



**The
Personal Rule
of Charles II
1681-85**

Grant Tapsell

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THE PERSONAL RULE OF
CHARLES II, 1681–85

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Peter and Joan Tapsell,

and my gran,
Jessie Wells,

with love

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GT
St Andrews
September 2006

Abbreviations

Unless otherwise stated, the place of publication for all works cited is London. In the interests of economy I have given partially abbreviated titles for most contemporary published works. I have, however, sought to include enough of every title to make it clear what I am referring to, and each published source is listed in the bibliography with its Wing number. When quoting from contemporary sources I have silently expanded contractions (e.g. 'wth' to 'with'), and changed a few archaisms that serve no purpose (e.g. 'yt' and 'ye' to 'that' and 'the', or 'fanatiqs' to 'fanatics'). Otherwise original spellings and grammar have been retained. Text placed within angled brackets – e.g. <the> – represents interlineations in the original documents.

Add. MS	Additional Manuscript
BIHR	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
BL	British Library
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
CSP Col.	<i>Calendar of State Papers Colonial</i>
CSPD	<i>Calendar of State Papers Domestic</i>
DWL	Dr Williams's Library
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
FSL	Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC
HEHL	Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California
HJ	<i>Historical Journal</i>
HLQ	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
HOP 1660–1690	<i>History of Parliament Trust, The House of Commons, 1660–1690</i> , ed. Basil D. Henning (3 vols., 1983)
HOP 1690–1715	<i>History of Parliament Trust, The House of Commons, 1690–1715</i> , ed. D.W. Hayton <i>et al.</i> (5 vols., Cambridge, 2002)
HRHRC	Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin
IHS	<i>Irish Historical Studies</i>
JBS	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
JMH	<i>Journal of Modern History</i>

ABBREVIATIONS

JRUL	John Rylands University Library, Deansgate, Manchester
NAS	National Archives of Scotland
NLI	National Library of Ireland
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NLW	National Library of Wales
ns	new series
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (60 vols., Oxford, 2004)
os	old series
<i>P&P</i>	<i>Past & Present</i>
PRO	Public Record Office
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
RO	Record Office
RPCS	<i>Registers of the Privy Council of Scotland</i>
SCH	Studies in Church History
SHR	Scottish Historical Review
TNA	The National Archives (formerly the PRO), Kew
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
UWB	University of Wales, Bangor, Department of Archives and Manuscripts
V&A	Victoria & Albert Museum, London
Wing	Donald Wing (comp.), <i>Short-title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and British America, and of English Books Printed in Other Countries, 1641–1700</i> (3 vols., New York, NJ, 1945–51)
WYAS	West Yorkshire Archives Service, Sheepscar, Leeds
YAS	Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds

Introduction

The political world of Sir John Holland

Sir John Holland's extraordinarily long life covered almost all of the seventeenth century.¹ Born in 1603, the year that James VI inherited the English throne, and an MP at various times from 1640 to 1679, he lived to see one king executed, and another driven from his realms, to be replaced by a Dutchman whose military campaigns in Europe had changed the face of the English state by the time of Holland's death in 1701. He also had the misfortune to live in Norfolk, whose 'precociously fevered' political life during the Restoration period caused him no end of anxiety. So grave was the situation by April 1679 that the celebrated author and Norwich resident, Sir Thomas Browne, feared the county would become 'a country of Guelphs and Ghibbelines'.² In that year more than 6000 voters participated in a particularly close election for the Norfolk county seats.³ The result was overturned by a hostile House of Commons on technical grounds prompted by partisan spite. The ensuing re-run saw many of the evolving features of partisan political culture in the later 1670s and 1680s, when the nation was deeply divided by the question of whether the Catholicism of the heir to the throne, James duke of York, the king's brother, should result in his being excluded from the succession by parliamentary statute. Subscriptions were invited to fund campaigns; the assistance of central government was solicited; considerable sums of money were expended on entertaining and accommodating voters; and candidates found themselves subject to intimidation by 'the rabble',

¹ A wealth of information about Holland can be found in John Miller, 'A moderate in the first age of party: the dilemmas of Sir John Holland, 1675–85', *EHR*, 114 (1999), 844–74; Caroline Robbins, 'Sir John Holland (1603–1701) in the Convention of 1660', *BIHR*, 29 (1956), 244–52; *idem*, 'Five speeches, 1661–3, by Sir John Holland, M.P.', *BIHR*, 28 (1955), 189–202; *idem*, 'Election correspondence of Sir John Holland of Quidenham, 1661', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 30:2 (1947–52), 130–9; *HOP 1660–1690*, II, 556–60.

² James M. Rosenheim, *The Townshends of Raynham. Nobility in Transition in Restoration and Early Hanoverian England* (Middletown, CT, 1989), p. 7. See also *ibid.*, p. 12; John Miller, *After the Civil Wars. English Politics and Government in the Reign of Charles II* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 228–32; *HOP 1660–1690*, I, 319–22, quotation at 321; *HOP 1690–1715*, II, 409–12.

³ An excellent account is offered in Miller, *After the Civil Wars*, pp. 245–9, esp. 247–8.

particularly on the grounds of alleged religious opinions. Sir Neville Catelyn and Sir Christopher Calthorpe – the candidates seen as sympathetic to the court – were defeated by the pro-exclusion candidates, Sir John Hobart and Sir Peter Gleane, not least because of the active support of local Protestant dissenters. The two MPs retained their seats in another close fought election in 1681. But the cost was formidable. Gleane's 'morbid and extravagant' melancholy can be partially ascribed to the huge financial damage that successive election campaigns did to his estates. After his death in 1696 his eldest son was reduced to living on the county rates, before ultimately being 'flung naked and starving into the Fleet prison'. Hobart found himself a much criticized and partially ostracized figure in county life. He died in 1683 at the age of fifty-five shortly after being subjected to the indignity of having his house searched for arms in the wake of the Rye House Plot scare.⁴

For Holland all this division was profoundly regrettable. At the end of 1683 the octogenarian wrote to the local power-broker, Lord Townshend, informing him that at the next election he would 'hold to my Principle of doing all I can towards the reuniting of the County'. He was 'resolved never more willingly to be instrumentall to divide it, as it hath of late yeares unhappily been'.⁵ This was a tactful acknowledgement of the fact that he himself had assisted this process of division, having voted for the exclusionists, Hobart and Gleane, in 1679. His punishment had been removal from the commission of the peace by a vengeful central government.⁶ Holland must have written to Townshend in December 1683 more in hope than expectation of securing the peer's support for a programme of reconciliation. Three months earlier he had received Townshend's flat refusal to have anything to do with a scheme for 'an Accomodation of those unhappy differences which have arisen from our contested Elections; and of our preventing the like for the future'. This had been a 'great disturbance' to him, especially as Townshend had ruthlessly shown Holland's private letter to him to Sir Henry Bedingfield, who was a Catholic, a 'close associate' of the heir to the throne, James duke of York,⁷ and a 'neighbour who I never thought would agree [with the proposals for reconciliation] unless you push them positively'. Despite claiming to 'see cause now utterly to dispayer of success', Holland doggedly asked Townshend not to express further public dislike of his ideas, so that at the next parliamentary election there might still be hope for a general agreement of the gentry on who would be (s)elected.⁸

⁴ HOP 1660–1690, I, 321–2; II, 397, 553.

⁵ Norfolk RO, MC 1601/29: Holland to Townshend, 31 Dec. 1683.

⁶ HOP 1660–1690, II, 560.

⁷ Miller, 'A moderate in the first age of party', 870.

⁸ Norfolk RO, MC 1601/30: Holland to [Townshend], 16 Sept. 1683. For much more on this theme, see Mark A. Kishlansky, *Parliamentary Selection: Social and Political Choice in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1986), esp. ch. 8.

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The following summer, Holland – by then eighty-one years old – wrote a very long letter to Townshend describing his recent movements. Both the declining quality of his handwriting, and the long-winded exposition of events make it tempting to conclude that Holland was beginning to drift into senility. With an almost childish earnestness, he described visiting Charles II at Windsor.⁹ He had assured the king that he was sorry ever to have caused him displeasure, and that no part of his political actions had ever been motivated by disloyal thoughts. In Holland's account, Charles solemnly assured him that he knew the Norfolk knight to be a man of honour. Holland then repeated the performance with the duke of York. Even this did not put the old man's mind at rest. On his way home to Norfolk, he secured a meeting with Laurence Hyde, earl of Rochester, the powerful first lord of the Treasury and brother-in-law to the duke of York, who – according to Holland's account – promised to ensure that his recently expressed sentiments were rightly understood by both royal brothers. One can only imagine the private reaction of Rochester – described by Ronald Hutton as an 'aboriginal tory', and long recognised as a particularly close follower of James¹⁰ – to the following harangue, which is extraordinary enough to merit being quoted at length. Holland told him

I had not now made my humble address to either [of the royal brothers] from the least consideration of the successes they had by there prudent government obteyned in ther affayres, but singly from the sence of my owne Principles, which I ame ready to owne to all the world Viz: That I thinke my self obliged to support & defend that Government under which I was born, had I been Born under a Commonwealth I should have thought my self obliged to have supported the Rights of that Commonwealth against any Usurper whatsoever, but being born under a monarchy, an hereditary Monarchy, I think my self obliged, to support the rights of that Hereditary Monarchy and that noe suggestions whatsoever of Black Boxes or any the like arguments could prevayle upon my Judgement; That I was, and ought to be satisfied, from that Evidence his Majesty himself have given, who is much the best Judg & Witness Who have in express Tearmes disclaimed the pretended marriage with the Duke of Monmouth's mother and consequently his legitimacie & have caused this his Majesty's owne testimony to bee entred not only in the Councell Book but likewise to remain upon Record in Chancery to all posterity, and being thus fortified I think my self obliged to support his Right & shall; That I

⁹ Here I depart from John Miller's straightforward account of this letter, which simply follows Holland's version of events, and notes that he was subsequently restored to the commission of the peace. (Miller, 'A moderate in the first age of party', 871.)

¹⁰ Ronald Hutton, *Charles II: King of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (Oxford, 1989), p. 405. For more on Rochester at this time, see W.A. Speck, 'Hyde, Laurence, first earl of Rochester (*bap.* 1642 – *d.* 1711)', ODNB; G.P. Tapsell, 'The life and career of Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, c.1681–c. 1686', unpub. M.Phil. thesis, Univ. of Cambridge, 1999.

acknowledge it to bee a Great misfortune to himself and to the whole kingdome that his Royal Highness is faln from the Protestant Religion wherin hee was bred, but yet I cannot find my self also freed therby from that obligation I ame in to support his Royal Highness right much less to oppose it; I know noe other [means] to bee used in that Case but prayers & teares . . .¹¹

Holland's speech to Rochester offers rich insight into the contemporary political world. Indeed we should be thankful for the aged knight's apparent lack of self-consciousness: he lays bare a number of the issues and shibboleths affecting politics during his declining years. At the core of Holland's concerns was the nature of the state: should it be a monarchy or a commonwealth? This may not be surprising coming from a man who had been in the prime of his natural and political life at the time of the regicide. But another observer thirty years his junior could also note after the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament in March 1681: 'The thruth was that the question was not now whether the Duke [of York] should succeed [to the throne] or not, but rather whether it should be a monarchie or a commonwealth.'¹² At one level, such stark thinking may have reflected the educational background common to most of the gentry, steeped as they were in classical discussions of the nature and typologies of government.¹³ But it also reflected the depth of political fears that the Exclusion Crisis had excited about a return to upheavals in the state and civil war.

Having affirmed his commitment to monarchy to a no doubt nonplussed Rochester, Holland then emphasised that it needed to be hereditary. The unstated alternative was a weak elective monarchy like that of Poland. Nor was this mere idle amateur theorising. The leading whig politician Anthony Ashley Cooper, earl of Shaftesbury, was frequently attacked in the press by way of pejorative analogies to Polish politics: support his efforts, went the tory propaganda line, and England would be diminished to the level of that unfortunate eastern European state.¹⁴ So the throne needed to be inherited by the appropriate blood heir. But who was that? In his account, Holland tactlessly dwelt on the most sensitive aspect of Charles II's immorality and unfortunate marriage: he had both failed to produce a legitimate heir, *and* fathered at least fourteen bastards, notably the eldest, James Scott, duke of Monmouth.¹⁵ The 'Black Box' mentioned by Holland had been touted by exclusionists as containing documents proving that Charles had married

¹¹ Norfolk RO, MC 1601/32: Holland to Townshend, [July 1684].

¹² *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, ed. Andrew Browning (2nd edn with a new pref. and notes by Mary K. Geiter and W.A. Speck, 1991), p. 223. For more on this, see below, ch. 5.

¹³ For a brilliant exposition of the intellectual milieu of seventeenth-century English republicanism, see Jonathan Scott, *Commonwealth Principles. Republican Writing of the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2004).

¹⁴ See below, ch. 3.

¹⁵ Charles II enjoys the unique distinction of having a whole appendix devoted to his

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Monmouth's mother, thus kicking away the tory argument that the duke of York had to inherit the throne as he was the nearest blood heir.¹⁶ Holland was writing when memories of Monmouth's quasi-regal processions to the south and north-west of England were still fresh in tory minds, as was his disgrace following the Rye House Plot.¹⁷

Monmouth's popularity had in large part been due to his status as one of the potential Protestant antidotes to York's poisonous Catholicism.¹⁸ Thus, when Holland stated that it was 'a Great misfortune to himself and to the whole kingdome that his Royal Highness is faln from the Protestant Religion wherin hee was bred', he was boldly putting his finger on the central political problem of the 1680s: could a Catholic king be trusted to rule Protestant England? It is unlikely that Holland would have known that Rochester had been saddled with several sensitive missions to James during the period of his exile in Scotland, specifically to urge him to return to the Church of England.¹⁹ But the broader political importance of James's religious beliefs was clear. Holland's laboured profession of continued support for James's right to succeed did not go nearly as far as die-hard tories at the time. They tended to argue either that the future king's religion was irrelevant as the Church of England's position at the heart of the state was adequately safeguarded by legislation, or simply that James was a man of his word and had already expressed his high regard for the established church. (That James's reign would show up the weakness of both arguments should not detract from our awareness of the sincerity with which such views were held in the early 1680s.) For die-hard tories, Holland's 'prayers & tears' would have smacked of insufficient faith in James's character.

Holland's written record of his speech to Rochester points to two other key themes of the political world he inhabited. The first was how important 'public opinion' had become. As he notes – though without putting it in quite such blunt terms – Charles had had to face the ignominy not just of denying that he had married the duke of Monmouth's mother, but also of having to do so *publicly*. The king had even gone so far as to have his denial 'entred not only in the Councell Book but likewise to remain upon Record in Chancery to all posterity'. This was not the only time that Charles had

(14) bastards in George E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage*, ed. Vicary Gibbs *et al.* (13 vols. in 14, 1910–59), VI, app. F, 706–8.

¹⁶ Mark Goldie, 'Contextualizing Dryden's Absalom: William Lawrence, the laws of marriage, and the case for King Monmouth', in Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier, eds., *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540–1688* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 208–30; Tim Harris, 'Scott [formerly Crofts], James, duke of Monmouth and first duke of Buccleuch (1649–1685)', *ODNB*.

¹⁷ For the importance of the Rye House Plot, see below, ch. 1.

¹⁸ The other was Mary, James's eldest daughter, who had been raised a Protestant, and had in 1677 married William of Orange, the hunchbacked pin-up boy of European Protestantism.

¹⁹ Tapsell, 'Life and career of Laurence Hyde', pp. 76–7.

thought it both necessary and politic to explain himself to his subjects. He had also recently discussed another key part of his prerogative – the calling and dissolving of parliaments – in a declaration that had been read in all parish churches, to the horror of some of his supporters, who were appalled that the king had stooped to the level of competing with his opponents for the support of the people.²⁰ This theme of growing appeal to the people as an ‘umpire’ of political belief has received increasing stress in recent historiography,²¹ and will be a key motif of this book.

The second theme is that of a turning of the political tide. After the exclusionist high-water mark of 1679–80, political opinion had begun to shift in the government’s favour. This had both fed and fed-off increasingly strident government reaction to the exclusionist threat. Holland himself had been a casualty of this trend, removed from the commission of the peace in Norfolk for his support of exclusionist parliamentary candidates. Although Holland chose to stress that his decision to seek audiences with Charles and James in 1684 was solely the result of his own political principles, his defensive tone here is telling. He was careful to claim to Rochester that ‘I had not now made my humble address to either [of the royal brothers] from the least consideration of the successes they had by there prudent government obtayned in ther affayres’. But can this really be accepted at face value? Perhaps so if we accept that Holland was primarily a man of ‘moderate’ political opinions, dedicated to reconciling nascent ideological divisions in the interests of national harmony and local neighbourliness.²² But even then, it is hard to escape the conclusion that Holland – for all his advancing age and clumsy expressions of loyalty – was still sensitive to a change in the political temperature. By the time that he saw the king, Charles had already broken the Triennial Act (1664) by not calling a parliament to meet in the spring of 1684. That he had been able to do so with remarkably little opposition, or even comment, would have been inconceivable just a few years earlier. This was a period of political change, even if not one as uncomplicated as the label ‘tory reaction’ usually suggests.

No one letter could adequately describe the whole of the political world in which Sir John Holland lived. This book will address a number of themes not remarked upon by the veteran politician. Scottish and Irish affairs are notable by their absence in Holland’s account, as are detailed accounts of the press, the central government, and the established church. But Holland’s written version of his speech to Rochester does give a sense of the political culture that will be the focus of all that follows. Like it or, more often – as in

²⁰ For the declaration itself, see Andrew Browning, ed., *English Historical Documents, VIII 1660–1714* (1953), pp. 185–8. More discussion of this is offered below, pp. 36–9.

²¹ Notably in Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain. Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford, 2005).

²² This is in essence the argument of Miller, ‘A moderate in the first age of party’.

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Holland's case – loathe it, contemporaries were forced to accommodate themselves to the living reality of political division as a daily fact of life.

Aims and arguments

The present study is the first monograph to be wholly devoted to political culture during the personal rule of Charles II. Most studies of the Restoration period as a whole tend to treat the years between the dissolution of Charles II's last parliament in March 1681 and the king's death in February 1685 as ones of political anti-climax. Civil war had seemed a real possibility as the Exclusion Crisis developed in parliament between 1679 and 1681, and as the passions that fuelled debates within the two Houses were duplicated 'out of doors' in many localities. Yet Charles II's monarchy – unlike his father's in the 1640s – weathered the storm without armed conflict. Nor did James VII and II's long anticipated (or feared) succession in 1685 prompt immediate upheavals within the church and state.²³ Barring only a serious assassination plot in 1683 the personal rule seemed to lack focal points for study. In particular, without the records of a sitting English parliament readily to illuminate the thinking of the political nation, historians are perforce required to investigate a widely dispersed range of sources. Only then can they hope to recapture the nature of political culture in this period. It will be my contention throughout this study that what lay at the heart of this was partisanship. Despite all the deeply ingrained tendencies within contemporary thought toward the values of harmony, unity, and good neighbourliness, in practice Charles II's subjects found themselves caught between a number of stark choices. The two most important of these were whether to support the succession of James to the throne, or to oppose it, and whether to champion the persecution of Protestant dissenters who stood outside the Church of England, or to promote a broader church settlement.

The geographical spread and social depth of these divisions was considerable. This argument is worth emphasizing because of the volume of historiography that has focused on London in the Restoration period.²⁴ However important the capital undoubtedly was, the evidence presented in this study will demonstrate that partisan rivalries were widespread across England rather than being restricted to an unusually sophisticated metropolitan population. Furthermore, until very recently it was too readily assumed that the Exclusion Crisis ended with the sudden demise of the Oxford Parliament. After that moment of drama, historians usually described a rather dull

²³ See the conclusion, below.

²⁴ Notably Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II. Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis* (Cambridge, 1987); Gary S. De Krey, *London and the Restoration, 1659–83* (Cambridge, 2005); *idem*, *A Fractured Society: The Politics of London in the First Age of Party 1688–1715* (Oxford, 1985).

final act in which a vengeful government and its local tory allies fundamentally smashed the whigs and their dissenting supporters. A one-party (tory) state was delineated, one in which Charles – egged-on by his brother – lurched towards a more ‘absolutist’ system of government, one in which royal prerogative and armed force seemed to be triumphing over statute law and parliaments.²⁵ Here a key phase was the spring of 1684. At that time the king failed to call an English parliament, as he was required (but not forced) to do under the terms of the Triennial Act of 1664. He was thus in danger of being labelled ‘arbitrary’ as well as absolute, of governing solely by consulting his own whims and passions rather than taking into account the views and best interests of his subjects as represented in parliament. Nevertheless, little criticism of the king’s actions was publicly voiced. Consequently, many historians have found it easy to imagine that partisanship went into limbo between 1681 and the sudden revival of strife that surrounded the Revolution of 1688–9.

This book will offer a different analysis, one based around seeing how whigs and tories continued to dominate political life even after the parliamentary setting in which they had first crystallized was removed. Building in particular on studies by Paul Halliday and Mark Knights, I look to approach partisan politics during the personal rule from a variety of angles: local, national, governmental, polemical, and religious. Perhaps most centrally of all, I will emphasize the importance of news and rumour for politicians and the public. Although far from virgin territory for the Restoration historian,²⁶ I hope to contribute to a growing field that deserves to be at least as rich and diverse as that now dealing with the first half of the seventeenth century.²⁷

The last part of my account will move beyond the borders of England to examine how far politics during the personal rule needs to be understood in a ‘Three Kingdoms’ context. The writing of ‘British’ history is bedevilled with problems of chronology: what works as a period of study for one kingdom may not be equally viable for the others. Writing about ‘personal rule’ in Scotland makes both less and more sense than it does for England. Less for this period since a Scottish parliament *did* sit in the summer of 1681. More

²⁵ For discussions of the multifaceted meanings of ‘absolute’ and ‘absolutism’, see Tim Harris, *Restoration: Charles II and his Kingdoms, 1660–85* (2005), pp. 56–67, 106–15, 120–1, 129, 220–37, 419–24; John Miller, ‘The Potential for “Absolutism” in Later Stuart England’, *History*, 69 (1984), 187–207.

²⁶ Miller, *After the Civil Wars*, ch. 4; John Patrick Montaña, *Courting the Moderates: Ideology, Propaganda, and the Emergence of Party, 1660–1678* (Newark, DE, 2002), esp. pp. 36–9; Knights, *Politics and Opinion*; *idem*, *Representation and Misrepresentation*.

²⁷ E.g. Dagmar Freist, *Governed by Opinion: Politics, Religion and the Dynamics of Communication in Stuart London, 1637–45* (1997); Richard Cust, ‘News and politics in early seventeenth-century England’, *P&P*, 112 (1986), 60–90; Kevin Sharpe, ‘Crown, parliament and locality: government and communication in early Stuart England’, *EHR*, 101 (1986), 321–50; F.J. Levy, ‘How information spread among the gentry, 1550–1640’, *JBS*, 21 (1982), 11–34.

because Scottish political culture had a deeper-seated regard for ‘personal’ monarchy than its English counterpart, partly on indigenous Scottish grounds – frequent Stewart royal minorities were followed by the ‘personal’ rule of adult monarchs²⁸ – and partly on indigenous English grounds – the saturation of politics by the language and assumptions of the common law.²⁹ In Ireland, no parliament had sat since 1666, though there were numerous rumours thereafter of another session. There are also evidential problems impeding the construction of a genuinely integrated ‘British’ history for this period.³⁰ With the exception of a few important figures – notably James Butler, duke of Ormond in Ireland and Sir John Lauder in Scotland – the source base for a synoptic account of politics is much more limited for Charles’s ‘other’ kingdoms than it is for England. We cannot turn to as rich a body of published polemic, or compare as many different individual accounts of events in Scotland and Ireland as we can for England. The attrition of archives, the repressive nature of many regimes, and the different foci and character of Scottish and Irish politics all take their toll on the historian of the later seventeenth century. This does not mean that an attempt to discuss the interchange of politicians, texts, and ideas should not be made, merely that it cannot be expected to yield as detailed a picture for Scotland and Ireland as for England, especially prior to the Revolutions of 1688–9.³¹ It is for these reasons that instead of dealing with all three kingdoms within each of my major themes, my discussion of Scottish and Irish political life appears in a separate final chapter.

The personal rule of Charles II

Having set out my main aims, I should now explain my title as it offers significant hostages to fortune. Historically, it inevitably evokes comparison with the personal rule of Charles I, and historiographically with Kevin Sharpe’s mammoth book of the same title.³² Some disclaimers should therefore be

²⁸ J.H. Burns, *The True Law of Kingship: Concepts of Monarchy in Early-Modern Scotland* (Oxford, 1996). For the most sophisticated treatment of theories of monarchy in post-1660 Scotland, see Clare Jackson, *Restoration Scotland, 1660–1690. Royalist Politics, Religion and Ideas* (Woodbridge, 2003), esp. chs. 3–4, and p. 217.

²⁹ Alan D.T. Cromartie, ‘The Constitutionalist Revolution: the transformation of political culture in early Stuart England’, *P&P*, 163 (1999), 76–120.

³⁰ Although Tim Harris has done a sterling job with many of the available materials in his diptych, *Restoration and Revolution*.

³¹ For the post-revolutionary world, see in particular the groundbreaking studies by David Hayton, many of which have now been collected in his *Ruling Ireland, 1685–1742: Politics, Politicians and Parties* (Woodbridge, 2004), or are summarized in his superb introductory volume to *HOP 1690–1715*, I, 141–77, 505–35.

³² Kevin Sharpe, *Personal Rule of Charles I* (1992). See also *idem*, ‘The personal rule of Charles I’, in Howard Tomlinson, ed., *Before the English Civil War: Essays on Early Stuart Politics and Government* (1983), pp. 53–78; Richard Cust, *Charles I: A Political Life* (2005),

offered at the outset. In what follows, I am working on a smaller canvas than Professor Sharpe, and with different colours. Charles II's personal rule was significantly shorter than his father's, and it had a different political 'feel'. Unlike his father, Charles II was not reliant on the vigorous and unpopular exploitation of his royal prerogatives in order to make financial ends meet. Thanks to buoyant and, at this stage, largely uncontroversial customs revenues based on booming trade, Charles II was able to live within his means and avoid antagonizing most of his subjects by hitting them in the wallet. Furthermore, he and his court did not become 'prisoners of their own aesthetic' in the way that his father and his father's court had.³³ In the 1630s, Charles I had partially retreated into an isolated world of illusions, one where pictorial images of majesty and theatrical neo-Platonic evocations of order and hierarchy came to replace practical good governance and active engagement with his subjects' grievances as the basis of politics.³⁴ Nevertheless, the beauty of majesty had not saved the early Stuart monarchy, any more than the 'beauty of holiness' had saved the early Stuart Church of England.³⁵ Charles II was not indifferent to the value of magnificent display – as the ambitious building plans he supported at the end of his reign demonstrate³⁶ – but the beauty that most captured his imagination was that of his mistresses.³⁷

ch. 3; L.J. Reeve, *Charles I and the Road to Personal Rule* (Cambridge, 1989); Esther S. Cope, *Politics without Parliaments 1620–1640* (1987). For an attempt to identify another period of Stuart personal rule, see Andrew Thrush, 'The personal rule of James I, 1611–1620', in Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake, eds., *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: Essays in Honour of Conrad Russell* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 84–102.

³³ Andrew Walkling, 'Court, culture, and politics in Restoration England: Charles II, James II, and the performance of Baroque monarchy', unpub. Ph.D thesis, 2 vols., Cornell Univ., 1997, I, 72–3.

³⁴ Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (1975); R. Malcolm Smuts, 'The political failure of Stuart cultural patronage', in G.F. Lytle, and Stephen Orgel, eds., *Patronage in the Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ, 1981), pp. 165–87. I find critical views of Charles I more convincing than Mark Kishlansky's recent bravura exercise in polemical apologetic, 'Charles I: a case of mistaken identity', *P&P*, 189 (2005), 41–80.

³⁵ For a compelling attempt to describe 'the overall package' of Laudianism, see Peter Lake, 'The Laudian style: order, uniformity and the pursuit of the beauty of holiness in the 1630s', in Kenneth Fincham, ed., *The Early Stuart Church, 1603–1642* (Basingstoke, 1993), pp. 161–85, quotation at p. 163.

³⁶ H.M. Colvin, ed., *The History of the King's Works, 5: 1660–1782* (1976), pp. 249–53, 276–7, 304–41; R.A. Beddard, 'Wren's mausoleum for Charles I and the cult of the Royal Martyr', *Architectural History*, 27 (1984), 36–49; Simon Thurley, 'A country seat fit for a king: Charles II, Greenwich and Winchester', in Eveline Cruickshanks, ed., *The Stuart Courts* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 214–39.

³⁷ Catherine MacLeod and Julia Marciari Alexander, eds., *Painted Ladies: Women at the Court of Charles II* (2001); Sonya Wynne, 'The mistresses of Charles II and Restoration court politics', in Cruickshanks, ed., *The Stuart Courts* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 171–90; Nancy Klein Maguire, 'The duchess of Portsmouth: English royal consort and French politician,

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The personal rule of Charles II was not just different from that of 1629–1640 in terms of its financial basis and aesthetic display. It was also part of a political world that had significantly changed from that which had existed before the civil wars. The ‘shape’ of the seventeenth century has recently been much debated by historians. The value of the old dividing line of 1660 has been powerfully questioned, notably by Jonathan Scott in a series of works that seek to unite the period in terms of ‘England’s troubles’, shorthand for recurring fears of popery and arbitrary government.³⁸ There were widespread perceptions of a ‘popish plot’ under the early Stuarts; there were again under the later Stuarts. The personal religious beliefs of the Stuart monarchs were much debated by their subjects. Successive kings’ Catholic wives, apparently pro-Catholic policies within the Church of England, and, in the case of James II, open Catholic worship all fuelled the fires of anti-popery that had become one of the defining features of post-Reformation Britain. Worse still, all such domestic fears were played out against a background of resurgent Catholicism in Europe: the proportion of the continent ruled by Protestant princes declined sharply over the course of the seventeenth century.

Potent as this analysis is, it should not be allowed to obscure the political change that permeated the seventeenth century. This change was tripartite in form, though each of the three aspects interacted with the others. First and most obviously, those living in the Restoration era were aware of what had gone before. Jonathan Scott has not denied this; indeed, he has put it at the heart of his analysis by claiming that the English body politic was like a road-crash victim, doomed to relive its horrific past again and again.³⁹ Yet this line of argument runs the risk of minimizing the extent to which politicians and pamphleteers manipulated the past for their own benefit, or else acted as they did specifically in reaction to what had gone before. The ‘politics of memory’ was multi-layered, and could cut in different directions. Knowledge of the past could allow for political agency as much as it could prompt repetitions of previous events.

The second change from the early Stuart period lay in the different scale of press output. Put bluntly, the English presses spewed out far more material in the later Stuart period than had been the case before 1640. High levels of publishing do not necessarily have to correlate with periods of political crisis,

1670–85’, in R. Malcolm Smuts, ed., *The Stuart Court and Europe: Essays in Politics and Political Culture* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 247–73.

³⁸ *England’s Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge, 2000); ‘England’s troubles 1603–1702’, in Smuts, ed., *The Stuart Court and Europe*, pp. 20–38; *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis, 1677–1683* (Cambridge, 1991), pt. 1; ‘England’s troubles: Exhuming the Popish Plot’, in Tim Harris, Paul Seaward, and Mark Goldie, eds., *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 107–31; ‘Radicalism & Restoration: the shape of the Stuart experience’, *HJ*, 31 (1988), 453–67.

³⁹ Scott, ‘England’s troubles 1603–1702’, p. 26.

but the circumstantial ‘fit’ between peaks of publishing in England and constitutional flashpoints in 1642, 1648–9, 1660, and 1679–82 is very close.⁴⁰ Perhaps more important still than the change in the volume of publishing between the early and later Stuart period was the change in government attitudes towards print. The 1630s had witnessed formidable efforts by government to crack down on the expression of dissident opinion.⁴¹ Whilst Charles II’s personal rule *did* see efforts to restrict the output of the presses – particularly in relation to periodicals – this went alongside a novel attitude: that of trying to shape and influence the press, rather than just constraining it.⁴² This may have had much to do with the changing character of the two monarchs. Charles I was shy, cursed with a stammer, and always fearful of the dangers of ‘popularity’ or pandering to the people.⁴³ His son was garrulous, charming, and not above political grandstanding, whether that was visibly scowling during debates in the House of Lords, or putting out proclamations explaining his actions to his people in a style calculated best to stigmatize his political opponents.⁴⁴ But the change must also have had much to do with the growing experience that government and people had of the printing press; its dangers and potential uses. The living embodiment of this was Roger L’Estrange, who acted *both* as the Surveyor of the Press and probably the most prolific published author of the period.

The third change is another of degree rather than wholesale innovation. Protestantism had been divided in each of the three kingdoms within the islands of Britain and Ireland almost since the first stirrings of ‘reformation’ in the sixteenth century. During the personal rule of Charles I, Archbishop Laud and his allies had – with firm royal backing – pursued a bitter campaign

⁴⁰ For the figures, see John Barnard and Maureen Bell, ‘App. 1: Statistical tables’, in John Barnard and Don McKenzie, eds., with the assistance of Maureen Bell, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 4: 1557–1695 (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 783–4 table 1, 785 fig. A1.

⁴¹ On the vexed question of the effectiveness of early modern censorship, the best guide will soon be Jason McElligott, *Royalism and Print in Civil War England* (forthcoming, Boydell & Brewer). I am very grateful to Jason McElligott for allowing me to read his important work prior to publication.

⁴² See below, chs. 4–5.

⁴³ The fear of ‘popularity’ is a major theme of the most recent and most scholarly biography of the king: Cust, *Charles I*.

⁴⁴ For all his superficially talkative nature, Charles II remains an inscrutable figure. Unlike his father and grandfather he has left little in the way of a written archive. Much that remains is court gossip and hearsay; quips and quotes that are difficult safely to attribute. For these reasons the king will be a far less central figure in what follows than Charles I is in Professor Sharpe’s work. My focus will be much more on the *experience* of personal rule – not least the impact of news and rumour in the localities – than on the formation of policy in the shadowy environs of a court presided over by a king variously described by Ronald Hutton as ‘the Slippery Sovereign’ or ‘monarch in a masquerade’. Ronald Hutton, ‘Knocking the gilt off the golden days’, *HJ*, 31 (1988), 203; *Charles II. King of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (Oxford, 1989), title of ch. 16.

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to reduce those ‘puritans’ who did not wholeheartedly embrace the liturgy and ecclesiology of the Church of England to full obedience.⁴⁵ They did this not least out of a belief – which became self-fulfilling – that puritans were bad subjects, obstreperous and potentially disloyal to the king (who was also Supreme Governor of the Church of England). Nevertheless, the narrow ecclesiastical settlement that came into effect in England in 1662 inaugurated a different era. From this time a number of separate and distinct Protestant groups existed outside the discipline of the national church. Although strenuous efforts were made by Archbishop Sancroft and his allies during the personal rule of Charles II to reduce nonconformists to the discipline of the Church of England as by law established,⁴⁶ the nature of the problem had changed. Before 1660 religious heterodoxy was mainly a matter of shaping the future character of the established church within which almost everyone worshipped. After 1662 – and with increasing force as the decades passed – it became a matter of negotiating the relationship between the Church of England and other religious communities outside its buildings and theological framework.

Partisanship

All three of these issues impact upon the core theme of this book: political partisanship.⁴⁷ The existence or otherwise of political parties has always been one of the few issues to disturb the relatively tranquil waters of Restoration studies. This is not least because of the turbulence obvious in eighteenth-century accounts of the later Stuart period, which were conditioned by contemporary political considerations.⁴⁸ As the veteran writer Roger North put it in his posthumously published *Examen* (1740): ‘What Wonder . . . is it that, at present, the Current of History is muddy, and instead of clearing, the Stream grows continually more foul; for when the Party Stuff is once thrown in, the Water drives all together into Channels, and the Reservoirs will receive and continue the Stain.’⁴⁹ For his part, Sir John Dalrymple

⁴⁵ In seeing close cooperation between Laud and Charles I, I follow Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, ‘The ecclesiastical policies of James I and Charles I’, in Fincham, ed., *Early Stuart Church*, pp. 23–49.

⁴⁶ See below, ch. 3.

⁴⁷ I have deliberately kept this historiographical section brief as it would be pointless to recycle a number of recent extended summaries of the literature, notably Montañó, *Courting the Moderates*, pp. 27–51, and Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, pp. 5–13.

⁴⁸ Such considerations influenced the publishing of important source materials. The Yorkshire tory Sir John Resesby’s ‘memoirs’, for instance, were first published in 1734 as a corrective to Gilbert Burnet’s whiggish *History of My Own Times*. *Memoirs of Sir John Resesby*, ed., Browning, pp. ix–x.

⁴⁹ Roger North, *Examen: Or, An Enquiry into the Credit and Veracity of a Pretended Compleat History* (1740), pp. xi–xii. North was explicitly writing as a corrective to White Kennet’s whiggish *Complete History*.

was without illusions when it came to the likely reception of his own work in the 1770s: 'Every man who treats of party-matters in Britain, must expect to make enemies on the one side or the other.'⁵⁰

Despite the increased distance from events, twentieth-century accounts of the nature of political belief and organization in the period were themselves sharply polarized. Delivering the Romanes Lecture for 1926 in the Sheldonian Theatre, G.M. Trevelyan chose as his theme 'The Two-Party System in English Political History'.⁵¹ Inspired by the recent publication of Keith Feiling's *A History of the Tory Party 1640–1714* (1924), Trevelyan argued that 'There could be few more important themes [in English history] than the inner history and structure of the two perennial groups labelled Whig and Tory.' Whilst they were 'shadowy', Trevelyan summed up the assumptions of generations of English historians when he stated that the 'two extraordinary bonds' which held whigs and Tories together 'somehow continued as the strongest and most lasting element in our public life from the days of Danby and Shaftesbury to the days of Salisbury and Gladstone'.⁵²

Others were not so sure, especially in the wake of Sir Lewis Namier's vastly influential *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (1929), indomitable in its belief that 'There were no proper party organizations about 1760, though party names and cant were current; the names and the cant have since supplied the materials for an imaginary superstructure.'⁵³ This analysis was read back into Anne's reign by Robert Walcott in the 1950s, only to be destroyed 'with painful courtesy'⁵⁴ by Geoffrey Holmes in his *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (1967). For Holmes, 'whatever the complexities of the body politic in the early years of the eighteenth century, its life-blood was the existence and conflict of two major parties'.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the pro- and anti-party perspectives exemplified by Namier and Holmes have continued to excite controversial debate amongst historians of the eighteenth century, additional venom having been added by disputes over the significance of Jacobitism.⁵⁶

This book was initially inspired by a desire to engage with Jonathan Scott's provocative comments about the nature of party in later Stuart

⁵⁰ Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland from the Dissolution of the last Parliament of Charles II until the Sea-Battle off La Hogue* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1771–3), I, vii.

⁵¹ 'The Two-Party System in English History', repr. in G.M. Trevelyan, *An Autobiography & Other Essays* (1949), pp. 183–99.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 183–4. See also, David Cannadine, G.M. Trevelyan. *A Life in History* (1992), p. 202.

⁵³ Lewis Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (2nd edn, 1957), p. x.

⁵⁴ Robert Walcott, *English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1956); *HOP 1690–1715*, I, 29.

⁵⁵ Geoffrey Holmes, *British Politics in the Age of Anne* (1967), p. 6.

⁵⁶ For a good overview of much of the vast secondary literature, see *HOP 1690–1715*, I, 28–32.

England; or rather his opinion that prior to the fundamental changes ushered in by the Revolution of 1688/9 – in particular, annual parliaments from 1689 and triennial elections from 1694 – the ‘preconditions’ for ‘the development of the structures of party politics . . . did not exist’.⁵⁷ ‘For those who wish . . . to extrapolate backwards in time from the names of the first parties (1681–3) to the things (1679–83), their existence needs to be demonstrated rather than assumed.’⁵⁸ Scott took particular issue with J.R. Jones’s over-emphasis on the success of the earl of Shaftesbury in forging a political party in *The First Whigs. The Politics of the Exclusion Crisis 1678–1683* (1961).⁵⁹ Although Jones noted that ‘the word “party” has to be used with extreme care’ in a Namierite historical world, and although he listed different ‘component sections’ within the whigs, he nevertheless felt able to write that ‘The first Whigs were, and had to be, a party’, and referred to their ‘overriding unity’ and ‘party machine’.⁶⁰ By contrast, instead of ‘simultaneous “organisations”, taking opposite standpoints over a particular issue’, Scott has argued for a fluid spectrum of belief along which individuals moved over time: ‘To a large extent, and with the important exception of some hardliners on both sides, 1678’s “whigs” were 1681’s “tories”’.⁶¹

Unfortunately, the ensuing debate on Scott’s work rapidly became rebarbative.⁶² Relatively little light seemed to be being generated by a discussion which, as one of its participants acknowledged, was in danger of degenerating into ‘tit-for-tat claims’ on the subject of the existence or otherwise of parties.⁶³ The problem of defining what constituted a political ‘party’ was obviously central. Should we search – like J.R. Jones – for evidence of organization that could be presented as an embryonic form of modern party

⁵⁷ Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis*, p. 11; restated in *idem*, *England’s Troubles*, pp. 490–3; *idem*, ‘Restoration process. Or, if this isn’t a party, we’re not having a good time’, *Albion*, 25 (1993), 630–2. (For an earlier emphasis on the importance of the Triennial Act of 1694 on party development, see Geoffrey Holmes and W.A. Speck, eds., *The Divided Society: Parties and Politics in England, 1694–1716* (1967), intro.)

⁵⁸ Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis*, p. 81. For a very wide-ranging and general discussion, see Terence Ball, ‘Party’, in Terence Ball, James Farr and Russell L. Hanson, eds., *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 155–76, esp. p. 158.

⁵⁹ Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis*, pp. 10–13. Jones, too, however, noted that ‘the Revolution changed the structure of politics and the circumstances under which they were to be conducted in future’. J.R. Jones, *The First Whigs. The Politics of the Exclusion Crisis 1678–1683* (Oxford, 1961), p. 211.

⁶⁰ Jones, *The First Whigs*, pp. 2, 9–18, 216, 213.

⁶¹ Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis*, pp. 47–8.

⁶² See in particular the special issue of the journal *Albion* devoted to his thesis in 1993, and the excellent historiographical summary in Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, pp. 5–15.

⁶³ Tim Harris, ‘Sobering thoughts, but the party is not yet over: a reply’, *Albion* (1993), 647. See also *idem*, *Politics Under the Later Stuarts. Party Conflict in a Divided Society* (1993), pp. viii, 81–2. As Scott pointed out, his comments on ‘party’ were only a part of his much wider work on Algernon Sidney and the nature of seventeenth-century republican thought, and those criticising the former rarely engaged with the latter.

structures? Or should we – like Jonathan Scott – instead stress ideology and belief? I have no wish to turn the clock back to what could seem like an attempt to read anachronistic modern standards of what does and does not constitute a ‘party’ into the early modern period. But neither would I wish to abandon every last vestige of organization.⁶⁴ Coffeehouses and clubs will both make appearances in the following chapters, and each often took on distinctive political colours: whigs and tories knew where to go when they wanted the company of fellow-travellers, and where to go when they wanted confrontation.⁶⁵ And there is a middle ground between organization and ideology. As the work of Mark Knights has shown, groups of contemporaries often worked hard to generate petitions and addresses.⁶⁶ These allowed for mass subscription and the prominent display of political divisions. Although the precise nature of their genesis can be shrouded in uncertainty, it seems likely that the ideological positions set out in petitions and addresses could only be so displayed as a result of a degree of coordinated work by groups of partisans.

Structure of the book

Chapter one will sketch an outline of the Restoration period in order both to place the personal rule period in a broader context, and to introduce the main themes and events of 1681–5 that will recur throughout the rest of the book. Chapters two and three will then address respectively two key features of these years: the nature of government and the treatment of Protestant dissenters. With regard to government, I will argue that a hitherto missing element in historians’ accounts of the personal rule is the widespread expectation of another parliament. This proved a powerful stimulus to partisan passions. Furthermore, any suggestion of nascent absolutism needs to bear in mind the way that English governance remained participatory. Incompetence, ignorance, and inefficiency dogged the government, and whigs continued to occupy local office. Nor was the Church of England a tory

⁶⁴ Here I strongly endorse the comments of Gary S. De Krey in his monumental *London and the Reformation*, esp. pp. 172–3, concerning the divisions in contemporary society and the existence of parties.

⁶⁵ See below, ch. 4.

⁶⁶ ‘London’s “monster” petition of 1680’, *HJ*, 36 (1993), 39–68; ‘Petitioning and the political theorists: John Locke, Algernon Sidney and London’s “monster” petition of 1680’, *P&P*, 138 (1993), 94–111; ‘London petitions and parliamentary politics in 1679’, *Parliamentary History*, 12 (1993), 29–46; *Politics and Opinion*, chs. 8–10; *Representation and Misrepresentation*, ch. 3. Cf. David Zaret, ‘Petitions and the “invention” of public opinion in the English Revolution’, *American Jnl of Sociology*, 101 (1996), 1497–1555; *idem*, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton, NJ, 2000), and the review of the latter by Mark Knights on H-Net: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=23451969480497>.

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monolith, and fears about Charles's irresolute nature sapped the morale of many clergy who held anti-whig and anti-dissent views. This theme will be further developed in chapter three in a discussion of the politics of religious persecution. Here a balance will be struck between acknowledging the severity of persecution during the personal rule period and maintaining an awareness of the marked regional variations that ensured dissenters in many areas were left alone. Partisanship was at the heart of this range of experience since politics and religion were so powerfully interconnected in these years. Where tories saw in nonconformity a threat to the uniform integrity of the Church of England, whigs perceived a sincere body of Protestants who ought to be embraced in a broad anti-Catholic alignment of patriotic Englishmen.

Chapter four turns to consider the political importance of news and rumour. I will argue that it is easy to exaggerate the impact of government efforts to restrict the volume of political debate during the personal rule. The vibrancy of the political press did not immediately decline with the end of parliaments, and even when it did this was from an extremely high base. Manuscript news and oral rumours were also of great significance in maintaining partisan tensions. Overall I will argue that political debate was not dealt a death-blow by the dissolution of parliament: the English remained keenly involved in a broad political process that was not restricted to a lofty 'high' politics at Whitehall. Signs of partisanship can be discerned across the country, not least in and around coffeehouses and alehouses, and as an aspect of vigorous civic political life. Important as London was within the English body politic, men and women throughout the country found themselves marked by their political beliefs in the course of daily life, and were dealt with accordingly by their peers. Chapter five extends this analysis of political opinion into the world of printed polemic. Two particularly important themes within this literature will receive extended attention. First, the religious self-images and hostile caricatures that were adumbrated in hundreds of pamphlets and sermons. Secondly, debates about how best to achieve a stable constitution, and, in particular, the powers and practice of kingship. Overall, it will be argued that whigs and tories were battling to assert the best means to ensure unity within English society. This went hand-in-glove with the negative aim of assigning blame for the fissures that were all too obvious to contemporaries.

Finally, chapter six will explore political and religious life beyond England, and discuss some of the ways in which the three kingdoms interacted during the personal rule. For several tory observers, Charles II's 'other' kingdoms had set an excellent example of loyalty to the crown for England and played a vital role in bolstering the Stuart/Stewart multiple monarchy against its whig critics. In the reign of Charles I 'the fall of the British monarchies'⁶⁷ had been prompted by events in Scotland and Ireland. In the

⁶⁷ To appropriate the title of Conrad Russell's *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637–1642* (Oxford, 1991).

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reign of Charles II the situation seemed to be reversed. At the same time, we can also discern the first echoes of English whig and tory partisan politics in Scotland and Ireland. Although not as widespread or obviously virulent as the English kind, partisanship in Charles II's 'other' kingdoms was part and parcel of a widespread news culture that bound his realms together. If 'whig' and 'tory' were originally pejorative terms imported into English political discourse from very different Scottish and Irish contexts, during Charles II's personal rule they began to be exported back to their countries of origin carrying new sets of ideological baggage.

1

The shape of the period

Introduction: The view from Oxford

Charles II dissolved his last parliament at Oxford on 28 March 1681. It had sat for just seven days. Heated elections had produced a House of Commons at least as fractious as in the two preceding parliaments. A majority of MPs again favoured the extraordinary course of legislating to change the line of succession, excluding the king's brother and heir to the throne James, duke of York from his birthright on the grounds of his avowed Catholicism. The Oxford Parliament was intensely dramatic: MPs and peers arrived in stage-managed groups, armed and anxious. The two Houses quickly fell to wrangling over procedure, whilst enduring the discomfort of cramped and unfamiliar surroundings in different parts of the Bodleian Library. Unbeknownst to them the king successfully concluded a deal for a secret subsidy from the French king that alleviated some of his financial worries, and strengthened his resolve abruptly to dissolve the session. When Charles eventually did so, it was in a manner which exemplified much of the intrigue and bawdy of Restoration politics. Hiding his robes of state in a sedan chair, and allegedly concealing his crown in a capacious royal codpiece,¹ he issued a sudden summons to MPs to appear before him in the makeshift House of Lords where he tersely dissolved the session, and quickly left the town. Small wonder that three days later the scholar Zaccheus Isham wrote from his Oxford college to a correspondent in Chester that 'We have not been so much an University here of late, as a stage; upon which very suddain turns, & changes of state affairs have been acted.' He portentously concluded that 'what denomination the Drama must have, cannot appear till the event; for the Last Act is not yet come, & we must expect other revolutions'.²

Others offered more pragmatic assessments about the end of parliament. Several focused on the disappointment of Oxford's merchant community at

¹ *A Supplement to Burnet's History of My Own Time . . .*, ed., H.C. Foxcroft (Oxford, 1902), p. 106. Burnet's text was re-written many times. In other versions the king concealed the crown 'between his feet' or his 'legs': *Burnet's History of My Own Time*, ed. Osmund Airy (2 vols., Oxford, 1897–1900), II, 286; BL, Add. MS 63057B, fol. 58v.

² BL, Sloane MS 1008, fol. 305: Z[accheus] Isham to Edmund Borlase, Christ Church, [Oxford], 31 Mar. 1681.

the short duration of the session. Their hopes for financial success through servicing the needs of visiting MPs, petitioners, courtiers, and soldiers had been dashed.³ So too the political hopes of the whigs, who left Oxford with none of the triumphant bell-ringing and confidence that had accompanied their entrance.⁴ Yet for the tory supporters of the government, the king's bracing willingness rapidly to dissolve a parliament that had showed every sign of behaving as contentiously as its two immediate predecessors augured well for the future. A week before the session began, the bishop of Oxford, John Fell, had gloomily confided to an acquaintance in Warwickshire that the condition of the nation 'seems deplorable, and beyond human aids'. Pious cleric that he was, Fell ended his pessimistic prognostications with the thought, 'But when the power of man ceases, then the divine begins.'⁵ As events proved, the Good Lord had apparently taken the Stuart monarchy's side as decisively as He had in 1660: there was talk of a 'second Restoration'.⁶ Nevertheless, by 1681 there was a degree of political polarization that seemed to be as bad as that which had existed during the civil wars of the 1640s.⁷ How had things come to this pass and what would the future hold?⁸

A failed Restoration, 1660–81

Charles had received a rapturous welcome on his return to England in May 1660, eleven years after the execution of his father and the creation of an English commonwealth. Nevertheless, whereas historians looking for political upheavals once moved rapidly from this honeymoon period into discussions of the Exclusion Crisis, recent writers have unearthed earlier crises in the Restoration period, in 1660–64, and 1667–73. In an attempt to impose conceptual rigour on what might otherwise collapse into a general blanching of unrest, some specialists have pointed to the 'inherent instability' of the Restoration polity.⁹ 1660 did not banish the basic problems faced by

³ *Ibid.*, fol. 303; FSL, L.c. 1060; *The Protestant (Domestick) Intelligence: Or, News Both from City & Country*, no. 110 (1 Apr. 1681).

⁴ Contrast the accounts in *The Protestant Oxford Intelligence: Or, Occurrences Forraign and Domestick*, nos. 6 and 7 (24–28 Mar. and 28–31 Mar. 1681).

⁵ Warwickshire RO, CR136/B414: bishop of Oxford to Sir Richard Newdigate, 14 Mar. 1680/1.

⁶ The phrase was coined by Roger North, and is quoted in Mark Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678–81* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 5.

⁷ John Miller, *After the Civil Wars. English Politics and Government in the Reign of Charles II* (Harlow, 2000), p. 272.

⁸ In offering the following summary of political and religious life from 1660 to 1685 I am particularly indebted to Miller, *After the Civil Wars*, chs. 9–13, and Tim Harris, *Restoration. Charles II and his Kingdoms, 1660–1685* (2005).

⁹ John Patrick Montaño, *Courting the Moderates: Ideology, Propaganda, and the Emergence of Party, 1660–1678* (Newark, DE, 2002), p. 35; Harris, *Restoration*, chs. 1–2.

Stuart monarchs throughout the seventeenth century. How could a society that placed so much theoretical value on harmony and uniformity cope with the daily practical reality of religious heterodoxy? In an age of personal monarchy, how could the Stuarts successfully act as absentee rulers of Scotland and Ireland? How could a proudly Protestant nation trust a dynasty that so often seemed to flirt with Catholicism, both at home and abroad? Lastly, would it prove possible to maintain peace and order in a society that placed a premium on hierarchy when the sphere of political life seemed to be expanding to include more and more people as the seventeenth century progressed?

Many of these questions were about the links between theory and practice. Whilst most Englishmen were quick to express their hostility to the evils of 'popery' and fanaticism (Protestant dissent), for much of Charles II's reign local gentlemen proved unwilling to persecute their neighbours. Raising the issue of closer 'union' between Scotland and England, or the English Parliament's power *vis-à-vis* the Irish Parliament was virtually guaranteed to raise the political temperature. But few Englishmen, Scotsmen, or even Irishmen seem to have expressed a clear desire to separate the kingdoms so that each could definitively go its own way. Dynastically speaking, even the overt Catholicism of James VII and II did not in itself make his fall and exile in 1688–9 inevitable. Rather his practical interference with the laws and institutions of government, and his assault on the Church of England, had systematically alienated his subjects.¹⁰ And for all the routine criticism of the malign influence of the rabble, the interaction of 'elites' and popular groups was ongoing, prevalent, and more sophisticated than simple allegations of bribery and corruption would suggest.

Thus, for all the instability of the Restoration polity, Charles II did not face a hopeless task in 1660. Yet within a few years the welcome he had received in 1660 must have seemed a very distant memory indeed. That this was so was the result of both the nature of the Restoration 'settlement' and royal actions. The 'reconstruction of the old regime'¹¹ that occurred in the early 1660s had at its heart the creation of a narrow and intolerant Church of England. Unable or, in orthodox eyes, unwilling to accommodate themselves to its discipline, a fragment of the Protestant nation broke away and became nonconformists.¹² Division and discord were a matter of daily fact, despite the terms of the Act for Indemnity and Oblivion that attempted by legislative means to wipe away memories of civil wars and interregnum. The

¹⁰ The best account is now Tim Harris, *Revolution. The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685–1720* (2006).

¹¹ A phrase taken from Paul Seaward, *The Cavalier Parliament and the Reconstruction of the Old Regime, 1661–1667* (Cambridge, 1989).

¹² For more detail on this process, see John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646–1689* (1991), pp. 29–42; *idem*, *English Puritanism 1603–1689* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 127–30.

past conduct of individuals was not forgotten; in many cases it dovetailed with ongoing political and religious disaffection.

At the same time, although Charles's personal charm was much commented upon, the king did not wholly endear himself to his subjects. Two issues – which were in part linked – stand out. First, his court quickly acquired a reputation for debauchery. Sexual incontinence and moral bankruptcy had direct financial costs as well as a political price. Funding Charles's lifestyle, and that of his courtiers and increasing number of bastard children, was bitterly resented by many.¹³ Worse still, the king's own probity was damaged by presiding over such a dissolute establishment, especially as several of his leading mistresses were Catholics. These women provide the link to the second issue that had a deleterious impact on royal political fortunes. Charles's attempts to honour a royal promise made in the Declaration of Breda (4 April 1660) to give a liberty for tender consciences created anxieties. Even many of those who favoured a less intolerant established church did not welcome the king's attempts to set aside the parliamentary statutes that proved the bulwarks of the restored Church of England. In 1662 and again in 1672 Charles's declarations of indulgence prompted fierce criticism of such sweeping uses of the royal prerogative. Furthermore, there were question marks over Charles's motivation. Was he really acting purely to protect his subjects who were Protestant dissenters from persecution on the basis of their religious beliefs? Or was he actually trying covertly to gain a general toleration that would benefit Catholics? The king's period of exile in Catholic Europe excited fears that he had been intellectually infected with a religion most Englishmen equated with domineering clerical power and repressive rule. Fears of 'popery and arbitrary government' deepened when the parliamentary backlash against the 1672 Declaration of Indulgence led to a 'Test Act' which stipulated all senior office-holders should be communicating members of the Church of England.¹⁴ This prompted James, duke of York, to resign his position as lord high admiral, effectively 'outing' him as a Catholic. Many contemporaries wondered whether Charles was also a secret Catholic.¹⁵ And, irrespective of the current regime, all kinds of horrors could be expected under a popish successor by a nation weaned on tales of violent

¹³ For early references to this by the two leading diarists of the 1660s, see *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed., E.S. de Beer (6 vols., Oxford, 1955), III, 308, 316 (6 Jan. and 13 Feb. 1662); *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed., Robert Latham and William Matthews (11 vols., Berkeley, CA, 1970–83), II, 167 (31 Aug. 1661); III, 83, 271, 292–3 (15 May, 30 Nov., 25 Dec. 1662).

¹⁴ Although commonly known as the Test Act, this legislation was officially more descriptively called 'An Act for preventing Dangers which may happen from Popish Recusants' (25 Car. II, cap. 2): *Statutes of the Realm*, V, 782–5.

¹⁵ A clever account of a difficult subject is offered in Ronald Hutton, 'The religion of Charles II', in R. Malcolm Smuts, ed., *The Stuart Court and Europe: Essays in Politics and Political Culture* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 228–46.

Catholic persecution of Protestants, especially in John Foxe's martyrology, the *Acts and Monuments*.¹⁶

In this way the 1670s saw the extension and diversification of fears already evident during the first decade of the Restoration.¹⁷ Abroad, Louis XIV's France seemed to be becoming a dangerous Catholic juggernaut, perhaps worse even than Philip II's Spain a century earlier. Yet far from rallying to the defence of international Protestantism, Charles II appeared intent on close alliance with Louis, even to the point of supporting the French assault on the Dutch Republic that nearly resulted in its complete annihilation in 1672. At home, ministerial activity went from bad to worse. If the ministers of the Cabal – Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley Cooper, and Lauderdale – had seemed to represent all shades of religious opinion except Anglicanism, the rise of the conformist Sir Thomas Osborne, created earl of Danby, rapidly raised even greater suspicions of government activity. Danby worked hard to establish a Protestant foreign policy – crowned in 1677 with the marriage of James's eldest daughter Mary to William of Orange – and to support the Church of England at home.¹⁸ Nevertheless, he seemed to be working even harder to entrench himself in power and to enrich himself in the process.¹⁹ As lord treasurer, Danby had unparalleled opportunities to build up his own power-base and his enemies feared – perhaps with some justification – that he was intent on controlling parliament through the systematic bribery of MPs.²⁰ In the eyes of many contemporaries, the creation of a corrupt 'court party' in parliament would fundamentally subvert the independence and power of the greatest institutional guarantor of English liberties. 'Country' criticism of Danby's activity, real and imagined, led to increasingly organized opposition in parliament.²¹

Matters came to a head in 1678–9. For several years 'country' opponents of Danby had called for new elections and an end to the parliament that had sat since 1661, and was increasingly derided as the 'pensionary' parliament. The sparks for an explosive political crisis were provided by Titus Oates's allegations that there was a popish plot to kill Charles II and replace him with the Catholic James.²² Such shaky claims suddenly gained credibility as

¹⁶ For a marvellous pictorial evocation of these fears see 'A prospect of a popish successor', reproduced in Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 40–1, with discussion on p. 42.

¹⁷ For the most detailed account, see John Spurr, *England in the 1670s: "this masquerading age"* (Oxford, 2000). For the earlier decade, see N.H. Keeble, *The Restoration: England in the 1660s* (Oxford, 2002).

¹⁸ Mark Goldie, 'Danby, the bishops and the Whigs', in Tim Harris, Paul Seaward, and Mark Goldie, eds., *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 75–105.

¹⁹ Miller, *After the Civil Wars*, pp. 221–6.

²⁰ Andrew Browning, 'Parties and party organization in the reign of Charles II', *TRHS*, 4th ser., 30 (1948), 21–36.

²¹ Montañó, *Courting the Moderates*, pp. 14, 17–18, 36–7, 273, 306, and esp. 253–72.

²² The most substantial account remains John Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (1972).

a result of the death of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, the magistrate before whom Oates had first sworn his testimony, an act which many believed to have been committed by Jesuits. Worse was yet to come. By unlucky chance for the government, letters were found in the possession of James's former secretary, Edward Colman, that showed links with Père la Chaise, Louis XIV's Jesuit confessor. And in parliament, Ralph Montagu, the embittered former ambassador to France, revealed other letters to an appalled House of Commons. These showed Danby, with Charles's support, soliciting money from the French king in order to avoid having to meet parliament. At a stroke, Danby's pro-Protestant policies and pretensions seemed to be revealed as a sham. Charles looked little more than a French stooge. In particular, military forces that had recently been raised ostensibly to fight France now appeared in a much more sinister light.

Forced to dissolve parliament, Charles then had to endure three parliaments in which the House of Commons was dominated by critics of the government. Those who would by late 1680 and early 1681 be called 'whigs' pursued two goals above all. First, the exclusion by legislative means of James from the line of succession – hence the term 'Exclusion Crisis'. It was, they argued, simply too dangerous to allow an avowed Catholic to ascend the throne. Secondly, they sought to remake the Church of England along lines that would bring within it – or 'comprehend' – many Protestant dissenters, notably Presbyterians.²³ This would strengthen the 'Protestant interest' against Catholic subversion at home, and allow for the easier projection of power against Catholic bellicosity abroad.

The Exclusion period (1679–81) saw the rapid crystallization and dissemination of political division. John Miller has pointed in particular to the polarizing effect of frequent and bitter parliamentary elections and the increasing use of mass petitions to prescribe certain political remedies for the nation's ills.²⁴ Those who increasingly became known as 'tories' were horrified by events which could be, and were, compared to the bitterly partisan run-up to civil war in 1640–2.²⁵ They deplored whig appeals to the people as dangerous demagoguery, and argued that parliament could not exclude James: it was his divine and inalienable hereditary right to succeed to the crown. If parliament *did* exclude him by statutory means, then it would be acting in an 'arbitrary' way. If James's rights were overturned by parliament today, anyone's might be tomorrow. So if whigs feared an arbitrary Stuart monarchy, tories could point to a potentially arbitrary parliament. Nor were

²³ Henry Horwitz, 'Protestant reconciliation in the Exclusion Crisis', *JEH*, 15 (1964), 201–17; *idem*, 'Comprehension in the later 17th century: a postscript', *Church History*, 34 (1965), 342–8.

²⁴ Miller, *After the Civil Wars*, pp. 257–63.

²⁵ For which, see David Cressy, *England on Edge: Crisis and Revolution, 1640–1642* (Oxford, 2006), summarized as 'Revolutionary England 1640–1642', *P&P*, 181 (2003), 35–71.

tories receptive to calls for the comprehension of Protestant dissenters. In their view, the Protestant interest was damaged not by a narrow and intolerant orthodoxy, but by pig-headed dissenters rejecting the teachings of the Church of England. Unity required uniformity.²⁶ More aggressively still, tory propagandists increasingly harped on the theme that the whigs were really republicans and puritans with a direct lineage stretching back to the 1640s. They were helped in such claims by the fact that many leading whigs politicians and writers – notably Anthony Ashley Cooper, earl of Shaftesbury, and Algernon Sidney – had themselves played an active part in the parliamentary opposition to Charles I in the 1640s and republican regimes of the 1650s. Whig electioneering seemed increasingly extreme, with politics being taken from parliament ‘out-of-doors’ onto the streets.²⁷

Scottish and Irish political and religious life between 1660 and 1681 did not necessarily readily follow patterns established and familiar to historians of England.²⁸ Neither kingdom seems remotely to have interested Charles II. Indeed, until recently the Restoration period represented something of a ‘black hole’ for Scottish historians, eager to press on to discuss the Act of Union (1707) or the Enlightenment.²⁹ The period has often scarcely seemed any brighter for Ireland, with David Ogg’s old summary that ‘It was Ireland’s good fortune that she had comparatively little history in the reign of Charles II’, only recently receiving much in the way of challenge.³⁰ Each kingdom was dominated for much of the period by a single figure: James Butler, duke of Ormond, in Ireland, and John Maitland, duke of Lauderdale, in Scotland. If Lauderdale was the more obviously ruthless of the two ministers – Ronald Hutton has recently remarked that ‘his sole abiding principle was to take power for himself and to retain it’³¹ – both men faced the problem of governing kingdoms in which the re-established churches commanded the respect and allegiance of only a minority of the population. The Restoration ‘settlement’ in Scotland resulted in a narrowly conceived church which around a third of the parochial clergy refused to join. Concentrated in the south-west of the country, these pastors and their flocks retained their allegiance to the Presbyterian covenants that the Scots had entered into as a defensive device against Charles I’s religious policies. Lauderdale’s oscillation between policies of religious conciliation and repression did not ulti-

²⁶ Mark Goldie, ‘The theory of religious intolerance in Restoration England’, in O.P. Grell, Jonathan I. Israel, and Nicholas Tyacke, eds., *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 331–68.

²⁷ Tim Harris, ‘The parties and the people: the press, the crowd and politics “out-of-doors” in Restoration England’, in Lionel K.J. Glassey, ed., *The Reigns of Charles II and James VII & II, 1660–1689* (Basingstoke, 1997), pp. 125–51.

²⁸ Here I draw heavily on Harris, *Restoration*, ch. 2; Clare Jackson, *Restoration Scotland, 1660–1690. Royalist Politics, Religion and Ideas* (Woodbridge, 2003).

²⁹ Jackson, *Restoration Scotland*, pp. 1–6.

³⁰ David Ogg, *England in the Reign of Charles II* (2nd edn, 2 vols., Oxford, 1956), II, 400.

³¹ Ronald Hutton, ‘Maitland, John, duke of Lauderdale (1616–1682)’, *ODNB*.

mately solve the ‘covenanter problem’, and several armed uprisings were undertaken by men who came to be described as ‘whiggamores’ or ‘whigs’. In 1679 these rebels went so far as to murder the senior member of the established church in Scotland, James Sharp, archbishop of St Andrews, singing psalms all the while.³²

In Ireland, the duke of Ormond faced a two-fold religious problem: the majority of the population was Catholic and a significant minority of the population (especially in Ulster) was made up of Protestant nonconformists. Bluntly stated, the Church of Ireland was weak, poor, and inward-looking. Nevertheless, for most of Charles’s reign Ireland did not see significant armed rebellion on the Scottish model. Although the economic state of the country improved substantially between 1660 and 1685, this general quiescence is nevertheless surprising bearing in mind the general fractiousness of Ireland under English rule during most of the early modern period. It is particularly surprising bearing in mind that the Restoration ‘settlement’ in Ireland did not do nearly as much to overturn the effects of the 1640s and 1650s on landholding as most Catholics wished. The Cromwellian conquest had resulted in a massive change in the ownership of land in Ireland to the detriment of Catholics. Despite Charles II’s personal sympathies, only a relatively small proportion of Catholics’ lands were returned after 1660. At one level this injected an air of instability in Restoration Irish politics, since Protestants were frequently anxious that their cunning Irish Catholic neighbours would succeed in prevailing upon Charles’s goodwill to effect a major change in the settlement. But it may also have contributed to a general Catholic reluctance to risk all in any kind of armed revolt. Certainly Ormond – himself the Protestant exception in a generally Catholic Old English family – continued to regard Presbyterians as a far more likely threat to Irish peace than Catholics, especially thanks to their links with co-religionists in the west of Scotland.³³ Nevertheless, there was a widespread phenomenon of Catholic bandits in Ireland, known as ‘tories’, who continued to attract considerable attention in the press.³⁴

Although it will be clear from the foregoing discussion that ‘whig’ and ‘tory’ described very different types of people beyond England to within England, their transplantation and pejorative use in an English context is obviously significant.³⁵ But a ‘British’ dimension to Restoration political life was not just restricted to the cultivation of crude stereotypes and hostile

³² Jackson, *Restoration Scotland*, pp. 125–7 and pl. 5.

³³ For Ormond’s own religious views, see Raymond Gillespie, ‘The religion of the first duke of Ormond’, in Toby Barnard and Jane Fenlon, eds., *The Dukes of Ormonde, 1610–1745* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 101–13.

³⁴ See in particular Éamonn Ó Ciardha, ‘Tories and moss-troopers in Scotland and Ireland in the Interregnum: a political dimension’, in John R. Young, ed., *Celtic Dimensions of the British Civil Wars* (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 141–63.

³⁵ Robert Willman, ‘The origins of ‘Whig’ and ‘Tory’ in English political language’, *HJ*, 17 (1974), 247–64. For further discussion, see below, ch. 6.

labels. From the early 1670s there was also a growing sense in which Lauderdale's harsh rule in Scotland prompted opposition from many significant members of the Scottish political elite. As the decade progressed these men began to establish links with their counterparts in England – notably the earl of Shaftesbury. By the time of the Exclusion Crisis there were also some significant Irish politicians like Daniel O'Brien, Viscount Clare who were seen to co-operate with the emerging English 'whigs' in order to make trouble for the royal government.

Partisanship, plotting, and persecution, 1681–85

28 March 1681 did not mark the beginning of 'the tory reaction'. As Mark Knights has shown, resentment against whig political activities had been growing over the previous year.³⁶ Nor did the end of the Oxford Parliament mark the end of the Exclusion Crisis. As chapter two will argue, expectations of another parliament, one which might well return to the issue of exclusion, continued far beyond the spring of 1681. And, as the work of Jonathan Scott in particular has shown, political life over the previous three years had not *solely* been about exclusion. Powerful concerns about the constitutional intentions of the Stuart, and the vulnerability of parliament, had cohered around a broad fear of popery.³⁷

But for all these qualifiers, the years of Charles's personal rule *did* see increasing pressure being applied to whig politicians and writers. Two incidents and two policies emphasise the extent of this trend better than any other. In 1681, a draft 'association' was found in the papers of the earl of Shaftesbury. This consciously harked back to the Elizabethan bond of association which had been designed to safeguard Protestant England from the horrors of Catholic rule in the event of the assassination of the queen.³⁸ But in the context of the 1680s it could be portrayed as a treasonable design that was emblematic of growing whig extremism. A wave of 'abhorrences' flooded in from the localities, many of which had attracted large numbers of signatories. *Vox populi* did not sound so bad when it spoke the language of vociferous loyalty to the crown.

The second event was the discovery of the Rye House Plot in the summer of 1683.³⁹ This shadowy affair remains confusing, mired as it is in a web of contested allegations and unreliable evidence. But it seems likely that two plots *did* exist. One was an aristocratic attempt to capture the person of the

³⁶ Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis*, pp. 258–68.

³⁷ See sources listed above, p. 11 n. 38.

³⁸ Edward Vallance, 'Loyal or rebellious? Protestant associations in England 1584–1696', *The Seventeenth Century*, 17 (2002), 1–23.

³⁹ Richard L. Greaves, *Secrets of the Kingdom. British Radicals from the Popish Plot to the Revolution of 1688–89* (Stanford, CA, 1992), chs. 4–6.

king in order to force him to change his ministers and his policies. Leading whig grandees like William Lord Russell – who, in November 1680, had carried the second exclusion bill up from the House of Commons to the House of Lords – and Arthur Capel, earl of Essex – a former lord lieutenant of Ireland whose presence raised echoes of the attempted coup by his aristocratic namesake in 1601 – were implicated in this failed *putsch*. Another more violent plot was also being carried on at the same time, and featured a motley crew of old Cromwellians and Protestant dissenters. This group intended to kill both royal brothers as they returned to London after watching the horseracing at Newmarket. The place earmarked for the assassination was the eponymous Rye House, at Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire. A vengeful government made hay from exposing the narrowly averted plot, foiled by a fire at Newmarket that sent the royal party back to the capital sooner than anticipated. The trials of the conspirators were heavily publicized specifically in order to influence public opinion. Another wave of loyal addresses was triggered. The whole episode proved particularly useful for the way in which it proved tory propaganda right: religious dissent *was* inevitably and inextricably linked to political sedition.

The two policies were strongly inter-connected and in each case aimed both to demonize opponents of James's succession to the throne and to rally support behind Charles. First, efforts had to be made to regain the political initiative. During the Exclusion period whigs had been very successful at electing MPs, dominating town councils, and projecting their views in the press. The extent to which the government succeeded in dominating the press and the general dissemination of political information in 1681–5 certainly had a bearing on partisanship.⁴⁰ But Charles's personal rule also saw the determined use of writs of *quo warranto* to ask 'by what warrant' towns enjoyed the corporate privileges they claimed. Older historiography focused on this legal process as a means to pack a parliament full of subservient tory 'yes-men': four-fifths of MPs were returned from borough seats. Recently a more nuanced picture has emerged, one which stresses that tories were strongly committed to the rule of law, and therefore not likely to support a royal regime that overturned the English constitution.⁴¹ It is also increasingly clear that the *quo warranto* 'campaign' was one orchestrated in the localities as well as at the centre of government. Local tories used the writs as a means of outmanoeuvring their whig rivals, successfully effecting their removal from town councils in remodelled charters and using the legal machinery of King's Bench as a political weapon.⁴² This fits well with an

⁴⁰ See below, chs. 4–5.

⁴¹ Tim Harris, 'Tories and the rule of law in the reign of Charles II', *The Seventeenth Century*, 8 (1993), 9–27.

⁴² The key text for discussing both the historiography of the *quo warranto* campaign and the crucial importance of King's Bench, is Paul D. Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic: Partisan Politics in England's Towns, 1650–1730* (Cambridge, 1998), esp. ch 6.

increasing appraisal of the degree to which early modern English government involved the active participation of local elites. Crucially, the government secured – with the aid of metropolitan tory allies – control over the corporation of London. As the meticulous research of Gary De Krey has made clear, in the eyes of contemporaries this was a political triumph at least as important as the end of the Oxford Parliament, possibly a greater one.⁴³ After years as the main power-base for whig activity, London was no longer a haven in which whigs could effectively defy the royal government with impunity.

The second policy – which the foregoing discussion of the aftermath of the Rye House Plot has already alluded to – was the simultaneous demonization of dissent and trumpeting of the links between religious orthodoxy and political loyalty. There can be no doubt that many parts of the country *did* see very severe religious persecution during the personal rule period. And Roger L'Estrange was just the most prolific of the writers who – in the bitter words of the leading Presbyterian Richard Baxter – used ‘the voice of the presse, the loudest voice, to persuade as many thousands as you can to hate their brethren . . . in preparation to destroy them’.⁴⁴ But Baxter was not the only person to think that ‘Overdoing is undoing.’⁴⁵ Many remained unhappy about persecuting Protestant dissenters, and such activity remained one of the most controversial aspects of partisan politics during the personal rule. Members of the Church of England’s hierarchy remained suspicious of Charles’s own religious position, fearing that a policy based on the king’s recognition of what was politically expedient was fragile since it did not truly reflect his own views.⁴⁶

These events and policies found some echoes beyond England. Although Lauderdale was no longer a dominant player in Scottish politics by 1681 and died in 1682, his ‘brand’ of ruthless administration continued through several different ministries. A Scottish parliament in the summer of 1681 was used to rally loyalist sentiments and loudly to proclaim James’s right to succeed to the *Scottish* throne, thus threatening politically to disaggregate Britain if any future English parliament should have the temerity to pass another Exclusion Bill. Religious repression was far more brutally practiced than in England, with the frequent use of direct military coercion in the covenanting south-west. Additional fuel was provided for such policies by the connections that were exposed between the English Rye House Plotters and disaffected men north of the Border.⁴⁷

⁴³ Gary S. De Krey, *London and the Restoration, 1659–83* (Cambridge, 2005), esp. chs. 5, 7.

⁴⁴ DWL, Baxter Correspondence, MS 59, vol. II, fol. 122: Richard Baxter to Roger L'Estrange, [post 5 July 1682].

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. IV, fol. 38v: same to same, 19 Feb. 1684/5.

⁴⁶ See below, chs. 2–3.

⁴⁷ Greaves, *Secrets of the Kingdom*, ch. 5.

In Ireland there was less in the way of overt physical brutality against Catholics or dissenters: Ormond's pragmatism continued to influence policy there despite his growing eclipse in financial matters by the English treasury.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, and even in the continuing absence of a parliament after 1666 in which political debate could take place, there was a partially congruent loyalist reaction in political sentiments to that which occurred in England. Many Irish localities set out to publicise their loyalty to Charles – especially after the Rye House Plot – by producing loyal addresses on the English model. Although treated with a certain quizzical condescension in England, these addresses were duly listed in government mouthpieces like the *London Gazette*, even if their contents were not directly reproduced. Nevertheless, there is limited evidence to suggest that whig and tory partisanship in England had struck chords in Ireland that were not simply subsumed in a tide of generalized loyalty. In particular, the prevalence of a news culture which stretched across and connected the three kingdoms allowed for an awareness of partisan politics, even if the direct application of 'whig' and 'tory' in an English political sense remains far from straightforward in Scotland and Ireland during the personal rule period.⁴⁹

Conclusion

When Charles II lay dying in February 1685 it was noted that 'Many Doctors, as well Whiggs as others, were consulted.'⁵⁰ By this time the language of partisan division had evidently permeated a huge variety of subjects. Whether the emergence of partisanship in the 1670s had been prompted by the aggressive formation of a court party by Danby, or by the divisiveness of the Exclusion issue,⁵¹ it had – as the following chapters will demonstrate – matured into an alarmingly adaptable disease in the body politic.

⁴⁸ A core theme of Sean Egan, 'Finance and the government of Ireland, 1660–85', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2 vols., 1983.

⁴⁹ See below, ch. 6.

⁵⁰ *The Life, Diary and Correspondence of Sir William Dugdale* . . . , ed., William Hamper (1827), p. 449: John Dugdale to Sir William Dugdale, 3 Feb. 1684/5. For an account of the later unfortunate misplacing of the dead king's bowels before his burial, see CUL, Add. MS 9322: 'A Short Character of Charles the Second King of England Setting forth his untimely death &c.'

⁵¹ Montañó, *Courting the Moderates*.

2

Political partisanship and government without parliament

This chapter will extend and deepen the characterization of the ‘personal rule’ period offered in the first. In particular, it will offer two main arguments of central importance to the remainder of this study. First, that the absence of sitting parliaments did not automatically signal their demise in the English political imagination. Expectations of another parliament helped to maintain a high political ‘temperature’ and partisan tensions. Secondly, that we should be wary of exaggerating the extent to which government in this period decisively changed in character. The messy realities of day-to-day governance ensured both that whigs could remain unmolested in some areas, and that tories could continue to doubt how firm the king’s commitment to their cause really was. Overall, the uncertainties of political life during these years need to be teased out and emphasized. Only then can a full appreciation of partisan political culture at this time be offered in later chapters.

Introduction: Popery and arbitrary government

The King is betrayed by his little people . . .
(Roger L’Estrange to Secretary Jenkins, 23 June 1683)¹

When he turned to consider 1681, Charles Dickens had no doubt how to describe events in his *A Child’s History of England* (1851–3): ‘The Merry Monarch, having got rid of his Parliament, went to work to make himself despotic, with all speed.’² For generations of whig historians this would have seemed a sound verdict. The 1680s were a decade of unparalleled danger for the developing English parliamentary government that was lauded in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Having seen off the whig challenge, Charles showed his true preferences by ruling without a parliament for the remainder of his reign, breaking the Triennial Act in the process in 1684. He was able to purge whigs from office, or else – in the cases of William Lord

¹ CSPD 1683 Jan. to June, p. 336: Roger L’Estrange to Secretary Jenkins, 23 June 1683.

² Charles Dickens, *A Child’s History of England* (Everyman edn, 1969), p. 377.

Russell and Algernon Sidney – actually have them executed. A smooth transition to James's reign saw the same style of government being even more rigorously applied. When presented with the opportunity of Monmouth's rebellion, the new Catholic king took full advantage. His co-religionists were given commissions in the army, and his most brutal judge – George Jeffreys – instigated a reign of terror in the disloyal West Country: the bloody assizes. When parliament objected to the favour being shown to Catholics it was dissolved. Thereafter James attempted to bully the political nation into accepting the effective overthrow of the Anglican church-state by repealing the Test Acts and penal laws. When that failed he tried to pack a parliament for the same end. Only William of Orange's descent on England in November 1688 saved the nation from a lasting decline into Catholic despotism.³

Things no longer appear so clear cut. Did Charles really want to rule in an 'absolutist' or 'arbitrary' manner?⁴ To what extent was parliament 'got rid of'? Did the nature of the English state allow Charles – even if he wanted to – to participate in a European trend towards more centralized governmental systems and larger standing armies? Even if they were not always quite so precisely formulated, these were all questions that exercised many of the Stuarts' subjects throughout the seventeenth century. James I had been criticized for allegedly 'yearning for unEnglish ways'. Charles I was said to have enquired how Louis XIII of France had disposed of his estates-general, and in 1628 there were fears that troops Charles had sought to raise in Germany had been intended to enforce unpopular domestic financial policies: Sir John Eliot referred to them as 'praetorian bands'.⁵ In the Restoration polity, 1672–3 was regarded as having been a particular turning point for fears of 'popery and arbitrary government'. Charles's hugely controversial Declaration of Indulgence prompted a parliamentary backlash, the passing of the first Test Act, and the public exposure of the heir to the throne as a Roman Catholic.⁶ Despite the collapse of the Cabal ministry in 1673, and the rise of the overtly Anglican Sir Thomas Osborne as the king's chief minister, suspicions as to the direction in which government was headed never fully declined thereafter. The period 1675–7 provided considerable new fuel for

³ For the elegant apotheosis of this view, see G.M. Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts* (21st edn, 1949), chs. 12–13. (ch. 12, which dealt with 1678–85, was unambiguously entitled 'The Reigns of Terror'.)

⁴ See above, p. 8 and n. 25.

⁵ Derek Hirst, *Authority and Conflict. England 1603–1658* (1986), pp. 111–12, 147, 153–4. For a broader perspective on such fears, see Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles. Seventeenth-century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge, 2000), esp. ch. 4.

⁶ For commentary on the importance of 1672–3, see *The Diaries and Papers of Sir Edward Dering, Second Baronet 1644 to 1684*, ed. Maurice F. Bond (House of Lords RO Occasional Pubs., 1, 1976), p. 125; *Burnet's History Of My Own Time*, ed. Osmund Airy (2 vols., 1897–1900), II, 1–4, 6–11.

contemporary fears thanks to Danby's attempted non-resistance act, parallel moves in the Church of England, and a long prorogation of parliament.⁷ Anxiety about Charles II's intentions was especially acute thanks to apprehensions about the impact of years of exile on the royal psyche. In particular his subjects feared the extent to which time spent in Europe, and the magnificence of continental royal courts, might have given him a good impression of Catholicism and its utility for monarchs.⁸

Such anxiety helps to explain the way in which Titus Oates's allegations of a popish plot exploded in 1678–9. In particular, the revelations by the former ambassador in Paris, Ralph Montagu, of Charles II's murky financial dealings with Louis XIV appeared to confirm parliament's worst fears. The Stuarts were once again in hoc to the Bourbons, putting at risk English parliamentary government and the whole European Protestant interest. In 1677 Osborne – by then earl of Danby – had briefly succeeded in buffing up Charles's Protestant credentials by ensuring that James's eldest daughter, Mary, married a standard bearer of the opposition to France, William of Orange. Montagu's revelations were all the worse for apparently showing the cynicism of the royal regime, and its attempts to pull the wool over the eyes of the political nation. How could it ever be trusted again?

The question was particularly pressing due to the fact that the duke of York was heir to the throne. Even before he converted – and long before that conversion was widely known – James was seen to be at the heart of attempts to influence his brother in favour of an absolutist style of government via a standing army.⁹ Certainly Oates's fabricated assassination plot against Charles presented James as the likely beneficiary. Charles's repeated use of his prerogative powers to manage parliamentary crisis between 1678/9 and 1681 did little to quiet fears of popery and arbitrary government.¹⁰ Thereafter, despite partially successful attempts to present royal prerogative in a beneficent light, certain actions excited considerable notoriety. Prominent amongst these was the trial of Algernon Sidney in November 1683 for his

⁷ Andrew Browning, *Thomas Osborne, Earl of Danby and Duke of Leeds, 1632–1712* (3 vols., Glasgow, 1944–51), I, ch. 9; Robert Beddard, 'Of the duty of subjects: a proposed fortieth article of religion', *Bodleian Library Record*, 10 (1981), 229–36; Andrew Marvell, *An Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England. More particularly from the long prorogation of November, 1675 . . .* (Amsterdam [London], 1677).

⁸ *The Works of George Savile, Marquis of Halifax*, ed. Mark N. Brown (3 vols., Oxford, 1989), I, 214; Bodl., MS Carte 69, fols. 79r–v; BL, Egerton MS 1633, fol. 37v; Jonathan Scott, 'England's troubles: exhuming the Popish Plot', in Tim Harris, Paul Seaward and Mark Goldie, eds., *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990), p. 116.

⁹ E.g. *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews (11 vols., Berkeley, CA, 1970–83), VIII, 332. For Danby's later private view of James, see BL, Add. MS 28042, fol. 30.

¹⁰ Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis, 1677–1683* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 57–60; *idem*, *England's Troubles*, pp. 190–6.

alleged involvement in the Rye House Plot.¹¹ The use of a manuscript as a second witness to prove treason, and the naked political motivation for the trial aroused considerable comment. John Evelyn recorded that it was thought Sidney had 'very hard measure'.¹² Arthur Annesley, earl of Anglesey, was sufficiently moved by the experience of testifying on behalf of Sidney that he 'resolved of writing the summe of our Lawes and liberties and against the oppression of the times in causes of life members and liberties'.¹³

Such fears of absolutist intent were not restricted to the political élite. In the wake of the Rye House Plot, loyalists in several parts of England were infuriated that the politico-religious lesson which it gave them the opportunity to preach – that religious schism and political disaffection inevitably led to sedition – was overshadowed by rumours sweeping the countryside. These suggested that the king would seize all unmarked pigs and cattle in an arbitrary incursion into his subjects' property rights. As one tory in Gloucestershire reported to the central government, 'I have endeavoured to undeceive my neighbours, telling them 'twas a Fanatic alarm to alienate the hearts of the subjects, that 'twas dangerous to report it and idle to credit it.'¹⁴ Nevertheless, it was often clearly very difficult to 'undeceive' the people. Dissident elements were sufficiently successful in implying that the borough charter campaign was a prelude to the confiscation of corporation land that Secretary Jenkins had to stoop to epistolary denials.¹⁵

The intensity of these fears, and the tenacity with which many Englishmen and women of all social classes held on to them, is undoubtedly significant. Jonathan Scott is surely right to direct our attention to the importance of taking contemporary belief seriously.¹⁶ Nor do I wish to challenge the overall findings of many historians that the royal government during the 1680s regained much of the confidence and sense of security that it had lost during the 1660s and 1670s.¹⁷ In particular the importance of the *quo warranto* campaign against borough charters has been exhaustively investigated.¹⁸ Whatever its motivation, and even though the scale of the campaign reached new heights under James, *quo warrantos* did succeed in

¹¹ For the best account of the trial, see Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis*, ch. 14.

¹² *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E.S. de Beer (6 vols., Oxford, 1955), IV, 352–3. (Sidney was executed on 7 Dec. 1683.)

¹³ BL, Add. MS 18730 (diary of the earl of Anglesey), fol. 108v (25 Nov. 1683). Anglesey had been a witness for the defence at the trial of William, Lord Russell: *ibid.*, fol. 106. See also *ibid.*, fols. 110v–111.

¹⁴ CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 50: Thomas Rich to 'the Secretary of State', North Cerney [Gloucs.], 22 Oct. 1683.

¹⁵ BL, Add. MS 27448, fol. 285. See also, *ibid.*, fols. 135r–v.

¹⁶ Scott, *England's Troubles*, ch. 2.

¹⁷ The classic text here is J.R. Western, *Monarchy and Revolution: The English State in the 1680s* (1972).

¹⁸ Robert John Sinner, 'Charles II and local government: the *quo warranto* proceedings, 1681–1685', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Rutgers Univ., 1976; R.G. Pickavance, 'The English

breaking the whig hold over many town corporations during the personal rule. But how was government perceived during the personal rule? This is important both from the perspective of central government, and other people looking at government. I will argue that ministers in Whitehall remained alert to the potential fragility of their position, and that tory local governors were anxious not just about the continuing local prominence of whigs, but also the extent to which Charles II could be trusted to rule as a 'tory king'. In particular, it is vital to recognize that the participatory nature of English government, with the crown relying on unpaid local elites to hold offices, was a sheet-anchor against radical change and allowed many whigs to lurk in office. But before examining the nature of office-holding we first need to assess whether contemporaries saw March 1681 as a distinctive turning point in political life thanks to the dissolution of parliament.¹⁹

The end of parliaments?

When Charles dissolved parliament on 28 March 1681 some observers discerned a long-term significance in his action, namely that Charles would not quickly call another parliament.²⁰ Certainly in retrospect we can see that the sceptics would be proved right. As the whig clergyman and polemicist Samuel Johnson argued in 1693, 'if ever we came to the Low-water Mark in our Laws about Parliaments, and if ever they run Dregs, it was in the Time of *Charles the 2d*'.²¹ If emphasis is placed on the pre-eminent importance of sitting parliaments in early modern English political life, then the end of them might indeed be said to have 'reduced the political arena to the small circle of ministers and courtiers at Whitehall'.²² But how widespread was the

borough and the king's government: a study of the tory reaction 1681–5', unpub. D.Phil. thesis, Univ. of Oxford, 1976; Jennifer Levin, *The Charter Controversy in the City of London, 1660–88 and its Consequences* (Univ. of London Legal ser., 9, 1969); John Miller, 'The Crown and the borough charters in the reign of Charles II', *EHR*, 100 (1985), 53–84; Paul D. Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic: Partisan Politics in England's Towns, 1650–1730* (Cambridge, 1998), esp. chs. 5–7.

¹⁹ For previous scepticism about Mar. 1681 as a 'dividing-line' in Charles's reign, see Ronald Hutton, *Charles II. King of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (Oxford, 1989), p. 404.

²⁰ E.g. *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, ed. Andrew Browning (2nd edn with a new pref. and intro. by Mary K. Geiter and W.A. Speck, 1991), p. 223; *Memoirs of Thomas, Earl of Ailesbury Written by Himself*, ed. William E. Buckley (The Roxburghe Club, 2 vols., 1890), I, 21. This whole section is a heavily abbreviated version of the argument made in my 'Parliament and political division in the last years of Charles II, 1681–5', *Parliamentary History*, 22 (2003), 243–62, although I have also introduced a range of new evidence.

²¹ Samuel Johnson, *An Essay Concerning Parliaments at a Certainty; Or, The Kalends of May* (1693), p. 19.

²² Mark N. Brown, 'Trimmers and moderates in the reign of Charles II', *HLQ*, 37 (1973–4), 328.

view that parliaments were being placed in long-term abeyance? And what impact did the absence of parliament have on political life?

In the immediate aftermath of the 28 March dissolution there was considerable confusion as to what had actually happened at Oxford. This was hardly surprising bearing in mind the fact that Charles had kept his political cards so close to his chest in the period before the dissolution. Reports that parliament had merely been adjourned or prorogued reached many areas.²³ Thereafter there was some mockery of such a 'short-liv'd parliament': 'Some are pleased to call it the Jewish parliament, it being dissolved the 8th day, alluding to that peoples manner of circumcision on the 8th day.'²⁴ But the overwhelming mood was tense, with many MPs caballing together in London.²⁵ One group who met at the Crown Tavern were said to have been told by the lord mayor of London that the dissolution might prove 'ffattall' to the nation 'and that unlesse prevented the whole commonality in the countrie would be in armes'.²⁶ The Oxford Parliament appeared to have resolved nothing: it had begun amidst fears of imminent civil war, and it had ended in the same way.

It was in this atmosphere that Charles II published his *Declaration to all His Loving Subjects, Touching the Causes and Reasons That Moved Him to Dissolve The Two Last Parliaments*, which was to be read in all churches.²⁷ Mixing regret, indignation, and promises for the future, it powerfully criticized the proceedings of the two last parliaments, whilst concluding that

we do still declare that no irregularities in Parliaments shall ever make us out of love with Parliaments, which we look upon as the best method for healing the distempers of the kingdom, and the only means to preserve the monarchy in that due credit and respect which it ought to have both at home and abroad. And for this cause we are resolved, by the blessing of God, to have frequent Parliaments, and both in and out of Parliament to use our utmost endeavours to extirpate popery, and to redress all the grievances of our good subjects, and in all things to govern according to the laws of the kingdom.²⁸

²³ NLW, Wynn of Gwydir Papers, no. 2821; BL, Egerton MS 1628, fol. 9v; *The Protestant (Domestic) Intelligence: Or, News Both from City & Country*, no. 111 (5 Apr. 1681).

²⁴ BL, Sloane MS 1008, fol. 303: R. Parr to Edmund Borlase, 30 Mar. 1681; Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 72. See also BL, M636/35: Anne Nicholas to Sir Ralph Verney, 30 Mar. 1681; *A New Song Between Whig and Tory* (1683).

²⁵ BL, M636/35: Sir Ralph Verney to John Verney, 28 Mar. 1681, J. Stewkeley to Sir Ralph Verney, 29 Mar. 1681, John Verney to same, 30 Mar. 1681; *The Protestant Oxford Intelligence*, no. 7; *Diary of the Times of Charles the Second by the Honourable Henry Sidney*, ed., R.W. Blencowe (2 vols., 1843), II, 184; FSL, L.c. 1060: London, 2 Apr. 1681.

²⁶ NLS, MS 14493, fol. 147: newsletter, London, 2 Apr. 1681.

²⁷ The text is conveniently reproduced in Andrew Browning, ed., *English Historical Documents VIII. 1660–1714* (1953), pp. 185–8. For the rival draft versions of this *Declaration*, see Mark Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678–1681* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 319–25.

²⁸ Browning, ed., *English Historical Documents*, p. 187.

The extent of the response to this *Declaration* is well known, with a wave of more than 200 loyal addresses thanking the king for what the earl of Lindsey, lord lieutenant of Lincolnshire, described as ‘the most gracious declaration that ever Prince put out’.²⁹ The *Declaration* was said to have had a significant impact on local opinion in some areas. From his East Anglian perspective, Bishop Lloyd of Peterborough claimed that it ‘hath had a good influence upon most people in these <parts> who were lately intoxicated with feare & phancies soe that now they begin to returne to their witts & their Dutys’.³⁰ Yet whilst Charles II’s *Declaration* was incomparably more successful than that issued by his father in 1640,³¹ it was still received badly in some quarters.³² In Sussex, a former whig MP expostulated with his neighbours that the exclusionist pamphlet a ‘Character of a popish successor deserved better to be redd in all the parish Churches of England then that Declaration’.³³ And when the *Declaration* was produced to be read in Chiswick Church several gentlemen walked out in protest rather than hear it. For his part, the earl of Essex was reported as being sufficiently angry when his chaplain read the *Declaration* aloud in Osterley that he dismissed him.³⁴

As these examples suggest, the response to the *Declaration* confirmed the fear that some members of the government had had about its publication, namely that it would prove divisive.³⁵ Even an aggressive ‘aboriginal tory’ like Laurence Hyde³⁶ wrote to gentlemen in Cheshire that good could only come of addresses if they attracted unanimous support in their locality. If that could not be guaranteed then they were not to try and generate one.³⁷ But some local tories were not so cautious.³⁸ A number of the published

²⁹ CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 409: earl of Lindsey to Secretary Jenkins, 20 Aug. 1681. See also, FSL, L.c. 1076–8. Much the best account of the addressing campaign is offered by Mark Knights, who estimates the total number of signatories to have been at least 40,000: *Politics and Opinion*, pp. 316–47.

³⁰ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 33v: bishop of Peterborough to archbishop of Canterbury, n.p., n.d. See also, *ibid.*, fol. 11; BL, Add. MS 27448, fol. 16; *Burnet’s History of My Own Time*, ed., Airy, II, 288–90.

³¹ For which, see Esther S. Cope, ‘The king’s Declaration concerning the dissolution of the Short Parliament of 1640: an unsuccessful attempt at public relations’, *HLQ*, 40 (1977), 325–31.

³² Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, pp. 325–35; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 189; *A Letter from a Person of Quality to his Friend concerning His Majesties late Declaration . . .* ([1681]), p. 1.

³³ Bodl., MS Tanner 149, fol. 56: bishop of Chichester to archbishop of Canterbury, 5 July 1682. The former MP in question, James Butler, was ‘Probably a nonconformist’ according to *HOP 1660–1690*, I, 754.

³⁴ FSL, L.c. 1079.

³⁵ Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, p. 325.

³⁶ Hutton, *Charles II*, p. 405.

³⁷ JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: Viscount Hyde to Richard Legh, Hampton Court, 7 July 1681.

³⁸ For manuscript evidence from Kent and Westmorland, see BL, Egerton MS 2985, fols. 235–8; Cumbria RO, Carlisle, D/Lons/L12/2/14 (diary of Sir Daniel Fleming), fol. 56v. I

addresses from various parts of the country explicitly acknowledged that they represented only a part, or 'loyal' part, of the particular addressing body.³⁹ In doing so they trumpeted local divisions in the national press. Thus whilst Charles's *Declaration* has generally been perceived as a brilliant piece of political propaganda, its impact was ambiguous. Although the extensive reproduction of loyal addresses in the *London Gazette* was commented upon by newsletter writers, there is actually very little evidence upon which to base a verdict of whether this aggressive government use of the press really overawed individuals in the localities.⁴⁰ Evidence of its divisiveness suggest that if the *Declaration* was intended to rally support for the crown in such a way as to discourage whigs from continuing their political activity in many areas it failed,⁴¹ even if this failure has to be inferred from loyal addresses themselves.

Whatever the motivation that lay behind its production and diffusion, the *Declaration's* clear references to Charles's intention 'to have frequent parliaments' helps to explain the widespread anticipation of another session during this period. Of the 212 addresses printed in the collection entitled *Vox Angliæ*, fifty-seven explicitly thanked Charles for his declared love of parliaments and determination to call others frequently. The signatories of twenty-five addresses went further, promising to work for the return of MPs likely to proceed in a cooperative manner in another parliament, whenever it should please Charles to call one.⁴² The wave of loyal addresses thus ought to be seen not as validation for a new form of arbitrary government, or even for a lengthy period without parliaments, but as acceptance of a short-term

am extremely grateful to Scott Sowerby for bringing the latter valuable source to my attention.

³⁹ E.g. Windsor, Middlesex, Derby, Northampton, Sandwich, the Inner Temple: *Vox Angliæ: Or, the Voice of the Kingdom . . .* (1682), pp. 2, 5, 25, 27, 36, Second Part p. 19. For more tacit admissions of division, see *ibid.*, pp. 14, 28, 30–1, Second Part p. 11. For commentary on the ructions within the Inns of Court surrounding the question of addressing, see FSL, L.c. 1085, 1088–9, 1092; Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 94, 99–101; *A Vindication of Addresses in general, And of the Middle-Temple Address and Proceedings in particular* (1681). Failure to subscribe to addresses led to the dismissal of some JPs and grand jury members: FSL, L.c. 1080–1.

⁴⁰ The city of London boldly tried to use Charles's public commitment in his *Declaration* of 8 Apr. 1681 to call parliaments as a lever to make him do so: FSL, L.c. 1076.

⁴¹ For further examples from Halifax's correspondence, see BL, Add. MS 75360 (unfol.): Lord Windsor to earl of Halifax, Hewell, 22 Oct. 1681; BL, Add. MS 75360 (unfol.): John Millington to same, n.p., 3 Aug. 1681, Sir John Resesby to same, Thiburgh, 20 Aug. 1681, John Millington to same, Nottingham, 30 July 1683; BL, Add. MS 75363 (unfol.): Thomas Thynne to same, Kempford, 13 Aug. 1681.

⁴² *Vox Angliæ*, pp. 4, 6, 11, 16, 18, 23–4, 26, 31–3, 39, 42, 49, 52, 54; Second Part pp. 2, 8, 13, 15, 18, and 19. The address from Droitwich also implies the return of loyal MPs, but is not specific. (*Ibid.*, p. 49.) My count differs slightly from Mark Knights who found only 21: Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, pp. 337–8. For later promises to elect loyal MPs, see WYAS, MX/R/18/39; *Memoirs of Sir John Resesby*, ed. Browning, p. 284; CSPD 1 May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, p. 175.

expedient. And beyond the loyal addresses themselves, rumours of another imminent parliament were one of the most referred to items of news in both professional newsletters and private correspondence,⁴³ although the likely location of a session remained much debated: would it be Oxford, Norwich, Cambridge, or Westminster?⁴⁴

As had been the case during the personal rule of Charles I, the expectation of another imminent parliament was expressed in a number of ways.⁴⁵ When arguing in defence of Nottingham's town charter against a writ of *quo warranto*, the leading whig lawyer Henry Pollexfen attempted to intimidate the judicial bench with talk of another session.⁴⁶ The hint was clear: a whig-dominated parliament would not look favourably on those who had furthered any assault on the whigs' local corporate power-bases. Similarly, in Norfolk Sir John Hobart offered a menacing critique of a local rival who had had the temerity to argue that Hobart and his whig friends should not be returned to parliament again as they had always supported the policy of excluding James from the throne. 'How farr in prudence it is justifiable (whatever a mans present opinion is) to make a publick & generall charge against three Houses of Commons I shall not enquire into.'⁴⁷ But what would the composition of the next parliament be like? Predictably, opinions varied. At least one tory pamphleteer chose to leave a tract anonymous as he was worried about being called to the bar of the House of Commons if 'it should be so constituted as of late it hath beene'.⁴⁸ For his part, the mayor of a Somerset town was said to have refused to present an address against Shaftesbury's 'Association' of 1682, 'pretending he feared, if he did, he might

⁴³ For a sample, see FSL, L.c. 1061, 1079, 1082, 1103, 1105, 1133–5, 1142, 1159; UWB, Mostyn newsletters, 9068/6; BL, Add. MS 75359 (unfol.), 16 Apr. 1681, 20 Sept. 1681, 10 Oct. 1681, 1 Dec. 1684; Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 5; BL, Add. MS 75375, fol. 29v; BL, Sloane MS 2724, fol. 168; Gloucestershire RO, D3549/2/2/3 (Bishop William Lloyd letters), no. 31; Norfolk RO, WKC 7/6/58.

⁴⁴ For expectations of another parliament being called to Oxford, see FSL, L.c. 1133; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 46; CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 514; *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary, of Oxford, 1632–95, described by himself*, ed. Andrew Clark (5 vols., Oxford Hist. Soc., 19, 21, 26, 30, 40, Oxford, 1891–1900), III, 7; John Richard Magrath, ed., *The Flemings in Oxford, being Documents Selected from the Rydal Papers . . . 1650–1700* (3 vols., Oxford Hist. Soc., 44, 62, 79, Oxford, 1904–24), II, 43. For Cambridge and Norwich, see CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 485; Edward M. Thompson, ed., *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton . . . 1601–1704* (2 vols., Camden Soc., ns, 22–3, 1878), II, 13; HMC, *Twelfth Report, App.*, Pt. VII, p. 184. Norwich was perhaps suggested because of its especially zealous loyal address. See also *Strange and Wonderful News from Norwich . . . In a letter from Norwich to a Friend in London* (1681).

⁴⁵ Kevin Sharpe, *Personal Rule of Charles I* (1992), pp. 702–5.

⁴⁶ Nottinghamshire Archives, DD/SR/219/14 (L. Champion newsletters to earl of Halifax), 8 May 1681.

⁴⁷ Norfolk RO, WKC 7/6/62: [Sir John Hobart] to W. Windham, 14 Jan. 1681/2. Hobart referred to the three Exclusion Parliaments.

⁴⁸ WYAS, MX/R/18/99: N. Johnston to Sir John Resesby, [31] Jan. 1681/2.

be made [to] answer [for] it before the next parliament'.⁴⁹ More confidently, the tory author of a defence of Charles's *Declaration* warned that whig critics of addressers would be taken notice of by the next parliament.⁵⁰

It may well have been this sense of uncertainty about the future that gave electioneering such a clear 'edge' in 1681 and 1682. No one could yet be certain whether whigs or tories would predominate. In December 1681, for instance, the government received gloomy news from Oxfordshire that despite the best efforts of Lord Norreys, if another parliament was called to meet soon then both the county and city of Oxford would elect the same whig MPs as last time.⁵¹ Two months earlier in Dorset, the prominent whig John Trenchard – who would flee into continental exile after the Rye House Plot – noted that local 'Torys' were preparing for a parliament, and that candidates had been chosen at a recent muster of the local gentry. Trenchard hoped that in Taunton at least the tory candidates had little support unless treating 'shall alter the minds of the poorer sort'.⁵² A year later, hostile observers argued that the tory assault on Nottingham's charter was part of a wider strategy to intimidate other corporations, and thus influence the future composition of parliament.⁵³ In many parts of the country individuals began to build 'interest' for a future election, to solicit a seat, or to refuse requests to stand for one constituency on the basis that they had already made their arrangements in another.⁵⁴

Three (often connected) issues most closely interacted with that of a possible future parliament: foreign affairs, money, and religion. Rumours of another session were particularly voluble when it seemed that French expansionism in Europe threatened the 'Protestant interest', notably in the autumn and winter of 1681 when Strasbourg and Luxembourg were under sustained threat.⁵⁵ At such times the royal government was under real diplomatic pressure from Spain and the United Provinces to raise troops and

⁴⁹ CSPD 1682, p. 168: newsletter to Roger Garstell in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 15 Apr. 1682.

⁵⁰ *A Vindication of Addresses*, p. 3.

⁵¹ BL, Add. MS 75362 (unfol.): Sir William Coventry to earl of Halifax, 3 Sept. 1681. For much more on Oxfordshire politics in this period, see Robin Eagles, 'Unnatural allies? The Oxfordshire elite from the Exclusion Crisis to the overthrow of James II' (*Parliamentary History*, forthcoming). I am very grateful to Dr Eagles for sending me a copy of this article prior to publication.

⁵² Dorset RO, D/BLX/F56: John Trenchard to Henry Trenchard, Taunton, 1 Oct. 1681. I am grateful to Scott Sowerby for first drawing my attention to this letter.

⁵³ Nottinghamshire Archives, DD/SR/219/1/17.

⁵⁴ BL, Add. MS 75363 (unfol.): Thomas Thynne to earl of Halifax, Kempford, 13 Aug. 1681; BL, Add. MS 75375, fol. 3; BL, Sloane MS 2724, fol. 130; DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 388.

⁵⁵ FSL, L.c. 1133–4; BL, Add. MS 75361 (unfol.): earl of Strafford to earl of Halifax, 15 Oct. 1681; BL, Add. MS 75375, fol. 2; Norfolk RO, WKC 7/6/59, 60, 61. For the general context, see the able summary offered in Jeremy Black, *A System of Ambition? British Foreign Policy 1660–1793* (Harlow, 1991), pp. 20–4.

declare war, which would have required parliamentary supply.⁵⁶ As this suggests, although modern studies have illustrated the improvement in crown finances during the 1680s this was not yet so strong as to permit Charles much latitude in his affairs.⁵⁷ At moments of despair opposition spokesmen were said to be bargaining with Charles, promising future parliamentary supply in return for a parliament and an act of indemnity to protect individuals from prosecution for their prior political activities.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, at other times money became the stick rather than the carrot. In May 1683, two whigs in Thetford were said to have boasted that they would govern that town 'and would have the choice of making burgesses for Parliament and that the King must and would call a parliament when poverty knocked at Whitehall gate a little harder and then he should have a parliament that would mumble him'.⁵⁹ Lastly, rumours of parliament frequently excited fears of nonconformist political activity, whether because of public 'treating' and private meetings in the south-west; members of the gentry rallying 'the Godly Party' in Norfolk; or fears that JPs in Lincolnshire who were sympathetic to dissent would 'obstruct . . . the election of honest men'.⁶⁰ In all cases, the perceived imminence of another parliament served to maintain a high political temperature in the localities.

The discovery of the Rye House Plot in the summer of 1683 gave a new fillip to discussions about a future parliament. Thanks to the widespread revulsion against the Plot, the balance of political opinion – particularly in the press – seemed to tilt in the government's favour. Some local Tories optimistically hoped for the return of MPs who would 'act more according to the sense of the nation than did some of our late representatives'.⁶¹ A parliament composed of loyal men could be expected to vote Charles 'such cheerful supplies as may let the world see . . . [he] is master of their hearts and purses'.⁶² Nevertheless, the opportunity was not taken, leaving those – like Halifax – who argued that the king should maintain his word, and honour the terms of the Triennial Act that required a parliament by the spring of

⁵⁶ *Memoirs of Sir John Resesby*, ed. Browning, p. 233.

⁵⁷ John Childs has emphasized the retrenchments in the army during Charles's last years: *The Army of Charles II* (1976), pp. 154, 160–1, 197–8, 203–7, 228, 230, 256. For different perspectives, see Bodl., MS Eng. letters c. 53, fol. 95; J.R. Western, *The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century: The Story of a Political Issue 1660–1802* (1965), pp. 52–74.

⁵⁸ Douglas R. Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics 1661–89: A Study in the Perpetuation and Tempering of Parliamentarianism* (New Brunswick, 1969), p. 151; Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 157; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 276.

⁵⁹ CSPD 1683 Jan. to June, p. 276: information of John Mendham of Thetford, Whitehall, 29 May 1683. ('Mumble' indicates to maul or handle roughly. OED.)

⁶⁰ CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 514; BL, Add. MS 27448, fol. 171: J. Houghton to earl of Yarmouth, Norwich, 25 Dec. 1682; CSPD 1682, p. 514.

⁶¹ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 143: Sir Hugh Cholmley to Secretary Jenkins, Walcot, 17 July 1683.

⁶² *Ibid.*

1684, deeply frustrated.⁶³ This failure to call a parliament has usually been imputed to improving crown revenues relieving Charles from any particular need for grants of supply. Although undoubtedly a vital factor, there was also still a sense that calling a parliament in late 1683 or 1684 risked revivifying the whigs. The autumn and winter of 1683 saw widespread expectations of a parliament which 'has put most counties into a ferment'.⁶⁴ In September 1683, for instance, tories in Southampton were apprehensive that their whig rivals were 'consulting to make burgesses for choosing members for the next parliament'. At the house of one of the 'great Whigs' a bowling green had been constructed, 'where they meet to consult but will suffer none to be with them but their own gang. 'Tis almost like the King's Head club in London.'⁶⁵ Elsewhere, a brief period of favour for Monmouth at court and rumours that Algernon Sidney would be pardoned for his role in the Plot were said to have buoyed up 'the factious Party against the time that his Majestie shall think fitt to Call a Parlement'.⁶⁶ Certainly the unprecedented level of government activity once writs for a new parliament were sent out at the beginning of James's reign suggests a continuing degree of anxiety about the political climate.⁶⁷ Although we now know that the parliament of 1685 proved to be one of the most vociferously supportive of the crown in the whole seventeenth century, contemporaries were by no means sure of that outcome at the start of the election period. As Anthony Wood bitterly recorded in his diary at the end of February 1685, 'the whigs who . . . get their ends by lying, sent letters to most corporations . . . to presse them that the King died a papist & that a papist succeeds him & bid them look to themselves & stand to their guard'.⁶⁸ The elections clearly had a bitter flavour to them. In Nottinghamshire one group of tories arrived to vote carrying 'a long Pole . . . at the end of which was a black Boxe and a greate peece of parchment like a

⁶³ *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, ed., Browning, p. 327. For French awareness of Halifax's drive for a parliament, see BL, Add. MS 75376, fol. 57v.

⁶⁴ UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9068, vol. III, no. 30: Thomas Bulkeley to Thomas Mostyn, Dynas, 3 Dec. 1683. For rumours of parliament, see BL, Add. MS 75363 (unfol.): Thomas Thynne to marquess of Halifax, Longleat, 29 Oct. 1683; BL, Sloane MS 2724, fol. 168; UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS VII, 9091, fol. 164v.

⁶⁵ CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.*, p. 392: John Speed, M.D., and James Grosse to Owen Wynne, 12 Sept. 1683.

⁶⁶ Bodl., MS Eng. letters d. 72, fol. 52: Owen Wynne to Sir Richard Bulstrode, Whitehall, 30 Nov. 1683. (Another version of this letter is at *ibid.*, fol. 53.)

⁶⁷ BL, Add. MS 75359 (unfol.): duke of Newcastle to marquess of Halifax, Welbeck, 20 Apr. 1685; NLW, Kemeys-Tynte Papers C64; Cornwall RO, AR25/103; PRONI, D638/3/1; CSPD *Feb.–Dec. 1685*, pp. 7, 14, 21, 23–6, 30, 32–3, 41–2, 54, 60, 62–3, 72, 75, 79, 81, 93, 96, 104–5; C.E. Doble, ed., 'Correspondence of Henry Earl of Clarendon and James Earl of Abingdon Chiefly Relating to the Monmouth Insurrection (1683–1685)', in Montague Burrows, ed., *Collectanea III* (Oxford Hist. Soc., 32, Oxford, 1896), p. 255; R.H. George, 'Parliamentary Elections and Electioneering in 1685', *TRHS*, 4th Ser., 19 (1936), 167–95.

⁶⁸ Bodl., MS Wood diaries 29, fol. 20v.

Banner upon which was writt in a large Carrector noe blacke Box, noe Bill of Exclusion, noe association'. After the election the box and the parchment were 'burnt in Newarke Markett place before all the People'.⁶⁹

Charles II, the succession, and office-holding

The personal rule of Charles II thus featured a parliamentary dimension, even if parliament did not actually meet. In that sense March 1681 did not represent to contemporaries quite the watershed that it can appear in retrospect. Instead it has recently been persuasively argued that the royal government's success in regaining control over the administration of London in 1682 may have been a more significant shift in political life.⁷⁰ Frequently the source of severe political trouble for the Stuarts, and a hot-bed of support for whigs during the Exclusion Crisis, the taming of 'this greate Beast the Cittye' was greeted with a palpable sense of relief in government circles.⁷¹ By November 1682, the English envoy in Brussels was told that Charles was 'gaining ground dayly of the Ennemies of his government', and the following month James was able to write to his son-in-law William of Orange that, 'As for news this place affords but little now, all things being very quiet and on the mending hand every day.'⁷² Such sentiments were not necessarily merely part of a diplomatic smokescreen. Charles himself had already demonstrated considerable *sang froid* in September 1682 when placed in the extraordinary position of being asked by one of his secretaries of state 'whether he had any information or any apprehension of tumults and risings among the Whigs'. The king replied 'none that he believed', and then went hawking.⁷³

Resolution rather than cynical complacency was the image of the king which central government usually sought to project into the localities. In his more bullish moments, Secretary Jenkins tried to encourage local Tories during 'the times we have fallen into' by assuring them that 'You may rest confident that the king knows perfectly who his friends are and that he will stick to them inseparably, they having stuck to him and his father.'⁷⁴ But

⁶⁹ BL, Add. MS 75360 (unfol.): John Millington to marquess of Halifax, 23 Mar. 1684/5.

⁷⁰ Gary De Krey, *London and the Restoration, 1659–83* (Cambridge, 2005), pts. 3–4.

⁷¹ Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 222: earl of Longford to earl of Arran, London, 24 Oct. 1682. The feeling would be compounded after the successful *quo warranto* against London's charter in the summer of 1683. See HMC, *Twelfth Report, App.*, Pt. V, p. 55.

⁷² Bodl., MS Eng. letters d. 72, fols. 8r–v: Owen Wynne to Sir Richard Bulstrode, Whitehall, 27 Nov. 1682; CSPD 1682, p. 571: duke of York to prince of Orange, London, 8 Dec. 1682. See also HMC, *Eleventh Report, App.*, Pt. V, p. 65. For parallel optimism in the ecclesiastical sphere in 1683, see Bodl., MS Rawlinson letters 93, fol. 192.

⁷³ CSPD 1682, p. 366: earl of Conway to Secretary Jenkins, Windsor, 5 Sept. 1682.

⁷⁴ CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, p. 11: Secretary Jenkins to bishop of St Asaph, Whitehall, 13 Jan. 1683; CSPD 1 *Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684*, p. 246: Secretary Jenkins to Stephen Timewell, 29 Jan. 1684.

even some of those closest to Charles palpably lacked confidence in his ability steadily to pursue any line of policy, including that of proscribing the whigs. The duke of Ormond as lord lieutenant of Ireland and James as the virtual viceroy of Scotland often expressed uncertainty about Charles's intentions.⁷⁵ As James wrote to Ormond in March 1682, when he was on the verge of leaving court and returning to Scotland, 'I hope you will be able to fix him [i.e. Charles] in the resolution of standing by and supporting himself by his old Cavalier and Church party, which if countenanced have power as well as will to serve him.'⁷⁶ Yet this was a difficult brief. At the centre of government, after dismissals from the court in July 1681 it was reported 'that the King is resolved thoroughly to purge his family from disaffected persons'.⁷⁷ Two months later one of the primate of Ireland's correspondents wrote that 'His Majesty is as well as ever I knew him, and full of resolution not to be any more hector'd by the Whigs, which gives great heart to his friends.'⁷⁸ Wholesale reform of personnel in the tangled world of the Restoration court was not, however, an easy task, as previous attempts had suggested.⁷⁹ Talk of a purge of whigs from Whitehall recurred in December 1681 and again in July 1683 after the Rye House Plot revelations.⁸⁰ As late as February 1684 it was reported that Mr Bridges, a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, had had his place suspended for suggesting that Algernon Sidney had not had a fair trial.⁸¹ Efforts to attain an ideologically pure court were not rapidly achieved.

Besides its personnel, central government also continued to face problems of adequately projecting its power into the localities. Despite the often favourable reception of Charles's *Declaration* in 1681, the following year it was still said that the king's letters received no more attention in Coventry than did a ballad.⁸² A year later in Newbury, the royal proclamation giving

⁷⁵ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 94; HMC, *Ormonde*, os, I, 32; HMC, *Eleventh Report*, App., Pt. V, pp. 53–60, 67–8.

⁷⁶ HMC, *Leyborne-Popham*, p. 247: duke of York to duke of Ormond, Newmarket, 23 Mar. 1682.

⁷⁷ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 98: John Ellis to [unknown recipient], London, 12 July 1681. For the duke of York's dismay at the slow pace of 'cleering' the court of the disaffected in Feb. 1681, see HMC, *Eleventh Report*, App., Pt. V, p. 57.

⁷⁸ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 131: [Sir Maurice Eustace to archbishop of Armagh], London, 13 Sept. 1681.

⁷⁹ Andrew Barclay, 'Charles II's failed restoration: administrative reform below stairs, 1660–4', in Eveline Cruickshanks, ed., *The Stuart Courts* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 158–70.

⁸⁰ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 274; JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: [MS newsletter] to Richard Legh, London, 21 July 1683. See also the early eighteenth-century reminiscences of Sarah, duchess of Marlborough: BL, Add. MS 61426, fol. 7.

⁸¹ HMC, *Thirteenth Report*, App., Pt. II, 377; HRHRC, Bulstrode newsletters, 1 Feb. 1684.

⁸² R.G. Pickavance, 'The English borough and the king's government: a study of the tory reaction 1681–5', unpub. D.Phil. thesis, Univ. of Oxford, 1976, p. 97. For Coventry's position as a centre of religious and political disaffection, see Judith J. Hurwich, "'A

news of the Rye House Plot fell foul of another concerning the excise: 'This presently runs in the country and nobody talks of a plot but of the new tax they are to pay.' By contrast the king's immorality ensured that his personal reputation was often called into question.⁸³ In 1681, Sir James Johnson of Yarmouth was reported as having offered the memorable aphorism: 'the King of France Could whore well & governe well, our King could whore well but not govern'.⁸⁴ Such a comparison was scarcely idle or bereft of political overtones. There were certainly widespread perceptions of Charles's pro-French agenda during the personal rule from all points of the religio-political spectrum, ranging from tory Anglicans like Ormond and John Evelyn to nonconformist printers like Francis 'Elephant' Smith.⁸⁵ Charles was repeatedly derided as being a covert papist.⁸⁶ Lacking perceived religious integrity, Charles inevitably lost some of the personal kudos that other rulers of Protestant countries – notably Charles XI in Sweden – enjoyed and used to help enforce their political will.⁸⁷

Despite the frequently commented upon links between sexual depravity and popery, ironically one of the most serious sources of instability in government during the personal rule was Charles's illegitimate Protestant son, James Scott, duke of Monmouth.⁸⁸ By comparison with the duke of York, Monmouth was a shining ray of Protestant hope for whigs keen to avoid the darkness of Catholic rule. He was thus a natural rallying point for opposition to the regime. In the wake of the Oxford dissolution, Monmouth was reported to have been attended through London 'with ane Innumerable companie of spectators cryeing Lord defend the protestant prince and many prince of Wales'. Although Monmouth was said to have been 'very much offended' at such acclamations and to have driven 'with all speed to his Lodging', it was nevertheless claimed that '<the King> haveing notice of

Fanatick Town": the political influence of dissenters in Coventry 1660–1720', *Midland History*, 4 (1978), 15–47.

⁸³ For this theme, see Paul Hammond, 'The king's two bodies: representations of Charles II', in Jeremy Gregory and Jeremy Black, eds., *Culture, Politics and Society in Britain, 1660–1800* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 13–48.

⁸⁴ BL, Add. MS 27448, fol. 22: Thomas Medowle, Jeffrey Ward, and John Hossier to earl of Yarmouth, Yarmouth, 22 June 1681.

⁸⁵ Pearse Street Library, Dublin, Gilbert MS 207, fols. 17v–18; *Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. De Beer, IV, 369 (and *ibid.*, 331, 378, 380); Bodl., MS Carte 222, fol. 286. Cf. Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland from the Dissolution of the last Parliament of Charles II until the Sea Battle of La Hogue* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1771–3), I, v.

⁸⁶ E.g. FSL, L.c. 1123, 1138.

⁸⁷ A.F. Upton, 'Sweden', in John Miller, ed., *Absolutism in Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Basingstoke, 1990), pp. 99–121; *idem*, *Charles XI and Swedish Absolutism* (Cambridge, 1998), esp. ch. 13. I am grateful to Guy Rowlands for emphasizing the Swedish example to me. See also, Ronald Hutton, 'Knocking the gilt off the golden days', *HJ*, 31 (1988), 206.

⁸⁸ Tim Harris, 'Scott [formerly Crofts], James, duke of Monmouth and first duke of Buccleuch (1649–1685)', *ODNB*.

this is very much troubled yrat'.⁸⁹ The duke's tour of the north-west in 1682 further excited discussion about his place in the succession. One of the governor of Chester Castle's informants told him of a discussion amongst a group of townsmen in Warrington – who were 'sufficiently tainted with whiggism' – that 'the Duke was the King's *primogenitus*'. As one of the group suggested, even if Charles's marriage to Monmouth's mother 'was not according to the law of this land, yet *in foro coeli*, it went far with him'. The tory informant remarked with asperity that this 'damnable position' was 'so taking to ordinary capacities'.⁹⁰ Certainly, it was much dwelt upon by Monmouth's leading supporters at the time and continued to excite popular attention.⁹¹

As such examples suggest, the stark differences between the two dukes, York and Monmouth, allowed for some pretty lurid talk. Monmouth's presence in Coventry excited a mob to threaten to kill some they met 'calling them Tories'. Having lit a bonfire, one man 'said he cared not a f— for the King or Parliament, God save the Duke of Monmouth'.⁹² Little information could be gained about Monmouth's time in Liverpool since 'great care was taken that nothing of a Tory or any not well known to be of their party should come near them'.⁹³ Another government informant claimed to have heard a man say in 1682 that though the duke of York 'has all the places of strength in his hands . . . we are provided for him and the Duke of Monmouth has as good an interest in England . . . and, if the King should die, they would have a pull for the Crown'.⁹⁴ Such a tug occurred at a micro-level in Worcester when a local tory walked around wearing a hat adorned with a ribbon proclaiming in gold letters loyalty to 'Rex et heredes'. In response, the son of a governor of the town in the 1650s sarcastically

⁸⁹ NLS, MS 14493, fol. 147: [MS newsletter], London, 2 Apr. 1681.

⁹⁰ CSPD 1682, p. 415: P.H. to Peter Shakerley, 21 Sept. 1682. For discussions of the ideas surrounding the question of Monmouth's legitimacy, see Mark Goldie, 'Contextualizing Dryden's Absalom: William Lawrence, the laws of marriage, and the case for King Monmouth', in Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier, eds., *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540–1688* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 208–30; [Mrs J. Philips], *Advice to His Grace* (1681).

⁹¹ CSPD 1682, pp. 397, 421, 457–8, 482. For another strand of the succession issue – the gender of the duke of York's children by Mary of Modena – see James Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper and its Development* (Cambridge, 1986), p.155; HMC, *Thirteenth Report, App., Pt. VI*, p. 187; NLS, MS 14405, fol. 15; Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 198. News of the birth of a girl, rather than a boy, led to 'the greate disappoyntment of the loyall, & greate rejoycing of the Whiggs'. *Ibid.*, fol. 147: earl of Longford to earl of Arran, London, 14 Aug. 1682. See also, FSL, L.c. 1225.

⁹² CSPD 1682, p. 406: John Ramsay (serjeant-at-arms) to Secretary Jenkins, Coventry, 18 Sept. 1682.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 396: Peter Shakerley to same, Chester Castle, 16 Sept. 1682.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 226–7: statement by Constant Oates, 2 June 1682. For Oates's views, see his plainly titled sermon, *The Character of a Good, and Bad, Subject . . . wherein is made appear the fatal Consequences of Rebellious Principles . . .* (1682).

replied, 'why not Papa et successores'?⁹⁵ Small wonder that James was said to be more concerned about Monmouth's popularity than he publicly acknowledged.⁹⁶ This went hand-in-hand with doubts about how influential James was in government. Around the time of Monmouth's tour of the north-west, the lord deputy of Ireland was informed that James 'hunts much & by what I can guess or gather hath not that stroake in affairs he could wish'.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, James himself did not lack popular support, as the crowds who turned out to see him at Newmarket in the spring of 1682, or at Oxford a year later most obviously demonstrate.⁹⁸ His partisans were also not afraid to seek direct confrontations with Monmouth and his adherents on the streets of London.⁹⁹ The whole ducal context thus provided much fuel for partisan fires, physically on the streets, as well as in the press.

Reports of Monmouth's arrest during the course of his progress had a powerful initial impact. In York, 'Since this Newes of the Duke of Monmouth there is not a Whigg appears here either att Coffee house or Clubb'.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, support for Monmouth remained a significant undercurrent in the politics of the period even after the news of the Rye House Plot was widely known in the summer of 1683 and a proclamation issued for the duke's arrest.¹⁰¹ Rumours of Monmouth's presence at court, or likely rehabilitation with his indulgent father, were commonplace and had a direct partisan impact.¹⁰² Early reports that he had admitted involvement in a Rye House Plot, though not assassination, and had regained Charles's favour were said to be 'a killing blow to the rebellious faction which god

⁹⁵ BL, Add. MS 75359 (unfol.): Lord Windsor to marquess of Halifax, Hewell, 10 Oct. 1682. The man – 'Collins' – was bound over to the next assizes. For anxiety that a requirement formally to recognize James as Charles's successor might be imposed on 'all persons', see Staffordshire RO, D(w) 1778/1/i/769A.

⁹⁶ Edward Berwick, ed., *The Rawdon Papers* (1819), p. 276: Francis Gwyn to earl of Conway, Windsor, 26 Aug. 1682. See also, HMC, *Eleventh Report, App., Pt. V*, p. 60.

⁹⁷ Bodl., MS Carte 232, fol. 125v: Israel Feilding to earl of Arran, London, 30 Sept. 1682.

⁹⁸ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 351; Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 29.

⁹⁹ For 'severall Gentlemen (termd Tories) in ffidler disguise' provocatively serenading the duke of Monmouth outside his London house, see NLW, Wynn of Gwydir, no. 2828: [anon.] to Thomas Mostyn, London, 8 Aug. 1682.

¹⁰⁰ WYAS, MX/R/21/39: Thomas Fairfax to Sir John Reresby, [York], 30 Sept. 1682.

¹⁰¹ For examples of Monmouth's continuing popularity in Kent, see CSPD 1683 July to Sept., pp. 151, 392; in the north-west, see Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 293; J.H.E. Bennett and J.C. Dewhurst, eds., *Quarter Sessions Records with other Records of the Justices of the Peace for the County Palatine of Chester 1559–1760* (The Rec. Soc. for the Publ. of Original Docs. Relating to Lancs. and Cheshire, 94, 1940), I, 187, 189–90; and in Herefs., see HMC, *Thirteenth Report, App., Pt. IV*, p. 350.

¹⁰² For the rumours and events of this time, see CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, pp. 123–4, 147, 152, 154; *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, ed. Browning, pp. 319–20; *Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. De Beer, IV, 350; *The Duke of Monmouth's Kind Answer to his Mournful Dutchess Complaint . . .* (1683).

grant'.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, Monmouth's later refusal to swear to the veracity of the Rye House Plot buoyed up whigs, so much so that in Chichester, 'the faction' were said to be 'transported to an insufferable height of insolence so that they now affront loyal men in the streets by telling them that the plot is now discovered and that they are able to top the Tories and that the King now knows his true friends and those that are not so'. Monmouth and Halifax – who had secured the duke's temporary return to court – were said to be going to sway affairs whilst James and Rochester would be sent to Scotland: 'These stories are dispersed to encourage the faction and to cause the contrary effects amongst the loyal party and in great measure answer those ends.'¹⁰⁴

Partisanship and the instability of government

As such a claim would suggest, ducal jostling for position in the hearts and minds of the people during the personal rule was one of the factors influencing a wider question: who would dominate Charles II's government, both at the centre and in the localities? As the Quaker leader William Penn, a frequent mover in court circles, remarked, kings 'play at ninepins with their ministers' and 'destroy their creatures that they may create again'.¹⁰⁵ According to another player in court politics, the earl of Ranelagh, no minister could expect to last two years in power.¹⁰⁶ In the resulting 'whirlpool of State' it was unsurprising that Charles's 'wavering temper and open Ear' were said to require the constant attendance of ministers who wished to keep hold of the king's attention.¹⁰⁷ Certainly Ranelagh, Halifax, Conway, and Seymour were all at various times reported to be assiduous in their efforts to stay close to Charles.¹⁰⁸ Of course there was nothing new about this in a courtly context, but it is worth emphasizing that the

¹⁰³ BL, Egerton MS 3682, fol. 67: Thomas Chudleigh to Sir Richard Bulstrode, The Hague, 4/14 Dec. 1683.

¹⁰⁴ CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 136: Samuel Carleton to Secretary Jenkins, Chichester, 7 Dec. 1683. (Chichester was another centre of support for Monmouth after a ducal visit to the town.) See also *ibid.*, Roger L'Estrange to Secretary Jenkins, [London], 7 Dec. 1683; Thompson, ed., *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton*, II, 40–1; East Sussex RO, FRE 5095.

¹⁰⁵ *Diary of . . . Henry Sidney*, ed. Blencowe, II, 195: William Penn to Henry Sidney, n.d. (Penn's career at Court is outlined in Mary K. Geiter, *William Penn* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 28–31.)

¹⁰⁶ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 210–11, 217.

¹⁰⁷ WYAS, MX/R/24/14: Fr. Sterling to Sir John Resesby, Ripon, 7 Dec. 1683; Pearse Street Library, Dublin, Gilbert MS 207, fol. 4.

¹⁰⁸ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 249; HMC, *Fourteenth Report, App.*, Pt. IX, p. 435. For the crucial importance of access to the king, see the furious row between the earls of Arlington and Bath, respectively the Lord Chamberlain and the Groom of the Stool, when in 1682 Arlington was prevented from entering the bedchamber as of right: HMC,

attendant confusions and uncertainties created by ministerial rivalries continued to affect political life right up to Charles II's death. In the wake of his son being informed against to the king, Sir Edward Dering confided to his diary the view that 'certain it is that calumnies, slanders and cutthroat whispers never were so common and rank at court as they are now'.¹⁰⁹ Whilst court factionalism might not have been as bloody as it was under the Tudors, it was no less bitter. When Halifax secured the temporary return of Monmouth to Charles's favour, for instance, he was under no illusion that James 'would never forgive him for it'.¹¹⁰

This action helped to cement the most serious and significant ministerial rivalry of the period, that between Halifax and Laurence Hyde, earl of Rochester. This had already developed thanks to their fundamentally opposing interests: if Halifax sought the rehabilitation of Monmouth as a counter-weight to James, and the recall of parliament, Rochester's career took much of its shape from the fact that he was 'too nearly related to the Duke of York' as his former brother-in-law.¹¹¹ The dispute – which was nominally over Hyde's financial probity at the Treasury – had widespread political importance. Reports of its vehemence spread far beyond Whitehall, troubling ministers in Scotland,¹¹² and being much talked about in English provincial towns like York, where 'the Whiggs rejoyce att' it.¹¹³ All of this bore out the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland's fear that 'No doubt the Jarrings betwixt great men here [in London] is gotten into the Country & from it great hopes are rayseed in the factious & as great feares in loyall & well affected' men.¹¹⁴

Such bickering absorbed ministerial energy and disunited the government. This may indeed have been Charles's intention in allowing Halifax to pursue his attack on Rochester for so long: certainly the king had no love of overbearing ministers like Rochester.¹¹⁵ Far from furthering or tolerating the

Ormonde, ns, VII, 27–32; Brian Weiser, *Charles II and the Politics of Access* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 46–8.

¹⁰⁹ *Diaries and Papers of Sir Edward Dering*, ed. Bond, p. 129 (14 Aug. 1681). For more on this episode, see below, pp. 81–2.

¹¹⁰ *Memoirs of Sir John Resesby*, ed. Browning, p. 322 (6 Dec. 1683).

¹¹¹ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 274; HMC, *Ormonde*, os, I, 34; CSPD 1682, p. 494. For Hyde in this period, see my 'The life and career of Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, c.1681–c.1686', unpub. M.Phil. thesis, Univ. of Cambridge, 1999; Ross Brodie, *Lord Rochester and the Hearthmoney Scandal of 1683* (Royal Stuart Soc. Papers, 1995).

¹¹² NLS, MS 14405, fol. 84; NAS, GD33/63/3/19; NAS, GD406/1/3164.

¹¹³ WYAS, MX/R/21/9: Thomas Fairfax to Sir John Resesby, Furnivals Inn, 1 Feb. 1682/3.

¹¹⁴ Bodl., MS Carte 232, fols. 9v–10: duke of Ormond to [Sir Robert Southwell], London, 3 Feb. 1682/3.

¹¹⁵ *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time*, ed. M.J. Routh (6 vols., Oxford, 1823), II, 432; *The Autobiography of Sir John Bramston*, K.B. of Skreens, in *the Hundred of Chelmsford*, ed. Lord Braybrooke (Camden Soc., 32, 1845), p. 171; John Miller, *Charles II* (1991), p. 352; Hutton, *Charles II*, pp. 418–19, 432–3, 442–3.

emergence of a 'reversionary interest' around James, Charles delighted in continuing the policies of 'divide and rule' that had been amongst the most obvious hallmarks of his reign as a whole.¹¹⁶ One acute observer of affairs – albeit a nonconformist who was no friend to James – gleefully recorded the story of a courtier asking Charles in late 1683 why the recently deceased king of Portugal had been deposed. Charles replied that he had put too much confidence in a younger brother.¹¹⁷ Such lingering royal cynicism and casual disregard for candid dealings with office-holders was widely recognized. In the course of his long-running rivalry with Sir Robert Carr in Lincolnshire, the tory earl of Lindsey wrote bitterly that his foe 'hath too much credit with his Majesty, who according to his usual method seems to cut a feather between us'.¹¹⁸ According to Lindsey, ministers needed to have the constant esteem of their master, yet more statesmen were ruined in England than in other countries.¹¹⁹ Charles may thus sometimes have been compelled by circumstances to act the part of a tory king, but he did not do so with great enthusiasm or single-mindedness.

The earl of Lindsey's frustration provides a convenient link between a court-centred perspective, and the view from the localities. As many recent studies have shown, English government was profoundly participatory: it relied upon the consent of the English to govern themselves.¹²⁰ Lacking the financial resources of their continental counterparts, kings of England were in practice often at the mercy of local élites as they could not afford to employ a discrete and independent body of professional administrators who would answer to the crown rather than their own neighbours.¹²¹ But we should be wary of drawing over-neat divisions between the concerns of Whitehall and those of the commissions of the peace or aldermanic bench. Outside of periods of extreme crisis like the civil wars of the 1640s or James II's disastrous attempts to overthrow the Anglican church-state in 1687–8, centre and localities actually existed in symbiosis. Each needed the other: the king needed his laws enforced and money raised; local governors needed the prestige and perquisites that royally granted offices and titles could bring. Nevertheless, the emerging divide between whigs and tories placed great

¹¹⁶ Here I follow the compelling analysis in Hutton, *Charles II*, ch. 15.

¹¹⁷ DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 395.

¹¹⁸ HMC, *Fourteenth Report, App.*, Pt. IX, p. 437: earl of Lindsey to earl of Danby, 19 Nov. 1681; Clive Holmes, *Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1980), p. 246.

¹¹⁹ HMC, *Eleventh Report, App.*, Pt. VII, p. 22.

¹²⁰ For two excellent recent overviews, see Michael J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England c.1550–1700* (Cambridge, 2001); Mark Goldie, 'The unacknowledged republic: officeholding in early modern England', in Tim Harris, ed., *The Politics of the Excluded, c.1500–1850* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp. 153–94.

¹²¹ For the dilemmas that constables, in particular, could find themselves in, see BL, Add. MS 75359 (unfol.): Lord Windsor to earl of Halifax, Hewell, 13 July 1682; Thomas Ellwood, *A caution to constables . . . concerned in the execution of the Conventicle-Act . . .* (1683); and for an earlier period, Joan R. Kent, 'The English village constable, 1580–1642; the nature and dilemmas of the office', *JBS*, 20 (1981), 26–49.

strain on these age-old commonplaces of government. For the purposes of analysis we can examine how on the one hand central government laboured under considerable burdens of ignorance and inefficiency in its political proceedings. And on the other, many local Tories felt – like the earl of Lindsey – that they received scant assistance and support from the centre in their local activities.

There can be no doubt that the government went to considerable lengths to purge itself of those office-holders who were regarded as being disaffected men. Nonconformists were dismissed from the navy office and custom house;¹²² the commissioners who governed London after the revocation of the city's charter turned out whigs from the royal hospitals and livery companies;¹²³ and changes were made in the commissions of the peace.¹²⁴ As John Nalson wrote in the preface to his polemically driven edition of the journal of the High Court of Justice which had tried Charles I, 'Active Endeavours' were currently required of friends of the monarchy, not just 'Passive Loyalty'.¹²⁵ In James's famous phrase, this was an age to try men and know them.¹²⁶ Simply removing men from offices did not, however, necessarily lance a general political boil. As one political observer noted, the turning out of men from the Lincolnshire commission of the peace 'instead of lessening them hath at present made them more popular'.¹²⁷ Furthermore, the scale and success of the government's efforts should not be exaggerated: doubts persisted as to the thoroughness with which this 'trying and ejecting' process was carried out. There was no systematic policy to match James's later disastrous 'three questions' campaign. Yet as many observers recognised, nothing was more likely to ruin church and state than having 'ill men' in positions of trust.¹²⁸ This was an important matter at a time when, as

¹²² Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 171–2.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, I, 288; CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, pp. 61–2; Craig Rose, 'Politics, religion and charity in Augustan London c.1680–c.1720', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of Cambridge, 1989, pp. 44–7; *idem*, 'Politics and the London Royal Hospitals, 1683–92', in Lindsay Granshaw and Roy Porter, eds., *The Hospital in History* (1989), pp. 123–48; Gary S. De Krey, *A Fractured Society: The Politics of London in the First Age of Party 1688–1715* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 13–14, 44, 167. Mark Knights has, however, suggested that surrenders of company charters were often 'a cosy arrangement between the Court and its supporters in the City'. Mark Knights, 'A city revolution: the remodelling of the London livery companies in the 1680s', *EHR*, 112 (1997), 1148–9.

¹²⁴ *Burnet's History of My Own Time*, ed. Airy, II, 290; L.K.J. Glassey, *Politics and the Appointment of Justices of the Peace, 1675–1720* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 53–62. For Charles's interest in and receptivity to information from local Tories about commissions of the peace, see *Memoirs of Sir John Resesby*, ed. Browning, p. 231.

¹²⁵ John Nalson, *A True Copy of the Journal of The High Court of Justice for the Tryal of K. Charles I . . .* (1684), ep. ded. to James, duke of York.

¹²⁶ HMC, *Eleventh Report, App.*, Pt. V, p. 72: duke of York to Col. George Legge, [17 or 18] Nov. [1681].

¹²⁷ BL, Add. MS 75360 (unfol.): John Millington to earl of Halifax, Derby, 27 July 1681.

¹²⁸ Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 211v: bishop of Edinburgh to archbishop of Canterbury, 7 Mar. 1682/3.

Reresby indignantly noted in the autumn of 1681, 'One cannot immagin how every little fellowe undertook to censure the King and his proceedings.'¹²⁹ Loyal office-holders could be expected to present the policies of central government in the most palatable light, mediating with their local communities.

Yet the government continued to receive complaints about office-holders in all its numerous levels. During an age characterized by incessant fear of plotting and conspiracies,¹³⁰ much of the evidence concerning individuals is hard to verify. The government's reliance on professional or semi-professional informers does not always inspire confidence, but at the very least the allegations that were made had to appear plausible enough to be believed and secure payment. In London the ideological convictions of men in even the most sensitive placements came under scrutiny. One of the wardens in the Tower was suspended for disobeying orders and being a 'very notorious Whig': he went on to play a part in the demonstrations against the power of the Lord Mayor during the disputed shrieval elections of 1682.¹³¹ William Snow, a doorkeeper of the House of Lords, was informed against since he 'frequents seditious clubs, promotes the interests of seditious men, intermeddles with elections, and other public business in the City, endeavours to seduce people from voting for loyal men, adheres to the Duke of Monmouth, the Earl of Shaftesbury and that party and declares against his Royal Highness' – a pretty comprehensive list of political misdemeanours.¹³² The same informer alleged that one Kirstell, 'a dangerous and disaffected man', kept a coffee-house in the Court of Wards (in Westminster Hall) during term on the pretended authority of the Lord Great Chamberlain 'where great numbers of persons of the same principles resort to consult'.¹³³ Catholic plotters had skulked in the palace of Westminster's cellars in 1605; now disaffected Protestants sipped coffee in its halls. Further afield, royal messengers – the men sent out to apprehend 'adversaries' of the government – were also suspected of harbouring suspect political and religious views, and frequenting coffeehouses, alehouses, and clubs.¹³⁴ Even one of the secretaries

¹²⁹ *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, ed. Browning, p. 232 (7 Oct. 1681).

¹³⁰ Mark Knights, 'Faults on both sides: the conspiracies of party politics under the later Stuarts', in Julian Swann and Barry Coward, eds., *Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theory in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 153–72.

¹³¹ *CSPD* 1682, p. 305: Captain Thomas Cheeke to Secretary Jenkins, The Tower, 19 July 1682. Claims that James would not be secure in the Tower even if he fortified it are made in Staffordshire RO, D(w) 1778/I/i/769A.

¹³² *CSPD* 1682, p. 544: information of John Packer jnr, [?Nov.] 1682. Snow – or 'Snowan' – was nevertheless still described as 'attendant of the House of Lords' when he was 'taken . . . for . . . ill practices' in June 1684. HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 245: newsletter, Whitehall, 7 June 1684.

¹³³ *CSPD* 1682, p. 544: information of John Packer jnr, [?Nov.] 1682.

¹³⁴ *CSPD* 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 553: 'Queries of Mr Needham, curate of Lambeth', 7 Nov. 1681.

of state acknowledged that 'they are usually very full of scruples and malicious stories on everything that comes from his Majesty'.¹³⁵

If suspicions were harboured about the political reliability of the king's messengers, what of other office-holders in the localities? At the highest level of county government, Victor L. Stater has placed considerable emphasis on the role of the lieutenancy, calling it the 'policeman of a one-party state' after 1682, and 'the aggressive defender of the Royalist Anglican ascendancy'.¹³⁶ However, he also notes that the earls of Dorset and Pembroke – lord lieutenants of Sussex and Wiltshire respectively – were 'indolent', though in his opinion they were thus 'exceptional'.¹³⁷ Yet the earl of Derby was also afraid that his lack of firm action on behalf of the crown might lead to his dismissal from office in the north-west. Both he and the lord lieutenant of Shropshire were criticized for their slackness in searching for arms in the houses of prominent local whigs after the Rye House Plot.¹³⁸ In Norfolk, local Tories complained that 'The inactiveness of the Lord Lieutenant [the earl of Yarmouth] is a great discouragement to the party'.¹³⁹ In addition, Stater himself notes that 'Even some in the lieutenancy were reluctant to enforce the new royalist hard line. This might be particularly true when the pursuit of Exclusionists clashed with long-standing social attitudes', going on to detail Lord Beaumont's deep and legalistic reluctance to search his neighbour Lord Stamford's house after the Rye House Plot without written authority, despite the assurance of his lord lieutenant – the earl of Rutland – 'that a verbal order is enough to any in the militia'.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, the most conscientious loyal nobles could still see their best efforts frustrated by other peers. The earl of Abingdon testily informed Jenkins that, 'The town of Henley is certainly too full of men of those [whiggish] principles. . . . One Adam Springall is there, whom I formerly cashiered from being a lieutenant in my militia on account of his Whiggism and Lord Lovelace after got him to be a captain in Berkshire'.¹⁴¹ When the secretary of state praised the efforts of Lord Norreys as lord lieutenant of Oxfordshire since 'Posterity will judge that we owe these subordinate men to

¹³⁵ CSPD 1682, p. 115: Francis Gwyn to Secretary Jenkins, Newmarket, 9 Mar. 1682. Gwyn was Under-Secretary of State, 1681–3.

¹³⁶ Victor L. Stater, *Noble Government: The Stuart Lord Lieutenancy and the Transformation of English Politics* (Athens, GA, 1994), pp. 145–6.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 151; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 151, 159, 168; CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.*, p. 61. Derby's commitment as lord lieutenant had been questioned the previous year in the wake of Monmouth's tour of the north-west: JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: Thomas Chicheley to Richard Legh, 21 Sept. 1682. For Derby, see Barry Coward, 'The social and political position of the earls of Derby in later seventeenth-century Lancashire', *Trans. of the Historic Soc. of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 132 (1982), 146–50.

¹³⁹ CSPD 1682, p. 56: anon. account of affairs in Norwich and Norfolk, 2 Feb. 1682.

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in Stater, *Noble Government*, p. 151.

¹⁴¹ CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.*, pp. 37–8: earl of Abingdon to Secretary Jenkins, Rycott, 3 July 1683. For more on Lovelace's local activity, see Eagles, 'Oxfordshire elite'.

a good lord lieutenant', he was thus aware that Norreys was exceptionally diligent.¹⁴² Overall such examples suggest the need for a more nuanced position than Stater's blanket statement that 'by the middle of 1680, no lieutenant could safely ignore the central government's commands to remove prominent Whigs'.¹⁴³ Whilst direct opposition to royal commands was obviously unwise, during the personal rule period there was still significant evasion or amelioration of central authority thanks to local foot-dragging and uncertainty.

The ideological commitment of royal officers was linked to a broader issue: the quantity and quality of information available to the central government. After all, Whitehall could only operate according to the quality of the information it received. Yet the frequent ignorance of Whitehall remains striking. Indeed the correspondence of Sir Leoline Jenkins as Secretary of State ought to console historians struggling to get to grips with the complexity of early modern English governance. Jenkins' gaffes were particularly numerous in connection with the legal style and government of corporate boroughs,¹⁴⁴ the focus of so much of the government's attention during these years.¹⁴⁵ Although individually of little significance, each example of central government's ignorance contributes to the overall question of how reliable the advice and information that the government received was. With regard to a long-running dispute amongst the gentry in Northumberland, Sir Ralph Delaval assured Jenkins that one of the protagonists 'is represented to you in the false glass of misinformation and that our proceedings therein at the sessions have been according to law and for his Majesty's service and the good of the country'.¹⁴⁶ Thanks to their numerical predominance, whig JPs in the county succeeded in securing the removal of two tory JPs by blackening their reputations.¹⁴⁷ Some office-holders were thus obviously alive to the dangers of misinformation guiding government's actions. The bishop of Chichester was in little doubt that men there were loyal 'from the teeth forward'.¹⁴⁸ But his capacity to offer reassurance to local tories that their anxieties were being addressed in Whitehall does not seem to have convinced everyone. In 1683 Lord Fitz-Harding erroneously believed that a Somerset JP had been removed simply for having the same name as one of Shaftesbury's adherents. As a result, he stood up for what he felt to be his

¹⁴² Quoted in Stater, *Noble Government*, p. 124.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

¹⁴⁴ CSPD 1682, pp. 565, 228; CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, p. 12; HMC, *Eleventh Report, App.*, Pt. V, pp. 69–70.

¹⁴⁵ See above, n. 18.

¹⁴⁶ CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, p. 110: Sir Ralph Delaval to Secretary Jenkins, Seaton Delaval, 16 Mar. 1683.

¹⁴⁷ Glassey, *Politics and the Appointment of Justices of the Peace*, pp. 54–5. See also, Stater, *Noble Government*, p. 149.

¹⁴⁸ CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.*, p. 161: bishop of Chichester to Secretary Jenkins, Chichester, 19 July 1683.

falsely maligned reputation since, 'It can't be for the king's service to call good men ill men.' As Lionel Glassey has remarked, 'the episode illustrated how even a loyal Courtier like Fitzhardinge could convince himself that Whitehall was capable of the most ignorant mistakes when it began to tamper with county affairs'.¹⁴⁹

If government could not escape from whig misinformation, how could it be expected to aid its local tory supporters? Again, Jenkins did not convey much of a sense of authority. When the lord lieutenant of Ireland sought to protect Sir John Davys from the false allegations of an informer, Jenkins' lugubrious response was 'I hope he does consider that there is no man in business but hath reason to fear what he feels.'¹⁵⁰ Such luke-warm comments from the centre were naturally resented in the localities. In February 1682, Roger Morrice reported the complaints of some JPs that they did not receive 'support and countenance in the Execution of the Law' against dissenters.¹⁵¹ Criticism was repeatedly offered of the excessive royal 'mercy' – in the sense of tolerance or vacillation – that had encouraged factious whigs, whether in connection with specific mayoral elections or the more general phenomenon of the Rye House Plot.¹⁵² At the same time, the duke of Newcastle was merely one of the most vociferous articulators of the view held by many local tories that 'We have little encouragement for our loyalty.'¹⁵³ The following year the duke of Beaufort reported that things were even worse for tories in Malmesbury, since 'those that were very obnoxious' had managed to carry their charter to Charles at Winchester and get 'a favourable reception'. As a result

they are returned with flying colours and the loyal persons who had forced them to this dare hardly show their heads and are so dashed on their brags of the King's favour to them that they talk of leaving the place, expecting that the old offenders will be continued in power and will revenge themselves on these gentlemen for having given materials to justify the *Quo warranto*.¹⁵⁴

In Cheshire tories complained that 'The adverse party makes it their brags that the King Knowes nothing of our proceedings & disownes them: I

¹⁴⁹ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., pp. 238–9: Lord Fitz-Hardinge to [Sidney Godolphin], Wells, 1 Aug. 1683. See Glassey, *Politics and the Appointment of Justices of the Peace*, p. 60. For another criticism of misinformation from Somerset being believed by government, see Bodl., MS Aubrey 13, fol. 63.

¹⁵⁰ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 68: Secretary Jenkins to duke of Ormonde, Whitehall, 21 May 1681.

¹⁵¹ DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 328.

¹⁵² CSPD 1682, p. 226: Francis Lightfoot to Secretary Jenkins, Rye, 1 June 1682; Nottinghamshire Archives, DD/SR/212/36, quoted in Pickavance, 'The English boroughs and the king's government', p. 292.

¹⁵³ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 326: duke of Newcastle to Secretary Jenkins, Welbeck, 25 Aug. 1683. See also CSPD, 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 74

¹⁵⁴ CSPD 1 May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, p. 151: duke of Beaufort to earl of Sunderland, 20 Sept. 1684.

earnestly beg the Kinge may fully Know what we have done & the great advancement it will be to hime & crushing of his enemyes.¹⁵⁵ There was undoubtedly a lobbying function underlying these claims, but they arose out of a deep-seated distrust of the steadiness of the king and court's intentions, a theme which the next section will show was particularly potent with regard to religious policy.

The Church of England and partisan politics

Writing after the Glorious Revolution, the whig bishop Gilbert Burnet claimed that during the personal rule period the Anglican clergy worked 'with such zeal for the duke's succession, as if a popish king had been a special blessing of heaven, to be longed for by a protestant church'.¹⁵⁶ Thanks to his own experiences in these years Burnet was hardly a disinterested commentator.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Church of England clerics *were* very active in local politics, not least in electioneering for an expected future session of parliament.¹⁵⁸ London was the site of particularly vigorous activity. Anonymous directions for choosing aldermen that were directed to the lord mayor, include one desiring the clergy in Fleet Street Ward 'to oblige their parishioners to be at their ward moot. . . . This is to be done by the Bishop of London to the ministers.'¹⁵⁹ It may thus not have been an idle boast on the bishop of London's part in 1682 that 'it is the clergy that have preserved the city to the King'.¹⁶⁰ In addition, clergy were also involved in efforts to secure the surrender of town charters – which was 'current doctrine' according to the bishop of Oxford in 1684¹⁶¹ – and the promotion and support of loyal addresses.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵ BL, Add. MS 27448, fol. 143: J. Taylor to countess of Yarmouth, Chester, 5 Oct. 1682.

¹⁵⁶ *Burnet's History Of My Own Time*, ed. Osmund Airy (2 vols., 1897–1900), II, 290. Cf. *ibid.*, 334–5.

¹⁵⁷ He was silenced from preaching in the Rolls Chapel in this period, and fled abroad in 1683 fearful of accusations of involvement with the Rye House Plot conspirators. Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 321; Martin Greig, 'Burnet, Gilbert (1643–1715)', *ODNB*.

¹⁵⁸ Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 148; Bodl., MS Tanner 148, fol. 16v. For the clergy's activity in the elections of 1685, see e.g. CUL, Add. MS 5, fol. 330; Devon RO, Z19/40/7.

¹⁵⁹ CSPD 1682, p. 557: directions for choosing aldermen, [?Nov. 1682].

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 581: bishop of London to Secretary Jenkins, 19 Dec. 1682.

¹⁶¹ CSPD 1 May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, p. 85: bishop of Oxford to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 1 July 1684. For examples of this, see HEHL, HA 6034–5, 6038, 3968–71, 6040; R.W. Greaves, 'The Earl of Huntingdon and the Leicester charter of 1684', *HLQ*, 15 (1951–2), 371–91; D.A. Scott, 'Politics, dissent and quakerism in York, 1640–1700', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of York, 1990, p. 336; Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 223; Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fols. 20, 45–6; Bodl., MS Tanner 141, fols. 115–16; CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 85; HMC, *Fourteenth Report, App.*, Pt. VIII, p. 110.

¹⁶² CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 369; Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 67; *Vox Angliæ*,

Despite such evidence, we should be wary of assuming too readily that the clergy during this period were united in their political aims and outlook. In reality, they were not all as keen on forming a 'reversionary interest' as Burnet and some modern historians have implied.¹⁶³ Indeed, since the Church of England functioned as an integral part of the state, it should come as no surprise to find that the church shared many of the problems and concerns that afflicted secular government. These problems were the more significant because they affected an institution that could offer powerful assistance to its supreme governor by trumpeting his authority from pulpits across the nation. It could also offer another major forum for the expression of opinion other than parliament. In the context of reforming abuses within the church, one loyalist argued that recalling Convocation – the deliberative body of the clergy – would be the best solution, 'especially if summoned when there is no Parliament'. Convocation's support for the crown would in turn influence others: 'it would not onely Draw great Love and Gratitude from the Obedient and misled: but would alsoe breake the neck of Wicked Designers against the Church & State: when they shall see in Fact His Majestyes Absoluteness in such matters'.¹⁶⁴

But such bullish assessments were usually qualified by a lingering degree of anxiety. On the one hand, reform of the church was necessary because of the propaganda value of abuses and excesses to its critics: 'if any things that are now usd shall be agreed to be inconvenient, though by law Established; notice may be taken of them, so as to be corrected at the next parliament, That they may be no Longer a snare to the obedient, nor a scandall to Others'.¹⁶⁵ More importantly, many Anglican clerics were also sceptical about the commitment of Charles II to protecting the Church of England. Loyal addressers might thank Charles for the promise in his *Declaration* of 8 April 1681 to support the church, 'a testimony of which your Majesty hath given to the world by an unwillingness to pass your Royall assent to any act, which may repeale that of the 35th of Elizabeth'.¹⁶⁶ But nothing with

pp. 20, 21, 25, 28–9, 31, 41, 45–6, 49–50, 51, 53, Second Part pp. 1–2, 5, 13, 14; *London Gazette* [addresses relating to the Rye House Plot], nos. 1853, 1854, 1859, 1860, 1862.

¹⁶³ Notably Robert Beddard in his 'The Commission for Ecclesiastical Promotions, 1681–4: an instrument of Tory reaction', *HJ*, 10 (1967), 11–40. (I intend to expand on my reasons for questioning Dr Beddard's conclusions in print shortly.) But for an example of a clergyman describing himself as 'A true Loyall subject & right trusty Yorkist', see Bodl., MS Tanner 158, fol. 42: petition of William Oates, [c. 1681/2].

¹⁶⁴ Bodl., MS Aubrey 12, fol. 16v: Thomas ?Axe to John Aubrey, 22 Sept. 1684. Convocation was not, however, a regular topic of discussion in these years: see Norman Sykes, *From Sheldon to Secker. Aspects of English Church History 1660–1768* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 41–4.

¹⁶⁵ Bodl., MS Aubrey 12, fol. 17: Thomas ?Axe to John Aubrey, 22 Sept. 1684. See also Gloucestershire RO, D3549 2/2/3 (Bishop William Lloyd letters), no. 4.

¹⁶⁶ BL, Egerton MS 2985, fol. 241: 'The Humble Address of your Majestys most Loyall & dutyfull Subjects of the County of Kent'. For the efforts to repeal the statute 35 Eliz., see

Charles was ever straightforward.¹⁶⁷ His efforts to secure toleration in 1662 and 1672 were not quickly forgotten,¹⁶⁸ and his degree of attachment to the Church of England was often in question.¹⁶⁹ In the summer of 1681 the king ordered judges on circuit not to enforce the recusancy act of 35 Elizabeth.¹⁷⁰ The king granted relief to Quakers convicted under the same statute in Deal, Dover, and Canterbury the following year.¹⁷¹ He even pardoned a nonconformist minister, Thomas Rosewell, for treason in January 1685.¹⁷² Once again, proximity to Charles was obviously seen as crucial. The fact that a man described as 'the Sollicitor generall for the dissenting brotherhood' in Sussex was 'so near his Majestie' and could give 'an exact accompt of Court Affaires' to the 'phanaticks' caused the bishop of Chichester considerable anxiety in 1682.¹⁷³ Such concern may well have been justified. In April 1682, the recorder of Poole was horrified to be told by a nonconformist that 'there are 20 dores to Whitehall, and that I am not big enough to fill the least of them'.¹⁷⁴ Perhaps even more suggestively, in January 1683 the prominent Presbyterian agent, Sir John Baber, secured a meeting with the royal brothers for the first time in nine months. This overcame the prior opposition of the bishop of London that as long as Baber 'had liberty to waite upon' Charles and James 'with that freedome of accesse [which he had frequently enjoyed]' then the 'Church would alwaies have them in jealousy as if they were treating with him about shewing favour to the Dissenters'.¹⁷⁵

Nor were Charles's pro-Catholic predilections forgotten during the personal rule. When Charles reprimanded the JPs of Middlesex in December 1681 'for soe remisly enquiring after the number of papists and the

Gary S. De Krey, 'Reformation in the Restoration Crisis, 1679–1682', in Hamilton and Stryer, eds., *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England*, pp. 238–40.

¹⁶⁷ Here I take issue with John Miller's claim that 'In his last years Charles became firmly and unequivocally committed to the Church': *Charles II*, p. 350.

¹⁶⁸ For an intriguing reflection on the comprehension discussions of 1670–2 in the midst of Morrice's account of 1683, see DWL, Morrice MS P, fols. 359–60.

¹⁶⁹ For rumours of Charles's sympathy for nonconformists, see e.g. NAS, GD158/2823; CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, p. 170.

¹⁷⁰ Philip Henry, *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry, M.A. of Broad Oak, Flintshire A.D. 1631–1696*, ed. M.H. Lee (1882), p. 302.

¹⁷¹ CSPD 1682, pp. 270–1. See also Joseph Besse, comp., *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers* (2 vols., 1753), I, 513.

¹⁷² CSPD 1 *May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685*, p. 297; Tim Harris, *Restoration. Charles II and his Kingdoms 1660–1685* (2005), p. 302.

¹⁷³ Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fols. 57v–58: bishop of Chichester to archbishop of Canterbury, Chichester, 5 Aug. 1682.

¹⁷⁴ Bodl., MS Tanner 129, fol. 118: Anthony Etrick to archbishop of Canterbury, Blandford, 1 Apr. 1682.

¹⁷⁵ DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 351. This information is not noted in the brief account of Baber's career to be found in T.F. Henderson, *rev.* Patrick Wallis, 'Baber, Sir John (1625–1704)', ODNB. For Roger Morrice's links with Baber, see Mark Goldie, 'Morrice, Roger (1628/9–1702)', ODNB; *idem*, 'Roger Morrice and his Enttring book', *History Today*, 51: 11 (2001), 44.

prosecution of them', Reresby thought that he did so 'to comply with the times (for everybody suspected it was not his inclinations)'.¹⁷⁶ In the spring of 1683 the Presbyterian news writer Roger Morrice anxiously recorded that a Catholic priest had been arrested in London. When searched, he was found to be carrying a letter claiming that things went 'very well' thanks to help from James – 'their friend at St James's' – and Charles – 'K. [i.e. the King] was their friend'.¹⁷⁷ A few months later things looked even worse to the Anglican diarist John Evelyn. He recorded that thanks to the dwindling credibility of the popish plot Catholics again held their heads up and flocked back to London.¹⁷⁸ Such reports suggest how falsely optimistic Sancroft was when he recorded in April 1681 Charles's decision 'That all papists, & popish Recusants throughout the Realm be forthwith vigorously persecuted, & the Lawes of the Land made against them effectually put in Execution'. In Sancroft's view, Catholics would thus 'be either reduc'd into the Bosom of the Church, or driven out of the kingdom'.¹⁷⁹ By January 1685 Narcissus Luttrell recorded that 'There has been much discourse of a toleration intended for the papists' although he could 'find no ground for it'.¹⁸⁰ Certainly there was a clearly perceived link between Charles's frequently reported reluctance to prosecute Protestant dissenters and his regard for Catholics. According to the whig peer Lord Herbert of Chisbury in March 1683, London 'rung of a Toleration & that it was thought there would be one, & that the Court would slacken the present violent Prosecution of the Whiggs rather then the Papists should be involvd in it'.¹⁸¹ In other words, not only were Protestant Nonconformity and whiggery closely interlinked in the contemporary mind; favour for the former was seen as part of a wider attempt by Charles to relieve the legal assault on Catholics.

If many Anglican clergy feared royal support for Dissenters and Catholics, they were not necessarily at peace amongst themselves. Several clerics were criticized for failing to sign loyal addresses to the crown in 1681–2, including

¹⁷⁶ *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, ed. Browning, p. 239 (7 Dec. 1681). See also, DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 321.

¹⁷⁷ DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 365.

¹⁷⁸ *Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. De Beer, IV, 320. Morrice recorded attempts to 'bury' the Popish Plot in the interests of Catholics, and the way that the plot was ridiculed in a play performed before Charles in Jan. 1683. DWL, Morrice MS P, fols. 331, 333, 353.

¹⁷⁹ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 7: [archbishop of Canterbury to bishop of London], Lambeth, 9 Apr. 1681 (draft). This decision had been made in council on 8 Apr., the same meeting at which Charles's *Declaration* had been read. TNA: PRO, PC2/69, fols. 130v–132.

¹⁸⁰ Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 326. For a summary of John Miller's views on the relaxation of legal assault on Catholics during 1683–5, see his *After the Civil Wars. English Politics and Government in the Reign of Charles II* (Harlow, 2000), p. 279.

¹⁸¹ Bodl., MS Ballard 39, fol. 3: John Williams to Arthur Charlett, High Wycombe, 20 Mar. 1682/3. Printed in R.A. Beddard, 'A Whig view of Tory Oxford in 1683: Lord Herbert of Chisbury's criticism of the university', *Bodleian Library Record*, 15 (1995), 166–86.

one of the foremost preachers of the age and leading advocates of comprehension, John Tillotson.¹⁸² Furthermore, Tillotson's vehement anti-Catholic preaching even went so far as allegedly to include the statement that 'our religion and liberty in all human probability would expire' with Charles II. This was naturally taken as a 'reflection on his Royal Highness [i.e. James]'.¹⁸³ Perhaps because of his prominence Tillotson escaped serious punishment, but a minister in the notoriously factious town of Bridgewater was forced to recant at the local sessions for saying 'That if his Majesty should dy we should be in danger of popery'. His recantation was ordered on the grounds that 'such words from a clergy man were apt to trouble peoples minds', but it also had the political edge that 'he is the darling of that party [i.e. the whigs] in these parts'.¹⁸⁴

Internecine strife amongst Anglican clergy occurred in many areas and clearly impacted on partisan political life. Some clerics – notably in Chichester, Bristol, and York – were criticized by their brethren for supporting Monmouth's progresses and claim to the throne,¹⁸⁵ or else for being too lenient on dissenters in general, and thus discouraging local Tories in their efforts to secure universal conformity.¹⁸⁶ In Cheshire, the clergyman Zachary Cawdrey was 'knowne to be highly esteemed by those Gentlemen who have not bin of late entrusted [with local office] by the Government'.¹⁸⁷ As the bishop of Chester gloomily noted, ecclesiastical divisions had contributed to making 'the noise high: which could be no otherwise in a Country [i.e. Cheshire] so divided, & must continue so long as the divisions last at this heighth'.¹⁸⁸ By 1684 Cawdrey and one of the prebends of Chester

¹⁸² WYAS, MX/R/18/65; CSPD 1682, pp. 388–9; Colin Lee, '“Fanatic Magistrates”: Religious and political conflict in three Kent boroughs, 1680–1684', *HJ*, 35 (1991), 52; CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.*, p. 440.

¹⁸³ CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, p. 40: H. Crispe to Secretary Jenkins, 2 Feb. 1683. Significantly, Tillotson was the prominent whig merchant and would-be London sheriff Thomas Papillon's chosen intermediary on behalf of a local clergyman who had been accused of negligence during a visitation. Bodl., MS Tanner 41, fol. 13. When local loyalists sought the return of previously ousted loyal men to the corporation of Canterbury they enlisted the support of the dean of Rochester, not Tillotson. CSPD 1682, p. 338.

¹⁸⁴ Bodl., MS Aubrey 13, fol. 61: A. Paschatt to John Aubrey, Chedsey [i.e. Chedzoy], 13 July 1683.

¹⁸⁵ CSPD 1682, pp. 386, 388–9, 416; Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 276; DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 326.

¹⁸⁶ Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 99; Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fols. 27r–v, 142v. For jurisdictional problems in the church allowing dissenters in some areas to avoid prosecution, see Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 278; Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 224; Bodl., MS Tanner 146, fols. 30r–v; DWL, Morrice MS P, fols. 358, 366; W.T. Morgan, 'The prosecution of nonconformists in the Consistory Court of St Davids, 1661–88', *Jnl of the Hist. Soc. of the Church in Wales*, 12 (1962), 40.

¹⁸⁷ Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fols. 27r–v: bishop of Chester to archbishop of Canterbury, Chester, 14 May 1683. Certainly Cawdrey's 'Moderation' was praised by the dissenting diarist Philip Henry: *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry*, ed. Lee, p. 303.

¹⁸⁸ Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fols. 27r–v. For Cawdrey's perspective on events, see *ibid.*, fols.

Cathedral were said to have ‘strongelie promoted’ a ‘deepe infection of Whiggisme’ in the area.¹⁸⁹ For his part Dr Edward Fowler of St Giles Cripplegate in London so infuriated local magistrates by claiming in a sermon before them that the Rye House Plot was actually another popish conspiracy that they voted in common council never to hear him preach again. He had ‘on all occasions encouraged sedition and faction and preached to the disturbance of loyal subjects’.¹⁹⁰ In Lancashire, a list of disaffected people drawn up after the Rye House Plot included the minister of Preston – a ‘Whig’ – and the vicar of Hawkshead – ‘very Whiggish’.¹⁹¹ Further west still, the activities of the Welsh Trust – an eirenic body composed of moderate dissenters and members of the established clergy, devoted to charitable and educational endeavours – declined sharply after 1681. This was in part the result of suspicions that it merely acted as a front for the politically disaffected.¹⁹² Lastly, it is possible to parallel the apathy and incompetence of some bishops with the careers of indolent lords lieutenant during the personal rule.¹⁹³ As their more zealous brethren realized, such inactivity offered an easy target for critics of Episcopal government. Sancroft rebuked Carleton of Chichester for the misuse of the forests in his episcopal lands, ‘which even in Times more propitious to us would have been . . . condemn’d; but now wil be improv’d against us All with the utmost Spite & Malice’.¹⁹⁴ Worse still, if the timber of Chichester caused primatial anger, Wood of Coventry and Lichfield had to deny ‘my Clergys groundlesse Complaints’ and that he had been ‘wanting in my Duety’.¹⁹⁵ Despite his protestations, once he had been abandoned as ‘sordid, & refractory’ by

26r–v. An excellent recent account of political life in Cheshire can be found in Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Politics. Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 77–94.

¹⁸⁹ Bodl., MS Tanner 32, fol. 15: dean of Chester to archbishop of Canterbury, Chester, 3 Apr. 1684.

¹⁹⁰ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 326: [?] to [?], Gloucester, 25 Aug. 1683. For more on Fowler, see Mark Goldie and John Spurr, ‘Politics and the Restoration parish: Edward Fowler and the struggle for St Giles Cripplegate’, *EHR*, 109 (1994), 572–96.

¹⁹¹ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 187: [?] to Secretary Jenkins, Aldingham, 22 July 1683.

¹⁹² R. Tudur Jones, ‘Relations between Anglicans and dissenters: the promotion of piety, 1670–1730’, in David Walker, ed., *A History of the Church in Wales* (Cowbridge and Bridgend, 1976), pp. 86–9; Philip Jenkins, ‘“The Old Leaven”: The Welsh Roundheads after 1660’, *HJ*, 24 (1981), 819; Richard Brinkley, ‘Religion and education, 1660–1815’, in Brian Howells, ed., *Early Modern Pembrokeshire, 1536–1815* (Haverfordwest, 1987), pp. 229–30.

¹⁹³ For lords lieutenant, see above, pp. 53–4. For criticism of the bishops’ cowardice during the Oxford Parliament, see HMC, *Fourteenth Report, App.*, Pt. IX, p. 427.

¹⁹⁴ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 183: archbishop of Canterbury to bishop of Chichester, 16 Dec. 1681 (draft). Carleton replied bitterly that he had been belied by ‘so fals an information’, given by his enemies in the diocese. (*Ibid.*, fol. 222.)

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 76v: bishop of Coventry and Lichfield to archbishop of Canterbury, 1 Aug. 1681; *ibid.*, fol. 84: same to same, 4 Aug. 1681.

Charles and James, Wood was suspended from office.¹⁹⁶ Such affairs provide the backdrop for Samuel Parker's crushing summary of the Episcopal bench: 'You know what [tools]¹⁹⁷ are of late crept into that sacred order . . . & if ever Episcopacy was made a mean & contemptible thing, it is so now'.¹⁹⁸ Though the Church of England was an influential force in supporting tory politics in the last years of Charles II it was thus compromised both ideologically and practically by many of its personnel.

Conclusion

For all its remoteness from England, North Africa provides a concluding link between some of the themes pursued in this chapter. In January 1682 the minister and churchwardens of Thorncombe in Somerset went through the parish soliciting funds to redeem Christian captives in Muslim North Africa. At the house of Edmund Prideaux, formerly the whig MP for Taunton, they met with the blunt answer that the captives 'were better to live in slavery under the Turk than to come home here, where they must live under Popery'.¹⁹⁹ The following year, Prideaux would be suspected of involvement in the Rye House Plot.²⁰⁰ In the wake of those events, one of James's political clients, George Legge, earl of Dartmouth, gave a final speech to the military officers he commanded at the garrison in Tangiers, shortly before the post was abandoned. As he told them, 'you are remanded from this Place where you can be noe longer Capable of doing his Majestie farther Service . . . and Chose as Instrumentall to the safeguard of himself, and his Kingdomes att home'.²⁰¹

There can be no denying the increased scale of military forces in England during the last eighteen months of Charles's reign.²⁰² Yet the fears of 'popery and arbitrary government' that many contemporaries undoubtedly held have distracted historians from the very considerable evidence of continued factionalism and distrust within Restoration government, both civil and ecclesiastical. Perceptions of government during the personal rule were by no means all about recovered confidence or incipient tyranny, as Roger

¹⁹⁶ Bodl., MS Tanner 32, fols. 97r-v: bishop of Rochester to same, Windsor, 21 July 1684 (Sancroft's endorsement). See also, *ibid.*, fols. 115, 175.

¹⁹⁷ This is very indistinctly written – 'fools' is a plausible alternative, but does not significantly change the sense of the judgement.

¹⁹⁸ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 255v: Dr Samuel Parker to Dr Simon Patrick, [1681 or 1682]. Ironically, Parker was later infamous as James II's tame bishop of Oxford.

¹⁹⁹ CSPD 1682, p. 26: Capt. Gregory Alford to Marmaduke Alford, Lyme, 14 Jan. 1682.

²⁰⁰ For Prideaux's career, see HOP 1660–1690, III, 288.

²⁰¹ Staffordshire RO, D(w) 1778/1/i/855: 'The Lord Dartmouth's Speech to the Military Officers of the Garrison of Tanger October the 4th 1683'.

²⁰² E.g. HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, IV, 596: Sir Robert Southwell to duke of Ormond, King's Weston, 29 Sept. 1684; Harris, *Restoration*, p. 420.

L'Estrange's critique of the lower echelons of government which was quoted at the start of this chapter suggests. Writing from court in May 1682, the old and experienced politician James Butler, duke of Ormond, argued that whilst 'The King's affairs here do visibly improve' this did not mean that 'caution and industry are . . . to be laid aside'. In particular, 'There is, ever was, and ever will be courtiers and ministers that envy and heave at one another.'²⁰³ These sentiments seemed likely to find practical expression shortly before Charles's final illness, when rumours circulated about imminent changes of personnel within Whitehall. Although ultimately overtaken by events, it seems possible that the merry-go-round might have disadvantaged James – who was forced to make preparations for a return to Scotland to supervise another parliament – and his supporters, and led to a revival of Halifax's fortunes.²⁰⁴ Whatever the case, a 'tory reaction' was not advanced by such corrosive doubts about the attitudes of the crown and the competence of its governance. Thanks to such uncertainty, loyal bishops and churchmen in the country continued to fear that their actions would be misrepresented or undermined at Court, leaving them vulnerable to their local opponents.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 377: duke of Ormond to archbishop of Armagh, Windsor, 30 May 1682. Cf. Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 231; Bodl., MS Carte 217, fol. 47; Pearse Street Library, Dublin, Gilbert MS 109, fols. 21–2.

²⁰⁴ For a summary of the various historiographical positions on this subject, see Hutton, *Charles II*, pp. 441–2.

²⁰⁵ E.g. Bodl., MS Tanner 129, fols. 78, 108, 122; Bodl., MS Tanner 141, fol. 126; Bodl., MS Tanner 143, fol. 211; Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 279.

3

The politics of religious persecution

This chapter builds on earlier comments about the significant interpenetration of religious and political life in this period. If – as the previous chapter noted – one key perceived characteristic of this period in the historiography has usually been a change in the character of government, another has been an alleged shift in attitudes towards dissent. After very patchy enforcement of the penal laws through much of the 1670s, the first half of the 1680s has been seen as the crowning moment of seventeenth-century English religious intolerance. Whilst this chapter will not dispute the severity of persecution in many areas, it will argue for a more nuanced and locally specific perspective. Evidence will be presented of the continued connivance by office-holders that many nonconformists experienced. Both this connivance, and the contrary persecuting zeal exhibited by many Tories, had significant partisan political dimensions. Overall, this perspective will form the backdrop for the religious self-images and caricatures in contemporary polemic that will be discussed in chapter five.

Introduction: Persecution and nonconformity

The moderating of the penal laws with regard to . . . [dissenters] is the most important thing that can be agitated with regard to the domestic affairs of England, and leads to the entire destruction of episcopacy and of the English nation . . .

(Paul Barillon, French ambassador to England, to Louis XIV, December 1680)¹

For some Protestant dissenters the ending of Charles II's reign was an unambiguous sign of divine intervention. Recalling February 1685 in his memoirs, the Quaker merchant Ambrose Barnes wrote that, 'It pleased the Almighty by the death of Charles II to give deliverance to his people.'² Searching for

¹ Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland from the Dissolution of the last Parliament of Charles II until the Sea Battle of La Hogue* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1771–3), II, app., 287.

² *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes, Late Merchant and Sometime Alderman of Newcastle upon Tyne*, ed., W.H.D. Longstaffe (Publ. of the Surtees Society, 50, 1867), p. 175.

parallels, Barnes looked back to Roman antiquity: 'No inscription could better fit this King's coin than Dioclesian's triumph that he had overturned the Christians who would have overturned the Commonwealth.' The personal rule was undoubtedly a period of severe religious persecution: Barnes employed metaphors of a 'furnace' and roaring seas to describe the horror of contemporary events.³ These years saw both the last and perhaps the greatest of the seventeenth-century drives by the Church of England to enforce conformity; certainly the most vigorous since the Laudian 'Thorough' of the 1630s.⁴ By contrast, Catholics were probably less molested than they had been for decades.⁵ Critical observers like Barnes were in little doubt as to the likely result of this apparently two-pronged religious policy: 'men's hearts [were] failing them for fear, and for looking for the things that were coming upon the earth under the next Popish successor'.⁶ Schooled in Protestant histories that lingered on the iniquities of Mary Tudor's reign, dissenters feared that James's accession to the throne as an openly Catholic king would usher in a repeat performance of unfettered bigotry. It is unlikely to have been coincidental that the last complete edition of the great Protestant martyrology, John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, was published in 1684. Interest in gathering subscriptions for it had been particularly intense amongst nonconformists.⁷

A very different perspective was blasted from Anglican pulpits in the wake of James's accession. Preaching on the first Sunday after James was proclaimed king, Benjamin Camfield, chaplain to the earl of Rutland, and rector of Aileston in Leicestershire, dwelt at length on such hardy perennials of Restoration Anglican political theology as the royal supremacy, the divine right of kings, and the hereditary nature of monarchy. In the epistle dedicatory to the published version of the sermon Camfield evoked 'that Religious Loyalty which the Church of England traineth up all her Members to'.⁸ But

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 201–2. For the employment of similar imagery by Welsh Quakers in 1685, see Geraint H. Jenkins, 'Quaker and anti-Quaker literature in Welsh from the Restoration to Methodism', *Welsh History Review*, 7 (1975), 407.

⁴ R.A. Beddard, 'The Restoration Church', in J.R. Jones, ed., *The Restored Monarchy 1660–1688* (Basingstoke and London, 1979), p. 174; Douglas R. Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England, 1661–1689: A Study in the Perpetuating and Tempering of Parliamentarianism* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1969), ch. 8, esp. p. 150.

⁵ John Miller, *Popery and Politics in England 1660–1688* (Cambridge, 1973), ch. 9.

⁶ *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes*, ed. Longstaffe, p. 202.

⁷ *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby, F.R.S., Author of the Topography of Leeds (1677–1724)*, ed., J. Hunter (2 vols., 1830), I, 166; DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 354. See also, Lois G. Schwoerer, 'William, Lord Russell: the making of a martyr, 1683–1685', *JBS*, 24 (1985), 59 n. 92. (I am grateful to Dr Tom Freeman for pointing me to the last of these references.)

⁸ Benjamin Camfield, *A sermon preach'd upon the first Sunday after the proclamation of the High and Mighty Prince, James the II . . .* (1685), ep. ded., and *passim*. Camfield was also careful to append to the published sermon James's pledge at the first Privy Council meeting of the reign to uphold the rights of the Church of England. *Ibid.*, pp. 23–5.

for all their public professions of faith in James II at the time of his accession, many orthodox churchmen were privately anxious. Ten days after Charles II's death, Humphrey Prideaux, student of Christ Church and canon of Norwich, was deeply pessimistic:

God . . . often makes tryal of us by afflictions & proves us by adversity. His church is not to be triumphant here But if we looke backward into the Historys of it we shall ever find it struggling under difficultys & persecutions & always best thriving under them. the great quiet we have now had for many years have [sic] made too many of us forget our selves & therefore are ripe for those chastisements of the Almighty which we now fear to make us again recollect our selves & reform our lifes before him.⁹

Prideaux's pessimism would not be fully justified until the winter of 1686/7, when James performed a remarkable *volte-face*, enraged at the refusal of even his strongest supporters amongst the Anglican establishment to countenance a repeal of the Test Acts that guaranteed their own power at the expense of Catholics and Protestant dissenters. Having spent years supporting the rights of the Church of England as the natural bulwark of monarchical authority, he transferred his patronage to its enemies with the ultimate aim of using parliament to establish a statutory toleration that would benefit his Catholic co-religionists. In so doing he provided much of the impetus behind his ultimate deposition in 1688/9.

But in 1685 Prideaux's words echo Barnes' in two important respects. First, they evoke a sense of the recurrent motif of persecution in Christian thought.¹⁰ Conceptually, men from all parts of the religious spectrum existed within a shared mental framework that was profoundly historical, and which put a particular premium on the 'primitive purity' of the early Church.¹¹ That Church had been persecuted, and so *suffering* persecution could be celebrated, but never *inflicting* it. In Restoration England to persecute was to behave in a distinctively popish manner, and to show insufficient confidence in the manifest truth of one's own religious position.¹² When members of the Church of England legally – and illegally – assaulted dissenters, they believed themselves not to be persecuting, but to be educating hardened sinners who stubbornly refused to acknowledge the Church's message. The

⁹ Devon RO, Z 19/40/7: Humphrey Prideaux to Richard Coffin, Oxford, 16 Feb. 1685.

¹⁰ John Spurr, *English Puritanism 1603–1689* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 140–6.

¹¹ Eamon Duffy, 'Primitive Christianity revived: religious renewal in Augustan England', in D. Baker, ed., *Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History* (SCH, 14, Oxford, 1977), pp. 287–300. George Southcombe is currently exploring the historical awareness of Protestant dissenters during the Restoration. For his first thoughts on the matter see his 'The responses of nonconformists to the Restoration in England', unpub. D.Phil. thesis, Univ. of Oxford, 2005.

¹² B.E. Howells, ed., *A Calendar of Letters Relating to North Wales 1533–circa 1700* (Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales History and Law Ser., 23, Cardiff, 1967), p. 254.

personal rule of Charles II and the latter part of James II's reign were thus mirror images of each other, at least for Protestants.

The second way that Prideaux's words echo Barnes' is in their awareness of the intensely interlinked character of church and state in Restoration England. Anglican apologists were vociferous in their praise for the magisterial character of the English Reformation.¹³ Unlike most of its Protestant counter-parts in Europe, and Scotland in particular, the Church of England had emerged as part of a process that was overseen and controlled by the king-in-parliament. From the reign of Elizabeth onwards that Church had been protected by a growing body of legislation, a supremely important fact since parliamentary statutes had a totemic quality for the English as the ultimate expression of an ancient constitution centred on the rule of law. The power of that body of legislation in practice was what had made Barnes' and his co-religionists' lives so wretched during the personal rule, and was what Prideaux feared would soon inflict the same misery on Anglicans. Beneath their gloom and anger, both men point to the way that if persecution was a perennial motif, how it was to be inflicted was a contingent and unpredictable matter. Most obviously a huge amount depended on the attitudes of the king as Supreme Governor of the Church and defender of the faith. Charles II was carefully watched by individuals from all parts of the religious spectrum for signs of incipient betrayal. At several points during his reign he had shown spectacular disregard for what now seems – and seemed to many at the time – his obvious political best interest: upholding the legally enshrined power of the Church of England. In 1662 and 1672 he attempted to use the royal prerogative to establish the liberty for tender consciences that he promised in the Declaration of Breda, issued shortly before his Restoration. Both dissenters and Anglicans during the personal rule continued to wonder about the king's future intentions.

These were likely to be closely related to another aspect of the interlinked character of the church and the state: the perceived character of nonconformity. Were those who proved unwilling to accept the discipline of the Church of England necessarily incendiaries in the state? Or were they actually fellow-travellers in the national resistance to Rome that had proved such a potent part of the post-Reformation English self-image? The stakes were immensely high. In the absence of significant armed force, oaths – promises made before God – were at the heart of maintaining order, yet many dissenters refused to take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance.¹⁴ In

¹³ E.g. Matthew Fowler, Ἡ ἈΝΩΘΕΝ ΣΟΦΙΑ. Or, *The Properties of Heavenly Wisdom* (1682), p. 18.

¹⁴ John Spurr, '“The strongest bond of conscience”: oaths and the limits of tolerance in early modern England', in Harald E. Braun and Edward Vallance, eds., *Contexts of Conscience in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1700* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 151–65; Edward Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant: State Oaths, Protestantism, and the Political Nation, 1553–1682* (Woodbridge, 2005).

the absence of a widespread acceptance of pluralism, uniformity was the only chance for peace and prosperity: a house divided against itself would fall. This chapter will argue that despite the evident persecution that was such a feature of the personal rule, the common issues raised by men as different as Ambrose Barnes and Humphrey Prideaux were vital, contested, and of great political significance. In particular, the close associations that had developed between whigs and nonconformists during the Exclusion Crisis ensured that religious attitudes would continue to be taken as indicative of political aims throughout this period. Indeed the interconnections between religion and politics would only increase thanks to a number of key events, notably the Rye House Plot of 1683 which seemed to confirm tory fears of the violent nature of whigs and their nonconformist allies. Nevertheless, it is striking to find a continuing thread of support – or, at least, connivance – for nonconformists from sympathetic magistrates. This may well represent one of the most significant indicators of submerged and non-demonstrative whiggery during the personal rule.

Hating dissent

There can be no doubt that the personal rule did see the severe persecution of many dissenters. By 1684, the ‘chiefest business’ at the Middlesex sessions was ‘the prosecution of Dissenters’ and it was said that ‘the Government be resolved to make a thorough work of it, know they are ill weeds, and if any of them be left, will in their own time spring out and poison the land’.¹⁵ The bitterness of many in the face of a perceived threat from dissenters is clear. As the Oxfordshire clergyman Richard Evans put it in 1682, ‘Dissenters of what sort soever . . . are as soe many pricking briars, and grieveing thornes, troubling the church.’¹⁶ Another argued that ‘To mention the Inquisition in Spayne, or our owne Bedlam in England (two sorts of prisons, which a severe Monke sayd, would cure all kinds of offenders) would be abhorrent to a true christian temper, if any milde method may prevayle; which ought to be heartily wisht, but hardly to be expected.’¹⁷ Elsewhere, according to a nonconformist account of a visitation sermon preached in Yorkshire, Dr Richard Hook informed his auditory that ‘if I were a separatist, and acted against the laws as they doe, I should think myself worthy of death, and if magistrates should adjudge me to the most cruel torturing death that ever any

¹⁵ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 203: newsletter, Whitehall, 1 Mar. 1683/4. For the previous Middlesex session’s persecutory impulses, see *CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684*, p. 211; Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 295.

¹⁶ Mary Clapinson, ed., *Bishop Fell and Nonconformity: Visitation Documents from the Oxford Diocese, 1682–83* (Oxfords. Rec. Soc., 52, Leeds, 1980 for 1977 and 1978), p. 21: Richard Evans to bishop of Oxford, Hethe, 6 July 1682.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20: Boham to bishop of Oxford, Harpsden, 2 June 1682.

suffered I should judge that I had nothing but my just deserts'.¹⁸ Whatever their other differences, suffering was thus predictably a common thread running through the writings of Baptists, Presbyterians, Independents, and Quakers.¹⁹

What was it that triggered such visceral loathing? As Jonathan Scott in particular has been keen to emphasize, an important aspect of Restoration life was the politics of memory.²⁰ The 'world turned upside down' of the 1640s and 1650s undoubtedly loomed large in contemporary minds, a period when religious sects had assumed a prominence out of all proportion to their actual numbers. And if we are to agree with recent scholars who have challenged older notions of nonconformists losing their radical edge after 1660, weighed down by 'the experience of defeat', then we must accept that Anglicans had at least credible fears of a return to the upheavals and uncertainties of the past.²¹ This was not just a question of actual plotting and rebellion: it was also a result of frustration at the day-to-day facts of dissenting life. Failing to attend church, or attending it only occasionally as a means of avoiding persecution and retaining political office, niggled even when it did not infuriate. Anglicans – and, predictably, the clergy in particular – argued for the overwhelming merits of their church, the church that Charles I had died for in 1649.²² It is not hard to hear the resentment at what could easily

¹⁸ *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A. 1630–1702; His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books*, ed. J. Horsfall Turner (4 vols., Brighouse and Bingley, 1882), II, 288.

¹⁹ Edward Bean Underhill, ed., *Records of the Churches of Christ Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham, 1644–1720* (Hanserd Knollys Soc., 1854), p. 280; *Diary of Ralph Thoresby*, ed. Hunter, I, 155; H.G. Tibbutt, ed., *The Minutes of The First Independent Church (now Bunyan Meeting) at Bedford 1656–1766* (Publs. of the Bedfords. Hist. Rec. Soc., 55, Luton, 1976), p. 86; Russell Mortimer, ed., *Minute Book of the Men's Meeting of the Society of Friends in Bristol 1667–1686* (Publs. of the Bristol Rec. Soc., 26, Gateshead, 1971), p. 159; Joseph Besse, comp., *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers . . .* (2 vols., 1753), I, 54–73; DWL, Morrice MS P, fols. 322, 330. The most sophisticated and sustained account of the different experiences of the various groups of Restoration dissenters is now Southcombe, 'Responses of nonconformists'.

²⁰ Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis, 1677–1683* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 26–49; *idem*, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 161–81; Geoffrey Holmes, *Religion and Party in Late Stuart England* (1975), p. 5; Gary S. De Krey, 'Reformation in the Restoration Crisis, 1679–1682', in Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier, eds., *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540–1688* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 246–7.

²¹ Southcombe, 'Responses of nonconformists', intro.; *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, ed. N.H. Keeble and Geoffrey F. Nuttall (2 vols., Oxford, 1991), I, xxviii. Philip Jenkins has emphasized the degree to which conventicles were meeting places for old Cromwellian soldiers in Wales: "The Old Leaven": the Welsh Roundheads after 1660', *HJ*, 24 (1981), 813.

²² Andrew Lacey, 'The Office for King Charles the Martyr in the Book of Common Prayer, 1662–1685', *JEH*, 53 (2002), 510–26; *idem*, *The Cult of King Charles the Martyr* (Woodbridge, 2003); H.W. Randall, 'The rise and fall of a martyrology: sermons on Charles I', *HLQ*, 10 (1947), 135–67. The sermon preached on 30 Jan. 1681 in St Mary's, Oxford, 'swinged the phanaticques and presbyterians away', at a time when the townsmen

be portrayed as dissenters' pig-headed or perverse unwillingness to accept Anglican arguments and conform. According to the preacher Daniel Nicols, many dissenters 'deserve the lash, and ought to be scourged into better manners'. They were 'Religious Quacks' who aimed 'to set men at an infinite distance from the solemn service of Almighty God: and the first lesson they teach their Children and Proselytes, is, that our Liturgy is Popery, that our Ministers are Antichristian; that we have all received the mark of the Beast'.²³ Laurence Womock, the veteran polemicist who was soon to be made bishop of St David's, noted in 1682 that the contention 'That things indifferent should be made necessary to Communion with the church & consequently to Salvation has made a great noise'. Yet he argued that 'I am very sure God has given his Church Authority to make them soe; whereupon 'tis no usurpation (in the Governours of the church) but Divine appointment; So that the refractory to that Authority doe not (soe much) despise men as God.'²⁴ Nicols, Womock, and other churchmen provided the intellectual justification for the kind of irritation and anger which Sir George Jeffreys expressed more crudely when he railed at Ambrose Lewis of Wrexham for keeping a conventicle at his school: 'by which means your children get the twang of fanaticism in their noses when they are young, and they will never leave it'.²⁵ Thus a primary function of persecution was educative and habit-breaking.²⁶ Four Southwark JPs reported with satisfaction in October 1683 on 'the change that a late vigorous execution of the laws against Dissenters has wrought' on different groups. Some 'probably will be induced to join in public matters with the loyal interest', whilst others 'have been awed into a more dutiful behaviour . . . and seem forward to give all assurances that they will not mix with the factions in public affairs'.²⁷ Outward conformity and political loyalty thus went hand in hand.²⁸

of the city were said to 'Grow insolent as in 1641'. *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary, of Oxford, 1632–1695, described by Himself*, ed. Andrew Clarke (5 vols., Oxford Historical Society, 19, 21, 26, 30, 40, Oxford, 1891–1900), II, 514, 512.

²³ Daniel Nicols, *A Sermon Preach'd in the Cathedral of Lincoln . . .* (1681), ep. ded.

²⁴ Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 71: Womock to archbishop of Canterbury, Ely, 14 Aug. 1682.

²⁵ Matthew Henry, *The Life of the Rev. Philip Henry, A.M.*, corrected and enlarged by J.B. Williams, in *The Lives of Philip and Matthew Henry* (2 vols. in one, Guildford and London, 1974), p. 151 n.

²⁶ Mark Goldie, 'The theory of religious intolerance in Restoration England', in O.P. Grell, J.I. Israel, and N. Tyacke, eds., *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 348, 352, 366.

²⁷ CSPD I Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 61. (Another version of this text can be found in Bodl., MS Tanner 140, fols. 112–13v.)

²⁸ To cite just three drops from the ocean of sermonising on this subject: John Byrom, *The Necessity of Subjection . . .* (1681), p. 3; William Clifford, *The Power of Kings, Particularly The British Monarchy Asserted and Vindicated . . .* (1682), p. 2; Nicols, *A Sermon Preach'd in the Cathedral of Lincoln*, p. 3.

The physical and financial costs of persecution

Persecution had been a recurring fact of life for many dissenters since hopes for comprehension within a broadly based Church of England had been dashed in the early 1660s.²⁹ Although the level of persecution had varied considerably over the course of Charles II's reign,³⁰ by the 1680s there was an unmistakable sense of gloom in the writings of many dissenters, especially those with long memories. Harking back to the 'Great Ejection' of 'Black Bartholomew's Day' (August 1662), one preacher in 1683 referred to the 'long night – a night of – 20 yeares' that his auditors had endured.³¹ When in the same year John Owen – formerly Oliver Cromwell's vice-chancellor of Oxford University – was dying, he lamented that the ship of the church was currently in a storm, a sentiment echoed by the fifty-nine-year-old Rye dissenter Samuel Jeake the elder.³² The following year, a correspondent of Richard Baxter went even further and referred to the legislation of 1662 that shaped the Restoration Church of England as having destroyed the reformation.³³

The evidence clearly shows the considerable impact that vigorous individual persecutors – 'worrying wolves', 'Angerymen', and 'inraged devills'³⁴ – could have in their localities. In Dorset, Captain Gregory Alford was a hammer of the sectaries, battering down the door of a meeting house on the anniversary of the regicide in 1682 and taking the names of 110 dissenters he found inside.³⁵ Some persecutors even refused to be bound by considerations of applying the law prudently or moderately. In Bridport, the informer William Bond was said to have told imprisoned Quakers that 'they should

²⁹ Ian Green, *The Re-establishment of the Church of England, 1660–1663* (Oxford, 1978); Paul Seaward, *The Cavalier Parliament and the Reconstruction of the Old Regime, 1661–1667* (Cambridge, 1989), ch. 7.

³⁰ Anthony Fletcher, 'The Enforcement of the Conventicle Acts 1664–1679', in W.J. Sheils, ed., *Persecution and Toleration* (SCH, 21, Oxford, 1984), pp. 235–46. The personal rule period lies, deliberately, outside the scope of Fletcher's article.

³¹ Bodl., MS Rawlinson E. 2 (sermon notes by Bray Lane), fol. 65v: 'The word of god in tow sermons preached by mr ness – march the – 16 day 1683'.

³² *The Correspondence of John Owen, 1616–83, with an Account of his Life and Work*, ed. Peter Toon (Cambridge, 1970), p. 174; East Sussex RO, FRE 5090.

³³ DWL, Baxter Correspondence, MS 59, ii, fol. 95: [Stephen Lobb?] to Baxter, [c. 12 Apr. 1684]. For the intriguing career of Lobb – which incorporated both Presbyterian and Independent elements – see Richard L. Greaves, 'Lobb, Stephen (d. 1699)', *ODNB*.

³⁴ Bodl., MS Rawlinson E. 2, fols. 64, 253: sermons by Mr Ness, 16 Mar. and 1 Apr. 1683. See also *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, ed., Keeble and Nuttall, II, 263.

³⁵ CSPD 1682, p. 46: Capt. Gregory Alford to Secretary Jenkins, Lyme, 30 Jan. 1682. (For criticism of Alford, see Bodl., MS Rawlinson letters 100, fols. 187, 493; Bodl., MS Rawlinson letters 101, fol. 4.) For vandalism on another anniversary, see Besse, comp., *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers*, I, 63.

have no Law'.³⁶ The sheriff of Bristol for 1682–3, Sir John Knight, was clear that 'Whoever shall attempt to put the laws in execution must expect great clamour and noise' but that 'What has law for its warrant can be no disservice to Church and King.'³⁷ In the light of such sentiments, it is scarcely surprising to find that Nonconformists thought 'none but Tirants beares rule' in Bristol.³⁸

The physical and financial costs of persecution could be enormous. Severe physical violence against individuals may not have been that common: when a nonconformist preacher's legs were broken as he was dragged from his pulpit it was said that 'The dissenters make a mighty noyse' about the incident, suggesting a degree of atypicality and shock.³⁹ More frequent were attacks on property. Perhaps most visibly, some dissenting meeting houses were either internally damaged or completely destroyed by tory Anglican partisans, particularly in the south-west – for instance at Salisbury and Bristol,⁴⁰ Bridgewater,⁴¹ Lyme and Bridport,⁴² and Taunton. The latter was a particularly notorious centre of nonconformity, and a hostile local witness argued that 'This great meeting-place was the eye of all the West of England for Presbyterians and for meetings and now it's all gone.' Ten cart-loads of material were turned into a bonfire, prompting the ringing of church bells all night by jubilant local persecutors. In the wake of such comprehensive vandalism Anglican churches were unsurprisingly said to be full.⁴³ Elsewhere, in Norfolk 'one of the Largest and finest Meeting houses in England' was demolished at King's Lynn. The timing was significant: the meeting

³⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 172. See also, *ibid.*, I, 183, 186, 449, 543, 616–17.

³⁷ CSPD 1682, p. 100: Sir John Knight to Secretary Jenkins, Bristol, 26 Feb. 1682. For Jenkins' anxiety as to the divisiveness of Knight's 'over-great zeal', see *ibid.*, pp. 94–5, and for assistance in untangling the numerous John Knights prominent in Bristol life at this time, see Alfred B. Beaven, 'The Knights of Bristol', *Notes & Queries*, 9th ser., 3 (Jan.–June 1899), 321–2.

³⁸ YAS, MS 6 (unfol.): Jane Scarborough to Mrs Grace Bickerdicke, Exeter, 22 Sept. 1682. (The remark also applied to Exeter.) For the severity of persecution in Bristol, see Jonathan Barry, 'The politics of religion in Restoration Bristol', in Tim Harris, Paul Seaward and Mark Goldie, eds., *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 163–89, esp. p. 177 and the sources cited in n. 56. This persecution was partially intended as revenge for the favour shown towards dissenters during the Exclusion period: Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 45v.

³⁹ Bodl., MS Carte 222, fol. 322v: MS newsletter to archbishop of Armagh, [date obscured] 1682.

⁴⁰ Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 152.

⁴¹ CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.*, p. 60. For re-building by 1705, see Holmes, *Religion and Party in Late Stuart England*, p. 15.

⁴² Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 75v.

⁴³ CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, p. 287: Stephen Timewell to Lord Stawell, Taunton, 2 June 1683. See also CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.*, p. 279. For Taunton's notoriety, see CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, p. 212; CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.* (a host of refs. via the index); HOP 1660–1690, I, 378–9; JRUL, Leigh of Lyme Letters: John Chicheley to Richard Leigh, Bloomsbury, 13 June 1685.

house was destroyed in the wake of the Rye House Plot and at the same time that a loyal address was sent to Charles from 300 local inhabitants congratulating him on his escape from it.⁴⁴

Financially, the surviving records of local courts point to the extent to which fines were being levied in many parts of the country. In a swathe of central England – Warwickshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and Kesteven (Lincs.) – quarter sessions' records together show substantial sums being held by sheriffs as the king's third part of the fines levied on dissenting conventicles.⁴⁵ Persecution was also qualitatively as well as quantitatively significant: men as prominent as Richard Baxter and William Penn were subjected to financial assault at this time.⁴⁶ Although the fines represented an unprecedented source of revenue for the Treasury – £24,300 for the personal rule period⁴⁷ – the process must also have been indirectly detrimental to the economy.⁴⁸ At a micro-level, Samuel Jeake the younger recorded in his diary the damage that dodging persecution had done to his wool and hop trading and money-lending in Rye: a total of £54 13s 1d by New Year's Day 1685.⁴⁹ At a macro-level, the spectacular failure of a number of bankers at the beginning of 1683 was blamed on fearful dissenters withdrawing their funds after being excommunicated, 'fearing that after such excommunication they could not sue for their debts'. Tellingly, it was claimed that it was not just dissenters who removed their funds, 'but all that are whiggishly inclin'd'.⁵⁰ And above and beyond the purely financial cost to the economy, fines from persecution under statutes originally designed to

⁴⁴ JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: MS newsletter to Richard Legh, London, 12 July 1683. Much of this letter is reproduced in E.C. Legh (Baroness Newton), *Lyme Letters 1660–1760* (1925), p. 107, where it is misdated 1682.

⁴⁵ S.C. Ratcliffe and H.C. Johnson, eds., *Warwick County Records Volume VII. Quarter Sessions Records Easter, 1674, to Easter, 1682* (Warwick, 1946), p. 251; H. Hampton Copnall, comp., *Nottinghamshire County Records . . . of the 17th Century* (Nottingham, 1915), p. 141; J. Charles Cox, *Three Centuries of Derbyshire Annals, as Illustrated by the Records of the Quarter Sessions . . .* (2 vols., 1890), I, 301–6, 351–6; S.A. Peyton, ed., *Minutes of Proceedings in Quarter Sessions Held for the Parts of Kesteven in the County of Lincoln 1674–1695* (2 vols., Publ. of the Lincoln Rec. Soc., 25, 26, Lincoln, 1931), I, 134, 136–7, 140, 159; II, 209.

⁴⁶ For Baxter, see DWL, Morrice MS P, fols. 340, 350; CSPD 1 May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, p. 293. For the fine that Penn was subjected to in Dec. 1684, see BL, Add. MS 38175, fol. 111.

⁴⁷ Mark Goldie, 'James II and the dissenters' revenge: the commission of enquiry of 1688', *Historical Research*, 66 (1993), 57 n. 13.

⁴⁸ For a contemporary critique of persecution on the basis of the damage it would do to trade, see CSPD 1682, pp. 602–3.

⁴⁹ *An Astrological Diary of the Seventeenth Century. Samuel Jeake of Rye, 1652–1699*, ed., Michael Hunter and Annabel Gregory (Oxford, 1988), p. 171. See also *ibid.*, p. 67; Michael Hunter, 'Jeake, Samuel (1652–1699)', ODNB.

⁵⁰ Norfolk RO, WKC 7/6/66: 11 Jan. 1682/3. For the employment of excommunication as a political tactic, see DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 347; Bodl., MS Tanner 149, fol. 128; Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 171; HMC, Ormonde, ns, VI, 440.

punish Roman Catholics provoked bitter hostility and legal challenge from Protestant dissenters.⁵¹

Sympathy for dissenters and the regional variety of persecution

Nevertheless, despite the persecution that did undoubtedly afflict many individuals and groups during the personal rule, the overall picture was considerably more ambiguous than most historians have allowed. The patchy nature of anti-dissenter activity noted earlier in Charles's reign did not suddenly harden into consistent and overwhelming action.⁵² Certainly persecution continued to prompt strong criticism. In 1684 the marquis of Halifax responded to the dominant paradigm when he wrote that a persecuting zeal should not always recommend magistrates and divines. Rather than 'storms and Thunder; a clearer sky sometimes would make the church [of England] Looke more like Heaven, and would doe more towards reclayming those wanderers [i.e. the nonconformists] than a perpetuall Terrour which seemeth to have no intermission'.⁵³ In July 1681 Ralph Thoresby heard the future archbishop of York, John Sharp, preach an emollient sermon arguing that Christians should 'do all things with discretion and moderation'.⁵⁴ And in the south-west, Edward Fowler boldly chose an assize sermon preached in Gloucester Cathedral to criticise not just the more troublesome dissenters, but also those 'among *our selves*, that do *little* consult our Churches interest . . . by their intemperate heats, branding *all* with the names of Fanaticks and Presbyterians who are not up to *their* pitch, and in all things just of their complexion; although they be as obedient to both their Civil and Ecclesiasticall Superiors as themselves'.⁵⁵

The correspondence of the higher clergy also testifies to the tensions that remained in local society over the treatment of dissenters. The sickly bishop of Norwich, Anthony Sparrow, has recently been described as having shown 'no interest whatever in the case for latitude or moderation'.⁵⁶ His beliefs put

⁵¹ East Sussex RO, FRE 5099; DWL, Morrice MS P, fols. 305, 320, 330, 351, 353, 355–6, 365, 368, 424–5. See also, J.A. Williams, 'English Catholicism under Charles II: the legal position', *Recusant History*, 7 (1963), 124.

⁵² Fletcher, 'Enforcement of the Conventicle Acts'. For the situation in Wales, see R. Tudur Jones, 'Religion in post-Restoration Brecknockshire 1660–1688', *Brycheiniog*, 8 (1962), 26, 51, 58–61; J.W. James, *A Church History of Wales* (Ilfracombe, 1945), p. 136; Thomas Richards, *Wales under the Penal Code (1662–1687)* (1925), p. 27.

⁵³ *The Works of George Savile Marquis of Halifax*, ed. Mark N. Brown (3 vols., Oxford, 1989), I, 203–4. Cf. DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 329.

⁵⁴ *Diary of Ralph Thoresby*, ed. Hunter, I, 95–6.

⁵⁵ Edward Fowler, *A Sermon Preached before the Judges . . .* (1681), pp. 27–8. Fowler went into print in large part to face up to the criticism he had received over the sermon. See *ibid.*, 'Preface to the reader'.

⁵⁶ Richard J. Ginn and Sean Kelsey, 'Sparrow, Anthony (1612–85)', ODNB.

him at odds with many inhabitants of Norwich, and left him miserably recording how he was afflicted by 'the humors of the people where I live, some clamouring loud against me for prosecuting schismatics & some who profess great loialty & zeal for the church . . . complaining becaus we do not proceed violently beyond the rules of law'.⁵⁷ It is telling that Sparrow does not simply say that it was 'schismatics' themselves who were complaining; rather he implies that conforming Anglicans were critical of his actions. Such tensions *within* the Church of England can also be seen in the course of a long and intense letter from the bishop of Oxford, John Fell, to Sir Richard Newdigate in May 1681. Writing a rather belated letter in the wake of the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament, Fell sought to persuade Newdigate that he was wrong to want to admit dissenters into the Church. Perhaps deliberately confusing matters by moving beyond the question of comprehension, Fell vehemently argued against 'letting in all dissenters into the Church' as this 'must draw after them the alteration of the government, & Popery: Toleration being certainly destructive of our reform'd religion'. Fell evoked memories of toleration during the civil wars and interregnum; a time 'when blood & rapin put on the mask of Godliness & reformation; and we lost our king, our libertie & property & religion, by fighting for them'.⁵⁸

The comments of bishops Sparrow and Fell imply that sympathy for dissenters amongst conformists was far from being a dead letter during the personal rule. This can be further substantiated if we consider both the uncertainty as to what Charles II's intentions were during these years, and the evidence of continued regional variety in the intensity of persecution. Recalling the unsteady conduct of the government throughout Charles's reign, an anonymous author of 'private advice' to Secretary Jenkins in 1681 argued

since you have begun with the Dissenters, if you look back, you will be in great danger to be lost, for . . . when you have made ten steps forwards and but one backwards, the adverse party has grown prodigiously, and several such forward steps having been made and not persevered in has brought things to their present pass. Dilatory proceedings have given the advers party advantage, therefore either go through or meddle not at all, for, not obtaining your end, you give the enemy the greatest advantage imaginable.⁵⁹

It is notable that this 'advice' arrived shortly before a wave of commentary at the end of 1681 as to the king's likely intentions with regard to dissenters. In December 1681 a newsletter designed for Scotland recounted at length the

⁵⁷ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 228: bishop of Norwich to archbishop of Canterbury, 8 Feb. 1681/2. (Partially quoted in Spurr, *Restoration Church*, p. 82.)

⁵⁸ Warwickshire RO, CR 136/B413: Fell to Newdigate, 11 May [1681]. In his endorsement on the back of the letter Newdigate wrote that Fell 'mistakes my sentiments'.

⁵⁹ CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 660: [anon.] to Secretary Jenkins, [?Nov.] 1681.

efforts of the judges and bishops to get Charles to authorise the repression of conventicles. Despite their repeated references to the evils of 1641, Charles was said to be extremely slow to act, arguing that 'he was obliged by his oath to maintaine & defend the Protestant Religion, And therefore so longe as they continued in that faith without prejudice to him; he wold not molest or trouble them'.⁶⁰ Similar rumours would continue at several points through the personal rule. News in Yarmouth in April 1683 made the dissenters there 'briskier than of late'. This included claims from Scotland that the 'orthodox clergy' in Edinburgh were under investigation for their use of funds at Heriot's Hospital, and that 'a letter came from his Majesty to the Privy Council for mitigating the severity of the law against the Nonconformists, which gives them no small hopes that a new indemnity will shortly be granted'.⁶¹ Just a few weeks earlier, news was carried into Buckinghamshire by the whig Lord Herbert of Cherbury that 'all the Town [i.e. London] rung of a Toleration & that it was thought there would be one, & that the Court would slacken the present violent Prosecution of the Whiggs rather then the Papists should be involvd in it'.⁶² When Charles died, despite the kind of hostility noted at the beginning of this chapter, some dissenters argued that better times had lain ahead with a general pardon.⁶³

Whatever the monarchical intent, in practice the regional variety of persecution remained considerable. The Oxfordshire of Hugh Boham and his zealous bishop, John Fell, was said to be 'the persecuted Shire of England', which led some Baptists to flee elsewhere, presumably to more tolerant areas.⁶⁴ Even within a county or region, the level of persecution could be markedly different. In Yorkshire, Oliver Heywood kept a day of thanksgiving on 30 August 1682, 'for the publick liberty we have enjoyed in my house without interruption, above ten years . . . when all the society round about us have been sadly broken and scattered . . . scarce any place in this county free except Hull'.⁶⁵ In Cambridgeshire, such persecution as there was seems mainly to have occurred in villages rather than the town of Cambridge itself.⁶⁶ And the great compiler of Quaker sufferings, Joseph

⁶⁰ NAS, GD158/2823: [newsletter], London, 15 Dec. 1681.

⁶¹ CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, p. 170: Richard Bower to [Secretary Jenkins], Yarmouth, 11 Apr. 1683.

⁶² Bodl., MS Ballard 39, fol. 3: John Williams to Arthur Charlett, High Wycombe, 20 Mar. 1682/3. (Printed in R.A. Beddard, 'A Whig view of Tory Oxford in 1683: Lord Herbert of Chirbury's criticism of the university', *Bodleian Library Record*, 15 (1995), 166–86.)

⁶³ East Sussex RO, FRE 5198.

⁶⁴ Clapinson, ed., *Bishop Fell and Nonconformity*, p. 26: John Bushell to bishop of Oxford, Lewknor, 4 July 1682.

⁶⁵ Heywood . . . *Autobiography, Diaries*, ed., Horsfall Turner, III, 214. See also, *Diary of Ralph Thoresby*, ed. Hunter, I, 128.

⁶⁶ Laurel Phillipson, 'Quakerism in Cambridge before the Act of Toleration (1653–1689)', *Proc. of the Cambridge Antiquarian Soc.*, 76 (1988 for 1987), 22.

Besse, was unable to print any examples from Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, or Worcestershire during the period of personal rule.⁶⁷ Some dissenters enjoyed a continuing liberty to worship thanks to the connivance of local office-holders. As Heywood wrote, 'we have been secured through the moderation of our officers'.⁶⁸ Far to the south, in East Sussex, dissenters heard that some local officers were 'friendly enough' to offer a warning when they were about to search for meetings.⁶⁹ And in north-east Wales and the Marches, Philip Henry's quiet moderation and tactful ministry secured the respect and tacit assistance of the bishop of St Asaph and even Sir George Jeffreys.⁷⁰

Chapter two has already suggested the extent to which the agents of governance reflected rather than transcended the divisions in political and religious society at this time. But the nature and extent of persecution was not simply due to the personnel of government, but of a wider mentality within which governors and governed operated.⁷¹ Some officials might accept bribes in order not to present dissenters within their jurisdictions, or to secure them favourable returns at trial,⁷² while others were said to be afraid of losing custom as a result of prosecuting neighbours.⁷³ Nevertheless some office-holders framed their actions upon less grasping foundations, and their 'kind connivance' could be based on several factors.⁷⁴ Some might themselves be dissenters or be related to those who were.⁷⁵ Others might share in the popular dislike of the agents of persecution in contemporary society: informers who made a living out of the conviction of dissenters.⁷⁶

⁶⁷ Besse, comp., *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers*, I, 143, 767, 561.

⁶⁸ Heywood . . . *Autobiography, Diaries*, ed. Horsfall Turner, II, 294; IV, 70, 72, 86, 87–8, 90–1, 96, 100, 101–2. For a pamphlet aimed at moderate JPs which urged a very strict interpretation of the law in order to frustrate its practical effect, see Thomas Ellwood, *A Caution to Constables* . . . (1683).

⁶⁹ East Sussex RO, FRE 5095: Samuel Jeake the elder to Samuel Jeake the younger, 10 Mar. 1682/3.

⁷⁰ *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry, M.A. of Broad Oak, Flintshire, A.D. 1631–1696*, ed., M.H. Lee (1882), p. 309; Henry, *Life of . . . Philip Henry*, pp. 149–55.

⁷¹ See e.g. Mark Goldie, 'Sir Peter Pett, sceptical Toryism and the science of toleration in the 1680s', in W.J. Sheils, ed., *Persecution and Toleration* (SCH, 21, Oxford, 1984), pp. 247–73.

⁷² NLW, MS 10784E, fol. 68: Brecknockshire Quarter Sessions Records, 11 July 1682; Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 210; Heywood . . . *Autobiography, Diaries*, ed., Horsfall Turner, IV, 88; CSPD 1682, p. 60.

⁷³ CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 696; CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 251; Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II. Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 72.

⁷⁴ Henry, ed., *Life of . . . Philip Henry*, p. 157.

⁷⁵ Nottinghamshire Archives, DD/SR/219/1/2; Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 173.

⁷⁶ Mark Goldie, 'The Hilton Gang and the purge of London in the 1680s', in Howard Nenner, ed., *Politics and the Political Imagination in Later Stuart Britain. Essays Presented to Lois Green Schwoerer* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 43–73; CSPD 1682, p. 584; CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, pp. 177, 204; Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 75v; Luttrell, *Brief Historical*

Still others might not be convinced of the ideological or pragmatic case for persecution.⁷⁷ Perhaps the most powerful issues of all were the day-to-day questions of sociability and local ties which might vitiate against individuals participating in divisive actions. Heywood's activities were, until his eventual imprisonment in 1685, greatly facilitated by his local constables. They would come and tell him of the pressures they were being placed under,⁷⁸ or advertise their arrival at his house when coming on official business so as not to find him at a meeting and so be forced to arrest him. Finally, if forced to disturb his meetings, at least one constable apologised to Heywood, saying that 'he was as loath to see me as I to see him'.⁷⁹ The language used is significant, as the example of local office-holders in East Sussex has already shown.⁸⁰ Officers could act as 'friends' by choosing to search Heywood's house at times when they knew he would not be hosting a meeting.⁸¹ Similarly, when the High Constable of the area told Heywood that he must not have a meeting at his house, he emphasized that 'I come as a friend in a neighbourly way, and you must take it as a kindness'.⁸²

Partisanship and religious tensions

Having examined the general mental link between religious conformity and political obedience, and the variety of local experiences of persecution, it is time to turn more explicitly to 'the politics of religion' during the personal rule.⁸³ This can be examined in relation to both foreign and domestic dissenters.

Who could be more suspect of sacrificing English liberties and religious forms than foreign religious groups? Despite graphic descriptions of their sufferings,⁸⁴ and the fact that an order in council of July 1681 denized

Relation, I, 228; Besse, comp., *A Collection of the Sufferings of the People called Quakers*, I, 11; DWL, Morrice MS P, fols. 357, 363, 416, 437, 441, 448; Harris, *London Crowds*, p. 73.

⁷⁷ Some argued for the benefits that would accrue from leniency towards nonconformists. Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 283.

⁷⁸ For another example of this admission of pressure, see Dorset RO, D/BLX/F12.

⁷⁹ *Heywood . . . Autobiography, Diaries*, ed. Horsfall Turner, IV, 72, 87–8, 90.

⁸⁰ See above, p. 77.

⁸¹ *Heywood . . . Autobiography, Diaries*, ed., Horsfall Turner, IV, 87–8.

⁸² *Ibid.*, IV, 93. For an admirable account of the complexity of local politics in relation to Heywood, see John Smail, 'Local politics in restoration England: religion, culture and politics in Oliver Heywood's Halifax', in Muriel C. McClendon, Joseph P. Ward and Michael MacDonald, eds., *Protestant Identities: Religion, Society, and Self-fashioning in Post-Reformation England* (Stanford, CA, 1999), pp. 234–48, 341–5. For the strain placed on ties of neighbourliness in London in this period, see Harris, *London Crowds*, pp. 72–3.

⁸³ To appropriate the title of the seminal collection of essays edited by Tim Harris, Paul Seaward, and Mark Goldie in 1990.

⁸⁴ E.g. Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fols. 101–2; NLI, MS 803, fol. 39; Nottinghamshire Archives, DD/SR/219/14: 26 Apr. 1681. Criticizing dissenters, one preacher claimed that

them,⁸⁵ Huguenots fleeing persecution did not receive as universally warm a welcome as they might have expected.⁸⁶ Whilst one writer assured a correspondent in France that the Huguenots were 'well received', others regarded them with considerable suspicion.⁸⁷ Just as native dissenters had been perceived as likely to help the Dutch during the Anglo-Dutch wars since their religious positions were believed to be similar, so the Huguenots' principles were called into question.⁸⁸ In the course of a letter mainly devoted to accounts of whig and nonconformist electioneering in preparation for an expected Parliament, one tory writer commented that 'This coming over of so many persecuted Protestants from France is a little trouble to me, for they are all Calvinists, whose principles are wholly inconsistent to monarchy.'⁸⁹ He also insinuated that Jesuits might use the Huguenot influx as a 'cover': 'why not some other fathers, the great disturbers of all loyalty, come over under that pretence?'⁹⁰

So widespread was the latter notion that the Privy Council was stung into publishing a denial that Catholics had come into the country intermixed with the Huguenots.⁹¹ This was not, however, enough to prevent a Scottish observer arguing that 'I do beleive yr are as many papists as protestants' amongst the refugees.⁹² Office-holders in the Channel Islands had particular grounds for anxiety: their proximity to France ensured a considerable influx of refugees, exacerbating the religious tensions that already existed, espe-

'the affronts we daily see put upon our Government, certainly help to kindle the rage of France against our Brethren there'. John Inett, *A Sermon Preached at the Assizes Held in Warwick* (1681), p. 25.

⁸⁵ Daniel Statt, 'The birthright of an Englishman: the practice of naturalization and denization of immigrants under the later Stuarts and early Hanoverians', *Proc. of the Huguenot Soc. of Great Britain and Ireland*, 25 (1989), 67–8.

⁸⁶ For different perspectives, see Malcolm R. Thorp, 'The anti-Huguenot undercurrent in late-seventeenth-century England', *Proc. of the Huguenot Soc. of London*, 22 (1976), 569–80; Mark Goldie, 'The Huguenot experience and the problem of toleration in Restoration England', in C.E.J. Caldicott, H. Gough, and J.-P. Pittion, eds., *The Huguenots and Ireland: Anatomy of an Emigration* (Dublin, 1987), pp. 175–203.

⁸⁷ BL, Add. MS 38175, fol. 82v: [?John Crow] to [?Henry Crow], 15 Oct. 1681; John Miller, 'The immediate impact of the Revocation in England', in Caldicott, Gough and Pittion, eds., *The Huguenots and Ireland*, p. 162; Robin Gwynn, 'Government policy towards Huguenot immigration and settlement in England and Ireland', in *ibid.*, pp. 205–6.

⁸⁸ P.J. Norrey, 'The relationship between central and local government in Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire, 1660–1688', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of Bristol, 1988, p. 27.

⁸⁹ CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 514: Thomas Venn to Richard Newcourt, Ham, 15 Oct. 1681. This opinion was shared by James: Miller, 'The immediate impact of the Revocation in England', pp. 165–6; Robin Gwynn, 'James II in the light of his treatment of Huguenot refugees in England, 1685–6', *Proc. of the Huguenot Soc. of London*, 23 (1980), 212–24, esp. 213–14.

⁹⁰ CSPD 1 Sept. 1681 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 514. Cf. Bodl., MS Tanner 32, fols. 13–14.

⁹¹ TNA: PRO, PC 2/69, 19 Oct. 1681.

⁹² NAS, GD158/2823: [?] to [?], London, 15 Dec. 1681.

cially in Guernsey.⁹³ The Governor of Jersey privately wrote that his island was 'filld with people fled from france some for relegion and others for misdemenours this lland covering their knavenes'.⁹⁴ According to his counterpart in Guernsey, most of the Frenchmen on the island were 'rigid Calvinists', and those Huguenots who remained in France ungratefully criticised Charles II for supporting Catholics and for failing to remonstrate with Louis XIV about his actions.⁹⁵ On the mainland, the archdeacon of Canterbury reported that despite his great zeal in urging charitable collections for the Huguenots, 'I find it comes in slow. And people have been waylayd both ways[,] with the ffanatics that they are papists, & with the honest people that they are ffanatics'.⁹⁶ The confusion between Huguenots and dissenting 'fanatics' was readily made by some,⁹⁷ and was aggravated by the similar bones of contention they aroused, for instance when a French minister refused to wear a surplice when conducting services.⁹⁸ Nor did it help the Huguenot cause when prominent whig peers like the earl of Salisbury and duke of Monmouth were reported to be helping them, and – in the latter's case – 'constantly' attending their church services.⁹⁹

A detailed consideration of Kent will further reveal the political potential of this confusion. The situation in the borough of Rye is particularly revealing since – as in the Channel Islands – the Huguenot influx interacted in complex ways with pre-existing religious and political tensions. Rye accommodated a prominent group of dissenters, now well-known through the extraordinary diary of Samuel Jeake the younger.¹⁰⁰ Despite their long-standing hostility towards these local dissenters, in April 1682 a number of Anglicans – including the vicar and two of the jurats – signed a certificate that 'the French Protestants, that are settled inhabitants there, are a sober, harmless, innocent people, who serve God constantly and uniformly according to the custom of the Church of England and that they believe them to be falsely aspersed for Papists and disaffected persons'.¹⁰¹ They clearly did not view the Huguenots as inevitable allies of dissenters. Nor had the central government. Four months earlier Secretary Jenkins had thanked

⁹³ Robin Eagles, 'Lord Hatton's mission to Guernsey, 1660–4', unpub. paper delivered on 27 July 2005 during the inaugural Bangor Conference on the Restoration.

⁹⁴ WYAS, MX/R/18/63: Sir John Lanier to Sir John Resesby, Jersey, 16 Nov. 1681.

⁹⁵ Northamptonshire RO, FH 4327: Christopher Hatton to Viscount Hatton, Guernsey, 3 Dec. 1684.

⁹⁶ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 223: archdeacon of Canterbury to Dr George Thorp, 27 Jan. 1681/2.

⁹⁷ In Bristol the intolerant Sheriff Knight argued that Huguenots ought not receive charity as 'they were a people that went to meetings'. UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9090, vol. VII, p. 172: London, 22 Nov. 1681.

⁹⁸ Bodl., MS Tanner 92, fols. 134, 136. For the background to this, see *ibid.*, fol. 143.

⁹⁹ FSL, L.c. 1240–1 (11, 13 July 1682).

¹⁰⁰ *An Astrological Diary*, ed. Hunter and Gregory.

¹⁰¹ CSPD 1682, p. 170: certificate by the vicar, two jurats, and others of Rye, 18 Apr. 1682.

the mayor of Rye for the good reception that had been given to the Huguenots, and assured him that the French minister would conform exactly to the doctrine and stick close to the liturgy of the Church of England, though he would necessarily speak in French.¹⁰² The warm tone of this letter was particularly noticeable, bearing in mind the vigorous whig political activity in the borough, and the deep divisions that this had fostered, initially during elections to the Exclusion Parliaments, then over the town's mayoralty.¹⁰³

Nevertheless, in early 1683 the lord lieutenant of Kent, the earl of Winchilsea, recalled that when the Huguenots had first arrived in Rye, there had been 'greate endeavors and artifices used by the English fanaticks there to pervert the french congregation, hoping to macke them as factious against the King & Church as themselves are, by endeavoring to persuade them to set up presbiterie and not to comply with the Church of England'. Although action from the bishop of London had apparently been decisive in leading the French to submit to the Church of England,¹⁰⁴ Winchilsea's tone to the bishop of Chichester – in whose diocese Rye was located – remained admonitory. He was clearly anxious about the continuing danger of 'those turbulent fanaticks, who do not only every day disturb our church, but would alsoe pervert those french that would willingly comply with the Government'. Winchilsea argued that 'the chiefe root from whence all these evils spring, is by permitting the french Presbyterian Church in London & Canterbury which at his Majesties first restauration might have bin easily reduced to the Church of England'.¹⁰⁵

Here in microcosm are a number of the main themes of the politics of persecution: a preoccupation with the historical origins of the problem of Dissent; a concern with urban areas;¹⁰⁶ the belief that conventicles were politically seditious bodies; and the firm linking of dissenters with whigs.¹⁰⁷ The inherently political aspects of religious regulation may also be seen in Winchilsea's concerns to undermine the influence of Colonel Dering, the whig son of one of the lords of the Treasury, Sir Edward Dering, who had

¹⁰² CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 638.

¹⁰³ HOP 1660–1690, I, 500; *An Astrological Diary*, ed. Hunter and Gregory, pp. 29–32, 156, 159–60.

¹⁰⁴ Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 210: Heneage Finch, earl of Winchilsea to [bishop of Chichester], Eastwell, 22 Feb. 1682/3. Perhaps this accounted for the snippy advice Samuel Jeake the younger was offered not to loan a house to the French as they would 'so much abuse' it. East Sussex RO, FRE 5190: Thomas Miller to Samuel Jeake the younger, 2 Dec. 1684.

¹⁰⁵ Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 210: Heneage Finch, earl of Winchilsea to [bishop of Chichester], Eastwell, 22 Feb. 1682/3.

¹⁰⁶ See Colin Lee, '“Fanatic magistrates”: religious and political conflict in three Kent boroughs, 1680–1684', *HJ*, 35 (1992), 43–61.

¹⁰⁷ For a revealingly bitter Kent grand jury presentment emphasizing all of these links just two weeks after the previously quoted letter, see CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, p. 103. Cf. the grand jury of Somerset's claim in Aug. 1681 that 'there is scarce a Conventicle but there will be a Jesuit'. Quoted in Williams, 'English Catholicism', 135.

been returned as the exclusionist knight of the shire in each of the last three parliaments.¹⁰⁸ The elder Dering recorded in his diary for October 1681 that, 'my Lord of Winchelsea, Lord Lieutenant of the countie, by himselfe and his son, hath made a little [more] use of his authoritie, than was usuall' in order to prevent his son's election in an expected future Parliament.¹⁰⁹ Two months later he learnt that several whig JPs had been removed from the bench and urged to 'bee Honest', which was clearly understood as turning against his son in any electioneering.¹¹⁰ The accusations which were made to Charles against the younger Dering had a significantly religious cast to them.¹¹¹ It had been reported 'that he was an enemie to the church, and had drunk a health to the confusion of lawn sleeves. This he absolutely denyes, yet this tale is sufficient to set all the clergy in the countie against him, and most industriously do they labour against him.' If possible, more damaging still was the objection 'that all the fanaticks of the countie are for him'. This Dering answered with an engaging frankness, 'they are so, and there is not one of those who are against him but would be glad to have them for him selfe also'. Yet 'for himselfe he is no fanatick, nor ever was or pretended so to be. Never was at one conventicle, never forsooke the Church of England in any one thing'. This was followed by the revealing logical next step in the contemporary mind-set: 'That he is for monarchie and for the government of the church both as they are established by law'.¹¹² Finally, the key passage: 'if he thinke there is more present danger to the church and state from the papists than from dissenting protestants, he thinke it is an opinion that wants not . . . strong reasons for its defence'.¹¹³

Dering's outlook, and his opponents' interpretation of them, thus clearly suggests the divide in contemporary society as to the political position of dissent. The same endeavour to use religious issues to dictate the future course of local politics can also be seen in Great Yarmouth. In February 1684 Tories succeeded in gaining an 'Ordinance for disfranchising about 100 whigs . . . unlesse they prove their baptism by certificate . . . (which we beleive very few of them will be able to doe). . . . This ordnance will we doubt not make

¹⁰⁸ HOP 1660–1690, II, 208.

¹⁰⁹ *The Diaries and Papers of Sir Edward Dering Second Baronet 1644 to 1684*, ed., M.F. Bond (House of Lords RO Occasional Publs., 1, 1976), p. 130. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 128.

¹¹⁰ BL, Stowe MS 746, fol. 48: Sir Henry Oxinden to Sir Edward Dering, Dene, 2 Dec. 1681.

¹¹¹ For Charles's exasperated reaction to these accusations, see *Diaries and Papers of Sir Edward Dering*, ed., Bond, pp. 128–9. A comparable case within the University of Oxford – that of the 'whiggish' don James Parkinson of Lincoln – can be followed in *Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, ed. Clark, III, 68–72; Tyacke, ed., *History of the University of Oxford*, pp. 66, 611, 869, 896, and esp. 898–900.

¹¹² It was alleged that Dering had claimed limited monarchy was only 'a — in a chamber pot'. *Diaries and Papers of Sir Edward Dering*, ed. Bond, p. 130.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 131. *Diaries and Papers of Sir Edward Dering*, ed. Bond, pp. 128–9.

the Loyall side much the strongest.¹¹⁴ It seems unlikely to have been coincidental that it was at precisely this time that the terms ‘whig’ and ‘tory’ were first used by local figures.¹¹⁵

Conventicles and sedition

The associations between religious conventicles and political sedition were writ large across the country.¹¹⁶ When Secretary Jenkins urged local tories to suppress ‘such nests of faction’ via the penal laws he was often pushing at an open door: many local magistrates and officers needed no such urging.¹¹⁷ At the sessions for Devon held at Exeter in January 1682, an order for the prosecution of ‘papists and sectaries’ was made on the basis that

Forasmuch as Religion is the foundation of Civil Government and whilst faction and Schisme are allowed & permitted in the Church, wee can never expect peace and quiet in the state And observing at this time (as wee have heretofore by sad experience found) that those that dissent from Us in Our established Religion . . . though at seeming variance & difference among themselves Yet agree in theyre wicked attempts upon the Government & theyre trayterous plotts & designes against the Kings sacred person.¹¹⁸

It was thus natural and logical to assume that conventicles were inherently political meetings, and dissenters disloyal subjects.¹¹⁹ The vicar of Adderbury in Oxfordshire reported to his diocesan in 1682 that although there were

¹¹⁴ BL, Add. MS 27448, fol. 279: bailiffs of Yarmouth to earl of Yarmouth, Yarmouth, 25 Feb. 1683/4.

¹¹⁵ Perry Gauci, *Politics and Society in Great Yarmouth 1660–1722* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 11, 152.

¹¹⁶ E.g. CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 211; Clapinson, ed., *Bishop Fell and Nonconformity*, p. 14; Henry, *Life of Philip Henry*, pp. 147, 154; *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry*, ed. Lee, p. 296; *Heywood . . . Autobiography, Diaries*, ed. Horsfall Turner, IV, 75–6; Edward Sclater, *A Sermon Preached in the Church of Putney . . . 24th of April, 1681 . . .* (1681), p. 29 [misnumbered 23 in the original]; John March, *Th’Encœnia of St Anne’s Chapel in Sandgate . . .* (1682), ep. ded.

¹¹⁷ CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 333.

¹¹⁸ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 212. For similar statements from grand juries, see Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 55; Aytoun Ellis, *The Penny Universities: A History of the Coffee-Houses* (1956), p. 206.

¹¹⁹ This was particularly the case when old Oliverian officers were found attending conventicles: Clapinson, ed., *Bishop Fell and Nonconformity*, p. 4; Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 118; BL, Add. MS 75359 (unfol.): Lord Windsor to earl of Halifax, 10 Oct. 1681. On the other side of the coin, Cromwell’s grandson was said to be employed as a government spy on the Brownist Church amongst the English exiles in Amsterdam: BL, Add. MS 37981, fols. 2, 4. The Leveller John Lilburne’s daughter, Elizabeth, alleged that Halifax tried to suborn her into acting as a spy on radicals: V&A, National Art Library, F. 47. A. 40, vol. ii, fol. 91.

comparatively few out-and-out nonconformists in his parish, occasional conformists were numerous: 'they seem to be like the borderers betwixt two kingdomes one can't well tell what Prince they are subject to'.¹²⁰ The 'two kingdomes' in this case were the Anglican Church and a conventicle which met a mile outside the town and which 'is always the great Exchange for Politics and, by reason of our numerouse freeholders hereabouts, the County Knights are generally chosen in it'.¹²¹ And in London it was said that clergy and some laymen daily complained 'that conventicalls and meetings grew more numerous & drew the hearts of the peopell from the Legall constituted divine services; & was more like to turne to a factiōne, then the true worshipping of God', comparisons being drawn to 1641.¹²²

For vigilant tories, attempts to defend such meetings were *ipso facto* evidence of political unsoundness. It was 'a Whiggish jury' in York which had the temerity to stand in the way of tory Anglican prosecutions of conventiclors in January 1682, arguing that the legislation against them 'was made only against such persons as att meetings contrive Insurrections & Rebellion'. As a result they acquitted the defendants, 'And thus the Law Eluded & made uselesse & insignificant & these seditious & disloyall persons Encouraged to goe on <in their daungerous practizes> in the Open breach thereof.'¹²³ It was on the basis of exactly the same outlook that Thoresby presented to a sessions almost two years later for being at 'what was called a factious and seditious conventicle at Hunslet' in Yorkshire. When he was advised by a JP not to attend such meetings in the future since all that was preached was faction and rebellion, Thoresby coolly replied that when he heard such things preached he would take the justice's advice.¹²⁴

A combination of calm demeanour, legal representation, and generally sympathetic magistrates saved Thoresby on this occasion, but the links between nonconformists and political disaffection only seemed to increase during the personal rule – at least in the eyes of those predisposed to see them. In the summer of 1681, the bishop of Exeter had reported with frustration that 'Notwithstanding so many [loyal] Addresses (which we receive an account of by every Post) conventicles are as much frequented here as

¹²⁰ Clapinson, ed., *Bishop Fell and Nonconformity*, p. 1: Robert Parsons to bishop of Oxford, Adderbury, 24 June 1682. Cf. William Lloyd, bishop of St Asaph's thoughts on 'Borders': NLW, MS 11302D, fol. 47v.

¹²¹ Clapinson, ed., *Bishop Fell and Nonconformity*, p. 1. Wood had tellingly described the two men elected knights of the shire in 1681 as 'a gentile man but a presbyterian' and 'a most ill natured man . . . of no religion'. *Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, ed. Clark, II, 519. (See HOP 1660–1690, I, 357; II, 489–90, 582.)

¹²² NAS, GD158/2823: [anon.] to [anon.], London, 15 Dec. 1681. For the subsequent assault on dissent in the capital, see Arthur Giffen Smith, 'London and the Crown 1681–1685', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of Wisconsin, 1967, ch. 11; Gary S. De Krey, *London and the Restoration 1659–1683* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 238–46.

¹²³ WYAS, MX/R/18/124: Thomas Fairfax to Sir John Resesby, York, 16 Jan. 1681/2.

¹²⁴ *Diary of Ralph Thoresby*, ed., Hunter, I, 169–70; II, 422.

formerly.¹²⁵ But the pressure on nonconformists was growing. When Stephen College was convicted of treason by an Oxfordshire Grand Jury in July, having previously received an *ignoramus* from 'such Jury Men as Sheriff Bethel empanell'd in London', one tory clergyman chillingly wrote: 'Tis suppos'd that Others . . . may be brought before an Oxford Jury, seeing they have such large Consciences above.'¹²⁶ The allusion to nonconformists was clear, and rendered even more so by College's execution speech in September, delivered before a crowd of 2–3000 witnesses. Having spoken against the Common Prayer Book, 'he declar'd a secret love [of] the party & complain'd much of being debarr'd the liberty of haveing Gifted men to cant & pray with him'.¹²⁷ College was later said to be regarded as a whig 'proto-martyr', and to be the recipient of a health drunk to his 'pious memory'.¹²⁸

The scare surrounding the discovery of the Association in Shaftesbury's study and its supposed links to a 'Presbyterian Plot' added further fuel – in some areas literally – to the fire. When a letter revealing a widespread set of private prayer meetings on Monday mornings 'for the church of God, and for the land and nation, more fully and particularly than at other times' was intercepted, some of those involved were bound to the Assizes since Jeffreys was said to believe it to be a branch of the 'Presbyterian Plot'.¹²⁹ Nor did Shaftesbury's notoriety quickly die down. On 29 May, the anniversary of the Restoration and Charles's birthday, a crude effigy was burnt in Manchester which was variously described as 'old John Presbiter' or 'the Lord Shaftsberry': the distinction between the two can only have been slight.¹³⁰ In 1682 these anniversary celebrations may have been particularly vigorous and contested between whigs and tories as Charles had contracted a minor illness, but one sufficient to excite fears about the succession.¹³¹

Worse was to come with the Rye House Plot. Anthony Wood insistently

¹²⁵ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 62: bishop of Exeter to archbishop of Canterbury, Exeter, 21 July 1681. (The bishop's phraseology clearly suggests the expected propaganda value of the addresses.)

¹²⁶ John Richard Magrath, ed., *The Flemings in Oxford, Being Documents from the Rydal Papers in Illustration of the Lives and Ways of Oxford Men 1650–1700* (3 vols., Oxford Hist. Soc., 44, 62, 79, Oxford, 1904–24), II, 21–2: Rev. Thomas Dixon to Sir Daniel Fleming, Oxford, 29 July [1681].

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 30–1: same to same, Oxford, 4 Sept. [1681]. Mary Clapinson has argued that it was recent links between whigs and dissenters which prompted Fell's particular concern with Dissent in his 1682 diocesan visitation compared to that of 1679: Clapinson, ed., *Bishop Fell and Nonconformity*, pp. xxx–xxxii.

¹²⁸ *Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry*, ed. Lee, p. 303.

¹²⁹ Henry, *Life of . . . Philip Henry*, pp. 150–1. The meetings were prevalent in the west of England.

¹³⁰ HMC, *Fourteenth Report, App., Pt. IV*, p. 143: Matthew Bootle to Roger Kenyon, Manchester, 30 May 1682.

¹³¹ K.H.D. Haley, *The First Earl of Shaftesbury* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 694, 698. For the association generally, see *ibid.*, pp. 656, 677–8, 687, 692.

referred to it as the ‘crop-ear’d plot’¹³² and, predictably, made jubilant use of the event, recording that ‘Upon the breaking out of this presbyterian plot our Academicall whigs were run downe’ and were ‘all jeered by the *Terræ filii*’.¹³³ An Oxford Baptist’s house was searched for arms, merely one instance of a general concern to disarm dissenters.¹³⁴ Wood even maliciously suggested that the thanksgiving day for the royal brothers’ deliverance was deliberately called for a Sunday in order to spite the Presbyterians, though his secondary explanation for the choice of the Sabbath – that it was during harvest time – seems more likely. He also recorded the political fall-out of the Plot, with the setting up of a model of a Presbyterian tub-preacher preceding ‘The smart lads of the city’ marching ‘downe the streets with cudgells in their hands, crying for the King and the duke of York, and all people had York in their mouths, and his health was drunk publickly in most halls [of the colleges] at dinner’.¹³⁵ In Cheshire, the horror inspired by news of the Rye House Plot was exacerbated by concerted attempts to spread countervailing rumours that it was a sham: ‘<its> a Story contrived by the Presbiterians whose hearts are full of rebellion, & they care not what they say’.¹³⁶ By 11 September, Narcissus Luttrell noted that ‘The fanaticks, since the discovery of this plott, have been proceeded against more severe then ever.’¹³⁷ Oliver Heywood was forced to take additional precautions at this time when he made a journey into Lancashire since ‘if I went abroad they [i.e. local Tories] gave it out that I went to carry on the plot, on [sic] that I fled for fear of being apprehended as a plotter’. Nevertheless, he did travel, merely avoiding market towns, ‘not being willing to provoke’ local magistrates.¹³⁸ By October, he and other local Presbyterians expected particular severity at the Wakefield Sessions, ‘partly because they had been so before, but especially because they charge this plot on dissenters (though I hope none have a hand in it)’.¹³⁹

Elsewhere such thoughts would have been dismissed as ridiculous by vengeful Anglicans. It is striking that the Plot revelations had a significant impact even on some who had previously been sympathetic to the plight of dissenters. William Lloyd, bishop of St Asaph, had argued in February 1681 that excommunicated dissenters should be allowed to return to church

¹³² *Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, ed. Clark, III, 74, 97, 117. ‘Crop-ear’d’ was presumably a reference to the fate of the notorious puritan, William Prynne.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, III, 60.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 59; JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: MS newsletter to Richard Legh, London, 12 July 1683; Hunter and Gregory, eds., *An Astrological Diary*, p. 163. For similar concerns in Oct. 1682, see Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 231; DWL, Morrice MS P, fols. 341, 347.

¹³⁵ *Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, ed. Clark, III, 72.

¹³⁶ JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: James Lightbourne to Richard Legh, 21 July 1683.

¹³⁷ Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 279.

¹³⁸ Heywood . . . *Autobiography, Diaries*, ed. Horsfall Turner, IV, 95–6.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, IV, 100.

without taking any oaths so long as they merely promised conformity for the future.¹⁴⁰ He combined this relatively relaxed attitude with a firm commitment to catechizing in his diocese, and on reducing scandals within the Church of England that deterred dissenters from conforming.¹⁴¹ Yet after the Rye House Plot – this ‘damnable Conspiracy’ – Lloyd was clearly rattled and believed that he had been gulled. He referred to dissenters as ‘bloody Wretches’ and argued that ‘’tis visible that all this while we have been treating with these Sectaries, it has been God’s wonderfull Providence that when they musterd in their Conventicles they had not come out armd to cut our Throats’.¹⁴² Secular magistrates were also encouraged to take a harder line. In January 1684, Surrey Tories sought the prosecution of Sir Nicholas Stoughton, ‘the leading patron of dissent in the county’, and a man who had played a vigorous part in Whig electoral activity in Surrey during the Exclusion period.¹⁴³ Legal advice yielded the opinion that Stoughton’s ‘permitting conventicling in his house’ did not, in and of itself, represent grounds for requiring ‘sureties for his Behaviour’, a fate which would have been gravely embarrassing to his reputation and, the Tories no doubt hoped, prejudicial to his future political influence in the county. Nevertheless, the sureties were still sought since hosting conventicles ‘is not the cause . . . for which the Court is desired to Compell him to be bound’. Instead the actual cause was ‘the presentment of the Grand Jury that he and the rest [of those being so pursued] are persons disaffected & dangerous to the Government’ on the basis of a number of individual and specific facts.¹⁴⁴ This line of argument was felt to be ‘more candidly done’ than the very general ‘presentment at Midhurst where 30 persons are presented as dangerous to the Government’ for associating with the ringleaders of the Rye House Plot or for having ‘Countenanced Non-conforming preachers, Eytter by frequenting of their meetings or protecting them in their houses’.¹⁴⁵ The arguments were complicated, then, not because Stoughton and his associates’ religious predilections were irrelevant, but because they were legally inadequate. Religion nevertheless lay at the heart of the motivation for the action.

The continuity of involvement in treasonous activity by prominent Whigs and nonconformists can have done little to assuage Anglican suspicions. Looking backwards from the perspective of November 1683 – around the time that Algernon Sidney was being sentenced to death for his part in the Rye House Plot – the grand jury of Westminster made what Roger Morrice

¹⁴⁰ Gloucestershire RO, D 3549/2/2/3, no. 3.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 4, 6.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, no. 20: bishop of St Asaph to Rev. John Edwards, 17 July 1683.

¹⁴³ Surrey History Centre, LM/COR/6/74: James Gresham to Sir William More, Haslemere, 10 Jan. 1683/4; *HOP 1660–1690*, I, 407.

¹⁴⁴ Surrey History Centre, LM/COR/6/74. Cf. DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 433; *HOP 1660–1690*, III, 218–20, esp. 219.

¹⁴⁵ Surrey History Centre, LM/COR/6/74.

described as 'a very signall Presentment'. In this they urged 'That all those that were for the Exclusion Bill might be apprehended and proceeded against. The like for all Conventiclers &c. That all those that go to Church, and conforme to serve purposes, and to make themselves capable of offices might be proceeded against, and also all dangerous and disaffected persons to the Government.'¹⁴⁶ The members of the grand jury were clearly assaulting something which in their own minds represented a united whole: exclusionists, occasional conformists, and those threatening to the government.

Such associations reached their fulfilment with Monmouth's invasion in 1685. At that time Philip Henry found himself imprisoned for three weeks, tainted by association with a rebellious 'army made up almost entirely of Nonconformists'.¹⁴⁷ As Thoresby bitterly noted, 'Upon the landing of the Duke of Monmouth, not only such as had been engaged in the late wars were committed prisoners to Hull, but many good old ministers, and such private gentlemen, as were obnoxious to the censure of the Court, or their correspondents in the country.'¹⁴⁸ As with the JPs on the Welsh Borders, action was clearly prompted by a general lord lieutenant's order for the apprehension of all suspected person, something which allowed for a considerable overlap between nonconformists and whigs. One of those apprehended in Cheshire was Sir Robert Duckenfield, son of a Parliamentarian. He was forced to send a petition to Richard Legh of Lyme (in his capacity as a deputy lieutenant) with the assistance of the rector of Ashton-under-Lyme and three churchwardens in order to seek his release. This petition was subsequently annotated by a prominent local tory Anglican, Thomas Cholmondeley, with abusive marginal comments, notably 'it wants the hard word "loyally"' next to the description of Duckenfield as someone 'who liveth peaceably and quietly among his neighbours', and 'neither constant, frequent, nor often' next to Duckenfield being called 'a gentleman that cometh and reverently attendeth the parish Church'.¹⁴⁹ Preaching on the thanksgiving day for the putting down of the rebellion at Sedgemoor, the bishop of Ely argued that Monmouth's followers 'were Agreed in Nothing but What to pull Downe & Destroy': they 'longd to fight their old Cause over againe'.¹⁵⁰ The extent to which Monmouth's Rebellion confirmed and accentuated deep-seated prejudices must have been of immense importance

¹⁴⁶ DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 396.

¹⁴⁷ Henry, *Life of Philip Henry*, p. 158; Peter Earle, *Monmouth's Rebels: The Road to Sedgemoor 1685* (1977), p. 5. One Surrey nonconformist described Monmouth as a 'failed instrument of deliverance'. Hilary Jenkinson, ed., 'A late Surrey chronicler (Surrey and the Revolution, 1688)', *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, 27 (1914), 11. For a lurid account of the desecration of churches in Wells perpetrated by Monmouth's troops, see JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: Piers Legh to Richard Legh, [June 1685].

¹⁴⁸ *Diary of Ralph Thoresby*, ed. Hunter, I, 180.

¹⁴⁹ Newton, *Lyme Letters*, pp. 133–4.

¹⁵⁰ Bodl., MS Rawlinson E. 8, fols. 145, 146.

for James's reign as a whole. It provided a nightmarish background to the king's attempts to 'sell' a policy of toleration to the political nation in 1687–8.

Conclusion

Attitudes towards persecution during the personal rule were thus saturated by political concerns. It has been argued – particularly with reference to York – that tories did not tend to persecute dissenters very vigorously once they had achieved a firm grip on power. An active campaign of persecution tended to be pursued during phases of intense partisan rivalry, such as often existed in Bristol and Norwich.¹⁵¹ Similarly, Charles's most vigorous anti-dissenter pronouncements tended to follow instances of political disappointment or crisis. After the *ignoramus* verdict afforded to Shaftesbury at his trial in London, and the subsequent riotous celebrations, Charles was said to be highly displeased, and the dissenters were thought likely to feel the first smart of this in the form of vigorously applied penal laws.¹⁵² The king asked one visitor to the Court from Cheshire to 'tell all his [i.e. Charles's] Freinds he would have the laws putt in execution against all dissenters through England; for he had given liberty so long that they had now almost taken his, and that he could not have justice with the meanest of his Subjects'.¹⁵³ In addition, John Miller has contended that the relaxation of the persecution of Catholics which he believes to have taken place late in 1684 'would have been politically unthinkable a few years before and showed that Charles was confident that he and his tory allies had vanquished the Whigs'.¹⁵⁴ It was certainly at this time that an anonymous report on London to Sunderland affirmed that 'all the Dissenters lie so under the lash of the penal statutes that it restrains them of taking the liberty as formerly in discourse', and 'I never knew the Whigs so wary in managing their discourses and of their company'.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ D.A. Scott, 'Politics, dissent and Quakerism in York, 1640–1700', unpub. D.Phil. thesis, Univ. of York, 1990, pp. 202, 369.

¹⁵² HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 236–7.

¹⁵³ Newton, *Lyme Letters*, p. 109: Thomas Cholmondeley to Richard Legh, [1681] (erroneously dated to 1683 by Newton). This complaint became something of a mantra for Charles: see Browning, ed., *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, p. 234; Hunter and Gregory, eds., *Astrological Diary*, p. 157.

¹⁵⁴ Miller, *After the Civil Wars*, p. 279, largely relying upon *idem*, *Charles II* (1991), pp. 380–1. (See also *idem*, *Popery and Politics*, pp. 194–5.) This may, however, have represented merely a relaxation from the heightened persecution of Catholics that was undertaken in 1681 'to undermine the charge of favouring Catholics by the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament'. Williams, 'English Catholicism', 137.

¹⁵⁵ CSPD 1 May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, p. 187: [anon.] to earl of Sunderland, 29 Oct. 1684. For an earlier example of the perceived link between humbling London's whigs and suppressing conventicles in the capital, see HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 244.

Such a change in the dominant character of politics was bound to produce turn-coats. Having sensed the direction in which the political wind was blowing during 1681 and kissed the king's hand, the formerly whiggish seventh earl of Huntingdon spent the next few years reinforcing his claims to favour. In particular, he appointed a man to be deputy clerk of the peace in 1683 in the belief that 'hee will be the more active against conventicles which is the thing so much desired at Whithall that nothing can recommend a man more than to prosecute them'.¹⁵⁶ This was not necessarily true,¹⁵⁷ but it was an understandable piece of over-compensation on Huntingdon's part. Of even greater significance, however, was the earl's choice of language. A few weeks before his appointment of the deputy clerk of the peace, Huntingdon ruminated about one of the possible candidates: 'I shall not approve of any man who is a phanaticke or a favorer of them and if Mr Carter comes neere that or is Not as greate a tory as your friend Mr Newton I shall never thinke well of him.'¹⁵⁸ Carter was duly 'waived' from being the next deputy clerk after a letter from Huntingdon's correspondent.¹⁵⁹

All this contrasted sharply with the self-image of whigs and nonconformists as patriotic Protestant Englishmen.¹⁶⁰ Roger Morrice, for one, wrote earnestly about securing the Protestant interest in a future parliamentary session, and took particular notice of the indictment of Samuel Bolde after his sermon against persecution was preached in Dorset: 'Mr. Bolde was Indicted for Writing these words in his letter to Dr. John Parker . . . be sure you . . . doe not stoope to nor be afraid of the Toreys . . . approve your selfe . . . a resolute and faithfull Protestant'.¹⁶¹ For their part, tory Anglicans could argue that conventicles weakened and divided the kingdom. In Middlesex, the grand jury argued 'that conventicles are destructive to the interest of the kingdom. They publish our divisions to princes abroad and consequently the weakness of the kingdom and will inevitably perpetuate the unhappy separation amongst us'.¹⁶² Morrice bitterly glossed this presentment as 'very signall. . . . Representing the Non-Conformist Ministers that walked ordinarily up and down the Streete as the cause of all the dangers to the Government and of the disorders among us'.¹⁶³ Yet for tory Anglicans this was clearly not as ludicrous a position as it was made to sound: the Church of England was in a delicate position between two great evils. As John Inett put it during an

¹⁵⁶ HEHL, HA 7637, 6000, 6017: Anne Jacques to earl of Huntingdon, 20 Oct. 1681, earl of Huntingdon to John Geary, London, 10 Nov. 1681, same to same, Pall Mall, 15 Feb. 1682/3. Huntingdon would later profess his willingness to administer James's 'Three Questions': HEHL, HA 10330 (miscalendared 1681).

¹⁵⁷ For the tactless zealotry of Sir John Knight, see above, p. 72 and n. 37.

¹⁵⁸ HEHL, HA 6016: earl of Huntingdon to John Geary, Pall Mall, 25 Jan. 1682/3.

¹⁵⁹ HEHL, HA 6017: same to same, 15 Feb. 1682/3.

¹⁶⁰ For whigs specifically, see below, ch. 5.

¹⁶¹ DWL, Morrice MS P, fols. 325, 432-3.

¹⁶² CSPD 1682, p. 561: presentment of the grand jury of Middlesex, 4 Dec. 1682.

¹⁶³ DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 415.

assize sermon, 'We, like *David*, are in a strait, [and] seem to have nothing but choice of Plagues laid before us; either to give up our Necks to the *Roman* Yoak, which our Fathers were not able to bear; or else let the Kirk bore our ears to mark us for her slaves, and with a solemn League fasten us to the stool of Repentance.'¹⁶⁴ In a sermon preached to the Lord Mayor and aldermen of London in 1684, but printed in James's reign, Dr John Goodman went further and implicitly sought to contrast Protestant nonconformists unfavourably with Catholics:

They of the Church of *Rome* use such Deference towards their Church, that they will submit by an implicit Faith, and stoop to a blind Obedience, rather than indanger the peace, or infringe the Authority of that Society; and shall we who worthily value our selves upon the Temper and Wisdom of our Church express no regard, no tenderness towards it, but tear all in pieces for every petty Opinion, and idle Caprichio of our private heads?¹⁶⁵

By the time Goodman's sermon was printed, it described a tory Anglican world that was already partially lost, and that would soon be put to the severest trial.

As chapter five will explore at greater length, whigs and tories formed sharply different and polarized religious outlooks on England in the 1680s. Tories regarded their political self-identity as inseparable from a commitment to defend the Church of England. In part this reflected a general concern to uphold the laws of England.¹⁶⁶ The Church of England was established by law, under a monarch who was also Supreme Governor. But it also involved hostility to the apparently clear links between whigs and nonconformists who were tainted with accusations of plotting and violence. For whigs, 'the politics of religion' meant a broader perspective on what the Church of England ought to be: a port in a Europe-wide Catholic storm for *all* Protestants, not just those prepared to follow the letter of Anglican orthodoxy.

¹⁶⁴ Inett, *A Sermon Preached at the Assizes*, p. 24. Cf. John Chetwynd, *A Memorial for Magistrates. A Sermon Preached at Christ-Church in the City of Bristoll . . .* (1682), p. 15; Fowler, *Properties of Heavenly Wisdom*, p. 31; Bodl., MS Rawlinson E. 134, pp. 204–5.

¹⁶⁵ John Goodman, *A Sermon Preached at . . . Guild-hall Chappel* (1685), pp. 32–3.

¹⁶⁶ Tim Harris, 'Tories and the Rule of Law in the Reign of Charles II', *The Seventeenth Century*, 8 (1993), 9–27.

News and partisan politics

Having set out the key underlying themes fuelling partisanship during the personal rule in the last two chapters, the next two will turn to examine the means and style of expressing that partisanship. As this chapter will show, a news culture that extended far beyond London helped to bind the country together in terms of political knowledge and awareness. Paradoxically, this shared awareness was enormously important as a means of maintaining and deepening political divisions. Partisans were able to appropriate events in localities distant from their own as means of heightening fears locally, and binding together like-minded men and women. They were then able to advertise their solidarity and aims through news networks whose crucial nodes were coffee and alehouses, as well as a wider – and vibrant – civic culture.

Introduction: The political importance of news

Gloddaeth in Caernarvonshire is not usually regarded as one of the centres of early modern political life. But despite – or perhaps because of – its remote position in north Wales, one of Gloddaeth's inhabitants, Thomas Mostyn, amassed the finest collection of manuscript newsletters that survives in a British or Irish archive today.¹ Ten boxes of newsletters totalling several thousand items offer intensive coverage of a twenty-year period. Two or even three letters a week from professional news-writers in the capital ensured that Mostyn was up-to-date with the latest news and gossip from London, Edinburgh, Dublin, and other regional centres. The newsletters he received also often formed parts of larger packages that included books, pamphlets, and periodicals.² Thanks to the parallel survival of much of his general family correspondence, we can also directly trace the impact that newsletters could have on Mostyn. In December 1681, for instance, he

¹ In UWB, Dept. of Archives and MSS. For Mostyn as a politician, see *HOP 1660–1690*, III, 113; A.H. Dodd, *A History of Caernarvonshire 1284–1900* (1968; repr. Wrexham, 1990), pp. 168–9.

² E.g. UWB (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9090, vol. VII, fols. 137v, 151, 160v, 169v, 183: 9 July, 3 Sept., 8 Oct., 12 Nov., 17 Dec. 1681.

received verbal news from some of his neighbours that a parliament would be called to meet on 10 February 1682. Newsletters then confirmed this when he returned home. As a result, Mostyn proposed to his father, Sir Roger Mostyn, a general meeting of local gentry to discuss what to do next with regard to selecting candidates.³

Although unusual in terms of the volume of newsletters he received, Mostyn was far from being a unique figure. Sir Richard Newdigate of Arbury in Warwickshire and the Scottish laird, Sir William Scott of Harden, also received prodigious quantities of newsletters – around 4000 and 3000 respectively.⁴ The English diplomat, Sir Richard Bulstrode, acted as a hub for news from his posting in Brussels, both sending and receiving huge numbers of letters.⁵ For his part, the duke of Ormond relied on and demanded a vast correspondence in order to fulfil his role as lord lieutenant of Ireland. This correspondence included friends, relations, and dependants, as well as professional newsletter writers.⁶ And Roger Morrice, the author of a vast ‘*Entring Book*’ detailing news and current events from 1679–91, was probably the hub of a widespread news network servicing what Mark Goldie has described as ‘presbyterian-whig politicians’ like the Maynards, Hampdens, Harleys, Foleys, Hobarts, Howes, Pagets, and Swinfens.⁷

The obsessive desire for news that these men displayed puts them at the tip of a much larger iceberg that historians are recovering.⁸ ‘What news?’ is now recognized as one of the commonest questions that early modern

³ UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9068, vol. III, no. 6: Thomas Mostyn to [Sir Roger Mostyn], Gloddaeth, 7 Dec. 1681 (transcribed in NRA 22953 Lloyd–Mostyn, pp. 54–5); UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9090, vol. VII, fols. 177, 179: Owen Wynne to [Thomas Mostyn], Whitehall, 3 Dec. 1681, Robert Hookes to [same], London, 3 Dec. 1681.

⁴ FSL, L.c. 1–3950 (these can also be consulted on microfilm in the Bodleian: Bodl., MS Microfilm 293–9); LC, MS 18124, vols. 1–9. The latter collection has been very extensively utilized by Gary S. De Krey in his *London and the Restoration, 1659–1683* (Cambridge, 2005), see esp. p. 242 n. 47.

⁵ For the newsletters he received from London, see HRHRC, Bulstrode newsletters. (These are available for consultation in the CUL, MS Microfilm 11383, reels 1–4.) For replies to the newsletters he sent from Brussels to the English Secretary of State, Sir Leoline Jenkins, see NLW MS 5389C. His role in providing foreign news for the *Gazette* can be traced particularly in HRHRC, Bulstrode newsletters, 29 July 1681, 26 Dec. 1681, 30 Mar. 1683, 3 Sept. 1683.

⁶ The former are reproduced at formidable length for this period in HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI–VII, whilst the latter are concentrated in Bodl., MS Carte 222.

⁷ Mark Goldie, ‘Roger Morrice and his *entring book*’, *History Today*, 51: 11 (2001), 38–44; *idem*, ‘Morrice, Roger (1628/9–1702)’, ODNB. The *Entring Book* will soon be published by Boydell & Brewer in 6 vols., under the general editorship of Mark Goldie.

⁸ For the genesis of newsletters in the Secretary of State’s office, see Andrew Walkling, ‘Court, culture and politics in Restoration England: Charles II, James II, and the performance of Baroque monarchy’, unpub. Ph.D thesis, Cornell Univ., 2 vols., 1997, I, pp. 137 n. 109, 240 n. 22; and, more generally, J.B. Williams, ‘The newsbooks and letters of news of the Restoration’, *EHR*, 23 (1908), 252–76.

English men and women asked one another.⁹ A belated interest amongst Anglophone early modern historians in the ideas of the German sociologist, Jürgen Habermas, writing in the 1960s, about the emergence of a ‘public sphere’ in England at the end of the seventeenth century has been one of the main engines powering an interest in news and a popular awareness of political affairs extending well beyond the traditional centres of court and parliament.¹⁰ Other related engines have been a burgeoning interest in the participatory vigour of civic culture,¹¹ and a more balanced and integrative approach to the media of early modern England. The latter has stressed that orality continued to be an important aspect of daily life even during a period of rising literacy and the increasing dissemination of print.¹²

Yet the study of news and opinion in the period of Charles II’s personal rule has been neglected thanks to the general historical focus on a growth of ‘absolutism’, and the government’s more repressive attitude towards news and opinion after the dangerous free-for-all that existed during the Exclusion Crisis.¹³ Whilst the next chapter will address in more detail the partisan content of printed polemic, this one will focus on the dissemination and reception of news. A potent news culture was of central importance for the maintenance of partisan politics after the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament, and will be one of the recurring motifs running through the whole of this study. I will examine the main forums and foci of political discussion in order the better to locate this news culture, and to demonstrate that its geographical range extended far beyond the metropolitan hub that has so preoccupied later Stuart historians. Overall, I will demonstrate that political

⁹ Ian Atherton, ‘“The Itch Grown a Disease”: manuscript transmission of news in the seventeenth century’, in Joad Raymond, ed., *News, Newspapers and Society in Early Modern Britain* (1999), p. 39. For an excellent overall account of news in Charles II’s England, see John Miller, *After the Civil Wars. English Politics and Government in the Reign of Charles II* (Harlow, 2000), ch. 4.

¹⁰ Joad Raymond, ‘The newspaper, public opinion, and the public sphere in the seventeenth century’, in *idem*, ed., *News, Newspapers and Society in Early Modern Britain* (1999), pp. 109–40; David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton, NJ, 2000); Dorothy Turner, ‘Roger L’Estrange’s deferential politics in the public sphere’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 13 (1998), 85–101.

¹¹ A wealth of such literature has now been synthesized in Peter Clark, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain. Volume II: 1540–1840* (Cambridge, 2000); and for a fascinating recent study, see Phil Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth. Citizens and Freemen in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2005), esp. chs. 1, 5.

¹² Adam Fox and Daniel R. Woolf, eds., *The Spoken Word: Oral Culture in Britain, 1500–1850* (Manchester, 2002); T.A. Birrell, ‘Sir Roger L’Estrange: the journalism of orality’, in John Barnard and Donald McKenzie, eds., with the assistance of Maureen Bell, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, vol. 4: 1557–1695* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 657–61; Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500–1700* (Oxford, 2001).

¹³ Mark Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678–1681* (Cambridge, 1994); Timothy John Crist, ‘Francis Smith and the Opposition Press in England, 1660–1688’, unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of Cambridge, 1977, ch. 5.

activity and awareness during the personal rule was not radically restricted as a result of the end of parliamentary sessions. Politics without parliaments had a vibrancy that forms an important backdrop to any consideration by Stuart historians of the possible success of absolutist government. The English obsession with political news meant that no act of dissolution or prorogation could readily stifle discussion and debate.

The credibility of news

One of the most striking features of political life in these years is the extent to which the existence of an informed audience for news is taken for granted.¹⁴ Newsletter writers often offered their clients only truncated accounts of certain events as they assumed that printed materials would already have enlightened them.¹⁵ At other times specific information would be provided to supply the deficiencies of what was more widely available, for instance when Thomas Mostyn's hired newsletter writer 'not finding any good Account in the publique Intelligences of the tryall of Stephen Colledge' aimed to satisfy him with further details.¹⁶ Naturally there was a professional imperative here, with manuscript newsletter writers highlighting the privileged information that they could provide, and thus asserting their supremacy over the whole print medium.¹⁷ Some in government were certainly worried that such privately wielded pens continued to offer outlets for dangerous levels of political information even after the printing presses had begun to receive much closer supervision. The Lord Keeper, Francis North, Lord Guilford, offered himself an aide-memoire, c. 1682–3: 'Lying is a very Necessary thing to warr & faction, but it Must be

¹⁴ For the increasing political importance of news over the previous century, see F.J. Levy, 'How information spread among the gentry, 1550–1640', *JBS*, 21 (1982), 11–34; Richard Cust, 'News and politics in early seventeenth-century England', *P&P*, 112 (1986), 60–90; Kevin Sharpe, 'Crown, Parliament and locality: government and communication in early Stuart England', *EHR*, 101 (1986), 321–50; Andrew Mousley, 'Self, state, and seventeenth-century news', *The Seventeenth Century*, 6 (1991), 149–68; Michael J. Mendle, 'News and the pamphlet culture of mid-seventeenth-century England', in Brendan Dooley and Sabrina Alcorn Baron, eds., *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe* (2001), pp. 57–79.

¹⁵ E.g. BL, Add. MS 72595, fol. 1; BL, M636/36: John Verney to Elizabeth Verney, London, 28 Sept. 1681; UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9090, vol. VII, fols. 99, 105, 111, 123, 141: London, 22, 29 Mar. 1681, 12 Apr. 1681, 10 May 1681, 6 Aug. 1681.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 145: London, 20 Aug. 1681.

¹⁷ See e.g. CSPD 1682, p. 462; Edward M. Thompson, ed., *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton, Being Chiefly Letters Addressed to Christopher First Viscount Hatton A.D. 1601–1704* (2 vols., Camden Soc., ns, 22–3, 1878), II, 30; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 89. For an excellent general account, see Atherton, 'Manuscript transmission of news', pp. 39–65.

skillfully done, it has bin baffled & destroyed by printing, but News letters preserve it still, [and] the Government must suppress it.¹⁸ Clearly some news-writers were worried by the government's capacity to interfere in private correspondence via the Post Office.¹⁹ Such anxiety would be given substance by the successful prosecution of the prominent whig politician Sir Samuel Barnardiston for seditious libel in 1684 on the basis of a number of private letters written to individuals in East Anglia.²⁰

Guilford's optimistic attitude towards print is striking, and went hand-in-hand with his awareness of the need for government pro-actively to intervene in the opinion market.²¹ Elsewhere in his papers he set out detailed 'Instructions ffor a treatise to be wrote ffor undeceiving the people, about the late popish plott'.²² The Lord Keeper clearly had few illusions. He recognized that it would be impossible to write such an account 'authoritatively[,] that is, by laying downe facts'. Any account would need instead to be written 'persuasively' because 'facts' would only be judged according to 'the Credit of the Author'. Guildford thus pointed to one of the central aspects of his society: the way in which in a still extensively cashless world trade and business relied on an 'economy of obligation'.²³ Obligations would only be entered into if individuals had sufficient 'credit', that is perceived personal integrity and trustworthiness.

Guilford recognized that the popish plot had in a sense been anthropomorphized; it had itself acquired 'credit'. Witnesses who had testified to its dangerous reality had been heard by individuals and groups as socially significant as the king and privy council. They had been 'Entertained Countenanced & Encouraged' by the government; all levels of courts of law had accepted their testimony; and parliament had passed votes declaring belief in the reality of a popish plot. Men had been condemned to death for their part in it. This was too formidable a stock of 'credit' easily to overcome. As Guilford saw it, 'The authority of this whole proceeding is so great, that it

¹⁸ BL, Add. MS 32518, fol. 220.

¹⁹ NLS, MS 14407, fol. 78.

²⁰ Philip Hamburger, 'The development of the law of seditious libel and the control of the press', *Stanford Law Review*, 37 (1985), 698, 704–7 nn. 139, 142–3; James S. Hart Jr, 'Barnardiston, Sir Samuel (1620–1707)', *ODNB*; HRHRC, Bulstrode newsletters, 10, 14 Dec. 1683, 21 Jan. 1684, 15 Feb. 1684. For the trial itself, see T.B. and T.J. Howell, eds., *Complete Collection of State Trials . . .* (34 vols., 1809–28), IX, cols. 1333–72.

²¹ Guilford had been involved in drafting Charles II's *Declaration* of 8 Apr. 1681 setting out the reasoning behind recent dissolutions of parliament. Paul D. Halliday, 'North, Francis, first Baron Guilford (1637–85)', *ODNB*. For a general shift in government attitude towards the press after the seventeenth century, see Raymond, 'The newspaper, public opinion, and the public sphere', p. 109.

²² BL, Add. MS 32518, fols. 144–52. (I am currently preparing an edition of this document for publication.)

²³ Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation. The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1998), esp. pt. II.

will be very hard by way of Reasoning & discours, to perswade the world that the age was so wicked to act against their beleif, or if they did beleev it, that it was not true or at least very probable.²⁴

To attack an individual's 'credit' by blackening their reputation was of huge importance. In an early edition of his *Observer*, L'Estrange made the character 'Whig' explain that '*The Only way to Advance our own Power and Reputation with the People, must be by Lessening and Vilifying the Credit and Authority of the King*'.²⁵ He returned to the theme nearly a year and more than a hundred issues later when he urged the king to 'blast' the authority of the periodicals that flooded the market. All such literature ought 'to be *burnt* by the hand of the *Common Executioner*. *That Sentence would Support the Credit of the Government against the Virulence of those Pamphlets*'.²⁶ A complementary policy would be to set up 'some *Inscription of the Names, and Practices of these Detestable Libellers*' in 'Every *Publique Place*, throughout the *Kingdom*, to Encounter a *Generall scandal* with as *Generall a Confutation*'.²⁷

Others besides L'Estrange sought to use the press as a means of manipulating 'credit' for partisan political purposes. Individuals or groups wrote letters to be published in periodicals denying reports about them in other periodicals or pamphlets. Tories in the Kentish town of Deal, for instance, wrote in to the *Currant Intelligence* to deny reports that the loyal address sent up from their locality in 1681 had been artificially prompted by two men sent specifically for that purpose.²⁸ The same periodical reported how angry the loyal men of Norwich were that their address thanking Charles for his declaration explaining the reasons why he had dissolved recent parliaments had been presented as a libel by the (whig-dominated) grand jury of Middlesex. The Norwich addressors argued that 'we have done nothing therein, but what is sufficiently warranted by His Royal Declaration. And though we only in appearance are accused, yet the malicious reflection is plainly intended against His Majesty and Declaration . . . and we look upon

²⁴ BL, Add. MS 32518, fol. 144.

²⁵ *Observer*, no. 29 (2 July 1681).

²⁶ *Observer*, no. 152 (10 June 1682). For an example of a pamphlet that was burnt by the common hangman, see WYAS, MX/R/22/19. The Univ. of Oxford also condemned a number of books to be burnt as part of their response to the Rye House Plot: CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 210; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 79–80; Bodl., MS Carte 69, fol. 162; R.A. Beddard, 'Tory Oxford', in Nicholas Tyacke, ed., *The History of the University of Oxford, Volume IV. Seventeenth-Century Oxford* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 891–8.

²⁷ *Observer*, no. 155 (15 June 1682). Credit and reputation were also at the heart of the glut of *scandalum magnatum* prosecutions that proceeded through the courts at this time. James, in particular, used the legal weapon to assault those who had attacked his honour in the past. John C. Lassiter, 'Defamation of peers: the rise and decline of The Action for *scandalum magnatum*, 1497–1773', *American Jnl of Legal History*, 22 (1978), 216–36, esp. 225–30. See also, Hamburger, 'Law of seditious libel', 668–9; HRHRC, Bulstrode newsletters, 24 Nov. 1682.

²⁸ *Currant Intelligence*, no. 18 (21–25 June 1681).

it as an artifice to lessen the King in the esteem of his People.²⁹ Once again, it was the king's credit that was at stake, with potentially dire consequences for the political stability of his realm.³⁰

The very act of authorizing a declaration to explain the dissolution of parliaments testifies to Charles's own awareness of the need to intervene in the news market. As one newsletter writer put it at the beginning of April 1681, the declaration would be made 'to lett the world see that the king has done his part'.³¹ This is not to deny the continuing force of Charles's deep-seated cynicism. When taxed by Shaftesbury with claims of suborned witnesses being used at his trial in November 1681, the king was said to have replied by quoting a Scottish proverb: 'At doomsday we shall see whose arse is blackest.'³² But the royal government aggressively used its official mouthpiece, the *London Gazette*, to stake claims to truthfulness and to counter what it presented as lies. Time and again it criticized 'false' or 'false and scandalous' reports and newsletters, and emphasized that their purpose was to deceive the king's subjects.³³ Sometimes the *Gazette* stooped so far as to engage in detail with the erroneous claims of pamphlets, notably when it offered an account of the legislative history of one of the most resented penal laws, 35 Eliz., in order 'To undeceive the Kings Loyal Subjects, who may be misled into Error by a Pamphlet called The History of the Life and Death of 35 Eliz.'³⁴ At other times it advertised the publishing of official texts of items that had already appeared on the market in 'false copies', or else publicised anti-whig tracts.³⁵ In October 1681 the *Gazette* noted Charles's printed denial of claims made in 'several scandalous Reports' that many of the current influx of French Huguenot refugees escaping persecution in France were actually disguised Catholics.³⁶

²⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 14 (7–11 June 1681). See also, *London Gazette*, no. 1628 (23–27 June 1681), and for other similar examples, *ibid.*, nos. 1622, 1636; *Current Intelligence*, no. 26.

³⁰ For preachers' concerns about libels acting as a solvent on the respect due to divinely instituted authority, see John Clerke, *A Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church of Rochester* . . . (1684), pp. 1–2; Nathaniel Alsop, *A Sermon Preached at the Assizes Held at Leicester* . . . (1682), pp. 21–2; Edward Sclater, *A Sermon Preached in the Church of Putney* . . . (1681), pp. 4–5; Samuel Scattergood, *A Sermon Preached at Blockley in Worcestershire* . . . (1683), p. 9.

³¹ HRHRC, Bulstrode newsletters, 1 Apr. 1681.

³² *Burnet's History Of My Own Time*, ed., Osmund Airy (2 vols., Oxford, 1897–1900), II, 300. For another widely reported royal quip at Shaftesbury's expense, see FSL, L.c. 1088; *Current Intelligence*, no. 16 (14–18 June 1681).

³³ E.g. *London Gazette*, nos. 1607, 1641, 1646, 1655, 1660, 1709.

³⁴ *London Gazette*, no. 1609 (18–21 Apr. 1681). L'Estrange often used the *Observer* as a forum to discuss, deride, and criticize specific named pamphlets and periodicals. For particularly good examples, see nos. 2, 43, 46, 77, 78, 80, 95, 102, 157, 160, 219 (16 Apr., 17 Aug., 24 Aug., 3 Dec., 7 Dec., 14 Dec. 1681, 1 Feb., 22 Feb., 19 June, 24 June, 9 Oct. 1682).

³⁵ E.g. *London Gazette*, nos. 1674, 1678, 1713.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 1661 (17–20 Oct. 1681). See also, *ibid.*, nos. 1683–4. For more on the Huguenots, see above, pp. 78–81.

As both Guilford's remarks, and such persistent use of the press suggest, the government faced a formidable task during these years. In the first place, government ministers themselves attacked each other – or planned to do so – through use of the press. In the course of their poisonous wrangling in 1682, the lord privy seal (Arthur Annesley, earl of Anglesey) accused the lord lieutenant of Ireland (James Butler, duke of Ormond) of libelling him, 'which is the dangerous and countenanced sin of the age'.³⁷ In reply, Ormond claimed that Anglesey's literary output had 'little in it to the ends of History, or truth; but much to the appetite of a Faction, who always subsist by Slanders, & Reproach'. He sneered that Anglesey's efforts were 'little regarded being stifled in the Crowd of other Libells'.³⁸ And even if the government could work together, public opinion was extremely difficult to control. L'Estrange was at his rhetorical shrillest in the summer of 1682 when it came to characterizing the press over which he was himself the Surveyor.³⁹ 'How many Millions of Papers have been disperst up and down the Kingdom (the world I might have sayd,) since the Liberty of this Seditious Season?'⁴⁰ Such claims might once have been dismissed as mere hyperbole, but the most detailed recent research has suggested that between five and ten million pamphlets may have been in circulation during the Exclusion period.⁴¹

A week later L'Estrange offered more in the way of calculations, attacking the '*Clubb of Little Dirty Fellows that Disperse a matter of Ten or Twelve Thousand Libells a week all over the Kingdom*'.⁴² He tried to counter-point the volume of published opinion with the small number of people he alleged were producing it: 'There are not above *Four or Five Pens* that make all this *Din, and Bussle*.'⁴³ He mocked Janeway, Curtis, and Care for being 'the very *Oracles of almost all the Fools in the Kingdom*'; they would 'pass for the very *Machiavells and Tacitus of the Age*'.⁴⁴ The mocking analogy allowed L'Estrange to juxtapose the titans of past political cunning and commentary with the minnows who influenced current debate. In doing so, he also argued that whig opinion was a manufactured phenomenon; in modern parlance, mere unrepresentative 'spin'. Certainly a relatively small number of names

³⁷ Bodl., MS Carte 59, fol. 552: earl of Anglesey to Charles II, London, 2 Aug. 1682 (copy – read at Council 3 Aug.).

³⁸ NLI, MS 11968, fols. 1, 6: 'Some of the Earl of Anglesey's Errors detected, in Reference to the Affaires of Ireland. 1682' (copy). For more on this dispute, see below, ch. 6.

³⁹ Harold Love has described L'Estrange as 'the tory lightning rod for whig polemics' throughout the 1680s: 'L'Estrange, Sir Roger (1616–1704)', ODNB.

⁴⁰ *Observer*, no. 152 (10 June 1682).

⁴¹ Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, p. 168.

⁴² *Observer*, no. 156 (17 June 1682). Philip Hamburger has noted that the contemporary meaning of 'libel' was very loose and wide-ranging, extending to most pamphlets and short books: 'Law of seditious libel', 663.

⁴³ *Observer*, no. 161 (28 June 1682).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 147 (1 June 1682).

do recur time and again in this period, notably Henry Care, Richard Janeway, Francis Smith, Langley Curtis, and Nathaniel Thompson.⁴⁵ But was what this caucus of metropolitan authors wrote influential?

Consuming news and policing the public sphere

Clearly the problem of evaluating the mass of news and information that was available during this period was keenly felt.⁴⁶ ‘Domesday will bring all truth to Light, in the meane tyme I know not who nor what to beleeve, god send us quiet tymes.’⁴⁷ Contemporaries mockingly referred both to ‘Town Talke’ and the ‘excellent faculty of coyning news in some parts of the Country’.⁴⁸ News, like coins themselves, could thus be false.⁴⁹ In such a world partisan bias deeply influenced individuals’ reception of news. As the earl of Danby wearily noted to a correspondent overseas, interpretations of events ‘change so often, and upon such small appearances of good or bad fortune, as it is construed by the Court or the factious against it, that it is beyond the wisest man’s understanding to ground more than a conjecture upon any thing’.⁵⁰ According to another writer, ‘for news Ther is Litle of Certaintie We talke our fears & Hopes As we stand interested or affected’, and a third professed that he could only give ‘a blind Accompt of Fitz Harris’ since he was ‘no Cabal man of one side or other’.⁵¹ By June 1682 Luttrell reported that ‘the presse abounds with all manner of libells; some on one side reflecting on severall ministers of state; others against the late parliaments, and ridiculing their proceedings, turning the popish plott into a shamm, and cryeing out forty and forty one’. The political press was clearly divided, and it is immediately after recording this fact that Luttrell goes on to make his famous

⁴⁵ For the fullest accounts of this milieu, see Lois G. Schworer, *The Ingenious Mr. Henry Care, Restoration Publicist* (Washington, DC, 2002), reissued as *The Ingenious Mr. Henry Care: London’s First Spin Doctor* (2004); Crist, ‘Francis Smith’.

⁴⁶ Rachel Weil, ‘“If I did say so, I lyed”: Elizabeth Cellier and the construction of credibility in the Popish Plot crisis’, in Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky, eds., *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England. Essays Presented to David Underdown* (Manchester, 1995), pp. 189–209.

⁴⁷ NLS, MS 14407, fol. 78v: [anon.] to [?marquess of Tweeddale], London, 12 Mar. 1680/1. See also, Warwickshire RO, CR 136/B413.

⁴⁸ BL, M636/37: John Verney to Sir Ralph Verney, London, 3 Aug. 1682; WYAS, MX/R/25/10: Thomas Yarburgh to Sir John Resesby, 2 Feb. 1683/4.

⁴⁹ ‘Brummagen’ or ‘Birmingham’ Protestant was an early synonym for ‘whig’ that derived from a spate of false coins in the Birmingham area. *OED*, s.v. ‘Birmingham’, ‘Anti-Birmingham’, ‘Brummagen’.

⁵⁰ HMC, *Fourteenth Report, App.*, Pt. IX, p. 437: [earl of Danby] to Sir Henry Goodricke, The Tower, 11 Sept. 1681. See also, Thompson, ed., *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton*, II, 41.

⁵¹ NAS, GD158/2821: [J.H.] to [Joseph Johnstone], 10 Aug. 1681; JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: Ri[chard] Sterne to Richard Legh, 19 Apr. 1681.

observation that 'It has been the endeavour of some persons to run things up to a strange height, creating fewds and differences, and dividing the interests of protestants: now no other names are known then whig and tory, church papist, tantivee, fanatic, &c.'⁵² Furthermore, the body that had largely policed the press from the mid sixteenth century onwards, the Stationers Company, was itself divided, 'the Whigs dining at the hall & the Tories at the 2 Tun tavern' in October 1681.⁵³

Turning back from suppliers to consumers, the desire for information was potent, indeed perhaps addictive. As one learned Scot waspishly wrote to another, the studies they delighted in 'are not valued by this pragmatike Age, wherein Books of ancient Learning are more and more Laid aside, and the frothy Papers of the Times counted the best Learning by the Anti-quallative Readers'.⁵⁴ He clearly had a point since newsletter writers could command fifty shillings a year from clients in the localities anxious to be kept up to date with all available information.⁵⁵ Taking the trouble to write news was worthwhile financially: there was a buoyant market for information. Indeed many felt the market to be too buoyant. Whilst some leading politicians clamoured for ever more news,⁵⁶ others muttered darkly about the dangers of too much information and opinion, and expressed pleasure at times when there seemed to be none.⁵⁷ Some sententiously avoided coming into contact with news. Writing from London, one of the Yorkshire squire Sir John Reresby's correspondents explained to him that if he was more conversant with 'the newsmongers of the Towne' he would write more often. But as it was, 'I only minde my owne businesse which is not to meddle with the Pollitickes, I wish Every one else did soe, I fancy it would bee better for the publike affaires in generall'.⁵⁸ In the light of such sentiments, it should scarcely be surprising to find that an excessive appetite for news was often taken to be a distinguishing characteristic of the opponents of government. The Anglo-Irish trader Alexander Wallis, was said to be 'fanatically inclined and disaffected', not least because he 'commonly associates with such and is a frequenter of their clubs and always very inquisitive after news'.⁵⁹ An

⁵² Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 198–9.

⁵³ FSL, L.c. 1143; London, 29 Oct. 1681.

⁵⁴ NAS, GD158/2745: John Hume to the laird of Ayton, Huton Bell, 23 Jan. 1682.

⁵⁵ HMC, *Twelfth Report, App.*, Pt. VII, p. 184; CSPD 1683 1 Oct. – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 53; Warwickshire RO, CR 136/B1307B (Newdigate diary): 28 July 1683; W.M. Myddelton, comp., *Chirk Castle Accounts* (2 vols., privately pr., 1908–31), II, 153.

⁵⁶ E.g. Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 189.

⁵⁷ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 170; Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 157; NAS, GD406/1/11554; HRHRC, Bulstrode newsletters, 21 Aug. 1681.

⁵⁸ WYAS, MX/R/22/27: Ben Rokeby to Sir John Reresby, London, 7 Nov. 1682. See also *The Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. E.S. de Beer (8 vols., Oxford, 1976–89), II, 612; BL, Add. MS 28091, fol. 101: 'A Draught of the kings Declaration concerning the dissolution of Parliament' (by the earl of Danby).

⁵⁹ CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 349: John Beare to Secretary Jenkins, 30 Mar. 1684.

awareness of such beliefs made some men cautious. When the prominent Cheshire whig Col. Roger Whitley returned home after a stay in London in 1684, he was welcomed by a Mr Hall who 'askt what news; I told him I had none; soe he went away'.⁶⁰ Having narrowly escaped being linked with the Rye House Plotters, Whitley was by this time clearly paranoid about the possibility of entrapment by an unscrupulous government.⁶¹

Although the scale of press output would remain significant, the government did increase its attempts to limit the production and dissemination of damaging materials. In the autumn of 1682 most newspapers were suppressed.⁶² Newsletter writers had noted rumours of such a step for some time.⁶³ The government's prescriptive measure was clearly understood. In a typically terse entry in his diary for October 1682, the Essex vicar Ralph Josselin noted 'peace continued, news forbidden'.⁶⁴ How effective was the government's crackdown in practice? A cursory glance at the monthly list of periodicals shows a very sharp decline in titles after September 1682.⁶⁵ But what of other news-bearing materials? The intense activity prompted by the discovery of the Rye House Plot in the summer of 1683 offers the opportunity for a detailed case study.⁶⁶

A clearly rattled government quickly became aware of the scale of dissident publishing, even as it executed those convicted of plotting. Published at almost the same time as William Lord Russell's execution, the peer's scaffold speech was 'valued at so high a rate by the fanatics that we cannot gett any for Money; I had gott two or three [copies] but mr Secretary disposed [of] them otherwise'.⁶⁷ Russell's widow was questioned in council as to whether she had sent 2500 copies of the speech into his native county of Bedfordshire.⁶⁸ The whole affair became a major media event. As one observer put

⁶⁰ Bodl., MS Eng. hist. c. 711, fol. 13v: diary of Roger Whitley, 17 June 1684.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 3v (25 Apr. 1684). For more on Whitley, see Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, pp. 88–90; G.E. Aylmer, *The Crown's Servants: Government and the Civil Service under Charles II, 1660–1685* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 230–6; HOP 1660–1690, III, 709–11; HOP 1690–1715, V, 859–60.

⁶² Crist, 'Francis Smith', ch. 5; Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper*, pp. viii, 19–20.

⁶³ E.g. FSL, L.c. 1228, 1287.

⁶⁴ *The Diary of Ralph Josselin 1616–1683*, ed. Alan Macfarlane (Recs. of Social and Economic History, ns, 3, Oxford, 1976), p. 640.

⁶⁵ Carolyn Nelson and Matthew Seccombe, *British Newspapers and Periodicals 1641–1700* (New York, 1987), pp. 663–8, esp. pp. 665–6.

⁶⁶ For a highly focused account of L'Estrange and London, see Peter Hinds, 'Roger L'Estrange, the Rye House Plot, and the regulation of political discourse in late-seventeenth-century London', *The Library*, 7th ser., 3 (2002), 3–31.

⁶⁷ HRHRC, Bulstrode newsletters, 23 July 1683; BL, Add. MS 4107, fol. 39; Bodl., MS Eng. letters d. 72, fol. 36v: Owen Wynne to Sir Richard Bulstrode, Whitehall, 23 July 1683.

⁶⁸ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 190. For more on this, see Lois G. Schwoerer, *Lady Rachel Russell: "One of the Best of Women"* (1988), pp. 137–42; *idem*, 'William, Lord Russell: the making of a martyr, 1683–1683', *JBS*, 24 (1985), 53–61.

it, 'our cheefest business att this time' was 'discourcings upon my Lord Russells speech'. This included speculation as to its true authorship, and the report that Dr Gilbert Burnet had admitted that 'he did write while my Lord Dictated to him'.⁶⁹ Sir Robert Reading assumed that the earl of Arran would have received a copy of Russell's speech 'by another hand', but did send him 'the Animadversions this day printed upon it'. In his view, those and 'what Dr Tillotson is preparing & will be out to night or tomorrow make it seeme very hard on' Russell.⁷⁰

Such critiques nevertheless continued to face discursive opposition. As Laurence Womock, bishop of St Davids, informed Sancroft in December 1683, 'several Sermons & discourses [are] published . . . [and] give great Scandal: viz. Consolatory Addresses to the lady Russell upon the death of her Lord, without taking notice of his Crime or supposing his Repentance'.⁷¹ Thus, although in the first flush of shock about the Rye House Plot during July 'there are 7 or 8 [loyal] Addresses on every day',⁷² the subsequent rumours against its veracity and alleging Essex's murder continued to sustain an audience who could be expected to buy and read whig propaganda. For Womock, this continuing opposition was indicative of a whole, and wholly irreconcilable, mindset: 'when we observe such as come in for pardon, can presently (upon obtaining it) harden themselves in their sedition' it was clear that with regard to 'that party . . . no kindness could mollify, or make them relent & bring them to repentance'.⁷³ Searches were still being made for treasonable and seditious books relating to the Rye House Plot in July 1684, and in January 1685 the master of a ship was apprehended for bringing over from the continent a large number of copies of a libel relating to the death of the earl of Essex.⁷⁴ Despite the latter seizure, 'severall damnable libells' were 'thrown at many persons dores, it contains a sheet or two of paper in substance a compendium of [Robert] Ferguson's letter concerning the Earl of Essex's death, but still more black and bitter than that letter'.⁷⁵

Published works existed alongside powerful verbal rumours. In Sussex, the

⁶⁹ JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: Isabella Chicheley to Richard Legh, 26 July 1683.

⁷⁰ Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 315: Sir Robert Reading to earl of Arran, London, 26 July 1683. Sir Richard Bulstrode in Brussels was sent a copy of L'Estrange's remarks on Russell's speech: HRHRC, Bulstrode newsletters, 27 Aug. 1683.

⁷¹ Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 226: bishop of St Davids to archbishop of Canterbury, Ely, 16 Dec. 1683. See also, [Matthew Sylvester], *Submission to the Will of God in Times of Affliction* . . . (1683), which was dedicated to Lady Russell.

⁷² Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 315v: Sir Robert Reading to earl of Arran, London, 26 July 1683. The whig Oxford don James Parkinson responded to the flood of addresses by asking whether Charles did not have enough 'bum fodder' already. *Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, ed., Clark, III, 70.

⁷³ Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 226: bishop of St Davids to archbishop of Canterbury, Ely, 16 Dec. 1683.

⁷⁴ CSPD I May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, pp. 93, 284.

⁷⁵ HMC, *Twelfth Report, App.*, Pt. V, p. 84: Edward Bedingfield to countess of Rutland, 1 Jan. [1684/5].

bishop of Chichester was appalled that Robert Palmer, a Petworth man who was both a major in the militia and a JP, 'makes it his business to disperse false rumours against the King and government and particularly to possess the common people with an opinion that the Earl of Essex did not murder himself, but was murdered. . . . This noise fills the ignorant and gets belief in the country.'⁷⁶ Six months later such rumours were still being fostered around Andover.⁷⁷ They fitted into a broader pattern of whig attempts to discredit popular belief in the reality of the Rye House Plot. The tory sheriff of London, Peter Rich, passed on to Jenkins news 'from which you will see the Whig practices . . . and how loth they are the people should understand the truth'. Consequently, he urged that it would be 'serviceable that the trials be not only at length, but epitomized that all the world may be made sensible of this horrid conspiracy'.⁷⁸ From the opposite perspective, an intercepted letter from John Higgins, a nonconformist, urged a correspondent to give 'all the discouragement you can' to local opinion being swayed by pamphlets describing the plot. These were all 'very horrid lies and perjury stories'. Instead he sent out 'the true speeches [of those executed as plotters], which will be a great satisfaction to the world, if they could have them. I have heard they have been at 4d and 6d a piece, but I hope they will be cheaper'.⁷⁹

Both Rich and Higgins testify to an awareness of the need to appeal to the masses, whether by a clearly 'epitomized', in the sense of condensed and summarised, account of the Rye House Plot trials, or by the production of affordable literature. For his part, L'Estrange expressed astonishment at how successful allegations that the earl of Essex had been murdered and that the whole affair was another 'sham' plot had been. As he told Secretary Jenkins, 'it is almost incredible what impressions they have made on the people already'.⁸⁰ His proposed remedy was 'to digest all the insurrections and conspiracies in the three kingdoms since the restoration into an historical model'. This would describe 'not so much . . . the persons as . . . the method of the contrivances and their ways to abuse the people'. In L'Estrange's view, this 'if clearly and briefly laid down, would not only gratify people's curiosity

⁷⁶ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 380: bishop of Chichester to Secretary Jenkins, 8 Sept. 1683.

⁷⁷ CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 303.

⁷⁸ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 109: Sheriff Peter Rich to Secretary Jenkins, 13 July 1683.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 204: John Higgins to his brother, 25 July 1683. An advert in June 1682 noted that the second impression of Elkanah Settle's anti-tory *Absalom Senior: Or, Achitophel Transpos'd* would cost 6d, rather than the shilling of the first impression, 'for the encouragement of those as are Lovers of such an Excellent Poem'. *The London Mercury*, no. 17 (29 May – 1 June 1682).

⁸⁰ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 335: Roger L'Estrange to Secretary Jenkins, 29 Aug. 1683. For an earlier example of similar sentiments, see *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, ed., Andrew Browning (2nd edn, with a new intro. and notes by Mary K. Geiter and W.A. Speck, 1991), p. 232.

but make them masters of the whole project and probably secure them against any further impostures for the future'.⁸¹ Once again, there is a noticeable emphasis on the need for brevity and readability.⁸² This would allow the government's message to reach as many of the king's subjects as possible, however difficult that was to square with tory views about the need to limit mass involvement in political life.⁸³

The very fact that Charles issued a *Declaration* explaining the Rye House Plot events was attributed to the need to influence public opinion against attempts by 'the factious party' to 'make a sham of almost every branch of it'.⁸⁴ Ormond noted that this *Declaration* would be 'in effect . . . a declaration to every parish' since it would appear during a special day of thanksgiving.⁸⁵ To the earl of Strafford, writing from his country seat in Yorkshire, the plot represented a 'great opportunity . . . to settle the King & Kingdom in the greatest happinesse'.⁸⁶ Provincial opinion certainly needed convincing. One deponent in Yorkshire claimed that he had heard a man in Buxton, Derbyshire, say 'that this was but a shamm Plott, and that it was but the one & twentyeth sham plott that had been putt on foot to take a way the Popish Plott'.⁸⁷ Whilst there was considerable dispute about the veracity of this report, the sentiment it expressed was not isolated.⁸⁸ Thomas Mostyn sent on newsletters he had received to one of his correspondents, adding that his informant 'gives great credit to this plott, hee has writt these 2 or 3 posts in a great fright'. Nonetheless Mostyn had 'seen a private letter which speaks with as litle respect of this plott as . . . of the Meal-tubb &c particularly that West the principall discoverer was a most violent Tory till within this 3

⁸¹ CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.*, p. 379: Roger L'Estrange to Secretary Jenkins, 8 Sept. 1683. (L'Estrange can subsequently be traced being allowed access to the journals and other papers in the keeping of the clerk of the House of Commons relating to the Popish Plot. CSPD 1 *May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685*, pp. 15, 118, 132.) The JP Edmund Warcup similarly urged the writing of a journal to record the government's version of events to counter the journal 'the party' were said to be keeping: CSPD 1682, p. 607.

⁸² For similar emphases in a work that insistently referred to the similarity of recent events to those of the 1640s, see John Nalson, *A True Copy of the Journal of The High Court of Justice for the Tryal of K. Charles I . . .* (1684), esp. unpag. intro. and ded. to James II.

⁸³ For claims that numbers began to be on the tory side, see below, p. 135.

⁸⁴ CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.*, pp. 89, 215–16: newsletter to Madame Katherine Radcliffe, London, [28] July 1683.

⁸⁵ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 79: duke of Ormond to earl of Arran, St James's Square, 21 July 1683. For the extent to which the *Declaration* was received in exactly the sense Ormond suggested, see 'The Diary of Sir Willoughby Aston', *The Cheshire Sheaf*, 3rd ser., 56 (1961), 90, 98.

⁸⁶ BL, Add. MS 75361 (unfol.): earl of Strafford to marquess of Halifax, W[entworth] Woodhouse, 21 July 1683.

⁸⁷ WYAS, MX/R/23/55: 'The Information of Michael Ann esq[ui]r[e] Taken upon Oath the 2d day of August Anno Dom: 1683 before S[i]r John Resesby'.

⁸⁸ The accused man, Will Robinson, denied the bulk of what had been said about him and claimed that Ann, the deponent, was a Catholic. (*Ibid.*)

years, & since has convers'd & been intimate with fanaticks, & particularly the Quakers'.⁸⁹ Such scepticism was taken to be part and parcel of the fact that whigs had not changed their fundamental ideas. As the marquess of Halifax was informed from Wiltshire, 'the faction in the countries, are rather full of feare, then conviction, and more doubtfull of their owne safety, then ashamed of their principles or confederates'.⁹⁰

In this divided news culture, polemicists themselves became famous figures and prone to criticism and compliment. The Cheshire tory Richard Legh received word that the periodicals *Heraclitus Ridens* and the *Observer* were making 'good sport with [Francis] Smith & [Benjamin] Harris the 2 protestant Intelligencers'.⁹¹ The gout-ridden bishop of St David's argued from the depths of East Anglia that 'we have reason to blesse God, that we have so many men of right principles, & they so able & zealous to publish & maintain them'.⁹² Others were not so sanguine. Titus Oates objected to the fact that in his writings L'Estrange had 'villified the discovery of the Popish Plott'. According to Oates, 'L'Strang and his Confederates' were 'villaines who neither feare God nor Reverence Man' and he ought to be 'Stopt in his Carreer of Scribling and be for ever Sylenced'. With supreme hypocrisy, one of the greatest liars in English history sniffily remarked that 'Certainly that Church . . . must be in a Sad condicon that stands in need of L'Strange for a Supporter, the Religion established by Law will be very contemptible, if Rogers penny Observator must give it life.' The sneer at the low cost of the *Observer* – and thus its likely audience – is palpable. According to Oates, the Church of England hierarchy had 'noe need of his scurralous and Scandalous Pen to mainteyne their authority and reputacion'.⁹³ Oates was far from L'Estrange's only, or even most vehement, critic. He himself claimed to be 'libelled almost out of patience'.⁹⁴ An anonymous letter threatening L'Estrange's life warned: 'Perswade not thyself these golden days will last long. Our party will be able shortly to pay your Tory Tantivy dogs off.' L'Estrange received particular criticism for attacking Stephen College – 'that martyr for the people's privileges' – and for assassinating the character of Lord Russell after his death, along with 'our worthy assistant, Gilbert Burnet, putting the nickname of Trimmers on all sincere Protestants, [and] vindicating the Papists'.⁹⁵ The level of vitriol

⁸⁹ NLW, Wynn of Gwydir Papers, no. 2835: Thomas Mostyn to [?], 30 June 1683.

⁹⁰ BL, Add. MS 75363 (unfol.): Thomas Thynne to marquess of Halifax, Longleat, 4 Aug. 1683.

⁹¹ JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: Ri[chard] Sterne to Richard Legh, 19 Apr. 1681.

⁹² Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 240: bishop of St David's to archbishop of Canterbury, Ely, 18 Jan. 1683/4.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, fol. 281: Titus Oates to [same], 15 Mar. 1683/[4]. (Oates had earlier offered the same complaint to Secretary Jenkins: Bodl., MS Rawlinson letters 108, fol. 125.)

⁹⁴ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 341: Roger L'Estrange to Secretary Jenkins, 31 Aug. 1683.

⁹⁵ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., pp. 308–9: [anon.] to Roger L'Estrange, [20 Aug. 1683]. For the attacks on Burnet as the alleged real author of Russell's published speech, see Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 277–8. For Burnet's panic-stricken denial, see T.E.S. Clarke

alone suggests something of the bitterness of the campaign for control of public opinion that was conducted in these years.

Practical policy-making on this basis was far from easy. As the bishop of Bristol wearily noted, 'tis a hard taske, for one man to content a Multitude, so uncertain & giddy, & apt to be divided by diversity of opinion'.⁹⁶ In September 1683, in the wake of the Rye House Plot, Charles issued a proclamation to enforce the execution of an act of Parliament settling the profits of the post office on James, 'and for the prevention of treasonable correspondencies, and other inconveniencies arising by the infringement of the said act'.⁹⁷ Other vigorous governmental actions included Jenkins ordering the mayor of Gravesend to crack-down on the activities of a local packet-boat that had carried literature into England from the continent;⁹⁸ a string of prosecutions against rumour-spreaders, publishers of seditious literature, and libellers;⁹⁹ and strong interference in the Stationers' Company.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps the most significant of these legal actions formed one facet of the assault on London's charter. The third of Mr Justice Jones's eight reasons for ruling that the capital's charter was forfeit was that the common council had printed and published a factious and seditious petition to the king in 1681 for Parliament to be called. This had 'vilified & Exposed the King in the Eyes of his Subjects'.¹⁰¹ The government also undertook more positive actions designed to influence public opinion. When Yarmouth finally agreed to surrender its charter, Jenkins cited the example of Bristol's surrender as a piece of reassurance to the lord lieutenant of Norfolk, the earl of Yarmouth. 'This . . . may be an answer to the malicious surmises spread abroad, as if the King had a design on the lands or other estate of the corporation. He is willing to descend to do all in his power in order to cure so senseless a jealousy.'¹⁰²

Nevertheless, for the government to make such concessions to popular opinion – for the king to 'descend' – was still a controversial measure. A Scottish observer, Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, was horrified by Charles II's

and H.C. Foxcroft, *A Life of Gilbert Burnet Bishop of Salisbury* (Cambridge, 1907), pp. 191–3.

⁹⁶ Bodl., MS Tanner 129, fol. 66: bishop of Bristol to archbishop of Canterbury, Bristol, 26 Oct. 1681.

⁹⁷ CSPD 1683 Jan. to June, p. 384: Secretary Jenkins to Mr Sandys, Whitehall, 30 June 1683; Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 277.

⁹⁸ CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 87. See also, BL, Add. MS 37981, fol. 37.

⁹⁹ Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 255; BL, Add. MS 61903, fols. 87v–88; UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9090, vol. VII, fol. 201: 7 Feb. 1682; *ibid.*, 9091 fol. 84v: 10 Feb. 1683; FSL, L.c. 1071, 1104, 1136, 1188, 1209, 1284, 1309; HRHRC, Bulstrode newsletters, 1 Feb. 1684.

¹⁰⁰ CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, pp. 299, 334, 359–60, 363, 388.

¹⁰¹ Bodl., MS Carte 216, fols. 285r–v: newsletter, Whitehall, 12 June 1683. (See also, BL, Add. MS 32500, fol. 68.) For the alleged impact of whig literature on voters in London, see CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 161; WYAS, MX/R/22/19.

¹⁰² CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 363: Secretary Jenkins to earl of Yarmouth, Whitehall, 5 Apr. 1684.

Declaration of April 1681: 'some think a prince at a losse when he is put to give an accompt of his actions, or to apologize to his subjects'.¹⁰³ The polemicist John Nelson offered a deliberately low-key explanation of the tory rationale for writing against libellers. It would not, he argued, represent the government stooping to enter the lists against libellers; rather, it would be a purely compassionate act towards those who had made the mistake of listening to them. He intended 'to lend them a kind clue to lead them out of the dangerous Labrynth of mistakes & misrepresentacions, by which they have been misled'.¹⁰⁴ This was – to return to Guilford's language (above, p. 96) – an argument based on the need to persuade the king's subjects back to full allegiance, whilst also providing them with an excuse for their recent actions: they had been duped. L'Estrange echoed this view. In the *Observer* he made 'Whig' admit that 'Not one of a Hundred of 'em' who supported whig policies actually 'sees the Bottom of the Project.' This evocation of the language of conspiratorial politics concluded with the bold claim that 'though they may be Whigs in their Understandings they are Toryes yet in their Hearts'.¹⁰⁵ Engaging with a politically aware and knowledgeable public clearly involved the use of flattery as a tool of persuasion.

A news culture thus continued to exist in England beyond the superficial watershed provided by the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament. It was less spectacular and tumultuous, and so has been less studied than that of the Exclusion period, but it was important nevertheless. The remainder of this chapter will examine the forums for this political debate during the personal rule, and something of their effects and power. In the absence of a parliament, the English were not simply 'a nation of political spectators';¹⁰⁶ they were also actors.

Centres and signs of partisanship

Coffeehouses were an important arena for rumours, news and polemical political literature – those 'Excrements of Wit'.¹⁰⁷ As Steve Pincus and others have made clear, these centres of sociability and political debate were

¹⁰³ Adam Urquhart and David Laing, eds., *Historical Observes of memorable Occurrents in Church and State, From October 1680 to April 1686 by Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall* (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1840), p. 34.

¹⁰⁴ Bodl., MS Tanner 103, fol. 244: 'The Sketch of a Book', n.d.

¹⁰⁵ *Observer*, no. 29 (2 July 1681). See also, Mark Knights, 'Faults on both sides: the conspiracies of party politics under the later Stuarts', in Julian Swann and Barry Coward, eds., *Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theory in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 153–72.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Mullett, 'Popular culture and popular politics: some regional case studies', in Clyve Jones, ed., *Britain in the First Age of Party, 1680–1750: Essays Presented to Geoffrey Holmes* (1987), p. 130.

¹⁰⁷ *An Exclamation Against Julian, Secretary to the Muses; With the Character of a Libeller* (n.d.).

far from being merely a metropolitan phenomenon.¹⁰⁸ They were certainly sufficiently widespread by late 1680 for the Welshman Edward Lloyd to end a lengthy account of the breakdown of political order in 1640–1 with the terse statement, ‘And all this with out the helpe of a Coffee house.’¹⁰⁹ Though there would be no repetition of the attempt in 1675 to close all coffeehouses by proclamation, efforts to enforce some kind of discipline over them continued at a local level. In January 1682, the Wiltshire sessions made an order to suppress ‘a coffee house kept by William Pearce in Warminster’ because he ‘hath of late made it his dayly practice to expose to the view of the inhabitants divers seditious pamphlets and libells against the Government now established in both Church and State’.¹¹⁰ The previous year, the grand jury at Bristol had strongly denounced coffeehouses (and tipping houses) as meeting places of factious persons, and centres of false, scandalous news, libels and pamphlets. The jurors recommended that no news literature be allowed in Bristol’s coffeehouses unless the mayor or the alderman of the relevant ward had first sanctioned it.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, despite these piecemeal efforts, coffeehouses remained proverbial for the way in which they provided homes to critical, unquiet spirits.¹¹² ‘Cofé house people’ meant gossips; those who take ‘pleasure to lie & raise stories although they know they shall be contradicted an hour after’, even to the extent of spreading false versions of the king’s speech to the Oxford Parliament.¹¹³ In the wake of Charles’s April 1681 *Declaration*, it was taken to be ‘a good signe’ that ‘the Coffee houses are become soe modeste in their discours’.¹¹⁴ But how long-lasting and consistent was this quiescence? By September 1681, the duke of Ormond reported with satisfaction recent reports that had reached Ireland from London ‘that the Coffe Howses are lyke to want resort by reason that men are afraid to talk with the liberty they used evry man being doubtfull not only of strangers but of their neighbours & relations’. This ‘reformation’ was imputed to the fact that Stephen

¹⁰⁸ Steven C.A. Pincus, ‘“Coffee politicians does create”: coffeehouses and Restoration political culture’, *JMH*, 67 (1995), 811–14; Lawrence E. Klein, ‘Coffeehouse civility, 1660–1714: an aspect of post-courtly culture in England’, *HLQ*, 59 (1997), 30–51. For substantial recent accounts, see Markman Ellis, *The Coffee House: A Cultural History* (2005); Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (2005), esp. pp. 172–5 for their widespread distribution and positions as centres of news.

¹⁰⁹ NLW, Sweeney Hall MS A4, fol. 14.

¹¹⁰ B.H. Cunningham, ed., *Records of the County of Wiltshire, Being extracts from the Quarter Session Great Rolls of the Seventeenth Century* (Devizes, 1932), p. 266; Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, p. 185.

¹¹¹ John Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century* (Bristol, 1900), p. 403. For other examples of town governors or judges interfering with coffeehouses, see UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9090, vol. VII, fol. 205; London, 25 Feb. 1681/2; JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: [newsletter] to Richard Legh, London, 10 Feb. 1682/3; FSL, L.c. 1298.

¹¹² Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, pp. 202–9.

¹¹³ NLW, Wynn of Gwydir Papers: J.D. to Dr Birch, London, 22 Mar. 1680/1.

¹¹⁴ WYAS, MX/R/19/27: J. Wentworth to Sir John Resesby, 25 April 1681.

College had recently been successfully prosecuted for treason as a result of his satirical ballad and cartoon, *The Ra-ree Show*.¹¹⁵ College had been seized in a coffeehouse in London.¹¹⁶ Yet the following month the earl of Arlington's act of conveying a petition from Shaftesbury to the king proved controversial. 'The politicians of the coffee-houses discourse variously of this matter *and those [who] love [my] Lord Chamberlain [i.e. Arlington] fear this may be his ruin, and will subject him to the revenge of the Duke of York and Ministers, without whose knowledge he did it.*'¹¹⁷ The fact that the post boy from Harwich was set upon in December 1681, and a number of letters opened so that no news reached London from the Dutch Republic, 'has furnished us with many surmises in the coffee houses'.¹¹⁸ If government informers were to be believed, coffeehouses remained centres of plotting in 1682. Jenkins was told that plots had been hatched in a coffeehouse in Moorgate on Michaelmas Day to capture Charles if the results of the shrieval elections went against the hopes of armed dissenting 'clubbers'.¹¹⁹ In York, after news of Monmouth's fall from royal favour became known in September 1682, a local tory noted with satisfaction that 'there is not a Whigg appears here either at Coffee house or Clubb'.¹²⁰ 'Intelligence-Letters' were certainly still being received in the coffeehouses of Cambridge at the same time.¹²¹ As late as the turn of 1684/5, Ormond was horrified to find that a bitter letter he had written to his successor as lord lieutenant of Ireland, the earl of Rochester, had been published and thus made 'as public as coffee-house discourse'.¹²²

Partisan literature continued to be written *about* coffeehouses, as well as to be read in them. At the end of 1682 the government received a copy of '31 Queries from the Protestant coffee-house in Amsterdam to the Tory coffee-house in Rotterdam', which may or not have been alluding to the names of coffeehouses in London.¹²³ Referring to a circle of contacts

¹¹⁵ V&A, National Art Library, Forster & Dyce Collection, F. 47. A. 40 (vol. II), fol. 85: duke of Ormond to Sir Robert Southwell, Kilkenny, 3 Sept. 1681. See also, B.J. Rahn, 'A Ra-ree Show – a rare cartoon: revolutionary propaganda in the treason trial of Stephen College', in Paul J. Korshin, ed., *Studies in Change and Revolution: Aspects of English Intellectual History 1640–1800* (Menston, 1972), pp. 77–98; Maya Evans, 'Prints and Politics. The Contribution of Illustrated Broadsides to English Political Culture, 1678–1682', unpub. BA thesis, Univ. of Oxford, 2006, pp. 16, 23–4, 25.

¹¹⁶ FSL, L.c. 1094.

¹¹⁷ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 187–8: earl of Longford to duke of Ormond, London, 11 Oct. 1681. (The text in italics was originally sent in cipher.)

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 265: same to same, London, 17 Dec. 1681.

¹¹⁹ CSPD 1682, p. 448: James Harris to Secretary Jenkins, Paved Alley, St James's, 1 Oct. 1682. See also, *ibid.*, pp. 495–6.

¹²⁰ WYAS, MX/R/21/39: Tho[mas] Fairfax to Sir John Resesby, [York], 30 Sept. 1682.

¹²¹ Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 96.

¹²² HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 304: duke of Ormond to earl of Rochester, 7 Jan. 1684/5. For the context, see *ibid.*, pp. 292–3, 301.

¹²³ CSPD 1682, pp. 585–6: John Vener and James Rich to Israel Hayes, English merchant at Rotterdam, Leyden, 22 Dec. 1682/1 Jan. 1682/3. The English envoy in the

including Shaftesbury, Ferguson, Sir William Waller, and Edmund Ludlow, the queries included a number of scurrilous accusations and speculations about the sex-lives of various leading councillors, as well as more serious matters such as, ‘Whether the King governs according to the law and his oaths taken at Breda and at his coronation’, before ending with a thinly veiled call to rebellion – ‘a redemption from tyranny and Papist plots’.¹²⁴ A year later, a tory tract satirised the fact that many catalogues of forthcoming auctions were often distributed free in coffeehouses.¹²⁵ *At Amsterdammable-Coffee-House* featured a list of lots designed to mock whig leaders and tenets, such as ‘Three large Volumes of the Duke of Monmouth’s Politiques, valued at three Crowns’, and ‘Six Whiggs Sheriffs Chains’. It also harked back to recent parliaments in lot 12: ‘Three Loyal Votes pipeing hot from the house of Commons, One to exclude the lawful heir, and set up a Lawless one, 2. To make the King great by giving him no money, The third for Establishing the Church and Monarchy, by setting up Presbytery, valued at the publick good, to advance the Good Old Cause’.¹²⁶

A whole genre of reports (or stories) grew up, detailing confrontations between whigs and tories in coffee-houses. The readers of the whiggish *Protestant Oxford Intelligence* were treated to an account of yobbish tory critics of the MPs chosen to sit at Oxford in March 1681. These had drawn their swords in a coffeehouse, only to be ‘handsomely’ defeated by a single ‘Gentleman’ with a cane who defended parliament.¹²⁷ In December 1681, a more detailed account of several named tory peers and gentlemen storming into Peter’s Coffee House in Covent Garden – where ‘they talk treason & whisper in Cabals’¹²⁸ – and searching for whigs was offered by several newsletter writers. Their aggressive calls for any at the coffeehouse ‘to own themselves for whiggs’ met with no reply until they picked on ‘a poore Taylor’. When asked whether he was ‘a Tory or a whigg’, the tailor mistook their

United Provinces certainly complained of ‘Phanatick Bookesellers’ in Amsterdam, and ‘the great Coffymen as Spread all seditious news’. BL, Add. MS 37981, fol. 68: William Carr to [‘Rt. Hon.’], Hague, 9 Sept. 1681. But for the notoriety of the Amsterdam Coffee House in London in the later 1670s and early 1680s, see FSL, L.c. 1250, 1259, 1296; Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, pp. 170, 186, 192, 200, 201, 204, 205, 207, 208.

¹²⁴ CSPD 1682, pp. 585–6. See also, [John Phillips], *Horse-flesh for the Observator being a comment upon Gusman, ch. 4, v. 5 held forth at Sam’s Coffee-House / by T.D.B.D. chaplain to the Inferiour clergies guide* (1682).

¹²⁵ Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, pp. 135–43.

¹²⁶ *At Amsterdammable-Coffee-House On the 5th of November next will be Exposed to pub[li]ck Sale these Goods following, in several parcels* (dated by Wing to 1684, but more likely 1683); Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, p. 138. See also a mocking advert about ‘the Plot and Counterplot Coffee-House’: *Currant Intelligence*, no. 28 (26–30 July 1681).

¹²⁷ *The Protestant Oxford Intelligence: Or, Occurences Forraign and Domestick*, no. 4 (17–21 Mar. 1681).

¹²⁸ FSL, L.c. 1226. Peter’s Coffee House was searched for arms in the wake of the Rye House Plot: UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9068, vol. III, no. 24: [?] to Thomas Mostyn, London, [June/July 1683] (transcribed in NRA 22953 Lloyd-Mostyn, p. 61).

meaning and 'Replied Truly his hair was a whigg'. For this perceived insolence his periwig was burned and he was thrown down a flight of stairs.¹²⁹ Whether accurate or fanciful, such accounts testify both to a generally accepted perception of coffeehouses as political arenas, and to a certain ubiquity of political labels.¹³⁰

The drunken nature of the tory *provocateurs* in these accounts points to the extent to which alcohol and alehouses remained important features of political life.¹³¹ Toast-drinking became a notorious way of displaying political allegiance, notably by drinking confusion to the whigs or tories according to personal inclination.¹³² Matters of the succession also predictably raised the political temperature in alehouses. In Bury St Edmunds, a man's refusal to drink the health of the duke of York resulted in a glass of wine being thrown into his face, closely followed by the whole bottle.¹³³ Rumours about future parliamentary sessions also resulted in recourse to the bottle. Discussions amongst the Norfolk gentry about the selection of candidates for parliament customarily took place in the White Horse Tavern, Norwich.¹³⁴ In Nottingham whig opposition to the terms of the town's new charter was intense and well co-ordinated: 'they keepe there cabals every day & goe in great numbers ffrom Alehouse to Alehou to diswade the burgesses from there obedience to the new Charter'. As the author of these comments made plain, these actions were designed to be widely known and influential: 'it is the government that they ame at to deter all other corporations ffrom surrendering there charters that soe they might have a parliament to there one [i.e. own] content & keepe the kingdome in distraction & feares'.¹³⁵ In such circumstances, it was inevitable that the alehouses would also become places of suspicion and mistrust. A periodical informed its readers of talk that

¹²⁹ UWB (Bangor) Mostyn, Add. MS 9090, vol. VII, fol. 180: London, 6 Dec. 1681; FSL, L.c. 1157.

¹³⁰ For further overt reference to 'a Whig Coffe hous', see FSL, L.c. 1210; and for L'Estrange's patronage of Sam's Coffeehouse, see Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, pp. 164, 170, and the tract noted above, n. 124.

¹³¹ This is scarcely touched on in Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200–1830* (1983). For the linked theme of partisanship and feasting, see FSL, L.c. 1250–1; HRHRC, Bulstrode newsletters, 21 Apr. 1682; and, generally, Newton Key, 'The political culture and political rhetoric of county feasts and feast sermons, 1654–1714', *JBS*, 33 (1994), 223–56; *idem*, 'The localism of the county feast in late Stuart political culture', *HLQ*, 58 (1996), 211–37.

¹³² E.g. FSL, L.c. 1165, 1171; *The London Mercury*, no. 17 (29 May – 1 June 1682).

¹³³ UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn, Add. MS 9090, vol. VII, fol. 140: London, 30 July 1681.

¹³⁴ Norfolk RO, MC 1601/26. For the analogous use of coffeehouses, see Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, p. 180.

¹³⁵ Nottinghamshire Archives, DD/SR/219/1/17: Gervase Ripon to John Millington, Nottingham, 25 Nov. 1682. For the local context, see *HOP 1660–1690*, I, 356, III, 374, 439; Paul D. Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic. Partisan Politics in England's Towns 1650–1730* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 224–7.

two men in an alehouse in the Strand – one of whom, damningly, was thought to be French – had reacted uneasily to the entrance of a constable. They had promptly burned a roll of papers and left, rather than risk interrogation by the constable.¹³⁶ More certainly, we can read in Roger Whitley's diary an unusually intimate discussion of wary political activity in a drinking establishment. During a visit to London in spring 1684, he recorded sitting in an inn where a Mr Warburton

fell in discourse that Langley Curtis, was pilloryed that day (but others sayd it was another,) & that it was for printing a libell, called my Lord Russell's Ghost; I told him, I heard nothing of it; he made it strange; sayd, some-body at the Crowne Taverne in Bloomesbury, was concerned in it; & sayd something of a watchman; &c: but I considering, that he sayd, a man was pilloryed for printing the story; I thought it was not fit, for me, to heare it; soe got up, & went to the other table . . .¹³⁷

Coffeehouses and alehouses represented the quintessence of a much larger phenomenon: the close patterns of sociability and discussion that existed in towns.¹³⁸ In his analysis of the causes of the Civil War, Hobbes expressed the suspicious sentiments of many when he argued that London and the larger corporate towns had played a decisive part.¹³⁹ Such associations long continued to trouble the government, and its local gentry supporters. A large and geographically diffuse number of towns were described as 'factious' or disloyal, or else as being centres of fanaticism, notably Abingdon, Chichester, Walsall, Wigan, Worcester, Yarmouth, and York.¹⁴⁰ St Ives and Leominster were said to be dominated by the faction or, explicitly, by whigs.¹⁴¹ In the latter, supporters of the former whig MP John Dutton Colt refused to agree to surrender the town's charter at the same time as sending up a loyal address after the Rye House Plot. In retaliation local loyalists

¹³⁶ *The Impartial London Intelligence*, no. 3 (7–11 Apr. 1681).

¹³⁷ Bodl., MS Eng. hist. c. 711, fol. 3v. (For an analogous incident in a coffeehouse, see Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, p. 207.) The genre of ghost literature was much employed in these years as a vehicle for partisan debate.

¹³⁸ This is a major theme of Withington, *Politics of Commonwealth*, esp. ch. 5.

¹³⁹ Thomas Hobbes, *Behemoth or The Long Parliament*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies, with an intro. by Stephen Holmes (Chicago and London, 1990), pp. 3–4. (Though completed in manuscript in 1668, the first authorized printed edition of *Behemoth* did not appear until 1682. *Ibid.*, p. vii.) For further discussion, see Withington, *Politics of Commonwealth*, pp. 230–3.

¹⁴⁰ Abingdon: Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fols. 55, 112; Chichester: HOP 1660–1690, I, 420–1; Walsall: CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, p. 95; Wigan: HMC, *Fourteenth Report, App.*, Pt. IV, p. 128; Worcester: CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, pp. 249–50; Yarmouth: Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 254; Gauci, *Politics and Society in Great Yarmouth*, pp. 152–64; York: Browning, ed., *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, pp. 269, 283–4, 579–81; Withington, *Politics of Commonwealth*, pp. 263–4.

¹⁴¹ CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, pp. 78–9, 89.

refused to sign the address, and claimed that ‘the subscribers of this congratulation are all men of factious, anti-monarchical, dissenting, rebellious principles’, and former armed rebels. Whatever they claimed, such men had in practice ‘refused to trust’ the king ‘with their charter, franchises and privileges’. They were also the same men who in 1682 had ‘refused to join with the loyal party in our former Abhorrence’ of the Association found in Shaftesbury’s closet, ‘protesting rather to lose their right hands than profess any such thing’.¹⁴² In neighbouring Staffordshire, Monmouth’s tour of the area gave ‘such encouragement and advantages to the other party’ that if a Parliament was called ‘an ill choice’ would be made ‘in these parts’, especially in Stafford.¹⁴³ The tory mayor of the town bemoaned ‘the unsoundness of the major part of the Common Council’ who ‘stink for want of amputation’.¹⁴⁴ Such sentiments must have stemmed from his experiences a fortnight earlier when after failing to attend Monmouth ‘the vulgarity of the town threatened to make my house and my windows pay for the absence of the Tory Mayor’.¹⁴⁵ The threat was probably not an idle one: in Chester a man’s house was ‘pulled down because hee would not goe out & meet’ the duke.¹⁴⁶

As these sentiments, and the language within which they were couched, would suggest, divisions between whigs and tories were deep and bitter. A growing sense of mutually exclusive groups can be discerned. In 1683 the signatories to the Cheshire grand jury’s loyal address noted that it was ‘high time to manifest our seperacion from such persons and principles’ as had been involved in the Rye House Plot.¹⁴⁷ The address drawn up by Sir John Reresby in Yorkshire similarly proclaimed that the subscribers ‘own our seperacion from such persons & our abhorrence of such principles’.¹⁴⁸ These formal expressions were matched in private correspondence. In the wake of John Locke’s expulsion from Christ Church, Oxford, a government official in Ireland noted that ‘I thought John Lock had been more cautious than to have don any thing that might have brought his life in question, but treason

¹⁴² Having refused to ‘join with them’ the loyalists planned ‘to address his majesty by ourselves’. CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.*, pp. 178–80: T. Harris to William Chiffinch, Leominster, 21 July 1683. (Leominster’s dissenting community was so influential in the years after the Restoration that the town became known as ‘Little Amsterdam’: HOP 1660–1690, I, 265.) For more on the divisiveness of addresses, see above, pp. 37–8.

¹⁴³ CSPD 1682, p. 426; HOP 1660–1690, II, 49.

¹⁴⁴ CSPD 1682, p. 456: Sampson Byrch to Secretary Jenkins, Stafford, 7 Oct. 1682. Monmouth was High Steward of Stafford until his complicity in the Rye House Plot saw him removed. HOP 1660–1690, I, 389.

¹⁴⁵ CSPD 1682, p. 428: Sampson Byrch to Secretary Jenkins, Stafford, 25 Sept. 1682.

¹⁴⁶ NLS, MS 14405, fol. 40v: Lord David Hay to marquess of Tweeddale, London, 23 Sept. 1682. For pro-Monmouth riots in London, see HMC, *Twelfth Report, App.*, Pt. VII, p. 190.

¹⁴⁷ ‘The Diary of Sir Willoughby Aston’, 99. For more on this, see Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation*, pp. 77–8; HRHRC, Bulstrode newsletters, 15 Oct. 1683.

¹⁴⁸ WYAS, MX/R/17/28: endorsed ‘the Yorkshire address as I drew it 1683’.

is as infectious as the plague and there is, I see, no keeping company with persons disaffected to the Government without being tainted as well with their practices as principles.¹⁴⁹ When the son of the governor of Chester Castle attempted to infiltrate the whig crowds surrounding Monmouth during his north-western tour he was ‘by those of the county . . . soon distinguished to be none of their herd’, and prevented from getting too close to him.¹⁵⁰ By 1684 Roger Whitley had become sufficiently suspicious of people he did not know that he pointedly drank the king’s health in his own house after dinner when he played host to a stranger from Ireland.¹⁵¹ Nor was material wanting to sharpen Whitley’s alarm: an acquaintance told him that ‘there were many unkinde, malitious reports raised of me, & constant unkinde letters sent up’, and advised him to leave the country for a while.¹⁵²

Whitley’s informant was not the only contemporary to translate the separating language of loyal addresses into starkly geographical terms. When it was reported that Shaftesbury had fled to Holland, Luttrell recorded that ‘some others, tis thought, will follow, not thinking it safe to tarry here longer, as affairs are at present’.¹⁵³ More aggressively, the informer James Holloway spoke of an island in the West Indies where the disaffected could go to live.¹⁵⁴ Such notions were not merely hypothetical. Many disaffected Scots were noted as fleeing to Carolina, the American colony with which Shaftesbury had been closely involved.¹⁵⁵ Within England the creation of a loyal address against the Association proved so controversial at a Yorkshire assize in 1682 that ‘whigs & Toryes . . . <are> become averse to be seen in one anothers company’.¹⁵⁶ The previous year, Charles’s *Declaration* had provoked similar disputes, with large number of gentlemen withdrawing

¹⁴⁹ Cornwall RO, PB/8/1/256: John Ellis to Humphrey Prideaux, Dublin, 20 Nov. 1684.

¹⁵⁰ CSPD 1682, p. 396: Peter Shakerley to Secretary Jenkins, Chester Castle, 16 Sept. 1682.

¹⁵¹ Bodl., MS Eng. hist. c. 711, fol. 14: diary of Roger Whitley, 20 June 1684.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, fols. 5v–6: 1 May 1684. (Whitley replied that he would rely on his own integrity.)

¹⁵³ Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 228. For Scottish perspectives, see NAS, GD/406/1/2887; Ginny Gardner, *The Scottish Exile Community in the Netherlands, 1660–1690: “shaken together in the bag of affliction”* (SHR monographs ser., 13, East Linton, 2004); and for ‘Whiggish Sir Roland’ Gwynne fleeing Wales for Holland in 1683, see J.P. Jenkins, ‘Two poems on the Glamorgan gentry community in the reign of James II’, *NLW Jnl*, 21 (1979), 169.

¹⁵⁴ CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 379.

¹⁵⁵ Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 398–9. See also, *ibid.*, pp. 312, 369; Clare Jackson, *Restoration Scotland, 1660–1690. Royalist Politics, Religion and Ideas* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 36. Many Welsh Baptists also fled to the North American colonies in this period, see W.T. Whitley, ‘Radnorshire Baptists, 1646–1776’, *Trans. of the Radnorshire Soc.*, 5 (1935), 31; Thomas Richards, *Wales under the Penal Code (1662–1687)* (1925), pp. 21, 72.

¹⁵⁶ WYAS, MX/R/18/65: Thomas Yarburgh to Sir John Reresby, Snaith (Yorkshire), 22 Mar. 1681/2. See Scott, ‘Politics, dissent and Quakerism in York’, pp. 317–29 for the local context to this dispute.

rather than agreeing to sign an insufficiently 'loyal' address to the crown.¹⁵⁷ The summer of 1682 witnessed the naked partisanship of London's sheriffs, who continued the poll to elect their successors even after the Recorder had ordered a halt to proceedings: 'upon which most of the honest and loyal Citizens withdrew and non stayed but thoes of the factious pairtie'.¹⁵⁸ In the autumn it was noted in London that 'The Citty show was very small the Whiggs all generally denying attendance'.¹⁵⁹ In particular, Ormond observed the low turn-out of liverymen to line the rails during the procession to sup with the Lord Mayor: 'I suppose all that voted against this Mayor absented themselves and that was very near one half of those that had right to vote.'¹⁶⁰

Political affiliations impacted on individual well-being economically, as well as physically and spatially. Edward Ecclestone, a London bookbinder, deposed that he had been subjected to a political interrogation by one Samuel Birch, a scholar at Newington School. Having already asked Ecclestone's servant whether his master 'was a Whig or a Tory', Birch 'entered into smart discourse with him [Ecclestone] about his opinions, telling him that those were the only true Protestants that voted for Dubois and Papillon' in the shrieval elections. After these whig candidates had been defeated, Birch returned, clearly in some physical discomfort, admitting that 'he had been so zealous for Dubois and Papillon that he had broken a vein and Dr Cox told him he should not be his own man again'. He told Ecclestone that the whole of Newington School had been at the elections, although not liverymen or freemen, since 'their lives, liberties and fortunes lay at stake'. At the end of their conversation, the bookbinder said 'I suppose I shall lose your custom'. Although Birch denied this, he added 'but I wish we had one of our own judgement'.¹⁶¹ Whilst Ecclestone's specialist trade appears to have protected him from loss of earnings, his expectations are unlikely to have been based purely on speculation. A man claimed to have had to move his shop from St Bartholomew's Lane to Cheapside after turning government informant and fearing for his life amongst 'disaffected' neighbours.¹⁶² Anxiety about loss of trade was imputed to Trimmers by L'Estrange in the *Observer* as a means of suggesting their cowardice at a time when difficult decisions were being made by more committed men.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ WYAS, MX/R/17/45, 18/9.

¹⁵⁸ NAS, GD/33/63/3/13: W.P. to [earl of Aberdeen], Whitehall, 6 July 1682.

¹⁵⁹ Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 234: Israel Feilding to earl of Arran, London, 31 Oct. 1682.

¹⁶⁰ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 470: duke of Ormond to same, London, 31 Oct. 1682. For the political ructions within the livery companies, see Mark Knights, 'A city revolution: the remodelling of the London livery companies in the 1680s', *EHR*, 112 (1997), 1141–78.

¹⁶¹ CSPD 1682, pp. 381–2: deposition of Edward Ecclestone, Whitehall, 9 Sept. 1682.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 540: copy of a relation of Mr Heather or Hater, 13 Nov. 1682.

¹⁶³ Donald R. Benson, 'Halifax and the Trimmers', *HLQ*, 27 (1964), 120. Cf. *The Trimmer Catechised: Or, A Serious discourse between Trueman and Trimmer* (1683).

He also sought to encourage the economic proscription of the disaffected.¹⁶⁴ In early 1682, the character 'Tory' claims: 'I am told that the *Loyall Nobility; Gentry, and Commonalty* of the Nation are Ent'ring upon a *Resolution to have no sort of dealing in Mony-matters* (more than in point of Trade is absolutely Necessary) *with any of the Whig-Party*; and not to buy so much as a *Dish of Coffee*, or a *Pot of Ale* of any man that is not well affected to the *King*, and the *Church*.'¹⁶⁵ And in an anonymous and only partially dated set of 'directions for choosing aldermen' every 'alehouse-keeper and coffeeman' in London was expected to attend a ward moot and 'vote for such men as are right to the king and government, as they shall expect licences for the year ensuing'.¹⁶⁶ The king himself may have offered a lead by refusing to buy cloth from the whig sheriff Samuel Shute.¹⁶⁷

Fear of loss of trade was not the only factor that was seen to influence individuals' political lives. Education was also seen to have a real impact on the development of pupils' views, and in some cases to be at the root of all evils. Edward Ecclestone deposed that on Tuesdays the whole of Newington School 'come usually to Islington, where they observe a fast and have some kind of lecture, exercise or preaching on pretence of religious worship'.¹⁶⁸ Although historians have written very little about the politics of education in this period below the level of Oxbridge, it is clear that it was a major preoccupation of government.¹⁶⁹ The state papers at this time are littered with examples of concern about the influence of nonconformist schools and teachers.¹⁷⁰ Just as conventicles were seen as centres of political plotting,¹⁷¹ so nonconformist-run schools were regarded as being intimately linked with instilling seditious principles.¹⁷² Such links were furthered by the claim that

¹⁶⁴ For claims that dissenters in Taunton sought to use the withdrawal of their custom as a means of attacking the zealous tory mayor, Stephen Timewell, see CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.*, p. 251.

¹⁶⁵ *Observer*, no. 99 (15 Feb. 1681[2]).

¹⁶⁶ CSPD 1682, p. 557: directions for choosing aldermen (for the lord mayor), Nov. [?1682]; Cowan, *Social Life of Coffee*, p. 187. In several areas publicans were noted as especially zealous tories: Colin Brent, 'The neutering of the fellowship and the emergence of a Tory party in Lewes (1663–1688)', *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 121 (1983), 101.

¹⁶⁷ FSL, L.c. 1137: London, 15 Oct. 1681. For Shute's political fortunes, see Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 295–6; De Krey, *London and the Restoration*, pp. 228–9, 233, 234, 236, 237, 257, 258–61, 262, 263–4, 266, 268, 320, 351, 355, 359, 371, 380, 419.

¹⁶⁸ CSPD 1682, p. 382: deposition of Edward Ecclestone, Whitehall, 9 Sept. 1682.

¹⁶⁹ For an earlier period, see Joan Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England* (1966), chs. 4, 13.

¹⁷⁰ CSPD 1682, pp. 36, 92, 609–10; CSPD 1683 *July to Sept.*, pp. 57, 62; CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, pp. 30, 254; CSPD 1 May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, p. 40; HMC, *Twelfth Report*, App., Pt. VII, p. 193; Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 123; P.J. Norrey, 'The relationship between central government and local government in Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire, 1660–1688', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of Bristol, 1988, p. 256.

¹⁷¹ See above, ch. 3.

¹⁷² Clerke, *A Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church of Rochester*, p. 16; CSPD 1683 *July*

a school in Southwark had remained open on the anniversary of the regicide in 1682, the teacher declaring Charles I 'had his trial by due course of law and that his beheading was the best deed that ever Parliament did'.¹⁷³ On the other side of the coin, when a group of schoolboys from St Paul's met James in December 1684, he told their master 'to be very careful to teach them their duty to the Church and Crown'.¹⁷⁴ This message might have been redundant nearby at Westminster, where the schoolboys were reported to have burnt an effigy of Jack Presbyter rather than the pope on 5 November 1681.¹⁷⁵

Men and women thus found themselves marked by their political beliefs in the course of daily life, and were dealt with accordingly by their peers. At the most overt and controversial level, actual physical signs could be displayed in order to demonstrate political beliefs and allegiances. During the Exclusion Crisis, the Green Ribbon Club had provided an extreme example of this phenomenon, green being a colour traditionally associated with English radicals.¹⁷⁶ A literal colouring of politics and religion was maintained in Charles's last years. In July 1681, Luttrell noted that 'Many people in this city [i.e. London], as well as in other places, have of late distinguished themselves by wearing some red and some blew ribbons in their hats, the red signifyeing those that are for the duke of York, the blew those that are for the duke of Monmouth'.¹⁷⁷ Politicized ribbon-wearing was a natural extension of their use to illustrate particular events, notably St Patrick's Day in Ireland.¹⁷⁸ In Derby in 1681 the high sheriff and most of the gentry were said to be 'high Toryes' who wore 'little red Ribbons in theyr hatts', whilst a year later more than a 100 people in Durham celebrated the king's birthday and the Restoration adorned with the same red ribbons.¹⁷⁹

On the other side of the political fence, in London 'a great quantity of blew silke' was 'wrought and Interwoven with the words noe Papist noe Popery'. The ribbons cost four pence each and were again prominently

to Sept., p. 237; CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, pp. 62, 95; Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 163; 129, fol. 88.

¹⁷³ CSPD 1682, pp. 603–4: examination of Carey Murphy, n.d. (The teacher, Mr Roberts, was said to be the scrivener who had written out the whig informer Hetherington's evidence.)

¹⁷⁴ CSPD 1 May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, p. 248: newsletter to John Squire, London, 11 Dec. 1684.

¹⁷⁵ Clark, ed., *Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, II, 558; Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 142.

¹⁷⁶ J.R. Jones, 'The Green Ribbon Club', *Durham Univ. Jnl*, 49 (1956), 17–20.

¹⁷⁷ Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 110–11.

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Dineley (or Dingley), *Observations In a Voyage Through the Kingdom of Ireland . . . in the Year 1681*, ed. James Graves (Dublin, 1870), p. 20. Leeks were worn by some Welshmen to celebrate St David's Day. *Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. de Beer, II, 493.

¹⁷⁹ BL, Add. MS 75360 (unfol.): John Millington to earl of Halifax, Derby, 27 July 1681; *Observer*, no. 151 (8 June 1682); Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 283–4.

displayed in hats.¹⁸⁰ In Worcester, a Mr Collins, the son of a Cromwellian officer, was said to have reacted scornfully when he saw a ribbon in a man's hat 'upon which was writt in gold, Rex et heredes'. Collins asked the man 'why not Papa et succesores'? This implied commentary on James's Catholicism and perceived links to the papacy was enough to get Collins bound over to the next assizes.¹⁸¹ Even more provocatively, baskets of blue ribbons were said to have been distributed in the north-west at Lord Delamere's behest during Monmouth's tour of the area in 1682, a fact which he strongly disputed.¹⁸² He had not 'given ribbons to many thousands of young men', nor had he 'taken their names in writing, that is, in plain English . . . listed men' since 'I pretend to so much learning as to know what the law thinks of those that list men without the King's authority'.¹⁸³ Reference to late medieval and Tudor statutes against retainers¹⁸⁴ was more explicit in Surrey where after the Rye House Plot discussions took place about how to force prominent local whigs to give surety for their good behaviour as a result of 'giving of Liverys or Badges'.¹⁸⁵ This would taint local whigs and damage their future political prospects. Working by analogy even to repealed laws would show 'what jealousies those Law makers in noe lesse than 7. or 8. Kings reignes, had of such Cantonizers of the people, <to wit> that theyr <intent was to> maintaine Each other in all Quarells, whether reasonable or unreasonable'.¹⁸⁶ Limited evidence survives to suggest that this may have been a legitimate concern. In early 1683, for instance, it was reported that in preparation for a visit by the duke of Monmouth to Chichester 200 matching waistcoats had been made for the young men of the town.¹⁸⁷

Conclusion

What does the foregoing account suggest about the geographical range of partisan politics in this period? Despite the growing number of local studies covering the later Stuart period, there is still a marked historiographical bias in favour of London when it comes to discussing whig and tory political life.¹⁸⁸ This is unsurprising for several reasons. First, much of the political

¹⁸⁰ UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9090, vol. VII, fol. 88: London, 1 Mar. 1680/1.

¹⁸¹ BL, Add. MS 75359 (unfol.): Lord Windsor to earl of Halifax, Hewell, 10 Oct. 1681.

¹⁸² Thompson, ed., *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton*, II, 20.

¹⁸³ CSPD 1682, p. 455: Lord Delamere to Secretary Jenkins, Dunham Massey, 6 Oct. 1682.

¹⁸⁴ For the act of 1504, see G.R. Elton, *England under the Tudors* (3rd edn, 1991), pp. 58–9; *idem*, *Reform and Reformation. England 1509–1558* (1977), p. 32.

¹⁸⁵ Surrey History Centre, LM/COR/6/74: James Gresham to Sir William More, Haslemere, 10 Jan. 1683/4.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 73: same to same, Haslemere, 2 Jan. 1683/4.

¹⁸⁷ UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9091, p. 82: London, 2 Feb. 1682[3].

¹⁸⁸ For some thoughtful exceptions, see L.K.J. Glassey, 'The origins of political parties in

heat of the Exclusion Crisis was felt most spectacularly in the capital. Dramatic parliamentary debates and huge pope-burning processions have captured historians' attention, and pointed to the precocious political partisanship that existed in London.¹⁸⁹ Secondly, London in the Restoration period was, quite simply, enormous. The growth of London throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was one of the most astonishing aspects of European life. It grew from around 75,000 inhabitants in 1550 to perhaps 575,000 in 1700. In the process, it soared from sixth place to a clear first in the league table of largest European cities.¹⁹⁰ Within the Stuarts' territories London dwarfed not just English provincial towns, but also Dublin and Edinburgh.¹⁹¹ The sheer scale of the metropolis made it impossible to ignore. Particularly at times of crisis the London mob and City government could directly influence national events,¹⁹² and much recent historiography has emphasized the exceptional political sophistication of London's population, well below the level of the elite.¹⁹³ Small wonder then that a number of contemporaries regarded the government's success in getting its allies into the key positions of sheriffs and lord mayor, and then over-turning London's charter, as crucial steps towards regaining the political initiative across the country as a whole.¹⁹⁴

late seventeenth-century Lancashire', *Trans. of the Historic Soc. of Lancs. and Cheshire*, 136 (1987 for 1986), 39–58; Philip Jenkins, 'The Glamorgan gentry in 1677', *NLW Jnl*, 25 (1987), 53–70; P.R. Seddon, 'The origins of the Nottinghamshire Whigs: an analysis of the subscribers to the election expenses of Sir Scrope Howe and John White [1679]', *Historical Research*, 69 (1996), 218–31.

¹⁸⁹ Sheila Williams, 'The pope-burning processions of 1679, 1680 and 1681', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 21 (1958), 104–18; O.W. Furley, 'The pope-burning processions of the late 17th century', *History*, 44 (1959), 16–23.

¹⁹⁰ Jeremy Boulton, 'London 1540–1700', in Clark, ed., *Cambridge Urban History*, II, 316 table 10.1, 315. For London's self-image in 1683 as the major Protestant city in Europe, see Jonathan Scott, 'England's troubles: exhuming the Popish Plot', in Tim Harris, Paul Seaward and Mark Goldie, eds., *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England* (Oxford, 1990), p. 118.

¹⁹¹ Roger Finlay and Beatrice Shearer, 'Population growth and suburban expansion', in A.L. Beier and Roger Finlay, eds., *London 1500–1700: The Making of the Metropolis* (1986), p. 39 table 1.

¹⁹² For mob activity in London around the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot in 1682, see HMC, *Twelfth Report, App., Pt. VII*, p. 190; WYAS, MX/R/22/27; and for the Glorious Revolution, see Robert Beddard, 'Anti-popery and the London mob, 1688', *History Today*, 38:7 (1988), 36–9; W.L. Sachse, 'The mob and the Revolution of 1688', *JBS*, 4 (1964), 23–40; Tim Harris, 'London crowds and the Revolution of 1688', in Eveline Cruickshanks, ed., *By Force or by Default? The Revolution of 1688–1689* (Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 44–64.

¹⁹³ De Krey, *London and the Restoration*. See also *idem*, *A Fractured Society: The Politics of London in the First Age of Party 1688–1715* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 9–12, 37, 42–4; Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 18–31; Knights, 'City revolution', 1142–6, 1176.

¹⁹⁴ See above, ch. 1.

Thirdly, the capital has offered extremely rich archival remains to historians. These have allowed for very sophisticated treatment of crowd politics, and even for detailed statistics concerning the numbers of whig and tory common councilmen, and maps of 'Whig space', 'Tory space', and 'contested space' within the boundaries of the corporation.¹⁹⁵ Such detail is often difficult to recover elsewhere.¹⁹⁶

Finally, some local historians have emphasized the slow emergence in their areas of interest of a specific vocabulary of whig and tory political division that Londoners must have taken for granted.¹⁹⁷ With regard to Great Yarmouth, for instance, Perry Gauci has argued that 'whig' and 'tory' only became used locally in early 1684, and L.K.J. Glassey has dated the common employment of the terms in local Lancashire politics even later.¹⁹⁸ Yet such a specific focus on terminology may be misleading in its precision. Political division seems to have existed in many areas along axes that fit with what in London we would regard as whig and tory groups whilst not employing precisely that nomenclature. Furthermore, many of the examples used in this chapter have already shown that in other areas 'whig' and 'tory' were establishing themselves as part of the local political vocabulary.

Taking all these factors into account, was the political condition of the country actually dictated by events in London? Both J.R. Jones and James Rosenheim have emphasised the primary importance of London in early party political life, either because it was the usual seat of Parliament or because of its inherent social and political weight.¹⁹⁹ If this is true, is there any point in asking 'what of the hurly-burly of politics in the shires?'²⁰⁰ This chapter has argued that there is, and not just because of a large number of

¹⁹⁵ Harris, *London Crowds*; De Krey, *London and the Restoration*, pp. 276 table 6.1, 279 fig. 6.3. See also, *ibid.*, pp. 414–27 (appendices III–IV).

¹⁹⁶ For a political map of England based on the density of pro- and anti-exclusion MPs, see Andrew Browning, *English Historical Documents*, vol. VIII: 1660–1714 (1953), p. 255 map 3.

¹⁹⁷ For comments on the extent to which London was not necessarily representative of the country as a whole, see Phil Withington, 'Views from the bridge: Revolution and Restoration in seventeenth-century York', *P&P*, 170 (2001), 123; E.A. Wrigley, 'A simple model of London's importance in changing English society and economy 1650–1750', *P&P*, 37 (1967), 50–1.

¹⁹⁸ Gauci, *Politics and Society in Great Yarmouth*, p. 152; Glassey, 'Origins of political parties', 43–4, 54–5. For one family's gradually increasing use of 'whig' and 'tory', see Susan E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England. The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys 1660–1720* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 152–3.

¹⁹⁹ J.R. Jones, *The First Whigs. The Politics of the Exclusion Crisis* (1961), pp. 8, 182, 194, 198, 206, 211; James M. Rosenheim, 'County governance and elite withdrawal in Norfolk, 1660–1720', in A.L. Beier, David Cannadine and James M. Rosenheim, eds., *The First Modern Society: Essays in Honour of Lawrence Stone* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 98–9; *idem*, 'Party organization at the local level: the Norfolk sheriff's subscription of 1676', *HJ*, 29 (1986), 714.

²⁰⁰ Victor L. Stater, 'Continuity & change in English provincial politics: Robert Paston in Norfolk, 1675–1683', *Albion*, 25 (1993), 195.

individual local examples of partisan behaviour.²⁰¹ A powerful news culture helped to transmit knowledge of incidents and individuals across the country as a whole. To return to the well-documented example of the Cheshire grand jury's presentation of 1683, it was not significant simply for what it shows about partisan divisions within the north-west, important though that is.²⁰² It also became a matter of national comment. As James Gresham in Surrey noted, 'we see that <the> Northampton Jury were not singular' when they addressed the crown in a similar way. (Northamptonshire tories had pointed to the activity and allegedly highly armed status of 'a disaffected party in this County'. These men had shown their principles in a pro-exclusion address to knights of the shire at the last general election, and in holding 'severall meetings clubs & Caballs' since.²⁰³) In his view, 'I suppose this Cheshire Jury could not have the like Speciall ground for their Judgement of these persons . . . <as that of Northampton had,> but only such generall Observations of their Actings & hearing themselves with the Antimonarchicall partye.' In Gresham's sardonic opinion, such actions provided an example of how Surrey's tories ought to act against their local whig rivals, they should 'justly Expose them to the like censure'. If this could be done it would be of great political value for the future: 'I doe not see with what face they could offer themselves to the Election of that County who had before, by theyr legall Representatives, adjudged them Enemyes to the Government.'²⁰⁴

This example illustrates something of the complex interaction of locality and centre, with political point-scoring in one area – itself triggered by national revulsion at the Rye House Plot – being filtered through centrally produced newsletters, and then appropriated by a different locality to suit its own needs.²⁰⁵ It was this interaction that underpinned many of the most important ways of influencing public opinion during these years, such as the gathering and printing of loyal addresses, and the publicity afforded to charter surrenders. During the period of personal rule whig and tory politics linked together like-minded men and women across the country at the same time as dividing the body politic.

²⁰¹ With regard to earlier petitioning for a new parliament, Mark Knights has argued that 'although London was to lead the dance, it may have been to the tune of the provinces': *Politics and Opinion*, p. 234.

²⁰² See above, p. 114.

²⁰³ BL, Add. MS 25302, fols. 156r–v. For reference to a 'club' in Wales around this time, see Jones, 'Two Poems', 165.

²⁰⁴ Surrey History Centre, LM/COR/6/71: James Gresham to Sir William More, Haslemere, 28 Sept. 1683. The Cheshire grand jury's presentment was also explicitly imitated by the grand juries of Dorset, and the Isle of Ely: CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 314; JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: Thomas Chicheley to Richard Legh, 1 Oct. 1683.

²⁰⁵ For similar interactions during the 1685 general election, see H.A. Hanley, 'A Buckinghamshire Tory: Thomas Hackett of North Crawley (1627–1689)', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, 19 (1974), 467.

Print and polemical politics

This chapter will complement the last by moving from the nature of the news culture that existed in this period to the content of the printed works that did so much to fuel the fires of partisanship. In so doing it will seek to plug a gap in historical writing about the period by exposing the wealth and variety of printed polemic that continued to be produced during the personal rule. Although the balance of press output did shift – especially by 1684 – from primarily whig to primarily tory, the content of a range of pamphlets, periodicals, and sermons will be examined to show up the continuity of divided opinion within England. Underlying this strife was, ironically, an increasingly bitter debate about how best to achieve a united society.

Introduction: Polemical writing during the personal rule

That worse Vermine of small Authors hath given the world Such a Surfett that instead of desiring to write, a man would be more inclined to wish for his owne ease, that he could not read.

(George Savile, marquess of Halifax)¹

What can a consideration of polemic bring to our understanding of politics during the personal rule?² Until quite recently, this question would have seemed otiose. After the lapsing of the Licensing Act in 1679, a torrent of publishing was unleashed.³ The Exclusion years saw the market flooded with polemic in a way not seen since the 1640s.⁴ Mark Knights' *Politics and*

¹ *The Works of George Savile*, ed. Mark N. Brown (3 vols., Oxford, 1989), I, 178.

² For recent general historiographical reviews, see David Randall, 'Recent studies in print culture: news, propaganda, and ephemera', *HLQ*, 67 (2004), 457–72; Harold Love, 'Early modern print culture: assessing the models', *Parergon*, 20 (2003), 45–64; Kevin Sharpe, 'Print, polemics, and politics in seventeenth-century England', *JBS*, 41 (2002), 244–54.

³ Timothy Crist, 'Government control of the press after the expiration of the Printing Act, 1679', *Publishing History*, 5 (1979), 49–77.

⁴ For the extent to which publishing booms in the seventeenth century correlate to periods of political crisis, see the figures in John Barnard and Maureen Bell, 'Provisional count of *Wing* titles 1641–1700', *Publishing History*, 44 (1998), 89–97.

Opinion in Crisis utilized such materials in order to trace the scale and significance of public debate about contemporary events.⁵ More recently, Joad Raymond has argued that the actual playing out of the popish plot allegations that underpinned the whole Exclusion movement was partially shaped by the forms and conventions of contemporary pamphlets.⁶ Nevertheless, after this brief high noon for polemical politics, the end of parliaments in March 1681 and the apparently rapid progress of a 'tory reaction' were assumed to have had an overwhelming impact on published materials. Certainly the volume of printed titles did decline, but the degree and speed of that decline is now being called into question.⁷ Recent research makes clear that the peak of periodical publishing, for instance, occurred not in 1679–81, but in the autumn of 1682.⁸ The very fact that the government actively sought to rally opinion in its favour during these years is a key indicator of the major shifts in political life that distinguish this period of personal rule from that of the 1630s. Rather than attempt simply to suppress material, monarch and ministers now aimed decisively to intervene in polemical debates.⁹ In particular, the role of Roger L'Estrange as a prolific writer, rather than merely an immensely active Surveyor of the Press, has begun to attract attention. Reflecting on his recent role at the time of publishing a complete edition of his *Observer* in 1687, L'Estrange argued that 'the *Inducements* that Mov'd me to Enter upon This *Province*; [were] The *Needfullness* of some *Popular Medium* for the *Rectifying* of *Vulgar Mistakes*, and for *Instilling* of *Dutyfull*, and *Honest Principles* into the *Common People*, upon That *Turbulent*, and *Seditious Juncture*'.¹⁰ Over the previous six years he had published around two million words in the *Observer*, or the equivalent of eight to ten thousand words a week for a man advancing from sixty-five to seventy-one years of age.¹¹

⁵ Mark Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678–1681* (Cambridge, 1994).

⁶ Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 323, 331–3, 355. See also Harold Love, 'The look of news: Popish Plot narratives 1678–1680', in John Barnard and Don McKenzie, eds., with the assistance of Maureen Bell, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, vol. 4: 1557–1695* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 657–61.

⁷ See Joad Raymond's remark that the press remained 'livelier' around 1683 than during the 1660s or early 1670s: *Politics and Pamphleteering*, p. 340.

⁸ Susannah Randall, 'Reading between the lines: a cultural history of the Restoration newspaper', unpub. paper delivered at the Early Modern British History Seminar, Cambridge, 25 Jan. 2006.

⁹ For Charles II's *Declaration to all his loving subjects* of 8 Apr. 1681, see my 'Parliament and Political Division in the Last Years of Charles II, 1681–5', *Parliamentary History*, 22 (2003), 246–9; Knights, *Politics and Opinion*, pp. 316–45; and above, ch. 2.

¹⁰ Roger L'Estrange, *The Observer, In Dialogue* (3 vols. in 2, 1684–7), I, 'To the Reader'.

¹¹ Peter Hinds, 'Roger L'Estrange, the Rye House Plot, and the regulation of political discourse in late-seventeenth-century London', *The Library*, 7th ser., 3 (2002), 5; T.A. Birrell, 'Sir Roger L'Estrange: the journalism of orality', in Barnard and McKenzie, eds.,

L'Estrange's fluency is perhaps uniquely terrifying, but his writings were not being projected into a void. The personal rule of Charles II saw a continuation of the polemical politics of recent years, overlain with immediate contemporary events. This chapter will thus complement the findings of the previous chapter by moving from oral and scribal publications, and their contribution to political life, to published works. Periodicals, pamphlets, and printed sermons will be used to show how lively whig and tory partisanship remained. Nevertheless, there are obvious problems in the way of such a study. As the more substantial written work on the royalist newsbooks of the 1640s has shown, publishing in a period of constraints had very real risks for all those involved in the early modern print trade.¹² Recovering 'underground' networks of subversives is therefore difficult, and certainly many whig authors during this period either ceased publishing or were careful to do so anonymously.¹³ Often we are forced to rely on the hostile commentary of those in government about the nature and impact of polemic. Yet rifling the *Calendars of State Papers Domestic* is obviously not as desirable as being able to access individuals' private thinking on what they read. The whole question of reception and impact remains vexed.¹⁴

The remainder of this chapter will concentrate on two fields of contemporary comment. The first will be the pungent and powerful religious self-images and hostile caricatures offered by partisan polemicists. Perhaps unsurprisingly in the wake of the torrent of modern scholarship emphasising the continuing importance of religion in Restoration political life, it will be shown that religious language, forms, and ideas were vital to whig and tory identities during the personal rule. The second area of discussion will be rival perspectives on constitutional affairs, especially the powers and practice of kingship and its proper place in the constitution. Ultimately, the fissures between whigs and tories will be shown to depend on differing views of what was required to achieve unity in the realm.

Cambridge History of the Book, pp. 657–61, at p. 660. See also Harold Love, 'L'Estrange, Roger (1616–1704)', ODNB.

¹² G.J. McElligott, 'Propaganda and censorship: the underground royalist newsbooks, 1647–1650', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of Cambridge, 2001. See also Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks, 1641–1649* (Oxford, 1996).

¹³ J.S.T. Hetet, 'A literary underground in Restoration England: printers and dissenters in the context of constraints, 1660–1689', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of Cambridge, 1987. For one of the most outspoken critics of the government in this period, see T.J. Crist, 'Francis Smith and the opposition press in England, 1660–1688', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of Cambridge, 1977; Beth Lynch, 'Smith, Francis (d. 1691)', ODNB.

¹⁴ The best attempt to grapple with the question of reception in relation to a sub-set of early modern writing is now George Southcombe, 'The responses of nonconformists to the Restoration in England', unpub. D.Phil. thesis, Univ. of Oxford, 2005, pp. 32–41.

Tories and religion: Caricature and self-image

Much of the most venomous polemic produced during the personal rule dealt with the religious self-images and hostile caricatures generated by partisan authors. Thanks to the close associations that had grown up between whigs and Protestant dissenters during the Exclusion Crisis, it was natural for tory authors to attack whigs as being hostile to the Church of England. And by linking recent events to the horrors of the 1640s, whigs could be tarred with the brush of puritan sedition and disloyalty. For their part, whig authors lambasted their tory opponents for supporting a Catholic succession: they must be covert Catholics themselves. As chapter three has shown, the extent to which dissenters suffered persecution during these years also allowed whig writers to consolidate the charge of tories being popish fellow-travellers. To persecute was axiomatically to behave in a popish manner. On the other hand, both sets of partisans emphasised their own religious sincerity, and the extent to which their rival visions of the Church of England would best secure the nation from the never-ending threat posed by Catholics, both foreign and domestic. There is a sense in which contemporaries were fighting over a second chance for the Church of England that had been re-established in 1660–2. Plans for comprehension had been actively discussed in the Exclusion Parliaments;¹⁵ perhaps now twenty years of bigotry and intolerance could be wiped away. Or else – as the more bullish ‘high’ tory clergy hoped – the Church of England could at last fully impose its authority across the land. As well as persecuting – or, as they saw it, legally prosecuting – intransigent dissenters, this Anglican programme would involve a drive for greater active participation in the established church’s patterns of worship, notably via more frequent communion and more vigorous catechizing.¹⁶

Such a review of the underlying religious positions being adopted in this period is necessary in order to contextualize the polemical literature that poured off the printing presses. The vehemence of expression, the vigour of the *ad hominem* attacks, and the relentlessly racy and hyperbolic style deployed in the published works can too easily lead to their being dismissed as fantastical and of little intellectual merit. Yet the sense of writers straining after accessibility and a persuasive energy hints at just how much was at

¹⁵ Henry Horwitz, ‘Protestant reconciliation in the Exclusion Crisis’, *JEH*, 15 (1964), 201–17.

¹⁶ Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fols. 146, 176, 185, 198, 204, 228, 233, 242, 246, 251, 258, 265, 271, 273, 292; Bodl., MS Tanner 32, fols. 20, 21, 43, 47, 80, 106, 173; Bodl., MS Tanner 123, fols. 36, 81; Bodl., MS Tanner 129, fols. 95, 102; Bodl., MS Tanner 131 fol. 83; Bodl., MS Rawlinson letters 93, fols. 192r–v; John March, *Th’Encænia of St. Ann’s Chappel in Sandgate . . .* (1682), ep. ded.; Norman Sykes, *From Sheldon to Secker. Aspects of English Church History 1660–1768* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 26–7, 29–30.

stake. Religious affairs were simply too important not to be commented on. The marquess of Halifax was unusually suave in his style, but spoke for many when he argued that 'Religion hath such a superioritie above all other things, and that indispensable influence upon all mankind, that it is as necessary to our living happily in this world, as it is to our being saved in the next.'¹⁷ More typical in its rough vehemence was the anonymous pamphlet *A Dialogue Betwixt the Devil and the Whigs* (1684). In this work the Devil is made to congratulate the whigs by saying

. . . the *Blood that You have spilt*,
 No former Age can paralel your *Guilt*.
 I did corrupt the *Mobile* of Heaven.
 You did the like on Earth, now We are even.¹⁸

The kind of zealous anger that lay behind such writings was something with which the Church of England clergyman Samuel Bold was only too familiar. He sparked a fierce controversy, and was attacked at law, after preaching in Dorset against religious persecution in the wake of a brief on behalf of the Huguenots.¹⁹ According to Bold, persecutors were the 'devil's agents'. He spoke and wrote against 'violent and headstrong men', opining that 'Ever since we lost the Image of God, we are *by Nature the Children of Wrath*, not only as we are subject and lyable to the Wrath and Displeasure of God, but as we are of a wrathful, furious, and unreconcilable Temper. We are naturally Enemies not only to God, but to one another also.'²⁰ But for Bold's tory Anglican critics, this simply made him one of the group of clerical apologists for dissenters that L'Estrange labelled 'our Church-Phanatiques'.²¹ In their eyes, Bold's intense awareness of the religious fragmentation of England was of enormous political importance due to the continuing belief in the interdependence of church and state and the value that was consequently placed on uniformity.²² If men were divided in religion it was 'impossible to be united in their political Affairs'.²³ The fates of Zimri, Absalom,

¹⁷ *Works of George Savile Marquis of Halifax*, ed. Brown, I, 199.

¹⁸ *A Dialogue Betwixt the Devil and the Whigs* (1684), p. 2.

¹⁹ For the ambivalent attitudes towards Huguenots at this time, see above, pp. 78–81.

²⁰ Samuel Bold, *A Sermon Against Persecution. . . . Now Published to the Consideration of Violent and Headstrong Men . . .* (1682), pp. 4, title, 11. Bold later became a firm advocate of John Locke's published works: Bryan W. Ball, 'Bold, Samuel (164852–1737)', ODNB.

²¹ *Observer*, no. 103 (25 Feb. 1681/2).

²² Edward Stillingfleet, *A Sermon Preached before the King, February the 15. 1683/4* (1684), p. 31; *The Character of a Trimmer, neither Whigg nor Tory* (1682), unpag.; Edward Sclater, *A Sermon Preached in the Church of Putney . . . 24th of April, 1681 . . .* (1681), p. 10.

²³ John Knight, *The Samaritan Rebels Perjured, By a Covenant of Association . . .* (1682), p. 9.

Corah, Dathan, Abiram, and other biblical malefactors all pointed towards the ultimate effect of a house divided against itself by internal strife.²⁴

But who was to blame? Naturally whig authors knew exactly where to point the finger:

... to our Plague a Factious Party's come,
The infancy of old Rebellious Rome,
And 'cause the Whelps for Hells intrigues should bawl,
The Devil came and dub'd them *Tories* all . . .²⁵

These diabolically inspired tory troublemakers had a number of clear characteristics. They were incapable of praying, preferring instead to curse, even to the extent of selecting their favourites from catalogues of oaths they kept in their commonplace books.²⁶ Whereas 'Your Whigg never swears, or if he does, 'tis some dwindling Oath (as) by my truly; whereas your true Tory-Boy lets fly no mouth Granado's, but such as fill the bore, damme, sink me, Hell and Damnation, God bless the King, he swears, and the Duke of York, and dam the Whiggs and the Duke of Monmouth.'²⁷ Such extravagant swearing was fuelled by alcohol, and went alongside carnal depravity.²⁸ Since tories were the ultimate offspring of the perverted lust of 'the spiteful Copulation of a hot Monk with some distemper'd Protestant Dame, just on the dawn of our English Reformation', it was scarcely surprising that many tory clergy – tantivy men – should have two bastards apiece.²⁹ As one author mockingly claimed, 'if Vice correct sin, we shall have blessed doings!'³⁰

Besides being both drunk and sexually incontinent, a tory could also be

²⁴ Sclater, *A Sermon Preached in the Church of Putney*, p. 5; Knight, *The Samaritan Rebels Perjured*, p. 25; John Byrom, *The Necessity of Subjection . . .* (1681), p. 6; John Inett, *A Sermon Preached at the Assizes Held in Warwick . . .* (1681), pp. 7, 16; Robert Wensley, *The Present Miseries and Mischiefs of Sin . . .* (1682), p. 26; *Observer*, no. 98 (11 Feb. 1681/2). Zimri had burnt himself to death, Absalom was hanged from an oak tree, and the accomplices of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram had been consumed by fire from heaven.

²⁵ *The Tory Poets: A Satyr* (1682), p. 1.

²⁶ A.B., *News from Colchester. In a Letter to a dear Friend (an honest Whig) At London* (1681); *The Tory Poets*, unpag. 'Epistle to the Tories'.

²⁷ [Edmund Hiceringill], *The Trimmer His Friendly Debate with the Observer Concerning Uniformity . . .* (1683), p. 7.

²⁸ *The Whigs Drown'd in an Honest Tory-Health* (1683). See also, *The Loyal London Prentice . . .* (1681); *A Short Reply to the Author of the Whigs Rejoinder, &c.* (1682); *Strange and Wonderful News from Norwich: The like not in all England besides . . .* (1681); *Whig upon Whig: Or, A Pleasant Dismal Ballad On the Old Plotters newly found out* (1683). For resentment about such claims, see *Observer*, no. 43 (17 Aug. 1681).

²⁹ *The Character of a Thorough-Pac'd Tory, Ecclesiastical or Civil* (1682), p. 2; A.B., *News from Colchester*, p. 2.

³⁰ *The Charge of a Tory Plot Maintain'd in a Dialogue Between the Observer, Heraclitus and an Inferior Clergy-Man At the Towzer-Tavern . . .* (1682), p. 33. See also A.B., *News from Colchester*, p. 2; *A New-Years-Gift To the Tories: Or a few Sober Queries concerning them. By an Honest Trimmer* (1682/3).

identified by his fraudulent religious beliefs. Although he would vaunt his loyalty to the Church of England, when closeted away from the public eye, surrounded only by fellow tories, he would cry 'The Name of *Protestant* we hate'.³¹ In reality, each tory 'tacitly foregoes the exact denomination of Protestant, for that of a *Romanist* in possibility': they were all 'Romish Tory's', who either covertly favoured closet Catholics – for instance in parliamentary elections – or were active Catholics themselves.³² Indeed, tories' regard for Catholicism was intimately linked with their defective characters, since through favouring the advance of Rome they sought to gratify themselves in the process. In satirical dialogues, whig characters urged tories not to prefer '*Romun* [sic] Gold before Heavenly Grace; nor the Promises of Mammon before the Promises of God'.³³ The woodcut illustration which headed another dialogue portrayed 'tory' and 'tantivy' riding towards the pope – with cloven hooves visible beneath his vestments – who is offering them a bag of gold and a mitre respectively.³⁴ Tories were vulnerable to such allurements since their spiritual poverty was matched by material need: 'Tis only want that makes a Loyal Tory, and so many Mercenary Scriblers'.³⁵ Such accusations neatly inverted the standard tory critique of whig leaders like Shaftesbury; that they were unprincipled men, driven only by ambition.³⁶

Tantivies – outspoken tory clergy – clearly shared their lay counterparts' greed. Whig pamphleteers harped on the theme of tantivies' resentment that the Reformation had depressed priestly wealth and status. Tantivy support for tory politics was thus motivated by their desire to see a return to a pre-Reformation idyll:

The times were glorious, and the Nation flourish'd,
 When th'*English Church* by *Mother Church* was nourish'd.
 But since 'twas *weaned* from her Breasts, we find
 How she is wasted, languish'd and pin'd;

³¹ *The Tories Confession, Or, A merry song in Answer to The Whigs Exaltation* (1682 – one copy has '28 March 1682' handwritten beneath the title, probably by Narcissus Luttrell).

³² *Character of a Thorough-Pac'd Tory*, p. 1; *Sol in opposition to Saturn. Or, A short return to a late Tragedy call'd The Duke of Guise* (1683); *An Address to the Honourable City of London, And all other Cities, Shires and Corporations, Concerning their Choice of a New Parliament. Together with a True Character of Popery and Arbitrary Government* (1681), p. 9.

³³ *A Hue and Cry After Tory-Honesty, In a Dialogue between a Whiggish and a Tory Evidence* (1682), p. 2.

³⁴ *The Time-Servers: Or, A Touch of the Times. Being a Dialogue between Tory, Towzer, and Tantivee, At the News of the Dissolution of the Late Worthy Parliament at Oxford* (1681). For a splendid discussion of the visual aspects of polemic at this time, see Maya Evans, 'Print and politics. The contribution of illustrated broadsides to English political culture, 1678–1682', unpub. BA thesis, Univ. of Oxford, 2006.

³⁵ *The Tory-Poets: a Satyr*, unpag. 'Epistle to the Tories'.

³⁶ K.H.D. Haley, *The First Earl of Shaftesbury* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 415–16, 440–1, 741–3.

Revenue's gone, Promotions scarce and few,
Not half enough for the *Tantivee*-Crew.³⁷

To support themselves now, the quasi-Catholic tory clergy were reduced to self-interested preaching, 'contesting for the Twins of his Favour, Tythes and Prerogative. He being such a spiritual Gladiator, that he dextrously sharpens two edges of the Gospel for the Service of himself and Sovereign'. It was thus because of their avarice that they favoured Rome, and hated dissenters, since the latter would 'dry-nurse Priesthood' and force them 'to accept barren stipends to uphold their Function'. It was to avoid this fate that 'he is chiefly Induc'd to allow the Epithete of Nursing-Parents to Sovereign Magistrates; As judging he cannot more sweeten Ecclesiastical advantages, than to pronounce them foster'd by Regal Authority'.³⁸ Yet whig writers claimed that tory clergymen really sought to place the church above the monarchy, each to act like Thomas à Becket, 'for tho' he calls himself a Zealous subject, he thinks Imperial Purple but a Rag if compar'd to the Cope or Miter'.³⁹ Tantivies would even go so far as to undermine the hallowed Protestant history of the Church of England and look 'a squint on Protestant Defenders of the Faith' by arguing that Henry VIII's actions against the Pope 'receiv'd too much warmth from his groin', and that Elizabeth ought to be catechized simply on the grounds that she, like the mother of Christ, was a virgin.⁴⁰

English history thus became a vital battleground for whigs and tories. According to whig writers, the tory emphasis on 1641 was merely a blind to obscure their real historical perspective:

They're not asham'd of *Eighty-Eight*,
Or the *Gun-powder Plot*;
The *Irish-Massacre* is dead,
And quite with them forgot.⁴¹

Tory news-sheets like the *Observer* were pilloried as Catholic mouthpieces; L'Estrange walked 'very subtly . . . Incognito and with a dark Lanthorn (like Faux [i.e. Guy Fawkes])'; he was the 'English Bellarmine'; indeed 'In Rome he's a Saint'.⁴² In one dialogue, the tory character was made to say that

³⁷ *The Time-Servers: Or, A Touch of the Times*.

³⁸ *Character of a Thorough-Pac'd Tory*, p. 4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5. Cf. the self-image of several clergymen: Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 101; 123, fol. 11; R.A. Beddard, 'The Restoration Church', in J.R. Jones, ed., *The Restored Monarchy 1660–1688* (Basingstoke, 1979), pp. 172–4.

⁴⁰ *Character of a Thorough-Pac'd Tory*, pp. 5–6.

⁴¹ *A New Ballad With the Definition of the Word Tory* (1682).

⁴² *The Trimmer His Friendly Debate with the Observer Concerning Uniformity*, unpag. 'To the Reader'; R.S., *A New Ballad, With the Definition of the Word Tory; A Message from Tory-Land To the Whig-Makers in Albion* (1682 – '11 July 1682' and 'A whig thing' have been written under the title in a contemporary hand, probably Narcissus Luttrell's).

he thought the *Observer* was 'infallible', in other words, that he shared a characteristic of the pope that was derided by all sound Protestants.⁴³ Logically enough – when viewed from this perspective – it was claimed that tories sought to divide the Protestant interest by urging on the persecution of Protestant dissenters, who they thought were worse than papists.⁴⁴ The *Observer* was said to favour a return to the policies of the Laudian 1630s, 'when Pillories, and Anathema's, and Fines, and Jayls, and the *High-Commission-Court* made *old England too hot*' for the dissenters who chose instead to flee to New England.⁴⁵ In general, the 'heat' inherent in the tory character was such 'that one would think he [was] disgusted [by] the Reformed Faith for nothing more, than that it doth not by some Modern dispensation consume Dissenters with fire and faggot, according to the Ancient Popish example. To which purpose he could easily admit such a fierce Crosier as Bishop *Bonner* invested in the See of *London*.'⁴⁶ Overall, tories would bring down the Church of England as well as Presbyterianism 'Because it doth defend the Crown/Of our great Monarchy', and

The Penal Statutes they shall down,
Which long has born the sway,
High Mass be sung in every Church,
Professions every way;
We'l Reform the Church by dint of Sword
Since the Keys they will not do,
We'l make the Whigs dance a new Jigg,
And to the Altar bow.⁴⁷

Such an agenda ensured that tories were treacherous agents of foreign Catholic powers, most notably the papacy, but also France. Each 'is in Soul an Artificial Renegado to his birthright at home, tho' he could facilitate by his Apostacy the introducing of *French* or *Roman* shackles'.⁴⁸

For their part, tories regarded themselves as being 'The better half of *this*

'Bellarmine' refers to Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), the great Catholic controversialist.

⁴³ *A Supplement to the Popish Courant . . . In a Dialogue between Trueman and Tory* (1681), p. 1.

⁴⁴ *The Charge of a Tory Plot Maintain'd*, p. 5.

⁴⁵ *The Trimmer, His Friendly Debate with the Observer*, p. 10.

⁴⁶ *Character of a Thorough-Pac'd Tory*, p. 1. Bishop Edmund Bonner (d. 1569) had been Mary I's notorious bishop of London. The writ *de heretico comburendo* had been repealed in England in 1677.

⁴⁷ *A New Ballad With the Definition of the Word Tory*.

⁴⁸ *Character of a Thorough-Pac'd Tory*, p. 3. For criticism of Dryden's invocation of the French Wars of Religion in his drama, see *The Tory-Poets: A Satyr*, p. 6, and on the general theme, J.H.M. Salmon, *The French Wars of Religion in English Political Thought* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 123–46.

divided Land.⁴⁹ Their conviction that the church and the monarchy were indissolubly linked was undented by Charles II's Declarations of Indulgence and James's avowed Catholicism – at least in the published polemic. L'Estrange took the issue of James's religion head-on in the course of an extended assault on the exclusionist tract *Julian the Apostate*. He argued that it was not inconsistent for tories as Protestants to defend the duke's right to succeed to the throne, 'Nay, the *Obligation* of Defending his *Legall Title* is involved in the *Band* of Maintaining the *Protestant Religion*; for we are no longer *Protestants*, when we come to Question *Princes* for their *Religion*.⁵⁰ Such arguments were undoubtedly helped by circumstances. Certainly the chance to link nonconformity with rebellion in the Rye House Plot was, for many, quite literally heaven-sent.⁵¹ Even before that plot came to light, one tory observer argued that ill-affected men sought 'to involve us into another unaturall civill warr And thereby to Roote out Monarchy & set up (theire darling) a common wealth which is soe aparently designed by the non conformists that he that runs may reade!⁵² Such current events neatly fitted into the pattern of post-reformation English history. As one preacher explained, 'Our Princes *Power* in *Ecclesiasticals*, after the example of the Religious Kings of *Judah*, is one main Article of our *Reformation*; and what a mighty Influence this hath upon our *Civil Union*, no Considering Man can doubt.'⁵³ Whereas Jesuits and fanatics were both against the Royal Supremacy, 'the Religion of the Church of *England*, as now it is by Law Establish'd, prevents any Disguise; the Kings Authority both in Church and State, being the great Security of it'.⁵⁴ In particular, the cult that grew up around the Royal Martyr – whose *cachet* could be linked to his son, Charles II – cemented the relationship between church and monarch.⁵⁵ Indeed Charles I's totemic spiritual status was such that it was said that all loyal men would go to heaven and join him.⁵⁶

The ultimate basis for this tory perspective on the harmony of church and

49 Nathaniel Lee, *To the Duke on his Return* (1682).

50 *Observer*, no. 157 (19 June 1682).

51 Michael Mullett, '“To Dwell Together in Unity”: The search for agreement in Preston politics 1660–1690', *Trans. of the Historic Soc. of Lancs. and Cheshire*, 125 (1974), 75.

52 WYAS, MX/R/18/12: James Blythman to Sir John Resesby, Newlathes, 17 Apr. 1681. For the last phrase, see Habakkuk 2: 2.

53 Nathaniel Alsop, *A Sermon Preached at the Assizes held at Leicester . . .* (1682), p. 28.

54 *Some Brief Remarks on the Debates of the House of Commons In the last Parliament at Oxford* (1683), pp. 4–5.

55 Thomas Long, *Moses and the Royal Martyr (King Charles the First) Parallel'd . . .* (1684), pp. 5, 7, 11. The anniversary of Charles's martyrdom was reported to have been kept 'very strictly' at Whitehall in 1685. CSPD 1 May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, p. 305: newsletter to John Squire, London, 31 Jan. 1685. For this theme, see Andrew Lacey, *The Cult of King Charles the Martyr* (Woodbridge, 2003).

56 *A Parallel of Times: Or a Memento to the Whigs* (1683).

state was that it was a gift from God.⁵⁷ Eschewing all thoughts of contractual government – of an original compact between the people to grant away some of their liberties – tories stressed the likelihood of divine vengeance on a people who failed to obey God-given political authority. ‘It is observed in all History, that Rebels were ordinarily followed with divine Vengeance: But we *Cavaleers*, could not think that God would ingage his Power and Justice to vindicate an Idol of the peoples setting up.’⁵⁸ When Catholics and Protestant dissenters urged doctrines which made a distinction between God and the king by allowing for the disobedience of royal subjects, they were ‘no less absurd than the Roman Legends; for to reconcile Piety to God, with disloyalty to his Ministers, to Incorporate Perjuries and Seditions with Authentick Canons, is as odd a Conceit as that other Miracle in Masquerade, their Transubstantiation’.⁵⁹ Since the Church of England taught no such doctrine, but instead spoke for a ‘setled Reverence for Authority’, she was ‘the sure Conservatrix of the Principles of Loyalty . . . and this is it that makes her the Butt of all the Factions, at which they shoot their bitter Arrows . . . because she is known to be an Impregnable Defence to the Monarchy and lawful Government of the Nation, and cannot, as others do, give a Dispensation for Resistance’.⁶⁰ Hence the defiant scorn of tory preachers about ‘this juncture of Affairs (when Allegiance is made a Crime, and Conformity little better than Infidelity)’.⁶¹ L’Estrange sought to capitalize on and reinforce such sentiments when he argued that ‘The *Tory’s* Religion . . . is *Simple & Uniform*’, as well as being ‘constant to *Truth*, and *Duty*’.⁶²

Social and political unity could only be achieved by a uniformity centred on the Church of England. If a variety of professions in religion tended towards civil dissensions, and comprehension was derided as likely to lead to universal Presbyterianism, the Established Church offered the perfect antidote.⁶³ As a result the penal statutes naturally became the key bulwark

⁵⁷ *Some Brief Remarks on the Debates of the House of Commons*, p. 21. See also, Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 101.

⁵⁸ *The Primitive Cavalierism Revived: Or a Recognition of the Principles of the Old Cavaleers* . . . (1684), pp. 3–4.

⁵⁹ Knight, *The Samaritan Rebels*, p. 30. For L’Estrange’s argument that whigs were not Protestants at all, but rather ‘a sort of *Jesuites*’, see *Observer*, no. 79 (10 Dec. 1681).

⁶⁰ Alsop, *A Sermon Preached at the Assizes held at Leicester*, pp. 29–31. See also *A Letter from the Grand-Jury of Oxford to the London-Grand-Jury, Relating to the Case of the Protestant Joyner* (1681), p. 2.

⁶¹ Nathaniel Bisbie, *Prosecution No Persecution: Or, the Difference Between Suffering for Disobedience and Faction, and Suffering for Righteousness, and Christ’s Sake* . . . (1682), unpag. ded.

⁶² *Observer*, no. 29 (2 July 1681). These words were put into the mouth of the character ‘*Tory*’.

⁶³ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 212: ‘An order made at the Generall Sessions of the peace held at the Castle of Exon in & for the County afforesaid’ [10 Jan. 1681/2]; *A Dialogue . . . Upon The Kings Calling A Parliament To meet at Oxford* (1681), p. 16.

against all civil and religious disobedience. Criticising the efforts made by whig MPs in the Exclusion parliaments to repeal 35 Eliz. – hated by dissenters as it had originally been intended to combat the Catholic threat, but was now being used against them – one tory author sought to wrap his cause in the reputation of Queen Elizabeth herself: ‘I am such a *Protestant* as She was, and think none *Protestants*, who are not such.’⁶⁴ Obedience and loyalty were presented as specifically Anglican traits, and it followed logically that ‘As *Religion* and *Loyalty* are still found in Conjunction, so the *King* and *Priest* have the same Common Enemies.’⁶⁵ Certainly in 1685 preparations for a parliament saw tory clergy vociferously urging voters to return only ‘men of known affection to the established Church of England’, since anyone else lacked ‘Fidelity to the Crown’.⁶⁶ Two years earlier, another clerical pamphleteer admitted that tory clergy had more reason than anyone else ‘to promote good *Elections*’ as they were ‘the particular *Mark* and *Butt* of the *Factions* hatred’. By securing a loyal parliament, tory clergy would scotch recent attempts to strip the clerical estate of its right to vote.⁶⁷

Faced with such ruthless and implacable enemies, tory clergy were quick to defend their habit of preaching on political subjects in the pulpit.⁶⁸ Their partisanship was a necessary part of their priestly function. Like Aaron, they could not remain neutral when the enemies of God and religion sought to lead the people astray, not least because ‘’Tis a piece of *Satan’s* Polity . . . to begin with the weaker vessel: the Church’ before going on to attack the state.⁶⁹ Knowing that they could not deceive men as learned as the clergy, and recognizing their potential influence over the people, the agents of rebellion would seek to undermine the popular standing of the clergy, especially by attacking their wealth and status.⁷⁰ Like ‘*Corah* and his Rout clamouring with open mouth against *Moses* and *Aaron*’, those attacking the clergy would do so by using ‘bitter malicious words . . . to wound their Reputations’ in order to ‘make them odious with the people’.⁷¹ Once blown up

⁶⁴ *Some Brief Remarks on the Debates of the House of Commons*, p. 4.

⁶⁵ Alsop, *A Sermon Preached at the Assizes Held at Leicester*, p. 32.

⁶⁶ [Robert Grove], *Seasonable Advice to the Citizens, Burgesses, and Free-holders of England, Concerning Parliaments, and the Present Elections* (1685), pp. 35–6. (Although anonymously published, the title page did proclaim it to be ‘By a Divine of the Church of England.’) Such a claim was, of course, a wonderful way of arguing for a complete Anglican dominance of Parliament at the beginning of a Catholic king’s reign without appearing confrontational.

⁶⁷ [John Nalson], *The Present Interest of England; Or, A Confutation of the Whiggish Conspiratours Anti-Monyan Principle . . .* (1683), p. 43. Note the religious pun in the title.

⁶⁸ Matthew Fowler, H’ ANΩΘEN ΣΟΦΙ’Α. Or, *The Properties of Heavenly Wisdom* (1682), ep. ded.

⁶⁹ Sclater, *A Sermon Preached in the Church at Putney*, p. 11. See also *The Humble Address of the Grand Jury of and for the Town and Burrough of Southwark* (1683).

⁷⁰ Sclater, *A Sermon Preached in the Church at Putney*, pp. 11–13.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13. For claims about the noble, or at least reputable, social origins of clergy, see John Clerke, *A Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church of Rochester . . .* (1684), p. 11.

with the arrogant presumption of their factional leaders, the lower orders would argue that they did not need a maintained clergy at all.⁷²

Despite widespread criticism of the credulity of the masses, in 1681 a tory author could express a growing sense of confidence that they began to have numbers on their side.

But when the time comes, that the Pope must be burn'd
 I fear we shall finde that the Tide is much turn'd
 For the *Tory* Party, hath got so much ground,
 To Head a Rebellion there's none will be found;
 For now they'r Resolved that *Harts* shall be Trump
 And the Prentices Swear, they'l burn the Old Rump.⁷³

The years of pope-burnings would soon be at an end, to be replaced by widespread burnings of the symbols of the old republic.⁷⁴ According to L'Estrange – who was obviously writing as much to shape opinion as to describe it – ‘the Current of the People’ ran against whigs presumptuously petitioning Charles to call a parliament in 1681.⁷⁵ He juxtaposed the social inferiority of the whigs – they were ‘for matter of *Estate* . . . not the *Eighth part* of the *Value* of the *Nation*’ – with the allegedly solidly tory ranks of office-holders.⁷⁶ In 1682, another author made a whig ‘advert’ describe how ‘the Multitude, called *Tory*’s, endeavour to hold up *Bishops*, to maintain good Order, Discipline, and Orthodox Preaching in the *Church*; Learning and Arts in the *Universities*; and Peace in the *Common-wealth*’.⁷⁷ By 1683, and with the death of the earl of Shaftesbury – the whigs’ ‘Godfather’, – a balladeer could crow, ‘Repent Whigs all, you down must fall/And Loyal boyes must rise.’⁷⁸ Later the same year, the discovery of the Rye House Plot allowed a clergyman to take his lead from Charles II’s *Declaration* describing the conspiracy and note that the plotters aimed to destroy all the king’s loyal subjects, as well as monarchy itself, and so purge ‘the Nation both of Loyalty and Religion’.⁷⁹

⁷² Sclater, *A Sermon Preached in the Church at Putney*, p. 14. For further criticism of crude whig anti-clericalism, see *The Whiggs Advertisement Together With Whiggish Exercise of Arms: Or, A New Way to Withstand Authority* (1682).

⁷³ *The Whiggs Lamentation, For the Death of their Dear Brother Colledge, The Protestant Joyner* (1681 – ‘Against them’ and ‘4 Nov 1681’ are written in a contemporary hand, probably Narcissus Luttrell’s). The fact that this broadsheet came out in early Nov. – shortly before the anniversaries of the Gunpowder Plot, and Elizabeth’s birthday and Accession Day – explains the particularly pointed first line.

⁷⁴ For Rump burning in general, see Mark S.R. Jenner, ‘The roasting of the rump: scatology and the body politic in Restoration England’, *P&P*, 177 (2002), 84–120.

⁷⁵ *Observer*, no. 39 (3 Aug. 1681).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, nos. 99, 41. See also, no. 8.

⁷⁷ *The Whiggs Advertisement Together With Whiggish Exercise of Arms*.

⁷⁸ *The Whiggs Lamentation, For the Tap of Sedition* (1683).

⁷⁹ Scattergood, *A Sermon Preached at Blockley*, p. 15.

Tories could thus fence the boundaries of loyalty and claim that the bulk of the realm was within it, and on their side.

Whigs, 'true protestants', and dissent

In the face of the vehement attacks on the sincerity of their own religious opinions, tories did not hesitate to return the favour. Whiggish opposition to James's accession to the throne had centred on a religious conviction that his Catholicism would be incompatible with Protestant freedom. During the heated electoral strife of the Exclusion period, the links between whigs and nonconformists – and, to an even greater extent, the wider perception of the extent of those links – had grown.⁸⁰ Tories were, first and foremost, Church of England men who believed that practical compromise with nonconformists through any form of relaxation of the penal statutes would weaken the Established Church, and society in general. Thus tories focused their attack on the obvious overlap between whigs and nonconformists which had at its root common notions of personal religiosity. As a whig character was made to say in a polemical dialogue, 'we have been persecuted from one City to another, for the *Good Old Cause, Holiness to the Lord* being our *Eternal Banner*, and in fine the *Poor distressed Israel of God* is from a *Dominus Dominantium* become a *servus servorum*'.⁸¹

It was this tendency that was sharply attacked by the heavy association of the words 'Protestant' or 'True Protestant' with people and objects. Tories spoke and wrote of such people as 'the protesting Earl' and 'Protesting Lords',⁸² the Protestant 'squire' or 'esquire',⁸³ 'attorney',⁸⁴ 'gunsmiths' and 'swordcutler',⁸⁵ 'intelligencers' and 'booksellers',⁸⁶ 'merchant' or 'hop

⁸⁰ Bisbie, *Prosecution No Persecution*, p. 20; Philip Browne, *The Sovereign's Authority And the Subject's Duty . . .* (1682), p. 24. Generally, see Douglas R. Lacey, *Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England, 1661–1689. A Study in the Perpetuation and Tempering of Parliamentaryism* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1969), ch. 7.

⁸¹ *The Whigs Lamentation, Or The Tears of a True-Blue Protestant . . .* (1683).

⁸² CSPD 1682, p. 388; Cornwall RO, AR/33/7/26. See also, *Observer*, no. 4 (23 Apr. 1681); CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 661; *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton being chiefly letters addressed to Christopher 1st Viscount Hatton, A.D. 1601–1704* (2 vols., Camden Soc., ns, 22–3, 1878), ed. E.M. Thompson, II, 19.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 3; WYAS, MX/R/23/14.

⁸⁴ CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 479. See also, Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, I, 233.

⁸⁵ CSPD 1682, p. 538.

⁸⁶ JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: Richard Sterne to Richard Legh, 19 Apr. 1681. See also, *Sejanus: Or the Popular Favourite, Now in his Solitude, and Sufferings* ([1681]), p. 4. L'Estrange particularly criticized two of his rival polemicists and publishers, 'Protestant Smith' and 'Protestant Harris', i.e. Francis Smith and Benjamin Harris. *Observer*, nos. 1, 7 (13, 27 Apr. 1681).

merchant',⁸⁷ 'sheriffs', 'mercier', 'glover', 'baker', and 'bantamer'.⁸⁸ Whigs possessed Protestant limbs,⁸⁹ used 'The true Protestant Translator' to subvert language,⁹⁰ and were placed in polemical dialogues with such bizarre objects as 'the true-Protestant Elm-Board'.⁹¹ The corrosive impact of the 'humour of protestancy', was particularly noted in connection with the legal process.⁹² Men referred to a Protestant 'grand jury' or 'juries', and decried the fact that 'if a true Protestant comes to be arraigned for treason, he need not feare of an Ignoramus brought in by a jury of as honest men as himselfe'.⁹³ Most notoriously, 'Protestant flayls' were designed to scourge Tories, and 'True Protestant blunderbusses' were carried by whiggish conspirators intent on murdering the royal brothers.⁹⁴ The alleged real ends of whigs were made clear by referring to them as 'cut-Throat' or 'Common-wealth' Protestants, and the falsity of their characters suggested by the appellation 'Bromigen Protestants', alluding to a recent incidence of false coinage in Birmingham.⁹⁵ Tories deposed that whigs had argued that 'those were the only true Protestants that voted for Dubois and Papillon' in the London shrieval elections, or that in previous years they had stated that 'every good Protestant or good Christian would be for the Bill of Exclusion'.⁹⁶ A whig merchant from Newcastle said to have made 'little difference 'twixt a Papist and a Churchman, for he

⁸⁷ Michael Mullett, 'The politics of Liverpool, 1660–88', *Trans. of the Historic Soc. of Lancs. and Cheshire*, 204 (1972), 38; CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, p. 187; CSPD 1 May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, p. 225. See also, *Observer*, no. 85 (31 Dec. 1681).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, nos. 161, 216 (28 June, 2 Oct. 1682).

⁸⁹ Bodl., MS Ballard 39, fol. 5.

⁹⁰ *At Amsterdammable-Coffee-House On the 5th of November next, will be Exposed to publike Sale these Goods following, in several parcels* ([?1683]).

⁹¹ *The Last words and sayings of the true-Protestant Elm-Board which suffer'd martyrdom in Smithfield . . .* (1682). See also, *A sober vindication of the Reverend Dr and the harmless Board* (1682); *More last words and sayings of the True Protestant Elm-board* (1682); and *A real vindication of Dr B from the base and scurrilous pamphlets* (1682); *Observer*, no. 221 (11 Oct. 1682). (The object of the satire was Gilbert Burnet.)

⁹² *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton*, ed. Thompson, II, 15: William Longueville to Viscount Hatton, 28 Feb. 1682.

⁹³ BL, Add. MS 61903, fol. 86; CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 431; Bodl., MS Firth c. 3, fol. 29v.

⁹⁴ T.D., *A New Littany, design'd for this Lent, and to be Sung in all the Conventicles, in and about London, for the Instruction of the Whiggs . . .* (1684); *Loyalty Triumphant: Or, Phanaticism Display'd*, printed as a second part to *The Loyal Health: Occasion'd by His Majesties most Happy Deliverance from the late Horrid Phanatical Conspiracy . . .* (1684).

⁹⁵ *No Protestant Plot, Or, The Whigs Loyalty: With the Doctor's New Discovery* (1683); *Bristol's second Address, As it was presented to their late Members in Parliament, at their return from Oxford* (1681), p. 2; *Sejanus*, p. 1. The last pamphlet claimed to be written by 'Timothy Tory'.

⁹⁶ CSPD 1682, p. 381: deposition of Edward Ecclestone, Whitehall, 9 Sept. 1682; East Sussex RO, QR/E/225, fol. 118, quoted in Colin Brent, 'The neutering of the Fellowship and the emergence of a Tory party in Lewes (1663–1688)', *Sussex Arch. Collections*, 121 (1983), 105.

always accounted them all enemies to his true Protestants'.⁹⁷ In the eyes of critical Tories, 'true Protestant' was clearly just a euphemism for 'dissenter'.⁹⁸

For Tories, Whig claims to exceptional godliness represented the height of conceit. In reality, they argued that Whigs were fundamentally ignorant about religion: they did not understand what it was to be a Protestant. Instead, they had merely imbibed a set of prejudices and political goals from their forefathers: 'His Profession (I cannot call it Religion) is of the Geneva-Stamp . . . he was moulded a strong Presbyterian in the very Womb, and so proves a rank Phanatick by the Pure force of Imagination and Extract.'⁹⁹ Although the precise notion was, of course, unknown, contemporaries thus believed in a genetic predisposition to political and religious views, or, as they expressed it, 'what was bred in the Bone, would never out of the Flesh'.¹⁰⁰ It was, therefore, taken for granted that 'Principles and aversion do descend to Posterity', and the whole gamut of post-Reformation history could legitimately be brought to bear on current politics.¹⁰¹ True loyal Protestant Whigs had 'been hatching Rebellion, and working under-ground the Subversion of Church and State for these many years past' and 'in all Ages since the Reformation' they had sought 'to disturb and divert . . . Governours with Petitions, Grievances, Toleration, Comprehension, and a thousand Tricks and Artifices' whilst loyal men 'were wholly taken up in detecting the Trains and Treacheries of the Romish Pioneers'.¹⁰² The author of a tract which described the proceedings of the Oxford Parliament as a prologue to the Rye House Plot conspiracy claimed that the proposed religious legislation of that Parliament demonstrated that 'the greater number [of MPs] were Dissenters'. Yet they had failed to account for the fact that Charles II knew enough Elizabethan history to know why Protestant dissenters had been included within the penal statutes in the first place. In addition, 'have these men Express'd their Loyalty to the King, His Father and Grandfather, as to Encourage Him to Repeal the Laws made against them? Let him who hath Read History, and Remark'd who are the Disturbers of His Majesties quiet, judge.'¹⁰³ Above all, the regicide and Interregnum were never to be forgotten: 'let the Royal Martyr's Fall remain/Fresh in our minds'.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ CSPD 1683 1 Oct. – 30 April 1684, p. 230: info. on oath of Shadrach Fox, 21 Jan. 1684.

⁹⁸ See, for instance, *Observer*, nos. 1, 103 (13 Apr. 1681, 25 Feb. 1681/2); BL, Add. MS 28091, fols. 100r–v; HMC, Ormonde, ns, VII, 75–6.

⁹⁹ *The Character of a Modern Whig, or An Alamode True Loyal Protestant* (1681), p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ *A Dialogue . . . Upon The Kings Calling A Parliament To meet at Oxford*, p. 26.

¹⁰¹ [Nalson], *The Present Interest of England*, p. 36.

¹⁰² *Character of a Modern Whig*, p. 1.

¹⁰³ *Some Brief Remarks on the Debates of the House of Commons*, p. 3. In a particularly vituperative attack on Titus Oates, one author described him as 'Hugh Peters redivivus, the Pulpit-Buffoon of this Nation, the squeaking Cushion-cuffer of Dissenters'. B.D., *The Essexian Triumviri: Or, A Discourse Between Three Colchester-Gentlemen Disguiz'd in Masquerade, and Titus Otes . . .* (1684), p. 16.

¹⁰⁴ *A Parallel of Times*.

Tories could thus generate a version of religious history every bit as partisan as that formulated by whigs: 'consult all Histories, Ancient and Modern, view the present posture of Affairs; if ever this Hundred years there ever was any Rebellion, Massacre, Tumults or Treasons, Blood, Rapine, and Murther, but either Papist, or Phanatick, or both, had the great hand in it.'¹⁰⁵ Once again, the key element in the religio-political nexus was Catholicism. Whereas tories faced the accusation that they were themselves popish or popishly affected, they described whigs as furthering a catholic agenda by promoting disunity, and agitating against the government. In a series of memorable metaphors, Papists and fanatics were said to be

two unruly Whelps in a *Chain*, that pull two several ways with th' same intent of getting loose; a couple of pure sticks, that make the same use of each other to consummate their several ends, as two *Knavish Executors*, that have both an inclination to defraud the Right Heir. These two Utensils together make for his most *Fallible Holiness* a most *Infallible Tinder-box*; and when he would strike sure Fire out of his *Jesuitical Steel*, he takes the *Phanatick* for his Flint.¹⁰⁶

The passage of events meant that true Protestant whigs were ultimately said to be at least as bad as Catholics. If one pamphleteer in 1681 could claim that 'there are as deep *Protestant Traytors*, as *Popish Ones*, and the Danger to the King, and the Establish'd Government, are equally the same from them both', after the Rye House Plot revelations in 1683 true Protestant whigs could be described as worse than Catholics. An exact parallel was drawn with the regicide – 'a *Murder* that can never be parallel'd by the most *Bigotted Papist*' – since the Rye House Plot revealed 'the *same men* at work again, the *same way of management*, the *same fears* and *Jealousies* the *same scandals*, the *same Grounds of Quarrels* pretended, *Insurrections*, *Plots*, and *Rebellions* raised on the *same Foundations*, and every thing the *same* over again, unless the *success*'.¹⁰⁷ One clergyman found another ready parallel in the murder of Henri IV in 1610: the Rye House Plotters acted 'a *Ravaillac's* part under a True Protestant disguise, or to hide a *Dominican Dagger* under a *Presbyterian Cloak*'.¹⁰⁸ So heinous was the planned act that one clergyman hoped that the day designated to celebrate the royal brothers' deliverance – 9 September – would be made coequal with that celebrating the failure of the Gunpowder Plot as an annual day of thanksgiving.¹⁰⁹ As one shocked tory wrote to a correspondent in Wales, God had providentially delivered

¹⁰⁵ *A Letter from Colchester*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ *The Phanatick in his colours being a full and final character of a Whig: in a dialogue between Tory and Tantivy* (1681), p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ *The Whigs Lamentation*.

¹⁰⁸ Brome, *The Original of Plots*, unpag. ded. In the course of equating the principles of papists and fanatics, L'Estrange noted that 'Harry the 4th. was stab'd by the One; and Charles the 1st Beheaded by the Other'; *Observer*, no. 42 (13 Aug. 1681).

¹⁰⁹ Miles Barne, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Assizes at Hertford. July 10th. 1684.* (1684),

the nation from the plotters' 'villany', yet it was this sort of people that 'are true protestants'.¹¹⁰ For another local tory, if a detailed account of the conspiracy could be sent into his region, 'It may be of great use to bring off well meaning & deceived people from leaning to those evill men who cover the worst things under specious pretences of zeal for god & reformation of the world.'¹¹¹

If whigs pursued their ends with similar notions of force as Catholics, it should come as no surprise to find them pilloried for using a similar kind of fraud too. That each true Protestant 'hath all along Danced to the *Jesuits* Pipe, and Steer'd by his Compass we know, but of late he hath openly profest, and avowed such Doctrines as these: That 'tis lawful to take any Oaths whatsoever with a Mental *Salvo* for the sake of the good Old Cause. That no Faith is to be kept with the *Tory-Party*'.¹¹² Casuistry was thus co-opted to partisan politics. Furthermore, the links that were manufactured between whigs and Catholics allowed some of the same vocabulary to be foisted onto them, notably that of such ambitious and unscrupulous men being 'New Popes'.¹¹³

In such ways, the Jesuitical cunning of the whigs was said to be being put to use in the pursuit of a radical religious policy.¹¹⁴ During the electoral preparations for James II's Parliament in 1685 dissenters were said to have fingers 'still itching at *Church-Lands*, and the Revenue of the *Crown*', they were 'such as can serve *God* by none but a *Model* of their own *conceiving*'.¹¹⁵ That model was outlined in the abuse that was retrospectively heaped on the religious proposals of the Exclusion parliaments. During the course of a fictional discussion between three watermen, one explained that he had conveyed a whig MP in his boat, and learnt from him that the whigs 'had resolv'd to Overhall' the Thirty-Nine Articles. Furthermore, he had said that 'the Parsons must use the *Surplice* no more', that the bishops' courts would have been 'mauled . . . to some purpose' and 'the Bishops [made] poor Gentlemen: They would have clipt their Wings, if not quite staved them'.¹¹⁶ This

unpag. ep. ded. See also, *The Whigs laid open, Or, An Honest Ballad of these sad Times* (1683).

¹¹⁰ NLW, Wynn of Gwydir Papers, no. 2834: [J.D.] to Dr Andrew Birch, [London], 23 June [1683].

¹¹¹ Bodl., MS Aubrey 13, fol. 62: A. Paschatt to [John] Aubrey, Chedsey, 29 June 1683. See also, Bodl., MS Tanner 34, fol. 55v.

¹¹² *Character of a Modern Whig*, p. 2.

¹¹³ *A New Song Between Whig and Tory; The Whiggs Lamentation*.

¹¹⁴ Stephen College's execution speech was said to be so cunningly written that it was 'som what of the Jesuits strain', see *The Flemings in Oxford . . . 1650–1700*, ed., John Richard Magrath (3 vols., Oxford Hist. Soc., 44, 62, 79, Oxford, 1904–24), II, 30: Rev. Thomas Dixon to Sir Daniel Fleming, Oxford, 4 Sept. 1681. See also, DWL, Morrice MS P, fol. 212.

¹¹⁵ *The Duty of Subjects Reinforct, Especially in the Choice of their Representatives To Sit in Parliament . . .* (1685), p. 4.

¹¹⁶ *A Dialogue . . . Upon the Kings Calling a Parliament To meet at Oxford*, pp. 9–10.

‘wing-clipping’ would have extended to excluding the bishops from the House of Lords, a policy, another waterman said, that would not have been popular in Oxford since ‘the Bishops are in great Power amongst the Scholars’.¹¹⁷ For other authors, this would simply have been the start. Whigs had, ‘with the Sacred Solemnity of a Sacramental Vow’, committed themselves to ‘the utter Extirpation of Prelacy, and the Royal Race of the *Stuarts*’.¹¹⁸ This was what the calls for ‘Godly Reformation’ really meant.¹¹⁹ The anti-popish rhetoric of the whigs was thus simply a means to undermine the Church of England as a social and political force, as well as a religious one. Shaftesbury came in for particular criticism since ‘in all the Revolutions of his time he measured [his religion] still by his Interest’. In a list of treasons cited against him, the fourth stated

That he endeavour’d to render the Church of England as ridiculous as Popery and defamed all his Majesties officers both by Sea & Land and all others who out of a due sense of Loyalty adhere to the Crowne stileing them Toryes Tantivees in Masquerade &c. purposely to frighten them from their Duty and weane them from their Sovereigne to adhere to him and his Faction . . .¹²⁰

For hostile observers it was clear that little credence ought to be given to talk of religion by puritanical whigs.¹²¹ They argued that in reality they were the worst form of hypocrite, revelling in debauchery whilst laying extravagant claim to personal sanctity and calling for public reformation.¹²² Having levelled the social order and abolished nobility, whigs would assault the ‘plump young daughters’ of peers.¹²³

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17. See also [Francis Quarles], *The Whig rampant, or, Exaltation being a pleasant new song of 82 . . .* (1682). For the Univ. of Oxford’s status as a bastion of Restoration Anglicanism, see the admirable account given by Robert Beddard in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume IV – Seventeenth-Century Oxford*, ed., Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford, 1997), pp. 803–905.

¹¹⁸ *Character of a Modern Whig*, p. 1. See also, *A New Ballad, With the Definition of the Word Tory*.

¹¹⁹ 1643 was cited as a ‘Godly reformation time’: [Quarles], *Whig Rampant*. For critical comments on the idea of ‘Reformation’, see also *A General Sale of Rebellious Houshold-stuff* (1682); *Interrogatories: Or, A Dialogue Between Whig and Tory* (1681); *Massinello: Or, A Satyr Against the Association*, p. 11; *Observator*, nos. 8, 47 (30 Apr., 27 Aug. 1681); William Clifford, *The Power of Kings, Particularly The British Monarchy Asserted and Vindicated . . .* (1682), p. 18; John Okes, *A Sermon Preached At the Assizes Held at Reading . . .* (1681), p. 10; Gary S. De Krey, ‘Reformation in the Restoration Crisis, 1679–82’, in Donna B. Hamilton and Richard Strier, eds., *Religion, Literature, and Politics in Post-Reformation England, 1540–1688* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 231–52.

¹²⁰ Bodl., MS Carte 39, fols. 381r–v: newsletter, [c. July 1681].

¹²¹ For criticism of mechanical, sectarian-style preaching, see *The Whigs Lamentation, Or The Tears of a True-Blue Protestant*.

¹²² *Great News From Count Teckely, or, An account of some passages ‘twixt a true Protestant English volunteer and a Teckelytish Mahumetan . . .* (1684).

¹²³ [Quarles], *Whig Rampant*.

Whilst whigs attacked tories for their alleged links with France and Rome, tories sought to smear whigs by connecting them with the Ottoman Empire, and with Poland. Each country carried with it particular polemical overtones. Poland was irredeemably associated with political instability and limited monarchy.¹²⁴ To write of whigs in relation to the Turk was to suggest their religious insincerity: they preferred Mahometism to Christianity.¹²⁵ Once again, there were links between whigs and nonconformists to be capitalised on in polemical debate. Some nonconformist writers sought to set off the full extent of the persecution they faced by noting the toleration which existed within the Islamic world.¹²⁶ More frequently, tory authors wrote about 'Tecklit Protestants', an allusion to the anti-Habsburg alliance between the Hungarian Protestant rebel Count Imre Tököly or Thokoly (usually given as Teckely in the English press) and the Turkish forces invading his country; one they deplored as based on political expediency and acting contrary to the Protestant interest.¹²⁷

Whigs, a broad church, and anti-clericalism

If the divine right of kings became an article of faith for tories, a sense of living through a period of religious crisis was equally central to whigs' self-identity. As a result of it, the elections to the Oxford Parliament could be presented as a religious referendum, in which electors could vote for or against Protestantism, and thus the whole nature of their government: 'since our Danger is so great, and the only way of securing our Religion and Liberty (in order to the Choice of our Representatives in Parliament) all imaginable care should be taken . . . to Elect such Members to serve in this present Parliament as are Men of Wisdom and Courage . . . to stand up for the Good of the King and Kingdom . . . [and] to Maintain the Protestant Interest against all the Attempts of Rome and France, and Secure our Liberties from Arbitrary Incroachments'.¹²⁸ To be a whig was thus to be a patriotic

¹²⁴ For Shaftesbury as 'The Polish Tapski', see BL, Add. MS 11043, fol. 126; *Tony's Lamentation: Or, Potapski's City-Case. Being his Last farewell to the Consecrated Whigs* (1682); Haley, *First Earl of Shaftesbury*, p. 735.

¹²⁵ *Great News from Count Teckely*. See also, CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 197; CSPD 1 May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, pp. 187–8.

¹²⁶ N.I. Matar, 'Islam in Interregnum and Restoration England', *The Seventeenth Century*, 6 (1991), 57–71, esp. 63.

¹²⁷ *A Dialogue Betwixt the Devil and the Whigs*, p. 1; B.D., *The Essexian Triumviri*, p. 12; *A Dialogue between Bowman the Tory and Prance the Runagado. A New Song* (1684); [Nelson], *The Present Interest of England*, p. 18; *Observer*, no. 216 (2 Oct. 1682); NLW, MS 5389C: Sir Leoline Jenkins to Sir Richard Bulstrode, Whitehall, 21 Sept. 1683; NLW, Clennau Letters and Papers, no. 831; Elizabeth Lane Furdell, 'Grub Street Commerce: Advertisements and Politics in the Early Modern British Press', *The Historian*, 63 (2001), 44.

¹²⁸ *Advice to the Freemen of England, In the Choice of their Representatives in Parliament*

Protestant, resisting popish incursions into the body politic.¹²⁹ This was an outlook which favoured taking action over passively placing too great – and too presumptuous – a reliance on Providence.¹³⁰

Whigs particularly resented what they perceived to be the temporal ambition and pernicious doctrinal teachings of many Church of England clergy.¹³¹ Attacking ‘the suppleness, treachery and fawning of the Clergy’ one pamphleteer claimed that they ‘governed’ the nobles and gentry who were their local patrons, strangling them as ivy ultimately did the oak trees it lived on. Such clergy ‘set up absolute Monarchy to be *Jure Divino*, declaiming against the unreasonable stubbornness of any Parliament, that will not give away the peoples money’. Furthermore, ‘They cry up the Prince like an Angel, so long as he will be their Executioner, to whip, imprison or hang all that are not of their flock’, so that in the meanwhile ‘they might not be troubled with those uneasie tasks of Studying, Preaching and Catechising’. In reality, such clergymen aimed to ‘live at ease . . . with a Curate to do all the drudgery, whilst they are making their Addresses above, by flattering and informing at some great Nobleman’s or Bishop’s Table; or else if their parts reach so high, by some Pamphlet or Sermon against the Government establish’d by Law, they teach that men have no property either in their Lives or Goods, but during the Prince’s pleasure’.¹³²

The clergy’s two main objectionable characteristics were thus their uncharitable desire to persecute dissenters, and a willingness to pronounce that dangerous political positions had a religious and scriptural authority. In particular, whigs attacked the close co-operation of tory pamphleteers and clergymen, and the destructive potential of their output. When the personified newssheet ‘Heraclitus’ was, during the course of a polemical dialogue, made to tell ‘Observator’ that ‘you are too Bare-fac’d in affirming, That if the matter of a Law be *Controvertible*, the Subject is not to dispute either the *Authority* of it or his *Obedience*’, the character ‘Inferior Clergy’ pipes up ‘Why

(1681). See also, C.B., *An Address To the Honourable City of London, And all other Cities, Shires and Corporations, Concerning their Choice of a New Parliament . . .* (1681), p. 10.

¹²⁹ For a discussion of contemporary usage of ‘patriot’, see Hill, *From Patriots to Unionists. Dublin Civic Politics and Irish Protestant Patriotism, 1660–1840* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 7–14, 56–7.

¹³⁰ *The Charge of a Tory Plot Maintain’d*, p. 13.

¹³¹ For emphasis on the importance of anti-clericalism within whig circles, see Mark Goldie, ‘John Locke and Anglican Royalism’, *Political Studies*, 31 (1983), 61–85; *idem*, ‘The roots of true Whiggism 1688–94’, *History of Political Thought*, 1 (1980), 207; *idem*, ‘Priestcraft and the birth of Whiggism’, in Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner, eds., *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 209–31.

¹³² C.B., *An Address to the Honourable City of London*, pp. 4–6. Cf. [Nelson], *The Present Interest of England*, pp. 4–5, 7–8, 22, 26, 30–1, 37, for a tory clergyman’s perspective on parliament’s duty adequately to fund the crown. Nalson advocated the greatest financial exactions to be levied on dissenters, in part as revenge for the prohibitive taxation placed on royalists during the Interregnum: *ibid.*, pp. 31–2.

Sir, this is no more than we have been preaching these twenty years.¹³³ When dealing with the question of the succession, 'Heraclitus' notes that 'Observer' would have it 'That no power on Earth can hinder any man from coming to the Crown in his course, be he as bad as the Devil.' 'Inferior Clergy' is then made to offer a wildly inappropriate scriptural quotation to support 'Observer' via a patently weak logical argument: 'For seeing dispersed Jews and the meanest of the people are forewarned from rebelling against their lawful Sovereigns; it follows *a fortiori*, that the King and Parliament cannot exclude any man from the Succession.'¹³⁴ As he ends by telling the pamphleteers, 'I can assure you, your Works are in great esteem amongst us: We should not know what course to Steer, if we were not guided by you.'¹³⁵

Whig writers clearly evinced the kind of sympathy for Protestant dissenters that their pamphleteering opponents so excoriated. Indeed they maintained their stance in the face of that criticism, and even sought to turn it to their polemical advantage. One author savaged 'the Libels, the Rimes, the Ballads, the Pamphlets, that at such an unfortunate Conjunction overflow the Nation, and spit their quotidian Venome against the Dissenters' on two grounds. First, by emphasizing the numerical significance of the dissenters, and their deep loyalty to the crown against all its enemies. And secondly, that the so-called loyalists who criticised dissenters were actually just furthering the papacy's 'Arts of National disturbance' by dividing 'the Protestant Interest in England'.¹³⁶ In this way the persecution of Protestants could be neatly linked to the perils of popery. Indeed, Samuel Bold was quite clear that those men who acted as persecutors of Protestants would be the most likely to convert to Catholicism under a popish prince.¹³⁷ Persecution was a Satanic activity; those who furthered it were most likely to be unregenerate, especially the informers, whose financial motive ensured that they 'prostitute their Souls to Hell'; and rather than safeguarding the Church it actually imperilled its safety: 'All the Dissenters in the Nation cannot prejudice the Church half so much, as you drunken swearing prophane Informers and Persecutors do.'¹³⁸ According to Bold, dissenters of his acquaintance were 'men of great Learning, exemplary Piety, strict Devotion, and extraordinary Loyalty', and there was no inconsistency in being both against persecution and 'a thorough Conformist' at the same time. By contrast, 'Those who do generally Decry and Prosecute Dissenters with greatest Passion and Virulence,

¹³³ *The Charge of a Tory Plot Maintain'd*, p. 4.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7. See also, *ibid.*, p. 31.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹³⁶ [John Phillips], *New News from Tory-Land, &c.* (1682), p. 9. See also, Samuel Bold, *A Plea for Moderation Towards Dissenters . . .* (1682), p. 6.

¹³⁷ Bold, *A Sermon Against Persecution*, p. 36.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 3, 10, 28. Persecutors were 'the very Pest of Society': *ibid.*, p. 7.

*are greatest Strangers unto them. They usually know no more of them, then they learn from some false and scandalous Observer or other.*¹³⁹

The religious battleground: Unity or uniformity?

There was thus a clear religious dimension to the political polemic of the last years of Charles II. Religious language, arguments, and examples tintured the rival identities of whigs and tories. As one tory clergyman wrote bitterly in 1682, his was an 'Apostate Age . . . when Disobedience shall be sainted, and Rebellion made a mark of the Godly Party, and all Loyalty run down with the Rabble'.¹⁴⁰ And as a like-minded pamphleteer put it, 'a Modern Whig is the very Spawn of Antichrist, the Counterpart to Popery, the Jesuits Bum-Crack, the Shame of the Reformation, and the Scandal of Christianity'.¹⁴¹ In such a climate, the seemingly commonplace descriptions of the great crisis of the period – the Rye House Plot – as a 'hellish' conspiracy or 'diabolical design' become rather more than that.¹⁴² Instead of just being empty figures of speech, they were indicative of a whole mind-set that was so ingrained and all-pervasive as to sound casual. Both whigs and tories came to discuss the plot in religiously polarized terms. According to tory writers, the nation's deliverance from the effects of the plot – 'a work of darkness' – was a shining example of the workings of providence.¹⁴³ To whigs, it was a 'sham plot . . . contrived . . . as deep as hell' in order to ruin them, and provide the government with an excuse to round up their local leaders.¹⁴⁴

Such wrangling was based on a closely fought battle over the meaning and likely consequences of certain key concepts. Was it more accurate to read post-reformation religious history as a tale of puritan disloyalty or popish influence? Who were the real debauchees, whigs or tories? Did 'reformation' indicate a positive change in religion, or a cynical design forcibly to alter the whole nature of society? How was Protestant unity best to be attained: by a

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, unpag. intro. 'To the Reader'.

¹⁴⁰ Browne, *Sovereign's Authority And the Subject's Duty*, unpag. ep. ded. See also, Bisbie, *Prosecution No Persecution*, p. 12; NLW, MS 11303D, fol. 74.

¹⁴¹ *Character of a Modern Whig*, p. 2.

¹⁴² T.B. and T.J. Howell, eds., *A complete collection of state trials and proceedings, for high treason and other crimes and misdemeanours* (34 vols., 1809–28), IX, 1351; *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton*, ed., Thompson, II, 26: bishop of Oxford to Viscount Hatton, 5 July 1683.

¹⁴³ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 306: Secretary Jenkins to Sir William Portman, Whitehall, 18 Aug. 1683; Howell and Howell, eds., *State Trials*, IX, 1355; *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton*, ed., Thompson, II, 34.

¹⁴⁴ CSPD 1683 Jan. to June, pp. 362–3: John Burd to John Orum, London, 28 June 1683. See also, CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 126. For differing partisan views about whether the earl of Essex had been murdered or committed suicide in the Tower, see British Museum, Print 1871–2-11–17, 'Death (alleged murder) of Arthur Capel, Earl of Essex'; CSPD 1 Oct. 1683 – 30 Apr. 1684, pp. 283–4, 296, 303; Bodl., MS Carte 40, fol. 77; *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton*, ed., Thompson, II, 35.

forcible reintegration of dissenters into the Church of England, or by freeing those who felt they could not join in the Anglican communion from legislative penalties? Was the national religious interest compromised more by one side than the other?

In this bipolar environment, it was said that honesty could not live with knavery any more than God could live with Belial.¹⁴⁵ Indeed, one cleric sought to castigate those who refused to believe in the veracity of the Rye House Plot with the notion that 'should an Angle [i.e. angel] come now from Heaven, and attest the truth of these things, they would believe him too, to be only some misguided *Tory Apparition*'.¹⁴⁶ Such vituperative language bears close resemblance to that employed by Restoration churchmen when dealing with the issue of a religious toleration, indeed it may have been modelled upon it. Political division could be no more justifiable than religious.¹⁴⁷ One tory writer memorably ended his pamphlet with a 'Whiggish Exercise of Arms: or, a New Way to Withstand Authority'. This was based on the claim that 'there may be a Spiritual Warfare, in which, if we are not very well exercised in the Postures of our Doctrine, we shall all go nigh to suffer'. As a result 'the *Sanctified Brethren*' proceeded to exercise their doctrine as if it was a part of a weapons' drill on a parade ground, advancing it if authority seemed weak, and retreating if it was strong.¹⁴⁸

From the rival perspective, in this martial setting those who persecuted Protestant dissenters – that is to say, many tories – were 'Enemies to Christ and Religion' and 'fighters against God'.¹⁴⁹ Men who argued for a Protestant unity which did not require Anglican uniformity believed that they stood for 'the Protestant cause', or the cause of Heaven, in difficult times.¹⁵⁰ Whatever temporal fate they met with they would ultimately be received as saints in heaven. For their part, tories stood for a society under attack from popish influences receiving effective support from Protestant schismatics. Thus whilst they might caricature whigs as religiously insincere – 'Religion, the huge Bugbear of the Times,/The pious Cloak to cover all our Crimes'¹⁵¹ – their own rhetoric was centred on a defence of true religion; that is religion rightly interpreted. Ultimately, preachers might have exercised their professional right to inveigh against 'this profane Age', but in reality the last years of Charles II's reign were anything but.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ *A Hue and Cry After Tory Honesty, In a Dialogue between a Whiggish and a Tory Evidence* (1682), p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ Brome, *The Original of Plotts*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁷ For a discussion of the evils of toleration, see NLW, MS 11310D, fol. 31.

¹⁴⁸ *The Whiggs Advertisement Together With Whiggish Exercise of Arms*.

¹⁴⁹ Bold, *A Sermon Against Persecution*, pp. 6, 18.

¹⁵⁰ *A Friendly Dialogue Between Two London-Apprentices, The One a Whigg, The Other a Tory* . . . (1681), p. 4.

¹⁵¹ *Massinello*, p. 11.

¹⁵² John Hildeyard, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Right Honourable Robert Earl and Viscount Yarmouth* . . . (1683), p. 28.

Kingship and a stable constitution

Although this chapter has so far been focused on the religious discourse employed in polemical works during the personal rule period, this did not simply stand alone; it was inextricably linked to constitutional debates. As has been shown, this was not least because of the willingness of the Church of England's clergy to engage in political discussions. Referring to the king's declaration (8 April 1681) explaining his reasons for dissolving recent parliaments, the bishop of Peterborough preached to an audience in Northampton that 'by that Declaration our religion is (under god) secure, for his Majesty declares he will governe by the law & the law secures every man in his property & as long as his Majesty governs by the laws soe long [are we] secure'.¹⁵³ More grandiloquently, during a visitation sermon preached in rural Essex, the earl of Albemarle's chaplain defended the sovereign's power in ecclesiasticals: 'he can make that which is a Divine Law already, to become the Law of the Land. Religion may be incorporated into our Laws, and the Bible it self may become our *Magna Charta*'.¹⁵⁴

Besides visitation sermons, another obvious and regular platform for the intermixing of religious and legal/constitutional thinking was that provided by meetings at the assizes. On these occasions laws were enforced, charges to the grand jury generally extolled religious principles, and sermons emphasised political precepts.¹⁵⁵ The assizes held at Leicester in March 1682 provided an ideal opportunity for Nathaniel Alsop, the rector of Church Langton, to hold forth. Preaching on the commandment 'Honour thy father and thy mother', Alsop offered a vigorous exposition of patriarchal thought harnessing a cosmopolitan range of authorities that included Grotius, Calvin, and Filmer. Monarchy had been established by divine right, necessitating 'the implacable Enemies' of it 'by a kind of aukward Courtship to the Multitude, by a most fulsom Flattery of the People, to insinuate into them an Opinion, That all Sovereignty and Power, all Honour and Authority, as to the first Ownership, is theirs, and where they are pleased to lodge it'.¹⁵⁶ Ready financial support of the government was urged, and alternative bases for government were firmly rejected. Alsop offered particularly sharp criticism of the republican thinker James Harrington for making an undue

¹⁵³ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 33v: bishop of Peterborough to archbishop of Canterbury, [c. June 1681].

¹⁵⁴ Browne, *The Sovereign's Authority and the Subject's Duty*, p. 6. By 1686 a clergyman in Hampshire could preach against the effects of 'torturing' the laws: John Miller, *James II* (New Haven and London, 2000 edn), p. xii.

¹⁵⁵ J.S. Cockburn, *A History of English Assizes 1558–1714* (Cambridge, 1972), esp. pp. 8, 251–4.

¹⁵⁶ For similar sentiments, see Luke Beaulieu, *The Terms of Peace and Reconciliation Betwixt all Divided Parties . . .* (1684), pp. 13, 18.

distinction: 'The *Oceanists* are wont to tell us of an Empire of men, so they call Monarchy; and an Empire of Laws, and that must be their own dear Common-wealth.' Instead, he offered a traditional peroration on the glory of England, thanking God

for assigning us our Lot in that Country which of old was called, and still is (would our little Discontents but let us know how to value it) the *Fortunate Island*, not so much for its temperate Climate, but for that happy temper of the Constitution we now live under. . . . The Bounds of our Liberty and Property are sacred also, and not to be invaded, so long as there shall be any Reverence had to Law or Justice among us . . .¹⁵⁷

Alsop's sermon indicates a number of the key themes in contemporary constitutional debate, and the divisions within that debate: patriarchalism, fear of republicans, the importance of liberty and property, and the proper basis of governmental authority.¹⁵⁸ With regard to the partisan political cultures of the period, the remainder of this chapter will focus on disputes about the powers and practice of kingship and its proper place in the constitution. Ultimately, the fissures between whigs and tories will be shown to depend on differing views of what was required to achieve unity in the realm.

'Commonwealth principles' and 'arbitrary government'

For whig commentators the perspective offered by clergymen like the bishop of Peterborough and Nathaniel Alsop was patently absurd and self-serving. Instead of offering a paragon of good government, the personal rule of Charles II resembled the worst periods of tyranny in ancient Rome. Gilbert Burnet offered a celebrated parallel between Charles and Tiberius, and, for good measure, described the former as being 'a viceroy to France, rather than a king that ought to have watched over and prevented the mischiefs that

¹⁵⁷ Nathaniel Alsop, *A Sermon Preached at the Assizes Held at Leicester* . . . (1682), pp. 5–6, 12, 14, 23–6.

¹⁵⁸ For more extended treatments of particular subjects than it would be possible to engage in here, see Zera S. Fink, *The Classical Republicans. An Essay in the Recovery of a Pattern of Thought in Seventeenth-Century England* (Evanston, IL, 1945); J.G.A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* . . . (Cambridge, 1957), esp. ch. 8; Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen* . . . (Cambridge, MA, 1959); Corinne Comstock Weston, 'Legal sovereignty in the Brady controversy', *HJ*, 15 (1972), 409–31; Corinne Comstock Weston and Janelle Renfrew Greenburg, *Subjects and Sovereigns. The Grand Controversy over Legal Sovereignty in Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1981); Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government* (Princeton, NJ, 1986); J.P. Somerville, 'Absolutism and royalism', in J.H. Burns, ed., with the assistance of Mark Goldie, *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450–1700* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 347–73; Jonathan Scott, *Commonwealth Principles. Republican Writing of the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2004), esp. chs. 15–16.

could happen to him or to his people'.¹⁵⁹ In providing a pedigree for Charles in Roman tyranny, Burnet followed in the footsteps of Algernon Sidney. The latter's numerous references to Caligula and Nero in the *Discourses Concerning Government*, written in the early 1680s, were pointed in the extreme. As Sidney noted, 'we have known such as have been worse than either of them'.¹⁶⁰ Sidney's view was obviously an extreme one; extreme enough to ensure his execution in 1683. He would thus prove to be one of the 'inveterate Enemies' of the crown that Sir John Heath had in mind when he penned a loyal address thanking Charles for his *Declaration* of April 1681. According to Heath, such men ignored 'the blessed Fruits of your Majesties Golden Reign'.¹⁶¹

Such differences of opinion existed within a broader debate about seventeenth-century history, and the place of the monarchy within it. Public memory of the civil wars and interregnum was strong but contentious.¹⁶² Charles himself offered a vigorous lead to opinion when he referred to men of 'commonwealth principles' and the fall of the monarchy during the 1640s in his *Declaration* of April 1681.¹⁶³ A cacophony of support for this scare-mongering royal perspective can be found. A polemical tory *Dialogue* criticizing the Oxford Parliament's proceedings attacked whig MPs: 'they keep the Commonwealth's Title a Foot in their minds, though they dare not publicly own it'.¹⁶⁴ L'Estrange was typically forthright when in the first edition of his *Observer* he claimed that whig periodicals were actually the product of 'the Venom of a Club of *Common-wealths-men*'.¹⁶⁵ And a satire on the Association and the whig-inspired riot at the London shrieval elections in 1682 blasted 'Catilines' who thought that 'Better Five hundred bear Command than one'.¹⁶⁶

Little imagination had to be used to deduce who 'they' and the 'Catilines' were. The tory polemicist John Nalson wrote against 'the *Factious Whiggish Conspiratours, who have left no Corner of the Nation unpoisoned with their*

¹⁵⁹ Burnet's *History of My Own Time*, ed. Osmund Airy (2 vols., Oxford, 1897–1900), II, 470–1. See also, Robbins, *Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen*, p. 26.

¹⁶⁰ Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis 1677–1683* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 201, 217, 222, 224, 232, and esp. 240.

¹⁶¹ BL, Egerton MS 2985, fol. 240: 'The Humble & Cordial Address of your Majesties most faithfullie Loyal Subjects . . . in the Countie of Kent'.

¹⁶² For the importance of public memory in the Restoration, see Scott, *England's Troubles*, ch. 7.

¹⁶³ Andrew Browning, ed., *English Historical Documents VIII: 1660–1714* (1953), pp. 187–8. (Charles would return to the theme in his letter to the Scottish Parliament of 1681: *His Majesties Gracious Letter To His Parliament of Scotland* . . . (1681), pp. 3–4.) The loyal addressors in Norwich were particularly noted for their criticism of men who retained 'their old Commonwealth Principles': *The Currant Intelligence*, no. 4 (3–7 May 1681). See also, *ibid.*, nos. 14–15; *Observer*, no. 8 (30 Apr. 1681).

¹⁶⁴ *A Dialogue . . . Upon the Kings Calling a Parliament To meet at Oxford*, p. 29.

¹⁶⁵ *Observer*, no. 1 (13 Apr. 1681).

¹⁶⁶ *Massinello*, p. 11.

Appeals, *their Vox Populi's, their Growths of Popery, and whatever might help to subvert the Government*'. This they did since they were a 'rebellious Antimonarchical Faction'.¹⁶⁷ Modern whigs were 'insects . . . bred in the Corruption of the late Rebellion'.¹⁶⁸ A particularly prominent example of the species, the earl of Shaftesbury, was mocked during his imprisonment in the Tower – 'for the *Good Old Cause*' – in 1681 as 'the Mouth of this *Young Rump*'.¹⁶⁹ Whigs represented 'this *Faction of Shaftsbury-Commonwealthmen*'.¹⁷⁰ Other whigs in Cheshire were presented by a grand jury for 'hearing with the Antimonarchicall partye' after the Rye House Plot of 1683 made the charges all the more potent.¹⁷¹

Such polemical attacks and legal prosecutions were naturally seen as being sufficiently damaging to require refutation or redefinition. A highly critical set of *Remarks* on the Oxford Parliament's proceedings pilloried 'R.H.' (probably Richard Hampden) for being 'much concern'd that he should be call'd a *Republican*' and for saying '*That they who are about to alter the Government will cast it upon others*'.¹⁷² The Londoners who petitioned Charles in May 1681 for another Parliament to be called duly expressed amazement 'at the Unprecedented Boldness of some Private Persons, who (by Printed Papers, and otherwise) take upon them to Arraign and Condemn the Proceedings of Your Two last Parliaments, which . . . plainly tends to bring that part of the Constitution into Contempt, and in the Consequence of it to Dissolve the Ancient Government and its Fundamentals'. They were, they stressed, 'very far from being moved by any Commonwealth Principles, in Opposition to the English Monarchy, which we esteem the best of Governments'.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, the emolliency of these claims was not made more plausible by the author of the prominent *Just and Modest Vindication of Parliaments* which replied to Charles's April 1681 *Declaration*.¹⁷⁴ Rather than denying the charge of 'commonwealth principles', he sought to redefine its meaning by arguing that those who believed in them ought to be thought of as being 'passionately devoted to the Public good' and the 'common Service' of the country, and of holding that 'kings were instituted for the good of the People, and Government ordained for the sake of those that are to be governed'. On this basis, 'To be fond . . . of such

167 [Nalson], *The Present Interest of England*, unpag. 'To the Reader', p. 4.

168 *Character of a Modern Whig*, p. 1. For the pernicious legacy of the Interregnum, see also Browne, *Sovereign's Authority and the Subject's Duty*, p. 33.

169 *Sejanus*, pp. 1, 4.

170 [Nalson], *The Present Interest of England*, p. 10.

171 Surrey History Centre, LM/COR/6/71: James Graham to Sir William More, Haslemere, 28 Sept. 1683.

172 *Some Brief Remarks on the Debates of the House of Commons*, p. 12.

173 *The Humble Petition and Address of the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City of London . . .* (1681).

174 For the fame and force of this piece, see Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis*, pp. 184–5, and for its authorship, *ibid.*, pp. 186–7.

Commonwealth Principles, becomes every *Englishman*.¹⁷⁵ Overall, such protestations led a broadsheet to mock

Republick *Whig*, whose true *Protesting Arm*
 With so much art a Thunderbolt can sling,
 As unto *Majesty* can ne're do harm,
 Yet will dissolve a *Charles*, and save a *King*.¹⁷⁶

As Hampden's complaint and the last piece of mockery both imply, whigs advanced the claim that they were actually the custodians rather than the subverters of the constitution.¹⁷⁷ If in defending the validity of 'commonwealth principles' Sidney was the most pugnacious of these figures, his attack on an innovatory 'arbitrary government' rooted in illegitimate uses of the prerogative did not stand alone.¹⁷⁸ Another polemicist claimed that tories followed 'Arbitrary Dictates', and that they believed that 'As Princes permit, for diversion, Fools and Jesters; so he may be allow'd the Zany of Prerogative', indeed he is 'a fiery Pensioner to Prerogative'.¹⁷⁹ Similarly, L'Estrange's *Observer* was attacked for claiming 'I had rather forty times the King should lay me by the heels without shewing cause for it, than a *House of Commons*; and be a Slave to an *Imperial Prerogative*, than to a *popular priviledge*'.¹⁸⁰

Just as whigs were anxious to deny claims that they were republicans, tories were keen to absolve themselves of the charge of supporting the prerogative of the crown to such a point that it impacted upon the proper sphere of the common law.¹⁸¹ Indeed tory pamphleteers were sufficiently incensed that they rubbished whig votes in the Exclusion Parliaments that had labelled anyone who pressed Charles to prorogue the session 'an Enemy to the King and Kingdom: Nay, he was a Pensioner to the *French King*'. Adapting the Elizabethan statesman William Lord Burleigh's old claim for the power of Parliament, one wrote 'I have often heard say, that a Parliament can turn a Man into a Woman; and now I see, they can make a man into a Pensioner of *France* tho' he be none.'¹⁸² Yet the claims persisted. In the

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 195.

¹⁷⁶ *Whig and Tory, Or the Scribling Duellists* (1681), p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ See also, Charles D. Tarlton, 'The Exclusion Controversy, pamphleteering, and Locke's *Two Treatises*', *HJ*, 24 (1981), 50, 60.

¹⁷⁸ Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis*, pp. 185–6, 189–90, 193, 195–6.

¹⁷⁹ *Character of a Thorough-Pac'd Tory*, pp. 2–3, 6.

¹⁸⁰ *The Charge of a Tory Plot Maintain'd*, p. 18. The polemicist was quoting *Observer*, no. 135. L'Estrange denied being against parliaments *per se*, and sought to throw the charge of arbitrary government back at whigs: *ibid.*, nos. 42, 39, 41 (13, 3, 10 Aug. 1681).

¹⁸¹ Tim Harris, 'Tories and the rule of law in the reign of Charles II', *The Seventeenth Century*, 8 (1993), 9–27. For the example of Lord Keeper Guilford, see Mark N. Brown, 'Trimmers and moderates in the reign of Charles II', *HLQ*, 37 (1973), 329.

¹⁸² *A Dialogue . . . Upon the King's Calling a Parliament to Meet at Oxford*, p. 21. Algernon

winter of 1682/3, the earl of Essex informed Burnet that Charles had told him that 'tho he would never bring things to the pass they were at in Turkey . . . yet he thought the french Government was a much happier constitution than the English, and that he would have no body enquire into or question anything'.¹⁸³ Certainly Tories did emphasise the crown's central role in maintaining the religious and legal health of the nation. Preaching in Putney Church, Edward Sclater removed any lingering stain of Levelling principles from the locality by arguing in support of Charles's *Declaration*. In the course of an extended parallel between Charles and Moses and his regal powers, Sclater claimed that kings were 'the life of Religion and Law'. In a clear invocation of the 1640s and '50s, he added that law would 'want its strength, as if its Sinews were cut in pieces' in the king's absence: 'Religion must bleed and Law expire in him who is the life of both.'¹⁸⁴ It was thus fitting that immediately after Charles II's death in 1685 he was lauded by a member of Gray's Inn as a 'living law' and 'true religion's breath'.¹⁸⁵

A sympathetic presentation of the prerogative was offered from the pulpits by many orthodox preachers, who emphasised that dislike of the prerogative was a characteristic of factious people.¹⁸⁶ By contrast, it was argued that the defence of prerogative power was a sign of well-affected self-interest: it was an infallible axiom that '*To defend the Kings Prerogative is the best way to secure the Peoples Liberties, nay Lives.*'¹⁸⁷ And looking beyond the pulpit, loyal addressers also fixed on the positive aspects of the prerogative: it was 'no less necessary for the Subjects Safety than the Prince's Grandeur'.¹⁸⁸ Far from being a weapon to be wielded against the people's liberties, the prerogative was thus properly to be understood as a shield which protected them: 'These two must mutually support the one the other, or else they will be both in danger of a Fall.'¹⁸⁹ There was no necessary conflict between monarchical power and individual liberty.¹⁹⁰ 'Let other Nations call

Sidney himself received 1000 guineas from the French ambassador Paul Barillon: Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis*, p. 109.

¹⁸³ Quoted in Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis*, p. 279. See also, *HOP 1660–1690*, III, 87–8; Jonathan Scott, 'England's troubles', in Harris, Seaward, and Goldie, eds., *The Politics of Religion in Restoration England*, p. 122.

¹⁸⁴ Sclater, *A Sermon Preached in the Church of Putney*, pp. 8–9.

¹⁸⁵ John Nash, *A Poem Condoling the Death of Charles II* (1684/5), p. 1.

¹⁸⁶ Knight, *The Samaritan Rebels Perjured*, p. 9. See also *ibid.*, pp. 12–13, 16–17.

¹⁸⁷ Hildyard, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of . . . Robert Earl and Viscount Yarmouth*, p. 23.

¹⁸⁸ *Bristol's second Address*, p. 1. (The presenters of the address attacked the whig writer of the 'Protestant Mercury' news-sheet, Langley Curtis, for criticizing a local minister 'in scurrilous language peculiar to such Common-wealth-Protestants'. (*Ibid.*, p. 2.) For the context of these disputes, see *HOP 1660–1690*, I, 238–9.) See also, *An Address From the Justices of the Peace Of the County of Middlesex . . .* (1681), p. 4.

¹⁸⁹ [Grove], *Seasonable Advice . . .*, p. 3. See also, Mullett, 'Politics of Liverpool, 1660–88', 52.

¹⁹⁰ Much of this rhetoric may ultimately have been based on Charles I's arguments in his

themselves Free, let potent Princes assume what Titles they please, there is none can boast of more Liberty, than the *English*-man enjoys; there is no Monarch more absolute, and really Great, than a King of *Great Britain*, introned in the Hearts and affections of his People.¹⁹¹

Nevertheless, this ‘inthroneing’ was not as automatic a process as coronation was taken to be by most political commentators.¹⁹² In 1677, Danby had argued that ‘Till the King can fall into the humour of his people, he can never be great.’¹⁹³ In the following years whig propaganda was said to be working against the cherished union of king and people.¹⁹⁴ During the period of Exclusion Parliaments, ‘The People were perswaded to Thwart the King, and that his and their Interest were not only Distinct, but Opposite; and at last were wrought upon to desire things so Extravagant, that twas impossible His Majesty could grant them with less Inconvenience than His Own and the Monarchy’s Ruin.’¹⁹⁵ According to John Nalson, the faction that opposed Charles aimed ‘to distract and disaffect the People’ by which means ‘they disrobe him of the hearts, and affections of the People’. He offered the historical argument that it had been by precisely these means that Charles I had been brought low, and went on to invoke the powerful language of ‘Court’ and ‘Country’:

I am a true *Countryman*, not according to the *Factionous* distinction of a *Countryman*, as opposite to a *Courtier*, but such a *Countryman*, as would by supporting the Dignity of the *Crown* and *Court*, also advance and improve the Interest of the *Country*. For let the *Commonwealthsmen* say what they will, the Court and the Country are not two separate Interests . . .¹⁹⁶

The force of such accusations and counter-accusations lay in age-old notions of ‘ambition’. Power was a potentially corrupting force on fallen man, but who was it least likely to affect? The author of *Arbitrary Govern-*

rejection of the authority of the High Court of Justice which tried him in 1649: S.R. Gardiner, *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1899), pp. 374–6.

¹⁹¹ [Grove], *Seasonable Advice . . .*, p. 14.

¹⁹² For an exception, see William Le Hardy, ed., *County of Buckingham. Calendar to the Sessions Records* (Aylesbury, 1933), I, 176.

¹⁹³ Quoted in John Miller, ‘The Potential for “Absolutism” in Later Stuart England’, *History*, 69 (1984), 33.

¹⁹⁴ Whigs themselves had emphasized the malign influence of evil counsellors, and had adopted a (well-worn) rhetorical position of trying to disabuse the king of any thought that his interests and those of his subjects were separate: Tarlton, ‘Exclusion Controversy’, 55.

¹⁹⁵ *Some Brief Remarks on the Debates of the House of Commons*, p. 1.

¹⁹⁶ [Nalson], *The Present Interest of England*, pp. 4, 13, 15, 26. The same point is made in [Grove], *Seasonable Advice . . .*, pp. 14–15; *The Diaries and Papers of Sir Edward Dering Second Baronet 1644 to 1684*, ed. Maurice F. Bond (House of Lords RO Occasional Publs., 1, 1976), p. 132.

ment Display'd: In the Tyrannick Usurpation of the Rump Parliament, and Oliver Cromwell was, perhaps predictably, in little doubt: 'Tho some Faults and Miscarriages may be found [in a royal government], or appear in his Ministers . . . the King himself can do no wrong.' By contrast, 'if we look back, into all the Actions, of the most Arbitrary and Tyrannick, [of] the lawful Kings of this Nation, we shall find Arbitrary Government, attending usurpers, in the little time of their usurpation, to be more horrid and dreadful, and brought on this Nation more Misery, Blood, and Persecution than any of them; nay, all of them together'.¹⁹⁷

The commonwealth had been worse than the monarchy because English kings, unlike upstart rulers, were free of ambition.¹⁹⁸ They would always be ready to redress the grievances of their subjects thanks to 'the Passion' kings have 'for the Ease and Satisfaction' of their people. This was both a prudential matter and one that arose axiomatically from the 'body politic' analogy popular in contemporary political discourse. On the one hand, 'Lawful Princes have a kind Sympathy for their Subjects; and are sensibly affected with any Miseries, and Inconveniencies they suffer; as the pain of every Member, is immediately felt by the Head'. And on the other, 'Princes do well understand, that the Throne is established by Righteousness; and that it is their most unalterable Interest, to take care that Justice be duely, and impartially executed'.¹⁹⁹

Flattery and dissimulation – the tools of the disaffected ambitious men who stood against monarchy – were 'plebeian Vices' beneath kings.²⁰⁰ A satire against Shaftesbury made the most of the charge that he had 'big Ambition', pointing to the essentially selfish aims of non-royal rulers: 'What a vast pitch the cunning States-men flies!/ Another's Fall he makes his Step to rise'. If he could choose his religion, it would 'be one of Profit, and of Use;/ One that should carry on the Mighty Cause'. He wished to be a king, 'made Cobwebs of the Laws', and manipulated the people with 'Jealousies and Fears', whilst all the time making 'Interest the God y'adore;/ Int'rest all Order to Confusion brings,/ And aims at having none, or many Kings'.²⁰¹ Such claims were firmly based on the experience of those whose actions had laid Charles I low: 'their Design was to lessen the Crown not to Ease the

¹⁹⁷ *Arbitrary Government Display'd: In the Tyrannick Usurpation of the Rump Parliament, and Oliver Cromwell . . .* (1683), p. 5.

¹⁹⁸ Nash, *A Poem Condoling the Death of Charles II*, p. 1; Robert Sheringham, *The King's Supremacy Asserted: Or A Remonstrance Of the King's Right Against the Pretended Parliament* (3rd edn, 1682), p. 5. As the title of the latter piece suggests, it was first published (in Holland) during the Interregnum. For the importance of reprinted literature in these years, see Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, pp. 365–8.

¹⁹⁹ [Grove], *Seasonable Advice . . .*, pp. 18, 21. (Grove quoted from Proverbs, 16: 12.) See also, Bodl., MS Aubrey 12, fol. 271.

²⁰⁰ [Grove], *Seasonable Advice . . .*, p. 24.

²⁰¹ Massimello, pp. 4–5, 11–13.

People'.²⁰² This applied *mutatis mutandis* to those assaulting the crown in the 1680s: 'all *Fanaticks* and *Anti-Courtiers* love . . . to acquire *Riches* and *Power* any how, by fair or foul means'.²⁰³ On this basis, whigs' criticism of the Anglican establishment was alleged to be nothing more than a tactic for factional aggrandisement: in reality they aimed to fill 'their insatiate Stomacks' with bishoprics and other livings.²⁰⁴

But Charles himself was far from being a model of honesty and probity, as many observers clearly recognized.²⁰⁵ How could a monarch of doubtful sincerity best be 'managed'?²⁰⁶ For whigs the answer lay in a clear emphasis on the role and importance of Parliament. Their polemicists mocked heavy-handed tory claims and sought to make a degree of coordination with Parliament both innocuous and traditional. As 'Heraclitus' puts it during a dialogue with 'Observer', if the king can do no wrong 'I cannot see how his having the advice and consent of Lords and Commons should *make him do wrong*.' A sudden link is then made to conciliarist theory: 'to me it seems indifferent as to that, whether the King do a thing from his own meer motion and science, or by the advice of his Privy Council, or of his Parliament'. In reply, an abashed 'Observer' says, 'Hang't, my mistake was, to bring the King into the Argument; for if I had only said Lords and Commons, I had hit it. But now I think on't, 'tis not the Pope and Council, but the Pope alone, that is infallible.'²⁰⁷ Thus, while tories stressed the extent to which Exclusion Parliaments had sought to browbeat the king into submission by a blunt use of their control over supply,²⁰⁸ whigs sought to suggest the natural harmony of the differing parts of the constitution.

Nevertheless, their arguments often had a stridency to them which did not suggest that harmony would be easily achieved. A prime example of these was Samuel Johnson's notorious pamphlet against passive resistance, *Julian the Apostate* (1682). Johnson – who was William Lord Russell's chap-

²⁰² [Nalson], *The Present Interest of England*, p. 11. See also, *Observer*, no. 29 (2 July 1681).

²⁰³ *Some Remarks on the Debates of the House of Commons In the last Parliament at Oxford*, p. 15. See also, *Observer*, no. 8 (30 Apr. 1681).

²⁰⁴ *The Whiggs Advertisement*.

²⁰⁵ CSPD 1683 Jan. to June, p. 2; CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 167; Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 198; *Memoirs of Sir John Resesby*, ed. Andrew Browning (2nd edn, with a new intro. and notes by Mary K. Geiter and W.A. Speck, 1991), p. 327; Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis*, p. 191; Scott, 'England's troubles', in Harris, Seaward and Goldie, eds., *Politics of Religion in Restoration England*, p. 117.

²⁰⁶ For tory critiques of whig efforts to make the people distrust their king, see *Observer*, no. 29 (2 July 1681); Thomas Pomfret, *Subjection for Conscience-sake . . .* (1682), p. 26.

²⁰⁷ *The Charge of a Tory Plot Maintain'd*, p. 9. The legacy of medieval debates between conciliarists and ultramontanists for early modern thinking on absolute monarchy is well brought out in J.H. Burns, 'The Idea of Absolutism', in John Miller, ed., *Absolutism in Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Basingstoke, 1990), pp. 21–42.

²⁰⁸ [Nalson], *The Present Interest of England*, pp. 5–6.

lain – wrote in a vehemently legalistic style, arguing ‘That Doctrine overthrows Magna Charta, Chap. 29. together with multitudes of Statutes and ruled Cases.’ In his advocacy of Exclusion, Johnson pointed to the Elizabethan statute 13 Eliz c. 1, interpreting it as making the denial of Parliament’s ability to limit and bind the crown (including with regard to the succession) treasonable. Nor was the option of excluding the heir to the throne impossible because, as some argued, MPs were pre-engaged to the king and his heirs and successors by the oath of allegiance: ‘No man can have an Heir while he is alive.’ Invoking the authority of Elizabethan history, *Julian* urged ‘Let those . . . that run down three successive Houses of Commons for that Bill, turn their Fury and Reproaches with more justice upon these old Excluders, and we have done.’²⁰⁹

By contrast, tory authors emphasized the fact that parliament owed its existence to royal goodness and generosity: ‘’tis true that the Members of the *House of Commons* are Chosen by the People; but yet the *House* is not Constituted by the People’. Instead it was called by the king’s writ ‘and when his Majesty pleases, he sendeth them away’. Parliament could thus never legitimately coerce the king, and the principle of a coordination of power between king, lords, and commons ought not to be accepted as being part of ‘the ancient constitution of the government of this kingdom’.²¹⁰ In particular, tory polemicists emphasised the hypocrisy of their whig opponents in describing the king’s prerogative actions as arbitrary. Parliament could be just as bad: ‘Nor are the Laws the Square only for the Kings Actions, the Fundamental ones ought to be so for the *Lords* and *Commons* too, since we can have no other Rule, by which we can judge what is Arbitrary or not; and therefore the Parliament, or any Power whatsoever, acting contrary to them, is Arbitrary.’²¹¹ It was unduly sanctimonious on the part of the Commons to claim that they were superior in the ends of their actions to the crown: ‘They call that Power which they themselves both do act by, and would govern by, the Liberty of the Subject, tho’ no Subject, but a few Members have any Liberty at all: But if his Majesty, God bless him, should act by the same Power, and do the same things which they do; then they call the very same Power flat down-right Tyranny.’²¹² Indeed, whereas the Commons were fond of alleging arbitrary intentions on the crown’s part, it was they who had actually exercised it within the memory of many.²¹³

²⁰⁹ Samuel Johnson, *Julian the Apostate . . .* (1682), pp. ix, xii–xiii, xviii–xix.

²¹⁰ *Some Brief Remarks on the Debates of the House of Commons*, pp. 11, 8; *The Arraignment of Co-ordinate Power* (1683), p. 13, quoted in Weston and Greenburg, *Subjects and Sovereigns*, p. 151.

²¹¹ *Some Brief Remarks on the Debates of the House of Commons*, p. 7. See also, *Observer*, no. 41 (10 Aug. 1681).

²¹² *A Dialogue . . . Upon The Kings Calling a Parliament To meet at Oxford*, p. 19.

²¹³ [Nalson], *The Present Interest of England*, p. 12. See also, *ibid.*, p. 6; *A Dialogue . . . Upon The Kings Calling a Parliament To meet at Oxford*, pp. 13–15.

Conclusion

An important issue in this period was disagreement about the very nature of the fissures obvious in contemporary society. Who was responsible for dividing the kingdom and so destroying traditional notions of harmony between king and people? Tories argued that whigs and dissenters were to blame for insinuating to the people that their interests were different to the king's, and that he was acting against their own. Whigs also failed to support the power of the Church of England and so practically encouraged religious disunity. But for whigs, tories were the disunifiers since they represented a doubly insidious and alien force in the body politic: they were crypto-Catholics, and they sought to destroy the balance of the English constitution by encouraging the king to rule in an arbitrary manner.

Underlying this debate was a fundamental disagreement about the ramifications of the Restoration itself. The Interregnum careers of whiggish opponents of the crown were not forgotten, despite the Act of Indemnity and Oblivion. Some optimists hoped that the disaffected would feel 'Remorse' and so 'at length proceed to . . . a dutiful Reverence' of the king, or 'Mercy that even Heavens hardest Toyle/ FANATICISM shall reconcile'.²¹⁴ Others were less hopeful. When some Rye House Plot conspirators escaped in July 1683 it was noted that they, and 'many more of them', had been pardoned at the Restoration, but 'without repentance'.²¹⁵ Prominent tories like Edward Seymour thus hoped 'his Majesty will be weary of forgiving the enemies of the public peace, since by woeful experience it might have been found they will never be weary of offending'.²¹⁶ But if tories felt that whigs had abused the Act of Oblivion, whigs thought that tories went against its spirit. Rather than cooperating in a general laying to rest of old ghosts, they had consciously sought to harp on the events of the 1640s, thus keeping unfortunate memories alive and potent. And in doing so they fallaciously sought to equate the past and the present, ignoring the real differences between

²¹⁴ Samuel Philipps, *To the Learned and Worthy Artist Mr Grinsted Gibbons* (1684), p. 1; *A Pindarick Ode, Upon His Majesties Review of His Forces at Putney Heath* (1684 – 'October 1st' handwritten addition).

²¹⁵ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., p. 69: Sir Richard May to Secretary Jenkins, Chichester, 8 July 1683. See also, *Character of a Modern Whig*, p. 1; *Some Brief Remarks on the Debates of the House of Commons*, p. 4.

²¹⁶ CSPD 1683 July to Sept., pp. 69–70: Edward Seymour to Secretary Jenkins, Orchard Portman, 8 July 1683. For other examples, see Howell and Howell, eds., *State Trials*, IX, 1353; JRUL, Legh of Lyme Letters: Francis Cholmondeley to Richard Legh, 8 Dec. 1684. One tory author nevertheless proposed an amnesty prior to the 1685 Parliament: *Some Proposals offered to Publick Consideration, Before the Opening of Parliament May 19. 1685* (1685), p. 1.

them.²¹⁷ Their use of history for present scare-mongering was thus said to be against the terms of the Act of Oblivion too.²¹⁸

Precisely because of the reality and depth of division in society great stress was laid rhetorically on the value of harmony and unity. Authors claimed that they wrote in order to help 'towards the Uniting Our Divisions, Composing Our Differences, and Healing Our Breaches', or 'to promote Love and Union, and to beget a right understanding in the minds of Men'. To this end, 'I could heartily wish that the appellation of *Tory* and *Whigg* might be obliterated among us, and that we might all Joyn hand in hand, resolving to fear God, and Honour the King.'²¹⁹ Harmony would be achieved when king and people knew and understood each other; this would help 'toward the Establishment of a Distracted Nation, in Agreement, Peace, and Plenty'.²²⁰ Everyone's duty was to '*Know your own Int'rest and Obey your King*.'²²¹ Thus if whigs and tories saw themselves as 'warriors for God', a similar degree of difference existed as to how they believed each stood affected to the king. In such an environment, it is scarcely surprising that many observers were wholly alienated. As one versifier chose to criticize both whig and tory writers,

whilst devoted to their Cause, each strive
 Th' imaginary Conflict to maintain,
 Naught but a shameful *Trophy* doth survive
 Both Sence, and Law, and History are slain.²²²

²¹⁷ *Character of a Thorough-Pac'd Tory*, p. 3.

²¹⁸ [J. Phillips], *New News From Tory-Land, &c.* (1682), p. 3.

²¹⁹ Robert Hearne, *Loyalties Severe Summons to the Bar of Conscience* (1681), t.p.; *An Humble Address To The Livery-Men of London, Relating to the Election of Sheriffs, by a Lover of his King and Country* (1682).

²²⁰ [Grove], *Seasonable Advice . . .*, pp. 11–12; *The Protestant Petition and Adresse* (1681).

²²¹ *A Poem Upon the New Marble Statue of His Present Majesty, Erected in the Royal Exchange . . .* (1684), p. 3.

²²² *Whig and Tory, Or the Scribling Duellists*, p. 2.

Partisan politics in the British monarchies

Although the focus so far has overwhelmingly been on England, this chapter will argue that a significant dimension of the struggle between whigs and tories is best understood in a ‘British’ or ‘Three Kingdoms’ context. Certainly contemporaries thought so, with contrasting whig and tory perspectives on Stuart/Stewart rule in Scotland and Ireland. This is not crassly to argue that political life was the same in each of the three kingdoms. Rather that the shared awareness of political and religious issues helped not just to define the partisan struggle in England, but also to nurture and shape divisions in Scotland and Ireland. Although a degree of caution will need to be maintained about offering such a complementary account to English affairs,¹ overall the conclusion to this chapter will suggest that this was a period of transition for Scottish and Irish politics.

Introduction: ‘the menace and stedly aspect of these two Kingdoms’

In 1685 Sir Robert Southwell, an Anglo-Irish diplomat and government official, wrote an answer to the earl of Anglesey’s published attack on the duke of Ormond, which had sought to smear the Irish lord lieutenant with a critical view of his actions in Ireland during the civil wars of the 1640s.² As a friend of Ormond, Southwell naturally presented him as the wronged party, lauding his government of Ireland and its wider importance within the

¹ See above, pp. 8–9.

² For the details of this, see Douglas G. Greene, ‘Arthur Annesley First Earl of Anglesey 1614–1686’, unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of Chicago, 1972, chs. 5–6; Margaret Anne Creighton, ‘The catholic interest in Irish politics in the reign of Charles II’, unpub. Ph.D thesis, The Queen’s Univ. of Belfast, 2000, pp. 284–6; Michael Perceval-Maxwell, ‘Sir Robert Southwell and the duke of Ormond’s reflections on the 1640s’, in Micheál Ó Siochrú, ed., *Kingdoms in Crisis: Ireland in the 1640s. Essays in Honour of Dónal Cregan* (Dublin, 2001), pp. 229–47; *idem*, ‘The Anglesey-Ormond-Castlehaven dispute, 1680–1682: taking sides about Ireland in England’, in Vincent P. Carey and Ute Lotz-Heumann, eds., *Taking Sides? Colonial and Confessional Mentalités in Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2003), pp. 213–30; Deana Rankin, *Between Spenser and Swift. English Writing in Seventeenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 244–55.

British monarchies. Pointing to the recent furore surrounding Titus Oates's allegations of a Catholic conspiracy against Charles II, Southwell argued that the credence which had been given to 'the story of a Popish Plott to destroy his Majesty and Subvert Religion and the Government' in 1678 had allowed a 'formidable . . . faction' to start up and, by 'suddaine steps', to become 'a Terrour to the Government'. Indeed ultimately Southwell argued that 'The Government was soe reduct, as even to crouch, and pay respect to the Faction'. So desperate did the political crisis become that

surely all had been swallowed up by Them, had not Scotland on the one syde then stood firm by the Presence and authority of the Duke of York, and Ireland on the other syde, by the unshaken Loyalty of the Duke of Ormond. The Votes the Clamours and the Blood that was drawn by Impeachments and forms of Judiciall proceedings, had certainly broke <out> into Uproare and Armes, had not the menace and steady aspect of these two Kingdoms repress Them.³

Southwell thus endorsed, from an approving tory perspective, long-standing whig fears about the potential role that Charles II's 'other' kingdoms might play in overawing or overpowering England. As the earl of Shaftesbury had put it in his notorious 'two little sisters' speech of 1679, Scotland and Ireland were 'two doors, either to let in good or mischief upon us': he left the House of Lords in little doubt which he thought most likely.⁴ Shaftesbury sought to make political capital from the long-standing spectre of danger from Catholic Ireland – 'the snake which we have harboured in our bosom and warmed it . . . when it could scarcely live'⁵ – by gathering allegations of an Irish plot to massacre Protestants and reclaim the government.⁶ This could seamlessly be accommodated into a deep-seated gloom about the perennial lack of success in England's governance of Ireland; a failure which in the seventeenth century had been punctuated by massacres and panics.⁷

³ Bodl., MS Carte 69, fols. 455r–v. (Another copy of this can be found in Bodl., MS Carte 118, fols. 430–5, where it is endorsed 'Sent the 26 Aug 1685 with a short letter to the Duke of Ormonde'.) See also, V&A, National Art Library, Forster & Dyce Collection, F. 47. A. 40 (vol. II), fol. 99.

⁴ K.H.D. Haley, *The First Earl of Shaftesbury* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 510–11.

⁵ Quoted in Haley, *Shaftesbury*, p. 584. The analogy grew out of the longstanding belief that Ireland, post-St Patrick, was inimical to snakes and venomous creatures.

⁶ Haley, *Shaftesbury*, esp. pp. 539, 569–72, 575, 578, 583, 587–8, 594–5, 599, 617–18, 643–4, 647–9; John Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (1972), pp. 224–5, 233–4; S.J. Connolly, *Religion, Law, and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland 1660–1760* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 22–3; Jacqueline Hill, *From Patriots to Unionists. Dublin Civic Politics and Irish Protestant Patriotism, 1660–1840* (Oxford, 1997), p. 58; Mark Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678–81* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 307; Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 168–9, 171–4.

⁷ T.C. Barnard, 'The uses of 23 October 1641 and Irish Protestant celebration', *EHR*, 106 (1991), 889–920; Connolly, *Religion, Law, and Power*, pp. 7–8, 16–17, 29–31; Thomas Dineley (or Dingley), *Observations In a Voyage Through the Kingdom of Ireland . . .*

The uncertainties of the power relationship between the component parts of the British monarchies in the seventeenth century were thus well appreciated. This chapter will attempt to move beyond England in order to contextualize the political partisanship that has been the subject of the previous four.⁸ In order to do so, the nature and importance of parliaments and government – religious as well as secular – in Scotland and Ireland will first be outlined. Then the politics of those kingdoms will be examined for signs of the influence of events in England, and the reciprocal impact that they made on English political life. Ultimately it is not possible to describe widespread whig and tory politics in Ireland and Scotland in the ‘English’ sense that has been the main focus of this book. But I will argue that this period sees the first stage of the re-importation of ‘whig’ and ‘tory’ from England into the Stewarts ‘other’ kingdoms as party political labels.

Parliaments and politics

The English Parliament did not, rather to its members’ regret, exist in a vacuum. At one level, MPs and peers were well aware of the general decline of representative assemblies across Europe, often because they had surrendered the exclusive and tightly regulated capacity to vote financial supply.⁹ And within the wider Stuart multiple monarchy, Scotland retained an independent Parliament, albeit one bound in the ‘shackles’ of a committee of articles made up of representatives of the bishops, nobles, and burgh commissioners. Thanks to the crown’s ability to influence the composition of this committee, it usually ensured the quiescent passage of government-sponsored legislative programmes.¹⁰ Ireland too had its own Parliament, although it lacked the mystique and prestige of antiquity that its English counterpart enjoyed, and was formally subordinated to English government through Poyning’s Law.¹¹

in the Year 1681, ed. James Graves (Dublin, 1870), p. 124; BL, Add. MS. 4816, fols. 2, 19, 27v, 30v, 31v.

⁸ For a ground-breaking study in this area, see Tim Harris, ‘The British Dimension, religion, and the shaping of political identities during the reign of Charles II’, in Tony Claydon and Ian McBride, eds., *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650–c.1850* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 131–56.

⁹ Jonathan Scott, *England’s Troubles. Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 30.

¹⁰ William Ferguson, ‘Imperial crowns: a neglected facet of the background to the Treaty of Union of 1707’, *SHR*, 53 (1974), 23; Ronnie Lee, ‘Retreat from revolution: the Scottish Parliament and the restored monarchy, 1661–1663’, in Young, ed., *Celtic Dimensions of the British Civil Wars*, p. 188.

¹¹ Hugh Kearney, ‘The Irish Parliament in the early seventeenth century’, in Brian Farrell, ed., *The Irish Parliamentary Tradition* (Dublin, 1973), pp. 100–1; James Ernest Aydelotte, ‘The Duke of Ormonde and the English government of Ireland 1677–85’, unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of Iowa, 2 vols., 1975, I, 3, 59–60.

Nevertheless, neither Parliament had been especially prominent during the Restoration period,¹² both having made the 'European' error of voting too generous a financial settlement in the 1660s.¹³ After its dissolution in 1666 the Irish Parliament did not meet again during Charles's lifetime. According to Southwell, 'That Devil was chain'd downe as uselesse and Dangerous; soe that the Country lay groaning herein, just as a poore whale between the sword fish and the Tresher, for all the Rest of that Reigne'.¹⁴ And although the Scottish Parliament met in the summer of 1681, the advocate Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall was dismissive of its nature: 'the Parliament miserably varied in thir points, as the wind of favor or prejudice tossed them'.¹⁵ This was not least because of the government's success in playing off different parts of the Scottish political nation against one another: 'The Royal Burrows in the Parliament, ware by the Court gulled with the hopes of getting ther priviledges restored against Brughs of Regalities and Baronies . . . and in hopes of it, with Isachar, they crouched under the burden, and yeilded to every demand of the Duke of York.'¹⁶

As with rumours of the English Parliament, money continued to be a vital part of the parliamentary equation in Charles's other kingdoms. It seems highly unlikely that Ormond intended the 1666 dissolution to herald such a long non-parliamentary period in Ireland.¹⁷ Indeed, his desire to enlarge the armed forces in Ireland as a means of ensuring the peace and security of the kingdom frequently led him to advise the recall of Parliament to secure the necessary funds.¹⁸ The king, however, paid more attention to the various shady revenue farmers who offered him privately supplied ready cash –

¹² James I. McGuire, 'The Irish Parliament of 1692', in Thomas Bartlett and D.W. Hayton, eds., *Penal Era and Golden Age: Essays in Irish History, 1690–1800* (Belfast, 1979), p. 1; F. O'Donoghue, 'Parliament in Ireland under Charles II', unpub. MA thesis, Univ. College, Dublin, 1970, p. 243; John R. Young, *The Scottish Parliament 1639–1661. A Political and Constitutional Analysis* (Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 327–8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 315–16; T.J. Kiernan, *History of the Financial Administration of Ireland to 1817* (1930), pp. 76–86; O'Donoghue, 'Parliament in Ireland under Charles II', p. 243. For qualifying remarks, see Lee, 'Retreat from revolution', pp. 194–5; Keith M. Brown, *Kingdom or Province? Scotland and the Regal Union, 1603–1715* (1992), p. 145; Seán Egan, 'Finance and the government of Ireland 1660–85', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2 vols., 1983, I, 4, 6–7.

¹⁴ Pearse Street Library, Dublin, Gilbert MS 207, fol. 16. For an eighteenth-century perspective on the 'endless Slavery' that Charles II's reign brought to the corporation of Dublin, see Hill, *From Patriots to Unionists*, p. 44.

¹⁵ Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, *Historical Notices of Scottish Affairs*, ed. David Laing (Bannatyne Club, 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1848), I, 319. See also *Narrative of Mr James Nimmo . . . 1654–1709*, ed. W.G. Scott-Moncrieff (Publs. of the Scottish Hist. Soc., 6, Edinburgh, 1889), p. 18.

¹⁶ Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 323. Lauder referred to Issacher, the ninth son of Jacob, 'who his father called "a strong ass, crouching between the sheepfolds"'. (Gen. 49: 14.) For this information I am indebted to John Morrill's biblical knowledge.

¹⁷ O'Donoghue, 'Parliament in Ireland under Charles II', p. 262.

¹⁸ The question of whether to call an Irish Parliament can be traced in exhaustive detail

'bounty Money for the King & the Ladys' – than he did to his lord lieutenant.¹⁹ As Ormond wrote bitterly to his son in May 1682, 'It is plain that what can be preserved out of the revenue of Ireland is accounted as so much gained to that of England, in which case it is well if we can preserve necessary support for the army's continuance as it is.'²⁰

In Scotland too there were expectations that the Parliament of 1681 might be manipulated to ensure greater financial supply to the crown.²¹ After a national fast was announced 'to pray for the succes of the subsequent Parliament' Sir John Lauder acidly noted, 'Some wished this Parliament might not make us or our posterity fast after it was done.'²² In Lauder's opinion, a variety of alleged proposals for non-parliamentary taxation between 1681 and 1683 were illegal, and were intended 'to make up a stock of money, to forward the Duke of York's affairs, when he shall succid to the croun'.²³ For all the economic dominance of England, the taxpayers of Scotland and Ireland were thus apparently in line to shore up Stuart/Stewart monarchy against its critics.²⁴

As such examples indicate, 'British' or pan-national concerns were clearly appreciated by contemporaries. Ormond was careful to acknowledge that the option of an Irish Parliament would have to be 'adjusted to the affairs of the other kingdoms upon which a Parliament here might in consequence have had more influence than I was able to judge of'.²⁵ By October 1682 he was more positive, urging that an Irish Parliament would supply revenue deficiencies 'especially if his Majesty shall succeed in the foundations laid for the suppression of factions here' in England. Although 'It cannot be said that they [i.e. the whigs] are absolutely extinguished, or well to be hoped that

in Aydelotte, 'The Duke of Ormonde and the English government of Ireland', I, 30–33, 50, 52–6, 63–79, 98, 100–1, 103, 108–37, 163–73, 192–4.

¹⁹ Pearse Street Library, Dublin, Gilbert MS 207, fol. 14v. For Nell Gwyn's Irish pension, see HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 483. See also Toby Barnard, 'Scotland and Ireland in the later Stewart monarchy', in Steven G. Ellis and Sarah Barber, eds., *Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State 1485–1725* (Harlow, 1995), p. 267; Bodl., MS Carte 39, fol. 539; and, for the king's susceptibility to bribery, *The Works of George Savile Marquis of Halifax*, ed. Mark N. Brown (3 vols., Oxford, 1989), II, 499–500.

²⁰ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 378: duke of Ormond to earl of Arran, Windsor, 30 May 1682. See also, *ibid.*, 138, 174, 256, 307, 347, 354; VII, 23, 25–6, 97, 99; V&A, National Art Library, Forster & Dyce Collection, F. 47. A. 40 (vol. II), fol. 89v.

²¹ For the Scottish Parliament's actions to bolster the Stewart regime financially, see Harris, *Restoration*, p. 346.

²² *Historical Observes of Memorable Occurrents in Church and State, From October 1680 to April 1686 by Sir John Lauder*, ed. Adam Urquhart and David Laing (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1840), p. 42.

²³ Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 326, 436–7.

²⁴ Though for the archbishop of Armagh's view that the English doubted the revenue-raising potential of Scotland, and the extent to which it could thus be used as a weapon against them, see HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 115.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 227: duke of Ormond to Thomas Sheridan, Dublin, 14 Nov. 1681.

ever they will . . . it is evident they lose ground almost everywhere, and will do so in Ireland in proportion.²⁶

The actuality of a Scottish Parliament provided much more grist to the 'British' mill.²⁷ Despite a high degree of royal control over proceedings thanks to the lords of the articles, the Scottish Parliament had not been a wholly quiescent institution in the 1670s.²⁸ Early reports that reached northern England suggested that the 1681 session might prove difficult for James and the Scottish ministers to manage in the wake of some vigorously contested elections.²⁹ What the Scottish Parliament would do was the 'great Expectation' in London in late July, and a matter of concern for the English envoy in Berlin, where the court 'doubted' his optimistic hope that 'it will be an example to us [in England] to agree better'.³⁰ The actual proceedings of the session generally went well, and were presented in the best possible light, but did not avoid unwelcome divisions. Although a report to England blandly noted that the Parliament dealt with 'some controvertible Eleccions' in its early days, the hostile Lauder vilified the bishop of Edinburgh for arguing in regard to 'the debatable election of Eist Lothian, that for serving the King, the Committee might verie lawfullie præfer one who was inferior in votes, and they might passe over 4 or 5 votes, to hold out a Shaftsburie'.³¹ Similarly, whilst English newsletters recorded that 'Lord Bellingham [i.e. Belhaven]' had been committed to prison by the whole house for making a motion to have the successor to the throne bound by the new Test Act excluding dissenters from Parliament, Lauder noted that it was 'the Court party' that had disliked his implicit attack on James's rights.³² Reports of confrontations in the Scottish Parliament also reached Ireland,

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 457: duke of Ormond to archbishop of Armagh, London, 2 Oct. 1682. For the archbishop's reply, see *ibid.*, 464, and for Arran's tacit acknowledgement of the continued dominance of 'state motions' in England on the possibility of an Irish Parliament, see *ibid.*, VII, 95.

²⁷ The best published account of the Scottish Parliament of 1681 is now Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 341–50. See also, Kathleen Mary Colquhoun, "'Issue of the Late Civill Wars": James, Duke of York and the government of Scotland 1679–1689', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, ch. 4.

²⁸ Gillian I. MacIntosh, 'Arise King John: Commissioner Lauderdale and the Parliament in the Restoration Era', in Keith M. Brown and Alastair J. Mann, eds., *Parliament and Politics in Scotland, 1567–1707* (Edinburgh, 2005), pp. 163–83; John Patrick, 'The origins of the opposition to Lauderdale in the Scottish parliament of 1673', *SHR*, 53 (1974), 1–21; J.D. Mackie, *A History of Scotland* (Harmondsworth, 1964), p. 239.

²⁹ WYAS, MX/R/18/106. See also, Turner, *James II*, p. 188.

³⁰ WYAS, MX/R/18/48: MS newsletter, [London], 30 July 1681; BL, Add. MS 37986, fols. 124v, 133: Edmund Poley to William Blathwayt, Berlin, 21/31 Aug. and 31 Aug./10 Sept. 1681.

³¹ WYAS, MX/R/19/3: [brief account of the Scottish Parliament's proceedings, 10–13 Aug. 1681], 13 Aug. 1681; Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed., Laing, I, 307.

³² WYAS, MX/R/18/53: MS newsletter, 6 Sept. 1681; Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 308. The Scottish Parliament was unicameral, nobles, bishops, and burgh representatives sitting together.

raising anxieties in the government there that ‘warm beginnings seldom conclude to the advantage of the King or country’.³³

Nevertheless, the legislation passed by the Parliament – particularly the Act anent the Succession, which allowed for the lineal successor to inherit irrespective of his or her religion – was widely noted outside Scotland for its partisan importance.³⁴ In Amsterdam, William Carr, the English envoy, had the Scottish Acts of Parliament translated into Dutch and French and distributed to the town’s magistrates in order to counter recent rumours spread by ‘our Phanaticks the English Merchants that the Scottish Parliament was desolved & very much displeas’d with the Duke for refusing to take the [Protestant] Oathes’ necessary to act as High Commissioner.³⁵ In Berlin, the elector told the English envoy, Edmund Poley, that ‘he hoped he should quickly hear the same newes from England, and that His Majesty would happily conquer the ill conjuncture of his affaires, which would be a great happiness to the rest of Christendome’, alluding to recent English disengagement from European affairs at a time when the French appeared to be rampant.³⁶ And from his viewpoint in Brussels, Sir Richard Bulstrode – a future Jacobite exile – hoped that James’s success and apparent popularity in Scotland ‘will break the Measures of those who flattered themselves with a Support from that Kingdom’, in other words, the whigs.³⁷

Whatever the wider British and European perspectives on the Scottish Parliament of 1681, it was certainly important as a part of James’s policies as head of the Scottish administration at this time. Historians have generally stressed the positive aspects of James’s actions, pointing to his apparent popularity and successful wooing of the Scottish political elite.³⁸ The years from 1679 to 1682 seemed to offer the prospect of a successful second Jaco-

³³ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 138–9: archbishop of Armagh to duke of Ormond, Dublin, 24 Aug. 1681.

³⁴ William Croft Dickinson and Gordon Donaldson, eds., *A Source Book of Scottish History. Volume Three 1567 to 1707* (London and Edinburgh, 1954), pp. 185–6; BL, Add. MS 61903, fol. 86v. See also, BL, Add. MS 75360 (unfol.), 27 Aug. 1681. For the Act itself and its local application, see Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 347–56; and for English discussions of the Scottish Parliament’s activities generally, see *ibid.*, pp. 336, 339, 343, 345, 356.

³⁵ BL, Add. MS 37981, fol. 66v: William Carr to earl of Conway, Amsterdam, 5 Sept. 1681.

³⁶ BL, Add. MS 37986, fol. 136: Edmund Poley to William Blathwayt, Berlin, 6/16 Sept. 1681.

³⁷ Sir Richard Bulstrode, *Memoirs and Recollections Upon the Reign and Government of King Charles the 1st and K. Charles the 2d* . . . (1721), pp. 321–2.

³⁸ Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 357–9; Clare Jackson, *Restoration Scotland, 1660–1690. Royalist Politics, Religion and Ideas* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 49–52; Colquhoun, ‘“Issue of the Late Civill Wars”’, esp. chs. 2–3; Hugh Ouston, ‘York in Edinburgh: James VII and the patronage of learning in Scotland, 1679–1688’, in J. Dwyer, A. Mason and A. Murdoch, eds., *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 133–55; Allan I. Macinnes, ‘Repression and conciliation: the Highland dimension 1660–1688’, *SHR*, 66 (1986), 189; David Stevenson, *Alasdair MacColla and the*

bean reign north of the Border after half a century of revolts, religious disaffection, and rebellion. According to the very sympathetic Bulstrode, Scotland 'has not been in many Ages more united than it is at present, under the prudent Conduct of his Royal Highness'.³⁹

Yet although this session of parliament was officially meant to heal 'the breaches' and pardon 'the sins of the kingdom',⁴⁰ it may actually have heightened pre-existing divisions within Scotland. Admittedly much of the evidence for this comes from the hostile pen of Sir John Lauder, but his account is sufficiently detailed, wide-ranging, and well-informed to command attention. In particular, he recorded the confrontational rhetoric of the King's Advocate, Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh. Mackenzie insinuated that some MPs had recently been in arms as Covenanter rebels, and implied the need for strong central interference in elections by questioning the political loyalty of some burghs.⁴¹ Lauder also noted the vengeful pursuit by James's government of a number of individuals who had opposed the duke's will during the recent elections.⁴² Most notably, the earl of Argyll, 'the most powerful noble in Scotland', was successfully prosecuted for treason after refusing to take the new Test Act without reservation.⁴³ According to Lauder – who was one of the earl's advocates at his trial – Argyll's fall was hastened because he 'appeared to be a valiant assertor of the Protestant interest in the Parliament'.⁴⁴ Whilst the legal assault on the earl may have been motivated by a fear of 'the over-great house of Argyll', it may also have backfired by increasing the earl's credit with 'the Presbyterian faction'.⁴⁵ And besides attacking individuals, James was said to have 'stifled' a debate about the power of the lords of the articles, making use of 'the advantage the sovereign prerogative hath got with us over the people'.⁴⁶ The government of Scotland, and Ireland, was thus to be conducted by thoroughgoing executive power, but the extent to which this was actually achieved can be questioned.

Highland Problem in the Seventeenth Century (Edinburgh, 1980), p. 287; John Miller, *James II* (New Haven and London, 2000), pp. 101, 107; F.C. Turner, *James II* (1948), p. 174.

³⁹ Bulstrode, *Memoirs and Recollections*, p. 322. See also Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 10.

⁴⁰ These were the words of the proclamation commanding a national fast in July 1681: *RPCS 1681–1682*, p. 132.

⁴¹ Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed., Laing, I, 310; MacIntosh, 'Arise King John', p. 179.

⁴² Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed., Laing, I, 301–2, 304, 336. For references to 'the Country party', 'the Court party', 'the Duke of York and his party', 'the Court faction', 'the power of the faction', and 'the Duke of York's syde' in parliament, see *ibid.*, 304, 308, 312–13, 318, 327. See also MacIntosh, 'Arise King John', p. 180.

⁴³ Turner, *James II*, pp. 190–3; Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 351–2.

⁴⁴ *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 54.

⁴⁵ Stevenson, *Alasdair MacColla*, pp. 288–9; *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 54.

⁴⁶ Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 313–14. For James's efforts as king to get greater recognition of prerogative power, see HMC, *Fifteenth Report, App., Pt. VIII*, pp. 91–2.

Royal government, office-holding, and persecution

Looking beyond parliaments, how did Charles rule his 'other' kingdoms, and what impact did this have on the nature of political life in Scotland and Ireland? For those historians keen to argue that James was king in all but name during the early 1680s, these might seem like *questions mal posées*.⁴⁷ Certainly some contemporaries can be quoted to support such a view. Lauder may be the most extreme example: he wrote that in Charles's last years the king 'was forced to yeeld many things to his brother and the Popish party, contrary to his oune inclination, meerly out of fear leist they should kill him and rob him of his life'.⁴⁸ Yet such a hostile retrospective view is hard to square with James's lack of confidence at the time. His hard-nosed client, James Drummond, earl of Perth, argued during the duke's visit to see Charles at Newmarket in the spring of 1682 that his patron would 'not be too sudden in the Scottish affaires, least that should be used as a dvice to send him away, as having done his business'.⁴⁹ At the very end of Charles's life, James agreed to 'see to my affairs so as to be able' to travel to Scotland for a Parliament in March 1685, but he clearly did so with a heavy heart.⁵⁰ As he wrote to the marquess of Queensberry, 'I hope you will prepare things, so as when the Parliament sits and I am with you, I may not be obliged to stay long from his Majesty'.⁵¹

For all his efforts to build support for his succession in Scotland, James clearly continued to regard time spent north of the Border as tantamount to exile. Certainly when he accompanied the king to Newmarket again in 1683, it was noted by illusionless Scottish observers that 'the Deuk hunts, beseids going where ever the King goes'.⁵² Indeed both James and Ormond were never more popular with the political elites of the kingdoms they administered for Charles than when they travelled to see the king in

⁴⁷ Egan, 'Finance and the Government of Ireland', II, 143; Miller, *James II*, pp. 113–16; and, to a lesser extent, Turner, *James II*, pp. 220–3. (Miller does, however, note that Charles was very reluctant to allow James a leading role in government: *Charles II*, p. 114.) I find the analysis offered in Ronald Hutton, *Charles II: King of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 429–43 much more compelling.

⁴⁸ *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, pp. 49–50, 81. See also Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 326.

⁴⁹ *Letters . . . Addressed . . . to George, Earl of Aberdeen, Lord High Chancellor of Scotland. 1681–1684*, ed. J. Dunn (Spalding Club, Aberdeen, 1851), p. 10: earl of Perth to earl of Aberdeen, Newmarket, 23 Mar. 1682.

⁵⁰ HMC, *Fifteenth Report, App.*, Pt. VIII, p. 209: duke of York to marquess of Queensberry, 19 Oct. 1684.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 210: same to same, St James's [Palace], 8 Nov. 1684. See also, *Letters . . . to George, Earl of Aberdeen*, ed. Dunn, p. 83.

⁵² Andrew Murray Scott, ed., 'Letters of John Graham of Claverhouse', in *Miscellany XI* (Scottish Hist. Soc., 5th ser., 3, Edinburgh, 1990), p. 187: John Graham to marquess of Queensberry, Newmarket, 13 Mar. 1683.

England. So great was 'the jovial crew' that attended Ormond on his visit to London in 1682 that his son and lord deputy, the earl of Arran, claimed there were too few senior army officers left in Ireland to staff a court martial.⁵³ The same year, large numbers of Scots accompanied James south to England, whilst in August 'a world of Scots' were present at Windsor during the feeding-frenzy that attended the fall from power of Charles Maitland, the last member of Lauderdale's family left in government.⁵⁴

What were the main political issues facing James and Ormond? Predictably enough, questions relating to the succession were particularly sharp in Scotland and Ireland since James's rule was experienced at first hand in the former, and had enormous implications for the sectarian politics of the latter kingdom. Furthermore, the links between Presbyterians in south-west Scotland and Ulster was one of the enduring worries for the governments in Dublin, Edinburgh, and London.⁵⁵ James clearly aroused powerful and contradictory feelings in Scotland.⁵⁶ He was certainly accused of exercising tyranny;⁵⁷ compared to the duke of Alva whose brutal rule had helped to foster the Dutch Revolt; and accused of intending 'to assume the title of Prorex or Viceroy' in order to claim that there were 'no limitations at all' on his power.⁵⁸

Small wonder that Monmouth might have seemed an attractive alternative to some Scots, despite the fact that he had led government forces to victory over the Covenanters at Bothwell Brig in 1679. Although excommunicated by the zealot Donald Cargill, Monmouth's moderation after the military victory gained him popularity in Scotland and may explain why Lauder consistently presents James as trying to lay traps to ensnare him.⁵⁹ A brief

⁵³ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 375, 427: earl of Arran to duke of Ormond, Dublin, 22 Aug. 1682. It seems clear that in this context 'jovial' is a caustic reference to the entourage being of Jove-like proportions, rather than just good-humoured. See also, *ibid.*, 377.

⁵⁴ NLS, MS 14405, fol. 18v: Lord David Hay to earl of Tweeddale, London, 24 Aug. 1682.

⁵⁵ Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 289v; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 60; CSPD 1 May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, pp. 114, 225.

⁵⁶ For criticisms of the repressive government – particularly with regard to the oppression of religious dissent – which he presided over, see *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 79; Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 301; RPCS 1681–1682, p. 147; RPCS 1683–1684, p. 624; *Narrative of Mr James Nimmo*, ed. Scott-Moncrieff, p. 27; NAS, GD406/1/8670, 3103, 5891, 5900; *Burnet's History Of My Own Time*, ed. Osmund Airy (2 vols., 1897–1900), II, 329.

⁵⁷ Dickinson and Donaldson, eds., *A Source Book of Scottish History*, pp. 176–7; RPCS 1683–1684, p. 91; Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 427. Charles was also decried as a tyrant, and of intending to introduce popery: NLS, MS 1945, p. 411: Court of Justiciary Criminal Proceedings, 17 May 1682; Dickinson and Donaldson, eds., *A Source Book of Scottish History*, p. 183 (the Sanquhar Protestation, 1685); RPCS 1681–1682, p. 123; Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 302, 332, 350–1, 408, II, 486.

⁵⁸ *Burnet's History of My Own Time*, ed. Airy, II, 333; *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, pp. 7, 41.

⁵⁹ Tim Harris, 'Scott [formerly Croft], James (1649–85)', ODNB; Ian B. Cowan, *The Scottish Covenanters 1660–1688* (1976), p. 105; *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, pp. 74–6.

period in his father's favour was said to have excited considerable political ripples north of the Border:

Our Whigs [in Scotland] ware come to that height, that they ware speaking of no lesse than the rescinding the Duke of York's Parliament as null, because it was held by a Papist, who by our acts of Parliament, are incapable of any office or trust . . . but ther hopes were very short lived, and we may say of Monmouth's favor, as Tacitus of Galba's reigne, *precarium et brevi transiturum imperium*; and we know not which of thir 2 factions, strugling in the womb of our state, shall prevaill.⁶⁰

The significance of the rivalry extended to Ireland. In the spring of 1681 James's client Thomas Sheridan had been in Cork where he was reported to have talked 'Mountain high for his Royal highness'.⁶¹ The latter part of that year featured rumours that James would visit Ireland. Ormond reacted calmly to the prospect, but in November the Irish Privy Council received information detailing anti-Catholic fears, including the claim: 'As for the bloody Papist, the Duke of York, whom the King and the Duke of Ormond intend to bring into Ireland to plant popery, if ever he comes, we will seize him and prevent him reigning over us.'⁶² The fear underlying such claims had an inherent plausibility since Irish Catholics would have been likely to respond enthusiastically to James's presence, not least as Monmouth was so heavily lauded as 'the Protestant Duke'.⁶³ Certainly the defeat of Monmouth's Rebellion in 1685 was greeted with relief by Catholics in Dublin, who burned him in effigy.⁶⁴

The political impact of religious disaffection was obviously a major theme in both Scotland and Ireland. Despite English whigs' fears that Charles's regime would be able to establish arbitrary tyranny in his other kingdoms, and then use them to overawe England, in practice government in Scotland and Ireland remained circumscribed. The limitations of naked force are clear in regard to the repression of the Scottish Covenanters. Extreme threats were undoubtedly made and brutal actions perpetrated by unruly troops,

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 111–12. For the anxieties of the marquess of Queensberry – another of James's clients – at news of Monmouth's favour in Sept. 1682, see NAS, GD/406/1/3085; and for rumours in provincial England that Charles's favour towards Monmouth might see James sent to Scotland and his client Laurence Hyde sent to Ireland, see East Sussex RO, FRE 5095.

⁶¹ NLI, MS 35, no. 402: Shannon to countess dowager of Orrery, Cork, 19 Apr. 1681.

⁶² HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 166; CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681, p. 580: lord lieutenant and council to Secretary Jenkins, the Council Chamber, Dublin, 21 Nov. 1681.

⁶³ For references to Monmouth's superiority to James, see NLI, MS 4909 (Clonmel Assize Records), fol. 30.

⁶⁴ NLI, MS 1793 (MS diary, 11 July 1685, written on 'Proclamations relating to Ireland, 1673–1716'), p. 212 (number missing in the original). A printed version of this can be found in HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VIII, 343.

during what is now known as the 'Killing Times' in Scottish history.⁶⁵ From a lawyer's perspective, Lauder argued that by 1683 matters had gone from bad to worse in the government of Scotland, even when compared to Lauderdale's rule, particularly with regard to the conduct of troops.⁶⁶ Certainly by 1683–4 some of the main prisons in Scotland were filled to overflowing.⁶⁷

Yet the danger of widespread alienation was recognized by many of those who had to oversee the application of repressive policies in the localities.⁶⁸ Lord Ross, for instance, sent home two soldiers who had been quartered on a household in Renfrew after the provost had been unable to collect an arbitrarily imposed subsidy. He did so to avoid giving substance to claims by the disaffected that arbitrary government was intended for Scotland.⁶⁹ Even the much-demonized Claverhouse knew the effective limits of his power, writing from the recalcitrant south-western shires that 'for what remains of the laws against the fanatiks, I will threaten much, but forbear sever execution for a whyll, for fear people should grou desperat and increase too much the number of our enimys'.⁷⁰ Claverhouse clearly understood that terror was a temporary emotion, and no more than a partial solution to the Covenanter problem. Although he had been successful in ensuring that two-thirds of the population of Galloway returned to church during the course of his vigorous sojourn in the area, he argued that this would be an empty achievement without a permanent garrison to prevent recidivism.⁷¹

The same sense of struggling against committed Protestant nonconformists can be discerned in Ormond's government of Ireland: 'Dispersing of conventicles, if nothing more follow that may make them weary of meeting, is no better than scattering a flock of crows that will soon assemble again, and possibly it were better to let them alone, than to let them see the impotence of the government, upon which they will presume.'⁷² At the same time Archbishop Michael Boyle could only offer a rather pathetic reply to accusations made at court of 'some mismanagements' in Ireland, since 'the

⁶⁵ For the brutal events in the parishes of Midcalders, Westcalders, Livingstons, and Hoddams in 1682–3, see NLS, Wodrow MS Quarto XXXVII, fols. 28, 36v–37, 65.

⁶⁶ *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 87. See also, Scott, ed., 'Letters of John Graham of Claverhouse', p. 191.

⁶⁷ NAS, GD406/1/3197; RPCS 1683–1684, p. 504.

⁶⁸ For attempts to secure legal redress against soldiers for their actions, see Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 363–4.

⁶⁹ *Memoirs of His Own Life and Times by Sir James Turner*, ed. T. Thomson (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1829), app. II, p. 282: Lord Ross to Sir James Turner, Halkhead, 10 Feb. 1682. Cf. NAS, GD33/65/54.

⁷⁰ Scott, ed., 'Letters of John Graham of Claverhouse', pp. 169–70: John Graham to marquess of Queensberry, New Galloway, 16 Feb. 1682. See also, Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, II, 413–14.

⁷¹ Scott, ed., 'Letters of John Graham of Claverhouse', p. 175: John Graham to marquess of Queensberry, New Galloway, 1 Mar. 1682. See also, NAS, GD/406/1/9420, 3243.

⁷² HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 102: duke of Ormond to earl of Arran, St. James's Square, London, 9 Aug. 1683.

thin make and constitution of this government, according to the present establishment, is such as not to enable it to serve his Majesty as fully and as effectually as is desired or may be necessary'.⁷³ Boyle referred in particular to the practical problems of a Protestant government ruling over a largely Catholic population. He himself generally turned a blind eye to the day-to-day activity of the Catholic clergy in Dublin, notably the performance of Mass.⁷⁴ It was these clergy, and a small group of leading lay Catholics, whom Sir William Petty referred to as 'the Internal and Mystical Government of Ireland', compared to the Protestant establishment, which was merely 'the External and Apparent Government of *Ireland*'.⁷⁵ Even the superficial calm of adjacent kingdoms could not soothe Arran's fears away as lord deputy: 'I apprehend more from Scotland, now I hear they are in great quiet, than I should do if there were any outward appearance of disturbance.'⁷⁶ Such supine timidity was anathema to Ormond's leading New English critic, Anglesey, who argued that more rebellion could be expected in Ireland unless the English government prevented it 'by timely politick lawes and provisions and an utter subduing the opposite Irreligious spirit of the popish Clergy and Lawyers'.⁷⁷

But who was to translate this 'subduing' from words into actions? The scale of the task was widely appreciated. According to Lord Chief Justice Keatinge, in Ireland 'full forty-three [years] . . . have been without the least success spent by two of the best of Kings to win this sort of people to a love of the best of governments'.⁷⁸ At the top of the socio-political pyramid, leading magnates in both Scotland and Ireland withheld their full support from the regime. Although the duke of Hamilton eventually succumbed to pressure to take the Test,⁷⁹ his religious and political attitudes thereafter remained opaque – partly as a result of the personal influence of his formidable Presby-

⁷³ *Ibid.*, VII, 68: archbishop of Armagh to duke of Ormond, Dublin, 10 July 1683. For Boyle's anxieties, see also, *ibid.*, VI, 497.

⁷⁴ Bodl., MS Carte 39, fols. 560v–561. (Cf. Ormond's forceful views: HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 386.) See also, *ibid.*, VI, 482, 486–7, 496–7, 499–500, 508.

⁷⁵ Sir William Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland* . . . (1691; repr. Shannon, 1970), pp. 38–9. I am grateful to James McGuire for emphasizing the importance of this passage to me. For the real differences within what Petty and other Protestants clearly regarded as a 'popish' monolith, see Creighton, 'The catholic interest in Irish politics', ch. 1.

⁷⁶ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 88: earl of Arran to duke of Ormond, Dublin, 28 July 1683. Arran did go on to write that he had taken such appropriate security measures within Ireland that 'we shall be safe enough'.

⁷⁷ BL, Add. MS 4816 ('Heads & Memorandums'), fol. 1v. See also *ibid.*, fols. 2v, 29. For other comments on Irish courts and lawyers, see HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 368–9; T.C. Barnard, 'Lawyers and the law in later seventeenth-century Ireland', *IHS*, 28 (1993), 256–82.

⁷⁸ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 70: Lord Chief Justice Keatinge to duke of Ormond, 13 July 1683.

⁷⁹ For this much-delayed event, see NAS, GD406/1/9206, 9211, 3127, 3130, 10582–3.

terian wife.⁸⁰ Indeed in 1683 he was cited for negligence in his office as sheriff of Clydesdale as a result of not suppressing field conventicles.⁸¹ Hamilton's equivalent in Ireland was probably Viscount Massereene, a significant force in Antrim politics. His Presbyterian tendencies allegedly extended to actual attendance at conventicles, notably those patronised by his mother.⁸² His protestations that he attended 'the public established worship' were strong, but remained undercut by his equivocal arguments concerning the separation of private life from public duty.⁸³ As Arran sardonically observed, though Massereene 'is very assiduous and attends me every Sunday to church . . . I would never give him the sword to carry . . . I will . . . deal very plainly with him, and will admit of noe equivocation'.⁸⁴

At a lower level, too, the governments of Scotland and Ireland were plagued by the kind of inefficiency and lack of commitment that affected the English government. In particular, the high level of disaffection to the established churches created problems. JPs in several parts of Ireland were reprimanded for failing to clamp-down on the activities of Catholic clergy.⁸⁵ At the other end of the spectrum, it was probably Protestant dissenters that Ormond had most in mind when he informed Charles that 'there is no faction in any of your other kingdoms, but hath some abettors and well wishers in this, and I fear even in your service'.⁸⁶ Clearly Ormond's enemies worked hard to insinuate to Charles that Ireland remained a haven for die-hard Cromwellians.⁸⁷ Whilst they may have exaggerated, the legal aftermath of the Rye House Plot offered further fuel for such charges, revealing a stratum of popular sentiment similar to Scottish Presbyterian critiques of Stuart tyranny, though with a distinctively Irish fear that their country was simply a milk-cow for English extravagance. Charles was accused of being 'unjust', untrustworthy, and an 'old furnicator . . . who changes his wife when he pleases, and imposes soe much taxes on these three Kingdomes merely to

⁸⁰ NAS, GD406/1/9121, 5888, 5900, 9401, 5886; Rosalind K. Marshall, 'Hamilton [formerly Douglas], William (1634–94)', ODNB; and for his wife, see NAS, GD406/1/8152; Rosalind K. Marshall, *The Days of Duchess Anne: Life in the Household of the Duchess of Hamilton, 1656–1716* (new edn, East Linton, 2000).

⁸¹ NAS, GD406/1/8249; Ruth Richens, 'The Stewarts in Underbank: two decades in the life of a covenanting family', *SHR*, 64 (1985), 108–9; Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, II, 459–60. For Claverhouse's clashes with Hamilton, see Scott, ed., 'Letters of John Graham of Claverhouse', p. 173.

⁸² HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 358–9, 370–1, 374–5, 384–6.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, VI, 393–4: Viscount Massereene to duke of Ormond, Antrim, 29 July 1682.

⁸⁴ Bodl., MS Carte 216, fols. 379v–380: earl of Arran to duke of Ormond, Dublin, 9 Nov. 1683. (For Ormond's firm anti-Presbyterian prejudices, see Bodl., MS Carte 68, fol. 323.)

⁸⁵ Bodl., MS Carte 68, fols. 301, 299r–v; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 486–7. The civilian government of Ireland was allegedly so short of willing officers that Boyle supported the use of clergy as JPs, a clericalist move resisted by Arran. *Ibid.*, 471–2, 477–8, 484.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, VI, 104: duke of Ormond to Charles II, Kilkenny, 23 July 1681.

⁸⁷ See, e.g., HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 202, 208–9, 233, 277.

maintaine his whores and bastards'.⁸⁸ Again, the links with Scotland were clear: 'most goe to meetings in the North of Ireland, & few to Church so that Magistrates, & ministers are overaw'd by the scotch Phanaticks that swarm in these parts'.⁸⁹

As such comments suggest, members of the government feared the links between radicals throughout the three kingdoms, particularly during the investigations triggered by the Rye House Plot revelations.⁹⁰ Ormond kept a careful eye on Protestant Dissenters in Ulster, pointing both to their numbers and 'the correspondence held betwixt that sort of people in the three kingdoms'.⁹¹ In Scotland, the government argued that 'all meanes' had been used by the plotters there and in England 'to bring both kingdomes into Strict measures of correspondencie and mutuall aid for the executing of the design'.⁹² Many Presbyterians – and covenanters in particular – remained committed to a pan-national religious settlement.⁹³ In these circumstances it was scarcely surprising that members of the government, including Charles himself, insistently asked those suspected of political disaffection about their beliefs concerning the Covenant.⁹⁴ Investigations into the religious affiliations of Irish JPs revealed many lacked certificates to prove that they had received the sacrament.⁹⁵ And, as in England, the disaffection of postmasters raised particular concern, notably in Dublin, Strabane, and Londonderry.⁹⁶

⁸⁸ NLI, MS 4909 (Clonmel Assize Records), fols. 30, 59v. See also *ibid.*, fol. 61v. Ormond himself was privately anxious about the extent to which Charles's extended illegitimate family drained the royal finances in Ireland: Bodl., MS Carte 70, fol. 563. On this theme, see also Miller, *Charles II*, p. 353.

⁸⁹ Bodl., MS Carte 45, fol. 10: Hugh Pughe to duke of York, n.d. (copy). (Pughe was himself a former dissenter.) See also, *ibid.*, fol. 9; *Journal of the Hon. John Erskine of Carnock, 1683–1687*, ed. Walter Macleod (Pubs. of the Scottish History Soc., 14, Edinburgh, 1893), p. 13.

⁹⁰ Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 131, 364–6, 385, 397–406; Doreen Milne, 'The Rye House Plot with special reference to its place in the Exclusion Crisis and its consequences till 1685', unpub. Ph.D thesis, Univ. of London, 1949, ch. 7; Richard L. Greaves, *Secrets of the Kingdom. British Radicals from the Popish Plot to the Revolution of 1688–89* (Stanford, CA, 1992), esp. ch. 5; Colquhoun, '“Issue of the Late Civill Wars”', ch. 6.

⁹¹ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 65: duke of Ormond to earl of Arran, St James's Square, London, 7 July 1683. See also, *CSPD 1683 July to Sept.*, p. 131.

⁹² NLW, Clenennau Letters and Papers, no. 825: duke of Beaufort to [deputy lieutenants of the county of Merioneth], Badminton, 14 July 1683. See also, *CSPD 1683 July to Sept.*, pp. 66, 200; *Memoirs of Sir John Resesby*, ed. Andrew Browning (2nd edn, with a new pref. and notes by Mary K. Geiter and W.A. Speck, 1991), pp. 307–10.

⁹³ Aydelotte, 'The Duke of Ormonde', I, 13; Dickinson and Donaldson, eds., *A Source Book of Scottish History*, p. 184 ('The Sanquhar Protestation', 1685).

⁹⁴ *CSPD 1683 July to Sept.*, p. 191; 'Memoirs of the Rev. James Fraser of Brea, Minister of the Gospel at Culross', in W.K. Tweedie, ed., *Select Biographies* (Wodrow Society, 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1842), II, 360–1. See also Scott, ed., 'Letters of John Graham of Claverhouse', p. 182; Raymond Gillespie, *Reading Ireland. Print, Reading and Social Change in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester, 2005), p. 119.

⁹⁵ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 67, 68–9.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, VI, 268–9, 501; *CSPD 1683 Jan. to June*, p. 6.

Arran was only able to report that the Dublin post office was in 'secure hands' in July 1683.⁹⁷

Rather less evidence remains for Scotland, where it has been noted that the frequently repeated orders of the privy council with regard to the necessity of individual office-holders taking the Test suggests a high level of practical obstruction and non-compliance in the localities.⁹⁸ Even at the heart of government, the criminal clerk of the privy council was proceeded against for allowing 'fanatics' to escape for money.⁹⁹ Overall the privy council registers are peppered with examples of negligent or downright disaffected officers allowing other rebels to escape, not prosecuting conventicles, or obstructing more zealous members of the government from enforcing the letter of the law.¹⁰⁰

Besides less than committed nobles, disloyal local officials, and significant groups of the religiously disaffected, ministerial infighting afflicted Scottish and Irish governance just as surely as it did English. Reference has already been made to the fall of the last of Lauderdale's family from high office in 1682. Charles Maitland's nominal offence had been mismanagement of the Scottish Mint, and the tortuous series of allegations and investigations absorbed vast amounts of time and political energy.¹⁰¹ But his real crime was obstructing the rise and political ambition of men like Perth and Queensberry, the kind of 'hard-faced, ambitious, and energetic' Scots that Ronald Hutton has – entirely reasonably – described as virtually indistinguishable at a distance of more than 300 years.¹⁰² Subsequent to Maitland's fall, another power struggle resulted from the bitter rivalry between Aberdeen and Queensberry as chancellor and treasurer of Scotland. These two men 'stood opposite one to the other avowedly, by keeping up distinct companies and cabals'.¹⁰³ James's eventual willingness to see one of his clients – Aberdeen – thrown to the wolves, was not, according to the hostile Lauder, 'the way to get stout and faithfull servants'.¹⁰⁴

James may also have played a significant role in Ormond's fall from the Irish lord lieutenancy in 1684. Like all chief governors of Ireland in the early modern period, Ormond had long been vulnerable to whispering campaigns

⁹⁷ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 64: earl of Arran to duke of Ormond, 6 [July] 1683.

⁹⁸ RPCS 1683–1684, p. x. For postmasters, see RPCS 1681–1682, pp. 235, 309.

⁹⁹ Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 348.

¹⁰⁰ E.g., RPCS 1681–1682, pp. 112–13, 144–5, 165–6, 273, 503–4, 572, 607–8.

¹⁰¹ NAS, GD406/1/9123, 3135, 9124, 3080; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 429–30; NLS, MS 14405, fols. 20v–21v; RPCS 1681–1682, pp. 543–4; *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, pp. 72–3, 77–8, 130; Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 335; HMC, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Mar and Kellie*, p. 214; Clare Jackson, 'Maitland, Charles (c. 1620–1691)', ODNB.

¹⁰² Hutton, *Charles II*, p. 413.

¹⁰³ *Journal of the Hon. John Erskine of Carnock*, ed. Macleod, p. 25 (6 Dec. 1683).

¹⁰⁴ *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 131. For the fall of both Charles Maitland and Aberdeen, see Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 359–60.

against him at court in England.¹⁰⁵ He thus ensured that either he or his son, Arran, was in attendance on Charles as often as possible. Nevertheless, despite all his experience as a courtier and politician, Ormond fell from power in 1684.¹⁰⁶ He had long been hampered by the fact that Charles 'was always wary of overmighty subjects'.¹⁰⁷ His fall was ultimately the result of the concentration of Irish politicians in England – notably the earl of Ranelagh and Richard Talbot, the future earl of Tyrconnell – and the added venom that they injected into the existing rivalries of English ministers.¹⁰⁸ Ormond was unfortunate to be the object of envy and hatred flowing from two antithetical groups whose focal points were the earl of Anglesey and James. Despite a period of co-operation after the Restoration, the political and religious differences between Anglesey and Ormond dated back to the 1640s.¹⁰⁹ But there was also a vital political issue at stake between the two men: should Ireland march, like a soldier, in line with England and at the same speed – Ormond's analogy – or would both Ireland *and* Scotland only be happy when fully subordinated to England and governed by committees of the privy council there – Anglesey's view?¹¹⁰ In other words, both men continued into the Restoration period older divisions between Old English desires for an Irish government that would be separate but strongly linked to England, and New English zeal for the complete subjection of Ireland to England.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, these debates also came to be situated within the new partisan divisions developing within England. Anglesey's diary shows him dining regularly with a number of leading whig nobles, MPs, and writers

¹⁰⁵ Toby Barnard, 'The viceregal court', in Eveline Cruickshanks, ed., *The Stuart Courts* (Stroud, 2000), p. 261; J.C. Beckett, 'The Irish viceroyalty in the Restoration period', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 20 (1970), 69–70. See also BL, Add. MS 4816 ('Heads & Memorandums'), fol. 2; Sir William Petty, *A Discourse of Taxes and Contributions . . .* (1689), unpag. pref.

¹⁰⁶ Ormond acted as lord steward of the household throughout Charles's reign, and would continue to do so into James's. For accounts of Ormond's fall in 1684, see Hutton, *Charles II*, pp. 435–7; Lady Burghclere, *The Life of James First Duke of Ormonde 1610–1688* (2 vols., 1912), II, 389–400; J.C. Beckett, *The Cavalier Duke. A Life of James Butler – 1st Duke of Ormond* (Belfast, 1990), pp. 132–3.

¹⁰⁷ Miller, *James II*, p. 118. For the duke of Buckingham's efforts against Ormond in the 1660s, see Pearse Street Library, Dublin, Gilbert MS 109 (Mountjoy's narrative), p. 10; J.I. McGuire, 'Why was Ormond dismissed in 1669?', *IHS*, 18 (1973), 295–312.

¹⁰⁸ Bodl., MS Carte 217, fols. 79v–80. For Tyrconnell, see John Miller, 'The earl of Tyrconnell and James II's Irish policy, 1685–1688', *HJ*, 20 (1977), 802–23; James McGuire, 'Richard Talbot earl of Tyrconnell (1630–91) and the Catholic Counter-Revolution', in Ciaran Brady, ed., *Worsted in the Game: Losers in Irish History* (Dublin, 1989), pp. 73–83.

¹⁰⁹ Bodl., MS Carte 39, fol. 391v; Bodl., Carte MS 69 (Southwell's 'Some Domestick Informations touching the Life of James Late Duke of Ormond'), fol. 77.

¹¹⁰ Bodl., MS Carte 118, fols. 342v–343; BL, Add. MS 4816, fol. 30v.

¹¹¹ Michael Perceval-Maxwell, 'Ireland and the monarchy in the early Stuart multiple kingdom', *HJ*, 34 (1991), 279–95.

including Monmouth, Shaftesbury, Essex, the earl of Macclesfield, Col. Silius Titus, Thomas Thynne, Ralph Montagu, Thomas Hunt, and Henry Powle.¹¹² In December 1681 Longford reported rumours of a forthcoming English Parliament in which Essex would attempt to prove that Ormond had endeavoured 'to make a Presbyterian plot' and had suborned witnesses to that end.¹¹³ Talk of a 'greate league' between Anglesey and Essex persisted in 1682, as did news of Anglesey's continued links with 'the high flying malcontents'.¹¹⁴ In addition, recent research has revealed the extent to which Anglesey's library came to be used as a partisan resource for leading whig politicians and polemicists.¹¹⁵

For his part, James ultimately proved a significant force in Irish politics.¹¹⁶ He was influenced by prominent Irish Catholics, notably Richard Talbot, the future earl of Tyrconnell, who saw Ormond as a brake on their desire to overturn the restoration land settlement in Ireland.¹¹⁷ Talbot amassed evidence of Cromwellian and dissenting influence in the Irish civil and military government in 1684,¹¹⁸ and after Ormond's fall bragged about the extent of his power.¹¹⁹ Those who survived in this harsh environment fit into Toby Barnard's picture of an 'imperial chancellery' in the early 1680s, staffed by those who 'Alert to how the issues of religion, security and royal reputation interlocked . . . coordinated measures between England, Scotland and Ireland'.¹²⁰ And the prime locus for such co-ordination clearly remained the court, based in England and presided over by Charles II.

¹¹² BL, Add. MS 18730, fols. 89r–v, 90v, 91v, 92v, 95, 98, 100v–103v, 104v–105, 109v–110.

¹¹³ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 249–50: earl of Longford to duke of Ormond, London, 6 Dec. 1681. See also *ibid.*, VI, 262–4.

¹¹⁴ Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 119: earl of Longford to earl of Arran, London, 25 July 1682 (these meetings are not recorded in Anglesey's diary); *ibid.*, fols. 206r–v: Israel Feilding to earl of Arran, London, 10 Oct. 1682.

¹¹⁵ Annabel Patterson and Martin Dzelzainis, 'Marvell and the earl of Anglesey: a chapter in the history of reading', *HJ*, 44 (2001), 703–26.

¹¹⁶ See Creighton, 'The catholic interest in Irish politics', ch. 8. For the role played by the English earl of Rochester in Ormond's downfall, see Burghclere, *Duke of Ormonde*, II, 394–5, 399–400; Grant Tapsell, 'The life and career of Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, c.1681–c.1686', unpub. M.Phil. thesis, Univ. of Cambridge, 1999, ch. 3.

¹¹⁷ Miller, 'Tyrconnel and James II'; McGuire, 'Richard Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnel', pp. 72–83; Creighton, 'The catholic interest in Irish politics', pp. 14–15, 262, 266, 272, 278, 288, 300, 302, 305, 318.

¹¹⁸ Bodl., MS Carte 69 (Southwell's 'Domestick Informations touching the Life of James Late Duke of Ormond'), fol. 76.

¹¹⁹ Bodl., MS Carte 217, fol. 80.

¹²⁰ Barnard, 'Scotland and Ireland', p. 259. See also, Hutton, *Charles II*, p. 413.

The established churches

The importance of the court was also clearly recognized by leading clerics in the established churches of Ireland and Scotland. A key factor was the relatively limited patronage powers of the viceregal court in Dublin. Whilst Michael Boyle as archbishop of Armagh vainly tried to hold back the tide, place-seekers sought to gratify their hopes via brokers at court in England.¹²¹ More positively, others implicitly recognised that the Church of Ireland was, as Toby Barnard has put it, ‘debilitated and introverted’, and sought to import ‘some choice plants’ from England in order to strengthen it.¹²² Indeed, such ‘plants’ might be particularly useful because they would not be ‘ingaged in factions or partialities’ within Ireland, and would ‘much Conduce to the <good> Correspondencie of boath churches and to the sincerity of Reformation and uniformity in discipline’.¹²³ Ormond had sympathy for this perspective, especially after he and his son had experienced the insatiable appetite of the Irish clergy for preferments and promotions.¹²⁴

In some respects the Scottish Episcopal church was in an even weaker state than the Church of Ireland, bishops having been grafted onto a basically Presbyterian structure.¹²⁵ Reliant on the civil government for its support, it was paradoxically further undermined by the controversial Test Act of 1681, by which individuals swore not to attempt to change the existing government in church and state.¹²⁶ Largely designed to exclude Presbyterians with its requirement to renounce the Covenant, an official letter to Charles described the Test as ‘a most happie expedient’ for filling offices with well-affected men.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, in reality it proved bitterly divisive,¹²⁸ alienating many moderates with its implicit claims for the basis of

¹²¹ Bodl., MS Carte 40, fol. 265; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 432. With regard to similar fears in Scotland, see Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fols. 185r–v.

¹²² T.C. Barnard, ‘Protestants and the Irish language, c. 1675–1725’, *JEH*, 44 (1993), 266; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 245: Secretary Jenkins to duke of Ormond, Whitehall, 3 Dec. 1681.

¹²³ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 142: Dr Dudley Loftus to archbishop of Canterbury, Dublin, 15 Oct. 1681.

¹²⁴ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 194, VII, 13, 25. For Ormond’s pursuit of John Tillotson, dean of Canterbury, see *ibid.*, VI, 243–4; *CSPD 1 Sept. 1680 – 31 Dec. 1681*, p. 614.

¹²⁵ Julia Buckroyd, *Church and State in Scotland 1660–1681* (Edinburgh, 1980), chs. 3–4; Jackson, *Restoration Scotland*, esp. ch. 5.

¹²⁶ NLS, Wodrow MS Quarto XXXVII, fols. 36v–37; Bodl., MS Tanner 32, fol. 161; *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 88; Dickinson and Donaldson, eds., *Source Book of Scottish History*, pp. 186–9.

¹²⁷ *RPCS 1681–1682*, p. 304. Burnet claimed that the bishops had supported the Test as they thought it would secure them forever from ‘a presbyterian parliament’. *Burnet’s History of My Own Time*, ed. Airy, II, 313.

¹²⁸ Kathleen Colquhoun has even argued that it was ‘a complement to the Exclusion Crisis in England, achieving in Scotland what had begun in England’: ‘Issue of the Late Civill Wars’, p. 115.

Episcopal authority and confused references to the validity of the 1560 Confession of Faith.¹²⁹ Those who took the Test were despised by those who did not as 'decoy dukks' set up to lead the rest on, and the whole exercise was clearly perceived through the lens of rampant Scottish anti-popery.¹³⁰ Worse still, some ministers who had previously conformed now scrupled to take the Test and expressed their anger that it had been so counter-productive, serving only to increase many Scots' distaste for Episcopacy in the church.¹³¹ The Test also became a trap for Monmouth, since, as a member of the Scottish privy council who happened to live in England, he was expected to take it.¹³² Monmouth's arguments that he would not, as a lover of parliaments, be likely to break one of its acts, and that he did not need to take it as he was in England were refuted.¹³³

Attempts to shore-up the Episcopal church in Scotland with the aid of the Test thus simply exacerbated its ongoing weaknesses. On the one hand, rumours of an indulgence towards dissenters continued to be heard, and were especially linked to the earl of Tweeddale, who enjoyed both familial and financial links with Monmouth.¹³⁴ And on the other, the journeys of Scottish bishops to court in England raised fears that another attempt might be made to match Charles I's efforts to introduce the English liturgy north of the Tweed.¹³⁵ In some quarters this may not have been unpopular, at least to

¹²⁹ Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 308; Cowan, *The Scottish Covenanters*, pp. 108–10; Stevenson, *Alasdair MacColla*, p. 290; *RPCS 1681–1682*, pp. viii–xi. For examples of those who scrupled the Test, and the entreaties of others for them to take it, see John B. Wilson, ed., *The Lochmaben Court and Council Book 1612–1721* (Scottish Rec. Soc., ns, 23, Edinburgh, 2001), p. 172; W. Mackay, ed., *Records of the Presbyteries of Inverness and Dingwall 1643–1688* (Publs. of the Scottish Hist. Soc., 24, Edinburgh, 1896), pp. 345–6; *RPCS 1681–1682*, pp. 198, 210, 214–15, 220, 249–50, 261–2; *RPCS 1683–1684*, pp. 31, 634; Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 330–1. See also Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 353–5.

¹³⁰ *Journal of the Hon. John Erskine of Carnock*, ed. Macleod, p. 2. The Test was placed in the mouth of an effigy of the pope which was burned on the streets of Edinburgh: Bodl., MS Carte 228, fol. 154: [anon.] to Nicholas Daniel, 2 Jan. 1681/2. See also, *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, pp. 55–6.

¹³¹ NLS, MS 7035, fol. 48 ('Grounds whereon the Conforme Ministers scruple to swear the test'). See also, *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 53. For more positive official views designed to impress Archbishop Sancroft, see Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fols. 192, 200; 35, fol. 196.

¹³² *RPCS 1681–1682*, p. 200.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 229, 233. Charles eventually agreed that Monmouth's offices would be exercised by deputies who *had* taken the Test. *Ibid.*, p. 295. (The Test had earlier raised the vexed question of Monmouth's legitimacy due to debates about whether it applied to all the king's sons or merely his 'lawful' ones. Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 328; Harris, *Restoration*, p. 350.)

¹³⁴ Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 186; Scott, 'Letters of John Graham of Claverhouse', p. 181; Patrick, 'The origins of the opposition to Lauderdale', 6.

¹³⁵ Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 279v; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 60; *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 133.

judge from the 'great numbers' of Common Prayer books that were being sold in Edinburgh in 1681.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, the wider unpopularity of the bishops within Scotland is perhaps evidenced by the fervency of their thanks to James for his support whilst in Scotland,¹³⁷ and the extent of their visits to England to reassure and keep up bonds with their English brethren.¹³⁸ Indeed, in 1683 the archbishop of St Andrews successfully lobbied that some Scottish bishops should 'once every year, at least, attend his Majesty to give him an account of the Church Affaires [in Scotland]', though he was loath to have it known that it was his initiative, presumably for fear of increasing suspicions about the drift of the church north of the Border.¹³⁹

The knock-on effects between the kingdoms of religious policy and church government were clearly of great importance, and were recognized as such by contemporaries.¹⁴⁰ Ormond, for instance, gratefully received Boyle's account of his repressive visitation of the north of Ireland in a letter of September 1682, but replied from London that 'what is proposed in it for the further hindrance of Nonconformity shall be extracted that it may be ready to be offered [to Charles] when the success with the City of London [in the contested sheriffs election] shall appear'.¹⁴¹ In other words, news of persecution within Ireland had to be carefully timed according to a schedule dictated by the struggle with the whigs in England. Conversely, when allegations were made against the unpopular bishop of Edinburgh that he left livings vacant in order to keep their revenues, Lauder claimed that 'the English praelats thought it *mali exempli* for the King to lay aside or deprive even a vitious Bishop, because it opened the Whig's mouths and reflected on the order'.¹⁴² Lauder's words offer a clear hint at the wider extent of pan-British political awareness in this period.

¹³⁶ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fol. 32: Francis Turner to archbishop of Canterbury, Edinburgh, 2 June 1681. By 1684 the marquess of Queensberry was working to get the English Common Prayer adopted in all of the king's houses in Scotland: Bodl., MS Tanner 32, fol. 127v.

¹³⁷ Bodl., MS Tanner 36, fols. 105, 192v; 35, fols. 24, 37, 42, 154, 185. See also, *ibid.*, fols. 31v, 196, 211v, 219; Harris, *Restoration*, p. 358.

¹³⁸ CSPD 1682, p. 373; NAS, GD406/1/3294; NLS, MS 14405, fol. 30v; *Letters . . . to George, Earl of Aberdeen*, ed. Dunn, p. 37.

¹³⁹ Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fols. 213r–v. For the royal summons, see CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, p. 129. For discussions between English and Scottish bishops about both church appointments and secular government ministers, see Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fol. 186; *Letters . . . to George, Earl of Aberdeen*, ed. Dunn, p. 44; *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 128. (The last two references relate to the fall of the earl of Aberdeen as chancellor of Scotland.)

¹⁴⁰ See Clare Jackson, 'Restoration to Revolution: 1660–1690', in Glenn Burgess, ed., *The New British History: Founding a Modern State 1603–1714* (1999), pp. 100–4.

¹⁴¹ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 451: duke of Ormond to archbishop of Armagh, London, 26 Sept. 1682. (See also, *ibid.*, 459.) For visitations within the diocese of Armagh in 1681 and 1683 by commissions, see PRONI, DIO/2/14 (Armagh Diocesan Registry 1678–1713), fols. 12v, 26v.

¹⁴² *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 133. In contradiction to Lauder's prej-

Partisan interactions

The previous sections of this chapter have sought to demonstrate the inter-connectedness of Charles's three kingdoms during his personal rule. In many instances – notably those surrounding James and Monmouth – these have shown up the extent to which Irish and Scottish events, personalities, and issues interacted with partisan politics in England. The remainder of this chapter will aim to consolidate those links by focusing in particular on the core theme of whig and tory political culture.

The political soil of Scotland and Ireland appears to have been less favourable to the development of whig and tory politics than that of England. Arguably it was not until after the revolutionary upheavals of 1688–91 that party divisions were imported into Ireland, and not until the reign of Anne that the first overt references to 'whig' and 'tory' parties in the Irish Parliament were made, apparently in the session of 1703–4.¹⁴³ Prior to that, Toby Barnard has suggested that a 'mulish loyalism' held sway in Ireland, the product of an increasingly buoyant economy and the absence of most major Irish political figures at court in England.¹⁴⁴ In Scotland, D.W. Hayton has discerned 'traces of party politics' in early eighteenth-century elections.¹⁴⁵ 'Embryonic parties' prior to the Act of Union developed further in the wake of exposure to the deep-seated whig/tory division at Westminster after 1707, only to be abruptly terminated by the death of Anne, and the subsequent Hanoverian repression of Jacobites in Scotland.¹⁴⁶

What of the situation during the personal rule of Charles II, mid-way between the 1660s and the 1700s? Toby Barnard has emphasized the congruent nature of the royalist reaction in Ireland and England, itself,

udiced view, see the suspension of the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield for being 'sordid and refractory', noted above, pp. 61–2.

¹⁴³ David Hayton, 'The beginnings of the "Undertaker System"', in Thomas Bartlett and D.W. Hayton, eds., *Penal Era and Golden Age: Essays in Irish History, 1690–1800* (Belfast, 1979), pp. 32–54; *idem*, 'A debate in the Irish House of Commons in 1703: a whiff of Tory grapeshot', *Parliamentary History*, 10 (1991), 151–63. See also, NLI, MS 999 ('A Collection of Sevrall Manuscripts 1704'), p. 2; Connolly, *Religion, Law, and Power*, pp. 74–84.

¹⁴⁴ T.C. Barnard, 'Settling and unsettling Ireland: the Cromwellian and Williamite Revolutions', in Jane Ohlmeyer, ed., *Ireland from Independence to Occupation 1641–1660* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 266. For a similar perspective on Scotland, see Ouston, 'York in Edinburgh', p. 133.

¹⁴⁵ David Hayton, 'Traces of party politics in early eighteenth-century Scottish elections', *Parliamentary History*, 15 (1995), 74–99; *idem*, *HOP 1690–1715*, I, 505–17.

¹⁴⁶ Hayton, 'Traces of party politics', 81. (Hayton quotes William Ferguson, *Scotland 1689 to the Present* (Edinburgh, 1968), p. 137 for 'embryonic parties', but inverts Ferguson's perspective on the importance of 1707.) For early eighteenth-century Scotland, and whig and tory 'parties', see also NLS, MS 68, fol. 36.

perhaps, partly a feature of the general impact of English affairs on Ireland.¹⁴⁷ Hugh Ouston has delineated James's efforts to foster a royalist culture in Edinburgh in this period, and, again, the effects of English political life on Scotland can be noted.¹⁴⁸ It would certainly be unwise to make strident claims for the nature and extent of whig and tory penetration into Scottish and Irish political life, not least because of problems of vocabulary. 'Whig' is a problematic term to use in a Scottish context 'because . . . right up until the union period the original usage held its ground and vied with the English version'.¹⁴⁹ 'Tory' similarly retained its currency in Ireland as a term of reference for Catholic bandits.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, a degree of cross-over and interaction between Scotland and Ireland clearly occurred, as might be expected from fluid populations of Presbyterians and Gaelic-speaking Catholics.¹⁵¹ Allan I. Macinnes has demonstrated the way in which 'tory' was transplanted from Ireland to Scotland as a term of abuse in English in 1651, but also that the original Gaelic 'Toraidh' had made the transition three years earlier.¹⁵² Evidently the interchange continued: Viscount Mountjoy wrote in 1683 of 'a knot of Scotch Torys in the county of fermanah that are very dangerous fellows'.¹⁵³

Nevertheless, the terminology does seem to be blurring during this period.

¹⁴⁷ Barnard, 'Scotland and Ireland', p. 266; Egan, 'Finance and the government of Ireland', II, 101. For important recent work on this theme, see Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 387–90.

¹⁴⁸ Ouston, 'York in Edinburgh', pp. 133–55; Patrick, 'The origins of the opposition to Lauderdale', 18–21; J.R. Jones, 'The Scottish constitutional opposition in 1679', *SHR*, 37 (1958), 37.

¹⁴⁹ William Ferguson, *Scotland's Relations with England. A Survey to 1707* (Edinburgh, 1977), p. 158. (As Ferguson notes, the two groups had nothing in common, one aiming for a godly monarchy limited by God's law; the other for a monarchy restricted by a parliament in turn dominated by a narrow landed oligarchy.)

¹⁵⁰ For a pioneering study suggesting the political dimensions to these rebels, see Éamonn Ó Ciardha, 'Tories and moss-troopers in Scotland and Ireland in the Interregnum: a political dimension', in John R. Young, ed., *Celtic Dimensions of the British Civil Wars* (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 141–63.

¹⁵¹ Robert Peel, ed., 'The Diary of the Rev. George Turnbull, Minister of Alloa and Tynningham 1657–1704', in *Miscellany I* (Publs. of the Scottish Hist. Soc., 15, Edinburgh, 1893), pp. 296–9; NLS, MS 548 ('Narrative of Robert Landess, of Robroyston, Minister of Blantyre, 1662–1703'), fols. 23v–30; Jane H. Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration in the Three Stuart Kingdoms. The Career of Randal MacDonnell, Marquis of Antrim, 1609–1683* (Cambridge, 1993), esp. pp. 6–14. For the problems of policing the west coast of Scotland, see *RPCS 1681–1682*, p. 463.

¹⁵² Allan I. Macinnes, 'The first Scottish Tories?', *SHR*, 67 (1988), 56–66. See also Ó Ciardha, 'Tories and moss-troopers', pp. 149–57. For the appearance of 'Whigg' and 'Tori' in Welsh poetry dating from this period, see W. Ll. Davies, 'Y Gwir er Gwaethed yw . . . 1684. A Welsh story of the "Popish Plot"', *Jnl of the Welsh Bibliographical Soc.*, 4 (1935), 248.

¹⁵³ Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 289: Viscount Mountjoy to earl of Arran, Newtownstewart, 22 June 1683. For a flippant reference in Somerset – itself, of course, geographically close to Ireland – to 'Tories', in the Irish sense of the word, see Bodl., MS Aubrey 13, fol. 66a.

When the Presbyterian preacher James Fraser was prosecuted in 1681, 'Some prejudice they had at my surety, a gentleman of good estate, and who was judged something whiggish; for he had been engaged in one thousand seven hundred pounds sterling for nonconformist ministers.'¹⁵⁴ What would in England have been a clear sign of political sympathies is here still primarily a religious statement. But what are we to make of Lauder's reference in 1683 to 'our Whigs', and their growing confidence after Monmouth's rumoured return to favour in England?¹⁵⁵ A religious dimension clearly remains – in this case the distaste for James as a Catholic – but the degree of difference between this and the English situation is unclear. Early the previous year, Secretary Jenkins had to apologise to Ormond that despite the lord lieutenant's letter in favour of one Arthur Turner, 'two or three of the most knowing men in the affairs of Ireland' had given the king an account of Turner as 'a great Whig'.¹⁵⁶ Again, the context is unclear but suggestive. More obviously, by 1685 Sir George Mackenzie, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, could write of 'the modern Differences . . . between the Episcopal and Fanatick, Cavalier and Republican, or as some term it, Whig and Tory'.¹⁵⁷

Whilst the direct evidence for whig and tory groups in a political sense outside England is fragmentary at best,¹⁵⁸ a number of links with the English situation can be made, particularly with regard to published and verbally transmitted news.¹⁵⁹ Beyond England, a degree of caution must always be maintained for fear of comparing 'like with unlike'.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it is interesting to see the degree of Irish imitation of England in areas other than political vocabulary, for instance in regard to town administration,¹⁶¹ controversial legal decisions,¹⁶² charters,¹⁶³ and addresses.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore,

¹⁵⁴ Tweedie, ed., *Select Biographies*, II, 351 ('Memoirs of the Rev. James Fraser of Brea').

¹⁵⁵ See above, p. 169.

¹⁵⁶ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 294: Secretary Jenkins to duke of Ormond, Whitehall, 14 Jan. 1681/2.

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in Jackson, *Restoration Scotland*, p. 36.

¹⁵⁸ Harris, *Restoration*, p. 384.

¹⁵⁹ For a pioneering discussion of pan-Britannic rumours and political awareness, see Tim Harris, 'Understanding popular politics in Restoration Britain', in Alan Houston and Steve Pincus, eds., *A Nation Transformed: England after the Restoration* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 125–53.

¹⁶⁰ Barnard, 'British history and Irish history', in Burgess, ed., *New British History*, p. 219. For confusions in the early eighteenth century, see NAS, GD406/1/7441, quoted in Hayton, 'Traces of party politics', 85 n. 49; Harold Williams, ed., *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift* (5 vols., Oxford, 1963–5), II, 371.

¹⁶¹ J.T. Gilbert, ed., *Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin* (19 vols., Dublin, 1889–1944), V, 239.

¹⁶² HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 148, 352; Bodl., MS Carte 40, fol. 148.

¹⁶³ CSPD 1 May 1684 – 5 Feb. 1685, pp. 135–6. Cf. Bodl., MS Eng. lett. c. 53, fol. 2.

¹⁶⁴ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 57, 61, 362–3, 365, 444, 450, 458, VII, 81, 86; Bodl., MS Carte 40, fols. 92, 96, 110; Bodl., MS Carte 216, fols. 45v–46, 59, 315v; PRONI, LA/79/2AA/1 (minute book of the corporation of Londonderry, 1673–1686), p. 92; NLI, MS 2993 (proceedings of the assembly of the corporation of Trim), pp. 30–1, 45

there clearly were a number of issues and themes that provided ready political connections between two or more of the three kingdoms.

Reference has already been made to the bishop of Edinburgh's anxiety 'to hold out a Shaftsburie' from the Scottish Parliament, even if it meant returning one of his rivals who had polled fewer votes.¹⁶⁵ Thus, whilst J.R. Jones's emphasis on the central role of Shaftsbury amongst 'the first whigs' in England has been questioned, he retained totemic status north of the Border, indicative, perhaps, of the way in which politics in Restoration Scotland had been organised around noble factions. When one of the witnesses in the trial of the rebel Sir Hugh Cessnock was repeatedly cross-examined in court, shouts were heard from onlookers: 'Then the [King's] Advocate rose in a passion, and said, That's the Protestant cry, and I never heard such insolence except in England at Shaftesbury's trial.'¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, a hostile account of discussions involving Hamilton and 'the rest of that gang' of discontented Scottish peers in early 1680 emphasized a devastating attack by Sir George Mackenzie on 'all their journeys to London, [and] all their hanging on the Earle of Shaftsbury'.¹⁶⁷ This suggests something of the continuing links between opposition figures in Edinburgh and London evidenced in 1679 by a list, sent to Shaftsbury, of those who would be suitable for office in the event of Lauderdale's fall from power.¹⁶⁸ Lauder went so far as to observe that 'almost none of the English nobility (even of the King's party), and few of ther gentry' visited James in Scotland 'for fear of offending the other faction' until after 'Shaftsburie's imprisonment' in 1681.¹⁶⁹

The pan-national axis of political discontent also stretched to Ireland. Shaftsbury's attempts to fabricate an 'Irish Plot' and to use Irish witnesses have already been noted.¹⁷⁰ In addition, Ormond feared that allegations about the activity of a Catholic priest in Ireland had been 'contrived and timed for my Lord of Shaftsbury's service and copies of the information sent over in haste to come forth in print before his lordship's trial'.¹⁷¹ The lord

(consulted on microfilm P8976); NLI, MS 11960 (copies of Irish loyal addresses); Hill, *From Patriots to Unionists*, p. 59; Hutton, *Charles II*, p. 435; Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 390–5, 403–5.

¹⁶⁵ See above, p. 164.

¹⁶⁶ *Journal of the Hon. John Erskine of Carnock*, ed. Macleod, p. 51. See also, Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, II, 519.

¹⁶⁷ *RPCS 1681–1682*, p. 743: anon. letter to 'my dearest Lord', 7 Feb. [1680, though miscalendared as 1682–5].

¹⁶⁸ Jones, 'The Scottish constitutional opposition in 1679', 37–41. See also the extraordinary discussion of Scottish political life dating from the later 1670s in Shaftesbury's papers that reflects at length on linkages with English politics: TNA: PRO 30/24/6A, fols. 93v–94.

¹⁶⁹ *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 32.

¹⁷⁰ See above, p. 160. See also HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 220, 231, 236, 240.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 200: duke of Ormond to earl of Arran, Kilkenny, 18 Oct. 1681. See also, *ibid.*, 203.

lieutenant had earlier learned that a 'gentleman' who supported Shaftesbury 'has been in Dublin to keep up the spirits of the party with assurances that the good Earl will come off in splendour'.¹⁷² After Shaftesbury's notorious acquittal in November 1681, Ormond wrote from Dublin that his 'going off will raise the spirits of his faction here, but it shall in no degree lessen my watchfulness over them, or gain them better countenance'.¹⁷³ In response to this argument, Jenkins wrote that 'What your Grace foretells of the humour there [in Dublin] upon my Lord Shaftesbury's being acquitted hath been most industriously endeavoured to be made out here, but not with so much success as ostentation'.¹⁷⁴ The manipulation of Anglo-Irish news was thus a continuing aspect of whig and tory political life. Indeed, Tim Harris has convincingly argued that Ireland mimicked England in 'a marked loyalist reaction' in Charles's last years, not least because Irish addresses were often commenting on events in England in an anti-whig style.¹⁷⁵

Thus, besides personal contact, political manipulation also exploited the printed word. The scale of printing within Scotland and Ireland was limited, but probably increasing in this period.¹⁷⁶ The corporation of Dublin established the first 'printer generall' only in September 1681, noting that it 'might be of great use to this cittie and the honour thereof to have' one.¹⁷⁷ As late as 1683 it was claimed that one press was sufficient to serve the whole of Scotland, 'our printing being but inconsiderable'.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, when Sir John Resesby detained a number of Scots in Yorkshire after the Rye House Plot, he noted that 'greater numbers of Scots pedlers then usuall (within ten or twelve months last past) have flocked to us, and especially to

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 133: same to earl of Arran, Kilkenny, 15 Aug. 1681.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 248: same to Col. John Fitzpatrick, Dublin, 5 Dec. 1681.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 268: Secretary Jenkins to duke of Ormond, Whitehall, 17 Dec. 1681. Conversely, Ormond's presence in London from 1682 was said to have had a variable impact upon whigs there: 'the whiggish party (I meane those that are violent) are vext to their soule at His Grace stay here because His presence gives reputation to the Kings affaires, But the moderate partye seeme pleasd & expect from his prudence & moderation, lesse severity then from the Ministers'. Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 149: earl of Longford to earl of Arran, London, 19 Aug. 1682. See also, Hutton, *Charles II*, pp. 414–15; Miller, *Charles II*, p. 369.

¹⁷⁵ Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 379, 387–8, 394–5.

¹⁷⁶ Jonquil Bevan, 'Scotland', in John Barnard and D.F. McKenzie, eds., with the assistance of Maureen Bell, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 4: 1557–1695 (Cambridge, 2002), p. 698; Robert Welch, 'The book in Ireland from the Tudor re-conquest to the battle of the Boyne', in *ibid.*, pp. 716–17; Gillespie, *Reading Ireland*, pp. 106, 111, 187, 189 (tables 1, 3).

¹⁷⁷ Gilbert, *Calendar of the Ancient Records of Dublin*, V, 227.

¹⁷⁸ Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 393. The claim was, however, made polemically, in the course of an ongoing dispute between Scottish printers. See *ibid.*, II, 501; *RPCS 1683–1684*, pp. 250–1, 384, 410; James Maidment, ed., *The Spottiswoode Miscellany* . . . (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1844–5), I, 305–9. See also *CSPD 1682*, p. 551.

the most remarkable places for faction, and have sould godly bukes, as they called them, and pamphlets from Scotland'.¹⁷⁹

It seems likely, though, that a far greater volume of printed material went the other way.¹⁸⁰ Lauder certainly owned Samuel Bold's *Sermon Against Persecution* and 'many [printed] papers' about the Rye House Plot, besides showing a broader awareness of the printed 'Animadversions' on Russell's scaffold speech.¹⁸¹ The Scottish chancellor received warning from England in July 1682 'that severall seditious and traitorous lybells, which daylie swarme heir, were sent down to Scotland', particularly *Julian the Apostate*.¹⁸² A 'lying and villanous fals Gazett' or 'Protestant Mercurie' written by Langley Curtis was sent into Scotland later in the year.¹⁸³ The dour Presbyterian gentleman, John Erskine of Carnock, was embarrassed to be mocked by a passer-by who saw him 'reading on a gazette' on the sabbath: 'I could not altogether justifie this in myself, or the too great curiosity some have in seeking after and reading of news on the Lord's day.'¹⁸⁴ Such an appetite for news suggests that James Anderson and Agnes Campbell may have had a legitimate case, as well as an economic self-interest, when they emphasized the need to ensure that the press was carefully regulated in Scotland, 'that no scandalous books be imported or reprinted prejudicial to religion or his Majestie's authority or government; it being notour that the country is pested and infected with these books, as the League and Covenant, Jus Populi, Naphtali, and the like'. If other 'ill-disposed stationers' were granted greater latitude, they 'would import and reprint these scandalous and seditious books, whereof they have most gain and advantage'.¹⁸⁵

Imported books were also a prominent part of Irish political and cultural life in this period.¹⁸⁶ Ormond himself received the 'prints' from London via a Mr Mulys, whilst the earl of Longford refrained from going into greater detail about Shaftesbury's trial in one of his letters to the lord lieutenant as he assumed that he received the periodical, *The Loyal Protestant Intelligence*.¹⁸⁷ Ormond was also sent one of Dryden's poems, which his son hoped 'will

¹⁷⁹ *Memoirs of Sir John Reresby*, ed. Browning, p. 309 n. 1: Sir John Reresby to Secretary Jenkins, 11 July [16]83.

¹⁸⁰ For Anglo-Scottish news interactions, see Jackson, *Restoration Scotland*, pp. 32–3, 73.

¹⁸¹ *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, pp. 87, 100–2.

¹⁸² *Letters . . . to George, Earl of Aberdeen*, ed. Dunn, p. 27: Sir William Paterson to earl of Aberdeen, Whitehall, 4 July 1682.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 88–9: Sir George Mackenzie to earl of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, 2 Oct. and 10 Oct. 1682. Mackenzie ensured that the piece was answered, but was left spluttering 'its untollerable that such false and seditious papers should be disperst heer'. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹⁸⁴ *Journal of the Hon. John Erskine of Carnock*, ed. Macleod, p. 59.

¹⁸⁵ Maidment, ed., *Spottiswoode Miscellany*, I, 308–9. For Campbell, see Bevan, 'Scotland', pp. 696–7.

¹⁸⁶ Robert Welch notes that a quarter of the £16,000 owed to the London printer, George Sawbridge, in Sept. 1681 was due from Irish booksellers: Welch, 'The book in Ireland', p. 716. See also, Gillespie, *Reading Ireland*, p. 114.

¹⁸⁷ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 215, 236.

divert you [by] characters he gives of the worthies here'.¹⁸⁸ The lord lieutenant was presumably less pleased when a copy of the whig tract *The Third Part of No Protestant Plot* was found in a Dublin booksellers stall in June 1682, its pages covered with pro-Essex and anti-Ormond marginalia.¹⁸⁹ Referring particularly to allegations about the practical toleration of priests and friars celebrating Mass, the archbishop of Armagh recommended that though he could find out who had written the marginalia, it would not be prudent 'lest it might draw a greater inconveniency by a publick enquiry'. According to Boyle, such an enquiry would have no trouble proving that Mass was indeed said in Dublin every week.¹⁹⁰

More positive interventions into the marketplace of opinion were also open to those responsible for governing Ireland and Scotland. Boyle responded to news that Russell's scaffold speech was being printed in Dublin with the advice that the Irish government should ensure the 'animadversions' upon them should also be printed. This would allow 'that this Kingdom may be undeceived of the pretended Innocency & Integrity of that suffering Noble man'.¹⁹¹ Clearly he, along with the printers, envisaged that there would be a market for the speech. Similarly, in Scotland although Lauder was clearly astonished that Charles should have taken the decision to issue a public *Declaration* explaining the dissolution of his recent English parliaments,¹⁹² those in power tempered their distaste for explanation with an appreciation of the realities of the situation. Charles himself ordered the publication of a large number of documents relating to the Scottish government from the death of James VI onwards, 'for the satisfaction of all our good subjects'. Contemporary concerns were obviously much in the king's mind. The published documents were to include 'all informations, relations and petitions sent to our Privy Councill there from time to time about anything of this nature, as conventicles, insurrections, insolencies or cruelties of the phanaticks'. A particular impetus behind publication may have been government awareness of the widespread sense in Scotland that Argyll had been harshly treated at his trial, an event that was specifically mentioned in Charles's letter.¹⁹³ And, switching perspectives, the government and the

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 236: earl of Arran to duke of Ormond, London, 22 Nov. 1681.

¹⁸⁹ Bodl., MS Carte 39, fols. 560r–v. The pamphlet in question was [Robert Ferguson], *Third Part of No Protestant Plot* (1682).

¹⁹⁰ Bodl., MS Carte 39, fols. 560v–561: archbishop of Armagh to duke of Ormond, Dublin, 13 June 1682. For Ormond's agreement with Boyle's cautious advice, see HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 386.

¹⁹¹ Bodl., MS Carte 40, fol. 106: archbishop of Armagh to earl of Arran, Blessington, 30 July 1683. Nevertheless, such work was not printed, probably due to economic factors precluding the production of a lengthy text: Gillespie, *Reading Ireland*, p. 108.

¹⁹² *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 34.

¹⁹³ *RPCS 1683–1684*, pp. 67–8: Charles II to privy council, 21 Feb. 1683 (calendared under 1 Mar. 1683).

tory press in England was careful to publicise loyalist sentiment in both Ireland and Scotland.¹⁹⁴

As in England, manuscript material and verbal rumours were important shapers of opinion in Scotland and Ireland. Rumours of an indulgence for dissenters were still sometimes heard, even during the 'killing times'.¹⁹⁵ And in the summer of 1683 Lauder recorded contending rumours with very different political implications. On the one hand, he was annoyed that some men now laughed at Coleman's letters and Godfrey's death, 'as Shaftsburie's fables maliciously contrived by him: but this ware to cast a reflection on the publick justice of the English nation, whosse [parliamentary] representatives . . . ware fullie satisfied as to the existence of the said Popish plot'.¹⁹⁶ On the other hand, 'Their is a report spred throw Brittain as if the deceast George Monck, Duke of Albemarle . . . had, about 1669, a dream, that Whytehall was all on fyre, and the King in the midst of the flames, and that in a fear he came and found the King in the Quean's chapel at Masse or popish service . . . which I hope was false'.¹⁹⁷ The Scottish privy council were certainly conscious of those who spread 'false, disloyal and seditious speeches', and were critical of 'the chapmen who travell up and down the countrey . . . [and] who debauch and abuse the people and convene them to field conventicles'.¹⁹⁸

In Ireland, one obvious route for news was between Ulster and the west of Scotland, particularly for news of religious repression and retaliatory acts of violence.¹⁹⁹ But there were many other routes. A visitor to Ireland in 1681 argued that 'Any news, report or rumor from towns is convey'd into the countreys with dispatch above an Englishman's imagination, and they are so credulous that it is no sooner heard but believ'd'.²⁰⁰ The sneer is obvious, but news probably did travel well within Ireland. After reporting on various nocturnal meetings and rumours of arms being gathered, a government spy informed Boyle 'that a letter directed to one of the dissenting party in Kilkenny was found by a namless person under a Table in a Coffy Hous in Dublin which letter did import much inve<te>racy against his majestie and his Royall Highness'.²⁰¹ Coffeehouses would again be blamed by the Irish government in July 1685 for being amongst the places in which 'many storrys about Monmouth' circulated, whose aim was 'to censure and defame the proceedings of State'.²⁰² News and rumour also poured into Ireland from

¹⁹⁴ Harris, *Restoration*, pp. 336, 339, 343, 345, 356, 358, 387, 390.

¹⁹⁵ Bodl., MS Tanner 35, fols. 186, 197; NAS, GD406/1/3201.

¹⁹⁶ *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, pp. 101–2.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹⁹⁸ RPCS 1683–1684, p. 226: supplication of Robert Andrews to privy council, 16 Aug. 1683; RPCS 1681–1682, p. 122: committee of public affairs report, 2 June 1681.

¹⁹⁹ Bodl., MS Carte 45, fols. 565r–v; Bodl., MS Carte 40, fols. 310–12, 313, 315.

²⁰⁰ Dineley, *Observations*, p. 21.

²⁰¹ Bodl., MS Carte 40, fol. 150: J.B. to archbishop of Armagh, 25 Sept. 1683.

²⁰² NLI, MS 1793, no. 48/209 and MS diary 'July 1685': MS diary and proclamations relating to Ireland, 1673–1716. See also, Gillespie, *Reading Ireland*, p. 107.

London, including that supplied by professional news-writers, though Arran can be found plaintively requesting 'more . . . than what may be gathered out of the newsletters'.²⁰³ Certainly rumours about the likelihood of the Irish army being newly regulated – an implicitly pro-Catholic measure – roused Arran's ire.²⁰⁴ By the end of 1684 Lord Chief Justice Keatinge reported that 'greate Arte Is used In dispersing the Rumour' of major changes in the military and civil government of Ireland once Rochester arrived as the new lord lieutenant.²⁰⁵ In such a climate, it was scarcely surprising that by the time of William's invasion of England in 1688 many different accounts of events poured into Ireland, '& so every body makes what news pleases him'.²⁰⁶

Conclusion

This chapter began with Southwell's vision of Ireland and Scotland in the Popish Plot period acting as restraining influences on England; moral and political guardians who stiffened their neighbour's resolve not to surrender to the evil of whig exclusionist politics. This aspect of multiple monarchy was naturally one which others would not see in such a positive light. In 1683, the English whig peer Lord Herbert of Cherbury argued that 'we had in Scotland A sample of what we were to expect here [in England], if good Patriots did not interpose'.²⁰⁷ But the reality was not so clear-cut; Scotland and Ireland were not straightforwardly bastions for budding Stuart power. Even apparently pellucid evidence to the contrary can yield intriguing suggestions when read with enough care.

When the earl of Arran was sworn in as lord deputy of Ireland on 3 May 1682, Michael Boyle gave an oration in which he promised that he would not 'entertain your lordship with the unpleasant prospect of those different and jarring interests which of late years make up the being and composition of this kingdom'. According to Boyle, 'the swellings and animosities which they begot are in a great degree lessened and abated amongst us, at least they seem to be so, our distinguishing and separating names, which set us at so great a distance, being so far laid aside that we can now live together and correspond together like Christians and subjects'. He boasted that 'while our neighbour nations have been haunted by conspiracies and rebellion,

²⁰³ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 64: earl of Arran to duke of Ormond, Dublin, 6 [July] 1683. See also Bodl., MS Carte 40, fol. 98; HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 415.

²⁰⁴ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 402; Bodl., MS Carte 40, fol. 239.

²⁰⁵ Bodl., MS Carte 217, fol. 77v: Lord Chief Justice Keatinge to earl of Arran, 6 Dec. 1684.

²⁰⁶ TCD, MSS 1995–2008, fol. 61: [anon.] to Rev. Samuel Foley, 13 Nov. 1688.

²⁰⁷ Bodl., MS Ballard 39, fol. 3: John Williams to [Arthur] Charlett, High Wycombe, 20 Mar. 1682/3. (For a printed version of this account, see R.A. Beddard, 'A Whig view of Tory Oxford in 1683: Lord Herbert of Chirbury's criticism of the university', *Bodleian Library Record*, 15 (1995), 166–86.)

wrapped up in clouds of jealousies and confusions, we breathed in a clear air and suffered nothing under the force of such enchantments'. Referring to overt symbols of partisan politics in England, and the murder of Archbishop Sharp in Scotland, he concluded: 'The mists were dispersed and broke before they reached our Ireland. We have no enthusiastic insurrections to give us inquietudes. We had no signal ribbons to distinguish and increase partisans. We had no barbarous assassinations to promote the pretence of religion, but in truth fanaticism. All here was peace and quietness.'²⁰⁸

The speech protested too much. If all really was a vision of peace and harmony, why write that former divisions had abated, or 'at least they seem to be so'? Surely this was as much a reminder of disharmony as it was a soothing piece of rhetoric; a more polished version of the Scottish privy council's bullish decision publicly to burn the Covenant in Edinburgh.²⁰⁹ Boyle also demonstrated the degree of awareness of developments in England in his remark that 'signal ribbons' were not worn in Ireland: he must have presumed that his audience would know that he referred to whigs wearing blue and tories red.²¹⁰ Furthermore, the speech itself became part of the wider political game. Ormond's former secretary, the earl of Lanesborough, sent a copy of it into England as he was informed that it would be 'very acceptable there'.²¹¹ At the same time, Lanesborough took care to show Ormond's reply to Anglesey's attack on him to a 'good many' of the lord lieutenant's friends in Ireland.²¹² This interchange of polemic represented the reverse of that between Shaftsbury's 'party' or 'faction' in England and Ireland.²¹³

More direct concerns were evident in Scotland; indeed Lauder claimed that the English were copying the practice of discontented young men in Edinburgh when they adopted blue ribbons as a whig symbol.²¹⁴ Writing from London, Sir George Mackenzie assured Aberdeen that 'the vnanimity and fixedness of yow in Scotland is at once both acceptable and usefull to all good men'.²¹⁵ The sense of working for a 'common cavalier cause' was especially important since 'our phanaticks heir' in Edinburgh expect 'great news by the nixt' newsletter concerning the vigorously contested shrieval elec-

²⁰⁸ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 360.

²⁰⁹ *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 58; Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 346.

²¹⁰ See above, pp. 118–19.

²¹¹ HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VI, 397: earl of Lanesborough to Henry [Gascoigne], Dublin, 3 July 1682. (Gascoigne was Ormond's current secretary.)

²¹² *Ibid.* For Ormond's reply to Anglesey, see NLI, MS 11968.

²¹³ See above, pp. 183–4.

²¹⁴ *Historical Observes*, ed. Urquhart and Laing, p. 19; Jackson, *Restoration Scotland*, p. 127.

²¹⁵ *Letters . . . to George, Earl of Aberdeen*, ed. Dunn, p. 47: Sir George Mackenzie to earl of Aberdeen, London, 17 Apr. 1682.

tions in London in 1682.²¹⁶ In addition, Queensberry reported to Hamilton that he had seen a newsletter suggesting that ‘some of our countrey men ar macking strong court to Shaftsberry’ during the elections.²¹⁷ After the tory candidates were returned in London, Mackenzie responded to news of Argyll’s maintenance of arms in the west of Scotland with the thought that ‘ill men in England tho they know the unconsiderablness of a Scots rebellion, yett a rebellion heer, tho neer so litle, might give lyfe and motion to on there . . . nor would it be so desyrable to the bad English at any tyme as now, when the seditious there are at their last prayers’.²¹⁸ Certainly the written legal opinion of Argyll’s lawyers at his trial that his explanation of the sense in which he took the Test contained no treason ‘was afterwards printed in England, and Argile’s tryal, with another peice called, “A Scots Mist to weat ane Englishman to the Skin;” being sundry animadversions on Argile’s proces’.²¹⁹ News of Argyll thus travelled into England as news of Russell would later travel into Scotland (and Ireland).

We are left with a sense of the early 1680s representing a transitional period in Scottish and Irish political life, as they interacted with the developing partisanship in England. ‘Whig’ and ‘tory’ may not yet have been widely used within Ireland and Scotland in the prevalent ‘English’ sense, but the Stuarts’ other kingdoms were clearly both influenced by and impacted upon the political division which those words described. News networks allowed contemporary Irishmen and Scotsmen to view partisan divisions in England, and for English writers and politicians to apply political and religious activity in the ‘other’ kingdoms to their own experience. For some, Scotland and Ireland seemed to offer a tonic for England’s troubles; for others they appeared to add to the poison of ‘popery and arbitrary government’ coursing through the veins of the English body politic.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 88, 60: same to same, 10 Oct. 1682, Sir William Paterson to same, Edinburgh, 21 Sept. 1682. For the frequent news reports in Scotland about the progress of the sheriff’s elections in London, see *ibid.*, pp. 21, 25–6, 28–36, 58, 61–2.

²¹⁷ NAS, GD406/1/9125: [marquess of Queensberry] to [duke of Hamilton], Edinburgh, 11 July 1682.

²¹⁸ *Letters . . . to George, Earl of Aberdeen*, ed. Dunn, p. 84: Sir George Mackenzie to earl of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, 4 Oct. 1682. A Scottish rebellion was exactly what Algernon Sidney did hope for: Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis, 1677–1683* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 205, 277–8, 284–91. Cf. HMC, *Ormonde*, ns, VII, 272.

²¹⁹ Lauder, *Historical Notices*, ed. Laing, I, 343. See also *ibid.*, I, 342–3; Jackson, *Restoration Scotland*, p. 151.

Conclusion

1685

Making political predictions has always been a risky business. When James II was proclaimed king of England in February 1685 one observer noted that ‘the whole Nation has conceived an assurance of the most glorious reign that ever was in this kingdom’.¹ However misguided such a claim may now appear, its author was far from alone in prophesying great things from the reign of ‘James the Just’.² A few days after Charles II’s death, the earl of Strafford could comment with satisfaction that the new king’s reign ‘begins so auspiciously’.³ In Oxford, Anthony Wood wrote in his diary that James was proclaimed ‘with all joy & alacrity’.⁴ Others remarked in tones of relieved surprise on the general calm and lack of disorder at the accession to the throne of the first openly Catholic ruler of England since Mary Tudor.⁵ As the son of the noted antiquary and herald William Dugdale put it, the general calm meant that ‘what we feared (God be thanked) is now over’. He also caustically noted the large number of people rushing to kiss James’s hand: now there was ‘not a Whigg to be heard of’.⁶

Such a claim is difficult to square with the care taken by the government to ensure a subservient House of Commons in 1685.⁷ The government’s local allies also clearly saw a need for continued vigilance. In Nottinghamshire, Sir William Clifton was outraged at the underhand tactics employed by his rivals, Sir Scrope Howe, Richard Slater, and ‘all that party’. Slater’s supporters were voting tactically, ‘almost all’ of them giving one of their votes for Clifton. As he noted, this was ‘<not> out of Kindness to me <but> partly to gaine some reputation to themselves, & partly to make the Loyall party suspect my fydellity to them’. In other words, Clifton’s whig opponents were both attempting to cover themselves with a veneer of respectability by

¹ BL, Add. MS 71124AA, fol. 77: H. Porter to [anon.], 6/16 Feb. [1685].

² A phrase coined by loyal addressers from Canterbury and quoted in Tim Harris, *Revolution. The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685–1720* (2006), p. 51.

³ BL, Add. MS 75361 (unfol.): earl of Strafford to marquess of Halifax, 10 Feb. 1684/5.

⁴ Bodl., MS Wood diaries 29, fol. 5.

⁵ E.g., UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9068, vol. IV, no. 8 (transcribed in NRA 22953, p. 75); Harris, *Revolution*, pp. 46–57.

⁶ *The Life, Diary and Correspondence of Sir William Dugdale . . .*, ed. William Hamper (1827), p. 450: John Dugdale to Sir William Dugdale, 10 Feb. 1684/5.

⁷ See above, sources cited in p. 42 n. 67.

associating themselves with his name, and trying to lead local tories to question his political credentials. Worse still, the tactic worked with one of the most important local political figures, the duke of Newcastle, who sent Clifton word 'that he heard I was joined with Slauter'.⁸ To counter these tactics Clifton was forced into the expedient of sending 'some of my freinds to all the publick places in This towne [i.e. Nottingham] to declare I do not joyne with Mr Slauter'.⁹ This evidently had the desired effect on the duke, who reported to the earl of Sunderland that two loyal men could not have been elected for the county without Clifton's assistance. This was no mean achievement since, according to Newcastle, 'it is very well known this is the most factious county in the kingdom'.¹⁰

In its own way this local report is as revealing of the themes that this book has addressed as the account of Sir John Holland's trip to see the royal brothers with which the introduction began. For all the general ritual joy at the beginning of a new reign, and for all the genuine tory pleasure at James's final accession to the throne that the whigs had sought to deny him, the subsequent parliamentary elections showed up the lingering political divisions in society. As Anthony Wood snarled in his diary, at the end of February 1685 'the whigs who . . . get their ends by lying, sent letters to most corporations (without name) to presse them that the King died a papist & that a papist succeeds him & bid them look to themselves & stand to their guard'.¹¹ With or without lying letters, some of the surviving private correspondence discussing the 1685 elections indicates the fear as to what might happen in a Catholic king's first parliament. It is clear that several men sought to steer clear of trouble and avoid election. In Cumberland, Sir Daniel Fleming found himself under pressure from the bishop of Carlisle, 'who set forth how all true sons of the Church of England were bound in conscience to help now to defend her, when she was very likely to be in great danger'.¹² And in North Wales Thomas Mostyn had the proverbial thumb-screws applied in much the same way by his neighbour Thomas Bulkeley: 'as the present state of affaires appeares to me there was never more

⁸ Newcastle's importance lay more in his immense social standing than in any political ability: his extraordinarily child-like hand accurately conveys the sophistication of his political commentaries.

⁹ BL, Add. MS 75366 (unfol.), Sir William Clifton to marquess of Halifax, Nottingham, 21 Mar. 1684/5. Clifton was only twenty-one at the time, and clearly possessed both an extraordinary character and great powers of manipulation: *HOP 1660–1690*, II, 96–7.

¹⁰ *CSPD Feb.–Dec. 1685*, p. 105, no. 438: duke of Newcastle to [earl of Sunderland], Wellbeck, 24 Mar. 1685. For further details concerning elections in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, see *HOP 1660–1690*, I, 350–1, 355–6; III, 439; *HOP 1690–1715*, II, 464–5; V, 490; and for Norfolk's position as a potential rival to Nottinghamshire in the fractiousness stakes, see above, intro.

¹¹ Bodl., MS Wood diaries 29, fol. 20v.

¹² Cumbria RO, Carlisle, D/Lons/L12/2/15, fol. 140. (Fleming went on successfully to stand for election.)

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need of persons of worth and principles specially in so criticall a juncture'.¹³ Reverting to a biblical discourse, another of Mostyn's neighbours wrote, 'Consider what is at stake; you have reade of one man that saved a Cittie; it may happen that you maye save a great nation.'¹⁴ The language is urgent but guarded.

Two other warning signs can be discerned during James's superficially successful first six months as king. First, there were claims – admittedly not unusual in early modern Britain and Europe – that the successor had come into his inheritance early by poisoning the previous monarch.¹⁵ Secondly, in the aftermath of Monmouth's failed rebellion several observers noted how 'strangely disaffected the generality of the common people are'.¹⁶ In particular, they were said not to believe that the duke of Monmouth was really dead, despite his public execution in July 1685.¹⁷ Many did not want to acknowledge that the 'Protestant duke' could no longer ride to the rescue and save the nation from the Catholic James.

The weakness of the middle ground

Even before James's *volte-face* in the winter of 1686–7, when he moved away from his old tory-Anglican friends and into an uneasy alliance with Protestant dissenters, the political auguries were thus not all good. In part this may have reflected the relative weakness of the 'middle ground'. Some historians have argued that the fact the Stuarts' kingdoms did not slide into civil war during the Exclusion Crisis indicates the success of tories in appealing to a broad middle ground of opinion. Whereas 1640–2 had seen moderates powerless to restrain groups of zealots on either side, with horrific consequences, the latter stages of the Exclusion Crisis have been presented differently. The growing radicalism of whig activity – and, even more, the extent to which this could be emphasized by tory politicians and pamphleteers – alienated many within the political nation. For Jonathan Scott, the

¹³ UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9068, vol. IV, no. 10: Thomas Bulkeley to Thomas Mostyn, Dynes, 20 Feb. 1684/5 (transcribed in NRA 22953, p. 76). For Mostyn, see above, ch. 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 11: Robert Cotten to same, 26 Feb. 1684/5 (transcribed in NRA 22953, p. 76). Mostyn was unmoved: see *ibid.*, Mostyn's reply appended to no. 11, and no. 26 (transcribed in NRA 22953, pp. 77, 82).

¹⁵ John Miller, *Charles II* (1991), p. 381.

¹⁶ *Correspondence of Sir William Dugdale*, ed. Hamper, p. 454: Sir William Dugdale to Gregory King, Blythe Hall [Warwicks.], 3 Aug. 1685. Dugdale referred specifically to his own locality in the Midlands.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*; Nottinghamshire Archives, DD/SR/219/13: earl of Plymouth to marquess of Halifax, 22 Sept. [1685]; J.C. Atkinson, ed., *Quarter Sessions Records* (The North Yorkshire Recs. Soc. for the Publ. of Original Documents Relating to the North Riding of the County of York, 8 vols., 1884–90), VII, 77.

outcome of what he prefers to call the 'Restoration crisis' was a swing in opinion, with the majority of the nation moving along a political spectrum in the direction of toryism.¹⁸

But the evidence of the personal rule period cautions against constructing too powerful a middle ground.¹⁹ There are, it is true, formidable evidential problems in the way of making any definitive pronouncements on this subject. By their very nature, moderates tend to leave less of an historical record than zealots, being generally less prone to articulate the nature of their moderation.²⁰ Nevertheless, this was the era in which 'trimmers' emerged into a degree of prominence.²¹ The most famous of them all, George Savile, marquess of Halifax, argued that he had put pen to paper because 'when Madmen in the two extreams, shall agree to make Common sense treason, and joyne to fix an ill Character upon the only men in the Nation who deserve a good one', a defence needed to be made.²² Bearing in mind the centrality of religion to political debate that has already been emphasized in chapter five, it should come as little surprise to find that much of the language of political moderation was drawn from religious debate. In the popular press, the character of a trimmer – or simply 'Good Man' – was said to be that of an educated conforming Protestant, opposed to the extremes of 'Superstition' from 'Rome' and 'Phanaticism' from 'Munster' as both tended towards the creation of schisms in the body of Christ.²³ He submitted to all legally prescribed ceremonies, and accepted public authority above private judgement, emphasizing the core tenets of primitive Christianity and the need to 'condescend' in lesser matters.²⁴ He followed Scripture in describing rebellion as the sin of witchcraft, but would not violently persecute others since

the best way to propagate the Religion of our Blessed Saviour, is by Love and Sweetness, rather than by Rage and Violence, as knowing that the Laws of Christianity, cannot be written in the Hearts of Men with the points of

¹⁸ Esp. Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis, 1677–1683* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 47–9.

¹⁹ For a different view for the Restoration period as a whole, see Philip Jenkins, 'Wales and the Order of the Royal Oak', *NLW Jnl*, 24 (1986), 340.

²⁰ One of the themes of G.E. Aylmer, 'Collective mentalities in mid-seventeenth-century England, 4: Cross currents: neutrals, trimmers and others', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 39 (1989), 1–22.

²¹ Mark N. Brown, 'Trimmers and moderates in the reign of Charles II', *HLQ*, 37 (1973–4), 311–36; Tim Harris, *Restoration. Charles II and his Kingdoms 1660–1685* (2005), pp. 325–8.

²² *The Works of George Savile*, ed. Brown, I, 178. See also, *ibid.*, 240.

²³ *The Character of a Trimmer, Neither Whigg nor Tory; The Character of a Good Man*, p. 2.

²⁴ *The Character of a Trimmer, Neither Whigg nor Tory; The Character of a Good Man*, p. 1; *The Second Part of the Character of a Good Man, neither Whigg nor Tory* (1682), unpag.

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Swords; neither can their Understandings be illuminated with flaming Fagots, the Syllogism of the Rack not being so perswasive as pure dint of Reason.²⁵

A trimmer hoped for the reunion of all Protestants, and was ‘a Hater of *Anti christ*, an Abominator of *Enthusiasm*, the *Jesuites* Eye-sore, the *Phanaticks* Plague: An Honour to the King, an Ornament to the Church, a Grace to the Reformation, and the Publick Good of Christianity.’²⁶

Despite their best efforts, the authors of tracts espousing a position other than the whig or tory ones faced fierce attack from partisans. Their religious claims left them particularly open to assault, even to allegations that they lacked any real spiritual commitment at all. As one critical author expostulated about ‘church-trimmers’, ‘He pretends to be of the Religion of his *Country* for *Peace*-sake, but is really a Sceptick in Point of *Faith*; for though he is ready to *do* all things that he is commanded, yet all this while he *believes* Nothing; or if he do, it is not as the Church, but as the State believes.’²⁷ Once the claim to religious sincerity had been dismissed it was easy to claim that being a trimmer actually involved no fixed principles at all, merely the determination to prosper by courting all sides at once with the aid of Janus-faced duplicity.²⁸ This duality allowed critics to ape the ‘monster’ literature that was so popular in the early modern period, with its fascination for grotesque creatures and monstrous births.²⁹ A trimmer was ‘A *twisted Brute* . . . / That blows up the *Whig-Heat* and cools the *Tory*. / A State *Hermaphrodite*, whose doubtful *Lust* / Salutes all *Parties* with an equal *Gust*. / . . . he seems two Natures joyn’d . . . / . . . such a *Sphinx*, the Devil can’t unriddle. / A Human *Schism*’. And it was axiomatic that things of mixed natures were unworthy: ‘*Noah* . . . / Sav’d *Natures* breed by *Mandate* from above, / But all the learned *Sages* doe agree / He kept his *Ark* from *Mules* and *Leopards* free, / All such mix’d *Animals* he scorn’d to float, / And would not save one *Trimmer* in his *Boat*.’³⁰ Such thunderous criticism was spear-headed by L’Estrange in the *Observer*, where ‘Trimmer’ came to replace ‘Whig’ as the whipping boy in successive dialogues about political and religious principles from November 1682.³¹

How significant was this partial change in polemical nomenclature? An extremely crude measure is to compare the number of published works

²⁵ *The Character of a Trimmer, Neither Whigg nor Tory; The Second Part of the Character of a Good Man*.

²⁶ *The Character of a Good Man*, p. 1; *The Character of a Trimmer, Neither Whigg nor Tory*.

²⁷ *The Character of a Church-Trimmer* (1683), unpag. For superficially incriminating words by Halifax, see *The Works of George Savile*, ed. Brown, I, 220–1.

²⁸ *The Character of a Church-Trimmer*.

²⁹ David Cressy, ‘Headless Monsters in Civil War England’, paper read at the Early Modern British History Seminar, Cambridge, 18 Oct. 2000.

³⁰ *The Character of a Trimmer* (1683).

³¹ Harris, *Restoration*, p. 325.

detailed in Early English Books Online that contain references to trimmer, whig, and tory. The total figures for 1681–5 are 31, 81, and 136 respectively.³² Perhaps more striking is the fact that contemporaries were far more likely to note individuals shifting from being perceived as avowedly whig to tory over the course of this period than from whig to trimmer. Most notoriously of all, Elkanah Settle dramatically shifted from being ‘the great Whig poet, with Tom Shadwell, for the Shaftsbury discontented party’ to a tory writer.³³ More generally, in March 1683 Narcissus Luttrell argued that ‘The tempers of men are much altered to what they were within this twelve-month, most now seeming tories.’³⁴ And the previous year, Sir Charles Sedley, the celebrated rake and playwright, had complained that ‘the distinction of Whigg and Tory doth add much to the present desolation’ of convivial society in London. In Sedley’s caustic opinion, ‘They are . . . (at least, the violent part on both sides) much of the same stuff at bottom, since they are so easily converted one in to an other, I mean self-interest.’³⁵

As Sedley’s cynical comments suggest, it seems likely that we should be concerned with different strands of thought within whig and tory circles, rather than a pursuit of a substantial and separate ‘middle ground’. ‘Courting the Moderates’ may be a legitimate title for a book whose coverage ends around 1678,³⁶ but the divisiveness of the Exclusion period left a very deep-seated legacy. It would, for instance, be difficult to characterize the prolific writings of Roger L’Estrange as *primarily* persuasive in intent. His aim seems far more often to be to browbeat and intimidate his readers; to make disagreement tantamount to treason, and thus overawe moderate whigs. To a very great extent the personal rule period was riven by a mindset of ‘them and us’.³⁷ Two examples of this must suffice. When scrutinizing the poll books during elections in London in 1682, Henry Crispe, the common serjeant, emphasised the care that was being taken to disqualify men ‘on the other side’, in other words, whigs: ‘we would not gain it only, but by as many

³² Figures yielded from a search conducted on 8 May 2006. It should be noted that 1685 saw the reimposition of the Licensing Act, which depressed the overall quantity of titles produced.

³³ *Historical Observes of Memorable Occurrents in Church and State, From October 1680 to April 1686 by Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall*, ed. Adam Urquhart and David Laing (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1840), p. 103.

³⁴ Narcissus Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs* (6 vols., Oxford, 1857), I, 252. See also, *The Whiggs Defeat: Or, The Mystery of Iniquity laid open* (1684).

³⁵ *Letters of Philip, Second Earl of Chesterfield, To Several Celebrated Individuals . . .* (1829), pp. 229–31. Cf. John Dryden, *Prologue To His Royal Highness, Upon His first appearance at the Duke’s Theatre since his Return from Scotland* (1682).

³⁶ John Patrick Montañó, *Courting the Moderates: Ideology, Propaganda, and the Emergence of Party, 1660–1678* (Newark, DE, 2002).

³⁷ In 1685 Jeffreys urged a fellow judge against ‘the snivelling trimmers’ on the basis that Christ had said ‘they that are not for us are against us’. Quoted in Harris, *Restoration*, p. 326.

CONCLUSION

also as we can'.³⁸ Secretary Jenkins showed himself another victim of the new numbers game when he wrote in May 1681 that 'I think we have a majority, without peradventure, in the Country, if you compute the nobility and Gentry aright; and we have a majority among the substantiall wealthy men, especially among the magistrates of the City [of London].'³⁹ Older centripetal forces in society came to be placed under severe strain,⁴⁰ and it became increasingly difficult to avoid identifying – or being identified by others – with one side or the other.

Whig and tory

In 1684 the marquess of Halifax argued that 'we have played the foole with throwing *Whig* and *Tory* at one another, as boys do snowballs'.⁴¹ Overall, the evidence presented throughout this book makes clear that the game was nevertheless one that many contemporaries played: for pleasure, profit, religious principle, ambition, or sheer bloody-mindedness. The descriptions 'whig' and 'tory' were pejoratively imposed on individuals to such a degree that there were rumours of a proclamation 'to be published against the abusive appellation of Wigg & Tory which of late has been a marke to distinguish people by & has been the occasion of animosities & Quarrells'.⁴² Yet the labels were also beginning to be positively taken up by them, with implications for their physical and economic well-being. According to the Welshman John Williams, in London in the spring of 1683 he had 'been many A time sufficiently bailed by some whiggs, received severall girds & gave some . . . & many times have mett with as Honest Tories as Live'.⁴³

³⁸ Bodl., MS Carte 216, fols. 214r–v: Henry Crispe to [?Secretary Jenkins], Guildhall, 17 Oct. 1682.

³⁹ NLW, MS 5389C: Secretary Jenkins to Sir Richard Bulstrode, Whitehall, 20 May 1681.

⁴⁰ Caroline Robbins, "'The Being of the King and Kingdom": Andrew Marvell's Concept of English Politics and the Constitution, 1665–1678', in Barbara Taft, ed., *Absolute Liberty. A Selection from the Articles and Papers of Caroline Robbins* (Hamden, CT, 1982), p. 81; John Miller, 'A moderate in the first age of party: the dilemmas of Sir John Holland, 1675–85', *EHR*, 114 (1999), 847–50, 868–9; James M. Rosenheim, 'County governance and elite withdrawal in Norfolk, 1660–1720', in A.L. Beier, David Cannadine and James M. Rosenheim, eds., *The First Modern Society: Essays in Honour of Lawrence Stone* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 125.

⁴¹ *The Works of George Savile*, ed. Brown, I, 179.

⁴² UWB, (Bangor) Mostyn Add. MS 9091, vol. VII, fol. 164: London, 1 Dec. 1683. For references to whig and tory lawyers, see Bodl., MS Carte 216, fol. 189v; CSPD 1683 *Jan. to June*, p. 107.

⁴³ Bodl., MS Ballard 39, fol. 6: John Williams to Arthur Charlett, London, 3 Apr. 1683. In this context 'bailed' may reflect a usage that would already have been old-fashioned, 'baile' or 'bayle' indicating a 'call to combatants to engage' in early sixteenth-century

Such divisions were widespread throughout England. Although whig and tory confrontations may well have been at their most intense in London, a vibrant news culture ensured the dissemination of political ideas and anxieties around the country as a whole. Partisanship was a national, rather than just metropolitan, phenomenon. The evidence presented in chapter six suggests that it was also beginning to be pan-national, rather than peculiarly isolated within England. Once again, a news culture exerted a vital influence, ensuring a general awareness of what particular political labels connoted. Although markedly different in the specific natures of their political and religious environments, Scotland and Ireland were connected to English debates and divisions. Initially rendered popular – or infamous – in England because of their Scottish and Irish overtones, ‘whig’ and ‘tory’ began to be exported back to their countries of origin. The 1690s and 1700s would see their further consolidation and entrenchment within the political cultures of the three kingdoms. The contours of this ‘divided society’⁴⁴ would owe much to the personal rule of Charles II, with its legacies of whig martyrs and frustrated tory nostalgia. Had this period witnessed the last flowering of a ‘golden age’ or the renewal of Roman imperial tyranny?⁴⁵ Although Charles II, unlike his father and brother, died in his bed the undisputed ruler of his kingdoms, the debates about the end of his reign would continue into the eighteenth century and beyond.

England: *OED*, ‘baile, bayle, int.’ ‘Gird’ could mean either ‘a sharp stroke or blow’, or ‘a sharp or biting remark directed against a person’: *OED*, ‘gird, n.2’, meanings 1, 4.

⁴⁴ To follow the label adopted by – amongst others – Tim Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society 1660–1715* (1993), and Geoffrey Holmes and W.A. Speck, eds., *The Divided Society: Parties and Politics in England, 1694–1716* (1967).

⁴⁵ Contrast *Memoirs of Thomas, Earl of Ailesbury*, ed. William E. Buckley (The Roxburghe Club, 2 vols., 1890), I, 10, and *Burnet’s History of My Own Time*, ed. Osmund Airy (2 vols., Oxford, 1897–1900), II, 470–1.

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