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ROYALISM, PRINT, AND THE CLERGY IN BRITAIN, 1639–1640 AND 1642*

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ABSTRACT. *Charles I and his clerical supporters are often said to have been wary of print and public discussion, only entering the public sphere reluctantly and to comparatively little effect during the political crisis of 1642. This article challenges such views by focusing on the neglected role of official forms of print such as proclamations, declarations, and state prayers and their promulgation in the nation's churches. It traces the ways in which the king utilized the network of parish clergy to broadcast his message and mobilize support during the Scottish crisis of 1639–40 and again in the 'paper war' of 1642. The article argues that traditional forms of printed address retained their potency and influence despite the proliferation of polemical pamphlets and newsbooks. The significance of these mobilizations is demonstrated by the profound disquiet they caused among the king's Covenanter and parliamentary opponents as well as the 'good effects' they had in generating support for the royalist cause.*

I

Many royalists were convinced that the civil wars were caused in part by a nefarious combination of seditious preaching and printing. Edward Hyde, earl of Clarendon, claimed in his *History* that parliament gave 'all possible license . . . in preaching' to traduce church and king, as well as 'printing any old scandalous pamphlets and adding new to them'. He recalled with 'horror' how 'this strange wild-fire among the people was not so much and so furiously kindled by the breath of the parliament as of the clergy, who administered fuel and blowed the coals in the Houses too'.¹ The unspoken message here, of course, was that Charles I and his supporters rejected such appeals through cheap print and the pulpit because they smacked of an unregulated 'popularity'.

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* I am most grateful to Mark Stoye, Mark Kishlansky, John Walter, Jacqueline Eales, and the anonymous reviewers for comments on earlier drafts of this article. All pre-1800 works were published in London unless otherwise stated.

¹ Edward Hyde, *The history of rebellion and civil wars in England*, ed. W. Dunn Macray (6 vols., Oxford, 1888), I, p. 263, II, p. 319.

Many historians have followed the logic of Hyde's analysis, seeing the royalists as suspicious or downright hostile to print and public engagement. They are forced to swallow the bitter pill of publicity only out of necessity when civil war engulfs them. Accounts present the king and his followers (the clergy prominent among them) as variously 'resisting appeals to public opinion', being 'reticent' about deploying propaganda, 'rejecting' it outright, and wishing to 'avoid' using print.² For John Morrill, Charles I was 'unparalleled in his failure to communicate with his subjects'; Richard Cust portrays him as being unwilling 'to engage with a new style politics of public relations'; while for Charles Carlton the king 'did not work at winning his subjects' loyalty'.³ The king, his clergy, and the broader coalition of royalists are seen to have engaged with the public sphere very hesitantly and 'at the eleventh hour' in 1642, and then only when forced to respond to parliament's media campaigns.⁴ It was at this late stage that they began to adopt the recognized vehicles of polemical engagement: the pamphlet and the newsbook.⁵

This picture has been qualified by some scholars who acknowledge an element of pragmatism in Charles's approach to publicity. For example, Richard Cust's biography of Charles recognizes that from early in his reign the king appreciated that the techniques of 'popularity' were appropriate on occasion to win support.⁶ More tellingly, recent works by Kevin Sharpe and Jason McElligott have alerted us to the strand of royalism that appealed to the public through a variety of media including cheap print.⁷ Nonetheless, historians often continue to characterize Charles I (and by extension royalism itself) as deeply reluctant to engage with the people until they could 'no longer avoid' it.⁸

The present article suggests an alternative reading of the relationship between royalism, print, and the clergy in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of civil war. It argues that once greater attention is paid to the

² Joad Raymond, *The invention of the newspaper: English newsbooks, 1641–1649* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 98, 123; Jason Peacey, *Politicians and pamphleteers: propaganda during the English civil wars and interregnum* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT, 2005), pp. 37, 41.

³ John Morrill, 'Introduction', in idem, ed., *Reactions to the English civil war* (London, 1982), p. 4; Richard Cust, *Charles I: a political life* (London, 2005), p. 167; Charles Carlton, *Charles I: the personal monarch* (London, 1984), p. 159.

⁴ Malcolm Smuts, 'Public ceremony and royal charisma: the English royal entry in London, 1485–1642', in A. L. Beir, David Cannadine and James M. Rosenheim, eds., *The first modern society* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 92.

⁵ Although see Mark Kishlansky, 'A lesson in loyalty: Charles I and the Short Parliament', in Jason McElligott and David Smith, eds., *Royalists and royalism during the English civil wars* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 22–3, and Esther S. Cope, 'The king's declaration concerning the dissolution of the Short Parliament of 1640: an unsuccessful attempt at public relations', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 40 (1977), pp. 325–41.

⁷ Jason McElligott, *Royalism, print and censorship in revolutionary England* (Manchester, 2007); Kevin Sharpe, *Image wars: promoting kings and commonwealths in England, 1603–1660* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2010), chs. 5–11.

⁸ Peacey, *Politicians and pamphleteers*, p. 37.

promulgation of proclamations, royal prayers, and declarations in the parish churches, claims about royalism's isolation and its unease with public discussion in the period before the civil war become much less convincing. The deployment of official print constituted a form of public engagement that sought to inculcate and fortify ideas of authority, duty, and obedience; ideas which all governments attempt to define, broadcast, and embed. Once these forms of public address have been considered, it becomes clear that Charles I's political mobilizations through print and pulpit reach back into the Scottish crisis of 1639 and 1640, rather than being the reluctant products of the emergency situation of 1642.

Before the calling of the Long Parliament, set-piece proclamations and prayers were read in English and Welsh churches, causing deep disquiet among the king's Covenanter opponents and their allies south of the border. Indeed, it is one of this article's claims that the anxiety aroused by these initiatives among the Covenanters and their sympathizers has been overlooked, and also that concerns of the king's opponents reflected the potential reach and potency of publicizing Charles's message via this ready-made state information system. Moreover, the continuing importance of such authorized print for the developing royalist party in 1642 has been ignored. Although royalists like Hyde articulated a common anxiety about political mobilization, we should be mindful that they were concerned principally with content rather than with form – they expressed distaste for the wrong types of mobilization, rather than for the whole notion of political engagement itself. Even before the civil war, many recognized that the press and church needed to be harnessed to encourage support for the king. Although perhaps not temperamentally inclined to do so, royalist ministers *had* to make use of print and appeal to the public through the parish church, and exploring the ways in which they discharged their duties in this respect adds another layer to our understanding of the nature of popular politics during this period. Rather than simply fuelling the fires of rebellion and civil war, the pulpit, reading desk, and official print were used by royalists as means to combat the conflagration.

The developments between the meeting of the Long Parliament in November 1640 and Charles I's flight from London in early 1642 form a lacuna in this discussion that needs to be explained at the outset. Rather than examining the (now well-studied) deluge of cheap print produced after the collapse of royal censorship during 1641, this article, by contrast, focuses on clerical dissemination of print authorized by the king. This occurred chiefly between 1639 and 1640 and again in 1642. The proclamations and declarations issued by the king in 1641 were not directed to be read in parish churches. Moreover, before December 1641 such official pronouncements were much less partisan and controversial than those examined here.⁹

⁹ The emollient (or at least neutral) run of 1641 proclamations was ended by one of 10 Dec. for observing the Book of Common Prayer, which the earl of Essex told the king would 'set all

In 1641, parliament contentiously began to lay claim to the production of 'official texts' directed towards the clergy, such as the 8 September order against innovations in public worship and the Protestation. These, like the pamphlets and petitions which swirled around issues such as the abolition of episcopacy and the status of the Book of Common Prayer, are outside the scope of the present study.

II

In 1637, resistance to a new Scottish prayer book and then the organization of the covenanting movement confronted Charles I with an entirely new challenge. To unify opposition from civil and religious authorities, the Scots produced voluminous propaganda challenging royal authority under the guise of attacking the Scottish episcopacy. At the same time, they began to promote their cause amongst English sympathizers. Tracts emanating from Edinburgh were directed at an English audience and narrated a tendentious story of ecclesiastical tyranny, and these appeals have recently drawn the attention of a number of scholars.¹⁰ To respond, the king had to defend his policies to his Scottish subjects and his conduct to his English ones.¹¹ This presented the most complex problem of royal discourse the English monarchy had ever faced, but the Covenanters' printed appeals to public opinion in England certainly did not go unanswered.

Parish churches were the main targets for a 'sharp' proclamation issued by the king on 27 February 1639 in response to a Covenanter pamphlet, *An information to all good Christians within the kingdom of England*, which had called for the convening of an English parliament.¹² 10,000 copies of this proclamation were printed, and it was ordered to be read in every one of the approximately 9,000 parish churches in England and Wales.¹³ Designed to 'disabuse the English

the kingdom by the ears': J. F. Larkin and P. L. Hughes, eds., *Stuart royal proclamations* (2 vols., Oxford, 1973–83), II, pp. 752–4.

¹⁰ Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and pamphleteering in early modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 161–201; David Como, 'Secret printing, the crisis of 1640, and the origins of civil-war radicalism', *Past and Present*, 196 (2007), pp. 37–82; Sarah Waurechen, 'Covenanter propaganda and conceptualizations of the public during the Bishops' Wars, 1638–1640', *Historical Journal*, 52 (2009), pp. 63–86.

¹¹ On Charles's propaganda efforts, see Kevin Sharpe, *The personal rule of Charles I* (London and New Haven, CT, 1992), pp. 813–18; idem, *Image wars*, pp. 149–62; Kishlansky, 'A lesson in loyalty', pp. 23–4.

¹² The National Archives (TNA), PC2/50, p. 130; Larkin and Hughes, eds., *Proclamations*, II, pp. 662–7; William Laud, *Works*, ed. William Scott and James Bliss (7 vols., Oxford, 1847–60), VII, p. 528; David Laing, ed., *The letters and journals of Robert Baillie* (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1841–2), I, p. 189.

¹³ TNA, PC 2/50, p. 130. For it being read in Leicestershire and Essex pulpits, see Bodleian Library (Bodl.), MS Walker c. 11, fo. 51v; British Library (BL), Additional (Add.) MS 5829, fo. 32. There was a protest by three godly aldermen at its reading in Exeter Cathedral, and also from some London officials, including Sheriff Isaac Pennington, in St Paul's: Mark Stoyle, *From deliverance to destruction* (Exeter, 1996), p. 43; TNA, SP16/420/157; 16/427/117, PC2/50,

subject and make him see their [the Covenanters'] false pretences', it warned parishioners of 'the seditious practices of some in Scotland' to undermine royal authority. In aggressive language, Charles accused the Covenanters of planning an invasion of England and maintained that their religious campaign was merely a veil masking republican designs.¹⁴ The parish clergy were chosen as the mouthpieces for this denunciation of the Scots because they could communicate its message to all the king's subjects, both literate and illiterate. As the king put it, the proclamation was to be read during divine service so that 'all our people to the meanest, may see the notorious carriages of these men, and likewise the justice and mercy of our proceedings'.¹⁵ It was something of an unusual move as proclamations were usually advertised by lay officials, and it seems the king saw this strategy as a way of getting his message across with greater authority and effectiveness than the normal posting of proclamations in the market square.¹⁶ The proclamation formed part of a larger clerical mobilization which included several high-profile sermons that also found their way into print. In these, the Scottish rebels were condemned and the importance of duty and obedience extolled.¹⁷

Having perhaps learned from the media campaign of his opponents, Charles conceded the need to appeal to his subjects in print and convince them of the merits of his cause after his comparative public silence during the 1630s.¹⁸ The proclamation of 1639 showed a sensitivity to the influence of Covenanter print in England, and paid particular attention to their 'infamous libels' and their usurpation of the king's right to control printing. It also required loyal subjects to ensure that any 'seditious pamphlets' which came into their possession were turned over to a local JP.¹⁹ The commitment to print as a medium for engaging

pp. 244, 294, 348, C115/109/8854; the proclamation was also translated into Dutch and distributed in the Netherlands where the Covenanters had printing presses and a network of sympathizers: Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC), *Report on the manuscripts of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu* (London, 1900), p. 125; *Placat und verklrung... betreffend die auffrhrischen practicken von alichen in Schottland* (Leiden, 1639).

¹⁴ Charles endorsed such confrontational language and directed that the proclamation's more extensive sister work, the *Large declaration*, be written in a similar 'smart' style: Laing, ed., *Baillie*, II, p. 430; also *ibid.*, p. 487.

¹⁵ Larkin and Hughes, eds., *Proclamations*, II, p. 667.

¹⁶ On this, see the comments of Nicholas Estwick relating to the promulgation of the Book of Sports: Bodl., MS Tanner 71, fo. 187.

¹⁷ Henry Valentine, *God save the king* (1639); Henry Peacham, *The duty of all true subjects to their king* (1639); Thomas Morton, *A sermon preached before the kings most excellent majestie in... Durham* (1639). Preaching before Charles in Durham Cathedral on 5 May, Morton, referred to the 27 Feb. proclamation as evidence of Charles's clemency which, he claimed, would be 'an astonishment to posterity' (p. 41). Charles had, however, intervened to change Morton's sermon text before it was printed, specifically removing claims that Calvin never authorized resistance to higher powers: TNA, SP16/437/56. On the wider clerical campaign, see also the visitation sermon at Canterbury in Apr. 1639 mentioned in Richard Culmer, *Cathedrall newes from Canterbury* (1644), p. 9.

¹⁸ Sharpe, *Image wars*, pp. 144–89.

¹⁹ HMC, *Manuscripts of the Earl Cowper* (3 vols., 1888–9), II, pp. 216–17. Charles would soon issue another proclamation against 'libellous and seditious pamphlets and discourses sent from

with public opinion in the February proclamation could also be seen in its advertising the forthcoming publication of the authorized narrative of Charles's dealings with the Scots, the *Large declaration*. Through his parish clergy, Charles informed his English and Welsh subjects that this extensive work would 'disannul and shame . . . [the Scots'] fair, but false words'.²⁰

Several Scottish commentators remarked on this attempt to reach out to the broader English and Welsh public.²¹ Robert Baillie smarted that the Covenanters had been 'declared, in all the churches of England, the foulest of traitors and rebels that ever breathed'.²² Scottish negotiators at Berwick following the First Bishops' War took particular notice of the proclamation supplied to England's parish churches, and requested the suppression of all 'proclamations and manifestoes' defaming the Scots. This suggests their disquiet as well as recognition of the proclamation's potential to reach and influence a large audience.²³ It is also telling that the Covenanters felt it necessary to make a printed response to the February proclamation, the *Remonstrance*, which again suggests an acknowledgment of the fact that Charles was exploring a fruitful avenue of public relations which could prove damaging if not addressed.²⁴ The *Remonstrance* observed uneasily that English 'eares . . . have been filled with this proclamation in their particular kirks', and expressed Scottish sorrow that English 'kirks and hearing are taken up with such discourses, and would wonder at their credulitie if they should be beleaved'. The authors of the *Remonstrance* expressed the pious hope that this exercise in public politics would not produce 'seminaries of sedition' (one wonders whether Charles would have appreciated the irony), and fretted about such publication among the English who could not 'controle the untruth of them'.²⁵

Despite these fears, several commentators acknowledged that Charles's attempt to convince his subjects through a proclamation in the nation's churches had not been as successful as he had wished. The Venetian ambassador observed that the king had hoped the proclamation would render

Scotland' after the appearance of the Covenanters' *An information from the states of the kingdome of Scotland*: Larkin and Hughes, eds., *Proclamations*, II, pp. 703–5; Como, 'Secret printing', pp. 55–6 and n. 31.

²⁰ Such comments suggest, *pace* Waurechen, 'Covenanter propaganda', that appeals to truth and an imagined rational audience through printed propaganda were not the preserve of the Covenanters.

²¹ See also the report of Covenanter reactions in BL, Add. MS 11045, fo. 5.

²² Laing, ed., *Baillie*, I, pp. 189, 487. Reading the proclamation in English churches was singled out by John Vicars in a discussion of the 'foule calumnies and scoffes' which had been cast upon the Covenanters in this period: John Vicars, *God in the mount* (1642), p. 16.

²³ G. M. Paul ed., *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston, Lord Wariston, 1639* (Edinburgh, 1896), pp. 69, 71, 73.

²⁴ John Spalding, *The history of the troubles and memorable transactions in Scotland and England from the year 1624 to 1645* (2 vols., Aberdeen, 1792), I, p. 144.

²⁵ [Alexander Henderson], *The remonstrance of the nobility . . . within the kingdome of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1639), pp. 26–7.

the Covenanters 'odious to all', but that this had failed, adding that, on the contrary, 'everyone applauds their steadfastness'.²⁶ One of those who applauded was the Northamptonshire puritan, Robert Woodford, who read the proclamation as a dangerous text produced by evil men about the king who were opposed to the true religion.²⁷ Notwithstanding these downbeat appraisals, evidence from Ashby Magna in Leicestershire provides a glimpse of why the Covenanters were so exercised by the proclamation. Here, the vicar, Thomas Mason, read the proclamation 'against the sedition through some in Scotland' in the parish church and followed this with a reading of the homily on obedience. This, in turn, had caused a local yeoman, William Musson, 'to take more special notice' of a conversation which a lawyer, John Owenby, had about the Scots. In his discussions, Owenby quoted a passage from the Book of Jeremiah that seemed to be directed against the rule of 'priests'.²⁸ Musson responded positively to hearing the proclamation, or at least felt that it provided an authorizing framework for dutiful action in reporting Owenby to the authorities. A single example is hardly a ringing endorsement of the proclamation's success, but it suggests that the Covenanters' worries about the effects of broadcasting the monarchy's message of duty and obedience through the nation's churches were far from groundless.²⁹

Stung by the proclamation, the Covenanters countered with a new propaganda offensive and believed that they had 'lost nought by that most injurious dealing; for our innocencie was so well remonstrat in print'.³⁰ The escalation in printed exchanges continued when the *Large declaration* appeared shortly after the February proclamation. This was, however, a folio volume of some 430 pages which may have helped explain the king's position to the gentry and clergy who could read it in their studies, but seems to have had only limited value as a tool of popular propaganda and broader political mobilization.³¹ Alongside the production of weighty volumes of public explanation, then, the clergy continued to be a valuable resource in the wider context of explaining and justifying the king's dealings with the Scots during 1639–40.

Numerous ministers were accused by hostile parishioners of using the church as a stage for denouncing the northern rebels. Edward Wallis of Capel in Kent, for example, was said to 'raile' against the Covenanters both inside and outside

²⁶ *Calendar of state papers, Venetian, 1636–1639*, pp. 509–10.

²⁷ John Fielding, 'Opposition to the personal rule of Charles I: the diary of Robert Woodford, 1637–1641', *Historical Journal*, 31 (1988), pp. 769–88, at p. 781.

²⁸ TNA, SP16/423/44(ii), 44(iv). See also SP16/425/16, 16(i), 16/430/10.

²⁹ It should also be noticed that one newsletter writer observed that since the proclamation was read, many Scottish books had been turned over to Justice Longe of Clerkenwell as required: BL, Add. MS 11045, fo. 1v. See also TNA, C115/109/8854.

³⁰ Laing, ed., *Baillie*, 1, p. 188.

³¹ [Walter Balcanquhal], *A large declaration concerning the late tumults in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1639). Cf. Kishlansky, 'Lesson in loyalty', p. 23, who offers a more positive reading of the *Large declaration* as part of a 'skilful propaganda campaign'.

the pulpit, 'callinge them dogs and divells; and saies he knows not how to call them bade enough'.³² Not infrequently, these outbursts were occasioned by the dissemination and discussion of government-produced texts. Important here was another controversial proclamation which was issued on 20 August 1640, the same day on which Charles began his journey north to engage the Covenanter army.³³ It branded those who were invading England as rebels and traitors, but also held out an olive branch by promising that they would be pardoned if they returned home and submitted to royal authority.³⁴

Alongside this proclamation, a broadside prayer for the king in his expedition against the Scots was also issued and ordered to be read by ministers in all churches immediately after prayers for the queen and the royal children.³⁵ This was written by Archbishop Laud and was adapted from a prayer he wrote the previous year when Charles's expeditionary force had moved north.³⁶ This earlier prayer referred to the king facing down anonymous 'treacherous enemies', but in the August 1640 version these had become 'rebels' and 'trayterous subjects' who had 'cast off all obedience to their anointed sovereign'. The change of tone reflected altered military and political realities.

³² L. B. Larking, ed., *Proceedings... in Kent* (Camden Society, 1st ser., 80, London, 1862), p. 149.

³³ S. R. Gardiner, *The history of England* (10 vols., London, 1883-4), ix, p. 189. For problems distributing the proclamation in the north, see *Calendar of state papers, domestic, 1640*, p. 631. The same day, Charles also issued proclamations demanding the payment of arrears of ship money, and another requiring those holding land by knight's service to join his campaign or pay a composition: Larkin and Hughes, eds., *Proclamations*, II, pp. 728-32; HMC, *De L'Isle and Dudley manuscripts* (6 vols., London, 1925-66), vi, p. 317; M. A. E. Green, ed., *Diary of John Rous* (Camden Society, 1st ser., 66, London, 1856), pp. 92-3.

³⁴ Larkin and Hughes, eds., *Proclamations*, II, pp. 726-8. Charles had previously declared recalcitrant Covenanters to be 'open rebels and traitors' in a proclamation issued in Scotland in Apr. 1639, but 'printed and published all over England'. This was a response to the *Remonstrance*, and seems to have been the target for an act passed by the Scottish parliament in June 1640 against 'unlawful and unjust proclamations'. The suppression of such anti-Covenanter print in England and Ireland was one of the demands made by Scottish commissioners at the Treaty of London: *Calendar of state papers, domestic, 1639*, pp. 40-1, 65, 77-81; [Charles I], *To our lovits, heraulds, maissers, messengers, pursuivants and sheriffs* (1639); Laing, ed., *Baillie*, I, pp. 202, 297, 300; *A remonstrance concerning the present troubles* (Edinburgh, 1640), pp. 33-9; *Lords Journal (LJ)*, IV, p. 159; BL, Harleian MS 6424, fos. 17v-18; John Raithby, ed., *Statutes of the realm* (11 vols. in 12, London, 1963), v, p. 123.

³⁵ *A prayer for the kings majestie in his expedition against the rebels of Scotland* (1640); Laud, *Works*, III, p. 106. For the directive that this be read by the minister and not an inferior official, see TNA, SP16/468/76. Bulstrode Whitlocke recalled the proclamation and prayer as part of the same propaganda initiative: *Memorials of the English affairs* (4 vols., Oxford, 1853), I, p. 102. For discussions of earlier state prayers, see J. P. D. Cooper, "'O Lorde save the kynng": Tudor royal propaganda and the power of prayer', in George Bernard and Steven Gunn, eds., *Authority and consent in Tudor England* (Aldershot, 2002), pp. 179-96, who describes such propaganda as 'unquestionably directed towards a mass audience' (p. 179), and Natalie Mears, 'Public worship and political participation in Elizabethan England', *Journal of British Studies*, 51 (2012), pp. 4-25.

³⁶ *A prayer for the kings majestie in his northern expedition* (1639); Laud, *Works*, III, p. 105.

The ecclesiastical authorities attempted to police compliance in reading this prayer, suggesting a concerted attempt to rally people behind the war in the north.³⁷ A glimpse of such enforcement comes from Kent in September 1640, when the puritan ministers, Thomas Wilson of Otham and Edward Bright of Goudhurst, appeared at Faversham before Vicar-General Sir Nathaniel Brent for refusing to read the prayer.³⁸ Bright was suspended while Wilson argued that only prayers authorized by parliament should be read publicly, and that this was an 'arbitrary' prayer. Proceedings were begun against him but were cut short by the meeting of the Long Parliament.³⁹ The authorities were clearly attempting to flush out Covenanter sympathizers among the ministry, as well as to ensure that a 'party line' against the Scots was hammering out of England's churches.

Parish readings of these ephemeral and historically neglected texts were important occasions in the early history of royalist attempts at political mobilization, and they left their mark in the memories of puritans and parliamentarians. No less a document than the Grand Remonstrance included a clause denouncing the clergy's enthusiasm for war against Scotland and mentioned specifically the prayer describing the Scots as rebels, citing the document as evidence of a design 'to put the two nations in blood and make them irreconcilable'.⁴⁰ John Bond, a pro-Scottish lecturer in Exeter, recalled a formidable nationwide campaign in a sermon of 1642. He described how 'generally and publicly' the Covenanters had been 'preached against, prayed against, proclaimed, disclaimed, exclaimed against throughout all their churches'.⁴¹ The combative Kentish puritan, Richard Culmer, in his attack on Canterbury Cathedral in 1644, asked rhetorically 'How often was the bishops prayer (or rather execration) against the Scots . . . read in the cathedrall, with a hundred cathedrall bellowing and bawling "A-A-Amens" after that prelatial prayer?'⁴² There were also contests over the public presentation of the August 1640 proclamation itself. Baillie later recalled that pro-Scottish Londoners

³⁷ TNA, SP16/467/147, 16/468/76, 16/469/52, 16/470/102.

³⁸ For Bright, see *Commons Journal (CJ)*, II, pp. 518, 569; Parliamentary Archives (PA), HL/PO/JO/10/1/119; J[ames] W[ilcock], *A challenge sent to Master E[dward] B[right], a semi-separatist* (1641), p. 6; idem, *The true English Protestants apology* (1642); Larking, ed., *Proceedings . . . in Kent*, pp. 144–5.

³⁹ George Swinnock, *The life and death of Mr Th[omas] Wilson* (1672), pp. 14–16. Wilson's case was raised in the early days of the Long Parliament by Sir Edward Dering, whose electoral candidacy Wilson had supported in both the Short and the Long Parliaments, and to whom Wilson dedicated a pamphlet in 1641: Maija Jansson, ed., *Proceedings in the opening session of the Long Parliament* (7 vols., Rochester, NY, and Woodbridge, 2000–7), I, pp. 76, 81–2, 84–5, 368, 372, 379, 382; TNA, SP16/471/49; Larking, ed., *Proceedings . . . in Kent*, pp. 38–9; Thomas Wilson, *Dauids zeale for Zion* (1641), sigs. A3–A4v.

⁴⁰ S. R. Gardiner, ed., *Constitutional documents of the puritan revolution, 1625–1660* (Oxford, 1906), p. 219.

⁴¹ John Bond, *A doore of hope* (1642), p. 22. See also Vicars, *God in the mount*, pp. 22–3, and Nehemiah Wallington's comments in BL, Add. MS 21935, fo. 93.

⁴² Culmer, *Cathedrall neues*, p. 8.

had fixed to the posted proclamation an additional paper which declared the king's northern subjects to be 'honest men' rather than rebels.⁴³

A charge of reading the prayer and proclamation sometimes formed part of the case against 'scandalous' clergy years after the event. The readings had clearly been charged occasions in many places, with the clergyman often providing his own political gloss and commentary on the authorized text.⁴⁴ Thus Richard Watts, minister of Mildenhall, Suffolk, was said to have 'commented upon the King's procklimation against the Scotts, calling them traitors & villans', while in Essex Gregory Holland 'prayd for their confusion'.⁴⁵ A detailed description has survived from Lincolnshire of how Hugh Barcroft of Wilborne read the prayer against the Scots every Sunday before dilating upon its core theme of rebellion in his sermons. Like many ministers he was portrayed as 'railing' against the Covenanters, describing them as worse than papists and barbarians. He exhorted his parishioners to 'fight and strike for your God and kinge'. When his passion overwhelmed him on this subject and 'hee could say noe more against them', he turned to another authorized text, the homily of obedience, and 'perswaded his people to have an evill opinion' of the Scots.⁴⁶ The conjunction of print and speech comes across powerfully, with the politics of persuasion framed in terms of the duty to defend church and king and finding its inspiration in these widely disseminated texts.

The glosses ministers put on these publications drew on long-standing anti-Scottish prejudices in the hope that this would help to sway opinion among their congregations.⁴⁷ Barcroft compared the Scots with barbarians lacking the lineaments of civility. Without civil codes, barbarians' behaviour could become unbridled, and many ministers exploited anxieties about foreign invaders when expounding on the king's texts. These included William Walker of Winston, Suffolk, who maintained that the Scots' chief purpose in invading England was 'to ravish men's wives & to deflower virgins'.⁴⁸ Similar opinions had been voiced at Middleton in Essex the year before when the parson, William Frost, had read out the king's February proclamation before declaring that, 'though ye Scotts pretended their coming was for maintenance of ye Gospell & liberty of the subject, yet the end of their coming was to take away o[u]r estates & abuse o[u]r

⁴³ Laing, ed., *Baillie*, 1, p. 261.

⁴⁴ For concern about the 'venting of private thoughts' during the reading of this supposedly 'public' prayer, see Michael Braddick and Mark Greengrass, eds., 'The letters of Sir Cheney Culpeper, 1641–1657', in *Seventeenth-century political and financial papers* (Camden Society 5th ser., 7, London, 1996), pp. 158–9.

⁴⁵ Clive Holmes, ed., *The Suffolk committees for scandalous ministers, 1644–1646* (Suffolk Records Society, 13, Ipswich, 1970), p. 34; BL, Add. MS 5829, fo. 65.

⁴⁶ J. W. F. Hill, ed., 'The royalist clergy of Lincolnshire', *Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society*, n.s., 2 (1941 for 1938), pp. 34–127, at pp. 46, 49, 52.

⁴⁷ For this, see Mark Stoye, *Soldiers and strangers: an ethnic history of the English civil war* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2005), esp. ch. 4.

⁴⁸ Holmes, ed., *Suffolk committees*, p. 57.

wives'.⁴⁹ The king's assertion that the Covenanters' profession of religious motivation was merely cover for far more sinister designs was taken in new directions here. Print became a point of departure for partisan elaboration rather than simply a script to be followed slavishly, and 'reading priests' were not necessarily confined to their texts. Uncontrolled lust and sexual violence have often been ascribed to foreigners and invaders, but Walker and Frost also invoked an established anti-puritan discourse which portrayed religious zealotry and enthusiasm as a form of studied dissimulation under which could be found all kinds of immoderate lusts and sexual excesses.⁵⁰ These ideas would be integrated into the composite stereotype of the Roundhead when it emerged in late 1641 and early 1642.

The readings of the August 1640 prayer and proclamation offered occasions for public demonstrations of loyalties which anticipated the construction of parties in 1642. In Alburgh, Norfolk, the rector, Stephen Hurry, described the Scots as rebels, adding that 'they were rogues & knaves that did not read the prayer against them which was in print'.⁵¹ Here, the prayer was specifically seen as a marker of political affiliation; for Hurry, men like Wilson and Bright in Kent were clearly on the other side of a political divide. It is worth recalling Conrad Russell's insight that anti-Scottishness (which can be read as a species of a broader anti-puritanism) in 1639–40 formed an important component of the intellectual and cultural matrix from which royalism was later to emerge.⁵² Although fixed lines of allegiance were certainly not drawn in 1640, the ministers' reading of such texts aroused passions and generated debate between political opponents with different conceptions of their religious and secular loyalties.

When Sir Cheney Culpeper discussed forms of public prayer in correspondence with John Dury in the autumn of 1641, he doubted their efficacy partly because it was the minister who chose the subject matter. He called to mind how ministers might 'impose suche as the reste consente not to, & for example of this I will goe noe farther then the prayer againste the Scotts in which (though from another kinde of hande) the analogy of reason holdes, & to which my owne eares hearde very fewe amens'.⁵³ In Culpeper's part of the Kentish Weald, there was little enthusiasm for Laud's prayer (although it should

⁴⁹ BL, Add. MS 5829, fo. 32. See BL, Harleian MS 6852, fos. 141, 295, and Stoye, *Soldiers and strangers*, pp. 84–5, for later royalist allegations of the Scots entering England to take men's lands.

⁵⁰ Tim Harris, "A saint in shewe, a devill in deede": moral panics and anti-puritanism in seventeenth-century England', in David Lemmings and Claire Walker, eds., *Moral panics, the media and the law in early modern England* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 96–116.

⁵¹ Bodl., MS Walker c. 6, fo. 47.

⁵² Conrad Russell, *The causes of the English civil war* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 15–16; idem, *The fall of the British monarchies, 1637–1642* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 83–5, 195, 272.

⁵³ Braddick and Greengrass, eds., 'Letters of Sir Cheney Culpeper', p. 158. It is worth noting that Richard Culmer later glossed positive responses to the prayer as 'cathedrall' amens: above, p. 305.

be noted that there was some), but the prayer's significance and impact was nevertheless suggested by Culpeper's use of it as an example for his argument a year after it was delivered. That the proclamation and prayer were notable attempts at public mobilization is further indicated by the fact that charges relating to their reading arose in allegations made against royalist ministers years later. The charges suggest that readings of these neglected texts were significant occasions in the formation of political loyalties in 1639–40. They also indicate the importance of print in the polemical memories of parliamentarians, and how such set-piece readings came to be incorporated into the construction of political malignancy in the 1640s. Their status as 'malignant texts' can be seen from the case of Charles Davell of Norwich, a supporter of Bishop Wren, identified in February 1642 as one of the city clergymen 'least affected' to parliament.⁵⁴ A set of charges drawn up by his parishioners maintained that, in the autumn of 1644, he 'did use on the fast day the same paper which was inioyned to be read when the kings maiesty went against the Scotts proclaiming them rebels'.⁵⁵ What is striking is that Davell had kept this broadside prayer for four years, and saw an opportunity for its polemical application on a parliamentary fast day.⁵⁶ For Davell, this was clearly not an ephemeral broadside, but rather an important legitimating text which helped to describe and understand the lineages and connections between Scottish insurgency in 1640 and parliamentary rebellion in 1644. It is also striking for the ways in which the king's word, disseminated in August 1640, contained messages that spoke to, and helped articulate, a discourse of partisan civil war royalism in very different political contexts.

Covenanter and puritan attitudes to the 1640 texts also reveal that these documents were more significant than most previous scholarship has acknowledged. At Laud's trial, one of the charges levelled against him by the Scottish commissioners was that their entreaties against the 1637 Prayer Book had been 'answered with terrible proclamations... Canterbury procured us to be declared rebels and traitors, in all parish kirkes of England... Canterbury kindleth warre against us'.⁵⁷ As in 1639, the fact that this proclamation had been publicized through the churches of England and Wales clearly alarmed

⁵⁴ Matthew Reynolds, *Godly reformers and their opponents in early modern England: religion in Norwich, c. 1560–1643* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 240–2.

⁵⁵ BL, Add. MS 15903, fo. 75. It was probably not by accident that the document throughout referred to the minister as 'Charles Devill'.

⁵⁶ An interesting parallel here was the public display of Charles I's 1643 letter of thanks to the Cornish in the county's parish churches throughout the first civil war: Mark Stoye, *West Britons: Cornish identities and the early modern British state* (Exeter, 2002), pp. 160–2. I am grateful to Prof. Stoye for drawing my attention to this.

⁵⁷ *The charge of the Scottish commissioners against Canterburie and the Lieutenant of Ireland* (1641), p. 15; Jansson, ed., *Proceedings of the Long Parliament*, 1, p. 646; Laud, *Works*, III, pp. 360–1; HMC, *De L'Isle and Dudley manuscripts*, VI, p. 377. A manuscript ballad of 1640–1 reported how 'little Lawd will pay for his fraud/And cunning innovation/ For service-booke & the eares that hee tooke/And the Scottish proclamation': Bodl., MS Rawlinson Poet. 26, fo. 123v.

the Covenanters. It is telling that they and their parliamentary allies were especially keen that Scottish loyalty should be proclaimed 'particularly in all parish churches of his Majesties dominions' at thanksgiving services for the Anglo-Scottish peace treaty held on 7 September 1641.⁵⁸ Hyde later recalled how pro-Covenanter ministers had seized this opportunity 'to magnify the Parliament and the Scots, and to infuse as much malignity into the people against those who were not of that faction as their wit and malice could suggest'.⁵⁹ The Presbyterian John Vicars wondered 'what said our Arminian foul-mouth'd priests to this?', and reflected on the providential manner in which 'those tounge[s] that had so taunted them [the Covenanters] yea and in their pulpits too, should now be forced even in the face of their congregations to give themselves the lye'.⁶⁰ Seen in this light, the order to proclaim the Scots' loyalty stands revealed as a calculated ploy designed specifically to target the sites which had previously championed the king's anti-Covenanter texts. The comments of Vicars and the Scottish commissioners make it plain that Charles's forays into the realm of public politics were seen as extremely dangerous by his opponents.

The royal voice was louder and more pervasive during the twilight of the personal rule than has usually been allowed, but its character and intonation were familiar from 1629.⁶¹ Both in 1629 and in 1639–40 Charles issued public appeals for obedience, rather than invitations to begin a discussion. Nevertheless, we should appreciate the fact that 1639–40 witnessed a re-engagement with print and people by Charles and his ministers after the long silence that had fallen in 1629. It is not the case that royalist appeals to the public only materialized in 1642 as a reluctant response to parliament's media barrage. The Covenanters had already driven Charles to undertake several nationwide propaganda exercises through the machinery of the church, exercises which they had regarded as potentially very threatening.

In his 'Annales' of contemporary affairs, Bulstrode Whitlocke discussed the polarizing effect that the Scottish war had on public debate. Perhaps with the clergy particularly in mind, he noted that those 'who favoured the popish and prelatial ways did sufficiently inveigh against the Covenanters', but their impact was not what the king would have wished, for 'generally the rest of the people favoured and approved their [the Covenanters'] feelings... many not only favouring but joining with and assisting the proceedings of the Scots'.⁶² The stock of the clergy under Laud had been eroded, and their value as propagandists for the king had suffered accordingly. Baillie reflected in December 1640 that the clergy were 'made vile in the eyes of all', and were

⁵⁸ *CJ*, II, pp. 274, 276; *LJ*, IV, pp. 379, 383; TNA, SP16/483/100; *An ordinance of parliament for a day of publicke thanksgiving for the peace concluded between England and Scotland* (1641). This clause was a later addition to the original ordinance secured at the commissioners' request.

⁵⁹ Hyde, *History of the rebellion*, I, p. 385.

⁶⁰ Vicars, *God in the mount*, pp. 58–9.

⁶¹ Gardiner, ed., *Constitutional documents*, pp. 83–99; Sharpe, *Image wars*, pp. 158–60.

⁶² Whitlocke, *Memorials*, I, pp. 105–6.

seen as part of the problem, rather than part of the solution.⁶³ Instead of churches acting as rallying points for the offensive against the Scots as Charles hoped, they became targets of opposition, particularly in south-east England. Here, waves of iconoclasm, often initiated by the very soldiers the king was deploying against his northern enemies, purged parishes of their altar rails and Laudian impedimenta. Charles's defeat at Newburn and the calling of the Long Parliament exposed the clergy to a firestorm of invective from which there was little refuge.⁶⁴ It was, however, especially active Laudians and ceremonialists such as Richard Drake at Radwinter who suffered most, and many moderate clergymen must have concentrated on keeping a low profile and tacking to the prevailing winds.⁶⁵ As David Cressy and others have shown, from the spring of 1641, calls for radical religious reform, the abolition of episcopacy and far-reaching constitutional change strengthened the position of those who argued that such developments led inexorably to sectarian immoderation and social dissolution.⁶⁶ In such an atmosphere the clergy could reclaim their authority as the voices of religious and social order and as spokesmen for a wronged and beleaguered monarch.

III

Although some excellent research has been done on the clergy and royalist propaganda after the outbreak of the civil war, little attention has been paid to their role in promoting authorized print in the year before fighting began, thus consideration now turns to this dynamic, with a particular concentration on the 'paper war' between king and parliament following Charles I's flight from London. The article maintains a focus on the ephemera of official print, particularly the proclamations and declarations issued from the presses at York, Shrewsbury, and Oxford. During this period, such authorized publications continued to have a significant political and polemical force which has been considered only fleetingly by most historians. Moreover, the attempts by parliament to suppress the king's declarations and silence his ministers reveal widespread alarm about their influence.

In January 1642, Charles fled London for fear of a popular revolt and began mobilizing support to face down his parliamentary opponents. From around March, he directed large numbers of proclamations and declarations throughout the country for distribution by sheriffs in the shires and mayors in cities

⁶³ Laing, ed., *Baillie*, 1, p. 286.

⁶⁴ Bodl., MS Clarendon 20, fo. 13; BL, Add. MS 11045, fo. 144v; HMC, *De L'Isle and Dudley manuscripts*, vi, p. 359.

⁶⁵ For Drake, see John Walter, "Affronts & insolencies": the voices of Radwinter and popular opposition to Laudianism', *English Historical Review*, 122 (2007), pp. 35–60.

⁶⁶ David Cressy, *England on edge: crisis and revolution, 1640–1642* (Oxford, 2006), chs. 10–11, 16.

and larger towns.⁶⁷ These, in turn, were to disperse and disseminate the royal message through the clergy and lower officials.⁶⁸ Ministers were a critical channel of communication for publications such as the king's declarations over the militia, with reluctant clergy sometimes pressurized into reading such messages by lay officials.⁶⁹ The king in particular needed to publicize his position through a supportive parish clergy because the loss of London and its presses placed him at a serious disadvantage regarding the volume of print he was able to produce. Charles acknowledged his difficulties here, requiring officials in north Wales to disperse copies of a recent declaration, 'having noe other way my selfe to make it publique, these men having restrained the use of my presses at London & the univ[e]rsities'.⁷⁰

Ministers' political allegiances in 1642 were partly defined and advertised by their public attitudes to print, and discriminating between texts was seen as an important political signifier.⁷¹ Indeed, from the spring of 1642, the authority behind particular texts became a core issue of political loyalty and reliability. For many clergymen, only publications from the king could be trusted as truthful. George Beardsall, minister of Arkesden in Cambridgeshire, discriminated between two books, one from parliament and one from the king, brought to him by his wife. He said that the parliamentarians 'write nothing but lyes, give me the other for that is true since it comes from the Kings owne printer'.⁷² In Deeping St James, Lincolnshire, the minister was reported to have said in March 1642 that 'it was treason to obey any order of parliament unless it had the king's hand and seal to it'.⁷³ The materiality of the publications was emphasized here; the 'correct' texts carried marks that bestowed political legitimacy. Charles's declarations and proclamations displayed the royal arms, particularly prominently in the case of proclamations. Even the unlettered were thus presented with a familiar badge of authority and authenticity; a connection with a more settled past when the hierarchies of order were understood and respected.⁷⁴

Contemporaries recognized that the propaganda offensive of early to mid-1642 provided the king with a significant popularity boost.

⁶⁷ Flintshire Record Office (FRO), D/DM 271; Derbyshire Record Office, D258/34/70; BL, Add. MS 71534, fo. 22; Wilson H. Coates, Vernon F. Snow and Anne Steele Young, eds., *Private journals of the Long Parliament* (hereafter *PJLP*) (3 vols., New Haven, CT, 1982–92), II, pp. 45–7, 49, 84, 99, 104, 107, 112, 137–8, III, pp. 107, 145, 148, 183, 206, 224, 245–6, 248; *CJ*, II, pp. 421, 496, 499, 503, 506, 510, 512, 650, 652–3, 643, 669, 673, 677, 684, 696; Anthony Fletcher, *The outbreak of the English civil war* (London, 1981), pp. 291–5; *A declaration... concerning the publishing of divers proclamations... in his majesties name* (1642).

⁶⁸ FRO, D/DM 271/38, 44; J. Willis Bund, ed., *Diary of Henry Townshend of Elmley Lovett, 1640–1663* (2 vols., London, 1920), II, p. 48. Cf. BL, Add. MS 70106, fo. 165.

⁶⁹ *PJLP*, III, p. 37.

⁷⁰ FRO, D/DM 271/2; *His majesties speech to the inhabitants of Denbigh and Flintshire* (1642), p. 6.

⁷¹ Bodl., MS Nalson 2, fos. 72, 79.

⁷² BL, Add. MS 15672, fo. 42v.

⁷³ *PJLP*, II, pp. 337, 341, III, pp. 9, 12; *CJ*, II, pp. 577, 603–4.

⁷⁴ The royal insignia was not wholly absent from parliamentary publications (for example, BL, Thomason 669, f.5 (1)) but it was used sparingly and disappeared as time went on.

Edward Hyde recalled that Charles 'caused all his declarations, messages, and answers, to be industriously communicated throughout his dominions; of which he found good effects, and by their reception discovered that the people were universally not so irrecoverably poisoned as he before had cause to fear'.⁷⁵ The Venetian ambassador was equally positive, while the godly minister of Rotherham maintained that Charles's publications had a 'better acceptance with the world than those of the House of Commons'.⁷⁶ On 1 June 1642, parliament was moved to address the threat of such propaganda after considering a proclamation and an accompanying declaration of 27 May which forbade complying with the militia ordinance. One reason that this initiative came under particular scrutiny was because MPs had formed the impression that the king had ordered the texts to be read in all parish churches.⁷⁷ A joint committee of both houses was established, and part of its brief was to produce a declaration outlining 'how it is illegal to injoin ministers to publish and read proclamations and declarations in the churches'.⁷⁸ A week later, Sir Simonds D'Ewes reported that the committee had met several times, but noted that members had been mistaken; there had been no royal instruction to read these texts in churches. Tellingly, however, he added that any such directive 'would now much strengthen such a declaration being added to it'.⁷⁹ A new committee was then charged with drawing up a declaration to prevent such material being published by local officials.⁸⁰

The declaration does not seem to have emerged from committee, but the threat of disseminating the royal word in parish churches remained and grew more troubling. Particularly important was a royal declaration of 21 June 1642 concerning the militia, which became known under the title of a later reprint as 'The declaration concerning leavies'.⁸¹ Its title page carried the injunction that it was the king's 'expresse pleasure . . . that our answer be read and published throughout all churches and chappells' of the kingdom. That the king had not hitherto specifically targeted the clergy with his printed addresses is somewhat surprising given the reaction such tactics had elicited from the Scots in 1639–40. The Commons' misapprehension that the proclamation and declaration of 27 May 1642 had been ordered to be read in churches suggests that the practice may have been widespread without such explicit directions. Charles's decision to order the reading of the 21 June declaration in parish

⁷⁵ Hyde, *History of the rebellion*, II, p. 74. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 48 n. 2, 69.

⁷⁶ *Calendar of state papers, Venetian, 1642–1643*, pp. 37, 61, 68, 72, 83; Charles Jackson, ed., 'The life of Master John Shaw', *Yorkshire diaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (Surtees Society, 45, Durham, 1877), p. 197.

⁷⁷ Larkin and Hughes, eds., *Proclamations*, II, pp. 767–9; *His majesties answer to the petition . . . presented to him at York, May 23, 1642* (1642); *CJ*, II, pp. 593–4; *PJLP*, II, pp. 386–7.

⁷⁸ *CJ*, II, p. 597; *PJLP*, II, pp. 398, 402, III, pp. 17–18.

⁷⁹ *PJLP*, III, p. 37.

⁸⁰ *CJ*, II, p. 611.

⁸¹ *His majesties answer to a printed paper, intituled, a new declaration of the Lords and Commons of the 21st of June 1642* (York, 1642); *His majesties declaration concerning leavies* (1642). A number of editions were produced, including two with black letter typeface for wider consumption.

churches may, in fact, have been motivated by the clear alarm expressed in parliament over the 27 May publications. D'Ewes's assessment that such a directive would 'much strengthen' royal pronouncements, as well as the Commons' continued efforts to draft a declaration against such practices, may have encouraged the king to adopt this deliberately provocative, but potentially fruitful, tactic.

Parliament's nervousness about the conjunction of loyalist clergy and royalist print can be seen in its concerted efforts to stop the clergy publicizing the declaration concerning levies.⁸² On 5 July, parliament issued an order that no official, including 'parsons, vicars and curates', should 'publish or proclaim . . . any . . . proclamation, declaration, or papers which are . . . contrary to any ordinance of parliament'.⁸³ The Venetian ambassador noted that the clergy had 'promptly' acted to make the declaration of levies 'known to everyone', but that parliament 'heard this news with great indignation'. He added that 'carried away by furious indignation, parliament has caused the arrest of the ministers who were only doing their duty in fulfilling the commands of his Majesty'.⁸⁴ On 13 July, several London clergy were questioned before the Commons for reading the declaration, with the curate of St Giles Cripplegate informing the House that he read it only because it had been published in other churches, while the curate of St Paul Covent Garden maintained that he had read it after being threatened by the messenger delivering it.⁸⁵ It is notable here that we have curates rather than ministers reading these texts, a tactic possibly adopted to shield the incumbent from potential parliamentary recrimination in the hostile streets of London. It is significant, however, that in the vast majority of instances for which we have evidence, it was the minister who read the king's publications and not the curate or parish clerk.

An illuminating account of an individual clergyman reading the declaration of levies survives from Hartest and Boxted in Suffolk. The minister, Frederick Gibb, was challenged and told that the declaration had been prohibited by parliament, but Gibb had read it anyway, saying he would 'venture his bloude & fortunes for it & the Kings commands'. The business of dissemination did not, however, stop at the church door, and the information against Gibb offers a glimpse of how more informal avenues of discussion and transmission were pursued. Gibb, we are told, had 'in a turbulent way gone one [sic] publishing the said declaration' after the service, and gathered people together in 'heapes at shopes and greenes'. Here, he expanded on the declaration's message, blaming parliament for its illegal actions before directing other clergy to follow

⁸² At its appearance, one parliamentary diarist seized immediately on the directive that it be published in all churches: *PJLP*, III, p. 164.

⁸³ *CJ*, II, p. 652; *LJ*, V, p. 182; BL, Thomason 669, f.5 (54).

⁸⁴ *Calendar of state papers, Venetian, 1642-1643*, pp. 100-1.

⁸⁵ *PJLP*, III, pp. 210-11; *CJ*, II, p. 669; *Some speciall passages*, 8 (12-19 July 1642), p. 47.

his example by publishing the text as widely as possible.⁸⁶ Gibb provides an example of why parliament was so keen to close down this avenue of royalist communication. As the clergy regained their influence through 1641, regarded as bulwarks of order and stability in the face of sectarian bogeymen and a disorienting cacophony of radical religious and political voices, so their capacity to translate and mediate the royalist message increased. Church services provided a captive audience and a setting redolent of the royal supremacy in church and state, a setting which was framed by the symbols of spiritual and political hierarchy. Yet Gibb was also active in mobilizing informal networks of communication which had the potential to reach across social and geographical boundaries.

Ministers' importance as disseminators of print also emerges from later accusations of refusals to read parliamentary texts. Although recent studies have emphasized growing access to print in the 1640s, we should be wary of taking such arguments too far and neglecting the continued importance in local society of literate figures like the clergy. Ministers acted as interpreters of print and were agents from which webs of oral communication radiated. For many, the parish church remained a key site of access to print. Although the large parliamentary print runs of 9,000 or more were superior to those of the royalists, such figures still represented one text per parish in England and Wales, and in 1642 parliament, like the king, targeted sheriffs and constables as the primary distributors of print in the provinces.⁸⁷ The co-operation of local officials thus remained highly significant for both sides in communicating their messages to a wider audience. Claims that ministers failed to read parliamentary literature were motivated primarily by the need to offer public and verifiable evidence of malignancy, but they also betray anxiety over the clergy's role as prominent, educated and literate individuals who offered wider access to the world of written information and opinion. This was particularly important outside London where literacy rates were lower, and was especially significant in Wales, where a linguistic barrier gave the clergy a potentially huge influence over the flow and interpretation of information contained in printed works.⁸⁸ Parliamentary commentators claimed that Welsh clergy had an unhealthy influence over parishioners, and ascribed the country's royalism in no small measure to the activities of malignant priests.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Bodl., MS Nelson 13, fo. 178; *CJ*, II, p. 684; *PJLP*, III, p. 245; *Some speciall passages*, 9 (18–26 July 1642), p. 56. Gibb later maintained that he was unaware of parliament's order against reading the declaration: PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/134/12; *CJ*, II, pp. 789, 794.

⁸⁷ Russell, *Fall of the British monarchies*, p. 499; *CJ*, II, pp. 609, 616. Cf. *Order for publishing declarations and books set forth by his majesties command* (Oxford, 1644). Jason Peacey notes that parliamentary print runs of 6,000–12,000 were usual: *Politicians and pamphleteers*, p. 47.

⁸⁸ For example, the Flintshire commissioners of array in Dec. 1642 directed 'every minister in every parish churche' to publish an order regarding the need to defend against the Chester parliamentarians 'in the vulgar language': Warwickshire Record Office, CR2017/TP646.

⁸⁹ Lloyd Bowen, *The politics of the principality: Wales, c. 1603–1642* (Cardiff, 2007), ch. 6.

Ministers' interpretation of the competing texts which tumbled from the royalist and parliamentary presses during the summer of 1642 was contained not simply in their words but also in the manner in which they were read. These texts offered the clergy opportunities for a politics of gesture, speech, and silence over and above the messages of the publications themselves.⁹⁰ Robert Levet, minister of Cheveley, Cambridgeshire, refused to read the parliamentary ordinance concerning the illegality of the commission of array to his congregation in July 1642. When he received the declaration concerning levies a fortnight later, however, he read it 'with an audible and chearefull v[o]ice'.⁹¹ One deponent at Stamford in Lincolnshire stated that the curate read a parliamentary declaration in 'soe low a voice that most of the few that were there could not heare', while the minister, Thomas Holt, read a royalist text 'with an audible voyce'.⁹² It was probably a strategic choice by Holt to reserve the king's message to himself and give the parliamentary text to his deputy, thus investing the former with a greater degree of authority.

Arresting evidence for the ways in which reading political print in the church involved more than neutral recitation comes from Cople in Bedfordshire. Here, the incumbent John Gwin was said to have read the king's declaration 'as if he had been acting a play', saying 'The Scripture bid him obey the king but there was no Scripture commanding him to obey the parliament'.⁹³ Evidently, the play had villains as well as heroes, and this detail suggests how much more there was to 'publishing' a text than simply reading it. Gwin also 'scornfully' threw parliamentary orders at a churchwarden whom he described as 'officious'.⁹⁴ Here, then, was a rich set of gesture, performance, speech, and text which offered a political commentary for public consumption; a commentary some in his congregation clearly rejected. His parishioners included a puritan clique, among them Sir Samuel Luke, with whom Gwin had clashed in the 1630s, and they mobilized a campaign to have him ejected.⁹⁵ The treatment given to a parliamentary declaration of 15 October 1642 by Anthony Short the minister of Drewsteignton, Devonshire, is equally revealing of how ministers could manipulate the messages of printed material. Short was said to have read the declaration in 'a disdaynefull menner', providing several negative glosses on the text. He maintained that the membership of the Lords and Commons was so denuded that it did not deserve to be called a parliament, claimed that royal agents plotting to kill Sir John Hotham were acting justly,

⁹⁰ On the politics of gesture, see Michael Braddick, ed., *The politics of gesture: historical perspectives* (Past and Present Supplements, 4, Oxford, 2009), pp. 9–35, 96–127.

⁹¹ BL, Add. MS 15672, fo. 10. ⁹² Hill, 'The royalist clergy of Lincolnshire', p. 85.

⁹³ *Some speciall passages*, 9 (18 July–26 July 1642), p. 54; *CJ*, II, pp. 682, 691–2, 780. Gwin clearly did have a sense of the dramatic. A pamphlet of 1641 accused him of writing scurrilous verse during services and securing them to the whipping post while the congregation sang psalms, and also of changing the form and sense of the psalms 'to his owne purpose': *Articles ministered by his majesties commissioners... against John Gwin, vicar of Cople* (1641).

⁹⁴ *CJ*, II, p. 691.

⁹⁵ John Cliffe, *The puritan gentry* (London, 1984), pp. 161–2.

and changed parliament's promise to consult with 'reverend & learned divines' about church government, to 'reverent and coxcomblike divines'. On encountering parliament's claim that religion was already being suppressed in favour of popery, Short, 'lifting up his hands & eies to the heaven, said "O what damnable lies doe they divulge?"'.⁹⁶ Examples such as those of Gwin and Short draw attention to the need to be attuned, where possible, to the tone and cadence of such political speech and its accompanying gestures. While such aspects are not always recorded, they formed vital components of any political reading in the parish church. In this regard, we might recall similar tactics of evasion and resistance employed by puritan ministers in the 1630s when confronted with the order to read the controversial re-issue of the Book of Sports.⁹⁷

The outbreak of hostilities in late 1642 generated a new propagandistic impulse, but it also meant that many royalist lines of communication with sympathetic clergy were cut, and the parliamentary policing of the church in areas under its control impaired the distribution and dissemination of royalist texts by the clergy.⁹⁸ The parliamentary campaign against scandalous ministers may have begun primarily as a process of religious purification, but from 1642 it was also a political purge, an attempt to disrupt and close down a vital communication channel between king and people. The improper use of partisan print was an important component in the allegations of political disaffection levelled against the ministry. Charles acknowledged this in a proclamation of May 1643 which lamented the ejection of loyal clergy 'because they publish our lawfull and just commands and declarations . . . and will not teach sedition'.⁹⁹

IV

Despite the claims of Edward Hyde, the combination of partisan print and the clergy was not the preserve of Charles I's opponents. The king's attempts to mobilize opinion through print were linked closely to the efforts of his loyal parish priests. The argument presented here suggests that we need to rethink the position that Charles and his advisers began to mobilize opinion in a concerted manner only in the emergency situation of 1642. Although its results in 1639–40 were mixed at best, Charles did seek to bring together pulpit and press in ways and on a scale not seen since the 1620s.

⁹⁶ Bodl., MS Walker c. 4, fo. 155; Mark Stoye, *Loyalty and locality* (Exeter, 1992), p. 206. The publication in question was *A declaration of the Lords and Commons . . . concerning his majesties advancing with his army towards London* (1642); *CJ*, II, pp. 810–11.

⁹⁷ For example, TNA, SP16/280/54, and, more generally, Julian Davies, *The Caroline captivity of the church* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 198–200.

⁹⁸ William Phillips, ed., 'The Ottley papers relating to the civil war', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 7 (1895), pp. 239–360, at p. 359.

⁹⁹ Larkin and Hughes, eds., *Proclamations*, II, p. 897.

Historians have not recognized the profound disquiet and unease that Charles's promulgation of proclamations and prayers in parish churches caused among the Covenanters. Although Charles did not make as full a use of the propaganda machinery at his command as he might have done, the evidence offered here suggests that the king and his clergy were less hostile to print than some have assumed. The royalist propaganda campaigns of 1642 had notable antecedents.

The trajectory described here also traces the ebb and flow in the reputation and influence of the parochial clergy. Their ability to affect public opinion during the Covenanter crisis was impaired by the fact that their opponents were fairly successful in tarring all of them with the brush of liturgical innovation and crypto-popery. The general euphoria at the meeting of the Long Parliament was accompanied by a powerful backlash against the most visible offenders among the Laudian clergy and a slump in the reputation and authority of the orthodox clergy. As fears over sectarianism and political radicalism grew during 1641, however, so the clergy managed to recapture their status as defenders of religious moderation and supporters of restrained and responsible monarchy. This allowed them to become more effective propagandists for the king as the political situation deteriorated. In uncertain times, increasing numbers of men and women were willing to accept that a minister, holding a paper inscribed with the word of their anointed king and emblazoned with the symbols of his majesty, afforded a surer refuge than a headless parliament fired with an excess of reforming zeal. Preachers like Edward Symmonds of Rayne in Essex looked to exploit this, pressing his auditors to apply a lesson from the book of Proverbs: 'believe whatsoever is set forth in the declaracon published in the kings name because a divine sentence is in his mouth and he cannot erre'.¹⁰⁰ In the 1630s, this might have sounded like high prerogative authoritarianism; in 1642, it seemed more like the voice of stable authority and strong government.

This article further demonstrates that Charles and his clergy were not opposed to print per se but were rather opposed to the wrong kinds of print containing the wrong messages.¹⁰¹ They were happiest dealing in established forms of prayers and proclamations, although Charles did experiment with other forms of royal declaration between 1640 and 1642, while royalist clergymen would be prominent in adopting the forms of newsbook and polemical pamphlet in the early civil wars. Yet this article has also suggested that ephemeral forms of official print retained a good deal of their potency and influence even in the expanded world of print after 1641.

¹⁰⁰ PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/145/32; *Lj* v, pp. 635–6. Nehemiah Wallington related this as Symmonds preaching 'that we are bound to doe all yt his maiestie commands and beleeve all yt his maiestie saith': BL, Add. MS 21935, fo. 125.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, Thomas Wyatt of Ducklington's description of 'trifling pamphlets' as 'very rude, uncivill & trifeling babbs': Bodl., MS Top. Oxon. C378, p. 321.

Proclamations remained powerful textual totems which worried parliament and influenced wider opinion, particularly when in the hands of a local minister. When the parishioners of Blaby in Leicestershire were summoned by parliament to Broughton Ashby to be ‘put in posture of war against the king’, the minister George Rogers barred their way, reading the king’s proclamations in the church porch ‘to hinder them from going thither’.¹⁰² Proclamations remained significant legitimating devices for local royalists, being posted up in public places as physical markers of allegiance,¹⁰³ while readings of proclamations and prayers in the parish church were remembered years later as notable episodes in local political history. Parliament’s response to the king’s order that the declaration of levies be read in all parishes also shows that appeals by means of authorized print through the clerical infrastructure continued to represent a significant danger even at a time when a multiplicity of pamphlets, satires, newsbooks, and other forms were available.

Finally, this article draws attention to the importance of the parish church as a site where the worlds of print and oral culture met.¹⁰⁴ This had long been the case, of course, with regular public readings of the Bible, prayer book, homilies, and printed sermons. However, here we encounter the reading and reception of official print in contexts which cause us to reflect on the world beyond the page and the impact texts had in their discursive afterlives.¹⁰⁵ The royalist preacher, Robert Mossom, was fully aware of the limitations of texts as reading matter and their potential influence through public dissemination, observing that

I know well . . . how much less the mind is affected with reading then with hearing; even by how much a preacher in the particular gift of utterance, is the more master of his tongue then pen; and so can speak much more piercingly to the eye, as an orator, then as a scribe.¹⁰⁶

The texts available to us are ghosts of a much richer and more dynamic communicative process which is an integral part of the realm of propaganda and publication. Descriptions of ministers reading royalist declarations alert us to the gestural politics which accompanied their dissemination, and the messages beyond the text which audiences received. Examples such that of Frederick Gibb also bring to light the elusive, but enormously important, discussions of these texts which occurred in informal contexts outside the parish church. This kind of evidence is rare, but the occasion it describes was probably commonplace, and the history of the ways in which political messages

¹⁰² Bodl., MS Walker c. 11, fo. 78. Cf. PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/124/21(i); *CJ*, III, p. 27.

¹⁰³ For example, see *The copy of a letter sent from the committee at Lincoln* (1642); *CJ*, II, p. 695, III, p. 26; *LJ*, v, p. 157; Stoye, *West Britons*, pp. 160–2; Jerome de Groot, *Royalist identities* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 31–2.

¹⁰⁴ Adam Fox, *Oral and literate culture in England, 1500–1700* (Oxford, 2000).

¹⁰⁵ See Arnold Hunt, *The art of hearing* (Cambridge, 2010).

¹⁰⁶ Robert Mossom, *The preachers tripartite* (1658), sigs. A3v–A4.

were received and interpreted as well as disseminated is crucial to our understanding of the civil wars. This article offers an examination of one stage in that process of dissemination and reception, but it can only infer the dynamics of the subsequent struggles over meaning which took place among the turbulent and discordant congregations of England and Wales.