and Monumentes touching things Done and Practiced by the Prelats of the Romishe Churche, specially in this Realme of England and Scotland, from the yeare of our Lord a thousand unto the tyme nowe present.* (1563), 1109. John Foxe's The Acts and Monuments Online. https://www.dhi.ac.uk/foxe/index.php

[143] Ibid. (1570), 2338.

[144] Ibid. (1563), 1096.

[145] Ibid., (1576), 2016, 2017.

reform that had been initiated with the coming of the Queen's Protestant reign should continue to root out corruption wherever it was found. However, "this may not be done with peecyng and pathyng, coblyng and botchyng, as was used in tyme past, whilest your most noble father and brother reigned." Instead, "the Realme will soone be purged, if vice and selfe love, be utterly condened. It wilbe in good state preserved, if these three things, Gods word truely taught and preached, youth well brought up in Godly & honest exercises, & justice rightly ministred may be perfectly constituted."[146] At that point in Elizabeth's reign, there was no mystery as to what this meant. The Queen was well aware of the growing voices of dissent among the Puritan element of the English Church. One of the most influential publications of their day was being used by Foxe and his colleagues to promote further ecclesiastical reform more in line with what the gospellers envisioned. It should be no surprise that by this time, Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* was no longer being used as a propaganda platform for the Queen's administration and the publication was becoming more aligned with the fledgling Puritan movement.

The other subtle impact of Foxe's work was present from its first edition and proved to have a deeper impact on the development of Puritanism. In Chapter 1, Foxe presents his innovative ideas regarding "The state of the primitive Churche compared with this latter Church of Rome." This is where Foxe fills in the historical voids left by the Protestant Reformation and provided ancient roots for the gospellers. He explained that the apostolic church was the primitive and pure church that within a few generations was corrupted by what eventually would be known as the Roman Catholic Church. However, this true church never disappeared but instead waged a continuous battle with the false church.[147] The returning Marian exiles that brought with them the Reformed Protestant ideas from the continent, of which John Foxe was a

[146] Ibid., 2034.
[147] Ibid. (1563), 24-129.

part, considered themselves part of that true church. This historical true church was not an institution but a God-inspired movement among real saints of God. This introduced the idea that soon took hold that there could be an ecclesiastical movement that could exist apart from the institutional church. It was the concept of separation before the Separatists. The most recent and vivid example was the faithful remnant that had retained their true faith (whether by exile, enduring persecution, or martyrdom) without being absorbed into the Marian Catholic Church. The problem in England came when the Elizabethan Church failed to develop the characteristics of the primitive, true church. As time went on, a number of clergy and laypeople began to see themselves as identifying more with the spiritual church than with the institutionalized one and the Puritan movement was born. While Foxe was not the sole contributor to this growing movement, *Acts and Monuments* contributed to it by providing historical and ecclesiological support.

The other major publication to come out of the Marian exile was the Geneva Bible. It was so named because it was an English translation created by a committee of scholars in exile in John Calvin's home city. It was first printed in 1560 and dedicated to the newly crowned Protestant monarch, Elizabeth I. The Geneva Bible became the most prolific and influential English translation of the Bible of that time. However, it gained a controversial reputation in later years, not simply because of its English text, but was politically controversial because of its marginalia. Given that this translation was made in exile by a group of men estranged from their homeland, it is not surprising that they would have interjected their own political biases in the biblical commentary. Consistent with other Protestant scholars in exile, the Geneva Bible carried with it a decidedly politically resistant tone, though not inconsistent with notions of scriptural authority.

Nowhere can this subtly anti-monarchial tone be demonstrated than in how it was perceived by the next monarch, James I. At the Hampton Court conference, at which a new English translation of the Bible was being considered, James displayed his distaste for the Geneva Bible precisely for its political undertones. He voiced as one of his conditions for a new translation that, "no Marginal Notes should be added, having found in them which are annexed to the Geneva translation… some Notes very partial, untrue, seditious, and savouring too much of dangerous, and traiterous conceits." The examples he specifically refers to were Exodus 1:19 and 2 Chronicles 15:16.[148] In the Exodus verse, the passage is referring to the incident in Egypt where the midwives disobeyed Pharoah by allowing the Hebrew babies to live. The marginal note states, "Their disobedience herein was lawful, but their dissembling evil."[149] In the passage in 2 Chronicles, James objected to the marginal note that indicated that Asa deposing his mother was insufficient and that he was disobedient in not killing her as well.[150] Examples of God's judgement upon tyrants were favored ones to receive marginal commentary, particularly during the story of Jezebel and her daughter, Athaliah. Upon the death of Athaliah, the comment is added, "For where a tyrant and an idolater reigneth, there can be no quietnesse: for the plagues of God are ever among such people."[151] While the reformers who translated and commented on the Geneva Bible did not join with Ponet and Goodman in advocating the individual taking up the sword against tyrants, their message was still clear. They firmly believed, in the light of the Marian rule, that obedience was due to God first, even if it meant disobedience and resistance to

[148] William Barlow. *The summe and substance of the conference, which it pleased His Excellent Majestie to have with the lords bishops, and others of his clergie (at which the most of the lords of the councill were present) in His Majesties privie-chamber, at Hampton Court, Jan. 14. 1603*. (Clerkenwell, Eng. : Bye and Law, Printers, 1803), 35.

[149] *The Geneva Bible.* (1560), 54. https://archive.org/details/1560TheGenevaBible/mode/2up

[150] Ibid., 399.

[151] Ibid., 405.

tyrants.[152] The later Puritans who cut their political and theological teeth on the Geneva Bible adopted this message.

In the years leading up to the dawn of the Puritan movement, the Marian exile had produced a generation of churchmen who had developed an identity that was separate from the Church of England. Although many of these men returning from exile were quickly reintegrated into the Protestant Church of England, there was a core attitude and beliefs that existed among some of them that sought to reproduce their experiences abroad back home. As this group grew in strength and recognition, it became a phenomenon in English society and politics that either drew new members toward it or repulsed others away from it. They had a definite goal in that they wanted more radical ecclesiastical reforms of the English Church. They were educated and literarily prolific and they even had the ear and sympathy of some in the higher echelons of the royal government. They had been provided their own unique history and literature. They were obedient and loyal subjects of the Crown but because their exile experiences had been gained in the fear of a distant monarch, they were quick to point out that their obedience lay first and foremost with God. Their recent experiences of resisting a monarch were fresh in their memories. And, most troublesome for the Queen and her administration, they were not content to sit back and be quiet. All they needed was a name and it was not long before that was provided to them as well. While they had several names for themselves, the one that stuck was one given them by Catholics who were observing them from afar: Puritans.

It is difficult to pinpoint an exact historical moment when Puritanism was born. Some historians have claimed it was born during the Marian exile abroad or later during the vestments controversy while others have identified Puritan elements as far back as during the reign of

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[152] Hardin Craig, Jr. "The Geneva Bible as a Political Document," *Pacific Historical Review*. 7, No. 1 (Mar., 1938), 40-49.

Henry VIII. Regardless of when there was the first person who could be identified as a Puritan, the elements of Puritanism were already present when Elizabeth gained the throne. All of the pieces were there just waiting to be assembled given the right circumstances. Those circumstances came about the moment that English reformers realized that Elizabeth had her own ideas as to what the Church of England would look like and that did not match what they envisioned.

The Church of England that was reconstituted under Elizabeth has often been described as a *via media* or a hybrid compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism. In reality, however, the English Church was something of Elizabeth's own making and actually resembled the church she knew in her younger days when her father still reigned while under the tutelage of her stepmother Katherine Parr.[153] During that time, the Church of England still retained much of the ostentation of the Catholic Church while gravitating to a Protestant theology. This mix is reflected in a devotional work by Katherine Parr, *The Lamentations of a Sinner*, published after Henry's death. In it, Parr shares her deeply personal Protestant faith by reiterating her belief in salvation through faith alone when she writes, "Saint Paul saith we be justified by the faith in Christ, and not by the deeds of the law. For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain."[154] Yet, Parr reflects the traditionalism that still existed in the Church of her time when she writes, "Then this crucifix is the book, wherein God hath included all things, and hath most compendiously written therein, all truth profitable and necessary for our salvation."[155] (While Puritans later republished her works, they conveniently edited out this reference to the crucifix.)

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[153] Diarmaid MacCulloch. *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603.* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 25.

[154] Katherine Parr. "The Lamentation of a Sinner." In *Katherine Parr: Complete Works and Correspondence*, ed. Janel Mueller. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 456. Chicago Scholarship Online, 2013. doi: 10.7208/chicago/9780226647265.003.0013.

[155] Ibid., 461.

Elizabeth preferred this unique mix of Reformed Protestant theology in a High Church conservatism packaging. She kept an ornate cross and candlesticks in her own personal chapel despite it being repeatedly vandalized by zealous reformers. She preferred a liturgical form of worship and continued to commission Catholic musicians to compose sacred music for her own use in worship while at the same time reformers were stripping these elements from churches around the country. However, Elizabeth was staunchly Protestant and fervently abhorred popish theology in her Church. The result has best been described by historian Diarmaid MacCulloch as a "theological cuckoo in the nest."[156] To suggest that the Elizabethan Church was a forced compromise with residual Catholicism in England is to overlook Elizabeth's resoluteness when it came to reform and her uncompromising nature. It was clear from the beginning that Elizabeth had set ideas as to what the English Church would look like and realized that she would face opposition from both Catholics and more radical reformers. Plans for church reform began as early as December 1558 when Mary's death was imminent in a document known as *The device for alteration of religion.* She anticipates her future obstacles to reform when she states:

> many such as would gladly have the alteration from the church of Rome, when they shal so peradventure, that some old ceremonies shal be left still, or that their doctrine, which they embrace, is not allowed and commanded only, and all other abolished and disproved, shall be discontented, and call the alteration a *cloaked papistry,* or *a mingle mangle.*[157]

If there was any element of compromise at all in early Elizabethan church reform, it was that the Church of England was now not quite Henry's church. Rather, it adopted the official reforms of Edward VI. The emphasis is on the word "official" because there were many reforms

[156] MacCulloch. *The Later Reformation in England*, 29.

[157] John Strype. *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion, and Other Various Occurrences in the Church of England, During Queen Elizabeth's Happy Reign: Vol. 1 pt. 2*. (United Kingdom: At the Clarendon Press, 1824), 394.

enacted during the reign and more projected that were never noted on official ecclesiastical documents. If Edwardian reformers had had their way, they would have been. However, they had to tread carefully lest what resistance they had to deal with escalated. In all likelihood, had Edward lived, the English Church would have been thoroughly Reformed Protestant similar to that on the continent. However, Edward's early death ended this more radical reformation before it achieved its ultimate goals.[158] The official reform that existed at his death still retained elements of the Henrician reforms with a sprinkling of Reformed Protestant theology and the major addition of the Book of Common Prayer. It was this form of English Protestantism to which Elizabeth turned back the clock to. What she did not adopt was the momentum that had been building by radical reformers toward continental Protestantism.

This element of Elizabethan church reform is the pivotal point when it came to the rise of Puritanism. The more radical Edwardian remnant that survived the Marian reign wanted to pick up where they left off. Elizabeth had no such intent. Had this simply been a difference of opinion, it is unlikely that anything resembling a non-conforming faction would ever have formed. However, the proto-Puritans' beliefs regarding English Church reform went beyond mere opinion. They were deep-seated religious and theological beliefs that stubbornly resisted compromise. To many Puritans, backing down from these ideas was more than just losing a battle of wills, it was to lose their eternal souls. To them, the Queen's plans for church reform were incomplete and, to some, corrupted because of the suggestion that she conformed to Marian Catholicism, even if only to a small measure.[159] Eventually both sides would be forced into some

[158] MacCulloch. *The Boy King*, 167-181.

[159] Robert Harkins. "Elizabethan Puritanism and the Politics of Memory in Post-Marian England," *The Historical Journal.* Vol. 57, No. 4. (2014), 916-917.

measure of compromise, however, this battle would be waged continuously throughout Elizabeth's reign with the Queen emerging the winner.

The reason why political resistance came to be associated with English Puritans stems from the fact that when early Puritans pushed back against church reform (or lack thereof), they were not merely pushing back against lesser magistrates or church officials, they were resisting the Queen herself. Facing fierce opposition from English Catholics at the outset of her reign, Elizabeth had to prioritize religious conformity to reconvert England back to Protestantism. Puritans became a thorn in the Queen's side. The only saving grace for the Puritans was that Elizabeth hated and feared papists more than she did Puritan non-conformists. Nevertheless, church uniformity was the Queen's ultimate goal. The battle that waged in the arena of the Church spilled over into the realm of politics when Elizabeth equated religious non-conformity with treasonous attitudes.

The first episode that demonstrates this battle of wills between the Queen's desire for church uniformity and the opposing ideas of the Puritans began when the issue of the prescribed use of clerical vestments arose in what was to become known as the Vestiarian Controversy. This issue had first appeared during the reign of Edward VI but seemed to have been resolved by compromise. While a number of early Puritans objected to the use of the surplice and cap that was required of the clergy, most had justified their compliance by considering vestments *adiaphora* or "things indifferent." In other words, these were issues that were not worth causing dissention over and were not in the same category as issues that were part of articles of faith. However, the Marian exile changed this willingness to compromise among the more radical of the nascent Puritans that returned to England. Many of these ministers had grown accustomed to

the simple black robes of the continental Reformed clergy.[160] Returning to the more ostentatious clerical garb smacked of papistry. The battleground was set when Elizabeth determined to enforce compliance with this issue.

The line was drawn by Archbishop Matthew Parker in *The Advertisements* of 1566. In this pronouncement of enforcement of Elizabeth's religious settlement, it states that "all ecclesiastical persons", whether they were in churches or academia, were to wear the prescribed vestments. Failure to do so would mean that they were condemned "to go as mere laymen, till they be reconciled to obedience; and who shall obstinately refuse to do the same, that they be presented by the ordinary to the commissioners in causes ecclesiastical, and by them to be reformed accordingly."[161] Elizabeth never gave her official authorization to this document; however, it was clear that the Archbishop was acting on her wishes. In a letter to Parker dated January, 1564, Elizabeth clearly stated to the Archbishop that she was troubled by:

> …sundry varieties and novelties, not only in opinions but in external ceremonies and rites, there is crept and brought into the church by some few persons, abounding more in their own senses than wisdom would, and delighting with singularities and changes, an open and manifest disorder and offense to the godly wise and obedient persons, by diversity of opinions and specially in the external, decent, and lawful rites and ceremonies to be used in the churches…

Elizabeth chides Parker for not doing his duty in seeing that these troublemakers were being made to conform and charges him to "observe, keep, and maintain such order and uniformity in all the external rites and ceremonies, both for the Church and for their own persons." She finishes her missive by warning Parker:

> And in the execution hereof we require you to use all expedition that, to such a cause as this is, shall seem necessary, that hereafter we be no occasioned, for lack of your

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[160] Hilary Doda. "Rounde Heades in Square Cappes: The Role of the Vestments in the Vestiarian Controversy," *The Journal of the Costume Society of America.* 39, No. 2. (December 3, 2013), 99.

[161] Matthew Parker. Henry Gee and William John Hardy, ed., "The Advertisements (1566)," *Documents Illustrative of English Church History.* (New York: Macmillan, 1896), 467-75. https://history.hanover.edu/texts/engref/er81.html

> diligence, to provide such further remedy, by some other sharp proceedings, as shall percase not be easy to be borne by such as shall be disordered: and therewith also we shall impute to you the cause thereof.[162]

In other words, she was commanding Parker to take care of the problem or he himself would be held responsible for any continuing dissention.

The diehard nonconformists fired back with publications of their own. One of the first was a *Briefe discourse against the outwarde apparell* that encouraged the faithful to resist the policy, even if it meant the loss of their position. However much this pamphlet concentrated on the religious issue at hand, the political implications as they related to resistance of the governing authorities were plainly stated as well. The author of the publication explained that they were

> Not despising the auctoritie that God hath giuen to Princes, and other Potentates: but preferring the commaundement of him that is the giuer of auctoritie, before the comaundement of those that haue none auctoritie of themsel|ues, but haue receyued theyr auctoritie at hys hande, and shall aunswere to hym for the vse therof… The things that we doe refuse, are such as God neyther hath cōmaunded nor forbidden, o|therwise than in the vse and abuse of them. And therefore, Princes haue no auctoritie either to cōmaunde or forbidde them other|wise than so. For this is the power, that God hath gyuen to Princes, To see his cō|maundements executed, to punishe suche as breake them, and to defende those that keepe them.[163]

Here was plainly the Reformed political resistance theory that these early Puritans had inherited over the previous decades. Earthly authorities were mandated to uphold and defend the laws of God and, should they fail to do so, the faithful were given the liberty to disobey and receive whatever punishment was to be meted out.

While there were many who conformed to the policy to avoid losing their benefices, or, like John Foxe, chose not to add to the division of the church, there was a significant number

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[162] Queen Elizabeth I to Archbishop Matthew Parker, January 25, 1564 in *Correspondence of Matthew Parker, D.D. Archbishop of Canterbury.* John Bruce and Thomas Thomason Perowne, eds. (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1853), 223-227.

[163] Robert Crowley. *A briefe discourse against the outwarde apparell and ministring garmentes of the popishe church.* (1566)

who resisted and were subsequently punished with deprivation. There were those who did not hold beneficed positions and exempted themselves before the line was drawn such as Miles Coverdale. There were others who, when given the ultimatum, refused to conform. In all, thirty-seven out of 110 London clergy were suspended from their positions on the spot.[164] The most radical of the early Puritans had effectively been driven out of the upper echelons of the Church of England. While this may be regarded as a win for Elizabeth and her Church, it proved to have an unintended consequence that had long-term negative repercussions. The more influential members of the growing Puritan movement had forever been dissociated from the ecclesiastical leadership of the English Church and, instead, had been "scattered into the ecclesiastical wilderness of roving, unbeneficed preachers."[165] Unfortunately for the Church of England, this was a position from which they could inflict greater harassment of the established church and the authority of the Queen. The official church had given up whatever leverage it had over these renegade ministers and their congregations and was left with only more severe and repressive tactics in which to try and rein them back. Their movement to the periphery of English Protestantism also encouraged a more uncompromising and militant attitude among the growing movement.

It is hard to overemphasize the importance of the perfect storm of events that followed in the wake of the Vestiarian Controversy. Over the course of the next few years, Puritanism was transformed into a movement that wielded significant political power and influence and embraced political resistance in a way that transcended mere theory. The marginalizing that occurred following the battle over vestments, rather than having the desired effect of diminishing resistance to the Church's policies, only served to encourage radicalism within the disaffected

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[164] Patrick Collinson. *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 76.
[165] Ibid., 83-84.

non-conformists. It is a repeated theme when discussing the Puritans that they were not a monolithic group, but rather there was a spectrum of Puritan ideas and non-conformity. In the years following the Vestiarian Controversy, there were certainly a significant number of moderate Puritan leaders that hoped to stay connected to the official Church and sought to remain at relative peace with their more conservative brethren. Many, if not most of these, had been former exiles and had formed the backbone of those pushing for further reforms in the early years of Elizabeth's reign.[166] However, it was the most radical element that was the most vocal and eventually the nucleus around which a new, more radical form of Puritanism formed and came to predominate the movement.

Another significant unintended consequence of the Vestiarian Controversy was that the apparent victory of the official Church forced the more radical Puritans to abandon hopes of ever effecting church reform from within the existing ecclesiastical structures. Instead, they realized that the next institution that could possibly be influenced to effect change was Parliament. This proved to be a watershed moment for the Puritan movement. From that point forward, Puritans took the step from political ideas into political engagement.[167] The event that precipitated this moment came about when two of the more radical Puritans, Thomas Wilcox and John Field, decided to put their radical ideas into print as a means to disseminate their ideas and, hopefully, influence Parliament. This next battle of wills between the Puritans and the Queen has been known as the Admonition Controversy because of the printing of Wilcox and Field's *Admonition to the Parliament.*

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[166] Peter Lake. *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[167] W. H. Frere and C. E. Douglas, eds. *Puritan Manifestoes: A Study of the Origin of the Puritan Revolt with a Reprint of the Admonition to the Parliament and Kindred Documents, 1572.* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1972), x.

This publication could not have come at a worse time for the Queen. There had been an ongoing battle during the latter 1560's into the early 1570's between Parliament and the Queen over who wielded the authority to change ecclesiastical policy. There was an element of the Commons that sympathized with the Puritans and their desires for reform to bring the Church into alignment with the Reformed Protestantism of the continent. It was this element that decided to wade into church reform by enacting laws regarding the Book of Common Prayer. The Puritan influence in the Commons sought to blur the hard line that mandated its use in church services. There was also a Presbyterian movement that sought to change church hierarchy. Some of the forays into ecclesiastical policy were not even this controversial. Nevertheless, the Queen saw the meddling of Parliament in these issues as undermining her prerogative to determine church policy on her own. When laws were in the process of being passed, the Queen interjected to warn Parliament to back away from those issues.

As the parliamentary session of 1572 was preparing to wrap up, the *Admonition* made itself known. The *Admonition to the Parliament* was a no-holds-barred onslaught against the Book of Common Prayer, the episcopacy, and almost everything about how the English Church conducted itself. Field and Wilcox were careful in their pamphlet not to attack the Queen herself and gave her the benefit of the doubt when they said, "Although our books should not seeme to be against the Queenes proceedynges, for shee seemeth none otherwise, but that shee wolde have Gods matters to proceede."[168] However, the problem was that their writing attacked nearly everything about the Church of England as it had been commanded by the Queen and supported by Parliament. The Queen's Proclamation dated June 11, 1573 made clear that she considered the *Admonition* "such insolent and inordinate contemptes" that "do tende to no other ende but to

[168] Ibid., 39.

make division and dissention in the opinions of men and to breede talkes and disputes agaynst common order."[169] In addition to the *Admonition,* the covert Puritan presses turned out other similar publications, all with similar themes and making similar arguments. The most notable were *An Exhortation to the Byshops to Deale Brotherly with Theyr Brethren* and *An Exhortation to the Bishops and Their Clergie to Aunswer a Little Booke, Etc.*

In order to counteract the growing threat of the Puritan presses, the Queen commanded in her Proclamation that "al and every Printer Stationer Booke bynder Marchaunt…or they be who hath in theyr custodie any of the sayd books to bring in the same to the Byshop of the diocesse or to one of her hyghnesse privie Counsel within twentie days…upon payne of imprysonment and her highnesse farther displeasure."[170] Although they were careful not to ascribe their names to the publication, it did not take long for the authorities to discover the authors, Field and Wilcox, and imprison them in Newgate. The *Admonition* proved to be a line in the sand for the Puritan movement as the more radical Puritans sympathized with its arguments while more moderate Puritans like Grindal and Coxe distanced themselves from its radicalism. The *Admonition* proved to be popular with the people as evidenced by it being reprinted several times to meet the demand and the fact that very few of the culprits of its dissemination were brought to the attention of the authorities within the "twentie days." In fact, the location and identity of the printer (or printers) remains a mystery to this day.

As if this was not enough of a headache for the Queen and her Church, concurrent with the Admonition Controversy was the rise in notoriety of a man that has been considered by some to be the "Father of Puritanism." While this title is arguable, it is nonetheless true that Thomas Cartwright was the first Puritan to attract national attention by name and gained a celebrity status

[169] Ibid., 153.
[170] Ibid., 154.

among the Puritan movement and its sympathizers. Cartwright was a part of the "new men" generated by the Puritan think tanks that had risen up in Cambridge and Oxford. It was during his time at Cambridge that events occurred that cast his image as a radical and a Puritan. Cartwright's first encounter with the Queen happened when she made a royal visit to Cambridge in August of 1564. The university rolled out the red carpet and put its academic excellence on display for Her Majesty. One of the events was a staged debate, entirely in Latin, on the subject of whether or not the monarchy was the best form of state for a republic. As it happened, Cartwright opened the debate by arguing against the monarchy. This was purely an academic exercise and was not intended to offend the Queen, nor was it taken by her as such. In fact, she lauded the participants in the debate and even stated she wished it could go on longer.[171] Nevertheless, this encounter causes one to wonder, in light of the fact that Cartwright's name would eventually be associated with radical Puritanism, whether the Queen remembered his stance in the debate.

Cartwright attracted attention to his Puritan opinions early in his career as a professor at Cambridge. As one of the preachers at Cambridge, he had gained a reputation and a popular following, so much so that whenever he spoke, students would often jostle for seats in the chapel to hear him speak. It is said that the windows of the church had to be removed in order to allow those who did not get a seat to hear him.[172] At the beginning of his professorship, Cartwright began a series of lectures on the first two chapters of Acts as it related to the organizational structure of the early church. The implications of his lectures brought into question the current church episcopacy. Cartwright at the time did not intend his lectures to stir up controversy,

[171] A. F. Scott Pearson. *Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism 1535-1603.* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1925), 13-16.

[172] Ibid., 23-24.

rather, he was merely trying to present an academic and scriptural take on the subject, consistent with his role as a professor.[173] However, his topic struck a chord with the Puritan student radicals, stirred up debate and division, and soon attracted the attention of the authorities. Eventually, Cartwright lost his position as professorial Chair and, in 1572, was expelled from Trinity College.

Meanwhile, the Admonition Controversy was gaining steam and a battle of the presses ensued. *A Second Admonition* appeared in November of 1572.[174] The early silence of an opposing view shamed the Church of England into recruiting someone to respond to the Puritan furor. The one that was selected by Archbishop Parker was none other than the one who was instrumental in getting Cartwright ejected from Cambridge, his nemesis John Whitgift. Whitgift's response, *Answere to a certen Libell intituled, an admonition to the Parliament,* was published in late 1572 or early 1573. Cartwright was recruited by the opposing side to pen the counterattack, *Replye to an answere made of M. Doctor Whitegifte against the Admonition to the Parliament* in the spring of 1573. Whitgift countered his old Cambridge colleague with his *Defense of the Answer to the Admonition against the Replie of T.C.*. Cartwright responded once more in his *Second Replie* which was the final salvo in the battle of the presses.[175] This high-profile interchange served as a proxy war between the conformists and the non-conformists. It resulted in a clear definition of the two viewpoints to which the clergy and the people could choose sides. It also made Thomas Cartwright a household name and a wanted man by the authorities.

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[173] Ibid., 26-27.

[174] Ibid., 74. According to Pearson, Cartwright has erroneously been identified as the author of the *Second Admonition,* however historical evidence suggests otherwise.

[175] Dan Eppley. "Defender of the Peace: John Whitgift's Proactive Defense of the Polity of the Church of England in the Admonition Controversy," *Anglican and Episcopal History.* 68, No. 3 (1999), 312-313.

One of the reasons why Cartwright attracted the ire of the ecclesiastical and royal authorities was because, more so than even the *Admonition,* his writings contained dangerous political overtones. He called into the question the authority of the crown to determine church policy and even intimated that the magistrate should actually be under the authority of the church. His advocation for a Presbyterian styled church structure would have effectively taken authority away from the Queen. He remarked that, as far as a form of government, it was not necessary in a commonwealth for one head to be over all. It is no wonder that Whitgift in his response labeled this type of thought "suspicious speech."[176] The Archbishop was livid over the fact that Cartwright had directed much of his criticism at him and rued that he was "so well applauded to" that his popularity entitled him to make such inflammatory accusations against the episcopacy. Frustrated, Parker appealed to the Queen through Lord Burghley for help in dealing with the situation.[177] Over the years, Cartwright came to be associated with the Presbyterian movement; however, Cartwright himself mellowed in his later years. While he never backed down from his belief in the Presbyterian form of ecclesiastical government, he considered himself more of a moderate and adamantly opposed the more radical Separatists.

The story of Puritanism in England in the latter decades of the sixteenth century is one of repression by the Church of England. The bishops were charged to suppress Puritan ministers and their prophesyings across the country. This concerted effort, encouraged by the Queen, paid off for the Church. Despite decades of attempting to graft a Presbyterian form of church organization onto the Church of England, the efforts of the Puritans failed. The campaign of repression by the Church piqued when John Whitgift rose to the position of the Archbishop of Canterbury. One of his projects was the introduction of an *ex officio* oath that all clergy were

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[176] Pearson, *Cartwright,* 95.
[177] Bruce and Perowne, *Correspondence of Matthew Parker,* 453-454.

required to take. Rather than squelch dissent, this act served to throw gas on the fire of the ongoing battle against non-conformity and provoked an unprecedented response from the Puritan presses.

Between the years of 1588 and 1589, a series of popular publications came out written by anonymous writers under the pseudonym of Martin Marprelate. These were satirical works aimed against the English Church and its bishops by name. They were effective because of their entertaining format and pithy satire. They were written in direct response to what was being perceived as unlawful repression by the authorities and the Church. Despite centering on ecclesiastical issues, the Marprelate Tracts were particularly troublesome to the Queen's reign because they were also a masked form of protest against how the government was conducting itself against the non-conformists. As one historian described them, the tracts were "a plea in favour of liberty, as well civil as religious."[178] Authorities were quick to respond to suppress the covert presses and were successful in ferreting out a number of them. However, the damage had been done. The response by Martin had diminished the efficacy of Whitgift's program of suppression and gave a voice to the disaffected. More importantly, the political undertones of the Marprelate Tracts had further cemented the relationship of Puritanism and politics. It is interesting to note that this episode of harsh repression by the prelacy that provoked response by the Puritan community was prescient of another episode a few decades later by Archbishop Laud that proved to have a disastrous outcome for the monarchy.

There was one more serious attempt by the Queen to suppress non-conformity once and for all. In 1592 an act was passed by Parliament at the Queen's bidding that outlawed any form

[178] William Pierce. *An Historical Introduction to the Marprelate Tracts: A Chapter in the Evolution of Religious and Civil Liberty in England.* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1908), 271.

of dissent or non-conformity on threat of imprisonment.[179] It proved to be no more effective in eliminating Puritanism than any of the other repressive measures. In the twilight years of her reign, Elizabeth had done everything she could to stop the growth of Puritanism. However, every repressive act had been met with increased resistance and only served to stimulate growth of the movement. The opposition of the Elizabethan reign had effectively turned a religious movement into what could almost be considered a political party.

The Puritans, realizing their goals for church reform did not lie within the official church nor with the monarch, learned to use political appeals with Parliament and the people as an effective weapon for their cause. Had the Puritan movement not been as politically savvy as it was, in all likelihood, Elizabeth would have met with greater success. While the earlier evangelicals and gospellers had inherited Reformed political resistance ideas, the age of persecution under Elizabeth indelibly consummated the relationship between Puritans and politics. Early Puritans understood political resistance, while later Puritans practiced it. The English monarchy would eventually come to understand that Puritanism thrived when oppressed. This historical observation brings clarity to a well-known quote by historian Patrick Collinson: Puritanism "was not a thing identifiable in itself, but one half of a stressful relationship."[180] As the Tudor dynasty drew to a close, the incoming Stuart dynasty came to create its own "stressful relationship" with the Puritans and brought about the heyday of Puritan political power and result in planting a new brand of Puritanism on colonial soil.

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[179] *The Act Against Puritans (1592)* https://history.hanover.edu/texts/engref/er86.html

[180] John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim, eds. "Introduction," *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3.

Chapter 3

"The Politicall Puritan": The Early Stuart Dynasty and the Rise of Puritan Political Resistance

The reign of the Stuart monarchs proved to be a defining moment in the story of the Puritans who eventually established a church and government in New England. It was under those kings that Puritanism attained a greater distinctiveness in theology and political expression. To understand the political mindset of emigrating Puritans, it is necessary to consider the events that occurred under the first two Stuart kings that led dissenters to consider leaving the familiarity of home to face the dangers and uncertainty of going across the ocean. As examined in the previous chapter, Puritans had inherited a rich history of thought regarding political resistance over the course of the preceding century. However, it was under the Stuarts that new ideas regarding resistance and government and their relationship to the monarch joined with their Protestant heritage to create a mindset that drove Puritans to abandon home rather than submit to monarchial conformity.

The political turmoil in the years leading up to the English Civil War have been considered extensively in the historiography. Much of this has been written to consider the political causation of the eventual break between royalists and roundheads and the historically intriguing time of the Interregnum. This period that includes the reign of James I and the earlier years of the reign of Charles I are relevant for the purposes of this study for other reasons. It is historically evident that the first generation of New England settlers were heavily influenced by the political milieu of their times. While English Puritans were honing their political skills during that period for political dominance of the country, future New Englanders made use of those skills for more constructive reasons. It is important to consider the question: What were the political developments of the early Stuart reign that proved to be useful and determinant for New

England state-building? This will help clarify the more specific question: What was it about English politics during that era that perpetuated and refined the idea of Puritan political resistance?

In answering these questions, it will be important to touch on theoretical concepts of political science, however, this present study will emphasize a more pragmatic approach. This era was rich in the development of political thought, much of which proved to be influential in the later history of Colonial America. However, there were certain aspects of English political thought that proved to be the more useful ideas for American emigrants. This approach is consistent with the overall study of Puritan political thought since Puritan politics was driven by circumstance and necessity. The most concise and clear explanation of Puritan political beliefs (for both English and colonial Puritans) is found in the writings of historian Edmund Morgan. Morgan reduces all Puritan political ideas down to three concepts: the idea of the calling, the idea of the covenant, and the separation of spheres of church and state.[181] These ideas will inevitably find their way into any discussion of Puritan political thought. However, in this discussion, a causal relationship between English and Puritan political ideas will be considered for the purposes of discerning continuity between New England Puritanism and Puritanism as a whole. This will eventually support the argument that political resistance in America owed much to the inherent political thought of Puritanism.

At the close of the Elizabethan Age, Puritanism was a thriving movement with growing numbers that embraced beliefs with radical implications. More importantly, their experiences had given them the skills to become politically influential. Traditionally, historians have described a scenario in which a thousand Puritan ministers signed a petition that detailed their desire for

[181] Morgan, *Puritan Political Ideas*, xv.

further reform of the English Church at the time of the ascension of James I. This "Millenary Petition" was presented to him on his first trip down to London from Scotland. Furthermore, this petition was the reason that prompted James to initiate a conference at which he could hash out his ideas regarding further church reform. More recently, historians have called into question the existence of such a petition, since no such document is extant and the reported wording of the petition has only been related through second-hand sources. There is also questionable historical evidence that supports that such a petition was James's motive for calling a conference regarding ecclesiastical issues. Nevertheless, James was fully aware of what Puritans wanted for the Church from the popularity of Puritan publications of the time and decided to set a meeting where his ideas regarding further reform could be aired.[182] That conference, known as the Hampton Court Conference, was the first confrontation between Puritans and the King and the event at which the King fully took the reins of the English Church. There were hopes among the Puritans that the missed opportunity for further church reform under Elizabeth could be resurrected under the reign of Protestant James. Their hopes were not unfounded based on the fact that James ruled over a thoroughly Presbyterian Scottish Church, something English Puritans desired for their own country. However, as they were soon to find out, those hopes were not to be realized.

It was James's experiences as the monarch of Scotland that had set his attitude so firmly against Puritanism and Presbyterianism. Although the Scottish Church had become thoroughly entrenched in Calvinism and Presbyterianism due to the influence of men like John Knox, James was none too pleased about this. He chafed at the constant friction he endured in his interactions with Scottish church leaders. One notable incident at Falkland Palace in 1596 highlights this

[182] William Craig. "Hampton Court Again: The Millenary Petition and the Calling of the Conference," *Anglican and Episcopal History*. 77, No. 1. (March, 2008), 46-70.

contentious relationship James had with the Scottish Church. It was during a heated interchange in which Andrew Melville, in his attempt to assert the authority of God over that of the King, referred to James as "God's sillie vassal." Melville then dared to grab the King by the sleeve while further emphasizing his argument. It is a testament to either James's limited ability to deal with the Scottish Church or his ability to tolerate such behavior for the purposes of rhetorical debate and counsel that James allowed such challenges to go unpunished and, later, referred to Andrew and James Melville as "His Majesty's loyal opposition."[183] Such interactions undoubtedly were part of the reason why James, upon taking the English throne, displayed a firmer stance toward English Puritanism, apparently not wishing to encourage any English versions of the Melvilles.

One of the historical controversies about the early reign of James I is concerning to what extent the Puritan delegation won or lost at Hampton Court. Some indicate that the fact that James announced his promotion of the rejuvenation of the preaching ministry of the English Church as a victory for Puritans. Others argue that because James made the Puritans second class citizens at Hampton Court and declared his firm determination to eliminate non-conformists that this supported the conclusion that Puritans met with defeat at the conference. Ultimately, James was determined in his opposition to Puritans and the next few decades proved to be defeating to the issues Puritans were most concerned about and the Church of England became decidedly less tolerant of dissent. In fact, the one concession that pleased the Puritans the most, the promotion of the preaching ministry in churches, proved to not be a Puritan victory at all. In the ensuing

[183] Stephen King."'Your Best and Maist Faithfull Subjects': Andrew and James Melville as James VI and I's 'Loyal Opposition,'" *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Reforme.* 24, No. 3 (Summer, 2000), 17-30.

years, James effectively used preaching, both oral and printed, as a means of propaganda to promote his political, ecclesiological, and theological ideas.[184]

One other development that came out of the Hampton Court Conference that had historical, cultural, linguistic, and even political impact was the translation of the King James (KJV) or Authorized Version of the Bible. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Geneva Bible had reigned supreme as the favored version of the Bible with Puritans for decades by the time of James I. Birthed out of the Marian exile, the marginal commentaries in the Geneva Bible showed evidence of the political resistance entertained by the exiles against the Catholic Queen Mary I. In the ensuing decades, the marginal content had been retained despite subsequent editions. The King had voiced his opposition to the Geneva Bible in clear and detailed terms, citing its controversial anti-monarchial undertones and considered it the worst of all translations.[185] This royal judgment of the Geneva Bible is significant considering that the Bishops Bible was in wide use at the time in the Church of England but was considered a poor translation even by contemporaries. The Geneva Bible, on the other hand, enjoyed wide-acceptance and popularity. Nevertheless, James determined at Hampton Court that a new translation of the Bible be commissioned, one in which no marginal commentary would be included. The current historiographical impression is that the Puritans at the time were actually seeking a wider acceptance of the Geneva Bible in English churches while the English bishops were pushing for its replacement. While generations up to the present day revere the KJV for its religious significance, it should be remembered that it owes much of its creation to the political realities of

[184] Lori Anne Ferrell. *Government by Polemic: James I, the King's Preachers, and the Rhetorics of Conformity, 1603-1625.* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 11, 47.

[185] Craig, "The Geneva Bible as a Political Document," 40-49; Alister McGrath. *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture.* (New York: Anchor Books, 2001), 161-162.

the day. The new translation of the Bible to replace the controversial Geneva Bible was one of the several decisions made by James I that sought to bring the English religious landscape into greater conformity under his reign.[186]

At the outset of his reign, James was prepared to meet ecclesiastical dissent at its most deep-seated theological core. Whereas Elizabeth I was a strong promoter of ecclesiastical uniformity, she was not one to delve too deeply into theological issues. One of her more well-known quotes is emblematic of this characteristic when she said that she had "no desire to make windows into men's souls." The Queen was not concerned as much with theological differences among her subjects as she was their outward cooperation with her policies. James I was much more of a theologian than Elizabeth. Having contended with the Presbyterians of Scotland throughout his reign there, James knew how to deal with non-conformists and made theological differences his business as head of the church. The King was prepared to confront Puritan points of contention head on at Hampton Court. One thing James did have in common with Elizabeth at the time of his ascendancy was that he had a fixed idea as to what changes would and would not be allowed in the Church.

Some historians have suggested that it was political motives as much or more as theological ones that drove James to call the Hampton Court Conference. James's experiences with the Scottish Presbyterian Church had caused him to associate Presbyterianism with political popularity (what could also be considered democracy) that undermined monarchial authority. Some propose that James's Scottish upbringing had made him more determined to oppose the innate popularity contained within the anti-episcopal movements, something he considered a threat to monarchial authority and what was most likely the driving force behind his firm belief

[186] Michael G. Rather, Jr. "About the Political Dimensions of the Formation of the King James Bible," *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture.* 11, No. 2, (2009).

in the divine right of kings. It is important to note that James was aware of the tradition of Protestant political resistance writings and commented on many of those. It was this tradition that James associated with the concept of popular sovereignty, a concept that he sought to counter with his political adherence to the divine right of kings. His creed, "no bishop, no king," was embraced not as much for theological or ecclesiastical reasons as it was for the protection of monarchial sovereignty the episcopacy provided.[187] The fact that James regarded English Puritanism as much or more of a political threat as it was an ecclesiastical one gives support to this argument and explains much of the vitriol he expressed against non-conformity.

This is clearly demonstrated in James's own writings. In his *Basilikon Doron,* which was a collection of words of advice to his son who would presumably become king, James describes Puritans as "verie pestes in the Church and common-weill of Scotland." He furthermore had "never founde with anie Hie-land or Bordour thieves so greate ingratitude, and so many lyes & vile perjuries, as I have with some of them: and suffer not the principalles of them to brooke your lande if ye like to sit at rest: except yee would keepe them for trying your patience." His recommendation to his son was to "banish their Paritie" because it "can not agree with a Monarchie."[188]

Time eventually revealed the entirety of James's ecclesiastical policies. It was apparent by 1625 when he died that he had aimed for several goals, even if he did not accomplish them all. First, was the incorporation of Puritanism into the English Church with the goal of assimilation rather than accommodation. Closely related to this goal was that he sought the eradication of Puritan radicalism. He pushed for greater acceptance of Roman Catholic theology

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[187] John Morgan. "Popularity and Monarchy: The Hampton Court Conference and the Early Jacobean Church," *Canadian Journal of History.* 53, No. 2 (2018), 197-232.

[188] King James I, *Basilikon Doron or His Majestys Instructions to his dearest Sonne, Henry the Prince.* (London: Wertheimer, Lea & Co., 1887), 49-51.

(minus the Pope), even while eschewing toleration of Catholicism within England. These goals would all feed into his overall ecclesiastical goal which was the monarchial empowerment and theological maturation of the Church of England. Considering these goals, it is easy to see why many historians have considered James's ecclesiastical policies paradoxical and confusing. It is also why there has been a persistent historiographical controversy in fitting the Jacobean church into neat categories such as Puritan versus Anglican, Protestant-leaning versus Catholic-leaning, or Calvinist versus Arminian.

The Jacobean reign and church affected Puritanism in significant ways. In particular, the years leading up to the Great Migration of Puritans to the New World proved to fundamentally change Elizabethan Puritanism. The heavy-handedness of Stuart ecclesiastical policies effectively drove more conforming Puritans deeper into the leadership structures of the church making them more "Anglican."[189] On the other end of the spectrum of Puritanism, the more radical non-conforming Puritans were forced into greater entrenchment into their non-conformity. Moderate Puritans were coerced into choosing one of these two sides. The result was that the Stuart church effectively eliminated moderate Puritanism giving greater definition and identity to the more radical Puritans. In fact, the very idea of Puritanism grew to have an increasingly more negative and radical connotation over the course of the early Stuart reign. From the King's writings and pulpits across the country, the term "Puritan" came to be a broad epithet that intimated the non-conformist fringe of English religious life and lost its more distinctive and identifiable meaning that had existed under Elizabeth.[190]

[189] The term Anglican at this stage in English history is anachronistic since the term did not attain its current connotation until the nineteenth century. However, for the purposes of this study, the term is useful to differentiate the mainstream English Church from the dissenting Calvinist factions.

[190] Ferrell, *Government by Polemic,* 16-17.

The other major change that occurred over the course of the reigns of James I and Charles I was a fundamental change in the theological fabric of the Church of England particularly in juxtaposition to Puritanism. Toward the latter part of James's reign, Arminianism made strides toward greater acceptance by the mainstream of the English Church. Theologically, James I was a die-hard Calvinist, even supporting Calvinism in opposition to Arminianism at the Council of Dort and suppressing anti-Calvinist expressions in England.[191] However, as early as the latter years of the sixteenth century there existed a minority of clergy and theologians who began to oppose the major tenets of Calvinism, particularly the doctrine of predestination. As historian Nicholas Tyacke has explained, this "rise of Arminianism" is not as simple as the growth of a cohesive, formulated Arminian theology. Early on, there were those who advocated an "anti-Calvinism" such as John Richardson, fellow of Emmanuel College, who published works against predestination well before the publication of the major works of Arminius in 1610.[192] In fact, even under Charles I when Arminianism was openly advocated, William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, could only questionably be called an Arminian but could clearly be labeled a vociferous anti-Calvinist.[193] Therefore, what grew over the course of the early Stuart reigns can more accurately be described as anti-Calvinism rather than Arminianism.

Puritans were *persona non grata* to James from the outset of his reign; however, they proved to be particularly troublesome to James after 1618 when their ranks and influence became invigorated. While Puritans had been relegated to the periphery of the English Church all along, with their greater political and ecclesiastical influence came a desire for James to populate his

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[191] Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake. "The Ecclesiastical Policy of King James I," *Journal of British Studies.* 24, No. 2 (April, 1985), 190.

[192] Nicholas Tyacke. *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590-1640.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 38.

[193] Ibid., 266-270.

church leadership with those more sympathetic to monarchial authority. The Arminians of the English Church shared James's anti-Puritan sentiments and they also tended to be strongly supportive of royal sovereignty. In order to rid the Church of Puritan influence, James began to elevate anti-Calvinists to higher ecclesiastical positions, many of which were overtly Arminian in theology. Thus began a trend of the rise of Arminianism that would reach full bloom under his son Charles I. This trend continued to the point where Puritanism and Calvinism became synonymous in public discourse.

This theological shift coincides with James's irenic stance toward Catholicism and his desire for ecclesiastical unity.[194] Arminianism was more conducive to James's more toleratant aims toward moderate Catholicism whereas the hardline stance of Calvinist Puritans was more divisive. By the time of the Caroline reign, Arminianism was openly embraced by the Church and encouraged by the King, much to the consternation of Puritans. This is evidenced by the fact that court sermons, such as those by Robert Skinner, clearly put forth an anti-Calvinist, anti-predestinarian, and strongly anti-Puritan theological perspective.[195] The effect was to further disenfranchise Puritanism from the mainstream of the English Church. Elizabethan Puritans certainly had their differences with the Church but these differences were largely related to church practice and policy. By the time of Charles I, Puritans not only differed in their opinions as to what church worship and government should look like but by then there was a theological gulf as well.

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[194] Dorothy Boyd Rush. "The Religious Toleration of James I," *History Today.* 29, No. 2 (Feb. 1, 1979), 110-111.

[195] Peter Lake. "Predestination, presumption, and popularity: Robert Skinner explains the ideological underpinnings of the Personal Rule," in Paul D. Halliday, et. al., eds. *Revolutionising politics: Culture and conflict in England, 1620-60.* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2021), 55-73.

More consequentially, Caroline Puritans had become politically savvy and effective. One of the consistent cautionary words of advice that most Puritan historians have for those who approach the history of the transatlantic movement is to avoid separating out Puritan politics from theology. Any student of Puritanism will soon discern from primary sources just how intertwined concepts of religion and politics were.[196] However, over the course of the early Stuart dynasty, Puritan activity began to be expressed in distinct ways. As contemporary sources have indicated, as the Puritan movement grew, Puritans began to concentrate their efforts with different emphases while maintaining the common Puritan impulse. Observers noted an expansion of what was included under the umbrella of Puritanism which came to include those primarily concerned with ecclesiastical issues, moral issues, or politics. A tract printed in 1641 explains that there had been "a new enlargement of the name" in more recent years. In addition to the Puritan who was primarily concerned with ecclesiastical reform, "there are now added Puritans in religion, Puritans in State, and Puritans in morality." [197] As one contemporary explained, the "Politicall Puritan" was concerned with "matters of State, liberties of people, prerogatives of sovereigns, etc."[198] While modern day historians are always mindful of the theological and ecclesiastical basis of all Puritans, it is not ahistorical to concentrate on political Puritans or Puritan political ideas.

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[196] It should be noted that Puritans did not hold a monopoly on the symbiosis between religion and politics. While primarily restricted to the nation's ruling class, because of the historical vicissitudes of English politics, many English were acquainted with the world of political thought of the time. Added to this was the fact that most of the exposure to political thought in England came from the pulpit, regardless of whether its character was Anglican or Puritan. (Ferrell, *Government by Polemic*, 10-14). English pulpits were used to promote royal absolutism as well as Puritan political resistance. This explains why James concentrated much of his political battles over control of what occurred in the nation's churches. It also explains why there could be distinct political biases based on the type of congregation they were a part of.

[197] John Ley and Henry Parker. *A discourse concerning Puritans. A vindication of those, who uniustly suffer by the mistake, abuse, and misapplication of that name. A tract necessary and usefull for these times.* (London: Robert Bostock, 1641), 10.

[198] Joseph Mead to Sir Martin Stuteville of Dalham, Suffolk, 14 April 1623, British Museum, Harleian MSS, 389, fol. 314. Quoted in Shipps, "The 'Political Puritan'," 196-205.

The primary reason for the development of the "political Puritan" stemmed from the fact that Jacobean Puritans grew increasingly more involved in political processes and rose to positions of greater influence and power within England. Beginning in the reign of Elizabeth, Puritans realized that any hope for attaining their desired reforms lie not with the sovereign but by gaining political influence on the local level and through Parliament. This momentum continued and increased under James to the point that Puritan representation in Parliament grew to be disproportionate to the representation of Puritanism in the population as a whole. It is understandable from this trend how eventually a Puritan-controlled Parliament could gain the political power it needed to make war on and overthrow a king.

The problem with the study of Puritan political thought, as historians have pointed out, is that there was no monolithic set of theological, ideological, or political beliefs that could be labeled "Puritan." Puritans' political expression could range from staunch defenders of the monarchy and the royal government to political radicals who instigated the English Civil War. However, there were certain anti-monarchial political ideas that gained traction in the years leading up to both the Great Migration and the English Civil Wars. While Elizabethan Puritans had certainly welcomed some relatively radical political thought, the era of the early Stuarts proved to be fertile ground for elucidation and expansion of those ideas.

However, it was not merely the nature of Puritanism itself that fueled their rise, rather, Puritans were prompted by and took advantage of current events, not only in England but on the continent as well. James's program of the elimination of radical Puritanism was so effective that by 1611 Puritanism was on track to become subsumed into the mainstream of the English Church. However, a rise in anti-Catholic sentiment at the start of the Thirty Years War in 1618 fueled a renewal of Puritan fervor that coincided with a rise of the same fears toward many

aspects of English society.[199] The English had been keenly aware of the threat of Catholicism ever since the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 that had fueled anti-Catholic fervor in England.[200] James's irenic stance toward Catholicism in subsequent years had sought to pacify those fears. However, the start of the Thirty Years War that effected a serious threat to Protestantism in other parts of Europe put English Protestants on a heightened defensiveness regarding Catholicism. James's response did little to assuage those fears when he refused to join with his sister and brother-in-law, Frederick V of Bohemia, in defense of their Protestant rule. Added to this was James's determination to marry his son, Charles, to a Catholic bride. His continued move toward ecumenicism that sought to appease militant Catholicism on the continent further fueled the anti-Catholic hysteria in England. It seemed that the Puritans, who had feared the specter of popery within the English Church and, by extension, the throne, had been right all along.[201] This gave rise to a renewal of Puritanism, however this was not the Puritanism of Elizabeth or even of the earlier reign of James. It was an invigorated, empowered and politically savvy Puritanism that now was more blatantly unafraid to wield its tradition of political resistance.

Puritanism at that time benefitted from recent developments in the political and legal landscape and gave it a more clearly articulated language with which to defend its resistance to monarchial overreach. From as far back as the latter reign of Elizabeth, there arose a movement of legal reform that sought to bring order to the confusion of the English legal system. Chief among the legal theorists of the time was Edward Coke who rose to prominence in government and in Parliament. The impact of Coke's career and writings was significant when it came to the

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[199] Fincham, "The Ecclesiastical Policy of King James I," 181, 199.

[200] Antonia Fraser. *Faith and Treason: The Story of the Gunpowder Plot.* (New York: Anchor Books, 1997), 282-284; Alice Hogge. *God's Secret Agents.* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2006), 379-384.

[201] Nicholas Tyacke. "The Puritan Paradigm of English Politics, 1558-1642," *The Historical Journal.* 53, No. 3 (Sept., 2010), 542.

political mindset of the New England Puritans. Coke attained a towering reputation during his lifetime, so much so that both James I and his son sought to silence his ideas as being threatening to royal sovereignty. As will be discussed, Coke was not an anti-monarchist, rather, he simply sought to draw clear lines for the limits of royal sovereignty. While not a Puritan himself, his view of constitutional law placed him within the realm of Puritan sympathies and helped to provide justification to a new generation of radical Puritans who sought to curb, and eventually resist, royal prerogative.

While legal historians have debated the true nature of Coke's legal thought, one characteristic stands out as consistent throughout his legal and Parliamentary career. Most every historian of Coke agrees that his legal thought over time was rife with contradictions. On a number of topics Coke emphatically states an opinion and then, years later, contradicts himself. For this reason, it is hard to discern continuity of legal thought throughout his lifetime. Despite the roundabout route it took to get there, Coke's legacy, particularly during his parliamentary career under Charles I, came to be associated with the promotion of the limits of royal sovereignty. Considering the political atmosphere of that era, it is not surprising that Coke would have adjusted the emphasis of his legal and constitutional thought to match the needs of the time. Coke himself even acknowledged the contradictions in his legal opinions and explained that it was the actions of the sovereign that had forced him to change his mind on many of the issues Parliament was confronted with. While there were other members of Parliament and other jurists who could arguably be recognized by history as being greater than Coke, Coke's longevity and his vast historical and legal knowledge set him apart and made him a revered figure in parliamentary history. Coke's opinions were sought out by his contemporaries because he was unparalleled when it came to explaining the reason why prominent legal and political ideas were

valid and his ability to make complex ideas easier to understand.[202] The ideas Coke expounded directly pertained to Puritan political resistance and deserve some consideration.

While it is true that Coke was not a Puritan, yet his legal stance on certain issues and the fact that there were Puritans within his immediate sphere of relationships made him a favored legal thinker by the Puritans of his time. He had a sister and a nephew who were of the more radical type of Puritan within his family and a former clerk was none other than Roger Williams who eventually founded the colony of Rhode Island. These connections in and of themselves do not prove Puritan sympathies since many families of the time had a Puritan or two in their family tree and Roger Williams himself admitted that he never shared his radical beliefs with his former employer. However, Puritans seemed to look to Coke as someone who, although not truly one of their own, was sympathetic to their aims. Coke's personal religious beliefs are often as difficult to discern from his life's records as were his legal opinions; however, several things are clear. He was vociferously against popery and a staunch defender of royal ecclesiastical supremacy and the Church of England.[203]

The religiously controversial part of his legal career concerned his actions against the ecclesiastical courts that sought to define their boundaries of sovereignty and pushed back against the overstepping of those boundaries. These actions, along with his vocal anti-popery stance, made him appear to be antiprelatical (something he actually was not) and was the part of his legal career that attracted Puritan supporters.[204] When he later joined the parliamentary battle

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[202] Stephen D. White. *Sir Edward Coke and "The Grievances of the Commonwealth," 1621-1628.* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 226.

[203] David Chan Smith. "Sir Edward Coke: Faith, Law and the Search for Stability in Reformation England," in Mark Hall and R. H. Helmholz, eds. *Great Christian Jurists in English History.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 93-113.

[204] Coke's legal actions when it came to the ecclesiastical courts were not entirely in favor of dissenting Puritans. He defended the High Commission Court when it came to matters related to enforcing religious conformity.

against arbitrary monarchy, this further endeared him to Puritans. Non-conformist Richard Rogers dedicated his commentary on the book of Judges in 1616 to "The Right Honovrable, Sir Edvvard Coke Knight, Lord Chiefe Iustice of England, and One of His Maiesties Most Honorable Priuie Counsel."[205] Another Puritan, Francis Bradley, preached a sermon that was published in which the title acknowledged that Edward Coke was in attendance.[206] While this may not mean that Coke himself sought out Puritan colleagues, they certainly felt comfortable enough with him that they wanted to acknowledge that he was someone who was in their audience.

Much of Coke's historical renown stems from his role in pushing for legal reform in England. By the time of the late Tudor dynasty, the English courts were a myriad of overlapping authority and confusing legal jurisdiction. The court systems that existed included the Court of Common Law, the King's Bench, the Chancery, the Court of Star Chamber, the Court of Requests, the Courts of the Admiral and Marshal, and the ecclesiastical courts.[207] The types of cases these courts oversaw often led to them stepping on the toes of other courts. To add to the confusion, some cases were entered into more than one court at the same time. Edward Coke sought to bring order from this confusion and the tool he chose to do it with was the common law.

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[205] Richard Rogers. "*A commentary vpon the vvhole booke of Iudges Preached first and deliuered in sundrie lectures; since collected, and diligently perused, and now published. For the benefit generally of all such as desire to grow in faith and repentance, and especially of them, who would more cleerely vnderstand and make vse of the worthie examples of the saints, recorded in diuine history. Penned by Richard Rogers preacher of Gods word at Wethersfield in Essex.*" *Early English Books Online.* https://name.umdl.umich.edu/A10933.0001.001. University of Michigan Library Digital Collections.

[206] Francis Bradley. *A Godly Sermon Preached Before the Right Worshipfull Edvvard Cooke Esquier, Atturney Generall vnto the Queens most exceleent maiestie, and others of Worship in Tittleshall in Norfolke.* (London: Felix Kingston, 1600).

[207] J. H. Baker. *An Introduction to English Legal History.* 3rd edition. (Boston: Butterworths, 1998); Christopher Hill. *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution Revisited.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 203.

While a detailed legal analysis of what the common law entailed is beyond the scope of this present study, a simplification of its significance can suffice to provide an understanding of its relevance. Simply put, the common law was the entirety of the English legal tradition that, according to Coke, originated in antiquity and evolved to become what it was in their own time. It was the history of legal precedents that had been established over the centuries that provided a reasoned and equitable understanding of the law that was unique to the English people. Coke believed that this law that stemmed from the ancient Anglo-Saxon tradition was superior to any other political force in English society.[208] The point at which Coke's ideas became controversial was when he emphasized that even royal prerogative was subject to the law and the king himself was beholden to the actions of judges under the common law.[209] This idea caused him to be demoted and eventually ejected from his position as Lord Chief Justice in 1616 by James I and committed to the Tower in 1621. His *Reports* were confiscated by James and, later, his *Institutes* were confiscated by Charles.[210]

With his judicial career behind him, Coke eventually regained his reputation by becoming a venerated member of Parliament between 1621 and 1628. These were tumultuous years due to the friction between the Crown and Parliament and it was during this time that Coke became most known for his opposition to royal overreach. Earlier in his professional life, Coke had emphasized a strong, absolute monarchy assisted by representative government as part of the vital components of a healthy English government with all subjected to common law. This scheme assumed a monarchy that knew its place and respected Parliament as a political organ of

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[208] David Chan Smith. *Sir Edward Coke and the Reformation of the Laws: Religion, Politics and Jurisprudence, 1578-1616.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 14-16.

[209] James VI and I. *King James VI and I Political Writings*. ed. Johann P. Sommerville. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xxii-xxiii.

[210] Hill. *Intellectual Origins.*, 218.

the people and the embodiment of English law. However, James I and his son chafed at the idea that they were ultimately answerable to any higher authority apart from God. Charles lacked the diplomatic skills of his father especially when it came to handling Parliament. His actions prompted Coke to redirect his political thought to defending parliamentary authority, as will be explained later.

Politically, the Jacobean reign has often been characterized by historians as a time of friction between an emerging royal absolutism and a growing constitutionalism.[211] This approach has often been used to explain the continuity between the reigns of James I and Charles I that ultimately led to civil war. An opposing historiographical theory emphasizes the political consensus that existed between the Crown and Parliament under James I. Historians have suggested that had something akin to the Jacobean consensus been maintained into the reign of Charles I that there would have not been an English Civil War. Whatever political friction that existed between Parliament and Crown was insufficient to cause political upheaval. Rather, it was Charles's lack of political finesse and determination to coerce monarchial will in both church and state while circumventing Parliament that led to his downfall. Early in James's reign, there is little evidence for a growing, organized opposition to the monarchy, despite the inherent friction between the King and Parliament.[212] Nevertheless, the Jacobean era was still a time of the development of political ideas that began to challenge royal sovereignty.

It is somewhat surprising that James developed such strong views of absolute monarchy by the time of his ascension to the English throne. In his formative years, he was tutored by George Buchanan who was an advocate of the political resistance to tyrants that had been

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[211] Glenn Burgess. *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution: An Introduction to English Political Thought, 1603-1642.* (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 109-114.

[212] Deborah Kilroy. "All the king's men? A demographic study of opinion in the first English Parliament of James I, 1604-10," *Parliaments, Estates and Representation.* 41, No. 1, (January 24, 2021), 1-23.

promulgated by the Protestant tradition. Buchanan harbored a deep mistrust of kings because of their nature to devolve into tyranny if left unchecked. For this reason, throughout history, men have decided that it was "much safer to trust their liberties to laws than to kings" and so "a king became a speaking law, and law a dumb king."[213] The boundaries of the king's power should come from the people because it was the people "from whom he derived his power" and "he should exercise over the people only those rights which he has received from their hands."[214] Furthermore, a tyrant can be actively resisted since a war undertaken against a tyrant is "the justest of all wars" and once declared a tyrant, "the whole people, but also each individual, has a right to kill that enemy."[215] In this, Buchanan was agreeing with the most radical of those advocating political resistance to tyranny.

James I had a much higher view of monarchy. Rather than the king deriving his power from the people, "Kings are iustly called Gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of Diuine power vpon earth."[216] As such, kings are not answerable to courts or people, nor is their sovereignty to be questioned since, "it is sedition in Subiects to dispute what a King may do in the height of his power." The king was not judged by the law, he proclaimed, rather, he himself would "rule my actions according to my Lawes."[217]

One of the more consequential aspects of this time was an evolution in how Parliament regarded the limits of royal sovereignty. This is evidenced by how the idea of absolute monarchy changed over the course of the first half of the seventeenth century. The concept of royal absolutism was a positive one early in the reign of James I. Among its varied meanings, the

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[213] George Buchanan. *De Jure Regni Apud Scotos; A Dialogue Concerning the Rights of the Crown in Scotland.* 1799 edition. trans. Robert Macfarlan. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Portage Publications, Inc., 2016), 16.
[214] Ibid., 25.
[215] Ibid., 77.
[216] James VI and I. *Political Writings*, 181.
[217] Ibid., 184.

connotation that many accepted was that the English throne was absolute in that it had no strings attached to it from outside powers (such as the Pope) and was complete in its independence. Such a definition was palatable to royalists and Puritans alike. However, another connotation was gradually gaining steam that came to full flower under Charles I. That meaning attributed to absolutism was a more negative one in which the king's power was answerable only to God. The problem came when Charles chose to act on this definition. This brought him into direct confrontation with Parliament who regarded their sovereignty as being as equally endowed by the people as the Crown's. Parliament began to concern itself more and more with defining the boundaries of royal sovereignty and what to do when the King breached those boundaries. It was in the years leading up to the English Civil Wars that royal absolutism achieved its full negative connotation, usually within the language of Puritans and Parliamentarians.[218]

It was in his attempts to defend parliamentary privilege that Edward Coke's political career becomes relevant to the Puritans and those who sought to curb monarchial overreach. The issue of the limits of royal sovereignty came to the forefront in Parliament with a series of clashes between the King and Parliament over the course of Coke's parliamentary involvement in the 1620s. These conflicts failed to reach a peaceful resolution since they eventually resulted in the overthrow and execution of Charles I. However, in the process, Parliament was forced to defend their stance by more clearly defining the boundaries of power between the throne and Parliament. What emerged out of this series of debates proved to be more useful for succeeding generations, both in England and in North America, by adding to the evolving concept of constitutional political thought. As will be discussed in the next chapter, Coke became such a towering figure regarding the law and government for emigrating Puritans that the General Court

[218] James Daly. "The Idea of Absolute Monarchy in Seventeenth-Century England," *The Historical Journal.* 21, No. 2 (June, 1978), 227-250.

of Massachusetts allocated funds to purchase two copies of Coke's *Reports,* First and Second *Institute,* and his *Book of Entries*.[219]

One of the major debates that affected both the Jacobean and the Caroline reigns was the issue regarding parliamentary free speech. Discussion and debate occurred in Parliament that concerned a variety of topics but topics such as foreign policy prompted the King to express to Parliament that they were encroaching on dangerous and treasonous territory. The 1621 and 1624 Parliaments proved to be particularly concerned with this debate and Coke played a significant role in defending Parliament's right to freely discuss any topic. As tensions between the King and Parliament were rising in the 1621 session, some members proposed that Parliament petition the King for the right to free speech. To this, Coke was adamantly opposed since, he argued, parliamentary free speech was a right and not a privilege granted by the King. Requesting such a privilege sent the wrong message regarding the powers of Parliament. Coke, earlier, had done his best to keep the peace regarding this issue but, over time, was forced to draw a line in the sand by helping to draft a Protestation to the King that asserted the rights of the Commons. This resulted in James's rejection of the Protestation, dissolution of Parliament, and imprisonment for Coke and confiscation of his manuscripts.[220] Despite these tensions, Coke was able to maintain his parliamentary career. It is a testament to James's political finesse that major issues such as this failed to result in major political upheavals and the King was able to continue to work with Parliament to accomplish many of his goals.

The political landscape that produced the New England Puritans was a result of several decades of Tudor and Stuart rule, however, it was Charles I that those Puritans left behind. In

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[219] Sir Edward Coke. *The Selected Writings of Sir Edward Coke, Volume I Reports.* ed. Steve Sheppard. (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, Inc., 2003), lxvi.

[220] White. *Sir Edward Coke and "The Grievances of the Commonwealth,"* 167-179.

examining the political rule of Charles, this is no happenstance. There were a number of factors that arose from the outset of his reign up until the Great Migration that proved to be particularly consequential and conducive to the formation of a Puritan-based government in New England far away from the reach of the monarch. Chief among these factors was that Charles I lacked the political finesse his father possessed and the tensions between the Crown and Parliament intensified as his reign commenced. In the waning years of James I, Parliament and Crown certainly had their differences; however, these differences usually resolved into a working relationship between the two governing institutions. Problems were usually dealt with on a case-by-case basis with only minor overtures toward larger issues.

Before considering how Charles I related to Puritanism, it is important to put the relationship between the Puritans and the monarchy into perspective. Without a doubt, the relationship between all Protestants and Mary I was not a good one as evidenced by the fact that it provoked exile and the emergence of a new genre of literature inspired by Marian persecution. While Puritanism was birthed under Elizabeth I, Elizabethan Puritanism enjoyed the most tolerance under her than any other monarch. This was mainly because Puritans were the lesser of two evils between them and Catholics and not because the Queen had any desire to entertain nonconformists. However, that is not to say that she was tolerant of Puritans. Patrick Collinson noted that Puritan repression enjoyed somewhat of a reprieve in the latter years of Elizabeth's reign mainly because they had essentially admitted defeat and decided to lay low and change tactics. Furthermore, the Elizabethan government lacked the resources to root out all forms of Puritanism.[221]

[221] Collinson. *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement,* 437.

The fact that Puritanism emerged with such a voice and influence at the outset of the reign of James I suggests, as Collinson argues, that Puritanism had been growing in numbers and strength in the Elizabethan years of "laying low." While Elizabeth was forced to pacify Puritans at the start of her reign, James saw no need to do so at the outset of his. James drew a firm line in the sand when it came to church conformity that afforded no room for radical Puritanism. If there is any tolerance for Puritans under the reign of James, that tolerance was only extended to moderate Puritans who James hoped to convert to his way of thinking with the brilliance of his theological rhetoric. At no point did James ever soften on his stance toward intransigent nonconformists.[222] However, in comparison to his son, James allowed for more of a spectrum of beliefs under the canopy of Jacobean orthodoxy. He concentrated his battles on a few key doctrines and allowed Calvinists and anti-Calvinists to coexist for the duration of his reign. This policy served to only exclude the most radical of Catholics and Puritans and it was this radical fringe that he concentrated his energies against.[223]

All of this changed in 1625 when Charles I took the throne. Charles saw his father's ecclesiastical compromises as merely an illusion of conformity and decided that a much more aggressive strategy was necessary in order to purge the church of any semblance of nonconformity.[224] Fincham and Lake suggest that Charles softened this more aggressive approach for the first few years of his reign for political reasons but pulled out all the stops once he realized his conciliatory approach gained him little with Parliament.[225] There was also no longer the conciliatory tone that had pacified Parliament in the Jacobean era.[226] At the outset of

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[222] Fincham, "The Ecclesiastical Policy of James I," 178.

[223] Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake. "The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I," in Kenneth Fincham, ed. *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642.* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 24.

[224] Ibid.

[225] Ibid., 38-41.

[226] This has been the historical consensus for the historiography in the years since the English Civil War; however, more recently, historians have called this narrative into question. Mark Kishlansky has argued that most of

his accession, Charles enjoyed a brief popularity that quickly soured only three months into his reign.[227] Charles himself even admitted later that "at the first I liked parliaments," however, it was not long before he understood his father's prediction that "he would live to have his belly full of parliaments."[228] When the Commons began to question his choice of counsel in Buckingham and there arose a mood of what Charles considered dangerous "popularity," the King dissolved the parliaments of 1625 and 1626, setting the stage for years of escalating tension between them.

Charles took most of his cues for kingship from his father's *Basilicon Doron* and its ideas regarding monarchial sovereignty and the divine right of kingship. He also took from it his father's bias against Puritanism. This is surprising considering that in his upbringing Charles was tutored by a group of evangelical Calvinists who early on seemed to be training him to follow in their religious path. However, not long before his death, James began to place anti-Calvinists within his son's entourage, notably the anti-Calvinist Lancelot Andrewes who had the prince's attention in matters of religion. It was during this time that Charles made a decisive turn toward anti-Calvinism and Arminianism.[229] Charles also adopted his father's suspicion of "popularity" or democracy as the insidious threat to a stable monarchy and also associated it with Puritanism. This is evident in James's warning that the enemy of monarchy was the "puritanical itching after popularity."[230]

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the assessments of Charles I can be attributed to the prevailing propaganda, conspiracy theories, and hysteria put forth by the King's enemies both during his reign and afterward and in reality there is little to support that he was "inept, inaccessible and inflexible." (Mark Kishlansky. "Charles I: A Case of Mistaken Identity," *Past and Present.* Vol. 189, No. 1. (November, 2005), 41-80.)

[227] Richard Cust. *Charles I A Political Life.* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 44.

[228] Ibid., 38-39.

[229] Ibid., 14-16.

[230] Ibid., 21-25.

It seems that from the outset of his reign that Charles only saw Parliament as a necessary evil that was required to obtain his desired finances.[231] To add to the powder keg of political tensions that ensued, Charles's ecclesiastical aims ran contrary to the mainline Puritan bent of Parliament. The Parliament of 1625 chose two issues to concentrate on: the King's request for supply and escalating religious problems.[232] The way that Parliament chose to deal with these issues proved to be particularly provocative to the King. Throughout English history, one of the tactics used by those who wished to question the monarch was not to do so directly, lest it be identified as treason. Rather, when they chose to criticize the Crown, they did so by attacking those closest to the monarch, those who advised and supported the throne most closely. When it came to the Caroline reign, Parliament chose the Duke of Buckingham as their target for political and financial issues and Dr. Richard Montague as their target for religious.

The individual grievances that prompted these conflicts with the Crown were not as important as the overall battle Parliament chose to wage. At the heart of both of these areas of controversy, according to Parliament, was the issue of its sovereignty and the parameters of its power. Both of the individuals that Parliament chose to attack had been identified by the King as having his particular favor and protection. As such, it was an announcement to Parliament that such an intrusion was beyond the scope of their powers and that they should keep their hands off them in their dealings. In ignoring this admonition, Parliament began to formulate and expound on a political doctrine that stated that no man or institution was above the reaches of the law (and by extension, Parliament), even the King's favorites.

The action of the King that produced the most trouble for him with Parliament came about when he failed to receive the desired funds he asked of them. Parliament did not outrightly

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[231] Ibid., 61.
[232] White. *Sir Edward Coke,* 192.

refuse the King but used the King's request as an opportunity to attach conditions and voice their concerns about issues they considered important. Frustrated, the King resorted to his own means to acquire the needed finances by using the controversial method of collecting money known as the forced loan. Since the King could not tax without the consent of Parliament, he circumvented them by getting money directly from the wealthier of his subjects by way of strongly requesting a loan with the implication that failure to follow through would have unpleasant consequences. As expected, the forced loan was wildly unpopular and fueled the growing disillusionment with the recently crowned King. Some complied, some partially complied, while many flatly refused or ignored the request. The King's response eventually provoked controversy when he imprisoned some who refused without following the due process of the law. The King and his lawyers appealed to divine right as his authority to do so. It was at that point that the issue of arbitrary imprisonment came to be front and center in the contest between Crown and Parliament. John Selden, who was also serving in Parliament at the time and who would later share Coke's renown as an English jurist, identified the debate as "the greatest [question] that ever was in this place or elsewhere."[233]

The specific case that was brought before Parliament was the Five Knights Case in which five of those who refused the forced loan were arbitrarily imprisoned and the King's agents had refused to state the charges against them, presumably because they realized the illegality of the forced loans. This left their imprisonment as an indefinite sentence with no apparent legal recourse. The forced loans were widely considered to be illegal and some, like the five men in the case, used their imprisonment to draw public attention as a means of protest. The men decided to appeal to the King's Bench for redress and to demand a writ of habeas corpus, which

[233] White. *Sir Edward Coke,* 231.

was granted. What proceeded was a myriad of legal arguments with the defendants arguing that their basic rights had been violated and the King's side arguing the divine right of kings.[234] More than just a protest of illegal taxation or arbitrary imprisonment, many viewed the controversy as a case against royal absolutism.

The outcome that proved to become a milestone in English and American legal and political history was the Petition of Right of 1628. In the final draft agreed upon by both the Lords and the Commons, Parliament argued that there were certain liberties that were a matter of right and not subject to be amended by Parliament or Crown. Consistent with Edward Coke's reliance upon the common law, the Petition based its points of contention with the Crown on precedent that had been set during the reigns of Edward I and III. Parliament reminded Charles that it had been established at that time that no "guift, Loan, Benevolence, or such like taxe or charge" should be levied except "by common consent in parliament." It was also the common law that "noe free man shall be committed or deteyned in prison, but according to the Lawes, and customes of the Kingdom." The Petition asserted that it should be required that any committed man should "the same returned uppon an habeas Corpus, hee shall bee delivered or bailed." There was also protestation regarding the billeting of soldiers or sailors in the private homes of the citizens. The petition was clear in charging the King with violating these basic rights and urging him to desist from continuing to do so.[235]

Parliament debated the form this declaration would take and decided that it would be a petition of right and not of grace. It was also deliberately not presented as a bill of Parliament. This was an important distinction. A petition of grace would have meant that they were relying

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[234] Frances Helen Relf. "The Petition of Right," *Studies in the Social Sciences.* No. 8, (December, 1917), 1-10.

[235] Appendices B and C. in Frances Helen Relf. "The Petition of Right," *Studies in the Social Sciences.* No. 8. (December, 1917), 63-67.

upon the King's grace to acquiesce to their request. A bill would have embodied their proclamation as something that could be accepted or rejected by the King. Neither of these would suffice for the gravity of the issues that were at stake. To Parliament, the things that were being proclaimed in the Petition of Right were above what the King could accept or deny.[236] They were preeminent and his opinion was irrelevant, although they hoped that he would willingly embrace the concepts as the law of the land. His first response was tepid and disappointing to Parliament since he failed to give a detailed acceptance of the terms of the petition or specifically acknowledge his wrongdoing of arbitrary imprisonment or forced loans. At Parliament's dissatisfaction, the King made a second response to Parliament by stating, "*Soit droit fait comme est desire.*"

Historians are divided as to how the King's responses were accepted by Parliament. Contemporaries generally regarded the responses as being positive, particularly the King's second response. However, some historians have suggested that the more legally astute were disappointed with the responses, claiming that they regarded them as the usual responses by the King to a bill passed by Parliament. As such, the responses would have failed to acknowledge the true nature of what the Commons sought to do in initiating the Petition. The Petition in the form presented to the King included a proposed answer to it. The fact that the King did not respond in the wording prompted by the proposition could be the source of any disappointment. Frances Helen Relf disagrees with that assumption that had been suggested by previous historians when she argued that both responses by the King were positive and both acknowledged them as a petition of right and not as a bill.[237] More recently, Mark Kishlansky agreed with Relf by

[236] Elizabeth Read Foster. "Petitions and the Petition of Right," *Journal of British Studies.* 14, No. 1 (Nov., 1974), 21-45.

[237] Relf. *Petition of Right,* 54.

indicating that Charles exhibited only an attitude of compromise and agreement with the Petition.[238] Regardless, the Petition of Right persisted within English parliamentary history as a turning point in political thought that guaranteed the rights and liberties of the individual against arbitrary government and established the writ of habeas corpus as a pillar of legal justice.

In addition to these important political developments, there were even deeper issues at play that had long-lasting implication on the power structures of government. The entire episode of the Five Knights Case and the Petition of Right initially came about because judges in the case failed to make a ruling on it largely for lack of legal precedent. While most agreed with the legacy of Magna Carta in asserting the right of individuals to the due process of law, the specifics in relationship to the prerogative of the King lacked any historical parallel. The failure of the judicial system in England prompted Parliament to take on the responsibility of determining a judgement.[239] The Petition of Right was its ruling on the Case. This series of events was, in effect, Parliament taking on a judicial role in addition to its legislative role, which was something novel in parliamentary history. This opened the door to Parliament eventually standing as judge and jury for the King and condemning him to death some years later. However, as will be discussed later, for the future leaders of Massachusetts, this set a precedent for ideas of government institutions that served as a model for their own state building. It is also significant for those future colonial leaders that all of this was done in the atmosphere of what was perceived as resistance to monarchial absolutism and overreach.

In addition to his contributions regarding royal and parliamentary sovereignty, Edward Coke made another significant contribution that had profound impact on the New England Puritans. Throughout the parliamentary debates of the late Jacobean and early Caroline eras,

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[238] Mark Kishlansky. Charles I, 56.
[239] Relf. *Petition of Right,* 20.

jurists and members of Parliament repeatedly referred to something that represented the closest England ever came to a written constitution on which its government rested. The Magna Carta of 1215 was a product of tyrannical monarchy, oppressive taxation, and feudal discontent. As the feudal barons allied against King John gathered their forces, they negotiated a fragile peace with the terms of the now-famous document. Legal theorists and historians have debated whether the Magna Carta was a law, treaty, royal response to a petition, or a declaration of rights with no clear answer prevailing.[240] Legal historian Sir John Baker notes that, despite how it would later be regarded, the Magna Carta was not a constitutional document, nor did it delineate the limits of royal sovereignty or assign any remedy should the king act like a tyrant. Rather, it had a more immediate function that was meant to "restore, declare, and preserve the previous common law."[241]

It was during the years of Coke's public service that he began to look to the Magna Carta as a linchpin in his developing theory of common law. The Magna Carta as a document of political importance had waned during the later Middle Ages. Interest in its significance was resurrected by two Puritan lawyers: Robert Snagge in 1581 and James Morice in 1578.[242] The most important part of the historic document that had the greatest relevance and impact was Chapter 29. This chapter stated that

> no free person…shall be taken or imprisoned, or disseised of any free tenement or of his liberties or free customs, or outlawed, or exiled, or in any way destroyed, nor shall we go against him or send against him, except by the lawful judgement of his peers…or by the law of the land…to no one shall we sell, to no one deny or delay, right or justice.[243]

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[240] William Sharp McKechnie. *Magna Carta A Commentary on the Great Charter of King John.* 2nd ed. (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1914), 104.

[241] Sir John Baker. *The Reinvention of Magna Carta 1216-1616.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1.

[242] Ibid., 251-261.

[243] Ibid., 32.

These jurists expounded on the idea that the Magna Carta had served as the basis for the rule of law in England from the time of its creation and had been enacted by Parliament. It was a foundational document and raised the law above royal prerogative. They demonstrated that throughout English legal and political history, the concepts inscribed in Chapter 29 had been relied upon, utilized, and acknowledged. For Coke, this was a key part of his idea regarding the common law and one that proved useful to him in his parliamentary career when issues of royal sovereignty arose during the issues surrounding the Five Knights Case and the debates that led to the Petition of Right. Legal historians have attributed to Coke the distinction of having elevated the Magna Carta from an obscure medieval document to that of a statement of fundamental liberties.[244]

The relevance of Magna Carta for the New England Puritans is significant. First, it is an important fact that the jurists who first brought attention to the significance of Chapter 29 of the Magna Cart were Puritans themselves. The reason why they attributed such importance to it was that it served as a potential legal safeguard against unjust legal harassment of dissenters in Elizabethan England. Later, Coke used the Magna Carta as part of his defense against the encroachment of the High Commission onto the personal liberties of individuals, even suggesting that men should not be incriminated for their thoughts.[245] This certainly resonated with the Puritans of his time. This issue would continue to be a vital one even through the formation of government in New England. Furthermore, Puritans in Massachusetts relied heavily on the constitutional concept of the Magna Carta and, as will be discussed in a later chapter,

[244] David Chan Smith. "Sir Edward Coke: Faith, Law and the Search for Stability in Reformation England," in Mark Hill QC and R. H. Helmholz, eds. *Great Christian Jurists in English History*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 94.

[245] Sir John Baker QC. "Magna Carta and Personal Liberty," in Robin Griffith-Jones and Mark Hill QC, eds. *Magna Carta, Religion and the Rule of Law.* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 104.

referred to it frequently especially during the era just prior to the second charter. The constitutional character of the Magna Carta served as a basis for their own developing constitutional ideas and the value colonists placed on a written constitution.[246]

While all of these political developments were influential to the first generation of New England founders, it was Charles's anti-puritanism that proved to be the decisive factor in dissenters seeking refuge in a new land. In fact, Charles's loathing of Puritanism and a fear of "popularity" were the defining characteristics of his reign.[247] As early as April of 1625, there was a growing push for separating out orthodox churchmen from those considered puritan. This was evidenced by Laud actually drawing up a list of churchmen and labeling them as "O" for orthodox or "P" for puritan.[248] Over time, contentious Calvinist doctrines such as predestination became more unacceptable to the point that by 1630, the King had encouraged the active suppression of Calvinist preaching, particularly that dealing with predestination. Publications dealing with such subjects were considered subversive and banned. Those holding Puritan beliefs were ejected from prominent positions, arrested, imprisoned, or fled the country altogether. It was not their beliefs alone that threatened the King, but the stigma of "popularity" and subversiveness that he associated with Puritanism.[249] The more obstinate of the English Puritans were made to feel more unwelcome while they increasingly viewed the royal government as being rife with immorality. In comparison, the sparsely settled shores of Massachusetts Bay seemed all the more inviting.

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[246] A. E. Dick Howard. *The Road from Runnymede: Magna Carta and Constitutionalism in America.* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 35-52.

[247] Cust. *Charles I,* 466.

[248] Ibid., 87.

[249] Ibid., 121-122.

While it may seem that the first few decades of the seventeenth century were noted for being rife with political conflict, throughout that tumultuous era leading up the Great Migration there were important political developments taking place. Earlier ideas from the Protestant Reformation regarding political resistance were clear in differentiating just government from tyranny and proposing that tyranny could be justifiably disobeyed or even actively resisted. Over the course of the Jacobean and Caroline reigns in England, the idea of inherent liberties and boundaries of sovereignty were promoted. What evolved was the idea that if certain political ideas were enshrined within a government, tyranny could be *preemptively* resisted. In other words, political resistance began to take a more formalized and civilized form that hoped to avoid turmoil and violence and safeguard the basic liberties of the people. Containing ambitious government power within a well-defined fence was preferable to having to take up arms against it. The rise of constitutionalism was the manifestation of this preemptive political resistance. Political resistance was not waning in England, rather, it morphed into a more civilized form. Eventually, even this broke down and devolved into violence when the monarchy refused to acknowledge this process and held tightly to its absolute sovereignty. However, before this occurred, the Puritans who settled in New England took with them those developing ideas of constitutionalism with its inherent preemptive political resistance and carried them even further. This is evident when one examines the creation of New England government and how the founders incorporated these political ideas.

When looking at the perpetuation of political resistance among English Puritans during the early Stuart reign, it is tempting to adopt the idea that Puritans were fighting to contain a lit fuse of political radicalism just waiting for the opportunity to unleash it. In the decades prior to the Great Migration and the English Civil Wars, despite this being a time of political friction, this

is far from the truth. More than anything, the first generation of New England founders were entrenched in the idea of order and social harmony.[250] The last thing they would have sought was revolution. Puritan revolutionaries in England were a thing of the future when more radical political theories would be used to support their militant aims. As would become evident when Winthrop and his colleagues created government in Massachusetts, Puritans desired order in all things related to politics and religion. With all of their inherent politically radical ideas, it was not the emigrating Puritans who took up arms against the monarchy but, rather, their colleagues who stayed behind. While it is true that New England sympathized with and contributed some of their own to the Parliamentarian cause in the Civil War, those colonists who chose to go to war in England were a small minority. As was the case with Puritans on both sides of the ocean, the expression of Puritan radicalism was dependent on circumstances that invited a more radical response. New England Puritans left their homeland and avoided many of the more extreme circumstances their brethren faced. Puritan radicalism and resistance in American had to wait for their own unique circumstances that would be faced by a later generation. However, as will be discussed in the next chapter, Puritans in America at no point abandoned their inherent bent toward political resistance, even when they controlled the reins of church and state.

[250] Burgess, *Ancient Constitution,* 132-134.

Chapter 4

"A Right Forme of Goverment": The Establishment of Government in New England and the Persistence of Political Resistance

When one considers the nature and personality of the colony planted at Massachusetts Bay beginning in 1630, one feature tends to stand out from a historical viewpoint. Historians often comment on the homogeneity of the social fabric of the colony in its formative years as well as its relative lack of social disharmony. As will be examined, there are a number of valid reasons for this observation. In considering this, it could also lead one to believe that political resistance failed to find a home among the colonial society in New England. In this, however, one would be mistaken. The formative years of the Massachusetts government demonstrated that Puritans were not afraid to vent their historical frustration with and mistrust of government, even if it was composed of fellow believers. Furthermore, Puritans understood from their experiences back in the homeland that governmental overreach, or arbitrary government as they called it, was an ever-present threat even in a Puritan utopia. As this chapter will examine, Puritans did indeed carry their bent toward political resistance with them when they crossed the Atlantic. Puritan colonists in Massachusetts applied political pressures on the formation of the colonial government and, as a result, influenced that government to build in safeguards against arbitrary governance.

Despite their feelings of alienation from the core of the Church of England, the Puritans who left in the Great Migration of the 1630s that extended up until the start of the English Civil War were far from being ascetic misanthropes who were the outcasts of English society. Rather, they were predominantly composed of educated, middle-class gentry who were fully immersed in their society and many of whom held influential positions, both ecclesiastical and secular.

Most importantly for the purposes of this present study, they were politically savvy and understood and commented on current events albeit through the critical lens of Puritanism. One such individual was an attorney in His Majesty's Court of Wards and Liveries. In that busy job, the attorney, John Winthrop, worked in the shadow of Whitehall and interacted with influential people in government and members of Parliament during the reigns of James I and Charles I.[251] He had a front row seat to the workings of government, including government corruption. As a devout Puritan, Winthrop rued the decline of godliness in government and in the country as a whole. In 1629, he left his position in London and prepared to depart for the New World where like-minded Puritans sought a refuge for true religion.

Among the most valuable of the things he brought with him to New England was a keen understanding of government and definite ideas as to what good governance should look like. In the years before his work in London, Winthrop had purchased the manor at Groton from his uncle and had become a justice of the peace in his home area of Suffolk. At the time, the role of the justice of the peace was one that involved administering the role of government on a local level and involved tasks both administrative and judicial. It was also a role to which the English government had entrusted a measure of independence and self-government since they found this adaptability to local needs to be the most efficient way to govern. This ability to be flexible and adaptable to local needs would eventually be a useful trait when faced with the unpredictability of colonial settlement. There was also the religious landscape of Suffolk and the Stour Valley that later proved to be beneficial to Winthrop's qualifications as a colonial leader. Winthrop's family had been instrumental in establishing a Puritan presence in the area that was encouraged by a cozy relationship between the secular and ecclesiastical leaders. The social harmony that ensued

[251] Edmund S. Morgan. *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop.* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 18-39.

from religious and secular leaders joining in governance foreshadowed the Puritan-led government in Massachusetts.[252] It was the disruption of this Puritan status quo in Suffolk by the Caroline government who sought to impose royal will that led him and other Puritan leaders from this area to consider relocating to New England.

With his work in London, Winthrop also became well-versed in the issues of his day on a more national scale. In his correspondence with family and friends, Winthrop often commented on the latest happenings concerning English government. Some of his letters mention foreign affairs such as events in Bohemia and the ill-fated mission of Prince Charles in Spain who returned without a bride.[253] In another letter, Winthrop commented to his wife that "the newes heer is of a Parliam[en]t to beginne the xiiith of Februarye next. The Earle of Oxford came out of the Tower vpon teusdaye last," referring to a recent controversy between Oxford and the Duke of Buckingham for which King James imprisoned him in the tower.[254] In a letter to his son, Winthrop reports, "Our Parliament here is begunne with exceeding muche comfort and hope…the Duke of Buckingham hathe quit himself worthily and given great satisfaction to the Parliament."[255] After Charles's accession, Winthrop commented that, "the coronation is put off till maye and then to be performed priuately: there is order giuen to the Bishops to proceed against the papistes by eccl[es]i[astic]all censures: and muche speech of the Kinges purpose to bringe the Queene to our church."[256] He was also familiar with the events surrounding the Five

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[252] Francis J. Bremer. "The County of Massachusetts: The Governance of John Winthrop's Suffolk and the Shaping of the Massachusetts Colony," in Francis J. Bremer and Lynn A. Botelho, eds. *The World of John Winthrop: Essays on England and New England 1588-1649.* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2005), 188-204; Francis J. Bremer. "The Heritage of John Winthrop: Religion along the Stour Valley, 1548-1630," *New England Quarterly.* 70, No. 4, (Dec. 1, 1997), 515-547.

[253] John Winthrop to Margaret Winthrop, London, January 30, 1620 [-21], in *Winthrop Papers*, Vol. I, Massachusetts Historical Society, (Boston, Mass.: The Plimpton Press, 1929), 261; John Winthrop to Margaret Winthrop, London, September 27, 1623, *Winthrop Papers*, Vol. I, 286.

[254] John Winthrop to Margaret Winthrop, London, January 1, 1623 [-24], *Winthrop Papers*, Vol. I, 295.

[255] John Winthrop to John Winthrop, Jr., London, March 7, 1623 [-24], *Winthrop Papers*, Vol. I, 311.

[256] John Winthrop to Margaret Winthrop, London, January 14, 1625 [-26], *Winthrop Papers*, Vol. I, 325.

Knights Case when he mentioned that "knightes of the Parliament for Suffolk…have been longe since sett at libertye," referring to the recent liberation of those being imprisoned for failing to pay forced loans.[257] Winthrop also had a definite opinion regarding those current events. Before taking up his position in the Court of Wards, he had been appointed by the King to the Forced Loan Commission for Suffolk in 1625. He declined the position since he and other Puritans of the time objected to the forced loans as being unjust.[258]

However, there is evidence to suggest that Winthrop was involved in parliamentary business in a greater capacity than a mere observer. There is extant a document entitled "Common Greuances Groaninge for Reformation" that bore Winthrop's handwriting and was most likely produced during the last Parliament of James I.[259] This foreshadowed the Petition of Right but also dealt mostly with issues regarding the manifestations of popery in England. There was also a proposed bill that was generated in a committee of Parliament in 1626 and 1628 that never made it into law. The proposed "For Preventing Drunkenness," was entirely written by John Winthrop. These documents suggest that Winthrop, in addition to his duties with the Court of Wards, most likely did work for committees of the House of Commons.[260] His involvement in Parliament is no surprise considering that just a few years prior to leaving for New England, he desired to serve as a member himself but had been disappointed by a failed bid for the position.[261]

Winthrop's qualifications and expertise in managerial, judicial, political and governmental matters did not go unnoticed by other members of the Massachusetts Bay

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[257] John Winthrop to Henry Winthrop, London, January 30, 1628 [-29], *Winthrop Papers,* Vol. II, 68-69.
[258] Bremer. "The County of Massachusetts," 204.
[259] "Common Greuances Groaninge for Reformation," *Winthrop Papers,* Vol. I, 295-310.
[260] "For Preventing Drunkenness," *Winthrop Papers,* Vol I, 371-374.
[261] Bremer. "The County of Massachusetts," 204.

Company when preparing to depart for New England. In 1629, Winthrop contributed to the promotion of the endeavor by helping to draft "General Observations for the Plantation of New England." In it, his reasoned lawyer's mind articulated arguments in favor of emigration, objections to these, and counterarguments.[262] In considering Winthrop for leadership in the Company, his colleagues referred to his "talent, which God hathe bestowed vpon him for publike service."[263] In the official document recognizing Winthrop as the newly-elected Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Company, they mention "his integritie and sufficiencie, as being one every [way] well fitted and accomplished for the place of Gouernour."[264] There certainly were men of qualification who understood governmental matters among the Great Migration that contributed to the early government of Massachusetts Bay, however, clearly none were as qualified as John Winthrop.

One of the driving forces behind the need to leave England was regarding the events occurring on the continent during the Thirty Years War. In the European clash between Catholicism and Protestantism, it seemed that Catholicism was on the ascendant and the future of Protestantism was in doubt. English Protestants saw themselves as holding the last great bastion of opposition to the Catholic Church. To add to the impending doom was the fact that many saw the current events in the Church of England and in the royal court as foreboding the encroachment of Catholicism within their very own land. Should the Protestant Church of England fall to the clutches of the Catholic Church, the fate of Protestantism was doomed. It was for this reason that Winthrop saw New England as a place to "raise a bulworke against the kingdom of antichrist which the Jesuits labour to rere in all parts of the world." The plight of

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[262] "General Observations for the Plantation of New England," *Winthrop Papers,* Vol. II, 111-149.

[263] "General Conclusions and Perticular Considerations: Later Draft," ("Particular Considerations in the Case of J: W:,"), *Winthrop Papers,* Vol. II, 133-134.

[264] "Election of John Winthrop as Governor," *Winthrop Papers,* Vol. II, 159-160.

Protestantism in Europe suggested that "like iudgement is comminge vpon vs and who knoweth but that god hath prepared this place for a refuge for many whome he meaneth to saue in the general distruction."[265]

While New England was not England's first colonial endeavor, this colony, according to Winthrop, would be different. Other colonies had their primary aim as "cheifly at profit, and not the propagating of Religion" and the endeavor consisted of "vnfitt instrumentes, a multitude of Rude and misgoverned persons the verye scomme of the lande."[266] The very nature of Puritanism was primarily religious but manifested itself in political expression in England as a means of creating godly society. This colony endeavored to do nothing less. While the highest goal was the propagation of true, unadulterated Christianity, it necessitated the creation of a government worthy of that goal. For Winthrop, this was "a right forme of Gover[n]ment."[267]

Despite what they perceived as the growing corruption of their country, Winthrop's Puritan colleagues that considered joining him pledged their loyalty to the English Church and King. In fact, the emigrants of the Great Migration were vocal in stating their support for their native institutions. They sought to differentiate themselves from the previous expedition a decade earlier to Plymouth that consisted of Separatists. The Massachusetts Bay Puritans considered the Church of England the true church, albeit one that had its flaws. Despite facing backlash from the growing anti-Calvinist bias of the English Church, they still declared their loyalty to the Church and the monarch. As previously mentioned, a number of the emigrating Puritans were in high regard by English society and held influential positions. While it was true that many Puritans were censured, relieved of their benefices, fined, or excommunicated due to their non-

[265] "General Observations for the Plantation of New England," *Winthrop Papers,* Vol. II, 111.
[266] Ibid., 117.
[267] Ibid.

conformity, as one historian explains it, they were prosecuted but not persecuted.[268] It is an important distinction that the Plymouth settlers left for the New World from exile in the Netherlands while the Great Migration left England in the light of day with no authorities harrying them out of the country. What drove Puritans from England was the repression of their religious expression and the opportunity to practice their purer form of English Protestantism unhindered. Puritans were motivated by principle and conviction and not for self-preservation as were the Marian exiles.[269] Nowhere in Winthrop's pamphlet promoting the journey to New England did he mention persecution as a reason for leaving home.

The emigration to and settlement of Massachusetts was legitimized by a charter that was issued by the King. The Charter of Massachusetts, issued March 4, 1628/29, specifically mentioned 26 men to whom the charter was issued. It prescribed that there would be "one Governor, one Deputy Governor, and eighteene Assistants of the Same Company, to be from tyme to tyme constituted, elected and chosen out of the Freemen of the saide Company." They were directed to "take Care for the best disposeing and ordering of the generall buysines and Affaires of, for, and concerning the said Landes and Premisses hereby menconed, to be graunted, and the Plantacion thereof, and the Government of the People there."[270] In order to carry out their duties, these officers were authorized "to elect and constitute such Officers as they shall thinke fit and requisite, for the ordering, managing, and dispatching of the Affaires of the saide Governor and Company." They were also authorized to "make Lawes and Ordinnces for the Good and Welfare of the saide Company." However, they were cautioned that the laws they

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[268] C. E. Banks, "Religious 'Persecution' as a Factor in Emigration to New England, 1630-1640," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 63 (Oct., 1929-Jun., 1930), 135-168.

[269] Alexandria Walsham. "The Godly and Their Neighbours: Puritanism and Religious Pluralism in Early Modern England," *French Journal of British Studies* [Online], XXVII-3 (December 4, 2022).

[270] "Charter of Massachusetts Bay," in W. Keith Kavenagh, ed. *Foundations of Colonial America: A Documentary History.* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1973), 51.

would create "be not contrarie or repugnant to the Lawes and Statuts of this our Realme of England." Due to the uncertain nature of colonial settlement and the unforeseen challenges they would face, the charter gave the Company latitude to govern the colony "as they shall thinke fit and requisite." The colonists eventually took full advantage of this latitude.[271]

Regardless of what it would eventually become, the charter that gave the Puritans the right to settle in New England was essentially a corporate contract and not a document of government *per se*. The royal government considered the settling of colonies as primarily a commercial endeavor, as John Winthrop pointed out in his pamphlet. The emigrating Puritans, on the other hand, saw the charter as a license to go across the ocean and create their own idea of church and state. This is evident from the outset when the Company chose to move their headquarters with them from London to Massachusetts and to merge the corporate entity with that of the governmental. To underscore this, any assistants of the Company that stayed behind resigned their position.[272] The significance of this cannot be overstated. When the Puritans left England, they left nothing behind that could be leveraged by royal authorities. The Great Migration settlers of New England benefitted from the fact that the nature of colonial charters had changed over the course of the previous years allowing for a more corporate-styled charter as opposed to the plantation or trading charters that were characterized by greater oversight by the privy council and board of commissioners. Furthermore, the charter of 1629 did not explicitly state that the residence of the corporation had to remain in England.[273] In fact, Winthrop himself referred to this in his *Discourse on Arbitrary Government* when he stated that the usual practice

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[271] Ibid., 52-53.

[272] George Lee Haskins. *Law and Authority in Early Massachusetts: A Study in Tradition and Design.* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), 11-12, 23.

[273] Herbert L. Osgood. *The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century. Volume I: The Chartered Colonies, Beginnings of Self-Government.* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1903), 131-132, 143.

of the corporation remaining in England "was intended" but "with much difficulty we gott it abscinded."[274] This proved to have historic ramifications and dramatically changed the nature of colonial settlement in Massachusetts as compared to that of previous and future endeavors. By removing the charter from England to Massachusetts, it allowed the colony to evolve from a corporate colony to a commonwealth after only a short time of settlement in New England.[275]

One factor that allowed for the rapid transformation from corporate colony to a commonwealth was that, although the charter specified eighteen assistants as part of its governing body, it also stated that the leaders could "elect and constitute such Officers as they shall thinke fit and requisite, for the ordering, managing, and dispatching of the Affaires of the saide Governor and Company."[276] This effectively made the colonial government an open body as opposed to a closed body that had been prescribed in some previous colonial charters. In such an open body, membership within its governing ranks could be expanded as needed.[277] This factor was crucial if Massachusetts were to ever become a representative government. Contributing to the nature of the open body was the fact that the charter used the term "freemen" to refer to its members as opposed to the terms "associates" or "adventurers" that had been used in previous charters. This lowered the bar for admittance into the governing body from those who were financially invested to simply including those who owned land in the colony.[278]

As the first generation of Massachusetts Bay settlers set about to create colonial government, it became clear that their innovations were inspired by the spirit but not the letter of the charter. There were occasions throughout the first few decades of the colony when precise

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[274] John Winthrop. "John Winthrop's Discourse on Arbitrary Government," *Winthrop Papers, Volume IV, 1638-1644.* (Boston, Mass.: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1944), 470.

[275] Osgood, *Volume I,* 155.

[276] "Charter of Massachusetts Bay," in W. Keith Kavenagh, ed. *Foundations of Colonial America: A Documentary History.* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1973), 52-53.

[277] Osgood, *Volume I,* 142.

[278] Osgood, *Volume I,* 132.

details of the charter were followed, however, some decisions were made in which the charter was regarded as a suggestion and not a royal or legal imperative. True to the charter, they had established and maintained the roles of the Governor, Deputy Governor, and the General Court. However, not long after the first settlement they deviated from the charter by creating a second group of governing officials, the Court of Assistants. This seems to have been an improvisation based on the immediate needs of establishing a government, economy, and society and allowed the adaptability needed simply to get things done in the most efficient and effective way possible. During these earliest months, the General Court essentially became a formality while the Court of Assistants did all of the executive, legislative and judicial work of government. In fact, in October of 1630, the General Court relinquished its role in electing the Governor and Deputy Governor to the Court of Assistants.

During the first formative years of the Massachusetts government, nearly all of the freemen and stockholders held a position as an assistant or an officer. The General Court and the Court of Assistants were nearly identical in its membership, and they were all known as assistants or magistrates. This early government rested on the assumption that this small group of men represented the entire colony. In fact, the job of governing the colony for the first four years rested on the shoulders of about a dozen men. However, early on the seeds of change were planted when more people emigrated to New England and made the colony their home. As early as 1631, there were a substantial number of colonists (at least one hundred) who solicited recognition as freemen. Realizing the ramifications of the admission of such numbers, the Massachusetts government hesitated. Eventually these men were accepted as freemen but only after the Court enacted its first major deviation from the charter and required all freemen to also be faithful members of their local congregation (a requirement that stayed in effect until the

enacting of the second charter sixty years later). Unsurprisingly, these newcomers soon made it known that they wished to have a say in their government.

From the outset of the first wave of the Great Migration, settlement around Massachusetts Bay did not begin as one community as it did in Plymouth. Rather, smaller groups chose to settle in scattered townships, each centered around their own church. The central government consisting of the Governor, Deputy Governor and the Courts resided in Boston; however, more localized government began early on to be based on the township model, something many of the early settlers were familiar with back in England. It is a testament to the unifying power of Puritanism that this did not lend itself to disorganization or chaos, rather, the township model proved to be an effective mechanism by which to govern a rapidly growing population. In fact, the earliest beginnings of a judicial system was structured around the townships. The township became a uniquely New England characteristic and eventually proved to be one of the factors that promoted its economic and political developments.[279] So, when the issue of the involvement in the government by newly admitted freemen came to the forefront of the Massachusetts government, it was only logical that such expansion of government should be based on the townships. By 1634, it was determined that two representatives or deputies from each township should be elected and delegated to represent their local community in the colonial government in Boston. Up until that point, every position within the colonial government had been an elected position. However, with the inclusion of the deputies four years after the founding of government, Massachusetts had a truly representative government.

One characteristic that historians tend to highlight about early New England was its relative lack of major social discord or unrest. Although New England Puritans certainly had

[279] Barry Levy. *Town Born: The Political Economy of New England from Its Founding to the Revolution.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

their share of squabbles and controversies among each other and even among colonial leaders, they always seemed to maintain a significant degree of social harmony. There were good reasons for this that went beyond effective government. One of the most significant reasons related to the characteristics of those who emigrated to New England. As compared to colonial settlement in Virginia and the plantation colonies of the West Indies, the Great Migration was remarkably homogeneous. Lacking in New England were the elite nobility on one end and the masses of working poor on the other. The majority of New England settlers were middle-class gentry with many of them well-educated. New England Puritans certainly had their social hierarchy, but the social spectrum was much narrower than it was in the plantation colonies. In fact, from the outset, it was determined that neither those of the noble classes nor the undesirable poor would find a warm welcome in New England.[280]

The other major factor that explains New England's relative social harmony was its unifying purpose based on their Puritan faith. Puritans by their nature were collectivists as a result of their adherence to scriptural teaching regarding ecclesiology and the idea that each individual only found their identity through their relationship to the overall Body of Christ. The entire Puritan society was based on the ecclesiastical covenant that bound men to Christ and to each other.[281] This was the reason why a punitive sentence of excommunication from a congregation or banishment from a colony was so effective as a deterrent to rule breaking. Furthermore, within the town congregations as well as to the colony as a whole, the Puritan clergy played a significant role in conveying accepted mores of the community and maintaining the status quo. The sermons delivered by the minister in each township was a blend of rhetoric

[280] David Hackett Fischer. *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 31.

[281] Miller. *The New England Mind: The 17th Century*, 435.

and emotion designed to convey vital truths, not only into the minds but into the hearts of the parishioners.[282] While they did not hold public office, clergymen were nonetheless regarded as political figures within the New England communities. When there were difficult or controversial decisions to be made by the General Court, it was the clergy who were called on to give guidance and input as to the proper biblical path to be followed. It was the clergy who gave the annual election sermon as the colony leaders gathered to perform their sacred duty of electing new leaders from among their ranks. When decisions were made or legislation enacted, it was the clergy who echoed those decisions within the pulpits throughout New England. Puritan clergy were the colony government's most effective tool in keeping colonists unified in purpose, orthodoxy, and conformity.[283]

This homogeneity, conformity and social harmony was difficult to find outside of New England. This explains why, while New England culture and politics had significant changes over time, there was a core culture and beliefs, both religious and political, that remained surprisingly consistent up until the American Revolution. Puritanism proved to be highly effective at maintaining the New England soul that harbored specific political and social ideals.

In considering this relative social harmony of New England, it is tempting to conclude that the political resistance that resided in the essence of historical Puritanism had effectively been lost with the crossing of the Atlantic. However, a closer look at the political history of New England, even during its formative years, shows this to be far from the case. While there was no evidence of intra-colonial rebellion during this time and colony leadership enjoyed a significant amount of support, yet the Puritans of the Great Migration never forgot the political lessons they had learned back in England under the Stuart kings. The fact that colonial leadership was

[282] Ibid., 300-305.
[283] Haskins, 61.

creating a Puritan utopia did not preclude colonists from being wary of tyranny, arbitrary government, or governmental overreach. In their own homeland they had witnessed what happened when governmental and ecclesiastical officials were given too much power, especially when that power was targeted against dissenting Puritans. In the Promised Land of Massachusetts, they had no desire to see such events repeated, even if those governmental officials were some of their own. As will be discussed, each expression of political resistance shaped New England politics in ways that kept governmental power in check.

One of the first notable acts of political resistance was the Watertown protest of 1631. The controversy came about when the town minister indicated to his congregation that they should not pay a recent assessment of taxation by the Court of Assistants for Watertown. The reason was that "it was not safe to pay moneys after that sort, for fear of bringing themselves (and posterity) into bondage." The alarm sounded by the clergyman reached the members of the Court who promptly responded by summoning him and town leaders to account for their accusations. The colony magistrates patiently explained to the Watertown protesters that all tax legislation was indeed representative and explained the current system of leadership that supported this claim. Once the magistrates made their case, it was made plain to the Watertown delegation that their protest was unfounded and "they were fully satisfied; and so their submission was accepted, and their offence pardoned."[284] While the entire episode turned out to be much less dramatic than the name of the "Watertown protest" suggests, the entire episode brought some serious questions to the colony leadership. As a result, colony leaders realized that every effort should be made to assure all appearances of a representative government as well as assure that every township felt included in matters of taxation. It was this act of political

[284] John Winthrop. *History* Vol. I, 70.

resistance that prompted colony leaders to allow two freemen from each town to participate in decisions regarding taxation that came before the Court. Two years later, this arrangement would be further formalized by creation of the role of the appointed deputies, two from each township, to determine matters that were to be brought before the Court.[285]

The introduction of the deputies opened the door for even more government accountability in the ensuing years. One of the first recorded acts by the deputies occurred when the town representatives called for a closer inspection of the colony charter to assure that developments of the Massachusetts government were in compliance with its dictates. Upon its reading, they discovered that the current role of the Court of Assistants failed to comply with the charter that actually mandated that the General Court was the entity that should conduct all legislation and was the rightful body that elected the Governor and Deputy Governor. The error was acknowledged and corrected by reassigning the proper duties of governance to the General Court. After that time, the Court of Assistants continued to exist but became a body that was primarily advisory and judicial in nature.[286]

Another expression of political resistance that can be observed over the course of the first two decades of the founding of New England were more static and persistent. It also reveals the deeper undercurrents of Puritan politics that steadily grew to manifest over time. That manifestation of political resistance dealt with how New Englanders regarded the elitist bent of its early leadership. In characterizing the leadership style of John Winthrop, it is apparent that he was not one to lord over his position or covet power. Such a lust for power was inconsistent with the Puritan mindset of his day. On the contrary, Winthrop was noted for his humility even when faced with scathing criticism. When facing political opponents, he was never vindictive and

[285] Haskins, 30.
[286] Ibid., 30-31.

always sought reconciliation after major disagreements. It was his humility when holding the reins of power that accounted for why he was repeatedly sought out to lead and why he was always content to take a lower position within government when not serving as Governor. However, despite his humility, Winthrop was a product of his times and was a firm believer in social hierarchy and the obligation of social elites to serve in government leadership. His viewpoint is evident in a speech he made to the Court in 1645 in which he explained the problem with the idea of liberty in the colony, something that he observed "a great mistake in the country about that." His summary of the problem was that there was too much of the natural, animal-like kind of liberty and not enough of the kind of liberty that submitted itself to authority.[287] With the undercurrent of Puritan egalitarianism within the colony, it was inevitable that there would be conflict between the two ideas of government.

One challenge to his authority came in 1632 by one of the deputies, Thomas Dudley, who presented a list of grievances, most of which concerned personal business between them. Winthrop admittedly records the interchange as a heated one. He, however, graciously answered each of the charges by defending his good intentions. Dudley went further to suggest that the Governor had overstepped his authority and sought to "make himself popular, that he might gain absolute power, and bring all the assistants under his subjections." Winthrop countered that this was untrue since he himself "had propounded in court to have an order established for limiting the governour's authority."[288] Winthrop later records that despite "the heat of contention" they were able to continue to conduct business with each other and "ever after kept peace and good correspondency together, in love and friendship."[289] Dudley would later go on to be the next

[287] Winthrop, *History*, Vol. II, 280-281.
[288] Winthrop. *History* Vol. I, 32-36.
[289] Ibid., 39.

Governor of the colony. Nevertheless, the larger issues brought up by Dudley did not go away. The concern of the colonists concerning the potential for unchecked arbitrary government was ever-present within the first two decades of the colony. This is further evidenced by an election sermon by Thomas Hooker, a minister who left Massachusetts for the Connecticut colony, presumably because of differences with the Massachusetts leadership. It has been suggested by historians that Hooker took issue with the elitist bent of Massachusetts and expressed this in his sermon by stating that "they who have power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power, also, to set the bounds and limitations of the power and place unto which they call them."[290]

One of the ways in which this concern was manifested was in the constant tension that arose between the magistrates and the deputies after their inclusion in the colonial government in 1634. The role of the deputies was still evolving at the time and the elitism of the magistrates was becoming more apparent to the town representatives. Evidence of this was seen in 1636 when the idea was entertained of having certain governmental roles, that of the Governor, former Governors, and a certain number of magistrates, as being elected for life. The proposal was immediately resisted by the deputies who indicated that such a provision was not a part of their charter. [291] The debate continued throughout the late 1630s. While a council was eventually created consisting of Governors and ex-Governors, the council was afforded no significant political powers and was primarily honorary and advisory in nature.[292]

Historian T. H. Breen frames this tension within the Massachusetts Court as a battle between the discretionary (the elitist or magistrates) and the delegatory (the representative or the

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[290] Perry Gilbert Miller. "Thomas Hooker and the Democracy of Early Connecticut," *The New England Quarterly*, 4, No. 4 (Oct., 1931), 695; Breen. *The Character of the Good Ruler*, 72.

[291] Winthrop, *History* Vol. I, 302-303.

[292] Breen. *The Character of the Good Ruler*, 74-75.

deputies). Behind each group was an assumption regarding their role in government. The discretionary faction believed that they were entrusted to act as rulers and make decisions for the colony at their own discretion. They were on a higher plane of authority than the regular colonists. They were assumed to have a special skill set that qualified themselves to perform the functions of governing. The delegatory faction believed that they were elected to represent their constituents as surrogates and considered themselves no better than those who elected them. They primarily answered to the demands and expectations of the electorate. In understanding New England political history, this distinction is an important one since these two factions persisted up until the time of the American Revolution in various manifestations. It is the argument of this present study that the essence of Puritan political resistance tended to reside within the delegatory portion of New England government and society. Later in the eighteenth century, the heirs of these differing political orientations would be identified as the Court and Country factions.[293]

Another major episode in which this tension can be observed first began in 1634 during a time when the number of deputies in the Court was growing due to the population growth in the townships. The number of assistants stayed constant which caused the magistrates to feel that their elevated power in the Court was being threatened by the deputies. One of the ways in which the magistrates held the upper hand was by the negative voice or veto power. When a dispute arose between the two groups in the Court, it was pointed out that the magistrates were holding onto the power of the negative voice in order to counter the growing influence of the deputies. The magistrates were not inclined to surrender this right of theirs. So tense was this debate that the Court had to be adjourned to pray about the issue. It was only an address that sided with the

[293] Ibid., 72-73.

magistrates by one of the clergy, John Cotton, that temporarily pacified the debate, despite the fact that it was not truly resolved to the satisfaction of the deputies.[294]

The debate over this issue continued into the next decade as deputies continued to object to the magistrates' negative vote. Winthrop responded to this debate by writing a defense of the negative vote in 1643 by explaining that, while it was not implicitly stated, it still conformed to the original intent of the charter. In his document he belies his elitist philosophy of government and reveals that "the Dep[u]tyes are the Democraticall parte of our Gouerment." His fear was that if the negative voice of the magistrates was removed, "our Government would be a mere Democratie, where as now it is mixt." For Winthrop and his magisterial colleagues, this was not a good thing since democracy was "accounted the meanest and worst of all forms of Goverment." To surrender the negative voice would be to "voluntarily abase our selues, and deprive our selues of that dignity, which the providence of God hath putt vpon vs."[295] Reverend John Norton further defended the negative vote by claiming that the magistrates were somehow more qualified to participate in the government than were the deputies.[296] Unfortunately, the debate continued into the next generation of Puritan politicians and was still going on when the original charter was revoked in 1684 and the General Court abolished. During this entire time, the magistrates never surrendered their right to the negative voice.

It should be noted that the debate over the negative voice demonstrates the influence of a sixteenth century political thinker, Jean Bodin. Bodin's views regarding monarchial sovereignty makes him an unlikely source of political thought for the Puritans of New England. However, the resourceful colonial leaders selectively used Bodin's ideas in order to formulate a colony

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[294] Winthrop, *History* Vol. I, 141-142.

[295] John Winthrop. "John Winthrop's Defense of the Negative Vote," in *Winthrop Papers,* Vol. IV, 382-383.

[296] Breen, *The Character of the Good Ruler,* 80.

government. One such idea related to veto power. According to Bodin, the presence of such a power distinguished elitist governments from those more democratically oriented.[297] This accurately framed the colonial government of Massachusetts and explains where elitist political thinkers like Winthrop adopted their ideas and why he desired to retain the negative voice in the government.

Bodin's ideas regarding sovereignty were also influential with colony leaders who had been exposed to his writings back in Cambridge University and held his books in their libraries. Bodin delineated the distinguishing characteristics of sovereign states which included four things that colony leaders were familiar with. The first was the right of the sovereign state to make and repeal laws. Second, was the authority to declare war or peace. The third was the right to appoint and remove officers of government. Fourth was the hearing of last appeals.[298] All four of these characteristics came to have a vital place within the Massachusetts government. The Governor and General Court certainly made laws, frequently declared wars against hostile Indians and made treaties with allies, created systems to appoint officers of the government, and constantly countered efforts to allow cases tried in the colony judicial system to be appealed to the home government in London. Any student of Bodin during this time would not fail to understand why critics of the colony frequently accused Massachusetts of trying to be its own sovereign state.

Throughout his life, despite his elitism, Winthrop never abandoned his innate Puritan aversion to governmental tyranny. This was clear in his *Discourse on Arbitrary Government,* written in 1644. In its opening, Winthrop defines arbitrary government as the situation "where a people have men sett ouer them without their choyce, or allowance: who haue power, to Gouerne them, and Judge their Causes without a Rule." One who assumes such a role and usurps authority

[297] Maloy, "Bodin's Puritan Readers," 13-16.
[298] Ibid., 6.

is a tyrant.[299] This historical document stands as the earliest treatise on Puritan political thought in America; however, its significance lies not only in what it says but the implication of why it had to be written in the first place. The fact that Winthrop felt compelled to defend his government against insinuations that it had characteristics of being arbitrary tells us much about what was going on within the political landscape of New England. Winthrop's journal records that the treatise was prompted by the ongoing frictions within the General Court in which the deputies persistently accused the magistrates of exercising arbitrary government and they sought to have "an unlimited power to do what they pleased without control."[300] Winthrop's political thesis pulls back the curtain on a political debate that persisted over the course of the first two decades of Massachusetts history and supports the argument that Puritan political resistance never died out upon settlement of the New World.

With the introduction of the deputies into the General Court, there began a growing opinion that the magistrates were governing arbitrarily both legislatively and judicially. The observation was that rulings were inconsistent and, therefore, potentially partial and unfair. Their complaints were not unfounded since Puritan justices in the courts throughout the colony as well as the magistrates in the General Court were indeed given quite a degree of latitude in how they decided the cases that came before them. Penalties, fines, guilt, and exoneration could vary to a great degree depending on the individual case. However, the reason for this was not because judges wished to abuse their power or rule unquestioned, rather, the reason had more to do with how Puritans regarded the role of mercy in the way the law was to be administered. Within court records of the colony, there were numerous examples of how colony leaders sought repentance and restitution above punishment for offenses. Even with the most famous of cases brought

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[299] John Winthrop. "John Winthrop's Discourse on Arbitrary Government," *Winthrop Papers,* Vol. IV, 468.
[300] Winthrop, *History*, Vol. II, 282.

before the General Court, such as those of Roger Williams or Anne Hutchinson, had the defendants repented and acknowledged their wrong publicly, Puritan leaders were ready to grant forgiveness and restoration and allow harmony to resume among the society of saints. On the more local level, justices sought the same outcome. This approach was more consistent with the ideals of Puritan society in which social harmony was highly valued.

Yet even the most uneducated of colonists could see the potential for abuse with such an approach. Without an objective legal standard by which offenses were judged, even well-meaning justices could introduce human fallacies and biases into their rulings. The potential was even more concerning should a less than honorable man be given the authority to judge. The solution, on the surface, was a simple one. A series of positive laws should be passed that prescribed specific penalties for specific offenses and acknowledge the liberties of the colonists. In relating this controversy, Winthrop recorded in his journal in 1639 that, "The people had long desired a body of laws, and thought their condition very unsafe, while so much power rested in the discretion of magistrates."[301] Such laws would be made known to every colonist and would allow a greater measure of impartiality and fairness in the colonial legislative and judicial system.

This solution would seem to have been an uncontroversial one and one that would have easily pacified the colonists. However, this solution was slow in forthcoming for several reasons. One reason, as previously mentioned, was that colonial leaders did not want to remove the ability for justices to administer mercy as well as punishment. Positive laws would mean that every offense would receive the same punishment with no regard for special circumstances and regardless of the penitent attitude of the guilty. While there was merit in such a system, to the

[301] Winthrop. *History*, Vol. I, 322.

Puritan leaders this was a step away from what they considered a more biblical way to administer justice.

While this may have been a significant factor in the resistance to positive laws, Winthrop recorded in his journal the fact that there was a philosophical reason why magistrates did not originally support this plan. This reason had more to do with English legal history than it did the immediate circumstances of the colony. He explained that, based on the tradition of common law, laws in England had been created *pro re nata*, or as circumstances had dictated the necessity of them, "and therefore the fundamental laws of England are called customs."[302] The justices and magistrates of England had created the laws considering the circumstances of the time, using their knowledge and wisdom appropriate to the positions that they had been elected or appointed to. Positive laws, such as those suggested by the deputies, were preemptive and were more likely to be made by those with lesser abilities or experience. This legal philosophy was consistent with Winthrop's more elitist view of government. It is significant that the deputies who sought the body of laws did not ascribe to this view, despite it having the weight of English legal history behind it. What they wanted was something that met their immediate needs for assurance of their liberties under colonial law. This observation underscores what legal historians have noted regarding the development of law in New England. The push toward the idea of the common law that was so prevalent in England at the time of the Great Migration failed to have relevance to the first generation of colonists in New England.[303] In fact, the common law that Winthrop referred to did not gain traction in New England until the latter half of the seventeenth century, particularly at the time of the establishment of the second charter.

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[302] Winthrop. *History*, Vol. I, 322.

[303] Rosezella Canty-Letsome. "John Winthrop's Concept of Law in 17th Century New England, One Notion of Puritan Thinking," *Duquesne Law Review,* 16, No. 3 (1977), 350-351.

However, there was an even more important reason for hesitating to enact a series of positive laws. Colonial leaders acknowledged that the laws that they would create would be different than those that existed back in England. This would be largely due to the need for adaptability to the special circumstances required by colonial settlement that English laws could never have foreseen. Such conditions included labor and supply shortages that required regulation by the authorities, substitutions permitted in lieu of minted money due to money shortages, regulation of commerce dealing with trading with the Indians, and the issues dealing with rapid population growth. There was also a whole series of laws generated in Puritan New England that dealt with the challenges to Puritan orthodoxy by heretics.[304]

As Puritans, they also desired a unique set of laws to conform to their quest to recreate a semblance of Mosaic law in their colony. While this had always been an obsession of theirs, eventually this would only be manifested in fragments since much of the reality of Mosaic law was not always palatable to seventeenth century Englishmen, even Puritan ones. Furthermore, as Winthrop pointed out, the Bible did not prescribe penalties for every crime which left them to assume that God had entrusted the wisdom of earthly magistrates to rule on such things as they saw fit.[305] Theologically, Puritans also did not wish to follow Mosaic laws wholesale since to do so would undermine their Calvinist beliefs and negate the teachings of the New Testament.[306]

The reason why creating laws that were unique to the colony was such a concern relates back to the dictates of their charter. Colonial leaders were quick to recite the portion of their charter that cautioned them against enacting laws that were "contrarie or repugnant to the Lawes

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[304] Haskins, 115-116.

[305] Ibid., 117.

[306] John Cotton. "How Far Moses Judicialls Bind Mass[achusetts]," in Worthington Chauncey Ford. *John Cotton's Moses His Judicialls and Abstract of the Laws of New England,* (Cambridge, Mass.: John Wilson and Son University Press, 1902).

and Statuts of this our Realme of England."[307] Winthrop himself acknowledges two examples, that of Puritan church discipline and the forbidding of solemnizing marriages by clergy, in which the laws of Massachusetts were already in conflict with English laws.[308] The danger of this was that published laws could be related back to royal authorities and create an existential threat to the colonial charter should they consider the novel colonial laws a violation of its terms. This concern regarding the danger to their charter and colony was an ever-present one throughout the history of the early founding of New England and one that was entirely justified.[309]

While there was no wholesale uprising among the colonists in a demand for positive laws, there was certainly a persistent push for them over time. The issue never faded away during the first few decades of the colony. Although it is not entirely accurate to say that the magistrates defied or resisted the push for a set of laws, it appears from their lack of productivity on the matter that they were not motivated to accomplish the task in a timely manner. The General Court responded to the initial request of the deputies by setting up a series of committees to draft what they called "fundamental laws."[310] The first one in 1635 was composed of only magistrates. The second in 1636 added three clergymen. Neither of these committees were able to produce anything substantial. In 1638, a third committee was constituted that added two freemen. It would appear that the lack of accomplishment prompted the Court to add the freemen as a means to motivate productivity. This third committee's work extended longer than the previous two and led to a fourth and final committee in 1639. This was the committee that eventually produced a written draft that was submitted for consideration by the freemen of the colony for comment.[311]

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[307] "Charter of Massachusetts Bay," in Kavenagh, *Foundations of Colonial America*, 52-53.

[308] Winthrop, *History*, Vol. I, 323.

[309] Frank Strong. "A Forgotten Danger to the New England Colonies." *Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, 1898, 77–94.

[310] Haskins, 124; Winthrop, *History*, Vol. I, 160.

[311] Haskins, 124-128.

It is no coincidence that the initial momentum for laws began within a year of the introduction of the deputies into the Massachusetts legal system in 1634 since it was the selectmen who agitated for positive laws and not the magistrates. In fact, the inauguration of the deputies, despite it being at a very early stage of its development, proved to be a significant event regarding the political landscape of New England. For the first time, there was a dichotomy within the overall unity of Puritan leadership and an element of friction grew between the magistrates and the deputies. This is evident in 1639 when an issue came up regarding the number of deputies that were allowed to be elected from each township and the magistrates wanted to limit that number to two. Winthrop records that, "This occasioned some to fear, that the magistrates intended to make themselves stronger, and the deputies weaker, and so, in time, to bring all power into the hands of the magistrates."[312] While the magistrates continued to hold the upper hand for some time to come, the deputies represented the introduction of a more democratic element into the Massachusetts governing body. The deputies appear to be the ones who are more aware of the issues that concern the common people while the magistrates represent the more elitist segment. This fact will become more evident as the colony government evolves into a two-house legislature and on into the eighteenth century with the emergence of the Court and Country factions. This is also an important development for the purposes of this present study since much of the persistence of political resistance in New England tends to reside within this more democratic aspect of Puritan society.

The work of the fourth committee produced the historic political document known as the Massachusetts Body of Liberties. Winthrop gives credit to Nathaniel Ward and John Cotton for contributing to its creation.[313] However, it was Nathaniel Ward who contributed the most to the

[312] Winthrop, *History*, Vol. I, 300.
[313] Ibid., 322.

finished product. Cotton, a minister, was previously asked to contribute to the endeavor back in 1636 at which time he submitted a manuscript of his *Moses His Judicialls* for consideration to the General Court.[314] Cotton's contribution was to suggest a body of laws based on Mosaic law, an approach that was highly favored by the Puritan clergy of the colony. This reflected the theme often used by the ministers that New England was the spiritual heir and reincarnation of biblical Israel.[315] He later explained in his *How Far Moses Judicialls Binds Mass*[*achusetts*] that only the laws that either projected forward to or were mentioned in the New Testament still applied to their day.[316] His submission laid out a detailed list of laws, however, only the parts concerning capital crimes (such as incest, adultery, or murder) made it into Ward's final draft.[317]

Nathaniel Ward was a Puritan minister in England who was deprived by Archbishop Laud. He then became a lawyer and was well acquainted with English laws and statutes.[318] Ward was a vociferous defender of Puritanism in the face of those who opposed true religion and just as fiercely defended the congregations of New England. As for Ward's political opinions, a clue as to where he stood is revealed in his *The Simple Cobler of Aggawam in America* when he said "I am a Crabbat [a club or cudgel] against Arbitrary Government. Experience hath taught us here, that political, domestical, and personal respects, will not admit one and the same remedy for all, without sad inconveniences."[319] This opinion reveals whose side Ward was on in the press for positive laws and explains his role in the development of the Body of Liberties. There are also clues that Ward was the favored representative of the more common people when in 1641

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[314] Ibid., 202.

[315] Michael Hoberman. *New Israel/New England: Jews and Puritans in Early America.* (Boston, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), 18-40.

[316] Cotton. "How Far Moses Judicialls Bind Mass[achusetts]," 12-16.

[317] Haskins, 130-131; John Cotton. *An Abstract or the Lawes of New England, as they are now established.* (London: F. Coules, and W. Ley at Paules Chain, 1641).

[318] Haskins, 106; Samuel Eliot Morison. *Builders of the Bay Colony.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), 219.

[319] Nathaniel Ward. *The Simple Cobler of Aggawam in America*. (Boston: Daniel Henchman, 1713), 13.

some freemen had taken it upon themselves to have him preach at the General Court, something that the Governor and magistrates had not agreed to. Deciding not to make an issue of it, the Court allowed him to preach but then objected to some of the content of his sermon. One of the offending remarks was when he "advised the people to keep all their magistrates in an equal rank, and not give more honor or power to one than to another."[320] Apparently this equalitarian remark did not suit the elitist ideas of the magistrates.

It is important to note just how historic the Body of Liberties was at the time it was written, despite the fact that those who produced it had little idea of its future ramifications and were only looking at its immediate utility.[321] It was a significant advancement in the concept of constitutionalism in written form. It also did something that the leaders of the colony at the time feared it would do in that it violated and added to the existing laws of England, albeit in positive ways. For example, it provided for a measure of free speech and assembly, free movement out of the jurisdiction, proscribed "inhumane Barbarous or cruell" punishments and torture for confessions, required that two or three witnesses were necessary for a death sentence, forbade monopolies, and gave limited protection for witnesses against self-incrimination.[322] It is likely that because these written liberties could be considered a violation of their charter they were not printed in their entirety for wide distribution in the colony or back in England and only read aloud in the General Court. However, some conjecture that the laws were not printed because the Court was anticipating continual revision.[323]

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[320] Winthrop, *History*, Vol. II, 42.

[321] This is a point that is crucial in understanding the weakness of Whig presentist interpretations of history. The creators of documents such as the Body of Liberties were not seeking to progress toward a future democratic republic regardless of the fact that later generations would build on such work to produce one.

[322] "The Massachusetts Body of Liberties," in Donald S. Lutz, ed. *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution.* (Carmel, Indiana: Liberty Fund, 1998), 70-87.

[323] Haskins, 131.

Although it was a momentous achievement within the scope of Early Modern history, it was not exactly what the deputies were seeking when they wanted a body of positive laws. As a political document, it more resembled the modern-day Bill of Rights than an actual system of laws. (This is no coincidence since much of the Body of Liberties eventually found its way into the US Bill of Rights.) It was clearly a compromise by the General Court to guarantee the rights and liberties of colonists while still preserving the latitude entrusted to the magistrates. The fact that the demand for positive laws escalated after the issuance of the Body of Liberties underscores its inadequacy in the opinion of the deputies.[324] What they wanted were specific laws and penalties. This sentiment was referred to in the introduction of the eventual Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts when it was stated that "it is very unsafe & injurious to the body of the people to put them to learn their duty and libertie from generall rules."[325]

From the time of the issuance of the Body of Liberties, the General Court was under pressure to produce a new set of more detailed laws. Part of this pressure came from within the Court itself, namely the deputies who sought to curb magisterial arbitrary government. The other pressure appeared occasionally when there were challenges to the authority of the Governor, Deputy Governor, and General Court to govern the colony. Some challenged the Puritan government, such as the case of Dr. Robert Child in 1646, by claiming that the colony government was illegitimate and tyrannical and questioned their right to govern. Child and a group of remonstrants was further causing problems by stirring up the people with their ideas and attempting to appeal to Parliament with their grievances. After a lengthy hearing before the Court in which they defended their authority to govern, they acted to squelch such criticism since

[324] Haskins, 131.

[325] *The Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts Reprinted from the Unique Copy of the 1648 Edition in the Henry E. Huntington Library.* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1998), A2.

it seriously undermined their authority in the colony.[326] With challenges such as this, the Court was further motivated to produce a set of written laws that would fortify their authority. Even with these pressures it took seven years after the Body of Liberties before the results pacified those agitating for a more definitive legal document. That result was the Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts of 1648. It was primarily the work of Winthrop, Bellingham, and Ward, most likely the ones who had the most legal experience in the colony. It was a combination of a significant portion of the Body of Liberties, laws that had been enacted in the previous years, and new laws.[327]

In reflecting on the momentous accomplishments of Puritan Massachusetts in producing such historic political documents, it is important to consider what element of Puritan society was responsible for their creation. The impetus to produce the documents guaranteeing the liberties of colonists did not originate nor was perpetuated by the magisterial element of Massachusetts government. Rather, it was the more democratic group of deputies, elected by their local townships, that pushed for it. And, as Winthrop noted in his journal, it was "the people," represented by the deputies, that "felt unsafe" and "feared" the unrestrained power of the magistrates. Therefore, they sought a constitutional remedy in the form of documents of positive laws and assurances of rights and liberties as a hedge against governmental overreach. While it is inappropriate to characterize the power of the magistrates as tyranny, nevertheless, this was political resistance in another form that had been transplanted from Stuart England onto the shores of Massachusetts. It was the same character of political resistance that sought to curb the power of Charles I that manifested within the ranks of the deputies of Massachusetts Bay.

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[326] Winthrop, *History*, Vol. II, 346-359.
[327] Haskins, 136-137.

In addition to the political resistance that could be observed within intra-colonial political battles, there was also evidence that the resistance and friction between Puritans and the monarchy that was evident in the years leading up to the Great Migration was still contained within the ranks of the emigrants in New England. If political resistance was truly a characteristic contained within Puritanism, as this present study argues, then this would be manifested among all Puritans, both magistrate and deputy alike. And, indeed, this is what can be observed even within the first decade of settlement of Massachusetts. While it began slowly, there grew a mounting resentment of royal interference in colonial affairs that accelerated during the Civil War especially when the royalists appeared to be losing.

The settlers of New England were clearly monarchists, even if their royalist stance was necessitated by a sense of preservation for their charter and colony. Records from the colony confirm that colony leaders were deferential to their monarch and avoided treasonous words and deeds that suggested otherwise. Yet even from the outset, there appears to be an underlying assumption that royal presence and influence was only allowed in Massachusetts on their terms alone. This can be seen in an episode that began in 1634 regarding the King's ensign that flew over a fort in Salem that bore a red cross on it. The Puritans at Salem found the flag to be particularly offensive since they considered it to be a "superstitious thing, and a relique of antichrist" and a Mr. Endecott took it upon himself to cut out the part of the flag with the cross on it. Some feared that defacing the King's flag could be taken as "an act of rebellion, or of like high nature" even though they were "doubtful of the lawful use of the cross in an ensign." A letter was sent to England to assure those who may hear of it back home that they meant no treason by this act and they were dealing with it. After deferring a final decision for several months, the Court ruled that Endecott should be penalized by not holding any public office for a

year and nothing harsher since "he did it out of tenderness of conscience, and not of any evil intent."[328] Following the incident, the flag was not flown again until a master's mate on board a ship noticed the omission and accused the Puritans of being "all traitors and rebels." While the man was chastised for his accusation, the Court agreed that the flag should be flown over the fort, even if it was an idolatrous thing, because the fort was considered the King's and the flag would fly in recognition of that alone.[329] This episode gives a hint as to the Puritans' permissive attitude toward royal authority rather than a full-fledged acknowledgement of it. It should also be noted that this was only four years after the establishment of the Massachusetts Colony and well before the beginning of the English Civil War when a less respectful attitude toward the monarchy was more common.

It would take circumstances that were clear challenges to Puritans and their ideals that had taken root on Massachusetts soil to elicit a more defiant response. Such circumstances came about when the first serious challenge arose to their precious charter. From the outset, the Puritan government of Massachusetts had enemies back in England who sought a revocation of their charter and a royal colonial government installed, one that was more similar to that of other colonies such as Virginia. Chief among those who felt that they had a superior claim on Massachusetts was Sir Ferdinando Gorges. As early as 1633, Winthrop's journal records that Gorges and others sought to discredit the Massachusetts government to the colonial commission in England with the ulterior motive of unseating them so their own interests could prevail.[330] This was an ever-present threat to the colony and it was only the intelligence that they received from allies and the help of those who advocated for them on their behalf back in England that

[328] Winthrop, *History*, Vol. I, 146-147, 150, 158.
[329] Ibid., 187-189.
[330] Ibid., 100.

kept the threat from materializing into something more serious. For this reason, the New England colonies were particularly sensitive to anything that could be perceived by the home government as violations of their charter or the toleration of treasonous or rebellious behavior. In 1639, Gabriel Fish was sought out and detained by thirteen armed men based simply on the charge that someone claimed he was speaking against the King.[331] Yet, despite their abundance of caution, there were occasions where royal intervention against their charter and their way of life seemed imminent.

Because of the real possibility of a threat upon their charter and the imposition of royal government, colonial leaders were preoccupied with how they were to respond if the threat became a reality. This can be seen in colony records as early as 1634 during the episode of the King's ensign. The ministers of the colony proposed the question to the Court of what would be done "if a general governour should be sent out of England?" The answer that the Court came up with was that, should this occur, "we ought not to accept him, but defend our lawful possessions (if we were able;) otherwise to avoid or protract."[332] In other words, the response of the colonial government was that if the King should send his own governor, they would exercise active political resistance. However, an alternate and less confrontational option would be to "avoid or protract." It was the latter option that they effectively used over the course of the next few decades and succeeded in retaining their charter for some time to come. The justification that they were adhering to in this course of action was that they were defending their "lawful possessions." In this, they were not only appealing to their lawful property rights but in keeping the social contract they had made when the colony was founded. The implications were as much religious as they were political and is another chapter in the ongoing story of Puritan political

[331] Ibid., 327.
[332] Ibid., 154.

resistance. As will be discussed in the next chapter, this became a key point during the era of the establishment of the second charter.

The day came in 1637 when their fear became reality. Two ships arrived out of England with one containing a copy of a commission from the English commissioners for New England. It declared that the commission was to assume government of the colony and that the current government was considered "no lawful authority in force…from his majesty."[333] The commission was ignored since no mention is made of a response and nothing else was recorded about it for at least a few days until Winthrop's journal noted that another commission arrived from Sir Ferdinando Gorges also assuming some authority over the colony. Gorges commission was "observed as a matter of no good discretion, but passed in silence." The other gentlemen who carried a commission were also ignored because they lacked what the Court determined should be proper authority. As for the document that they were given, they responded that "we received only a copy of it, but the commission itself staid at the seal for want of paying the fees."[334] In essence, they considered it an illegitimate document based on a technicality and continued their policy of avoiding and protracting.

Another episode in the ongoing drama occurred in the same year when a visiting dignitary, Lord Ley, sought to investigate a rumor that a man by the name of Ewre "had spoken treason against the king" by saying that "if the king did send any authority hither against our patent, he would be the first should resist him." When Ewre was called before the Court, he clarified that what he said did not mention the king but did admit that he did say that if anyone came out of England against the colony's patent, "he would withstand it." Governor Winthrop notes that no punishment was forthcoming "seeing it is lawful to resist any authority, which was

[333] Ibid, 226.
[334] Ibid., 231.

to overthrow the lawful authority of the king's grant" and this sentiment was "justifiable by the laws of England."[335] These words, recorded in his journal, were Winthrop's own and reveals the limits that he and his fellow colonists placed on their allegiance to the King's authority. While he delicately skirts around treasonous language, the response strongly suggests that any challenge to their charter, even a royal one, would be justifiably resisted. It also hints at some sympathy with Ewre's opinion, possibly even the original alleged statement he made, since the investigation was only prompted by an outsider. Interestingly, Winthrop's journal records that when Lord Ley and his entourage departed for England, the fanfare surrounding their departure was deliberately not attended by Winthrop, suggesting that Ley had incurred the Governor's displeasure and disrespect.

A more direct attempt against the colony's charter came again in 1638 by a "very strict order" that demanded the surrendering of their charter, a procedure known as a *quo warranto.* Winthrop records the response from the Court as:

> A letter should be written by the governour, in the name of the court, to excuse our not sending of it; for it was resolved to be best not to send it, because then such of our friends and others in England would conceive it to be surrendered, and that thereupon we should be bound to receive such a governour and such orders as should be sent to us, and many bad minds, yea, and some weak ones, among ourselves, would think it lawful, if not necessary, to accept a general governour.[336]

Here again Winthrop and the Court had determined to passively resist the demand from the Lord's Commissioners for Plantations. Yet another letter was sent to the Governor later in the year from the Lord's Commissioners in which "they straightly required the patent to be sent home by the first ship." The Court again "agreed not to send home the patent, but to return answer to the lords by way of humble petitions."[337]

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[335] Ibid., 234-235.
[336] Ibid., 269.
[337] Ibid., 274.

The Lord's Commissioners were persistent and sent yet another batch of letters in 1639. This time, Winthrop knew what was coming and, employing more delay tactics, avoided opening them because the council "thought it not safe to meddle with them, nor would take any notice of them." Eventually, on the threat of someone making a bad report back to the commissioners, they were forced to open them. This time, the commission indicated that they understood the lack of compliance was because of the perceived threat to their government so they agreed to let the existing government stand while the charter was removed back to England and until a new charter could be issued. This time the commission "added threats of further course to be taken with us, if we failed." Employing another avoiding and protracting strategy, the Court deemed the letter invalid since there was no proper documentary evidence that the letter had been delivered through the officially prescribed channels and properly served to the Governor.[338]

The ongoing conflict concerning the colony charter is significant because it reveals the true character of Puritanism that had been transplanted from England to Massachusetts. Puritanism still contained within it the potential and justification for active political resistance. Their resistance in Massachusetts was reminiscent of the resistance many of the colonists were familiar with in the years leading up to the Great Migration when Parliament drew lines in the sand with the King. As the English Civil War was becoming imminent back in the homeland in the later 1630s, English Puritans were becoming more militantly resistant. New England Puritans did not have occasion to exhibit this same militant response during this time, however when forced to defend their faith and way of life, they were still capable of radical resistance to governmental power. When a real threat materialized, Puritans, whether they were deputies or magistrates, English or American, were quick to manifest the political resistance that still resided

[338] Ibid., 298-299.

within their nature. The militant Roundheads were a portent of what would occur in the next generation of New England Puritans when their charter faced a threat that was actually carried through with. Those circumstances came about when the sons of Charles I decided that it was time to exert royal control in New England.

Chapter 5

"Let Our Government Live": Militant Puritan Political Resistance in New England

The Restoration of the English monarchy marked a turning point in the political history of Massachusetts. Prior to this time, the colony leadership had expended its political energies creating and refining the structure of colonial government. Most of the political tensions were primarily internal between the discretionary and delegatory factions who had different ideas of what representative government should be. There were also tensions over the development of a body of positive laws. While there were some tensions that the colonial government never truly resolved over the course of its history, most of the major battles had been fought and a relatively peaceful status quo had been reached. External threats from the royal government were always present but these had largely remained theoretical and had been successfully avoided. Puritan political resistance continued to be manifested within the colonial experience; however the Restoration brought out more tangible existential threats to the colonial charter and elicited a greater expression of political resistance.

The first three decades of New England political history were primarily concerned with the establishment and maturation of government that was molded by internal conflicts and pressures. The English government's preoccupation with the English Civil War facilitated Massachusetts' experienced autonomy and virtual absence of royal presence in its initial development. During that time, the Puritan government in Massachusetts weathered its share of detractors, hardships, and heretics and emerged even greater. By the end of the Interregnum, the population and economy of Massachusetts Bay had experienced significant growth and it had virtually become its own independent sovereign state.

In the span of time from 1630 to 1660, the colonial government of Massachusetts had experienced evolution of its working parts that had allowed for more internal stability. The constant battle between the elitist magistrates and deputies had reached a stalemate owing to the latter's gradual expansion of its influence and status. Early on, Winthrop had decisively sided with the magistrates as more qualified to carry on the work of governing the colony. His acknowledgement of the deputies reluctantly allowed the freemen of the townships a voice and pacified their discontent. However, the deputies, since they were elected by their fellow freemen of their vicinities, saw themselves as equal heirs of the powers of representative government and resented any superior powers possessed by the magistrates. They also responded to the concerns of their constituents that feared arbitrary government. However, as the colony grew and the need for manpower to govern it increased, it was the deputies who stepped up to fill the void.

During this time, three reasons are cited to explain the increase in the power of the deputies. First, with the decrease in newly qualified leaders emigrating from England, the need for new magistrates became increasingly filled by deputies, often making them magistrates-in-waiting. Second, in 1644 the magistrates and deputies became divided into two houses. The colonial government was thereafter bicameral with both lower and upper houses. While the Court of Assistants still possessed greater powers than the Court of Deputies, at least the deputies then had a rightful designated role and place in government, free from the critical eyes and ears of the magistrates. Third, there was the increased demand for judicial personnel in the outlying growing population centers. The magistrates had typically staffed judicial roles, however the workload demand was becoming increasingly more difficult to manage. The court system had to be expanded to allow for petty criminal and civil cases to be handled in the localities. For this purpose, an allowance was made for the election of three men (who were not magistrates) to be

elected by the General Court to serve as justices in these underserved areas. Frequently, the men elected were deputies, further elevating a number of deputies into judicial roles comparable to what many magistrates held.[339] While the upper house of the magistrates still held the negative vote, with the elevation of the deputies, Winthrop's elitist view of colonial government was becoming more impractical.

Massachusetts and the other Puritan colonies enjoyed the continued trajectory of independence and autonomy they had known since their founding. This continued through the Interregnum with a sympathetic Parliament and Lord Protector. The powers that ruled both England and New England were following parallel political paths.[340] The General Court of Massachusetts, despite their cherished autonomy, knew that they had to acknowledge the sovereignty of Parliament unless they "deny the foundation of [their] government by [their] patent."[341] In return, Parliament acknowledged the judicial sovereignty of the Massachusetts Courts by not receiving appeals and allowed a measure of free trade and coinage.

Political resistance during the first three decades had been largely limited to intra-colonial disputes in which the colonists sought to curb arbitrary colonial government. In response to these disputes, the leaders of Massachusetts had enshrined the guarantee of the liberties of the colonists into its evolving representative constitutional government. Because of their autonomy, Massachusetts and the other New England colonies were independent republics in everything but name. As such, there was no real need for a monarch and the absence of monarchial influence during the Civil War had little impact on the Northern colonies. Whereas from the beginning, Puritans in Massachusetts had functioned without a monarch out of practical necessity, by the

[339] Breen, *The Character of the Good Ruler*, 83-85.
[340] Osgood, Vol. III, 107-108.
[341] Winthrop, *History*, Vol. II, 224.

end of the Interregnum, New Englanders began to feel a sense of pride and a shared identity based on the fact that they ruled themselves without a King. Evidence of outright resistance to the monarchy was muted, however on occasion one could see the evidence that there was a growing resentment of the expression of royal sovereignty in Massachusetts. Monarchial authority was fine for the New England Puritans so long as the king could be acknowledged from a distance and made no direct moves to interfere with their way of life and their charter. However, what could be observed to have been an anti-royalist stance in its early years could more accurately be identified as the assumption of the early founders that Massachusetts was actually something more akin to its own sovereign state as opposed to simply being a royal colony. This is evident from the outset of colonization when the charter was deliberately removed to Massachusetts and in 1632 when Winthrop explained that the colony government was "rather in the nature of a parliament."[342]

However, the return of the monarchy to England in 1660 did not bode well for New England autonomy as they had known it. What little intervention that the King had made into the colony in the decades prior to the Civil War had been met with subdued resentment and passive resistance. The prospect of the monarch reasserting his authority into the colony was met with anxiety and a renewed sense of umbrage. Added to this was the fact that New England was known as being overtly sympathetic to Parliament in the recent hostilities and had connections to those who had actively fought against the royalists in England. Among those who were former colonists who fought on the Parliamentarian side in the war included former Massachusetts Governor Henry Vane, Israel Stoughton along with twelve of his fellow members of the Boston militia, and former minister to the church at Salem, Hugh Peter. A future Massachusetts

[342] Winthrop, *History*, Vol. II, 70.

Governor, John Leverett, was also a veteran of the English Civil War for the Roundheads.[343] While Massachusetts had been cautious in choosing sides earlier in the conflict, it was no secret on whose side their sympathies lay. Many in New England feared that there would be repercussions from this history, and in this their fear was justified.

The events that transpired with the outset of the Restoration highlighted a trend that had been subtly and steadily growing among the Puritans in Massachusetts. What began as a slight resentment of the royal government in the infancy of the colonial government had grown into outright anti-royalist sentiment during the time of the Protectorate. While their English counterparts had resigned themselves to welcoming the monarchy back to England, those in New England were not ready to subdue their anti-monarchial opinions nor trust the monarch so quickly. It was not until August of 1661 that the Massachusetts General Court officially proclaimed the resumption of the monarchy in the colony and only under pressure that they resumed issuing writs in the name of the King in 1663.[344] The official proclamation was not recorded in the colony records until December of 1661. At that time, a written address to the King was made that reminded him that "wee left not our countrye upon any dissatisfaction as to the constitution of the civil state," referring to the founding of the colony. They also claimed that during the time of the Interregnum, they had conducted themselves "after the example of the good old non conformist, hath binn only to act a passive part through out these late vicissitudes & successive overturnings of state."[345] While it is true that they did not overtly participate militarily in the events of the Civil War, yet it is a stretch to say that during the reign of

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[343] John Donoghue. *Fire Under the Ashes: An Atlantic History of the English Revolution.* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 166-167; Douglas C. Wilson. "Web of Secrecy: Goffe, Whalley, and the Legend of Hadley," *New England Quarterly.* Vol. 60, No. 4 (December 1, 1987), 524.

[344] Osgood, *Vol. III*, 165; Carla Gardina Pestana. *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution 1640-1661.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 216.

[345] Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed. *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England.* Vol. IV, Part I. (Boston: The Press of William White, 1854), 449-450

Parliament that they were entirely passive on political issues. There was a subtle implication in reminding the King that they were still following the path of the "good old non conformist." In other words, while there had been "successive overturings of state" (that had been none of their doing), they had simply kept following the path that their progenitors had started. The implication was that they had no intention of changing course with this latest "overturning of state." There was also the feeling among the New England colonies that, if they were patient and waited it out, there may be yet another change within the English government. News from the homeland suggested an incompetent royal administration plagued with scandal and even suggested a possible return to a commonwealth government.[346]

It is important to note the overall changes to the political landscape of New England that occurred over the course of the years following the re-establishment of the monarchy. The Restoration in New England proved to provoke differing political responses that indelibly changed New England politics for the next century. Historian Paul Lucas describes three distinct political groups during this time. There were the royalists who were on the periphery of New England politics. These were usually merchants who were not part of the Puritan churches and who owed no allegiance to the Massachusetts governing authorities.[347] Next, there were the moderates who were sympathetic with the Puritan hegemony but still felt a nostalgia toward the King and the homeland. They also sought to keep peace and avoided ruffling the feathers of the royal government. Theirs was a contradictory point of view but they felt that they were consistent with New England history up to that time. Finally, there was what Lucas describes as the commonwealth faction who felt that the Massachusetts Bay Colony government was

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[346] J. M. Sosin. *English America and the Restoration Monarchy of Charles II: Transatlantic Politics, Commerce, and Kinship.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 30-31.

[347] Michael Garibaldi Hall. *Edward Randolph and the American Colonies 1676-1703.* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1960), 16-17.

sovereign and essentially only paid lip service to the King. Both the moderates and the commonwealth factions resented royal interference into Massachusetts government.[348] Earlier colonial history resembled the moderate approach, however, over the course of the English Civil War and the Interregnum, the commonwealth viewpoint had gained traction and began to more strongly influence the decisions of the Massachusetts General Court and often reflected the orientation of the Governor.

Both moderate and commonwealth factions were present within the colonial government, leading to some tense moments when conducting the governing of the colony during the Restoration. Moderates sought pacification of the royal authorities and hoped to squelch any radical voices of opposition. Pro-commonwealth Puritans in government wanted to do nothing that would compromise their sovereignty and, even though they may not voice opposition themselves, often enabled such behavior among colonists by turning a blind eye to it. While firm lines of demarcation of political opinions are difficult to draw during any period of Massachusetts history, yet one can begin to observe a coalescing of these factions around existing political structures. Many of those who tended toward the moderate viewpoint could often be found among the more elitist magistrates. On the other hand, die hard commonwealth factionists could often be found among the more democratic deputies. Meanwhile, royalists always had a presence within New England even though they were rarely found within the colonial government of the time and mainly served to cause problems for those in power.

This division within the General Court was noted by moderate John Hull, a wealthy merchant, treasurer and mint-master in Massachusetts. In his diary in 1664, Hull noted after a meeting of the General Court that there were "sundry petitions" that expressed that "the liberties

[348] Paul R. Lucas. "Colony or Commonwealth: Massachusetts Bay, 1661-1666," *The William and Mary Quarterly,* 24, No. 1 (Jan., 1967), 89-90.

granted by patent might…be continued." He observed that "some of the original authors of those petitions were such as looked at this place as a State independent, and hence were less heedful of manifesting their own duty of subjection to our sovereign." However, he noted, "the former honest-hearted subscribers intended no such thing." Hull himself prayed that God would heed the desires of the colonists for preservation of their patent but recognized the danger of having them "forfeit…through defect of duty."[349] Hull's observations encapsulates the viewpoint of those of the moderate faction who feared that the lack of respect for the monarchy by the more radical of the colony could endanger their charter.

The sovereignty of Massachusetts was not something that was mere wishful thinking or delusion by the commonwealth colonists. Over the course of the 1650s, Massachusetts had taken the opportunity of the lack of intervention by Parliament to make its autonomy stable and prosperous. Following a time of economic hardship in the later 1640s owing to the lack of money and the drop in the number of emigrants to New England, Massachusetts had taken steps to expand its trade industry and had succeeded in bringing economic recovery to the area. While Puritans were not known to be zealous after riches, the reality was that a stable economy allowed them to maintain the Puritan hegemony and defend their churches against outside threats. One of the ways that they were able to expand their economy was by minting their own coinage, something that had historically been only associated with independent sovereign states.[350] Massachusetts began officially minting coins in 1652. When the King began to scrutinize the status of the colony after the Restoration, the existence of the "Bay shilling" was one of the

[349] John Hull. *The Diaries of John Hull, Mint-master and Treasurer of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay.* (Boston: John Wilson and Son, 1857), 213. https://dn790008.ca.archive.org/0/items/diariesofjohnhul00hull/diariesofjohnhul00hull.pdf

[350] Marshall Missner, ed. *Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan.* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 123.

things that suggested to him that the government in Massachusetts had overstepped its appropriate bounds as a colony. [351]

It is important to clarify that the evolution of Massachusetts into what was for all intents and purposes an independent, sovereign state was not in and of itself an act of political resistance. The government of Massachusetts Bay had grown into this sovereignty as a result of the lack of home government intervention and the necessity of surviving and growing as a colony. The status of Massachusetts at the time of the Restoration had not come about because of a political push for independence or some innate desire to eliminate monarchy. However, as will be discussed, political resistance occurred after the Restoration as a means to protect the sovereignty and independence they had come to enjoy.

With the impending intervention of royal authority at the outset of the Restoration, it became apparent that the commonwealth faction had become entrenched within New England culture as a whole, not just in its leaders. This can be evidenced by the 1665 visit of the Royal Commissioners. While the new king had a general concern about all of the colonies and trade, investigation into what was going on in New England had become a particularly urgent matter. Critics of the New England colonies had pointed out to royal officials their independent bent as well as deviations from the original Massachusetts charter which included laws of religious exclusivity and a failure to administer oaths that acknowledged allegiance to England (let alone the king). Massachusetts, the critics warned, had become resistant to any outside authority, and considered itself a sovereign state. Their recommendation was to supplant the existing colony government with a general governor appointed by the King.[352]

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[351] Jonathan Edward Barth. "'A Peculiar Stampe of Our Owne': the Massachusetts Mint and the Battle over Sovereignty, 1652-1691," *The New England Quarterly*. 87, No. 3 (September, 2014), 490-503.

[352] Osgood, Vol. III, 156-158.

The visit by the Commission had been preceded in previous years by an interchange of letters between the Massachusetts Governor, the General Court, and the King. Both sides had laid out their stances with the King asserting he still honored the original charter but wished to assert his rightful royal authority in the colony. Massachusetts stated that they still adhered to the rights of their charter and, while they wished to acknowledge the King, would continue to obey their conscience in religious matters.[353] These communications had been a delicate dance between them and allowed Massachusetts to continue to delay fully complying with all of the King's wishes. The Commission hoped to more definitively settle matters between them and to ascertain if the colony had complied with the wishes of the King in previous letters. Their mission was partially conciliatory bearing the King's good will toward the colony and they were charged not to disrupt the existing judicial system. However, they were also to convey the King's desire regarding religion, something that was sure to be a point of controversy with the Puritan leaders. They were also there to begin the process of a review of the charter for improvements and to initiate the King's desire to appoint a governor and take over control of the militia.[354]

The Commission arrived in July, 1664, delivered the King's letter to the Governor and Court, and then proceeded on to other colonies to conduct their business there. They briefly returned to Massachusetts but found such animosity and resistance to their mission that they decided to go on to Plymouth and Rhode Island where they enjoyed more success and a more friendly reception. They again returned to Massachusetts hoping that the cooperation of the other colonies would give them leverage to work with the leadership of the colony there. However, their work with the Governor and the Court was met with limited success and it was obvious to

[353] Thomas Hutchinson, ed. *The Hutchinson Papers.* Vol. II. (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell, 1865), 43-52.
[354] Osgood, Vol III, 172-173.

the Commission that the King's goals with the colony would not be easily met and so they departed back to England with a negative report regarding Massachusetts and its government.

The reception of the Commission by the leadership in Massachusetts is telling as to how they regarded the prospect of royal intervention. In a letter the Governor sent to the King within months of the arrival of the Commission, he voiced his opposition to the "gentlemen that are come ouer hither in this capacity of commissioners" who he claimed that should their mission succeed "will end in the subuertion of our all." Endecott further requested that "your majestjes instrucons…may put such ljmitations to their buisnes heere as will take of much of our ffeare." Their ultimate plea was to "let our gouernment liue, our patent liue, our magistrates liue, our lawes & libertjes liue, our religious enjoyments liue."[355] In the final sessions with the Court, the Commission presented several documents that questioned whether the colony had complied with the King's letter of 1662. Their final determination was that they had not and their attempts to come to some type of agreement on the matter had been met with resistance on every point. Their final conclusion was that the Court was determined to "misconstrue all these letters and endeavours, and that you will make use of that authority, which he hath given you, to oppose that sovereignty, which he hath over you." They had done all they could do and stated that "we shall not lose more of our labours upon you, but refer it to his Majesty's wisdom."[356] The frustration the Commission felt in dealing with the obstinate Puritans of Massachusetts was apparent. In addition to opposition among the colony leadership, there was even widespread hostility from the populace who regarded the King's letter delivered by the Commission as an imminent threat

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[355] Shurtleff, *Records of the Governor and Company*, Vol. IV, Part II, 131-133.

[356] Hutchinson, *History,* I, 248; Thomas Hutchinson, writing a century after these events, acknowledged that the colony had little excuse for not complying with the King's letter of 1662. He, however, allowed them some grace by claiming that the Commission superseded the authority that was granted them by their commission and the behavior of the Court was "not an obstinate perverse spirit, but a modest steady adherence to what they imagined, at least, to be their just rights and privileges." (Hutchinson, *History,* I, 256).

against the sovereignty of their colony. While moderates of the colony sought to squelch such public fear by posting a copy of the King's letter, many of the commonwealth faction blocked it being published and fueled the public animosity toward the Commission and, indirectly, the King himself.[357]

As much as the incident with the Royal Commission suggests resistance to royal authority, this pales in comparison to another drama that was playing out at the same time. In July 1660, two men arrived in Boston and received a warm welcome by the colony. They were the regicides Colonel William Goffe and Colonel Edward Whalley, both formerly of the Parliamentary forces during the English Civil War and both instrumental in signing the death warrant for Charles I as part of the High Court of Justice of 1649. When Charles II assumed the throne, he graciously pardoned most all of the anti-Royalists for their role in the War except for those who orchestrated his father's execution. Realizing that their lives were imminently in danger, they left for New England just a month before warrants were issued for their arrest. Goffe and Whalley realized that they would find support in the colony from sympathetic Puritans as well as some family connections and old friends among the colonists.[358]

The escape of the regicides to New England was not a secret from royal authorities. One of the points of business that the Commission was tasked in 1665 by the King "that they should duly inquire, whether any persons attainted of high treason, now reside there, or have been entertained there, and by whom, and what is become of them, and endeavor to cause them to be apprehended and sent to England."[359] The Court acknowledged that "Mr. Whaley and Mr. Goffe" had indeed been there but "they had departed this jurisdiction" before word had reached them of

[357] Lucas, "Colony or Commonwealth," 96.
[358] Wilson, "Web of Secrecy," 518-525.
[359] Hutchinson, *History,* I, 240.

the warrant for their arrest. In fact, the Court had commissioned "Mr. Kellond and Mr. Kirke," two royalists who were motivated by their loyalty as well as the King's bounty, to hunt for them in Connecticut and New Haven.[360] In fact, the United Colonies had issued a declaration back in 1661 that the whereabouts of Whalley and Goffe should be made known and every colony should do its best to apprehend and secure them. Failure to do so would be "at their utmost perill."[361]

While this all gives the appearance that the New England colonies were cooperating with the royal chase for the regicides, the reality was that this was all an elaborate game of hide and seek with the ultimate goal of allowing the regicides time to escape and hide out from any royal representatives who sought to find them. The list of those who aided and abetted the fugitives reads as a who's who of early New England. It includes Daniel Gookin, John Leverett, John Winthrop, Jr., John Davenport, Richard Saltonstall, Jr., and Increase Mather. For years, New England played the game of giving advanced alerts to imminent searches, using delaying tactics, and allowing deliberate sightings of the fugitives all perfectly timed so that royal officials and bounty hunters could never quite catch them. The timing was also such that it allowed Puritan officials deniability without having to commit the sin of lying. The fugitives spent most of their time in New Haven under the protection of John Davenport which gave that colony the most notoriety when it came the drama of the regicides. It was a reputation that the colony would eventually pay a price for. Whalley and Goffe both lived for years in New England and died natural deaths without ever getting apprehended. [362]

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[360] Ibid., 243.
[361] *Hutchinson Papers,* II, 63-64.
[362] Wilson, "Web of Secrecy," 526.

The incident with the regicides is significant because of all of the acts of resentment or resistance against royal authority up until that time, this was by far the most egregious. It reveals a blatant disregard and disrespect for monarchial authority that would have been uncharacteristic of Massachusetts during its first decade of existence. This disrespect went beyond mere resentment of authority to an actual disregard for the person of the King himself. It also reveals that all of the apparent cooperation by the colonial authorities was merely a false front that sought to hide their true opinion regarding royal authority. The leaders of the New England colonies were not false in the honor they were giving the present King since they knew it was their obligation to honor the authority placed over them according to the dictates of scripture. However, that honor had its limitations which was limited by the loyalty they had to their own faith and their fellow believers. Gradually over the previous two decades of autonomy, their loyalty to the King had also become limited by the growing value they placed on the sovereignty of their colony.

There were other examples of deeply ingrained resistance against royal intervention into the government and way of life of the colony. Not long after the news of Charles I's execution, the minister John Cotton addressed the General Court in 1651 regarding recent events. His sermon gave justification for the King's execution and the actions of Parliament. In giving an example that the leadership in Massachusetts could relate to, he proposed a scenario in which it was decided "by the generall Court as Unsafe to the state of church & Commonwealth to Receive A generall governour over Us." A dissenting group of deputies and magistrates could then come along and reverse this decision. A proper response, according to Cotton, would be for an opposing group to "Seclude Such of the magistrates of Deputies as were Redy to Betray the Safety of church & Common wealth, which they had Bought & maintained with theire Blood."

In other words, the political resistance demonstrated by Parliament would also be justified in Massachusetts should England decide to set up its own governor and any colonists should decide to go along with it.[363] There were also examples of more grassroots resistance to royal intervention in 1664-1665 when a series of resistance petitions were generated by colonists that constituted at least a fourth of the males, none of which were freemen. These petitions sought to counteract the notorious work of the Royal Commission. While these men were aware of complaints against the colony, they wished to express their satisfaction with their government to the King by asking him "for his royall favour in the continuance of the present estableshment and of all the previleges theirof."[364]

The King was also not well-regarded in Massachusetts for other reasons that may have fostered their lack of respect for royal authority. With the return of the monarchy, there were overtures made by the King toward toleration of dissenters as well as Catholics. While tolerance toward nonconformists would have been well-received, tolerance of papists would not have been. However, this all became a moot point when Parliament, now empowered by a growing rank of Anglicans, reasserted the traditional Church of England as the official brand of Protestantism leaving many Puritans on the periphery of the English Church once again. The King was forced to abandon his attempt at religious toleration in England but hinted at wanting to attempt it in the colonies.[365] This painted a picture for the Puritans in Massachusetts that they were once again being harassed by another Stuart king who may even harbor secret Catholic leanings.

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[363] Francis J. Bremer. "In Defense of Regicide: John Cotton on the Execution of Charles I," *The William and Mary Quarterly*. 37, No. 1 (January, 1980), 121.

[364] Adrian Chastain Weimer. "The Resistance Petitions of 1664-1665: Confronting the Restoration in Massachusetts Bay," *The New England Quarterly*, 92, No. 2 (June 2019), 243.

[365] Sosin. *Restoration Monarchy,* 33, 37.

The report of the Commissioners told the King everything he needed to know as to where he stood with the New England colonies. Overall, New England had given "his Majesty much content and satisfaction." However, "Massachusetts colony has been wanting in duty and respect to the King's Commissioners, his Majesty could not choose but resent their deportment, and has accordingly declared his just dislike thereof."[366] The King issued a demand that representatives from Massachusetts be sent to London to further discuss the issues that had failed to be resolved by the Commission. Lord Chancellor Clarendon commented regarding "what sense his Majesty has of the behaviour of those of Boston." He conjectured that "if they do not give obedience to it, we shall give them cause to repent it, for his Majesty will not sit down by the affronts which he hath received."[367] Back in Massachusetts, the Court was being pressured by colonists to pacify the King in order to return back into his good graces. The Court then debated on complying with the King's demand to send representatives, to which the Deputy Governor responded that "they must obey God rather than man."[368] The Court declined to send the requested representatives leaving the response to that decision up to the King.

The regard of the Court toward the Commission and their reaction to the King's request was defiantly bold and clearly tempted a strong response from the King. This situation combined with the mounting critics of Massachusetts's Puritan leadership that had the King's ear put the colony in a precarious position. It was a scenario reminiscent of that faced by the colony back in 1638 when Charles I demanded the charter of the colony be surrendered with the colony responding by delaying and ignoring. That episode, like the one in 1666, suggested that a drastic royal response was imminent. Fortunately for the colony government, the royal government

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[366] W. Noel Sainsbury, ed. *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1661-1668.* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1880), 373.

[367] Ibid., 377.

[368] Osgood, III, 191.

again faced challenges that delayed further actions. This time it was war with the French and the Dutch that preoccupied England and left Massachusetts to continue business as usual for the next ten years.[369]

With the conclusion of the war with Holland, royal attention resumed regarding the status of New England. The issue was renewed by Robert Mason and Ferdinando Gorges in 1675 who continued to press their legal claims against Massachusetts.[370] To bolster their claims, they solicited credible witness that highlighted the violations of Massachusetts against their charter. Eventually their persistence paid off when the King acquiesced to sending a representative to investigate New England and give him a detailed report of the veracity of the claims. The appointed representative, Edward Randolph, arrived in Boston in 1676 and, as would be expected, was met with a chilly reception from colony leaders when he presented them with a letter from the King.[371] Nevertheless, Randolph was able to conduct a thorough evaluation of the New England colonies for over a month and return to London with the most detailed report ever done up to that time. It included a list of laws of Massachusetts that contradicted those that existed in England and a failure to administer oaths of allegiance and what oaths were required contained no mention of the King, only the government of Massachusetts. The report also outlined the current status of the militia, Indian relations, relations with neighboring colonies, and the financial system and trade. Even though the colony accused Randolph of exaggerations, there was in fact nothing in his report that was erroneous.[372] This was only the first of a number of official visits made by Randolph who played a key role as the King's representative in New

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[369] Osgood, III, 191-192.

[370] W. Noel Sainsbury, ed. *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1675-1676.* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1893), 306-308.

[371] Hall, *Edward Randolph*, 21-22.

[372] Osgood, III, 316-317.

England for the next few decades and proved to be influential in enacting the King's wishes for the colony.

The laws of the colony were submitted for review by English jurists on behalf of the King who found a number of violations inconsistent with the provisions of the charter. There were laws based on Mosaic law and against heresy. Some laws defined the colony as a commonwealth and referred to the General Court as their chief civil power. Oaths administered by the colony leadership gave allowance for limitation of obedience to the king. There were laws providing for civil marriage and against Christmas as well as strict laws regarding Sabbath observance. The colony also had continued the minting of coinage. Missing were any laws against high treason and the militia were not required to swear obedience to the king.[373]

Upon his advice and the mounting evidence against Massachusetts, Randolph was commissioned to carry a *quo warranto* across the sea to Boston to be served against the charter.[374] Randolph fully realized that Massachusetts would attempt to continue its game of delay that had proved successful over the previous decades, and he was going to call their bluff. In a letter Randolph sent to the Governor, he alerted him to the charges being brought against the colony and that a *quo warranto* was imminent. He referred to the past history of the General Court and warned against "some greate and continued (I will not say designed) neglect of his Majesties Comands."[375] What Randolph was saying without actually saying it was that he would not tolerate the colony's history of delay and avoidance they had "designed" in the past. In order to show that the King meant business and that Randolph carried the full weight of the King's

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[373] Osgood, III, 321.

[374] Robert Noxon Toppan, ed. *Edward Randolph; Including His Letters and Official Papers from the New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies in America, With Other Documents Relating Chiefly to the Vacating of the Royal Charter of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay. 1676-1703.* Vol. III. (Boston: The Prince Society, 1899), 245-247.

[375] Ibid., 222.

authority, Randolph requested that a frigate accompany him to Boston; however, this would have delayed relaying the message even longer so he decided to leave immediately.[376]

Once delivered, Randolph waited for the repercussions since he knew that this would not go over well in the colony. As the King's notice was read to the colonists, it was no surprise that it was met with resistance. One episode shared with Randolph was a meeting of freemen during which they were given the opportunity to voice their opinion as to the surrender of the charter. A report of the incident stated that "when the freemen were to vote by holding up their hands not one man held up his hand, which caused one of the freemen to hold up both hands, and with Larg acclamations cryed out, the Lord bee praysed, not a man held up his hand to the delivering up of their Charter." Puritan minister Increase Mather, who would play a significant political role during this time, encouraged this sentiment by exhorting "the people, telling them how their forefathers did purchase it, and would they deliver it up, even as Ahab required Naboth's Vineyard: oh, their Children would be bound to curse them."[377] Here again, one can see the extent to which political resistance had taken root in the colony. Furthermore, it was a resistance born out of and encouraged by those of Puritan beliefs.

Despite the vocal resistance to royal interference with their way of life, it is at first glance surprising that there was not more physical, militant resistance to the taking of their charter. However, considering some of the circumstances of the time, there were good reasons why colonists surrendered the charter without more than murmurings of opposition and discontent. First, there was the change in the demographics of the colony. The dominance of the Puritans that formed such a significant portion of the colony in the first few decades of their existence was slowly becoming smaller in proportion to the colony as a whole. The prosperity of the

[376] Ibid., 248-252.
[377] Ibid., 284.

colony attracted those from every walk of life back in England and Massachusetts was becoming more and more a secular society. The timing of the latest challenge to the colony charter was no accident since the royal government was aware of this change in the makeup of the populace of the colony. Randolph alluded to this in his letter to the Governor in 1683 when he warned him that "'t will not always prove safe still to go on upon a confidence that the whole Countrey will assist and stand by you." Furthermore, the King was "well informed what persons in the present goverment have…opposed the matters complained of so that their Number will dwindle to a very few."[378] Randolph perceived that the political strength of the Puritan hegemony was potentially on the decline.

Added to this was what some historians call declension of the Puritan faith with the succeeding generations. As the second generation of the original founders was maturing, many were choosing not to adopt the fervency of the faith that their parents held. Their faith was limited to being outward but did not extend to being a personal inward experience. This caused a controversy when some of that generation wanted their children baptized into the Congregational churches. The compromise reached in 1662 was called the Half-way Covenant where children of the unconverted were allowed to be baptized, however neither they nor their parents could take communion or vote in church proceedings. This decision helped to perpetuate the vitality of the Congregational churches as New England society evolved, especially when a number of the unconverted maintained their connection to the churches and eventually experienced their own inward spiritual conversion.[379] However, this led many to believe that the Puritan hegemony was diminishing with each successive generation.

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[378] Ibid., 226.

[379] Harry S. Stout. *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 58-59.

There was yet another reason that took some of the obstinance out of the politically resistant Puritan leaders of that time. In 1675, Indian tribes across New England joined forces to wage war against the English colonists. The ensuing King Philip's War turned out to be the most devastating war ever fought on American soil before or since when considering the proportion of the population affected. By the time the war was finished, over half of the towns of the colony had been destroyed and English settlement had been driven back closer to the coasts. Despite the victory by the colonists, the war proved to be so devastating that some questioned whether the colony would continue to exist. Most importantly, it resulted in the colony being much more dependent on the homeland than what their independent sovereignty would suggest.[380] The war with the Indians had essentially taken the bravado out of the colonists of Massachusetts who in previous years had been ready to defiantly oppose royal intervention.

As Randolph predicted, the process of *quo warranto* and the subsequent legal machinations would take an entire year to produce the revocation of the charter.[381] The first charter of Massachusetts Bay that had existed since 1629 was officially revoked by the King in 1684. As loath as the colonists of Massachusetts were to part with their cherished charter, the reality proved to be even worse than they feared. Gone with the charter was the General Court and their system of elected, representative government. Also gone was the Governor as an elected position which would be royally appointed until after the American Revolution nearly a century later. The fatal flaw in the Massachusetts colonial system occurred when the founders merged the corporate charter with the colonial government. When the royal government revoked the charter, it uprooted the foundation of the entire government system. The events of 1684 had

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[380] Jill Lepore. *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), xi-xii.

[381] Toppan, *Edward Randolph,* 248.

been a victory for the home government and a loss for the independent sovereign state of Massachusetts.[382] However, as later events would demonstrate, if the royal government thought that a strike against the sovereignty of the colony would change the innate resistance of the Puritan core of the colony, they were mistaken.

The events that transpired in New England in the wake of the revocation of the charter proved to be the perfect storm of circumstances that unified New England in opposition to royal authority and elicited radical political resistance. The response by the King's administration that sought to bring the American colonies under a unified imperial control could not have been more inept nor more insensitive to the needs and values of the colonists in New England. What they attempted to do struck at everything New Englanders had come to value in their history. Edward Randolph, who was crucial to the expression of royal authority in the colonies, was characteristic of the royal endeavor. He was a man who was personally ambitious, strongly loyal to the King, and ruthless in the execution of his mission. It mattered little to Randolph how his work was perceived by nor how it affected the colonists. It is no surprise that he was extremely unpopular in Massachusetts during this era of colonial history. As will be demonstrated, in the period from the revocation of the charter up until the institution of the second charter in 1691, actions by the royal authorities served to elicit certain changes within the political landscape of New England that set the stage for what would occur nearly a century later at the outset of the American Revolution. These events also underscore that Puritan political resistance was an intrinsic part of New England culture and assured that it would remain so for several more decades.

There are several trends that can be noted throughout those years that proved to be consequential to politics in the Northern colonies. First, the royal attempt at unifying the New

[382] Osgood, III, 334-335.

England colonies for the purpose of expediency in administration served to unify the disparate colonies and gave them a new identity as New Englanders with a more unified purpose and culture. Second, there was the elevation of what those in New England had come to regard as their basic rights and liberties and for which they were willing to fight for. Those rights and liberties were no longer being threatened by fellow colonists who wielded arbitrary power as was the fear during the founding years, rather, now the threat came from and would continue to come from the assertion of royal power in the colonies. Third, one begins to see the rise of the influence of Puritan ministers in the political realm of New England and who became the voice that conveyed the language of political resistance within the context of their religious faith. While ministers had always been consulted by the General Court to advise the leaders when crucial decisions were to be made, they were now more often the voice of opposition to encroachment on their fundamental rights and liberties. Puritanism or Congregationalism as it was often called in New England, was not on the decline, as many had feared, but rather its significance had been enlarged to become something that was a part of their unique culture and identity as New Englanders. Following the Restoration, Puritanism as a distinct identity had been waning back in England, while in America it was being perpetuated as something that was uniquely American.

Confusion was widespread in Massachusetts following the revocation of the charter. Colonists understood that many of their cherished political institutions would be impacted, however rumors clouded the reality of what the specific impact would be. On his return from London, Randolph crafted a temporary government consisting of a president and a council. For the time being, townships were left to function as they had been. A new set of laws would need

to be created but until a more permanent government was appointed by the King, any attempts at doing so were futile. It was at this stage that resistance to these changes begins to emerge.

When the King's letter was read aloud to the General Court at its last meeting, the new President was announced as being Joseph Dudley. At his first speech to the Court on the announcement, Dudley rued the fact that he could no longer address the Court nor could he address them as a Governor according to their familiar traditions. Samuel Sewall recorded in his diary that the selection of Dudley was not without its controversy. The next day Dudley met with a group of ministers from the colony (Phillips, Stoughton, and Mather) who attempted to persuade him not to take the position of President, however, they were unsuccessful. (Several others who had previously served the colony had declined the position.) The ministers were evidently responding to the mood of the then-demoted Court who the day before had considered some type of formal protest. Instead, what followed Randolph's pronouncements was a spirit of defeated resignation that was summed up with Sewall's response to the Court, "the foundations being destroyed what can the Righteous do?". To add insult to injury, the day following the meeting with the ministers, Sewall noted that Randolph hosted several weddings performed by his Anglican Chaplain that accompanied him from England. He further acrimoniously noted that these were conducted "according to the Service-Book" (or the Book of Common Prayer).[383] The introduction of royal authority in Massachusetts could not have gotten off to a worse start for a colony full of Puritans who had owned their own government for more than half a century.

Joseph Dudley was the ideal choice for a leader who would be familiar with the colony yet be willing to cooperate with royal authorities. He was one of the new generation of moderates who were not above being sycophants of the royal representatives during the time of

[383] Samuel Sewall. *Diary of Samuel Sewell 1674-1729.* Vol. I. in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society.* Vol. V – Fifth Series. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1879), 139.

transition. As his response to the meeting of the ministers would predict, Dudley soon gained notoriety among the inhabitants of New England for his cooperation with the new regime. In a list of charges leveled against Dudley by colonists that were compiled in 1689, it is apparent that colonists perceived his cooperation with Andros and Randolph as complicity and "secretly and perfidiously under-minding the well-faire of his Native Countrey."[384] Among the Whig historians who favored the independent government of Massachusetts he was not well remembered. John Gorham Palfrey writing in the nineteenth century described him as expressing his "vicious nature" so he would not be "obscure and unimportant." Elevated to his new position, he "was in league with [Massachusetts's] foes."[385] While it is true that Dudley was taking a position of power and influence, it is more difficult to judge him as ambitious for power based on the historical record. In fact, later, the royal representatives found Dudley's loyalty to his Puritan culture difficult to work with, suggesting that Dudley did not entirely seek to sell out for the sake of power. Randolph at one point even referred to him as "a man of a base, servile and anti-monarchial principle."[386] Nevertheless, those who were willing to accommodate and work with the new royal presence in the colony represented a new manifestation of the moderate or court faction in Massachusetts. As Palfrey summarizes it, "The time for such practitioners had come."[387]

Eventually, the colonists were informed by Randolph that the temporary colony government would be replaced by the most sweeping change ever known in the Northern colonies. Rather than the several colonies that existed up until that time, each with their own

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[384] "Charges Against Andros and Others," in Whitmore, *The Andros Tracts,* Vol. I, 160.

[385] John Gorham Palfrey. *History of New England during the Stuart Dynasty.* Vol. III. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1870), 398

[386] Osgood, III, 392.

[387] Palfrey. *History,* III, 398; Osgood, III, 385.

charter, one grand political body was being created that encompassed all of the New England colonies as well as New York and New Jersey and would then be known as the Dominion of New England. It would be governed by a royally appointed Governor, Sir Edmund Andros. Andros was Governor of New York at the time. He had risen in ranks because of his close association with the royal family and his loyalty to both Charles I and II as well as the Duke of York who would later be James II. He had been knighted as a reward for his faithful service in 1678. Andros had been familiar with the New England colonies prior to his promotion. In what can best be described as thinly veiled criticism concerning their government, he observed that, "most knowing no other government than their own, think it best and are wedded to and opinionate for it." As to the potential for change, he felt that their leaders "think that they are obliged to assert and maintain said government all they can" and they would "continue without any considerable alteration and change there."[388] It would seem that at least Andros knew what challenges faced him when he took control of the New England colonies and some idea of the opposition he would face in eliciting changes.

It can be speculated that had these drastic changes made little impact into the day-to-day life of the people of the colony, they most likely would have resigned themselves to the changes and continued life as usual. However, it soon became apparent that Andros sought to scrutinize and bring every legal aspect of colonial life into alignment with that of the empire as a whole. Regardless of the fact that he may have been prewarned about the idiosyncrasies of the colonies he was assuming responsibility for, Andros approached changes in New England with total disregard for the sentiments and opinions of those he was displacing who had been in power. He also had little regard for the Puritan convictions of a significant portion of the population of the

[388] "Memoir of Sir Edmund Andros," in Whitmore, *The Andros Tracts,* Vol. I, xx.

colony. When Andros arrived in Boston in December 1686, along with him came sixty "redcoats." As unusual as this sight was, even more shocking was the fact that in his entourage was an Anglican clergyman. The significance of this soon came to the colonists when Andros announced that one of the Boston churches should be opened for episcopal worship services using the Book of Common Prayer.

As much as the new royal representatives would have liked to have thought that the previously existing Puritan leadership had been losing public support, the fact was that it had been fairly popular with and well-respected by the colonists. As the resistance petitions of 1664-1665 showed, there were many in the towns of Massachusetts that were quite satisfied with the way things had been and felt that, for whatever their faults, the Puritan hegemony had been effective in safeguarding their rights and liberties.[389] This is also borne out by the fact that, while colony freemen strongly valued their right to elect their representatives as a safeguard against arbitrary government, there was actually very little change in who they elected, suggesting their satisfaction with the job their representatives were doing. As the leaders of the Dominion began to unpack their plans for New England, it soon became apparent that they had little regard for the rights and liberties their previous leaders had protected for them.

Legally, Andros and his council were given full authority to govern the colony by making laws, collecting taxes, setting up a judicial system and appointing judges, try capital crimes, and take control of the militia.[390] His council membership was entirely at his discretion. Andros decided that the government that would replace the Massachusetts General Court would be fashioned after the existing one in New York that had never known a representative, elected

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[389] Weimer, "Resistance Petitions," 243.

[390] "Sir Edmund Andros' Commission as Governor, April 7, 1688," in Michael G. Hall, Lawrence H. Leder, and Michael G. Kammen, eds. *The Glorious Revolution in America: Documents on the Colonial Crisis of 1689.* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1972), 25-27.

legislative assembly.[391] Andros and his council wasted no time in initiating the changes he was authorized to perform.

When one considers the history of Massachusetts and the elements of government that the colonists had struggled so much to create, it is easy to see why each of the actions of the Andros government struck directly at the heart of what colonists had grown to treasure so highly. It is also understandable why an atmosphere of political resistance was so quickly ignited after the establishment of the Andros government. The first demonstration of resistance hearkened back to the Watertown protest of 1632. The Dominion government had enacted a law to provide for colony revenue that was a country rate of "a penny in the pound." This was a tax law that was enacted by leaders who had not been elected representatives of the people, something that had been anathema to the colonists of Massachusetts. The reaction by most of the towns of Essex County as well as towns in other areas was to refuse to pay. Spearheading this movement of resistance was the minister John Wise and John Appleton, a former assistant. They and four others were promptly arrested and jailed. After a trial, staged by the new government, a guilty verdict was pronounced with Wise losing his ministerial position, the others barred from holding office, and heavy fines assessed. In the 1689 deposition of those who named grievances against Andros, Wise accused him of damages received for "being unwilling for Sir Edmund Andros rayseing mony on the people without the consent of the people, but Improved upon Contrary to Magna Carta."[392] According to Wise, when he appealed to his rights as an Englishman during his trial, the notorious Dudley, who acted as chief justice, declared that the laws of England did not extend to them across the sea and told Wise that "you have no more privileges left you than not

[391] Osgood, III, 393.
[392] Whitmore, *Andros Tracts,* I, 150.

to be sold for slaves."[393] Whether this represents a historically accurate quote or not is not as important as the fact that Wise's claim was readily believed by fellow colonists and fueled the unpopularity of the new colonial regime.

As much as colonists complained about taxation without representation, some of their greatest alarm came as a result of the new leadership's scrutinization of land titles. They began to review the official documentation of land titles that had been issued to individuals and found them lacking. This undermined the system of land ownership in the colony and potentially revoked nearly every land transaction existing at the time. One of the issues the royal representatives had with the titles was their origins from purchase agreements with the Indians. Captain Joseph Lynes reported that the deed for his land, that had been granted by purchase from the Indians and certified by the General Court, was deemed illegitimate by the Andros administration because the marks made by the Indians who sold the property "were no more worth than a scratch with a beares paw, and that he must pattent them if he would keep them."[394] Such a "pattent" would only be granted by the paying of fees, something the colonists saw going straight into Andros's pockets. Furthermore, there were stories of such land titles being revoked and the land given to one of Andros's royalist colleagues as patronage.

The Andros regime's challenges to land ownership soon extended to the legal existence of the townships. At one point, Randolph made the audacious claim that no such thing as a town even existed in New England with one royal official even questioning whether Boston itself was a town. The townships of New England were the foundational unit of life for the colonists in the Northern colonies. An attack on the existence of the townships struck at the very heart of the political and social life of the colony. Recognizing the township as the political institution that

[393] Osgood, III, 404.
[394] Whitmore, *Andros Tracts,* I, 152.

presented the greatest challenge to coercing royal compliance in the colony, in March 1688 Andros forbid town meetings any more than once per year and then only for the election of town officers. Furthermore, township selectmen were then assigned to carry out tax assessment and conduct town affairs at the behest of royally appointed administrators over the towns. More than merely restructuring town governance for efficiency, this move had as an ulterior motive the removal of townships as political centers.[395]

These egregious moves by the Andros administration served to build animosity of the colonists toward Andros with Randolph and Dudley also heading the list of those the colonists perceived as attacking the cherished way of life of New Englanders. Dislike for Andros himself began to take on legendary status as rumors and innuendos began to grow regarding the nefarious deeds of the Governor. Colonists began to relate stories of Andros exposing native colonial members of the militia to purposeful abuse and torture. One colonist accused one of Andros's officers of "being the cause of the death of two of his souldiers by inhumaine usage." They also reported stories of Andros siding with enemy Indian tribes and Frenchmen and conspiring with them against the English colonists. One grievance against Andros reported a conversation in which an Indian shared that the Governor was "a Rogue and had hired the Indians to kill the English men." Another Indian was reported as saying that "Sir Edmund Andros dare not disarme them, for that the Governour had more love for them, the Indians, then for his Majesties Subjects the English."[396] These accusations stemmed from growing discontent with how Andros managed Indian relations in the colony. Colonists disagreed with how Andros sought to treat non-hostile Indians from any tribe with courtesy. This angered some of the colonists on the frontier borders who faced the Indian threat on a daily basis. Merchants of

[395] Osgood, III, 409-410.
[396] Whitmore, *Andros Tracts,* I, 152-153.

Boston were upset when Andros banned the sale of arms and ammunition to the Indians. This combined with the political resistance over Andros's political administration added to the overall discontent of the colonists.

Resistance to the Andros regime was mounting and, in all likelihood would have resulted in militant resistance regardless of what was transpiring in England. Fortunately for the colonists, events back in the homeland would work to their favor. Word of a threat to the monarchy of James II reached Edmund Andros early in 1689. In fact, the Glorious Revolution had essentially run its course by the time Andros received this news. Shortly after that, news reached the colony that William of Orange was advancing to England to take the throne at the invitation of Parliament. New England had once again observed a turnover of state of the homeland from a distance. The benefit of that to the discontented colonists was that their imminent uprising against the Andros administration could be reframed as rebellion against an outgoing, unpopular, Catholic king and avoid the stigma of an act of treason.

The timing of the Glorious Revolution was fortuitous for the Massachusetts rebels, however, it also resonated with New Englanders for several reasons. First, it was the overthrow of a popish king who, they feared, was seeking to impose false religion on the colony. Although the only tangible threat colonists witnessed was Andros's failed attempt to install episcopal worship in Boston, for Puritans, any use of the prayer book meant popery was not far behind. Second, the Glorious Revolution was hailed as a victory for British liberties. James II was regarded as an arbitrary ruler whose authority in the colony had resulted in the direct violation of colonists' basic rights and liberties. Overthrow of the King by Parliament brought the hope that colony liberties would soon be restored. Third, the Revolution was a victory for the idea of the ancient constitution of Britain and the return of constitutional monarchy. For those in

Massachusetts who still felt the sting of the loss of their charter, this held special significance and marked the beginning of the endeavor for the reinstitution of their original charter.[397]

One of the historical controversies is to what extent the uprising against Andros originated from the mob or was led by the Puritan leadership. The account by Samuel Mather appears to shed light on this controversy. At the beginning of the unrest, the Puritan leadership was aware of the potential mob riot. Mather explained that the unrest was concomitant with the news of the imminent move by William of Orange for the English throne. He described it as "a Strange Disposition" that "entred in the Body of our People to assert our Liberties against the Arbetrary Rulers that were fleecing them." Every sign indicated that the mob would "make a great Stir and produce a bloody Revolution." The imminent violence prompted the Puritan leadership to meet together in Boston with the idea that they should "consult what was best to be done" in order to "extinguish all Essays in our People to an Insurrection." The "principal Gentlemen in Boston" decided that in order to "prevent the Shedding of Blood by an ungoverned Multitude" they would step in to lead the resistance to make it a more civilized act of political resistance. They initiated that leadership of the uprising by drafting their own declaration addressed to William of Orange. They then thwarted the violent aspect of the mob by having Mather appear to the crowd and took charge of the apprehension of Andros and his cohorts so as to "reserve the Criminals for the Justice of the English Parliament."[398] Considering this, it is accurate to say that despite the rebellion being agitated by widespread unrest, it was given direction and leadership by the Puritan leaders of the colony. It is significant that the Puritan

[397] For a discussion on the Glorious Revolution as a constitutional revolution, see Edward Vallance. *The Glorious Revolution 1688: Britain's Fight for Liberty.* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2008). For a discussion on the Glorious Revolution as the beginning of the modern state, see Steve Pincus. *1688: The First Modern Revolution.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

[398] Whitmore, *Andros Tracts,* III, 145.

leaders still held the respect and acknowledgement by the people of the colony that they could so easily take control of the unruly mob.

The Andros Rebellion was the culmination of the history of Puritan political resistance that had been transplanted from the Puritan history in England onto the shores of New England. Up until that time, militant resistance had been hinted at or threatened but it had never materialized. The Andros administration had created the perfect storm of threats against the rights and liberties of Puritans in New England and struck at everything they held dear. The colonists under Puritan leadership had risen up and overthrown royal authority in order to restore those liberties. It demonstrated that New World Puritans contained the same potential for resistance as their brethren back in England who overthrew a monarchy. As will be examined in the next chapter, Puritan political resistance persisted in America and shaped the political identity of the colony and, eventually, manifested in revolution once again.

Chapter 6

"Our Rights Both as Men and as Christians": Revolutionary Puritanism in America

The Glorious Revolution in New England was more than merely the culmination of grievances, it also represented a political development of colonial society. While none of the political ideas of colonists up to that point in time were novel, yet Puritanism as it manifested in the age of the Dominion of New England and afterward came to have its own unique political personality. There was a more militant and rebellious bent to New Englanders that hearkened back to their brethren in England four decades earlier. This flavor of Puritanism no longer existed in England, whereas it was just gaining momentum in America. American Puritans, therefore, needed a new political language to justify the political changes that were occurring. This development of a more radical Puritan political landscape can be observed in the political discourse of the Andros Rebellion and afterward and left an indelible mark on New England politics that could still be traced up to the stirrings of revolution at the latter half of the eighteenth century.

One notable individual who voiced a new language of dissent was a minister turned politician by the name of Samuel Nowell. Nowell's militant attitude was fostered by his involvement as a chaplain to the troops during King Philip's War. In a published artillery election sermon entitled *Abraham in Arms,* Nowell taught the compatibility of Christianity and warfare. In this he was not referring to spiritual warfare, rather, he referred to the literal exercise of warfare with physical weaponry. He preached that there were justifications for war, among those is "to defend what we have lawfully obtained and come by as our possessions, lands, and inheritance here." In expounding on this, he cautioned that:

> Let but a Prince never so great, tread upon a worm, and it will turn; they have that instinct in them to defend themselves. There are our Rights both as Men, and as Christians, our

> civil Rights and Libertyes as Men and our religious Liberties and Rights as Christians: both which we are to defend with the sword, as far as we are able, or to commit our selves to God in the way of duty in doing of it. There is such a thing as Liberty and Property given to us, both by the Laws of God & Men, when these are invaded, we may defend our selves. God hath not given great ones in the world that absolute power over men, to devour them at pleasure…he hath set Rulers their bounds & by his Law hath determined peoples libertyes and property…therefore Kings are commanded to read the Book of the Law, because it is a boundary of their authority, as well as of the peoples liberty.[399]

There was a deliberate double meaning to his sermon that immediately applied to the recent war with the Indians but used the occasion to also make statements regarding the possibility of royal infringement on the rights and liberties of colonists in Massachusetts. Royal authorities, Edward Randolph in particular, were fully aware of the contents of this sermon and its radical implications. In a letter dated October 19, 1688, Randolph says, "I refer you to his [Nowell's] printed Sermon Called Abraham in Armes: and now if these mens principles are the best demonstration of Loyalty I desire to be accounted still a dissenter from such Good lord deliver."[400] What began as resentment of royal interference into their way of life in the first few decades of their existence had evolved into a full-fledged political doctrine of the rights of colonists to their personal property and personal liberties and these rights were sacrosanct even from the King himself. These rights and liberties were so sacred that they justified the taking up of arms to defend. This rhetoric would be commonplace among revolutionary colonists nearly a century later.

The colonists of New England were assuming rights and liberties that were theirs by right of being Englishmen. Surprisingly, this was a controversial assumption that royal authorities did

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[399] Samuel Nowell. *Abraham in Arms: or The first Religious General with his Army Engaging in a War For which he had wisely prepared, and by which, not only an eminent Victory Was obtained but A Blessing gained also. Delivered in an Artillery-Election Sermon, June 3, 1678.* (Boston: John Foster, 1678), 3, 10.

[400] Edward Randolph to John Povey. Boston. (October 19, 1688) in Robert Noxon Toppan, ed. *Edward Randolph: Including His Letters and Official Papers.* Vol. IV. (Boston: The Prince Society, 1899), 245.

not always agree with. This belief by colonists represented a shift in how they regarded the basic understanding of law and authority. In the first two decades of existence, colonists and their selectmen had agitated for positive laws. At the time, John Winthrop had disagreed on the grounds that the laws of the colony should develop naturally from real cases brought before the colony justices. What Winthrop was advocating was Edward Coke's classic teachings regarding common law. At that point in their development, what served to safeguard the people from the arbitrary practice of government were positive laws. It was not practical or necessary to appeal to the long history of English laws.

However, following the revocation of the first charter, the political language that protected the rights of colonists stemmed from the idea of common law. For that reason, the Magna Carta made a return to the political dialogue, particularly when colonists and their representatives were advocating for a renewal of their charter. In a document written to the King decrying the injustices that those in New England had endured under Andros, the authors described the revocation of their original charter and the subsequent new government as "absolutely destructive to the English-mans Magna Charta." Increase Mather later described the second charter as the "Magna Charta of New-England."[401] Using this language, colonists were reasoning with royal officials as to why they could claim the same basic rights that Englishmen back home enjoyed. They were simply Englishmen who had chosen to transport their lives across the sea onto a more distant English soil. They shared the same history and were entitled to the same rights as their brethren back home. This is the point at which the arguments of the die-hard commonwealth factionists revealed their faults. For them, Massachusetts was its own sovereign land with its own political and legal history. They too wanted to appeal to history, only it was a

[401] Whitmore, *The Andros Tracts*, Vol. II, 34, 290.

shorter history that only extended back to 1630. What they and like-minded colonists wanted was a reinstatement of the charter that had been in effect until 1684 and to pick up where they left off.

However, a number of royal authorities who dealt with colony business did not see colonists as being entitled to the rights and liberties of Englishmen. They were colonists which, to them, was a separate category of Englishmen that amounted to being second class citizens of the empire. As colonists, they were subjects of the King and would only be entitled to what he thought they should, nothing more and nothing less. That explains why when confronting this line of thinking, colonists used the language of servitude, comparing themselves to slaves who also had no intrinsic rights or liberties and were subject to every whim of their masters. That theory had a basis in reality since many colonists perceived they had a taste of slavery when Andros, Randolph, and other royal officials arrived and told them exactly what they could and could not do and they had little to no say in their own lives. Colonists under Andros had felt the stigma of slavery even though they were not actually slaves. Thomas Danforth, in writing to Samuel Nowell in 1688, hoped to appeal to the King "that he will grant us the same privileges that others of his plantations are not denyed, namely a generall assembly, without which our condition is little inferiour to absolute slavery."[402] In answering the critics of the actions of the colony against Andros, John Palmer quoted a council member as saying that, "the People in New England were all Slaves; and the only difference between them and Slaves, was their not being Bought and Sold." Their justification for this thought, according to Palmer, was "that they must not think the Privilege of English-men would follow them to the end of the World."[403]

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[402] Thomas Danforth to Samuel Nowell. Cambridge. (August 22, 1688) in Thomas Hutchinson, ed. *The Hutchinson Papers.* Vol. II. (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1865), 308.

[403] John Palmer. "An Impartial Account of the State of New England: or, the Late Government there, Vindicated," in Whitmore, *The Andros Tracts,* Vol. I, 29.

There were other notable changes within the political language of colonists that had been occurring over the course of the previous years, particularly since the Restoration. At no point in colonial New England history can it be identified that religion was entirely divorced from politics. The two concepts maintained a cozy relationship with each other up to the American Revolution and beyond. However, as T. H. Breen explains, the emphasis on religion and scripture as justification for political views lessened and gave way to more reasoned and secular ideas. In making arguments in support of their rebellion, very few to none of the complaints against Andros were based on his offense against Puritan sensibilities, even though there were quite enough of those for them to complain about. Instead, even the most devout of Puritans condemned Andros based on his violation of their basic rights and liberties, with his actions against personal property among the most frequently mentioned.[404] This trend can also be seen when Increase Mather negotiated for the renewal of the charter in London and there was little mention of biblical references in his account in justifying the need for the charter. In fact, Mather mentions the "Magna Charta" more than he does the Bible.[405]

It should be noted that to portray all of colonists as sharing similar political views is historically inaccurate. While there was a significant and growing segment of New England society that had a more radical bent and could be considered a part of the commonwealth faction, there was still a significant number who sought to ingratiate themselves to the King and his representatives. Both of these elements could still be identified within the Massachusetts government even after the establishment of the second charter. The fascination with emulating court culture grew more popular particularly after William III and Mary I took the throne. During

[404] Breen. *The Character of the Good Ruler*, 152-153.

[405] Increase Mather. "A Brief Account Concerning Several of the Agents of New-England, Their Negotiation at the Court of England," in Whitmore, *The Andros Tracts,* Vol. II, 273-298.

the Andros administration, many within the Puritan leadership shied away from cooperation with James II. For many, men like Joseph Dudley gave the appearance of compromise and betrayal. However, William was the savior of Protestant England, much like Elizabeth had been. William was also more sympathetic with the past leadership of Massachusetts and was willing to reinstate their own, albeit different, charter. This was someone that even many Puritans were now open to associating and cooperating with. With the stigma of cooperation with royal authorities gone, a number of prominent colonists grew intrigued with the idea of the English court and sought to emulate it on colonial soil. Those of this ilk grew to reject the more radical political trends that had been spawned in recent years.

With the establishment of the second charter in 1691, the trend that had been occurring since the deputies had been introduced into the colonial government became more pronounced. There had been a dichotomy within Massachusetts politics since that time that divided the elitist magistrates from the democratic deputies. However, during those earlier decades, there were still core beliefs that both sides shared that never allowed the tensions between the two groups to result in a deeper rift. However, as the colonial government of Massachusetts became less Puritan and composed of both freemen and non-freemen, the common foundation was no longer present. This allowed the differences between the two factions to result in a more definitive split with each side taking on more distinct and opposing characteristics. To be clear, these factions should not be misconstrued to be political parties since no such thing existed in the colonies at the time and there was no organized structure to them.

Nevertheless, the factions were known political entities even back in England at the time and manifested in Massachusetts in similar ways. On one side were those of the Court faction that represented the elitist, royalist political inclination that regarded those who participated in

government as possessing skills that could only be found within certain echelons of society. This group sought to emulate the royal court back in the homeland and reproduce certain aspects of it in the province. On the other side was the Country faction that regarded the representative aspect of government as its more virtuous trait. This group tended to advocate for a commonwealth view of government, revered the era of the original charter, and was always suspicious of the threat of tyranny and arbitrary government. This faction never forgot the lessons learned from the era of the Andros rebellion. They believed that since rebellion and revolution had resolved the problems of the tyranny of Andros, that radical militant solution should always be kept in the quiver ready to be used should the threat arise again.

These factions were inadvertently fueled by the details of the second charter granted to Massachusetts by William III. During the events of the Andros rebellion, Puritan minister Increase Mather had spent four years in London advocating on behalf of the colony. Mather, at first, lobbied at the court of James II. Meanwhile the Glorious Revolution and the Andros Rebellion occurred forcing Mather to change his strategy. He then shifted his negotiations to the court of William and Mary with the hopes of renewing the original charter. In his dealings with the committee of trade, he soon realized that this was not going to happen so he negotiated for a new charter with favorable terms that would make his fellow colonists happy.[406] Fortunately for Massachusetts, William had no interest in renewing the Dominion of New England and granted the colony a new charter that was more compatible with the policy of greater imperial control over the colonies.

The fact that the original charter was not reinstated made the new second charter initially unpopular with colonists. Many regarded Increase Mather as betraying the interests of the colony

[406] Richard R. Johnson. *Adjustment to Empire: The New England Colonies 1675-1715.* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1981), 136-137.

by giving in to the new charter. However, few understood the political obstacles and opponents that Mather had overcome simply to achieve a compromise. Massachusetts got many of the key elements that they missed from the first charter. It restored a representative elected legislative body, one of their main grievances with the Andros government. It also reaffirmed the personal property rights that Andros had brought into question and had been the catalyst for rebellion. It recreated the bicameral legislature with an upper and lower house with the lower house being elected deputies. However, this is where the similarities to the first charter ended. The upper house consisted of twenty-eight councillors that were elected by the lower house or House of Representatives. The Governor and Deputy Governor were then to be royally appointed. The Governor had greatly expanded powers as compared to that of the era of the first charter. He could veto the selection of councillors as well as any legislation made by the General Court. Mather characterized the new charter as being "more Monarchical and less Democratical than in former Times." However, he argued, the charter was more favorable to Massachusetts than other colonies of the realm and did place some restrictions on the Governor that avoided a repeat of another man like Andros. No longer could an Andros "make Laws, or Leavy Taxes; nor Invade any Man's Property, under pretense that it is the King's."[407]

While the second charter restored orderly government to New England and allowed them to make peace with their sovereign, it also inadvertently enshrined the political dichotomy that had become evident within the politics of the colony. There was now a permanent place in the colony government for those of the Court and Country factions. The governorship and the upper house were firmly under the control of those of a royalist bent and Court leanings. The lower House of Representatives continued the democratic nature of the deputies of the first charter and

[407] Mather. "A Brief Account," 290.

was often dominated by those of the Country faction. This arrangement guaranteed that the political tensions between the magistrates and the deputies from decades prior would continue into the future. The main difference was that from that time forward, the perceived threat to colonists' rights and liberties that had been arbitrary power from within their own ranks, now was seen as originating from royal power. The significance of that was that the colonists that had lived through the Andros Rebellion had tasted the blood of resistance to the monarchy and had been successful in safeguarding their cherished liberties. From then on, New England held within it a greater tendency to criticize and resist arbitrary royal power than it had at any point in its history.

There was also a profound impact on the Puritan hegemony in Massachusetts. While there was no longer any royal threat against non-conformity, it was no longer allowed for there to be a requirement for Puritan orthodoxy in order to participate in government. The new charter had opened the door for those of non-orthodox beliefs, such as Baptists, Quakers, and Anglicans, to join in the mainstream of political participation across the colony. However, to assume that this meant that the Puritan ministry or mindset no longer mattered to the political landscape would be to misunderstand New England culture. Congregational ministers still retained a voice in colony political matters and still gave annual election sermons. While Puritans no longer wielded the direct political powers they once had, they still wielded an influence over something that was more important: the soul of the culture. Colonists who grew up in New England culture were heavily influenced by the underlying political and religious culture that still continued to be dominated by their Puritan heritage. As will be discussed, the same political language used by the Puritan leaders to give meaning and direction to the revolution of 1689 would once again be

used in the Congregational pulpits of Boston nearly a century later on the eve of the American Revolution.

The heirs of the legacy of Puritan political resistance were not limited to the pulpits of New England, despite the fact that Congregational ministers continued to play a part in political thought. With the Andros Rebellion also came the burgeoning of more secular aspects of New England society that reflected many of the same ideas that Puritans had championed in previous generations. These new voices mixed with the traditional Puritan ones to perpetuate within New England the ideas related to Puritan political resistance. This trend can be evidenced by the presence of two voices that kept the Country faction alive in Massachusetts in the years after the establishment of the second charter: one, a Puritan minister, and the other, a newspaper.

John Wise came to notoriety in the colony when he inspired the town of Ipswich to rebel against the tax laws of the Andros administration. Having received the wrath of the Governor, Wise was no stranger to political resistance. He was also no radical upstart who practiced defiance for the sake of controversy. Having received an education at Harvard, Wise was well-versed on the prevailing ideas of his day and specifically named Baron Samuel Pufendorf as one of the influences on his political thought. Pufendorf advocated the idea of the social contract and that governmental power originated from the consent of the governed. He was also an inspiration for the political writers of the Revolutionary era in the latter eighteenth century.[408] Wise, however, did not set out to be a published writer of political thought, rather, his purpose was strictly ecclesiastical and only used political ideas for that purpose.

At the time of his writing in the early eighteenth century, the Congregational churches of New England were facing challenges that required addressing some structural and organizational

[408] Bailyn. *The Ideological Origins*, 23, 27, 29, 43.

issues with several ideas being entertained by church leaders. Wise disagreed with the direction that clergymen like the Mathers were influencing the churches toward. He felt they were deviating from their roots and the Cambridge Platform that had established many of the issues at hand generations prior. In defending the traditional form of the colony churches, Wise used the language of politics of his day, namely democracy, in describing the best form of church government. In his publication, *A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches,* Wise states that churches should be independent, and any issues faced by the ministry should be dealt with in their local assemblies and not by inter-ecclesiastical councils. He mirrored this with civil governments and, like the democratic government of churches, opined that democracy was the best basis for human government. What he went on to describe, however, was a representative government and not a pure democracy. Furthermore, he favored a mixed government that consisted of "a Regular Monarchy…settled upon a Noble Democracy as its Basis."[409]

Wise honored the English tradition of liberty and felt that the history of English government lent itself to the defense of tyranny and slavery. He had witnessed first-hand under Andros how a government could overstep its bounds and become arbitrary. Reaction and resistance against such a government was justified since, "The very name of an Arbitrary Government is ready to put an English man's Blood into a Fermentation." Wise saw how such a government impacted those under such oppression who began to reflect back the same arbitrary spirit: "it makes them stark Mad; and being of a Mimical Genius, and Inclined to follow the Court Mode, They turn Arbitrary too."[410] In this quote, one can see how Wise was addressing the

[409] John Wise quoted in George Allan Cook. *John Wise Early American Democrat.* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), 141-142.

[410] Ibid., 121-122.

political factions of New England and decrying the arbitrary bent of the Court (the remnant of the Andros regime) in the colony. Wise's *Vindication* (originally published in 1717) proved to be useful for later generations of New Englanders who republished his works in 1774. For this reason, Wise was the personification of the connection between the earlier colonial generations of those who embraced Puritan political resistance and those who maintained and retooled it for the era of the Revolution.

The New England press in the 1720s proved to be key in perpetuating the ideas of the Country faction. One newspaper in particular, the *New England Courant,* under the direction of the Franklin brothers has been regarded as pivotal to the political history of New England. Prior to the launch of the *Courant* in 1721, there had been no journalistic voice of opposition in New England. James Franklin and his younger brother, Benjamin, were attempting to fill the void. The *Courant* provided the first platform for criticism against the Puritan hegemony of the colony. The fact that some felt a need to challenge the authority of Puritan leaders gives an indication of the persistence of their influence. The issue that provoked criticism against prominent Congregational ministers was the ongoing smallpox epidemic and their advocacy for inoculation as a means to stem the spread of the disease. History would eventually prove the Puritan ministry were on the right side of the issue since inoculation proved to be an effective means at stopping the epidemic then and in later epidemics. However, at the time, critics of the Mathers and their fellow Puritan clergymen sought to discredit any of their public endeavors as a means of pushing back against the Puritan ministry. The atmosphere in Boston was tense not only because of the mounting deaths from smallpox but because of the heated debate over inoculation. At one point, Cotton Mather accosted James Franklin on the streets of Boston. Mather chose the occasion to vent to Franklin how his newspaper was used to "vilify and abuse the ministers of this town" and

because of that, "There are many curses which await those that do so."[411] Needless to say, the relationship between the writers of the *Courant* and the leadership of the colony was not a friendly one.

While inter-colonial politics was a favorite topic of the *Courant,* the newspaper contributed to the larger political development of New England through its publication of *Cato's Letters.* These letters were being published in newspapers back in England and were part of the burgeoning genre of opposition political literature. They were written by two authors, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, who espoused what could be regarded as relatively radical Whig political beliefs for the time. The letters expounded contemporary thinking regarding liberty and tyranny and reflected the natural law and natural rights theory that had been made popular by John Locke and Algernon Sidney. One of their favored topics to write about aside from criticism of government was criticism of the high church clergy of the Church of England.[412] It was apparently the combination of government and ecclesiastical criticism that piqued the interest of the Franklins. As those espousing Country faction political leanings as well as their penchant for criticism of the Congregational church leaders, *Cato's Letters* fit the bill as good newspaper content that could not find a place in any of the other existing Boston newspapers.

While it does not technically fit the description of Puritan political resistance, the *New England Courant* gave a voice to the ingrained politically resistant nature of the Northern Colonies and served to further ensconce those ideas in New England culture. It followed in the path of the legacy of early Puritan resisters even if it chose to vent its opposition toward the Puritan legacy itself. From its first issues, the *Courant* not only sought to provide a voice of

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[411] Tony Williams. *The Pox and the Covenant: Mather, Franklin, and the Epidemic that Changed America's Destiny.* (Naperville, Illiois: Sourcebooks, 2010), 174.

[412] Ronald Hamowy, ed. *Cato's Letters: or, Essays on Liberty, Civil and Religious, And other Important Subjects.* Vol. I. (Carmel, Indiana: Liberty Fund, 1995), xx-xxiii.

opposition but defend its right as journalism to speak freely against the governing powers, something Puritans from the Caroline era had advocated for as well.[413] Later issues acknowledge this heritage when it referred to the "wicked Ministry" of Charles I who "procured a Proclamation, to forbid the People to talk of Parliament." Rulers of that era "took up Tyranny, and suppress[ed] Truth and the Law." Benjamin Franklin, writing as Silence Dogood, reminded the readers of Boston that "Freedom of Speech is ever the Symptom, as well as the Effect of a good Government."[414] The opposition politics of the newspaper also aided in the maturation of political ideas that had been evolving from being based on the religion of the founders to becoming widespread across every segment of New England society that favored Country politics. This shift in the political orientation of resistance was crucial to the idea of resistance being a part of the political thought of a larger part of the New England populace rather than being exclusive to a smaller group of legacy Puritans.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the apparent balance between the Country and Court factions in Massachusetts all but disappeared as those espousing Country political views dominated the colony. This first became apparent with the furor that erupted over the Stamp Act. The protests and riots that ensued demonstrated that political resistance to government tyranny was widespread across a broad section of the colonial population. It included those from the wealthy merchant class down to the ordinary worker. It also was not limited to Congregationalists. Most importantly, sympathizers with and participants in protests against the Act included a majority of the General Court, much to the consternation of the Governor and

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[413] Willard Grosvenor Bleyer. "The Beginning of the Franklins' New-England Courant," *The Journalism Bulletin.* IV, No. II. (June, 1927), 5.

[414] *The New-England Courant. A Selection of Certain Issues Containing Writings of Benjamin Franklin or Published by Him During His Brother's Imprisonment.* (Boston: The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1956), 44. https://archive.org/details/newenglandcouran0000unse/page/n5/mode/2up?view=theater

Lieutenant Governor. This split within the Massachusetts government had begun with the institution of the second charter and had grown more pronounced as the Governor lost more and more supporters from within the ranks of the legislative houses.

This more radical shift in the political landscape of Massachusetts was partly due to its history of resistance to arbitrary government in previous years. However, it was also due to the surging popularity of ideas regarding resistance to tyranny that were being circulated through opposition literature back in Great Britain as well as many Western countries. These writings found a welcome reception in New England since there was already a predilection for political resistance there. What can be observed in Massachusetts as well as the other American colonies is an increase in writings regarding liberty and the resistance to tyranny. These ideas were not created in the colonies, however, with the sensitive relationship between colony and homeland, these ideas took on a renewed relevance. Back in Great Britain, writers of these Real Whig ideologies were quick to point out that there was a difference between theory and practice since there was little need for political resistance to tyranny in the peaceful homeland. They simply enjoyed the mental exercise of expounding and discussing the theories but were content to leave them in the realm of possibility rather than reality.[415] However, colonists soon began to see that the theory had an immediate application to their circumstances when the home government began to impose its will on the colonies.

The first major confrontation of the revolutionary era came about with the enactment of the Stamp Act in 1765. Indications that such a tax was forthcoming had been discussed in the colony and its unpopularity was well known. The House of Representatives had proclaimed their opposition to any type of taxation that had not gone through the colonial representative body.

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[415] Pauline Maier. *From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776.* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1991), 46-47.

Massachusetts even attempted to initiate a convention of committees from the colonies to coordinate resistance, something that had never happened prior to that time.[416] The colony determined that it would use boycotts of goods from Britain as a means of exerting economic pressure on the homeland since they had no voice in Parliament. Colonists also began an organized harassment of the men commissioned to the colonies to enforce and oversee the Act. Before the Stamp Act was eventually repealed, colonists had participated in riots targeted against royal representatives in the province.

The success of the resistance emboldened Massachusetts and made further resistance more likely for future confrontations with the home government. It also encouraged them to reach out to other colonies for mutual cooperation. Once such endeavor was in the form of a circular letter issued on February 11, 1768 in the wake of the Stamp Act drama. Fearing that further taxation would be imposed without their consent, the letter sought to "harmonize" with the assembly of each "sister colony." The Massachusetts House of Representatives acknowledged the authority of Parliament but decried that fact that the American colonies had no representatives there. They voiced their grievance over Parliament raising revenue from the colonies without their consent, the taxing of imported goods from Great Britain, and that royal agents in the colonies, which included the governors and the militia, were supplied their income from London rather than at the discretion of the people of the colony. Such policies endangered the freedoms of the English colonists. The letter also emphatically stated for the record that they were not seeking to separate from the home country and become their own independent state.[417]

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[416] Thomas Hutchinson. *The History of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, from 1749 to 1774.* (London: John Murray, 1828), 118-119.

[417] Massachusetts House of Representatives, "Massachusetts Circular Letter to the Colonial Legislatures: February 11, 1768." *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy.* https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/mass_circ_let_1768.asp

Receptive responses were received from the assemblies of Virginia, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Georgia, with others likely to have responded if given more time.[418]

The letter was considered scandalous to royal authorities who transmitted it back to the home government in London. The King considered the letter dangerous and potentially seditious and immediately demanded that the General Court of Massachusetts rescind it. A response was demanded by the Crown and any tactic of delay or ignoring the demand that had been characteristic of the Massachusetts government a century prior was not acceptable. What ensued was the worst of all possible outcomes for the royal government that was trying to rein in the unruly colony before its resistant spirit became contagious to the other colonies. Instead of backing down, the Massachusetts House met and put the response to a vote. The results were 92 to 17 to refuse rescinding the letter. The defiant response elicited cries of support from the other colonies with praise for the "Massachusetts Ninety-two." In fact, the number ninety-two became a patriotic symbol for the colonies at the time. The act of defiance toward the royal government was especially troubling for the Crown because it was not limited to the troublesome Northern colonies but elicited sympathy and a united cause from colonies in the South as well whose history had always been more royalist. The vote of the ninety-two proved to be a turning point in the relationship between the American colonies and the home government. It was also important because, as will be discussed later, it made Massachusetts an inspiration for the other colonies and cemented its reputation as a hotbed of colonial resistance.

The royal response was swift and decisive. With no prescribed penalty for their lack of compliance, the Governor chose to dissolve the General Court for the remainder of its session. This act amplified the already tense relationship between the legislature and the executive. When

[418] Hutchinson, *History 1749 to 1774*, 196.

the next session resumed, the House of Representatives chose to counter the Governor in any way they could. Their first act was to refuse to approve his choices for the members of the Council. This was merely a taste of what would happen within the colonial government as Massachusetts grew more revolutionary. The King himself responded to the unruly colony in his address to Parliament on November 8, 1768. He informed Parliament of the "Spirit of Faction" breaking out in some of the American colonies and pointed out "One of them, proceeding even to Acts of Violence, and of Resistance to the Execution of the Law." The colony he referred to "has proceeded to Measures subversive of the Constitution" and "Circumstances that might manifest a Disposition to throw off their Dependance on Great-Britain."[419] The colony he was singling out was none other than Massachusetts.

While political developments were front and center of the events leading up to the American Revolution, New England pulpits played a significant role in the political landscape as well. At the outset of the eighteenth century, the newer generation of Puritans such as Cotton Mather, although thoroughly orthodox in their Puritanism, were of a more enlightened and erudite breed. They sought to emulate British society in the homeland and were often associated with the Court faction in New England. However, Congregational ministers never abandoned their role as disseminators of political ideologies presented within a religious context. Ideas regarding resisting tyranny could always be found echoing from the Puritan pulpits of New England in later generations. While it was true that churches in every colony contributed to revolutionary ideas, New England had an almost exclusive monopoly on the genre of the printed sermon.[420] Furthermore, political sermons such as those preached at the time of elections were a

[419] "His Majesty's Most Gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament," *The Boston-Gazette and Country Journal.* January 16, 1769. https://www.masshist.org/dorr/volume/2/sequence/395

[420] Ellis Sandoz, ed. *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805.* Vol. I. Second edition. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998), xi.

staple of New England society. Just as they had throughout the history of the colony, the political ideas that were expounded from the pulpits proved to have a lasting and profound impact on the political thought of colonists. As New England began to experience unrest as a result of its declining relationship with the mother country, Puritan ministers once again gave political direction through their sermons to eagerly attentive congregations who often transcribed the sermons and sent them to the presses.

There were ways other than through sermons by which the Congregational ministry in Massachusetts encouraged an atmosphere of resistance as the colonies progressed toward Revolution. Throughout its history, the colony had responded to moments of crisis by declaring special times of prayer and fasting. These had typically been proclaimed by the Governor. However, in the wake of the actions by Parliament to enact unpopular taxation, the loyalist Governor felt it inappropriate to encourage rebellious feelings by calling for a colony-wide fast. Such was the case with the Coercive Acts which prompted a call for prayer and fasting by the ministry in New England. This proclamation was done despite the reticence of the Governor.[421] This act by the clergy served to further widen the existing gulf between the royalist and democratic elements of the colony government. It also helped to give direction to the more rebellious segment of colonial society and undermined the authority of the loyalist leadership. This form of passive resistance served to push the colony closer to Revolution.

While there are a number of Congregational ministers that propagated rebellious thought, one stands out as the most influential. Jonathan Mayhew was the minister at the Old West Church, a Congregational church in Boston. His sermons were notorious for being politically charged and were widely published in his lifetime and afterward. Mayhew's theology would

[421] Katherine Carté. *Religion and the American Revolution: An Imperial History*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 149-150.

have scandalized his Puritan ancestors just as his unorthodox beliefs scandalized his fellow Congregational ministers in Boston. He considered himself an enlightened, reasoned clergyman and rejected the doctrine of the Trinity and most of the tenets of Calvinism. However, his vociferous opposition to the attempt at introducing a Church of England bishop to New England, his anti-Catholic rhetoric, and his defense of Congregationalism made him at least tolerable to more orthodox ministers and qualified him to be considered an heir to the title of Puritan.

However, it was Mayhew's political beliefs and not his theology for which he was best known. Drawing heavily from his Puritan heritage, he defended the right to resist governmental powers and associated tyranny in England with the high church episcopacy. Consistent with his more radical predecessors in resistance theory, Mayhew felt that violent resistance against the monarchy was not contradictory to Romans 13 and defended the execution of Charles I and the overthrow of James II.[422] In his 1750 sermon, *A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Nonresistance to the Higher Powers,* he reflected back on the actions by Parliament against Charles I and interpreted them as "a most righteous and glorious stand made in defense of the natural and legal rights of the people against the unnatural and illegal encroachments of arbitrary power." At this stage, Mayhew was not ready to justify actions against the King, rather, he framed resistance as a last resort against tyranny. He cautiously admonished his audience, "Let us all learn to be free and to be loyal. Let us not profess ourselves vassals to the lawless pleasure of any man on earth. But let us remember, at the same time, government is sacred and not to be trifled with."[423] The principles contained in this sermon were widely read and received by those

[422] J. Patrick Mullins. *Father of Liberty: Jonathan Mayhew and the Principles of the American Revolution.* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2017), 44-65.

[423] Jonathan Mayhew. "A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Nonresistance to the Higher Powers," in Bernard Bailyn, ed. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution 1750-1776.* Vol. I. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1965), 241, 247.

in America and England and proved to be useful when the colonies contemplated whether resistance was appropriate years later. Sixteen years later, Mayhew gave his last sermon, *The Snare Broken,* on the occasion of the repeal of the Stamp Act. In the sermon, he expressed a celebratory tone in that Great Britain had acquiesced to the grievances of the colony. However, he gave caution regarding relations with the motherland going forward:

> It is to be hoped, the colonies will never abuse or misapply any influence which they may have, when united as aforesaid; or discover a spirit of murmuring, discontent or impatience under the government of Great Britain, so long as they are justly and kindly treated. On the other hand, it is to be hoped, they will never lose a just sense of liberty, or what they may reasonably expect from the mother-country.

In a parting exclamation, he said, "May that God, in whom our help has been, continue to protect us, our rights and privileges!"[424] This sermon, dedicated to William Pitt, was a carefully phrased warning to Great Britain not to tread on the liberties of the colony in any of their future dealings or it may not result in the relatively peaceful outcome of the Stamp Act drama. This sermon proved to be particularly prescient of the upcoming conflict.

Other Congregational ministers were also influential in educating colonists on political ideas in light of scripture. Charles Chauncy delineated the responsibility of civil leaders in his 1747 election sermon, *Civil Magistrates Must Be Just, Ruling in the Fear of God.* One of those responsibilities was to "take all proper care to preserve entire the civil rights of a people…They should do it by appearing in defence of their liberties, if called in question, and making use of all wise and sutable methods to prevent the loss of them" and by "seasonably and faithfully placing a proper guard against the design of those, who would rule in a dispotic manner, to the subversion of the rights naturally or legally vested in the people."[425] In 1754, Samuel Cooper,

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[424] Jonathan Mayhew. "The Snare Broken," in Ellis Sandoz, ed. *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805.* Vol. I. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998), 260, 264.

[425] Charles Chauncy. "Civil Magistrates Must Be Just, Ruling in the Fear of God," in Sandoz, *Political Sermons,* Vol. I, 157.

pastor of Boston's Brattle Street Church, published a pamphlet entitled *The Crisis* that decried the issue of unjust taxation. He sought to bless those who sought to defend "our happy Constitution" and exclaimed that "Whoever with an upright Heart supporteth thee against the Ravages of lawless Power, and the Arts of designing Men, is a Friend to the best Interests of his Country, A Friend to Mankind, a Friend to the Universal Chorus of Rational Beings…And he shall hereafter be called the Friend of God."[426] It is easy to see how New England colonists came to regard their rights and liberties and understood their obligation to defend those. It was this type of teaching that made the "inalienable rights" listed in the Declaration of Independence "self-evident."

It is important to note that the Puritan mindset when it came to political resistance was a two-way street. It is inaccurate to characterize Congregational ministers as pushing for rebellion against authorities and delighting in the riotous results. For any good Puritan, the admonishment in Romans 13 laid on them an equally burdensome responsibility as that for rulers to rule justly. In the idea of the covenant, citizens bore the responsibility to honor the authorities placed over them and to seek peace and reconciliation in society. Without first fulfilling this mandate, there was no justification for resistance against tyranny. Throughout the tumultuous events leading up to the Revolution, the ministry of New England and its leaders sought to curb over-zealous rebellious responses and to only resort to more extreme measures when all other avenues for peaceful resolution had been exhausted. It was only then that a more militant response was condoned by church and colony leaders. Even then, the response was carefully monitored and dampened lest it go too far into anarchy.[427]

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[426] Samuel Cooper. *The Crisis.* (June, 1754), 13. https://archive.org/details/ldpd_6447009_000/page/n11/mode/2up

[427] Maier. *From Resistance to Revolution*, 28-42.

The idea that New England ministers like Jonathan Mayhew had a direct impact on the events leading up to the Revolution is more than historical conjecture. There are a number of contemporaries who identified the impact of the Congregational ministry on revolutionary feelings. John Adams called Mayhew a "transcendent genius" who "seemed to be raised up to revive all their animosities against tyranny, in church and state." When listing individuals who were "the characters most conspicuous, the most ardent and influential in this revival [of American principles and feeling]," Adams names Mayhew among John Otis, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock.[428] He also referred to "Dr. Mayhew's sermon on passive obedience and non-resistance" as one of the "principles and feelings which produced the Revolution."[429] It is likely that had Mayhew not died before the Revolution, he would most likely have been remembered as one of America's founding fathers.

Mayhew, along with the rest of the Puritan clergy, was also remembered by the Tory critics of the Revolution. Loyalist Peter Oliver accused the Congregational ministers of "encouraging Seditions & Riots, until those lesser Offences were absorbed in Rebellion." He also faulted Mayhew with delivering the sermon that incited the riot that destroyed Thomas Hutchinson's home as protest over the Stamp Act.[430] In fact, there were a significant number of British critics of the Revolution that identified the rebelliousness of the colonies with the Puritan history and clergy in Massachusetts. In his account of the reasons for the Revolution, Joseph Galloway explained that the "principles of the American rebellion…has risen from the same source, and been conducted by the same spirit with that which effected the destruction of the

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[428] John Adams to J. Morse, December 22, 1815, Quincy, Massachusetts in Charles Francis Adams, ed. *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States.* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1856), 284, 287.

[429] John Adams to William Tudor, April 5, 1818, Quincy, Massachusetts in Adams, *Works,* 301.

[430] Douglass Adair & John A. Schutz, eds. *Peter Oliver's Origin & Progress of the American Rebellion: A Tory View.* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1961), 43,44.

English Government in the last century [referring to the English Civil War].” His narrative of the Revolution begins with the birth of Puritanism under the Tudors and traces their history from there up to the founding of New England. While he mentions the thirteen colonies, the primary culprit, according to Galloway, was the seditious demagogues of Massachusetts who were led by their dissenting ministers. He supports this contention by referring to a “faithful inquiry” of the ministry in New England back in 1641 during the time of the English Civil War when “there were only twelve among five hundred and fifty dissenting ministers…who declined the rebellious task.” The Puritans of Massachusetts, opines Galloway, had as their design the establishment of an independent republic from the outset of their settlement. New England was to blame for the sedition that spread throughout the other colonies. He indicates this when giving the account of the circular letter sent to the assembly of every colony at the time of the Stamp Act controversy. The letter, he claims, “was received by such as were fitting, from that source of sedition, a committee of correspondence appointed by the Assembly of the Massachusetts.”[431]

This contribution of the Congregational ministry to the Revolution is a pivotal point in this present study. If Puritans truly contributed to the idea of political resistance in America, as this study argues, this would be evidenced at the point of America’s ultimate expression of resistance during its colonial experience. The Puritan settlement of New England had ample evidence of political resistance in its history. However, no expression of resistance can be greater than militant uprising to throw off what they perceived to be an oppressive and tyrannical government. The American Revolution was an even more radical expression of resistance than the Andros Rebellion since that rebellion overthrew leaders but never sought to replace the monarchy or Parliament as its source of governmental authority. The Revolution regarded every

[431] Joseph Galloway. *Historical and Political Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion.* (London: G. Wilkie, 1780), 63, 111.

level of authority, from local leaders all the way up to George III himself, as being corrupt and conspirators in the tyranny the colonists were subjected to. Once colonists determined that they were to receive no redress for their grievances from any aspect of the British government, they determined that in order for their rights and liberties to resume, everything had to go, root and branch.

As this present study has discussed, the Puritan legacy was alive and well at the American Revolution. This is true regardless of the fact that the Revolution was far more than just the New England colonies. By the time of the Revolution, all of the colonies were unified in their revolutionary response to Britain. However, Massachusetts' political resistance was the primary focus of the British government at the outset of hostilities and regarded as the instigator and inspiration for the other colonies. George III had singled out Massachusetts on several occasions as being the most troublesome colony. By sending troops to Boston, the royal government hoped to make an example of its most unruly colony and, by doing so, intimidate the other colonies into subjugation. Considering the inherent strain of Puritan political resistance resident in New England, it is no surprise that the first armed conflicts of the Revolution were at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill. The success of these endeavors served to inspire the other colonies to join in the fight.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

New Englanders who took up arms against the home government at the outset of the American Revolution were the heirs of the political resistance that had been handed down to them from their Puritan forebears. That political resistance had its early modern origins in the Protestant Reformation that had taught them that God's laws were superior to man's. The reformers and French Huguenots also had taught that rulers were ordained by God to be just and righteous rulers and rulers who failed to live up to this commission were tyrants and could be justly resisted. The Puritan experience that arose out of the English Reformation had taught them that monarchs could not always be trusted to preserve the true faith and, when faced with such a ruler, they were left to make their own righteous path, even if it meant disobeying that authority. They learned under the Stuarts to value representative and constitutional government and that these served as a safeguard against arbitrary rule and tyranny. Puritans in the New World carried with them these lessons and used them to create governing systems that protected their basic rights and liberties. When these were threatened, colonists used the concepts of political resistance to resist and overthrow what they regarded as a corrupt and tyrannical government.

Even more than just the source of political resistance, Puritanism had furnished the burgeoning new nation with a blueprint for a replacement government. The founders of New England had taken the building blocks given them in a corporate charter and their own rudimentary grasp of political theory and with remarkable innovation had created a system of government that served as a model when the founders sought to draft a constitution. The internal squabbles under Winthrop between the magistrates and the deputies had produced a series of documents that guaranteed basic rights and liberties that served as a template for a future Bill of

Rights. Furthermore, the Puritan leadership of New England had even used the lessons learned from the endangerment of their rights to incorporate checks and balances within the government to place a curb on arbitrary power. As historian Alice Baldwin stated, "There is not a right asserted in the Declaration of Independence which had not been discussed by the New England clergy before 1763."[432]

A study of the literature regarding the causes of the American Revolution reveals that singling out one factor as the etiology of the conflict hardly presents an accurate historical representation. To suggest that the Puritan idea of political resistance was the driving force behind the events that led up to the Revolution is an inaccurate overstatement of the arguments of this present study. In fact, in Bernard Bailyn's detailed work on the subject, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution,* the Puritans of New England were only mentioned because of their contribution to the social contract theory by way of their doctrine of the covenant and the fact that the history of New England had become popular at the time of the Revolution. He does not even mention their contribution to political resistance.[433] That is not to indicate a deficiency in his work, rather, it is to demonstrate the tremendous number of ideological influences that led to revolution.

Puritan political resistance was not *the* reason for the Revolution, rather, it was *a* reason why and where it began. The colonists of Massachusetts had more of a legacy of political resistance woven within their culture than any other colony. Other colonies participated in the Revolution militarily and other colonies also had rebellions in their colonial past (such as Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia and Leisler's Rebellion in New York). However, these rebellions

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[432] Alice M. Baldwin. *The New England Pulpit and the American Revolution: When American Pastors Preached Politics, Resisted Tyranny, and Founded a Nation on the Bible*. ed. Joel McDurmon (Braselton, GA: The American Vision, Inc., 2014), 213.

[433] Bailyn. *The Ideological Origins*, 32-33.

were of a different nature owing more to social complexities rather than based on inherent political ideologies. New Englanders were schooled on political ideas from their childhood and reintroduced to them periodically in their churches. They participated in politics in their townships with elections almost from the very beginning of their settlement, a phenomenon not found in any of the Middle or Southern colonies until much later in their development.

Puritan political ideas were not significant because they were novel or innovative. The political ideas espoused by Puritans, whether English or American, were primarily derivative. However, what made them significant was the blending of political ideology with religion. The symbiosis of the two realms of thought and belief provided a vehicle by which political thought became relevant to everyday life and passed on to succeeding generations. Political ideas would come and go but certain ideas regarding government and governing took on particular meaning when someone was taught that their deeply held beliefs about God, the Bible, and church could be threatened by those in power and should be rightly resisted. This explains why the same political resistance directed toward the Stuart kings could still be just as relevant when challenged by a Hanoverian one.

This suggests the question of whether Puritan political resistance has had a longer legacy than the American Revolution, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Are there any remnants of Puritan political resistance in today's society aside from those found in the American structure of government? There are reasons to believe that there are. When perusing the headlines of current events in America, it becomes evident that there are still voices decrying government tyranny from both sides of the political spectrum. However, there is one segment of American society that has more consistently warned of the dangers of arbitrary government from a religious perspective that is the most reminiscent of the experiences of the Puritan forebears. From within

the ranks of the more conservative Protestant churches of America, today's evangelicals could be considered the heirs of Puritan political resisters. Recent books that have been published perpetuate the ideas of resistance promoted from within the Reformation heritage. Pastor Matthew Trewhella wrote a book in 2013, *The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates: A Proper Resistance to Tyranny and a Repudiation of Unlimited Obedience to Civil Government,* to revive the idea of political resistance through the lesser magistrates, something that was promoted prior to the more radical ideas of resistance of the seventeenth century.[434] Professor Glenn S. Sunshine wrote *Slaying Leviathan: Limited Government and Resistance in the Christian Tradition* in 2020 to suggest that advocating for limited government and political resistance has a Christian heritage and should be encouraged today to ensure the protection of society's liberties.[435] Liberty University's own Helms School of Government hosted a Public Policy Conference at which Darren Guerra presented a paper on "Obligation and Authority: Samuel West and the Christian Tradition of Resistance to Tyranny." This paper examined a revolutionary era sermon by Congregational minister Samuel West that encouraged militant resistance to tyranny. According to the author, the arguments of the paper "reminds present day Evangelicals of the rich heritage of deep rational argument that characterized much of the Founding Era political theology."[436]

The COVID epidemic of 2020 elicited political resistance from churches across the United States and Canada when government authorities sought to shut down places of worship in order to enforce arbitrary health mandates. Most churches acquiesced to the government

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[434] Matthew J. Trewhella. *The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates: A Proper Resistance to Tyranny and a Repudiation of Unlimited Obedience to Civil Government.* (North Charleston, South Carolina: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013).

[435] Glenn S. Sunshine. *Slaying Leviathan: Limited Government and Resistance in the Christian Tradition.* (Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2020).

[436] Darren Patrick Guerra. "Obligation and Authority: Samuel West and the Christian Tradition of Resistance to Tyranny." (Public Policy Conference, Helms School of Government, Liberty University, April 10-12, 2024). https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1487&context=hsgconference

demands, however, there were a number of churches, particularly evangelical ones, that decided to comply would be to violate their belief that government authority should not violate the authority of the church. A documentary released in 2023 entitled *The Essential Church* covers this issue from the viewpoint of one of the most notable and successful examples of political resistance which was the Grace Community Church in Los Angeles, California pastored by John MacArthur. Throughout the film, the issue of the church's right to resist government authority is supported by the historical example of the plight of Scottish Covenanters in the seventeenth century who were persecuted and martyred because of their resistance to the edicts of the Stuart kings who coerced conformity on the Presbyterian churches of Scotland. Puritans were specifically referred to by those interviewed when they explained the debates that occurred among the church leadership concerning justification for disobedience to government authorities. The historical examples helped to bolster their resolve since it showed them that generations before had dealt with these issues and political resistance as Christians was justified.[437]

These modern examples demonstrate that the political resistance wielded by colonial Puritans during the formative years of the country continue to serve as inspiration for more recent acts of resistance in response to challenges by governmental overreach. They also underscore the fact that political resistance has continued to find a place within Protestant Christian churches that elevate scriptural authority above that of human government. In the US, this phenomenon has been more observable as mainline, nominal Protestant churches have attempted to push evangelical Christianity to the periphery of society and many have found it more feasible to cooperate with government authority regarding controversial subjects. The decision to resist government authority has also been more frequently considered by the more

[437] *The Essential Church*, directed by Shannon Paul Halliday (Grace Community Church and Grace Productions, 2023), 2:05:16, tubi.

conservative Protestant churches as the government has adopted policies and viewpoints that contradict traditional interpretations of scripture. With some of the blatantly anti-Christian stances taken up by the American government and the states, it is unlikely that this trend will subside in the foreseeable future.

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