

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE OF CHRISTOPHER HILL A PROLIFIC HISTORIAN AND SCHOLAR OF THE 17TH CENTURY

Feb 27, Christopher Hill, the historian and former Master of Balliol who died on Wide-ranging, popular and immensely prolific, Hill wrote more than 20 books, and helped to make the 17th century the most contentious period in our history. diversity of his scholarship and his contribution to the history of ideas.

From he began to work on a new psalm translation, a project in tune with the circle round Sir Edwin Sandys that Wither frequented. An agrarian law was needed to limit the amount of land an individual could inherit to prevent the formation of an aristocracy. These satires "aimed at exposing 'th'abuses of these wicked Times" achieved some popular success and there were seven printings from to Wither was in London during the plague of , and in published Britain's Remembrancer, a voluminous poem on the subject, interspersed with denunciations of the wickedness of the times, and prophecies of the disasters about to fall upon England. After retiring, Hill taught at the Open University and continued to write. During his imprisonment he wrote what may be regarded as a continuation of Browne's work, The Shepherd's Hunting printed "eclogues in which the two poets appear as Willie and Roget in later editions Philarete. This caused her to be abandoned by the Rockingham Whigs. Despite the fact that the satires referenced nobody by name, and that Wither had published them a year before with no trouble, he was arrested for libel "on or about 20 March " and held in the Marshalsea prison for four months before being released. The "boasted birthright of an Englishman" she had always thought of as "an arrogant pretension" because it suggested "a kind of exclusion to the rest of mankind from the same privileges". His own house near Farnham was plundered, and he himself was captured by a troop of Royalist horse, owing his life to the intervention of Sir John Denham , on the ground that so long as Wither lived he himself could not be accounted the worst poet in England. Volume I , p. Only by claiming them as natural rights could they be secured. These views put him at odds with many of his contemporaries, and with the new generation of revisionist historians which emerged during the s and s. In his first significant essay, The English Revolution , he argued that: "the English Revolution of was a great social movement like the French Revolution of This work assumed the knowledge of metrical psalms. As a student, Hill was committed in equal measure to his books and to Marxism; but he was also a college man, and as a wing three-quarter scored the winning try in "Cuppers", the intercollegiate tournament. After leaving the Communist Party, Hill's interest in the English Revolution moved on to the issue of Puritanism, which he considered of central importance to the upheavals of the time. Some were stunned by the image of a Communist scholar delving into the dusty archives of Tudor and Stuart church history. Nonetheless, Hill continued to be acknowledged as the dominant figure in studies of the period. They could be seen, too, in Hill's own work ethic and the prodigious volume of his scholarship. The historical constant which framed Hill's work was the rise of capitalism, a rise in which the events of the s and s were portrayed as a climacteric which changed the country for ever.