

B. They must punish then the most of those that have had their breeding in the universities. For such curious questions in divinity are first started in the Universities, and so are all those politic questions concerning the rights of civil and ecclesiastic government; and there they are furnished with arguments for liberty out of the works of Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, and out of the histories of Rome and Greece for their disputation against the necessary power of their sovereigns. Therefore I despair of any lasting peace amongst ourselves, till the universities here shall bend and direct their studies to the settling of it, that is, to the teaching of absolute obedience to the laws of the king, and to his public edicts under the Great Seal of England. . . .

A. . . . The core of rebellion, as you have seen by this, and read of other rebellions, are the universities; which nevertheless are not to be cast away, but to be better disciplined: that is to say, that the politics there taught be made to be, as true politics should be, such as are fit to make men know, that it is their duty to obey all laws whatsoever that shall by the authority of the king be enacted, till by the same authority they shall be repealed; such as are fit to make men understand, that the civil laws are God's laws, as they that make them are by God appointed to make them and to make men know, that people and the Church are one thing, and have but one head, the king; and that no man has title to govern under him, that has it not from him; that the king owes his crown to

God only, and to no man, ecclesiastic or other; and that the religion they teach there, be a quiet waiting for the coming again of our blessed Savior, and in the mean time a resolution to obey the king's laws, which also are God's laws. . . . When the universities shall be thus disciplined, there will come out of them, from time to time, well-principled preachers, and they that are now ill-principled, from time to time fall away.

B. I think it a very good course, and perhaps the only one that can make our peace amongst ourselves constant. For if men know not their duty, what is there that can force them to obey the laws? An army, you will say. But what shall force the army? Were not the trained bands an army? Were they not the janissaries, that not very long ago slew Osman²⁰ in his own palace at Constantinople? I am therefore of your opinion, both that men may be brought to a love of obedience by preachers and gentlemen that imbibe good principles in their youth at the universities, and also that we never shall have a lasting peace, till the Universities themselves be in such manner, as you have said, reformed; and the ministers know they have no authority but what the supreme civil power gives them; and the nobility and gentry know that the liberty of a state is not an exemption from the laws of their own country, whether made by an assembly or by a monarch, but an exemption from the constraint and insolence of their neighbours.

JAMES HARRINGTON *On the Causes of the Civil War (1656)*

In this passage from the Commonwealth of Oceana, James Harrington (1611–1677) gives a very modern analysis of the social and economic instability that led to the collapse of the English monarchy.

SOURCE: John Harrington, *The Oceana of James Harrington and His Other Works* (London: Toland, 1700), pp. 69–70, 72.

²⁰Osman: sultan of the Ottoman Empire, killed 1622

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[Henry VII abased and impoverished the old nobility.] Henceforth the country-lives, and great tables of the nobility, which no longer nourished veins that would bleed for them, were fruitless and loathsome till they changed the air, and of princes became courtiers; where their revenues, never to have been exhausted by beef and mutton, were found narrow, whence followed racking rents, and at length sale of lands: the riddance through the statute of alienations being rendered far more quick and facile than formerly it had been through the new invention of entails.

To this it happened, that . . . the successor of the king,²¹ dissolving the abbeys, brought with the declining state of the nobility so vast a prey to the industry of the people, that the balance of the commonwealth was too apparently in the popular party, to be unseen by the wise council of Queen Parthenia [Elizabeth], who converting her reign through the perpetual lovetricks that passed between her and her people into a kind of romance, wholly neglected the nobility. And by these degrees came the house of commons to raise that head, which since has been so high and formidable to their princes, that they have looked pale upon those assemblies. Nor was there any thing now wanting to the destruction of the throne, but that the people, not apt to see their own strength, should be put to feel it; when a prince [Charles I], as stiff in disputes as the nerve of monarchy was grown slack, received that unhappy encouragement from his clergy which became his utter ruin. . . . It came to an irreparable breach; for the house of peers, which alone had stood in

this gap, now sinking down between the king and the commons, showed that . . . the isthmus [was] broken. But a monarchy divested of its nobility, has no refuge under heaven but an army. Wherefore the dissolution of this government caused the war, not the war the dissolution of this government.

Of the king's success with his arms it is not necessary to give any further account, than that they proved as ineffectual as his nobility; but without a nobility or an army . . . there can be no monarchy. Wherefore what is there in nature that can arise out of these ashes, but a popular government, or a new monarchy to be erected by the victorious army?

To erect a monarchy, be it never so new . . . it must stand upon old principles; that is, upon a nobility or an army planted on a due balance of dominion; . . . and there is no standing for a monarchy unless it finds this balance, or makes it. If it finds it, the work's done to its hand: for, where there is inequality of estates, there must be inequality of power, there can be no commonwealth.²² To make it, the sword must extirpate out of dominion all other roots of power, and plant an army upon that ground. . . . There must not only be confiscations, but confiscations to such a proportion as may answer to the work intended. . . .

To conclude, Oceana, or any other nation of no greater extent, must have a competent nobility, or is altogether incapable of monarchy: for where there is equality of estates, there must be equality of power: and where there is equality of power, there can be no monarchy. . . .

²¹king: i.e. Henry VIII ²²commonwealth: republic