

ECO 2210Y

Topic No. 34: The Nef Thesis: The ‘Early Industrial Revolution’ and Industrial Change in Tudor-Stuart England

1. L. A. Clarkson, The Pre-Industrial Economy in England, 1500-1750 (London, 1971), chapter 4, ‘Industry,’ pp. 75-116.
2. Peter Ramsey, Tudor Economic Problems (London, 1965), Chapter III: ‘Industry and the Towns,’ pp. 82-112.
3. D.C. Coleman, Industry in Tudor and Stuart England (1975), pp. 35-49; and his The Economy of England, 1450-1750 (1977), pp. 82-90, 165-72.
4. John U. Nef, ‘The Progress of Technology and the Growth of Large-Scale Industry in Great Britain, 1540-1640,’ Economic History Review, 1st ser. 5 (1934); and his ‘Prices and Industrial Capitalism in France and England, 1540-1640,’ Economic History Review, 1st ser. 7 (1937), both reprinted in E.M. Carus-Wilson, ed. Essays in Economic History, Vol. I (1954), pp. 88-107, and 108-34.
5. John Nef, Rise of the British Coal Industry (1932), Vol. I, pp. 165-89.
6. T.S. Ashton, Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution (Manchester, 1924; reprinted 1951), chapter 1, pp. 1-23.
7. D.C. Coleman, ‘Industrial Growth and Industrial Revolutions,’ Economica, new ser. 23 (1956), reprinted in: E.M. Carus-Wilson, ed. Essays in Economic History, Vol. III (1962), pp. 334-52.
8. Sybil Jack, Trade and Industry in Tudor and Stuart England (1977), especially chapter 2, pp. 66-121.
9. George Hammersley, ‘The Charcoal Iron Industry and its Fuel, 1540-1750,’ Economic History Review, 2nd ser. 26 (1973), 593-613.
10. Brinley Thomas, ‘Was There an Energy Crisis in Great Britain in the 17th Century?’ Explorations in Economic History, 33 (April 1986), 124 - 52.
11. J. R. Harris, The British Iron Industry, Studies in Economic and Social History series (London: Macmillan, 1988).

QUESTIONS:

1. Explain and discuss the Nef thesis: what did he mean by an ‘industrial revolution’ in the Tudor-Stuart era, during the ‘Price Revolution’ – in particular the ‘progress towards larger-scale forms of industrial capitalism?’ To what extent did industrial changes alter the general economic structure of Tudor-Stuart England? Were they ‘revolutionary’?

2. Did Tudor-Stuart England suffer from an 'energy crisis'? What impact did rising fuel costs have upon charcoal-burning and coal-burning industries: upon technology and industrial scale?
3. Explain the development of a 'capitalistic' iron industry in this era: in particular, the two-stage process involving the blast smelter. Did the English iron industry, after having experienced a century of rapid growth, suffer stagnation and/or decline in the later 17th and early 18th centuries? What was the subsequent Industrial Revolution in iron-making?