

## Chapter 1

### A royalist reads the news: Sir Edward Hyde and civil war journalism

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#### I

Writing to Charles I on 12 December 1647, Sir Edward Hyde grumbled that the king's departure for the Isle of Wight, following his escape from Hampton Court, hindered the process of collecting material for what would become the *History of the Rebellion*, claiming that he was forced to rely upon his 'ill memory' and upon a 'few pamphlets and diurnals'.<sup>1</sup> Although noted by historians, the significance of this statement has arguably not been fully appreciated by scholars of Hyde's great work, who have generally been preoccupied with his purpose, his style, his ideas and his accuracy, rather than with his method, at least since pioneering work by C.H. Firth.<sup>2</sup> This is despite the fact that, at least during the first phase of writing (1646–8), Hyde's correspondence contains numerous comments about his relationship with his sources, whether in terms of archival documents, oral and memorial testimony, written reports by other royalists or printed tracts and

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<sup>1</sup> Bodl., MS Clarendon, 30, fol. 208.

<sup>2</sup> C.H. Firth, 'Clarendon's History of the Rebellion', *English Historical Review*, 19.73 (1904), p. 45; Michael Finlayson, 'Clarendon, providence and historical revolution', *Albion*, 22 (1990), 607–32; Martine Watson Brownley, *Clarendon and the Rhetoric of Historical Form* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), pp. 22–23; Ronald Hutton, 'Clarendon's History of the Rebellion', *English Historical Review*, 97.382 (1982), 70–88; Christopher Hill, 'Clarendon and the Civil War', *History Today*, 3.10 (1953), 695–703; Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'Clarendon's History of the Rebellion', *History Today*, 29.2 (1979), 73–79; R.C. MacGillivray, *Restoration Historians and the English Civil War* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), ch. 8.

newspapers.<sup>3</sup> The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to use Hyde's comment about 'pamphlets and diurnals' as a means of exploring his approach to the *History*, albeit by a rather circuitous route. This involves recognising that understanding how Hyde conceived of his project requires interrogating his attitudes toward the available sources, and particularly to the print culture of the 1640s.

Of course, the issue of 'print culture' has played a significant part in the recent revival of interest in civil war royalism, particularly in terms of pamphleteering and journalism, and scholars like Blair Worden, Jason McElligott, Bernard Capp and Anthony Milton have added considerably to our appreciation of characters like Marchamont Nedham, John Crouch, John Taylor and Peter Heylyn.<sup>4</sup> Attempts have also been made to compare attitudes towards popular political print culture on the part of parliamentarian and royalist grandees, in terms of the degree to which, and the success with which, they

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<sup>3</sup> CSP, ii, pp. 318, 321, 331; T. Lister (ed.), *Life and Administration of Edward, first Earl of Clarendon*, 3 vols (London, 1837–38), iii, p. 43. See also: John Kenyon, *The History Men: The Historical Profession in England since the Renaissance* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1983), pp. 29–30, 33; Hutton, 'History of the Rebellion', p. 88; Firth, 'History of the Rebellion', p. 49; A.C. Miller, 'Joseph Jane's account of Cornwall during the Civil War', *English Historical Review*, 90.354 (1975), 94–102.

<sup>4</sup> Blair Worden, "'Wit in a Roundhead": the dilemma of Marchamont Nedham', in Susan Amussen and Mark Kishlansky (eds), *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 301–37; Jason McElligott, 'The politics of sexual libel: royalist propaganda in the 1640s', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 67.1 (2004), 75–99; idem, *Royalism, Print and Censorship in Revolutionary England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007); Bernard Capp, *The World of John Taylor the Water-Poet, 1578–1653* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Anthony Milton, *Laudian and Royalist Polemic in Seventeenth Century England: the Career and Writings of Peter Heylyn* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

exploited the media. This has involved suggesting that the royalist high-command was *generally* less preoccupied with print culture than were parliamentary leaders; that *most* royalist grandees were less adept at addressing popular audiences than were royalists on the ground; and that this – together with logistical difficulties that arose from being physically remote from London’s book trade – ensured that royalist engagement with the public *tended* to lack sophistication. Such claims have, of course, been debated, if not perhaps properly understood, and there is certainly mileage in recognising that there were grandees (like Sir Edward Nicholas), authors (like Nedham) and newspapers (*Mercurius Aulicus*, *Mercurius Pragmaticus* and *Mercurius Elencticus*), not to mention many royalists – not least clerics – who worked independently of the court, for whom and for which this pattern does not apply.<sup>5</sup> At least some royalists, in other words, had a more profound understanding of public culture, and of the ways in which it was being transformed through the development of pamphleteering and journalism. Hyde, of course, was pre-eminent in this regard, as a drafter of official declarations and as a polemicist of considerable skill, not least in response to Parliament’s declaration of ‘no further addresses’ in January 1648. Hyde clearly took great pleasure in producing a range of forgeries and satires during the early 1640s, and also relished the evidence that people were incapable of detecting his involvement in such works, as well as the impact they had on their intended targets amongst parliamentary opponents.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); L. Bowen, ‘Royalism, print and the clergy in Britain, 1639–1640 and 1642’, *Historical Journal*, 56.2 (2013), 297–319.

<sup>6</sup> Graham Roebuck, *Clarendon and Cultural Continuity* (London: Garland, 1981), pp. 3–96.

Nevertheless, recent scholarship has primarily been concerned with the *output* of the royalist press, in terms of the processes by which it appeared, and the characters and lives of those involved, and in terms of the literary qualities and the political and religious ideas involved. Much less attention has been paid to what can be learnt about royalism, and about royalist attitudes towards print culture, from observing the ways in which royalists *consumed* pamphlets and newspapers. The aim here, therefore, is to analyse Hyde's comments about the popular press, and to place them in the context of comments made by a range of his colleagues, in the hope not merely of demonstrating the extent of royalist interest in newspapers and pamphlets, but also of gauging contemporary attitudes towards such works.<sup>7</sup> What will emerge is that, in addition to displaying a particularly sophisticated

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<sup>7</sup> See: James Raven (ed.), *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, 'Studied for action', *Past and Present*, 129 (1990), 30–78; Richard Cust, 'Reading for magistracy', in John F. McDiarmid (ed.), *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 181–99; D.R. Woolf, *Reading History in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Lisa Jardine and William H. Sherman, 'Pragmatic readers', in Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (eds), *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 102–24; Steven Zwicker, 'Reading the margins', in Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker (eds), *Refiguring Revolutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 101–15; Andrew Cambers, *Godly Reading* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). See especially: Joad Raymond, 'Irrational, impractical and unprofitable: reading the news in seventeenth-century Britain', in Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker (eds), *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 185–212; This chapter was developed alongside broader work on the contemporary response to the print revolution, and

understanding of polemic and propaganda, Hyde also showed a subtle understanding of issues relating to the truth and utility of such material, and that this makes it possible to comprehend how at least some royalists thought about politics (not least as they coped with defeat and exile), propaganda and public political culture, as well as about the nature of historical writing.

## II

Royalist correspondence from the 1640s reveals a clear fascination with and enthusiasm for print culture, and any number of individuals sought regular supplies of pamphlets and newspapers, and asked for specific items. Writing to Nicholas in September 1653, for example, Hyde sought a catalogue of the works by Salmasius, in order to track down items which ‘are hard to find’.<sup>8</sup> Writing in April 1648 to the royalist ambassador in Paris, Sir Richard Browne, Nicholas discussed his attempts to get hold of a pamphlet which replied to the declaration of ‘no further addresses’, and asked Browne to find one of the ‘extraordinary’ editions of the French *Gazette* which contained a passage of particular interest.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, in February 1658 Nicholas expressed frustration at not being able to obtain a book which compared Cardinal Mazarin and Oliver Cromwell.<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Crispe, meanwhile, wrote to Browne from Brussels in November 1647, seeking news relating to

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elaborates on its findings: Jason Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), ch. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Bodl. MS Clarendon 46, fol. 262.

<sup>9</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,194, fol. 69.

<sup>10</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,195, fol. 75.

England, while in May 1648 Sir Thomas Hammer wrote to Browne from Angers to remind him about a promise ‘to send me now and then a *Moderate Intelligencer* or *Perfect Diurnall*’, and in January 1655 Joseph Jane clearly sought to get his hands on a copy of a book regarding the royalist plotters, John Gerard and Peter Vowell.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, those who found themselves unable to secure regular supplies of news clearly found the situation very frustrating. Writing from Madrid in 1645, therefore, Sir Arthur Hopton claimed to have become ‘a stranger to the state of business in England’, and that he would ‘receive great benefit’ from being informed about ‘the differences between the Presbyterians and Independents, and who are the chief heads of the factions, [and] whether it be true that the Independents have made a protestation and how it is received in the parliament’. In early 1647, meanwhile, he exclaimed that ‘we have here no news from England’.<sup>12</sup> Writing to Browne from Antwerp in November 1643, meanwhile, the earl of Arundel complained that ‘as for our English news, never any week was so barren as this’, and he explicitly stated that ‘the packets and particular letters’ had been ‘opened and the printed papers taken away’.<sup>13</sup>

Much more common, however, are references which indicate how regularly royalists on the Continent secured access to pamphlets and newspapers. This certainly involved European newspapers, which were read avidly and circulated widely, and while Browne’s accounts reveal regular purchases of gazettes (alongside copious quantities of absinthe), Nicholas circulated copies of Dutch placards, which were read enthusiastically

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<sup>11</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,198, fols 15, 86; Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 27.

<sup>12</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,191, fols 62v, 106.

<sup>13</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,193, fol. 25.

by any number of royalists.<sup>14</sup> More importantly, royalists also secured supplies of printed news from England. This is most obvious from the correspondence of Browne, who initially relied upon his father to send supplies of manuscript separates and printed pamphlets in 1641–2, alongside information about new titles.<sup>15</sup> On 6 January 1642, for example, Christopher Browne wrote about having ‘selected fragments out of those diurnalls successively published touching their proceedings in parliament’, and a week later he expressed a common concern about feeling overwhelmed not just by the speed with which events were unfolding, but also by the volume of printed material being published. He explained, therefore, that he endeavoured to identify the most important texts – ‘those of a more current alloy’ – which had ‘come forth abroad this week’, and listed a series of new titles, before expressing the hope that his son would be able to acquire them through other means.<sup>16</sup> Of course, Christopher Browne was not always able to pass on the latest pamphlets, and in November 1643 he felt compelled to apologise about being unable to maintain his regular supply: ‘you must expect none of the weekly printed passages from me until I shall be fit to visit London again’.<sup>17</sup> By the mid-1640s, however, Browne was getting news from a variety of sources: Arundel related news from *Mercurius Aulicus*, as well as from ‘the parliament papers’, while Sir Arthur Hopton sent copies of the *Perfect Diurnall*, and Nicholas copied passages from *Mercurius Elencticus*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,255, fols 44v, 63v; Add. MS 78,194, fol. 182; Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 122.

<sup>15</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,220, fol. 3.

<sup>16</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,220, fols 13, 14.

<sup>17</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,220, fol. 52.

<sup>18</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,193, fols 31v, 53v; Add. MS 78,191, fol. 133; Add. MS 78,194, fol. 73.

Indeed, people came to expect not just that Browne would be a recipient of new material, but also that he would serve as a conduit through which texts could circulate across Europe. Writing in June 1643, for example, Ranulph Crew said that ‘I know you have a diurnall of the passages here from intelligent friends’, while in December 1647 Prestwich Eaton explained that ‘I have several papers to send you about these our troubles, but supposing you have been supplied from Mr Baker, I forbear to remit you them until I hear further’.<sup>19</sup> Being thus furnished with news, and based as he was in Paris, Browne made considerable efforts to circulate London newspapers to royalists like Lord Goring, Benjamin Wright and Sir Henry De Vic, and also discussed recent pamphlets with men like Richard Steward, who once explained that he was ‘not in so much favour with the ladies at Caen as to have seen the printed letter you mention’.<sup>20</sup> Such evidence points to the *ubiquity* of English newspapers and pamphlets in continental Europe, something which is also revealed not just by the parcels of tracts that were regularly sent from England to Sir Ralph Verney, but also from Joseph Jane’s 1654 complaint that ‘this week’ had only produced copies of *Politicus*, and that ‘the occurrents came not over’, as well as from Nicholas’s 1658 note that ‘we have here every week *Mercurius Politicus*’.<sup>21</sup> Likewise,

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<sup>19</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,223, fol. 9; Add. MS 78,197, fol. 207v.

<sup>20</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,197, fol. 98; Add. MS 78,198, fol. 12; Add. MS 78,231, fol. 19; Add. MS 78,199, fol. 17.

<sup>21</sup> BL, M636/6 (Roger Burgoyne letters 31 Jan. 1645, 10 Apr. 1645, 25 June 1645, 9 July 1645, 31 July 1645, 9 Oct. 1645, 15 May 1645); Eg. MS 25,34, fol. 236; G.F. Warner (ed.), *The Nicholas Papers* (hereafter *NP*), 4 vols (London: Camden Society, 1886–1920), ii, pp. 103–04; BL, Add. MS 78,195, fol. 93.



many other royalists mentioned having received ‘our letters and prints’ or ‘the prints this week’, or at least to have seen extracts from them.<sup>22</sup>

What is particularly striking about the correspondence of men like Hyde, Nicholas and Browne is the sense that royalists displayed not just an appetite for, but also a *reliance* upon, English newspapers, in ways which obviously raise questions about the degree to which such texts were invested with credibility. Such men, therefore, frequently made comments to the effect that ‘I have this week heard nothing from England but what the London prints mention’, that ‘you see by the London print as much as I hear or know’, and that ‘the books have all I can say’, and even that ‘I know little but what is printed’.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, it is remarkable how often such works were mentioned without any apparent distrust. There is no evidence, therefore, that Christopher Browne considered printed newspapers to be inherently less reliable than the manuscript diurnals they replaced, and Joseph Jane often simply referred correspondents to such works for news of events like the dissolution of the first protectoral parliament in early 1655, or else prefaced news with phrases such as ‘you will find by the books’.<sup>24</sup> Such phraseology seems to imply faith in the media, or at least an uncritical response to the news revolution. In April 1644, James Hicke informed Browne that ‘I have sent you what news I have in print’, and William Garway stated in August 1645 that ‘the printed papers will show you [...] other news’.<sup>25</sup> Writing about a

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<sup>22</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fols 104–v, 118, 120v, 287v; *NP*, ii, pp. 248–49.

<sup>23</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,194, fol. 44; Add. MS 78,195, fols 105v, 110, 111, 116; Eg. MS 2,535, fols 250, 279, 301v; Eg. MS 2,536, fol. 363.

<sup>24</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,220, fol. 23; Eg. MS 2,535, fols 54, 301.

<sup>25</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,197, fols 72, 141.

December 1647 petition from London Presbyterians, meanwhile, intelligencers wrote that ‘the business fell to have no other conclusion than what is in print’, while in November 1647 Richard Spencer – a particularly well-informed correspondent in London – told Browne that ‘what the news here is I send you in print’.<sup>26</sup> Finally, the reliance upon newspapers like *Politicus* is evident from the comment of an anonymous letter-writer who explained his failure to forward a copy of the newspaper in April 1655 by saying that ‘some I think love it better than their common prayer books’, and would not part with their copies.<sup>27</sup>

### III

Such statements must be treated with caution, however, not least because of the danger of assuming that *reliance* upon newspapers implied that they were considered *reliable*. It might be suspected that newspapers were regarded as the most *common* form of news, not least as people refrained from the dangerous habit of writing letters which might be intercepted, rather than that they were viewed as trustworthy guides to breaking news, and there is certainly evidence that at least some royalists were concerned about the problem of ‘truth’ as it related to print culture, and grappled with the issue of news credibility. As such, it is possible to explore the degree of trust which contemporaries had in the print media, not least in relation to other sources of information.

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<sup>26</sup> Bodl. MS Clarendon 30, fol 211; BL, Add. MS 78,918, fol. 24. See also: BL, Eg. MS 2,534, fol. 300v.

<sup>27</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 120v.

Close scrutiny of surviving evidence indicates that at least some royalists were capable of reading newspapers sceptically and critically, and men like Nicholas often distanced themselves from the intelligence they passed on from newspapers. Like many others, therefore, Nicholas prefaced particular stories with phrases such as ‘the last week’s London print says’, or ‘the London print speaks of’.<sup>28</sup> Such phraseology means that other phrases used by Nicholas – such as ‘I see by the gazette you sent me’, ‘you see by the London prints’, or ‘you will find in the London prints’ – must be read with great care. That royalists ‘found’ and ‘saw’ things in London newspapers did not mean that they believed them, and there is a very real sense in which royalists were often merely reporting what the newspapers were saying, rather than reporting the news.<sup>29</sup>

This is not to say, of course, that newspapers and pamphlets were dismissed out of hand. Royalist grandees clearly mused over the truth of claims made in newspapers like *Politicus*, not least with phrases such as ‘if the print say true’, ‘if, as the prints make us conceive’, or ‘if one may guess by the books’.<sup>30</sup> They also admitted that newspapers proved difficult to interpret. In April 1655, therefore, Jane explained that ‘the prints this week much alter our opinions of affairs [...] for they not only want all mention of new risings [...] but they speak of taking prisoners daily’, before adding that ‘I know not what to conjecture of it, only time must tell us’, and concluding with a comment about ‘the hard

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<sup>28</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,194, fols 149, 150; Add. MS 78,195, fol. 39. See also: BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fols 195, 239, 525; Eg. MS 2,536, fol. 344v.

<sup>29</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,194, fol. 99; Add. MS 78,195, fols 75, 103; Add. MS 78,196, fol. 42; Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 104.

<sup>30</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,534, fols 58, 107; Eg. MS 2,535, fols 172, 214, 284v.

digestion of the prints'.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, many commentators made their scepticism about newspapers explicit. In 1642, Christopher Browne repeatedly described the pamphlets he wrote about to his son as 'factious' or 'frivolous', adding that 'the contention of the pen, though not altogether so sharp, exceeds that of the sword'.<sup>32</sup> In part this was a matter of specific stories. Commenting on reports about royalist plotters in January 1655, therefore, Jane claimed that 'there is more set down than was believed among us', while in April 1655 Sir George Radcliffe wrote of the royalist risings in England that had been 'slighted much by the London diurnalls (which is almost all the intelligence that comes hither)', adding that 'these books say that the western stirs are dissipated, which I have some good probability to believe false'.<sup>33</sup> Another of Nicholas's correspondents described a 'printed relation' about the Duke of Gloucester as 'a long, tedious false and most ridiculous thing' in 1655, while Jane identified specific stories – such as the report that Charles II was in Cologne in March 1655 – as being false, and another royalist referred to a May 1659 pamphlet as containing a speech which was 'pretended to have been spoken in the House of Commons'.<sup>34</sup>

There was also an increasing tendency to discuss the newspapers in terms of what was *not* reported, rather than merely in terms of the claims that they contained, and thus to look beyond the surface of reported events. On more than one occasion in 1655, therefore, Jane commented that the newspapers were 'very empty', and that 'the books of this week

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<sup>31</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 118; *NP*, ii, pp 248–49.

<sup>32</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,220, fols 14, 38.

<sup>33</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 27; Add. MS 78,196, fol. 31.

<sup>34</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fols. 62, 88; *NP*, ii, pp. 224–25; BL, Eg. MS 2,536, fol. 373v.

bring very little', just as he suspected that old news was being recycled by *Politicus*.<sup>35</sup> He had earlier written sceptically about the press, not merely by employing phrases such as '*Politicus* says', but also by reflecting that 'the omissions are more observable than the relations', particularly because '*Politicus* speaks nothing of the increase of their members in Parliament this week'.<sup>36</sup> Writing in January 1656, meanwhile, another royalist provided details about naval affairs which 'the rebels discourse not in their pamphlets'.<sup>37</sup> As such, when Jane noted having 'found' in 'the prints' that a petition calling for Cromwell to be crowned was 'prohibited' in September 1655, he added that this 'may be as former attempts of like nature in Parliament, when petitions were sent into the country to be signed, and Cromwell may desire to be petitioned and yet seem to give a stop to it, as a thing he dislikes'.<sup>38</sup>

What also emerges from such comments is a very real sense that commentators grew increasingly sceptical as time went on, not least when confronted with a government newspaper like *Mercurius Politicus*. In August 1650, one of Nicholas's correspondents in Paris described Nedham's newspaper as 'a base rogue' for suggesting that Charles II, 'wanting abilities to pursue all the designs his father aimed at or recommended to him', had adopted a 'design of putting himself in the Scotch hands and taking the covenant'.<sup>39</sup> In December 1659, meanwhile, Rumbold claimed that 'the news [...] is very uncertain, being

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<sup>35</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fols 88, 392, 402.

<sup>36</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,534, fols. 236–v; *NP*, ii, pp. 103–04.

<sup>37</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,536, fol. 33.

<sup>38</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 380; *NP*, iii, p. 36.

<sup>39</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,534, fol. 34.

represented through *Politicus* his spectacles, who takes the liberty to vent his own inventions beyond all his predecessors'.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, Nicholas himself commented in 1658 that 'we have here every week *Mercurius Politicus*, though for the most part it be not worth the money paid for its postage'.<sup>41</sup>

In some ways, of course, this process of assessing the trustworthiness of pamphlets and newspapers must be recognised as having taken place with a broader context of reflection on news credibility. Royalists clearly confronted news from a range of sources other than printed pamphlets, not least in terms of oral reports and scribal texts, and non-printed news was obviously not always regarded as being unproblematic. Nervousness can be detected, therefore, regarding all sorts of 'hot alarms' and 'flying reports' from Britain, and by referring to 'Westminster Hall news', Christopher Browne hinted at the circulation of rumours orally, albeit stories which may have had more rather than less credibility as a result of having emerged from the crucible of English politics.<sup>42</sup> Some stories were reported as being 'credible', or 'most certain', while on another occasion a 'great report' was dismissed as 'but a false fire'.<sup>43</sup> Nicholas was certainly careful to add clauses to his reports to the effect that 'some say', 'it's reported' or 'some write', and often he was only willing to pass on reports with the caution that 'I know not what faith is to be given to that report'.<sup>44</sup> It is also clear that news reports were assessed according to the status of the person from

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<sup>40</sup> Bodl. MS Clarendon 67, fol. 246v.

<sup>41</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,195, fol. 93.

<sup>42</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,191, fol. 83v; Add. MS 78,198, fol. 64v; Add. MS 78,220, fol. 3.

<sup>43</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,194, fols 115, 143v; Add. MS 78,195, fol. 11.

<sup>44</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,194, fol. 171; Add. MS 78,195, fols 56, 63v, 77, 81.

whom they came, and royalists were obviously more willing to talk confidently about stories obtained ‘from several hands’, or when ‘all letters and passengers that are come lately from England affirm’, although even stories which were ‘reported for a truth’ within royalist circles could be treated sceptically until cross-checked with those who were better informed.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, there were obviously situations and periods when it was thought inherently difficult to ascertain the truth or to understand current affairs, and occasions when royalists found it difficult to cope with competing news stories. Sir Francis Mackworth explained to Browne in October 1646 that ‘our news from England is so diverse and so uncertain that I will not trouble you with its relation’, while in August 1658 Nicholas explained that ‘there are letters from England of very different intelligence [...] so as it’s difficult to make a judgment of the present affairs there’.<sup>46</sup> Writing from London in November 1647, meanwhile, Richard Spencer explained that ‘affairs here are in a very turbulent condition’, and that some of the things he reported were ‘very probable’, but he also confessed that ‘one week more will give us much light what we must trust to’, and that ‘if I can dive into the mystery of these businesses which are now ripe to break, I will not fail to give you notice’.<sup>47</sup>

Of course, methods for assessing the credibility of oral and manuscript news had developed over generations, and as such it seems that the 1640s and 1650s witnessed a process whereby royalists sought to adapt to new media, not least by integrating printed sources with existing methods for gathering intelligence, and by comparing printed

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<sup>45</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,191, fols 75v, 79, 85; Add. MS 78,194, fol. 171; Add. MS 78,195, fol. 135v.

<sup>46</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,193, fol. 101; Add. MS 78,195, fol. 129.

<sup>47</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,198, fol. 19.

accounts with other sources of news. As such, even stories from *Mercurius Elencticus* were sometimes only passed on once it was possible to confirm them with personal evidence and eyewitness testimony, as Nicholas did in April 1648 in relation to controversial claims regarding the death of James I.<sup>48</sup> Very often, moreover, this process of scrutinising and comparing news reports resulted in printed accounts being found wanting. In April 1655, Sir George Radcliffe explained to Browne that ‘of our business in England I can say little; by the prints all is quiet there, though some letters speak otherwise’, while in September 1654 Jane compared what ‘the books tell us’ with comments from ‘those that come from England’, who apparently told him ‘that their books are very false of late’.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, one of Nicholas’s correspondents challenged stories relating to Admiral Robert Blake which had appeared in ‘the prints’ in October 1655 with what is ‘written’ in private letters.<sup>50</sup> This probably explains why during the 1640s Sir Richard Browne spent so much more money on news from the Parisian ‘gasettere’ (news writer) than he did on printed gazettes.<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, this distrust of print media makes perfect sense in the light of royalist awareness that newspapers were susceptible to political manipulation, whether in Britain or Europe. As early as February 1645, therefore, it was recognised that Italian journalism was controlled by the French authorities, because a new gazette was ‘suppressed’ by the French ambassador on the day of its first appearance, ‘to show his authority, and that

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<sup>48</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,194, fol. 73.

<sup>49</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,196, fol. 32; Eg. MS 2,534, fol. 216.

<sup>50</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 476v.

<sup>51</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,255, fols 14–66.



nothing of that nature should be published here without his participation'.<sup>52</sup> Likewise, Hyde was informed in October 1652 that the English republic's ambassador in Paris, René Augier, used his power over the 'gazeteer' in order to influence what was printed in France.<sup>53</sup> In the spring of 1647, meanwhile, Nicholas argued that 'we shall from henceforth have very little or no news concerning the king, other than what the two Houses shall think fit to publish'.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, such claims regarding the London press increased noticeably during the 1650s. Noting in October 1654 that *Politicus* refrained from publishing material relating to parliamentary proceedings, Joseph Jane argued that 'he hath his orders what to license', adding that 'Cromwell may be so wise as to see the use was made in the beginning of the Parliament of the press and publishing of parliament diurnally, and so will not leave himself open to the humours which that entertainment of the people will produce'.<sup>55</sup> In March 1655, moreover, Jane felt able to interpret inaccurate press reports by suggesting that 'perhaps they may fear the encouragement of others by the report', while in noting the treatment of royalist risings in English newspapers in 1655 he contemplated that 'they could not have very sure intelligence', before concluding that 'they are [...] careful (I believe) not to displease' the authorities.<sup>56</sup> Royalists also recognised that newspapers which survived the press clampdown in the autumn of 1655 had official backing, and that 'henceforth they will hardly be worth reading nor the money for postage', Cromwell having

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<sup>52</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,193, fol. 133v.

<sup>53</sup> *NP*, i, p. 316.

<sup>54</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,194, fol. 56.

<sup>55</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,534, fol. 236; *NP*, ii, pp. 103–04.

<sup>56</sup> *NP*, ii, pp. 224–25, 243–44; BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fols 106, 218.

discovered that ‘they may have the same force now they had against the king, and therefore he is put in mind now to suppress them’.<sup>57</sup> Within weeks of Cromwell’s order, moreover, Jane felt able to comment upon ‘the effects of Cromwell’s restrictions’, in terms of ‘the penury of the prints’, later reflecting that ‘the books of England bring very little’, and that ‘there is care taken that nothing be divulged of his [Cromwell’s] preparations or practices’.<sup>58</sup> Nicholas likewise reflected that ‘the effects of Cromwell’s orders appear in their weekly diurnalls, which have so little as they hardly weigh the postage’, while Jane commented on misleading coverage of the plotter John Hewitt by suggesting that ‘it’s to be doubted there is an eye upon the press that nothing come out to check the rascal gazeteer’.<sup>59</sup> Nicholas even suspected that English ambassadors – like Sir William Lockhart in France – were able to manipulate *Politicus*, noting in August 1657 that stories had been ‘put into the London print’ regarding the Duke of York’s treatment of prisoners’.<sup>60</sup> By 1659, it was possible to summarise such views regarding the political manipulation of *Politicus* by referring merely to ‘the licensed pamphlets’.<sup>61</sup>

Ultimately, royalist distrust of print media became evident in the desire to suppress particular works. In January 1654, for example, Nicholas was informed that authorities in the German states had offered to assist Charles II by means of ‘a severe edict against all

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<sup>57</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fols 474, 478.

<sup>58</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 489; *NP*, iii, pp. 246–47.

<sup>59</sup> *NP*, iii, pp. 260–61; *NP*, iv, p. 55.

<sup>60</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,195, fol. 27.

<sup>61</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,536, fol. 449.

the rebels' books that shall be turned into Latin or Dutch and there vented in Germany'.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, in May 1656 Hyde wrote ironically to Charles about 'a very worthy mention of you in the last diurnall printed at the Hague', regarding 'your changing your religion, and some other particulars not crowded in by chance', before adding that he would do everything he could to 'discover by what villainy these scandals are published'.<sup>63</sup>

#### IV

Royalist attitudes towards newspapers thus appear to be somewhat confusing, in the sense that they demonstrated enthusiasm for, and even reliance upon, print journalism and pamphleteering, at the same time as expressing profound and growing distrust in such genres. This seemingly paradoxical attitude is evident very clearly in a comment by Christopher Browne in January 1642, in which he dismissed the prevalence of 'factious and frivolous pamphlets [...] which have come forth abroad this week' before providing a long list of their titles and contents, and expressing the hope that his son would be able to get copies of them.<sup>64</sup> This combination of apparently contradictory responses appears even more perplexing, moreover, in the light of evidence that royalist exiles most obviously sought to read parliamentarian rather than royalist newspapers. Attention has already been drawn to the occasion when a story in *Mercurius Elencticus* – relating to the death of James I – seems to have been circulated by Nicholas only because he was able to verify it on the

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<sup>62</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,534, fol. 148.

<sup>63</sup> Bodl. MS Clarendon 51, fol. 204.

<sup>64</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,220, fol. 14.

basis of his own personal experience, having been present at Theobalds at the time.<sup>65</sup> However, the sense that other royalist newspapers were also considered to have only limited value is evident from Richard Spencer's comment that 'I send you *Pragmaticus* for the Scottish letter sake', and such titles generally seem to have been valued for their witty style rather than for their political substance.<sup>66</sup> One of Browne's correspondents in November 1647 noted that 'we have now a *Pragmaticus*, formerly *Aulicus*, as free, as witty and yet escapes', and in April 1648 the same anonymous writer told Browne that 'I am told witty learned Doctor Hackett is *Pragmaticus*, which gives him bread, his livings are sequestered'.<sup>67</sup> Just as Sir Ralph Verney demonstrated a preference for parliamentary newspapers like the *Parliament Scout* and the *Moderate Intelligencer*, so Sir Thomas Hanmer implored Browne in 1648 to 'remember' his promise 'to send me now and then a *Moderate Intelligencer* or *Perfect Diurnall*', adding that 'I care not for *Elencticus*'.<sup>68</sup> Likewise, when Hyde explained to Nicholas in July 1653 that 'I very rarely see any of those excellent authors you advise me to read', he made particular reference to another republican title, the *Faithfull Scout*, as well as to pamphlets by 'your friend John Lilburne'.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,194, fol. 73.

<sup>66</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,198, fol. 19.

<sup>67</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,198, fols 26v, 65.

<sup>68</sup> BL, M636/6 (Roger Burgoyne letters, 31 Jan. 1645, 10 Apr. 1645, 25 June 1645, 9 July 1645, 31 July 1645, 9 Oct. 1645, 15 May 1645); M636/7 (Mary Verney letter, 28 Apr. 1647); Add. MS 78,198, fol. 86.

<sup>69</sup> Bodl. MS Clarendon 46, fol. 89v.

It is possible to resolve this apparent contradiction, however, not least by recognising that royalists were interested in things other than credibility. First, parliamentary newspapers could prove appealing to royalist readers on a somewhat frivolous level, and one of Verney's correspondents noted that 'I know you love a libel with all your heart'.<sup>70</sup> Secondly, and much more importantly, pamphlets and newspapers may not only have been treated on a case-by-case basis, rather than in general terms, but also used selectively and cautiously, and even the most sceptical royalists probably recognised that the best parliamentary newspapers could probably be relied upon at a straightforward factual level, even if they were untrustworthy in terms of their analysis. Sir Arthur Hopton explained to Browne in December 1647 that 'for matters of fact you will have it in the *Diurnall*, which is the best intelligencer', although he added that it was hard to make 'a judgment upon matter of fact', while Nicholas felt able to rely upon 'the London print' for news of Ambassador Lockhart's arrival in England in October 1657, but not for an understanding of 'what his business is'.<sup>71</sup> In describing Nedham as a 'rogue' in August 1650, meanwhile, Nicholas's correspondent was not questioning the accuracy of the story about Charles II's new alliance with the Covenanters, but rather his interpretation of why this had come about.<sup>72</sup> The same logic may also have applied to royalist newspapers, and while Richard Spencer felt able to trust *Pragmaticus* in relation to some Scottish intelligence, he evidently struggled to interpret political machinations across Britain in mid-November 1647, admitting that affairs were a 'turbulent condition', and that more

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<sup>70</sup> BL, M636/7 (Mary Verney letter, 28 Apr. 1647).

<sup>71</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,191, fol. 133; Add. MS 78,195, fol. 39.

<sup>72</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,534, fol. 34.

time would be needed to resolve ‘ what we must trust to’ ..<sup>73</sup> In April 1648, meanwhile, one of Browne’s correspondents felt able to rely upon ‘the paper’ for an account of recent unrest in Moorfields – albeit ‘the number was greater than it mentions’ – but was much more cautious about how to interpret evidence relating to factional alignments among Scottish grandees.<sup>74</sup> As a result, it seems plausible to argue that for men like Hyde and Nicholas newspapers were problematic but better than nothing, not least when they were able to ‘find’ things ‘by the London print’ at moments when they had ‘no letters from England’.<sup>75</sup>

The possibility that newspapers, while hazardous, could be useful if handled with care is also revealed by two other kinds of evidence. The first involves the way in which newspaper reports were sometimes assessed in the light of royalist hopes and desires, rather than merely in terms of their accuracy. Joseph Jane commented, therefore, that ‘this post hath brought nothing in print that may any way support our hopes’, and Christopher Browne confronted a story from *Mercurius Britanicus* – about an alleged visit by his son Sir Richard Browne to the Jesuits in Paris – by writing that ‘I hope and am verily persuaded it will fall out to be no other than what with due reference to the maintenance of the true protestant religion the honour of the king and the power of the kingdom might be performed’.<sup>76</sup> The second kind of evidence relates to bitter factionalism among royalist exiles, which was sufficiently acrimonious – Richard Browne once complained of ‘backbiting lips [...] arrant lies [...] [and] a diabolical malicious whispering spirit’ – to

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<sup>73</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,198, fol. 19.

<sup>74</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,198, fols 67–v.

<sup>75</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,195, fol. 99. See also: BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 350.

<sup>76</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 145; Add. MS 78,220, fol. 62.

ensure that even a newspaper like *Politicus* might be regarded with less suspicion than one's rivals. Writing to the earl of Norwich in March 1651, therefore, Nicholas recommended that 'if you can get a sight of the last week's *Politicus*, observe how soon those in England have all the news of the Louvre, for therein is printed the effect of Mr Seymour's despatch to the queen, whereby the world may see what fit counsellors they are to manage His Majesties affairs'.<sup>77</sup>

What such comments suggest is that resolving the apparently contradictory nature of royalist attitudes towards the press involves evidence about its perceived *utility*. Indeed, by focusing upon the utility of print culture, rather than upon ideas about 'accuracy' and 'truth', responses which appear to be paradoxical can instead be considered perfectly explicable, in terms of the notion that pamphlets and newspapers might become important interpretative tools, as well as political weapons which needed to be confronted and exploited, precisely because they might be regarded as plausible and persuasive in certain quarters. Even for well-informed individuals, therefore, understanding specific episodes and the dynamic of political affairs, and balancing rational analysis with hopes and expectations, proved to be extremely difficult, and in this situation circulating printed texts – 'what news there is' – offered at least some benefit.<sup>78</sup> Thus, when Richard Spencer sent Browne 'all the news' that was 'extant' in print in November 1647, he added that this 'doth determine the variety of opinions about the place unto which His Majesty should go'.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, the regular parcels of pamphlets that Verney received from England clearly

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<sup>77</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,534, fols 110–11; *NP*, i, p. 225.

<sup>78</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,198, fols 24–v.

<sup>79</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,198, fol. 21.

reflected his desire to understand royalist allies like David Jenkins as well as his radical enemies like Lilburne, while on issues like the Engagement controversy he sought to understand all sides of the debate. Likewise, Hyde's intelligencer in January 1647 indicated that the fascination with 'infamous' books lay in their ability to help establish the framework of debate within parliamentary ranks, not least because of a perception that the authorities had connived at their publication, and that the 'bad intentions towards His Majesties person' needed to be taken seriously.<sup>80</sup> As such, it is possible to argue that parliamentary newspapers and pamphlets of all shades of opinion were read for more than just frivolous or vicarious reasons, and that even bad books were regarded as beneficial, in terms of helping people to understand what opponents were thinking. Reading parliamentary newspapers and pamphlets, in other words, could be justified on the grounds of 'know thine enemy'.

To this rather common sense attitude can be added evidence of a rather more subtle interpretative use of print, as men like Hyde factored what they learnt from newspapers into political analysis in rather different ways. Thanking Nicholas for pamphlets by 'your friend Lilburne' in April 1647, therefore, Hyde asked him 'to send me as many of his books as you can', and explained that 'I learn much by them [...] for though they want judgement and logic to prove what they promise, yet they being good materials to prove somewhat as they do not think of'. Hyde also admitted that 'I gain very much law by reading Mr Prynne,

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<sup>80</sup> BL, M636/7 (Ralph Verney letter, 2 June 1647; Mary Verney letter, 13 May 1647); M636/8 (letters of Mary Verney, Sir Ralph Verney and Henry Verney, as well as William Denton, 11 Mar. 1647, 10 Mar. 1647, 21 Feb. 1647, 11 Feb. 1647, 27 July 1647, 6 Oct. 1647); Bodl. MS Clarendon 29, fols 67r-v. For the bundles of books that Verney received, see: BL, M636/8-9, *passim*.



though nothing of it be applicable to those purposes for which he produces it'.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, when Hyde explained to Nicholas in July 1653 that 'I very rarely see any of those excellent authors you advise me to read, as the *Faithfull Scout*', he went on to say that 'I am abundantly satisfied with your friend John Lilburne', and this was clearly because reading Lilburne helped him to understand Cromwell, and because Cromwell's treatment of Lilburne – whether 'John proves to be hanged or not hanged' – would help him to 'judge much of Cromwell's power and interest both in the council and army'.<sup>82</sup>

Beyond using pamphlets and newspapers as tools to assist in political analysis, moreover, royalists were also concerned about their impact on readers. Their correspondence – like Hyde's *History* – thus reflected upon the state of public opinion in England, whether in terms of attitudes towards Charles I in late 1647 – Richard Spencer reported that 'his majesties message is liked very well of all sorts of people' – or in terms of attitudes towards Cromwell, as when Nicholas reported in March 1658 that 'he is now become so very odious' and would 'never be able to compass his ambition to be made king'.<sup>83</sup> In addition, royalists also recognised print's ability to reach large audiences and to mobilise opinion, whether in terms of printed petitions issued by London Presbyterians in December 1647, or in terms of Nedham's interventions in *Politicus*.<sup>84</sup> More importantly, royalists demonstrated concern that newspapers and pamphlets might be perceived to be

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<sup>81</sup> Bodl. MS Clarendon 29, fols 183–85v; *CSP*, ii, p. 363; Brownley, *Clarendon*, p. 130.

<sup>82</sup> Bodl. MS Clarendon 46, fol. 89v.

<sup>83</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,198, fol. 24; Add. MS 78,195, fol. 81; Edward, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion*, ed. W. Dunn Macray, 6 vols (Oxford, 1888), ii, pp. 314, 376, 392.

<sup>84</sup> Bodl. MS Clarendon 30, fol. 211; MS Clarendon 67, fol. 246.

plausible and credible. In March 1650, therefore, Ormond wrote to Nicholas about the ‘belief given to the rebels’ pamphlets (wherein they have doubtless perfected the conquest of this kingdom)’, while others feared that *Politicus* – ‘a base rogue’ – would fuel suspicions that Charles II had snubbed the advice offered to him in *Eikon Basilike*.<sup>85</sup> Referring to one of Cromwell’s declarations that had been printed in Dutch ‘and dispersed [...] as all novelties are’, Jane admitted that while it would not pass muster with ‘statesmen’, it might nevertheless ‘take with the people of ordinary capacity, who think every particular injury to a subject a cause of war to the state’. Indeed, he suspected that it had been aimed primarily at ‘the merchants’, who were ‘apt to think that their private concernments must govern all states’, and he argued that shoring up support on the Continent required supplying ‘intelligence of all sorts’; providing the kinds of information that had not previously been accessible, and circulating ‘more than the books bring’.<sup>86</sup> Nicholas, meanwhile, feared that press reports of Cromwell’s regal behaviour had made it ‘greatly believed that he will procure himself or his son to be proclaimed king before it be long’, while Sir George Radcliffe noted in 1655 that royalist risings had been ‘slighted much by the London diurnalls (which is almost all the intelligence the comes hither)’, adding that, while such stories were probably false, ‘most here do give all for lost on our side, grounding themselves on the diurnalls’.<sup>87</sup> This was precisely that attitude that Hyde reflected in the *History*, in distinguishing between the effects of print on ‘wise men’, as opposed to ‘lazy and quiet men’, the ‘vulgar-spirited’ and ‘common people’; in monitoring

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<sup>85</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,534, fols 14, 34.

<sup>86</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fols 557–v; NP, iii, pp. 140–41.

<sup>87</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,195, fols 75–v; Add. MS 78,196, fol. 31.

the role of parliamentary propaganda in ‘lulling’ people to sleep, and in ensuring that minds were ‘poisoned’, ‘dazzled’ and ‘captivated’; and in noting the ‘good effects’ of royalists texts, which provided ‘some antidote to their poison’.<sup>88</sup>

This was why royalists were so perturbed by the circulation of parliamentary and Cromwellian literature, not least on the Continent, and why attempts were made to counteract its influence. In his *History*, therefore, Hyde, included numerous references to the ways in which parliamentarians ensured that their works were ‘printed and diligently dispersed’, and during the Interregnum his colleagues complained that one of Cromwell’s declarations was ‘translated into Dutch’, even though it was thought to be ‘impertinent and flat’, and made attempts to influence the content of European newspapers, by trying to ensure that works like the French gazette were ‘better written’, and by attempting to insert specific portions of text.<sup>89</sup> In April 1648, therefore, Nicholas sought to ensure that a reply to Parliament’s declaration regarding the vote of ‘no further addresses’ – written by Hyde – should ‘be with all diligence and care translated into French and put into the next *Gazette*’, copies of which could then be dispersed, ‘especially among the foreign ministers’.<sup>90</sup> Nicholas repeated the plea in May 1648, ‘the same being already [...] in print in Dutch in the Low Countries, where it hath given great satisfaction, and will do so also [...] in France’, not least because of a concern that too much credence was being given to the idea that Charles I was ‘not unknowing’ about the so-called poisoning of James I, and

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<sup>88</sup> Clarendon, *History*, ii, pp. 64, 69, 71, 74, 84, 134, 226, 309, 376, 389, 394, 405, 424.

<sup>89</sup> Clarendon, *History*, ii, pp. 52, 64, 69, 71, 170, 185, 245, 376, 394; BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fos. 502, 543, 544v, 554v.

<sup>90</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,194, fol. 73.

because ‘no full answer is given to that particular’.<sup>91</sup> Reiterating the point, Nicholas subsequently added that he ‘should have been glad to have found that relation concerning King James’s death this week in the French gazette’, because ‘there is great care taken by that traitor Augier, or some others as ill-affected to the king, to put many things in print in French to the disadvantage of the king and his cause’, including the ‘four bills’ which had been presented to the king at Newport.<sup>92</sup> Such pressure eventually bore fruit, and Nicholas subsequently thanked Browne for his ‘care in procuring the true relation of King James his death to be put into this week’s *Gazette*’, which he then sought to distribute to those who could ‘make use of it for His Majesties just vindication’.<sup>93</sup>

This concern with public opinion, and with the believable nature of print culture, also provided the justification for publishing responses to contemporary newspapers and pamphlets. A proven polemicist like Joseph Jane, therefore, frequently mentioned the possibility of issuing royalist propaganda to counter that which emanated from England. In October 1654 he proposed replying to ‘a book lately written to declare the justice of Cromwell’s new government’, and in August 1655 he suggested translating an account of Penruddock’s trial, which he thought ‘would sell very well’, adding that ‘it were good that some such things should appear for us abroad, that they may see there are some spirits left in England for the king, which they scarce believe’.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, having noted the translation and publication of Cromwell’s declaration across the Continent in November

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<sup>91</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,194, fol. 74.

<sup>92</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,194, fol. 76.

<sup>93</sup> BL, Add. MS 78, 914, fol. 77. I am grateful to Tom Cogswell for discussions on this episode.

<sup>94</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,534, fol. 243; Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 345v.

1655, Jane thought it worth issuing a response, arguing that the Spanish ambassador ‘would be glad such a thing were done’.<sup>95</sup> A few months earlier, indeed, Jane had suggested that ‘to continue a good understanding with the people is of great use, and I fear there is too little done in it’, adding that what was needed was a means to ‘infuse into men in all quarters the king’s intentions and their own interest and what is to be done for their freedom and how much it depends on his restitution’. Jane recognised that this would be ‘laborious’, and yet he clearly saw ‘some use’ in ‘dispersing treatises or observations upon Cromwell’s actions, and the people’s sufferings’.<sup>96</sup>

Ultimately, it is possible to demonstrate that this desire to respond to unfavourable printed texts informed the kind of ‘politic’ histories which began to be written from the late 1640s onwards, and that the authors of such works actively sought printed material to assist in the process of thinking and writing. In preparing what became his *Histoire des troubles de la Grand Bretagne* (1661), therefore, Robert Menteith sought meetings with, and advice from, men like Sir Marmaduke Langdale, ‘who had a great hand in, and many memories of, events in England’, but he also sought to verify things that he had read in ‘the mercury’, and sought copies of other printed works, not least ‘that little book of *Mercurius Rusticus*’, which was described as being ‘of necessary use for me’, and which he thought he had very little hope of locating in London.<sup>97</sup> In addition, it can be shown that Hyde not only contemplated the value of his *History* as propaganda – boasting that it would ‘make mad work among friends and foes, if it were published’ – but also wrote it through close

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<sup>95</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 557; *NP*, iii, pp. 140–41.

<sup>96</sup> BL, Eg. MS 2,535, fol. 337v; *NP*, iii, pp. 22–23.

<sup>97</sup> BL, Add. MS 78,198, fols 104–05, 107, 109, 147.

engagement with printed pamphlets and newspapers. Given the attention paid in the *History* to Sir Richard Grenville, therefore, it is notable that in December 1647 Hyde had contemplated asking one Mr Harmon to ‘draw up an answer’ to Grenville’s recent *Narrative of the Affaires of the West*, and it is possible that the original aim had been to produce a rebuttal in the form of a ‘little discourse’, not least because Hyde knew that the *History* would ‘require much time before it will be done, and very much time and second thoughts after it is done, before it be published’.<sup>98</sup> More importantly, Hyde made a number of requests for information and material with which to assist in the production of his book, and with which to supplement his ‘ill memory’ and ‘a few diurnals’.<sup>99</sup> It is even possible to demonstrate the influence that such sources had on the text of the *History*, as of course they are known to have had on John Rushworth’s *Historical Collections*, in terms of the inclusion not just of royalist and parliamentary declarations, but also of passages which betrayed his reading of contemporary tracts, relating to episodes like the treaty of Uxbridge and Prince Rupert’s attack on Birmingham, and even of entire passages that were lifted from pamphlets and newspapers.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Brownley, *Clarendon*, pp. 20–21; Bodl. MS Clarendon 30, fols. 214–15; Firth, ‘History of the Rebellion’, pp. 33–34; Clarendon, *History*, ix, pp. 11–15, 17, 22–27, 43, 52–65, 75–76, 92–94, 103–08, 133–41.

<sup>99</sup> Bodl. MS Clarendon 30, fols 192, 208; *CSP*, ii, p. 288; R.W. Harris, *Clarendon and the English Revolution* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1983), p. 168.

<sup>100</sup> *CSP*, ii, p. 334; Firth, ‘History of the Rebellion’, pp. 36, 38–39, 46, 49, 51; Hutton, ‘History of the Rebellion’, pp. 71–73; O. Ogle et al (eds), *Calendar of the Clarendon State Papers*, 5 vols (Oxford, 1872–1970), i, p. 356; *CSP*, ii, p. 328. See: F. Henderson, “‘Posterity to judge’ – John Rushworth and his ‘Historicall Collections’”, *Bodleian Library Record*, 15 (1996), 247–59.

Like other royalists in exile, Hyde read the news, and although he was not unique in the way that he did so, he certainly responded to newspapers and pamphlets in a more sophisticated way than many of his contemporaries. He read avidly but sceptically, and recognised that newspapers were problematic in any number of ways, at the same time as appreciating that they could not be dismissed entirely, especially if they were used selectively and assessed alongside other sources of information. They were particularly valuable when other sources of information dried up, and they could even be regarded as more reliable than royalist rivals on certain occasions and certain issues. Some newspapers and pamphlets, moreover, were less problematic than others, and some of them contained factual evidence which could be trusted, even if they provided only partial accounts, superficial analysis and dubious interpretations. More importantly, they not only provided a useful way of understanding the attitudes of opponents, and a sense of the framework of debate and of the range of opinions in circulation, but also represented a tool with which to undertake political analysis. Newspapers, in other words, could be read on different levels, and in terms of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary effects. Moreover, if royalists like Hyde read the news with a great deal more than merely credibility in mind, they also understood that this was a vitally important issue in the sense that it was necessary to appreciate the ways in which other people, royalist or parliamentarian, read the news. Newspapers and pamphlets were perceived to have power and value, in other words, because they had credibility in some quarters, not because they were regarded as being inherently credible. Some people were likely to accept what they read, and this was part of the reason why men like Hyde needed to read newspapers and pamphlets of all kinds, just

as it was necessary to manipulate them, answer them or indeed suppress them. What ultimately makes Hyde unusual is the degree to which he had a rounded appreciation of print culture. He was willing to write polemic of various kinds, including satires and forgeries; he was interested in influencing the content of newspapers when he could, or in suppressing them when he could not; and he was willing to read and learn from the printed propaganda that was produced by his opponents. The *History of the Rebellion* goes some way towards encapsulating Hyde's attitude towards civil war print culture, and as someone who was painfully aware of the effectiveness of 'subtle' political machinations, and the manipulation of truth, and who was sceptical about historical certainty, it was perfectly logical for him to write a history which was something less than 'scientific', which was driven by a concern with history's practical efficacy, and which reflected the influence of pamphlets which were themselves of dubious credibility.<sup>101</sup> Hyde's history demonstrated neatly, in other words, a sense that writing ought to be judged by its efficacy and its political utility.

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<sup>101</sup> Clarendon, *History*, ii, pp. 170, 385, 387, 388, 389, 416; Finlayson, 'Clarendon', pp. 609–10; Brownley, *Clarendon*, p. 19.