

ROBERT HARLEY AND THE PRESS

by

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Abstract: Robert Harley and the Press

On the accession of Queen Anne there was no government propaganda machine, and ministerial attitudes to the press were rudimentary: in 1714 there was an effective machine for disseminating government propaganda, and the ministerial press policy was extensive. My thesis is that this was due largely to the efforts of Robert Harley. Harley's awareness of propaganda techniques can be traced back to William's reign, when the Old Whigs attempted to liberate parliament from what they believed to be overbearing court interference. Harley never relinquished this 'Country' ideology, and he worked for a new arrangement between the Crown and the propertied in which the sovereignty of parliament would be the basis of the political system. He felt that the Revolution had failed to secure this, and the act of settlement of 1701 was his model for the new structure. Throughout the 1690s the country party, without party whips, had concerted policy at the beginning of each parliamentary session by publications pinpointing the country line. These 'manifestos' were subsequently developed by Harley to embrace meetings of government supporters at which policy for the forthcoming session could be elucidated, and his press policy complemented then by providing arguments in print that could be developed in debate in parliament.

The second side to Harley's press policy was negative, involving the production of counter-propaganda to neutralize the arguments of his political opponents. Proscription was a weapon he could also employ when in office, but although he felt that a modicum of control was necessary to curb the worst excesses of polemical literature, he was sublimely indifferent to attacks on his own person in print, and he never favoured harsh proscriptive measures. His attitude to the party 'scribblers' was equivocal, and so was his most celebrated measure, the stamp act of 1712, designed to raise revenue and discourage the whig writers from attacks on the government's peace programme without instituting a rigorous repressive system of censorship.

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I have, of course, had occasion to use other libraries and to consult other manuscript collections in the course of my research. The Bodleian Library, Cambridge University Library, Lambeth Palace Library and the John Rylands Library all permitted me to use their facilities. I obtained xerox copies of a collection of State Tracts possibly unique to Harvard University from the Houghton Library of that institution. The National Library of Wales has been particularly useful during the last stage of my research in Bangor. I would also like to thank the duke of Buccleuch for allowing me to examine the correspondence of James Vernon and the duke of Shrewsbury, and for depositing it in Northamptonshire Record Office to enable me to do so. I similarly benefited from the earl of Dartmouth's generosity in depositing the Dartmouth manuscripts first in the William Salt Library and then in Staffordshire Record Office. I was also able to make use of the Somers

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I began my research at Newcastle University on a major state studentship: the final draft of the thesis, however, was written while I held a University of Wales Fellowship at Bangor. The libraries of both institutions assisted me consecutively throughout, especially the inter-library loans departments.

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Note on Dates

Dates are given in the old style throughout, although the year is taken to have begun on 1 January.

Abbreviations

Add. MSS: Additional manuscripts.

B.A.T.G.R.: Britain after the Glorious Revolution 1689-1714, ed. Geoffrey Holmes (1969).

B.I.H.R.: Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.

B.L.: British Library (formerly British Museum).

Bod.: Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Boyer, Annals: Abel Boyer, The History of the Reign of Queen Anne digested into Annals (1703-13), 10 vols.

Burnet: A History of His Own Time (1833), 6 vols.

C.J.: Journals of the House of Commons.

Cobbett: Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England (1806-20), 36 vols.

Coxe: W. Coxe, The Memoirs of John, Duke of Marlborough (Bohn edn., 1847-48), 3 vols.

C.S.P.D.: Calendars of State Papers Domestic.

C.T.B.: Calendars of Treasury Books.

C.T.P.: Calendars of Treasury Papers.

Defoe, Letters: The Letters of Daniel Defoe, ed G.H. Healey (1955).

E.H.R.: English Historical Review.

Ehrenpreis, Swift: Irvin Ehrenpreis, Swift: The Man, His Works and the Age (1962-), 2 vols (final volume in preparation).

Hearne: Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne, ed. C.E. Doble and others (1884-1918), 11 vols.

H.J.: Historical Journal.

H.L.Q.: Huntington Library Quarterly.

H.M.C.: Reports of the Royal Historical Manuscripts Commission.

J.B.S.: Journal of British Studies.

- Journal to Stella: Swift's Journal to Stella. The edition quoted is that of Harold Williams (1948), 2 vols, but for the sake of easy collation with the numerous other editions I have referred not to the page number, but to the date of the entry in a citation.
- Loan 29: The Portland Deposit in the B.L.
- Luttrell: Narcissus Luttrell, A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs from September 1678 to April 1714 (1857), 6 vols.
- N. & Q.: Notes and Queries.
- N.L.W.: National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.
- N.U.L.: Nottingham University Library.
- P.O.A.S.: Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660-1714, ed. George deF. Lord et al (1963-75), 7 vols.
- P.R.O.: Public Record Office, London.
- Rand, Letters: Life, Unpublished Letters and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, earl of Shaftesbury, ed. Benjamin Rand (1900).
- R.E.S.: Review of English Studies.
- Review: Defoe's Review, Reproduced from the Original Editions, with an Introduction and Bibliographical Notes by Arthur Wellesley Secord (1938, reprinted 1965), 22 vols. References to the Review cite the volume number of the original not the volume of the reprint.
- R.O.: Record Office.
- Somers Tracts: A Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts on the Most Interesting and Entertaining Subjects, ed. W. Scott (1809-15), 13 vols.
- State Tracts: State Tracts of the Reign of William III (1706), 3 vols.
- State Trials: A Complete Collection of State Trials, ed. Thomas B. Howell (1816-26), 33 vols.
- Swift, Corr.: The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, ed. Harold Williams (1963-65), 5 vols.
- Swift, Prose Works: The Prose Writings of Jonathan Swift, ed. Herbert Davis (1939-62), 13 vols.
- Toland, Works: [Pierre Desmaizeaux], A Collection of Several Pieces by Mr John Toland (1726), 2 vols.
- V.C.: Letters Illustrative of the Reign of William III from 1696 to 1708 Addressed to the Duke of Shrewsbury by James Vernon, ed. G.P.R. James (1841), 3 vols.

Chapter One

Introduction: The Political Apprenticeship

It is plaine now there is a party setting up to play ye old Game - ye same yt was in K[ing] Charles & James his time, but I trust God wil defeat them. I am sure our King is of our side.

Robert Harley to Elizabeth, his wife, 1 June 1689.

On 6 April 1689 Robert Harley was elected to parliament without opposition for the pocket borough of Tregony in Cornwall. His main recommendation for this 'dispensation' (as his father termed it) had been his spirited endeavours on behalf of William of Orange in the throes of the Glorious Revolution itself. A year after the event he reminisced to his wife:¹

God hath been very gracious to us since this day twelve month when we were in armes...upon Dec. 5. I marchd into Hereford at head of a Troop of Horse, [and] was elected into Parlt. April 6. in a place unknown w[i]thout my seeking.

One of his father's fondest memories was of being 'in Arms together for ye Gospel & ye Countrey',² and when, on 16 April, the Commons voted 'to support the King in a war with France, when he pleases, with his allies, to declare it', Sir Edward called it 'a great vote' and rejoiced in the decision in a letter to his son, urging him to set out for London 'with all speed'.³ On his arrival Harley was conveyed to Hampton Court 'to kiss his Na^ties hand',⁴ and in the same month, May, he was seen to be active in parliament in the struggle with the tory party.⁵

1. B.L. Loan 29/164/4: 7 December 1689.

2. B.L. Loan 29/141/3: Sir Edward Harley to Robert Harley, 8 June 1691.

3. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 436.

4. B.L. Loan 29/164/2: Harley to his wife, 11 May 1689.

5. Harley's first recorded speech in parliament was in the debate on the bill of indemnity on 14 May. He followed the lead of the experienced Shaftesburian whig, William Sacheverell, in arguing against the passage of a lenient bill. (Cobbett, v. 257. See also Burnet, iv. 26-27.)

Harley, then, entered politics as a decidedly junior member of a connexion based on a network of family ties and an unshakeable belief in the 'Revolution Principle', the complexion of which was unquestionably whig. He had campaigned without success for New Radnor in the elections to the Convention. When a vacancy occurred in Tregony on the death of his brother, Hugh Boscawen, the town's recorder, communicated to Harley's uncle, John Hampden, his willingness to accommodate one of the Harley/Foley group of whigs, and in a conclave of relatives Robert was nominated as a suitable successor, able to function effectively in parliament within the confines of this closely-knit unit.¹ On the periphery of the connexion were staunch Shaftesburian whigs of the old school such as William Sacheverell; quasi-republicans of the ilk of John Wildman; and bright young men of the calibre of John Somers and Thomas Wharton who were, in later years, to form the political band known as the Junto. Harley was chosen on a firm Revolution foot: his relations and his earliest political associates were recognised partisan whigs.

It is somewhat surprising in the light of these facts to find Robert Harley on intimate terms with tories of the kidney of Sir Thomas Clarges and Sir Christopher Musgrave a mere two years later, a development that led to a situation in which, as Edward Harley revealed to his father: 'Whigs and Tories unite against the Court in endeavouring to be frugal by good management'; resulting in Clarges and Musgrave being branded as 'Commonwealth men' by Christmas 1691; and Harley and Paul Foley finding that 'several persons' were 'greatly prejudiced' against them on account of

1. Sir Edward Harley was not consulted in the negotiations that resulted in his son's political debut, but it is apparent that the principal consideration was the relative ability of Robert and his cousin Thomas Foley to carry on the conflict with the tory party in parliament, and even Boscawen was a distant relative. For the arrangement see B.L. Loan 29/184, f. 200: Sir Edward Harley to Robert Harley, 30 March 1689. (The transcription in H.M.C. Portland, iii. 435 contains various omissions.)

their having 'Too great a familiarity wth S^r T[homas] C[larges and] S^r C[hristopher] M[usgrave]'.¹

How had this transformation come about, as it is clear that Harley was as fiercely anti-tory as any of his fellows when he first entered the Commons on a Boscawen ticket in April 1689? Throughout his first year in parliament he served his political apprenticeship with faithful adherence to the precepts of his political elders, displaying little distaste for the party struggle, at least outwardly in the face of tory attempts to white-wash the consequences of the Revolution. Although his efforts have not been chronicled it is evident that Harley played an active part in the agitation over the corporation bill in January 1690, and he was an ardent supporter of the Sacheverell clause. As a result, his name appeared along with the rest of his political associates in a blacklist of 'Commonwealth's men' circulated by the tories in the 1690 election campaign, while his future allies, Clarges and Musgrave, were charged with Jacobitism in a retaliatory whig list. To all intents and purposes Robert Harley in his twenty-ninth year was a hot whig, and he had been singled out as such.²

On the other hand, though, a superficially paradox predilection for 'moderation' was part of Harley's complex political psychology from the outset. His letters to his father abounded with references offering the solution of worldly problems to the guiding hand of Providence, and the judgments on political matters expressed in his correspondence were always carefully submitted to the superior will of God. These complemented similar sincere professions consistently propounded by Sir Edward Harley. The integrity of the Harley family was proverbial among contemporary political

1. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 481, 485; B.L. Loan 29/78/3: Edward Harley to his father, 10 November, 23 December 1691; 10 January 1692.

2. See Henry Horwitz, 'The General Election of 1690', J.B.S., xi (1970), 77-91.

figures, and Robert's father was anxious, almost over-anxious, that his son should do nothing out of character that would bring the family name into disrepute.¹ Both men pursued policies which they felt to be in the national interest, even if in reality this seemingly all-embracing definition was more particularly confined to the liberties and property of the independent country gentleman. Official employment in the government's service was not the primary consideration in the formulation of Harley's political creed.

In essence Robert Harley was anti-party. 'At the first Revolution, if care had been taken, Parties might have been prevented', he admonished the Commons in 1694 on the king's rejection of the place bill, 'and we should have had but one, and that for the good of England'.² In 1689 in his eyes there was no doubt which that one would have been: it was the whig party that was working for the public good, and for this reason he adamantly opposed toryism in any shape or form. But it was the principle he worshipped, not the party. He envisaged an ideal role for the Commons as 'Physicians of ye State'.³ These sentiments allowed him to work alongside tories. When the whigs, from 1690 onwards, began to assume the mantle of a court party, following policies that he believed to be contrary to the national interest; and when the tories, or a number of them, could be seen to be pursuing aims similar to his own; then Harley felt no qualms about joining forces with them in the face of his erstwhile allies. It was not he that had made a volte-face, he claimed, whether rightly or wrongly, but the court whigs who had done so: 'it was their deserting the true interest of their country, and running into and supporting all the mismanagements of the...reign, that made him join with those that were called tories...to rescue the nation from the rapine of that corrupt ministry'. The mere party

1. See, in particular, Sheila Biddle, Bolingbroke and Harley (1975), pp.11-53; and B.L. Loan 29/78/3: Edward Harley to his father, 1 October 1700.

2. Cobbett, v. 830.

3. B.L. Loan 29/164/3: Harley to his wife, 12 November 1689.

label was irrelevant to Harley: it was the principle that mattered. Once his first flush of party political enthusiasm had given way to a firm orientation in the house of commons, he saw clearly that while some whigs were acting apparently without regard to Old Whig principles of constant opposition to the court, some tories were seemingly keeping the public good closely at heart. In this way a country party which cut across traditional party lines became feasible.¹

Harley was the direct heir of a 'Country' vision of politics as propounded in the reign of Charles II by the first earl of Shaftesbury. Professor Pocock has described the elements which made up this 'Country' theory, focusing on the ideas borrowed from Harrington's Oceana, in a perceptive paper on the group of men he labels 'neo-Harringtonians'. Robert Harley should be included in this category. The principal consequence of his belief in Old Whig ideology was the dogma that the stability of the 'ancient constitution' of king, lords and commons depended on the complete separation of parliament and administration: 'It was for the Crown to govern, and for Parliament to exercise a jealous surveillance of government; "corruption" would follow if the Crown discovered any means at all of attaching members of Parliament to it in the pursuit of its business'. The policies pursued by the embryonic 'Country' party in the first half of the 1690s were the corollary to this ideology: all attempts at interference in parliamentary affairs were met with place bills designed to prevent pensioner parliaments, and triennial bills to prevent standing parliaments. Parliament was there to vet the king's policies, to consent to supply or to withhold it, to scrutinize his accounts, and to keep a check on his

1. [Simon Clement], Faults on Both Sides (1710), in Somers Tracts, xii. 694. (See Ch. Eight, below.) Cf. John Howe's speech on the place bill, 26 January 1694: 'I have never changed party. If others have left me, let them answer for it'. (Cobbett, v. 831.)

expenditure. Any indication that the king intended to maintain a standing army in peacetime was met with stony disapproval by the 'Country' theorists: 'The standing army was a bogey intended for country gentlemen, part of a hydra-headed monster called Court Influence or Ministerial Corruption, whose other heads were Placemen, Pensioners, National Debt, Excise, and High Taxation'. And this awareness of the 'Court' entailed a notion regarding which party was permitted to assist the Crown in the execution of government: the tories, the traditional supporters of the monarchy, were to fulfil this role; the whigs were to remain in permanent opposition.¹

During the 1690s Harley was approached many times by the court, sometimes to facilitate an agreement with the country opposition on certain issues, occasionally to offer employment in the ministry to a dangerous critic of government policy. While he consistently expressed his readiness 'to obey his Ma^{ties}' Commands when...sent for', he made it clear 'that he never would come to Court but when he was sent for', and although he effectively assisted the king and his ministers on a number of occasions, he was never tempted by a place.² He was pressed 'particularly (on occasion of several vacancys) to be Secretary of State', and he was specifically asked to replace Sir Robert Howard as auditor of the receipts on the latter's death in 1698.³ If Harley had wanted office he could have accompanied his fellow country party leaders into the ranks of the government at virtually any time in the decade.⁴ But it is clear that he wished to rectify existing

1. J.G.A. Pocock, 'Machiavelli, Harrington, and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century', William and Mary Quarterly, xxii (1965), 571, 563.

2. B.L. Loan 29/165/2: 'Large Account: Revolution & Succession', p. 2. Cf. N.U.L. Portland MSS, PWA 502-512; V.C., i. 44 et seq.

3. B.L. Loan 29/165/2; H.M.C. Portland, iv. 451; ibid., v. 646.

4. The question of his father's influence in resisting court overtures is an important one. 'I should, Sir, be very far from accepting or entertaining anything of much less concerne than a place', Harley wrote on 2 June 1691, 'without acquainting you and receiving your counsel and permission' (ibid., iii. 467; cf. B.L. Loan 29/141/3: 27 May 1691).

anomalies in policy from the opposition benches, he was not prepared to be bought off by a place in a ministry which he regarded as corrupt and supported by incompetent time-servers.

Other whigs did not subscribe to Harley's idea of the party's 'Country' role: William III was their king, and they should be his servants. In the reigns of the last two Stuarts there arose a fundamental division in whig ranks between what came to be called Old Whigs and Modern Whigs. While some whigs continued to tread the path worn by their earlier counterparts at the time of the exclusion crisis, remaining in permanent opposition, others, epitomized by the Junto, rallied in support of the Crown. Yet Harley's was never a purely destructive programme: he tried, rather, to replace outworn government policies by ones that had (he thought) definite advantages for the major part of the political nation, the country gentlemen whom he himself represented, and were designed to work towards identifiable aims. He was always a potential servant of the Crown, never a ruthless adversary, although he preferred to implement suitable measures from outside the ranks of the government. Moreover, as soon as a real chance of 'amendment' presented itself with the total rejection of the Junto by the king in 1700, Harley could be seen behind-the-scenes, cooperating wholeheartedly in the formation of an alternative 'Country' administration, and in the framing of a bill of settlement which embodied in its provisions most of the issues that the country party had contested throughout the long years in opposition. Nonetheless he chose personally not to accept an official position even in this administration, though he had been instrumental in its formation, preferring the more neutral role of speaker of the house of commons.

These aspects of Harley's political ideology must be defined and recognised before his aims can be identified. The motives behind his decision not to assist the Crown in an official capacity were not merely factious: his was a well-formulated, if idealistic, vision of a state in which the Crown governed, with parliament acting as a check on unbridled

royal prerogative. It was outside the legislative body's terms of reference to actually help to administer the laws it was able to make: this was the peculiar responsibility of the king and his servants. Parliament protecting the liberties and property of the political nation was the function envisaged by the young Robert Harley. It was to act as a check and a balance should the pendulum of power swing too far towards tyranny, or towards democracy, in which case the representatives of the 'people' would be called on to exercise their skill as 'physicians of the state' in order to heal the ailing body politic. This, then, was the 'Country' gospel preached by Harley and his political associates.

In 1690, however, there was no country party. The division that counted was between whig and tory, and Harley was identifiable as a whig and treated as such in the elections. With the dissolution of the Convention Parliament on 6 February he intended to stand not only for Tregony, but also for the family borough of New Radnor. Unfortunately his reputation preceded him. In Tregony Sir Joseph Tredenham formed an interest to oppose him, and in a speech to the electors he warned that 'Mr Harley...was notable, and made speeches, so was a dangerous person'.¹ Opposed by the tories in Cornwall, Harley quickly found himself contesting Radnor's single seat with a court whig, Sir Rowland Gwynne. He was rejected in both constituencies, accompanying his father and his uncle, John Hampden, into the political wilderness. No love was lost between whig and tory in this fierce party contest.²

But Harley had been defeated by malpractice at New Radnor. Although he had polled the majority, the bailiff refused to enter his name in the

1. B.L. Loan 29/74/2: Anne, Lady Clinton to Sir Edward Harley, 17 April 1690.

2. See Horwitz, op. cit., pp. 90-91. Twenty-seven whigs named in the tory blacklist were unseated, compared to ten tories in the whig list.

election return.¹ A petition was organised, and great lengths were taken to ensure that Gwynne was unseated when the case was examined by the committee of privileges and elections. On 13 November 1690 Harley resumed his place in the house of commons. It is not the fact of Harley's success that is significant, but the way in which his triumph was achieved. According to Edward Harley:²

Many persons of quality who seldom attend committees, appeared at this with great respect and kindness. The Comptroller [Thomas Wharton], Lord Cornbury, Lord Brandon, Lord William Paulett, Sir Thomas Lee, Solicitor-General [John Somers], Mr [Edward] Russell of the Admiralty, the Earl of Radnor, and Lord Chandos were there, though it was a most tempestuous night.

This tremendous turn-out on Harley's behalf furnishes some clues towards explaining his amazing election by ballot to the commission of public accounts on 26 December 1690, just over a month after re-entering parliament. Great efforts had been made to canvass as many potential supporters as possible for Harley's election petition in October and November 1690, and tories such as Sir Edward Seymour, Sir Thomas Clarges and Sir Christopher Musgrave had been approached in addition to the mass of whigs upon which his principal support was founded.³ While on the one hand it is clear that he was chosen on a whig ticket, which accounts for most of his remarkable 90 votes, it is quite possible that he captured a number of tory votes as well. 'My last gave a hint of a favor design'd to one you are pleas'd to cal Friend', Harley wrote to his father on 27 December in the somewhat over-modest and stylised manner in which members of the family referred to themselves:⁴

1. Source materials for the election are extensive. For a full account see my article, 'Robert Harley, Sir Rowland Gwynne, and the New Radnor Election of 1690', Transactions of the Radnorshire Society, forthcoming.

2. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 451: to his father, 8 November 1690.

3. B.L. Loan 29/184, ff. 346, 348, 350.

4. *Ibid.*, f. 391.

he never spake more or less of it to any person, & had it been possible to have avoided it would not have accepted it without your approbation, w[hi]ch he desires to propose always as his guide. S[i]r Tho[mas] Clargis would have excusd himself, Mr Paul Foley endevord ye like ye House would hear no more; I can not but admire ye wonderful providence of God in this matter.

Even the acceptance of a place on a body designed to be answerable to the house of commons and not to the Crown was rather tainted in the eyes of the future leaders of the country party.

The inauguration of the commission of public accounts was an important step in the formation of a country amalgam transcending the division between whig and tory.¹ Although its early proceedings were marred by internecine conflict, the commissioners gradually learned to work together, and by the beginning of the winter session of parliament in October 1691 the commission was recognisable as a unifying force for the country elements of both parties. 'There is a design, by a very great party, that the war, both by sea and land, should be managed by a Committee of Parliament', one frightened court observer informed the king during the summer recess, 'and this intelligence seems to be made good by the manner of the proceeding of the Commissioners for Accounts, who, in many things, exceed their power'.² The first commissioner, Sir Robert Rich, was accommodated by the court with a place on the admiralty board in November 1691, a far from subtle attempt to draw the sting of the commission's criticism of government expenditure. The split in whig ranks between court whigs and country whigs was beginning. As Dr Ellis observes, after the 1690 elections the relations of the group of whigs known in later years as the Junto 'with other Whigs like the Harleys and Foleys, the Howes and Sir John

1. For a full account, see my article, 'The Commission of Public Accounts and the formation of the Country Party', E.H.R., xci (1976), 33-51.

2. C.S.P.D., 1690-91, p. 465: Sir Robert Howard to the king, 31 July 1691.

Guise were still amicable', nevertheless 'the year 1691...marks the beginning of a serious Whig split'.¹ As we have seen, Somers, Wharton and Russell, by far the most prominent in 1690 of the famous five whig lords of Anne's reign, actively supported Harley's election petition. This bonhomie was short-lived. The process of alienation was a gradual one, but it began to take shape in the minds of Harley and Foley in the course of 1691, as the rapprochement with country Tories of the kidney of Clarges and Musgrave flourished. With the approach of the parliamentary session the country Tories, to the disgust of the court Whigs, encouraged their country whig counterparts to join forces in an attack on court mismanagement, regardless of party distinctions. 'I hope all animosities will be buried', Musgrave urged Harley, '& all heartily Joyne in preserving ye publick'.²

The outcome of the session was eagerly awaited. It was widely expected that a fusion of the country elements of both parties might cause considerable embarrassment to the court. Money was scarce, a tight rein on supply was advocated by the opposition leaders, and an outspoken attack on the management of the war, particularly with regard to the fleet, was strongly rumoured. By providing the independent country gentlemen who formed a natural majority in the Commons (but who were normally quiescent in the face of court pressure) with opposition spokesmen ready to turn their vague feelings of unease into eloquent, defined statements of discontent, it was hoped that they could be transformed from an amorphous mass into an effective organ of country opposition, without running the gauntlet of a confined party system and all its concurrent evils.

1. E.L. Ellis, 'The Whig Junto, in relation to the development of party-politics and party-organisation, from its inception to 1714' (unpublished Oxford D.Phil thesis, 1961), pp. 172, 191.

2. B.L. Loan 29/312/1: 1 October 1691.

The experiences of trying to motivate the notoriously unorganised and largely unorganisable body of uncommitted country members to follow a concerted policy of opposition played an important role in formulating Harley's later attitude to political parties, and his positive stance on propaganda and the press stems in large part from these early attempts to direct the opinions of the independent country gentlemen towards some precise goal. He quickly realised that they could not be led in any strict sense of the term. As Dennis Rubini notes, 'Harley was leader only in the sense that a lead wolf leads the pack...If he had acted otherwise he would have found himself all but alone'.¹ During the 1690s he learned to anticipate the movements of the pack and to run along with it at the head from the outset, giving the impression of leadership, where actually there was none. Only by adopting such a policy, he gradually came to appreciate, could the direction of the pack be influenced in any way. Any hint of organisation or coercion and, as in 1701, the independent backbenchers could veer wildly out of control. In this situation propaganda was of the utmost importance; not only in the form of the printed word, but also through the medium of the spoken word in parliament. In dealing with the independents, both had the same ultimate purpose, to channel the energies of the opposition into a united position in relation to the court. From the first Harley consciously or unconsciously followed the unwritten law of propaganda which is to convince potential sympathisers of the validity of the cause, before embarking on the much more difficult task of winning over supporters from the other side. Successful propagandists are able to turn the vague feelings of their audience into exact formulations of political policy: they succeed 'because the doctrine they bring into form is that

1. Dennis Rubini, Court and Country 1688-1702 (1967), p. 28.

which their listeners have for some time felt without being able to shape'.¹ The initial exercises in the dissemination of such propaganda, seen most clearly in Harley's dealings with Swift and in fully-fledged expositions of the calibre of The Examiner and The Conduct of the Allies, took place during the 1690s, and the principal medium was oratory in parliament.

It is largely irrelevant for our purpose whether country claims of mismanagement were or were not valid. The country members themselves believed them to be based solidly on fact, and even if their first consideration in forwarding the 'national interest' was more strictly their own interest, in safeguarding the linings of their pockets, this does not detract totally from the true spirit of their opposition. The country amalgam which made its appearance in the winter of 1691-92 was not a party representing the rights of the masses; it made no claims to be so.² More realistically it was a parliamentary group which sought to preserve the propertied from the abuse of royal prerogative, opposing the 'corruption' of the house of commons by the court, and borrowing many of its arguments from Harrington. Despite claims made to the contrary by historians, it is evident that Robert Harley played a subordinate role at this stage in the formation of the country amalgam. On 27 October he wrote pessimistically that 'the appearance was very thin and little judgment can be made how this session will be. The gentlemen come up with no other apprehension but to give all that is asked'. He was transported with enthusiasm when Paul Foley took the bull by the horns and, putting by the appointed debate on the king's speech and his request for supply for 65,000 men for 1692, 'began...

1. Thomas Hardy, The Return of the Native (MacMillan edn.), p. 179.

2. Harley would have concurred in Marchamont Nedham's definition: 'When we mention the people we do not mean the confused promiscuous body of the people' (cited in Christopher Hill, The World Turned Upside Down (1972), p. 48).

to open the State of the Nation specially in reference to abuses in the navy & army'. 'This', Harley noted approvingly, 'hath a little opned ye eyes of some Gentlemen yt come out of the country'. The country offensive had been launched, and the independent backbenchers came into the motion once it had been made. Yet Harley had not been prepared to set the ball rolling himself; like a good apprentice he watched and admired the principal country spokesmen, occasionally rising to his feet to support their lead.¹

During the winter session of 1691-92 the country members retained the initiative. Fierce debates on supply were the order of the day, with the fleet emphasised at the expense of the army as the main defensive arm. 'The House seems in a very strange temper', Harley observed on 7 November, 'and which way the parties will determine is very difficult to say, but at present they are very much intermixed and jumbled together'.² Traditional party alignments were breaking down, as the court whigs were forced to rally in support of the ministry in the face of country whig criticism, while the predominantly tory government was being subjected to scalding censure from its own country colleagues in the Commons. Politics for the rest of the session tended to assume a loose court/country character, and determined court tactics were employed to blunt the spirit of emerging country cooperation. 'There hath been a report of a dissolution of this parliam^t', Harley wrote on 19 December:³

ye circumstances seem unreasonable, mony not yet given, ye year too farr advanced for another [parliament] to supply that, besides that the Court when they take paines governe ye majority. It seems rather artificial & a method used to frighten the members into compliance.

1. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 479; B.L. Loan 29/185, f. 230: 30 October 1691. For Harley's role, see Angus McInnes, Robert Harley, Puritan Politician (1970), pp. 32, 34; [W.A. Shaw], C.T.B., IX, cli-clxxiv; *ibid.*, introduction to vols. XI-XVII, pp. clv-clxxxvi. Cf. Downie, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35, 49.

2. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 481.

3. B.L. Loan 29/79/2.

The significant country measure of a bill for regulating treason trials was dropped when clauses were added in the Lords, while the commission of public accounts bore the brunt of ministerial retaliation when an attempt was made to block the renewal of the bill under the authority of which the board had been inaugurated. These tactical ruses were accompanied by a strategic attempt to draw the sting of country censure at the source, when serious offers of ministerial employment were made to those country leaders not already committed to a place on the commission of accounts. Seymour was supposed to be in the running for a place as 'Secretary or Privy Seal', accompanied by an elevation to the peerage as 'viscount of Totnes'. Musgrave, although he immediately declared 'agst acceptance', was rumoured to be having 'a vacant place...made [for him] in ye Treasury'. It is even possible that Harley himself was first offered a place at this juncture, but in the long run Seymour was the only apostate, his opposition to the court being fundamentally factious.¹

There were other effects of the court/country confrontation in 1692. A difference of opinion arose among the members of the Harley and Foley families concerning cooperation with country Tories. Thomas Foley, accounted the 'black sheep' of Walcott's 'closest family connection' by Burton, Rowlands and Riley, was always basically a court supporter, and he took the

1. B.L. Loan 29/79/2: Harley to his father, 2 February 1692; Luttrell, ii. 331, 374. In his 'Large Account: Revolution & Succession' (B.L. Loan 29/165/2), Harley stressed that he did not receive 'any Commands from the King to attend him untill Jan. 1691'. Harley was not in London in January 1691, but using the old style calendar this would refer specifically to the period in which the court was manoeuvring against the emerging country party in 1692, and it is quite likely that William sent for Harley to see if he could be rendered politically harmless. According to Harley: 'On Sunday night the [blank] of Jan. [1691] Mr H. received the King's orders to attend him... which he accordingly did; And his Majesty was pleased to enter into a very long discourse of many hours when he was pleased to use him with great freedom & Confidence which continued to his Death, notwithstanding all the opposition of his Ministers. After that he pressed Mr H. to come into his Service' (ibid.). Cf. J.P. Kenyon, Robert Spencer, Earl of Sunderland (1958), p. 277: 'It is Harley's tragedy that he...went to school...under back-bench wreckers like Seymour'. Pace Professor Kenyon, Seymour's influence on the young Harley was minimal. During the years that the country party was being formed Seymour was a placemen.

lead of Hugh Boscawen in rejecting the embryonic country alliance for the more traditional division between whig and tory.¹ Philip Foley was of a similar opinion at this time, and both men voted with the court. The solidarity of the connexion through which Harley had entered politics in 1689 was beginning to break up less than three years later as a result of the alliance with tory elements in the Commons. The whig party as a whole was experiencing similar divergences in views as the fusion of country whigs and country tories stabilised. As Dr Ellis notes, by the autumn of 1692 the 'frequent rallyings to the side of the government [by the court whigs] were already prompting adverse comments by other Whigs. These attacks continued'.² If anything the historian of the Junto is unduly tentative. Court whig opposition to country whig motions had been clearly apparent in 1691-92. Harley was not slow to point out that the court had 'destroyd al public Bills of this session'.³ And while the split in the whig party was widening, the relationship that had developed between Harley and Foley on one side, and Clarges and Musgrave on the other, was maturing into a firm dependable political alliance that formed the basis of the visibly flourishing country amalgam in parliament.

Although in 1691 word of mouth had been the principal, indeed the only, organ of country propaganda, the development of the country party necessitated the use of the press to unite sympathisers and to counteract the influence of court pamphlets. The débâcle of the projected descent on France, which had been used to inveigle money out of the country gentlemen, was smoothed over by ministerial propagandists, and the way paved towards a

1. I. Burton, E. Rowlands and P.W.J. Riley, 'Political Parties in the Reigns of William III and Queen Anne: the evidence of division lists', B.I.H.R., supplement no. 7 (1968), p. 26n. Cf. Robert Walcott, English Politics in the early Eighteenth Century (1956); B.L. Loan 29/186, f. 30: Harley to his father, 16 February 1692; and V.C., ii. 118-19: 30 June 1698.

2. Ellis, 'The Whig Junto', p. 209.

3. B.L. Loan 29/79/2: to his father, 9 February 1692.

general excise. Blame for the abortive manoeuvres of the summer was being shouldered by no-one (it was 'hotly discoursed' that Russell, the whig admiral, and Nottingham, the tory secretary of state, intended 'to impeach one another'), and, as Thomas Foley remarked: 'It is said very publicly in coffee houses that [parliament] is put off so long that nothing may be done but give money'. For these reasons John Hampden was commissioned to expose the dangers of a general excise, to unite the country members against the imposition of such a tax should one be suggested.¹

It is idle to speculate whether Harley had a hand in the production of Hampden's efforts on behalf of the country party. He was his nephew, and someone needed to supply the 'disgraced republican, without doors'² with information. Certainly inside knowledge was indispensable for Hampden's revelation that:³

There are Commissioners of Public Accounts, sitting by authority of parliament, to examine how the treasure of the nation has been laid out for these last three years. It will be seen in this Report, what immoderate Pensions have been granted, and to what kind of men; and what incredible sums of money the nation has been cheated of, by those employed in civil and military trusts.

This leak of the findings of the accounts commission, designed to counter the 'scribbling court sycophants' by illustrating the 'corruption' of the parliament by the Crown, required the connivance of a member of the board, but it could just as easily have been Paul Foley and not Robert Harley. All the same the influence of Hampden's propaganda on Harley should not be discounted. Whether or not he was actively involved in their production, Hampden's pamphlets served as models for future excursions into the realm of politics and the press.

1. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 501, 502: Thomas Foley to Harley, 24 September, 1 October 1692. Cf. B.L. Loan 29/135/7: Paul Foley to the same, 17 September 1692.

2. Hampden's own phrase, used in a letter to Harley (B.L. Loan 29/138/2).

3. Some Considerations about the most proper Way of Raising Money in the present Conjuncture (1692), in Cobbett, V, appendix, p. lxiv.

An earlier tract had highlighted the desirability of the present arrangement of whig and tory in the administration in the eyes of the court:¹

What can more satisfy it than the present construction of Whig and Tory in parliament? Is there any thing that the court cannot carry? Whereas, if one party were declared for, it would not be so...This balance that the court has got is too useful, and shall never be departed from... whilst the court must use a parliament.

Taking the theme further, Hampden awakened latent fears that a general excise might reduce parliament to a mere rubber-stamp:²

Our ancestors, whose chief care it was to maintain those Rights and Privileges which distinguished them so advantageously from all the other people of these western parts of Europe, and who delivered those Privileges to us as our best inheritance, did constantly avoid this sort of Tax [a general excise], knowing its danger...We know the safety of the nation depends upon the Liberty of Elections of members to parliament. The Excisemen go already a great way in many corporations, by their interest in inns and alehouses, in influencing the elections to parliament. What then do we think they will do when they have an interest in every private house? If there were no other objection against taxing by an Excise, I should think this one abundantly sufficient, with any man that knows how much the being and well-being of the nation depends upon Free Parliaments, and consequently upon the intire liberty of those who are electors, in giving their votes.

Needless to say, this was not the only reason voiced by Hampden against a general excise, and he proceeded to go through the whole gamut of country theory. 'I think there was never but one Excise raised that ever fell again', he emphasised, although previous proponents of the tax 'pleaded an absolute necessity (as some men do now in their discourses about the town) for what they demanded'. Instead of an extraordinary tax levied at an extreme juncture, which was what the court always pretended the imposition of the excise would be, Hampden argued, it inevitably became permanent:

1. The State of Parties, and of the Publick, as influenced by those Parties, in this Conjunction, offered to Englishmen (1692), in Cobbett, V, appendix, p. xxxvi.

2. Some Considerations about the most proper Way of Raising Money, in ibid., pp. lvi, lxiii.

All that lived in the late times remember with what difficulty the Excise was raised by those who were then in the government; and it is certain they could never have compassed it, but for the terror of the Army then kept up. Now if the parliament should raise Money in this way to pay our Army, and should be necessitated, as they were, to keep up a Standing Army to gather it, we shall be at a fine pass. The Money must be raised to pay our armies, that they may carry on the war vigorously against our enemies; but instead of any such service from them, they must be kept at home to raise the Excise.

The old country rallying cry to 'Liberty and Property' was raised once more. The Revolution had been undertaken for 'the recovery and security of our Rights and Liberties, which had been so unjustly invaded. This is the thing we must always keep in our eye, and steer our whole course by this pole-star':

otherwise the hazards we have hitherto exposed ourselves to, and the success with which God has blessed us, will little avail us, whilst by flying one extreme we run into another...We have hitherto been the envy of all our neighbours for our Liberties, and the Privileges we enjoy; the greatest of which, is being governed by Laws made by our own Representatives. All we have is owing to the preservation of Parliaments, and making their frequent meetings necessary. Let Taxes be laid so, that they may cease with their cause, and so Parliaments may not become unnecessary.

This clear exposition of the country gospel in print was echoed almost word for word by Harley in his speeches in the ensuing session.¹

Some Considerations was not Hampden's only contribution to the country cause in print. As had happened the previous session, when parliament met the discussion of the king's speech was postponed until after the state of the nation had been considered. Harley had expected a hot debate on this issue, assuring his father on 17 November that 'both parties are preparing for it'.² This provided Hampden, thwarted from voicing his opinion inside parliament, with the opportunity of doing so in a pamphlet, to ensure 'the preservation of our Religion, Liberty and Country'. Parliament, 'our great

1. Ibid., pp. lx, lix, lxii, lv-lvi, lxvi.

2. B.L. Loan 29/186, f. 207.

State-Physician, and, under God, the Remedy of all our ills', having been asked in the king's speech for 'advice and assistance', this, Hampden suggested, should be freely given. And before the failures of the campaign could be dealt with, the unsettled basis of government had first to be rectified:¹

it is plain our government is altogether without settlement; and that whilst the holding of parliaments is precarious, and absolutely depending upon the pleasure of the crown, there can be no safety for the life, estate or liberty of the English subject.

In what amounted to a country manifesto for the session, Hampden spelled out a programme of measures 'to remedy the grievances of which we complain': free parliaments, frequent parliaments, regulation of trials in cases of treason, freedom from arrest without trial. Nor did he leave untouched the mismanagement of the war:

we cannot but see that there is a vein of treachery runs through it, from one end to the other: how else is it possible every thing should misgive and miscarry, as we see it has done? How could all our preparations this year for a descent upon France, have been fore-slowed and retarded as they were, and our men embarked, only to cost half a million, and make us ridiculous to the whole world, unless the hand of Joab had been in it? Nay, it does not appear there was so much as any tolerable scheme, plan or design laid for this descent, which was so much valued to the parliament last winter, and filled the world so much with expectation all the beginning of the summer.

The country party in parliament was altogether a more disciplined force in 1692, and Harley could hardly have failed to have been impressed by it all. Certainly he adopted a similar approach to preparations for each parliamentary session in his later years, extending the rudimentary procedures worked out by the leaders of the country alliance in his formative years to full-scale meetings of party sympathisers which provided the opportunity of briefing members with policy for the coming weeks, and foreshadowed modern parliamentary party techniques. More important for our

1. Some short Considerations concerning the State of the Nation (1692), in Cobbett, V, appendix, pp. lxxv-lxxxii.

purpose, he developed the use of propaganda to stimulate interest at the beginning of the session to the extent of supervising the production of scores of pamphlets pinpointing the party line. Though none of these methods bears scrutiny until Harley had served fully his political apprenticeship and was a party leader in his own right, the techniques used from the standing army controversy onwards were, in all probability, first formulated in the early 1690s under the influence of men like Clarges, Musgrave, Foley and Hampden.

The similarity of sentiment, and indeed language, expressed by Hampden and Harley is worth noting. Both men viewed parliament as the 'physician of the state', and the country rhetoric of each follows a prescribed pattern; a country jargon used by most of the leaders of the country party in promoting 'the same old threnody on mismanagement, inefficiency, corruption and high taxation'.¹ This is most evident in Harley's recorded speeches in the debate on the state of the nation in 1692. 'The Sea must be our first care', he stressed, 'or else we are all prisoners to our island':²

We have had a glorious victory at sea [the Battle of La Hogue]; though we have had the honour of it, your enemy has had the profit, by taking our Merchant ships...The pretence of a descent into France has been a topic used to get money from you. I am sorry to be told, that the orders of it were not practicable; if not, why were they given? If practicable, why not followed? I hope the king will not consult empiricks, but take the Advice of this house.

Like Hampden he suspected treachery, and bemoaned the loss of merchant shipping to French privateers. He urged the Commons 'to give advice now, otherwise we cannot blame ill conduct for the future'. He advocated parliamentary participation in the formulation of military and naval

1. J.P. Kenyon, Robert Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, p. 247.

2. Cobbett, v. 725. Cf. Bod. Carte MSS, 130, ff. 339-40: Robert Price to the duke of Beaufort, 24 November 1692; N.U.L. Portland MSS, PWA 2389: 21 November 1692.

strategy to avoid a second miscarried 'descent' on the French coast. To Harley's surprise and delight the country party forced a resolution censuring ministerial mismanagement, and the opposition continued to harass the administration. On one occasion Harley reported:¹

the longest debate upon one question that ever I knew [on supply]...the weight of ye debate on our side lay upon seven or eight at ye most, agst al ye place men on the other side, tho they have gaind their point I hope we have done the parts of Honest men & lovers of our countries, such truths were told & some told they did not pretend to answer, but carryed all by their perchasd voters.

Party configurations in the winter session of 1692-93 tended to conform to a two-party system, however loose, and the division was not between whig and tory, but between court and country. 'The Court & Country were warme about ye supply', one observer reported on 17 November, but 'ye Country party putt it off'.² Harley's letters consistently express sentiments characteristic of a two-party system. Tacit acknowledgment of the situation was forthcoming from the court in the form of an abjuration bill, which, it was hoped, would drive a wedge between the country tories and their whig colleagues. As Harley informed his father, under the 'specious name' of a 'Bill for Preservation of y^s Ma^ties person', 'a Bill was made to make words treason & other pernicious matters, as abjurations &c. but it was rejected'.³ The manoeuvres of the court whigs regarding this bill, designed to proscribe all tories who were reluctant to accept William as king de jure, illustrate how wide the breach between court and country whigs had grown. Thomas Foley again divided from his relations and voted with the court in support of the measure, criticising Paul Foley and his son for not doing likewise. As

1. B.L. Loan 29/186, f. 223: 3 December 1692.

2. Bod. Carte MSS, 130, f. 341: Price to Beaufort.

3. B.L. Loan 29/186, f. 229: 15 December 1692; cf. *ibid.*, ff. 227-28; Bod. Carte MSS, 130, f. 343.

Harley told his father, the rejection of the bill was used by the court whigs as a means to reproach Paul Foley and himself and to brand them as apostates.¹

Country party retaliation was swift. A place bill designed to disable M.P.s from accepting office after their election (the intention was not to exclude all office-holders arbitrarily) was carried up to the Lords where it met with determined court opposition. It was obstructed by a majority of two, the court having a greater number of proxies, and a protest was entered in the journals by the 'malcontents'.² Clearly country sentiment had permeated the upper house as well as the lower. Shrewsbury proceeded to introduce an alternative expedient to prevent the 'corruption' of parliament by the court: if placemen could not be excluded then at least a pensioner parliament could be avoided by frequent elections which gave the electorate the opportunity to reject those who had been bought off by the court in the interval since the previous election. Surprisingly perhaps the triennial bill was embraced wholeheartedly by a lower house habitually shy of measures introduced in the Lords. Harley made a token gesture of disapproval when he 'arraigned the Lords for sending down this Bill [and] touched on their extravagant assuming of Judicatory Power', but he nonetheless praised the good intentions, concluding that 'the bill was for the honour of the King...a very good one, and therefore I hope it will never be said of this House they threw it out'. In his best country rhetoric, Harley pointed out the concomitant dangers of a standing parliament and a pensioner parliament:

1. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 510: 27 December 1692. ('Mr T.F.' is in fact an incorrect transcription from the original in B.L. Loan 29/186, f. 238 of 'Mr P. F.', and 'one you are pleased to call friend' is an example of the stylised method adopted by members of the Harley family in referring to themselves. See above, pp. 9-10.) Cf. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 510: Edward Harley to his father, 26 December 1692.

2. See Cobbett, v. 751-52: Mulgrave's speech: 'whatever success this Bill may have there must needs come some good effect of it: for if it passes, it will give us security; if it be obstructed, it will give us warning'. Cf. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 511: Edward Harley to his father, 7 January 1693.

'A standing parliament can never be a true representative; men are much altered after being some time here, and are not the same men as sent up'.¹ Great play was made of the fact that Seymour, personifying perfectly the turncoat feared and despised by the country party, spoke against the bill.

Throughout sceptical of the triennial bill's chances of success, Harley supported it enthusiastically, but his misgivings were borne out when the king exercised the rarely used royal veto to prevent the enactment of frequent parliaments after the bill had passed the Commons.² It was the division between court and country that received royal approbation in 1693, not the bill for frequent parliaments. The worst abuses deplored by the country party were to remain: the existing parliament had proved, however fractious, to be relatively compliant in the provision of supply for the war. William did not wish to jeopardise this security. A pensioner parliament blindly offering more and more money would have suited his requirements precisely. Any and every attempt by the country leaders to put a restraint on royal prerogative and court expenditure was blocked, whether in parliament or through the investigations of the accounts commission. A classic court/country confrontation had become a fact.

Of course party distinctions were far from sharp. Blurred demarcation lines are the inevitable accompaniments of a conflict between two ill-defined groups based not merely on ideology, but on an 'in' and 'out' arrangement. There were the permanent courtiers: there were the men permanently in opposition, those who refused to come to terms with the ministry as it stood on ideological grounds, preferring to act out a

1. Cobbett, v. 760-61; The Parliamentary Diary of Narcissus Luttrell 1691-1693, ed. Henry Horwitz (1972), pp. 391-92. Harley's most extensive reported speeches to date are from this period.

2. For Harley's successive comments on the progress of the triennial bill through parliament, see his letters to his father in H.M.C. Portland, iii. 512 and B.L. Loan 29/187, ff. 12, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23 (most of the details are omitted from the transcriptions).

'Country' theory of government. But between these extremes there stood men like Seymour, who hotly criticised court management when independent, and then immediately tempered his stance when offered a place. The split in the ranks of the 'ideological' parties is clear. The predominantly tory ministry was bolstered in the Commons by the court whigs in the face of attacks made by tories, supported by country whigs. In the Lords the most determined attempt to avoid a standing parliament came from an 'ideological' tory, Mulgrave, in regard to the place bill, but from a whig, Shrewsbury, concerning the introduction of the triennial bill. Obviously there were ideological differences between whigs and tories, court and country alike, and the fact an abjuration bill was introduced demonstrated that there was life in the old conflict yet, and that this could be exploited. The terminology of whig and tory did not fall out of use: the convenience of the labels was too great for this to happen. But there was a third ideology which has not been sufficiently credited in the reign of William III, and this was anchored on the country theory of court and parliament; one to act as law-giver, and to see that the rights and privileges maintained in law were not violated; the other to act as executive. The existence of a country ideology transcended the division between whig and tory.¹ In the ordinary day-to-day business of the two houses of parliament the main division in these years was between court and country, and this arrangement was approaching a degree of stability.

Significantly the formative years of Harley's political career witnessed

1. See the account of the state of the parties at this juncture in chapter XIX of Macaulay's History of England. Shrewsbury was also at one with Harley at this time in expressing a profound dissatisfaction with the activities of the court whigs, and this, it seems to me, was based on a lingering Old Whig attitude to politics. 'I find by the votes, that there is no such thing left in being as a party of my mind', he wrote, adding on a separate occasion, 'I doubt whether I am skilful enough to agree even with those of whose party I am reckoned, in several notions they now seem to have of things'. (Correspondence of the Duke of Shrewsbury, ed. W. Coxe (1821), pp. 25-26.) There is some evidence of contact between Harley and Shrewsbury at this time. Shrewsbury was later to assure Harley that he was 'the same man as when we met formerly' (B.L. Loan 29/187, f. 284: 28 August 1694).

the flowering of this perennial country plant. For the whole of the reign of Queen Anne it was to lie dormant, and the buds it occasionally formed, so carefully tended by Harley in 1705, in 1708, and again in 1710, failed to open. It was similarly cultivated without success by Bolingbroke in the 1720s. But in the early 1690s the country plant was visibly flourishing, and its nostalgic effect on the aging mind of Robert Harley must not be under-estimated. He was never captivated by whig and tory ideology when in office: his was an anachronistic ideology stemming from the political world of his earlier and much younger days.

An entirely new element entered the situation, however, with the recruitment by the Crown of the services of James II's minister, the earl of Sunderland. 'Earl Sunderland is returned to town, and setting up to be premier at winter: in order to it driving barthers with several', Harley noted on 17 June 1693, 'Our friend is again solicited to meet him. I wish he get clear. It is hard to sit amongst tobacco takers and not carry away the smell, though one smokes not'.¹ The divergence of opinion within the Harley/Foley group had entered a new phase, and an out-and-out disagreement had broken out between Paul Foley and Harley's father-in-law Thomas. 'Mr [Paul] Foley is so fixed in his rage against Essex Street that he sticks not to charge all the misfortunes of the nation there', Harley wrote on 15 July, causing his father to pray for 'a brotherly reconciliation between our two friends'.² The court whigs did not share the reluctance of their country brethren to negotiate with the despised Sunderland.

1. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 528-29. 'Our friend' is Thomas Foley. Cf. J.P. Kenyon, 'The Earl of Sunderland and the King's Administration, 1693-1695', E.H.R., lxxi (1956), 584.

2. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 536. When in London, Thomas Foley lived in Essex Street and Paul Foley in the Temple. Hence Essex Street refers to Thomas Foley, as the Temple does to Paul Foley elsewhere in the Harley papers. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 528: Sir Edward Harley to Robert Harley, 9 June 1693: 'I trust the brothers are safe with their father Foley. My service to him and all friends in Essex Street. It would be great joy to hear the Temple and the Street were reconciled as becomes Christians'.

Sunderland had been drawn into the political whirlpool in order to get round the inconveniencies of a system coloured by rivalry between court and country, and the methods he employed demonstrated the reality of the threat posed by court 'corruption' to the integrity of parliament. Bribes of cash and promotions within the ranks of the peerage were the incentives to a more quiescent legislature. Somers was appointed lord keeper, Trenchard secretary of state, and with their cooperation and that of the venal secretary to the treasury, Henry Guy, and the corrupt speaker, Sir John Trevor, lists of parliament men were examined and agreement reached 'upon the best means of Perswading them to be reasonable'. By 20 June Sunderland was writing optimistically that 'Speaker, Mr Guy and myselfe have done a great deale in order to persuade men to serve the King, and I thinke with good successe'.¹

Sunderland was not content, however, merely to pave the way to a situation in which the Crown could extract supply from parliament with impunity: his aim was a full-blooded whig administration. 'I am perswaded the King may yet cure all if he Pleases', he wrote, 'But it must not be by Patching But by a thorough good Administration and imploying Men firme to this Government and thought to be so'.² For his purpose the unification of the whole body of the whigs was imperative. Shrewsbury was courted assiduously (his reconciliation with Sunderland was expected to 'unite the whole party for ever'³), while Harley, Foley and the country whigs were subjected to a programme of propaganda designed to show them the errors of their ways. Prior to the meeting of parliament a Sunderlandite pamphlet was

1. N.U.L. Portland MSS, PwA 1212, 1216: Sunderland to the earl of Portland, 3 May 1693, 20 June 1693.

2. Ibid., PwA 1229: the same to the same, 14 August 1693; cf. *ibid.*, PwA 1219: 'Ld Sunderlands Memoire', June 1693.

3. Correspondence of the Duke of Shrewsbury, p. 25.

published which contained what appears to have been the earliest printed reference to the country activities of the connexion:¹

Your great P[aul] F[ole]y turns Cadet, and carries Arms under the General of the West-Saxons [Seymour]; the two Har[le]ys, Father and Son, are Engineers under the late Lieutenant of the Ordnance [Musgrave], and bomb any Bill, which he hath once resolv'd to reduce to Ashes, tho it were for Recognition, or any thing else that is most necessary to our Security.

A Dialogue betwixt Whig and Tory had the overt purpose of ridiculing the tory members of the ministry and laying claims to a whig monopoly of the king's favour. In the opening section of the tract a very pally tory approaches a whig colleague, and makes play of the fact that despite the Revolution they are both now in the same interest at court. 'Why, who thinks that now?', he is rebuffed, and the rest of the work is devoted to a supposedly objective attempt to prove that the whigs would be better servants of the king after the events of 1688 than the tories, the traditional supporters of the Crown:²

if you ascend to the Ministry [the whig pointed out], I cannot help thinking my Lord Sh[rewsbury], or Sir J[ohn] Tr[encha]rd as able Secretaries as the E[arl] of N[ottingham] and Mr R[usse]ll as able an Admiral as Mr K[illigrew] &c.

The only flaw in this argument was the relative disunity of the whigs, and the tory did not fail to emphasise this:

You have no Government, no Discipline in your Party, no Firmness to one another, or to any Point [he observed]...every Man thinking himself fittest to be at the Head of Affairs, and hating and reflecting upon those who are so.

The message was clear: the easiest way to secure a thoroughgoing whig administration was the unification of the whig party, and the Dialogue was an effective piece of propaganda. 'The Dialogue between Whig and Tory is

1. A Dialogue betwixt Whig and Tory, alias Williamite and Jacobite (1693) in State Tracts, ii. 391. This pamphlet has been attributed to Defoe (J.R. Moore, A Checklist of the Writings of Daniel Defoe (1972), p. 254), but see J.A. Downie, 'Ben Overton: an Alternative Author of A Dialogue betwixt Whig and Tory', Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, forthcoming.

2. State Tracts, ii. 390-91.

with great eagerness dispersed here', Humphrey Prideaux informed John Ellis, 'and all that's said in it goes for Gossell amongst too many. The poison is soe taking that I think it needs an antidote'.¹

An answer was not slow in coming from the country side, with Harley assuring his father that 'care will be taken not to involve us in ye inconveniencies of last year'.² Robert Smythe, Sunderland's brother-in-law, refused to be implicated in his scheme, and offered 'to join upon a square foundation if anything forms'. The redundant but vastly experienced Halifax also threw his weight into country cabals. 'If the great brother of the spectative Primier would hold to a solid cube', Sir Edward wrote, 'it would hugely, by divine blessing, conduce to preservation, specially if the Lord with whom you and I dined joyn endeavors'.³ In the course of the summer An Essay upon Taxes, calculated for the present Juncture of Affairs in England appeared. According to the postscript, this tract had originally been 'writ

1. B.L. Add. MSS, 28929, f. 142: 11 December [1693].

2. B.L. Loan 29/187, f. 100: 1 July 1693.

3. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 529. The relations of Harley and Halifax are interesting, if obscure, and it would be tempting to assume that the Trimmer saw in Harley the heir to his ideology. There are numerous notes extant from Halifax to Harley, mostly undated, but clearly relating to 1693-95. (H.M.C. Portland, iii. 544-47; H.M.C. Bath, i. 51; B.L. Loan 29/151/8.) The character of existing correspondence is cordial to say the least, and we know from an outside source that the two met regularly in 1693 (B.L. Loan 29/187, f. 162), and that Sir Edward Harley was also on friendly terms with Halifax (B.L. Loan 29/142/4). Assuming that the alliance was politically functional, it is interesting to speculate on Harley's possible collaboration in the production of Halifax's final writings. There are MS copies of three of his later works in B.L. Harleian MSS (1243, ff. 129-43; 1898, ff. 139-44; 6274, ff. 186-91; 7017, ff. 79-80: I owe these references to Professor Mark N. Brown), as well as in the Harley papers (B.L. Loan 29/206/113). This endorses the MS evidence that a relationship of some sort did exist, and someone was responsible for seeing Halifax's Some Cautions Offered to the Consideration of Those who are to Chuse Members to Serve in the Ensuing Parliament posthumously through the press during the General Election of 1695. Harley's role, if any, cannot, however, be documented, although the copy of the tract extant in the Harleian MSS does appear to have been transcribed directly from Halifax's extant holograph, and it seems that it predates the printed edition. If Harley had been sent a copy of Some Cautions by Halifax prior to the latter's death, then it might be taken as evidence of his complicity in the pamphlet's publication as an important contribution to the country party's election propaganda.

and calculated for the year, 1692, before the parliament sat', but for some reason it had been shelved. The situation in 1693 with regard to taxation, however, was unchanged, and the threat of the imposition of a general excise still hung in the air. Taking it as a maxim 'that the present war should be carried on for the preservation of our liberties and religion, against the common enemy of both', the anonymous essayist maintained that this would 'bear no dispute'. 'All that admits of a doubt', he continued, 'is, what are the best means and methods to carry on this war'. And clearly a general excise was not going to do the trick.¹

The most influential piece of country propaganda, though, did not appear until after the publication of A Dialogue betwixt Whig and Tory, and in many ways it was a direct answer to the Sunderlandite tract, the author of which was being sought for publishing a seditious pamphlet without a licence.² It would be inconclusive to argue for or against Harley's complicity in Charlwood Lawton's A Short State of our Condition, with Relation to the present Parliament, which was commonly called the 'Hush-money Paper'. Harley knew Lawton, and correspondence between the two men is extant throughout his political career.³ Similarly the country rhetoric employed by Lawton was shared by Harley. Oldmixon noted that the paper was published by 'some Whigs who out of Disgust join'd with the Tories', and ridiculed the author who 'wou'd have us believe he is a Whig'.⁴ It is not beyond probability that the leaders of the country alliance were privy to

1. Cobbett, V, appendix, pp. cxix-cxxx. The Essay upon Taxes is sometimes attributed to Halifax. The tradition is an old one, but there appears to be confusion as Montague, the future earl of Halifax, was reported to know the author, and there might well have been a failure to distinguish between the earlier Halifax and the later. Foxcroft argued against the Trimmer's authorship, and this remains orthodox, see Mark N. Brown, 'The Works of George Savile, Marquis of Halifax: Dates and Circumstances of Composition', H.L.Q., xxxv (1971-72), 143-57.

2. Luttrell, iii. 228: 21 November 1693.

3. H.M.C. Portland, iii. iv. v. passim; B.L. Loan 29/149/1.

4. Oldmixon, The History of England (1735), p. 89.

the publication of the 'Hush-money Paper', which pointed out that the Prince of Orange was called over:¹

to get or give us all the laws we wanted; to have made the elections of parliament secure and frequent, trials impartial, the militia our standing force, and the navy our strength. I thought we had called him over to call ministers to an account, and to have put it out of their power impunibly to abase us hereafter.

Certainly the pamphlet was a country manifesto for the coming session in parliament, but details concerning the production of the paper are missing.

Great play was made of Sunderland's bribery of the house of commons and the use of pensions to render complacent men who would otherwise have been at the court's throat. 'I could name a certain gentleman who exactly resembles Harry Guy', Lawton pointed out:

that the last sessions when the house was a little out of humour, disposed of no less than 16,000^l. in three days time for secret service. Who are in places we may find out, but God knows who have pensions; yet every man that made the least observation can remember that some who opened loudly at the beginning of the last sessions, who came up as eager as is possible for reformation, had their mouths soon stopped with Hush-money.

'I once thought', Lawton threatened, 'to have affixed to this paper a list of those that are in office; which if I had, it would not only have shewn how many members are bought off, but would have pointed out many amongst the number of favourites and pensioners, who we expected should rather have been punished'. What the country leaders were too circumspect to do in print, however, they were prepared to do in private, and it is clear that lists of pensioners were circulated by hand as part of the country propaganda campaign against the forthcoming session. 'I have...ye names of all the pensioners', Humphrey Prideaux wrote on 11 December, 'I am of opinion this discovery will soe blast that party that we have noe need to fear any thing from them this sessions'.²

1. Cobbett, V, appendix, pp. xcix-civ.

2. B.L. Add. MSS, 28929, f. 142.

1693 was a turning-point in party configurations: the crucial negotiations with Sunderland were disliked by country whigs. Dr Ellis notes that during the year 'the men associated with Harley looked increasingly askance at the behaviour of Somers and his friends'.¹ As anticipated in the Dialogue, a ministerial reshuffle, which brought the Junto to the centre of the stage, resulted in the virtual dismemberment of the predominantly tory ministry of Carmarthen, and only the man himself and his henchman Lowther remained as rather useless appendages in the new cast of political 'ins'. In parliament Sunderland's schemes were less successful, as the country leaders once again launched their familiar offensive on naval mismanagement. Significantly, the arguments used were similar to those voiced in print prior to the beginning of the session. Sir John Thompson observed that:²

All of us come here full of affection to serve our king and country; but it must be confessed, that never parliament was under such discouragements as we are; but would it not grieve any Englishman, that the treasure of the nation should be spent in such extravagant bounties, and Pensions to Foreigners? A man must no more talk of Miscarriages at court, than of news in the camp. Do but consider the last session; our Bills for the Security of the Nation, all proved abortive...I hope, whatever is said abroad, that persons will not be so mollified with Places, as to betray their country.

And despite the rhetoric of this tirade, it undeniably seemed to be the case as far as the country members were concerned. The triennial bill was to be obstructed for the second year running, and it had been predicted in the 'Hush-money Paper' that Seymour had laid plans for its defeat in the Commons. 'There is a certain secret that has stole out of our Cabinet', Lawton had pointed out, 'that one there, immediately on the king's refusing the Triennial Bill last sessions, undertook that it should be thrown out the next time they sat, with as much scorn and contempt as was the Judges Bill'.

1. Ellis, 'The Whig Junto', p. 234. Cf. Surrey R.O., Somers MSS: Harley to Somers, 3 September 1693.

2. Cobbett, v. 776-77: 13 November 1693.

'It is time to have annual parliaments instead of triennial', Lawton had argued, 'since privy counsellors and lords of the treasury (both which stations this person enjoys) can so perfectly feel the pulse of a parliament during an interval'.¹

The place bill was subsequently baulked by a further use of the royal veto. This caused an outcry, and an energetic debate ensued on the state of the nation, ending in a resolution:²

that whoever advised the king not to give the royal assent to the Act touching free and impartial Proceedings in Parliament, which was to redress a Grievance, and take off a Scandal upon the proceedings of the commons in parliament, is an enemy to their majesties and the kingdom.

Harley took the lead throughout, and the winter session of 1693-94 really marked his arrival as a prominent country leader. No longer was he content merely to back up the other country spokesmen: now he helped to make the decisions, to formulate policy, to direct debates: 'disappointed of Remedy against Corruption', he moved to make a representation to the king. The extent of his recorded speeches on all the major issues far exceed his earlier offerings.³ And his new standing in the country party was endorsed by the result of the first new ballot for the commission of public accounts since December 1690. Then Harley had been last of the commissioners with 90 votes: in March 1694 he was first of seven men with well over 200 votes, outpacing even his old mentor Paul Foley, who was second.

These facts go some way in explaining the persistent attempts of the court in the course of the next few years to accommodate the two most popular men in the house of commons. All was not rosy in the government's

1. Ibid., appendix, p. civ.

2. Ibid., p. 830.

3. On 5 December Harley 'spoke well...against a general excise', and, Sir Edward Harley also reported to his sister Abigail, on 18 December 'the Lord was pleased to enable your brother to speak so that some in the House called upon me to bless God that vouchsafed to give me a son so to speak, and also the mercy to me to hear him'. (H.M.C. Portland, iii. 548-49; cf. Cobbett, v. 795.)

camp: Sunderland's scheme had not been implemented without hitches, and the unification of the whig party of 1689 remained incomplete. Shrewsbury was still recalcitrant about supporting a party which refused to allow the enactment of a bill for frequent parliaments, and Godolphin was upset by the suggestion that the commissions of customs and excise should be altered to suit the predilections of Sunderland and the Junto whigs.¹ Moreover no-one was satisfied with the position of James II's chief adviser as 'minister behind the curtain': relations between Sunderland and the Junto were never settled; they viewed his role as merely the means to gain full control of the administration for themselves. It is perhaps significant that meetings were organised during the summer of 1694 and again prior to the opening of parliament between Shrewsbury and Godolphin on the one hand, and Harley and Foley on the other. The outcome was disappointing for both parties: it is evident that Shrewsbury was aiming at a reconciliation between court and country whigs, and this did not suit the country gentlemen. They required more than an agreement to 'get men in'.²

But if nothing else the negotiations secured the passage of the triennial bill, and Burnet notes that this was 'the price or bargain for...the supply bills': 'the parliament was opened with a calmer face than had appeared in any session during this reign: the supplies that were demanded, the total amounting to five millions, were all granted readily'.³ The triennial bill received the royal assent on 22 December: on the same day the king was voted a generous supply. And although a place bill was introduced without success,

1. See C.S.P.D., 1694-95, 179-86; B.L. Loan 29/187, f. 267; N.U.L. Portland MSS, PwA 1238.

2. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 560; H.M.C. Bath, i. 51-52; B.L. Loan 29/135/8; B.L. Loan 29/187, f. 284.

3. Burnet, iv. 238. It was also the price of Shrewsbury's cooperation in the new regime. Harley introduced the triennial bill, and on the same day, 19 November, he called on Shrewsbury to discuss 'some matters that deserve an immediate consideration' (H.M.C. Bath, i. 52: my italics).

the principal activity of the Commons in the winter session of 1694-95, with the question of supply in abeyance, was in the prosecution of bribery and corruption, precipitated by anomalies first brought to light by the accounts commissioners.¹ All this apparent 'reformation' encouraged a lull in hostilities between court and country, and the backbenchers enthusiastically cooperated with the ministry in investigating misdemeanour. The affair snowballed, and a specially appointed Commons committee proved that the speaker, Sir John Trevor, had accepted a bribe from the city of London, and he was expelled the house. The country opposition showed its teeth, however, when Wharton of the Junto proceeded to nominate a court sympathiser, Sir Thomas Littleton, as Trevor's replacement. The irregularity of this attempt to exploit cooperation within the house caused an outcry, and Paul Foley was approved unanimously as speaker.²

Such a convincing display of country vitality resulted in further negotiations with Harley and Foley throughout the summer of 1695. These were managed by Harry Guy, and both men professed a readiness to cooperate in anything which 'would produce good to the publike'.³ The outcome was jeopardised, however, by rumours of a breach between Sunderland and Shrewsbury, 'throwne abroad on purpose as is beleev'd' by Montague and Wharton, much to the chagrin of Somers.⁴ At the outset Foley declared a 'wonderfull aversion' to Montague, but Guy recommended making the best they could of a speaker radically alien to the court: 'wee must do as well with him as wee can', he wrote, '& keepe him easy in some points, since wee cannot have him so in all'. The country leaders refused to abandon their

1. See Cobbett, v. 881-933; The Lexington Papers, ed. Sutton (1851), pp. 22-24; Vernon to Lexington, 18 December 1694.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70: the same to the same, 15 March 1695. Vernon was sure that Littleton 'miss'd of the chair' purely through Wharton's 'irregularity'.

3. N.U.L. Portland MSS, PwA 504: Guy to Portland, 18/28 June 1695; cf. *ibid.*, PwA 502: the same to the same, 31 May 1695.

4. *Ibid.*, PwA 510, 511, 1248.

beliefs: they were prepared to assist the court to correct anomalies and redress grievances, but not in the subjugation of the Commons by the Crown. Foley offered 'to live civilly' with his antagonist, but would 'not go farther: because hee sayes, that hee knowes, neither his understanding nor principles are good'. His reservations were well-founded, as Wharton flaunted a list of 'four score persons that hee would keep out of Parliament' at the 1695 elections, aimed specifically at Harley, Foley and other country leaders, Musgrave in particular. To add power to his threats Wharton claimed to have the backing of the king. According to Guy, Harley was 'much troubled':¹

because hee was confident, hee had never offended in so high a nature, as should induce the king to make so severe a declaration against him; that hee ever was, & ever would bee as faithfull to the Government as any man living; & would as much assist to support it; though hee might sometimes differ in the method.

William, through Guy, reassured Harley 'of the falsehood of that businesse', and Harley in return offered 'his utmost dutifull thanks, that hee would so graciously condescend to give him so full a satisfaction', but the episode serves to illustrate the limitations of the détente between court and country.² The elections exacerbated the situation. Musgrave had to retreat to Appleby under pressure from Wharton, while his son was thrown out at Carlisle amid severe riots.³ Musgrave reacted by viewing the approaching parliament with indifferency; Clarges died in October 1695; while Foley tacitly acknowledged his nephew's emergence as undisputed leader of the country opposition — 'What the Court designs upon the opening of Parliament is uncertain', he wrote to Sir Edward Harley, urging Harley's

1. Ibid., PwA 502, 503, 504, 511: Guy to Portland, 31 May, 14 June, 18 June, 6 August 1695. The italics are mine.

2. Ibid., PwA 506, 508: the same to the same, 5/15, 12/22 July 1695.

3. Ibid.; B.L. Loan 29/312/1: Musgrave to Harley, 20 June 1695, 21 August 1695; Rubini, Court and Country, pp. 56-58.

prompt attendance at the beginning of the session, 'All things stand still till he comes'.¹ The leadership of the party passed to younger men — to Bromley, Boyle, Gwyn, Granville and Dyke who joined Harley and Foley on the party's 'front-bench', the commission of public accounts.²

Harley's pre-eminence was quickly put to the test. On 24 February 1696 William revealed the existence of an assassination plot. The reaction of the court whigs to this news illustrated perfectly their real motives in seeking a rapprochement with Harley and Foley: the intention was to alleviate an inconvenient state of affairs, with country policies gaining ground in parliament over the directions of the court, by taking the edge of the opposition with dilatory offers of 'amendment'. Now that an opportunity presented itself to incapacitate the country alliance once and for all the Junto grasped it with both hands and projected an immediate and comprehensive oath of association with William III as king de jure. This was more than the majority of tories could stomach, regardless of country considerations. Once again the dissecting lines of court and country, whig and tory, played a vital part in the politics of William's reign, and Harley faced the speedy disintegration of his opposition party. The abjuration was initially voluntary, but it soon became compulsory to all political men. Unfortunately no less than four of the newly-elected accounts commissioners were country tories, and they refused to sign. Deprived of a quorum (which was four) the most vital feature of the country party could not function.

Harley himself had no conscientious objections to signing all the oaths of allegiance to William III that were going, though he stood out against

1. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 573: 5 November 1695.

2. A full list of the votes polled in the ballot for new accounts commissioners held on 1 February 1696 is preserved in the Harley MSS at Brampton Bryan, Box 117, and it illuminates Harley's status in the eyes of his fellow M.P.s: he polled over 200 to Barnardiston's 8, Andrews' 7, Newland's 3 and Rich's 1 (his colleagues on the first accounts commission); Musgrave polled 3, and Seymour only 1.

the multiplication of oaths as they were, he professed, 'no great security; they serve but as a snare to some men and will not hold such as are your enemies'.¹ His task as leader of the country party was to persuade at least one of the recalcitrant commissioners to sacrifice his tory faith for the public good and the health of the country alliance. The seriousness of the situation was recognised by all, and Musgrave, although he himself felt constrained not to sign, nonetheless actively canvassed all those whose consciences might perhaps be reconciled to the act.² Harley tried to organise a meeting of the accounts commissioners, but the response was disappointing. Bromley wrote to Harley on 25 April:³

I should be very glad to meet Fran Gwyn & you & the other Gentlemen at Yorke Buildings (the greatest satisfaction I had in ye Honour the H[ouse] did mee in calling mee to that Employment, being in the Company they joined mee with), could I satisfie my self to comply with the Forme since imposed. And no wonder I cannot, when others much wiser & abler than I am meet with Difficulties in them they cannot get over.

Harley's reaction to this dilemma demonstrates his already heightened awareness of propaganda techniques. Sensing that most hope of success lay in the cases of Bromley and Gwyn, he changed tactics, and attempted to cajole and wheedle them into compliance. 'I hope we shal be preserved by you from having stripes by scourges cut out of our own skins', he reasoned, since 'our ruine cannot be hastned but by ourselves'. He assured Bromley that 'the inclination of those I converse with seems to be for compliance with the Law, having distinguished their Principles enough by not doing that Voluntarily which receives a different Character when it is required by Law'. 'I have mett with some who have taken paines with great niceness and scrupilosity to Examine this for their owne satisfaction', he continued,

1. Luttrell's Parliamentary Diary, p. 316. Harley's belief would seem to be borne out by the proliferation of oath-taking Jacobites in Anne's reign.

2. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 575.

3. B.L. Loan 29/188, f. 119.

all the while addressing himself to a man 'whose love to his Country and the Public good (so nearly concerned at this question) supersedes all y^e Arguments of (otherwise) just resentments'.¹

This letter must surely count as an exercise in propaganda in microcosm: all the techniques later deployed in macrocosm in the works of Defoe and Swift, and, to a lesser extent, in the printed contributions of Harley himself, are identifiable in this carefully-worded missive. The whole gamut of literary devices to exhort, admonish and convince is used to win over one man where the polemical arsenal was usually aimed at a body of sympathetic or hostile readers. 'I am sure you will sacrifice more than that to the preserving the whole & keeping the Nation from the Power of a Party who can have no strength but what is given them by such a refusal', Harley concluded, mercilessly laying the consequences of Bromley's failure to secure the continuation of the accounts commission at the door of an over-nice sense of integrity. While he was prepared to sacrifice nothing of his own firmly-held beliefs, Harley was not as scrupulous in his attempts to knock down the shibboleths of others.

Despite being subjected to this determined attack on his conscience, Bromley did not waver. Again Harley changed tack and brought a personal slant to bear on his close friend Francis Gwyn, who professed a willingness to sign the association 'if any of the other four will act'. At the same time he made it clear that only his friendship for Harley 'influenced me to make the first offer to the rest, of complying', concluding with the ingenuous confession that he 'could not omitt letting you know this true state of the matter out of the Friendship w^{ch} I shall ever faithfully bear you'.² Harley responded by threatening to retire from politics. 'I should

1. Ibid., f. 120 (the transcription in H.M.C. Portland, iii. 575 has been emended from this original).

2. Ibid., f. 123: 4 May 1696. Cf. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 575-76.

be very sorry you would take up a resolution of that kind not to meddle in [the next session]', Gwyn observed anxiously, 'because if there is any good to be done you must be the chief author of it'.¹ Harley's tactics, verging on moral blackmail, finally won the day. On 18 June Luttrell noted that Gwyn had voluntarily signed the association, 'upon which these commissioners will now act, 4 making a quorum, viz. the speaker, Mr Harley, Mr Boil, and Mr Gwynn; the other 3, viz. sir Thomas Dyke, coll. Granvill, and Mr Bromley, refusing it'.² Harley had passed the acid-test of organising his supporters. Despite his persistent denials that he would separate from his fellow rebels Gwyn had eventually been worn down by Harley's arguments, and the accounts commission was operational once more.

Harley was less successful in overcoming the malice of court enemies. As part of the understanding with the country party which Sunderland had been groping for through Guy and Vernon in the winter of 1695-96,³ the land bank, the country alternative to the Bank of England, was accepted by the Commons as a means of raising the money needed for the war. The united schemes of Briscoe, Asgill and Barebone were approved under the title of the National Land Bank, Harley and Foley leading the Commons in ways and means, as in several previous sessions. Money was almost impossible to come by, and, as the minutes of the lords justices realistically noted, the land bank appeared 'to be the only source left for carrying on the public business', and 'all dispatch' was giving to the drawing up of the warrant.⁴

In the long run even this expedient was doomed to failure, despite the personal intervention of Harley and Foley, as the combined circumstances of

1. Ibid., 11 May 1696.

2. Luttrell, iv. 74.

3. See B.L. Loan 29/137/6 (notes from Guy to Harley); and Vernon's letters to Shrewsbury (Boughton House, on occasional deposit at Northamptonshire R.O.), hereafter referred to as V.C.

4. C.S.P.D., 1696, p. 177: 14 May. See C.J., xi. 495: 5 March 1696.

a critical economic situation and the active opposition of the Junto, led in this instance by Montague, produced conditions in which, with the best will in the world, little could be done to facilitate the incorporation of the land bank, let alone its financial survival. The country leaders were called in by the lords justices when the subscription-books, opened on 25 May, failed to accrue anything like the £1,282,000 which, under the conditions of incorporation, needed to be subscribed by 1 August 1696. They undertook 'that money will be got, with good words and good advantage'. As Shrewsbury observed to the king: 'In this exigence I think they will deserve both'.¹ When they were unable to achieve the predicted level of subscription Harley and Foley turned their offers of help into resentment at Montague's intriguing, and, to Shrewsbury, they appeared 'willing to quarrel upon a very slight occasion'.²

Harley's obscure connexions with the land bank scheme merit more investigation and analysis than they have hitherto received. Frequent claims that he was closely involved from the outset appear to be based more on assertion than evidence. Shaw has attacked Harley, awarding 'pride of place' for the collapse of the land bank to his 'sinister, unpractical brain', and implying that the leaders of the country party planned the utter failure in order to embarrass William III in the war with France when no supply for the 1696 campaign could be found.³ Shaw's inaccurate and unfair assault on Harley is based on a totally uncritical acceptance of the views of the most hostile opponent of the land bank, Montague. The real picture, of course, lies somewhere between the reservations of Montague and the resentments of

1. Correspondence of the Duke of Shrewsbury, pp. 131-32: 28 July 1696.

2. Ibid., p. 133: the same to the same, 31 July 1696. Cf. Correspondentie van Willem III en van Hans Willem Bentinck, ed. Japikse (1927), i. 180-81, 184, 187: Portland to the king, 28 and 31 July, and 4 August 1696.

3. C.T.B., introduction to Vols. XI-XVII, p. xxxv. Shaw's evidence is supplied by a series of letters from Montague to Blathwayt in B.L. Add, MSS, 34355, ff. 1 et seq. Cf. B.L. Loan 29/129/12: Hugh Chamberlen to Harley, 21 January 1695.

Harley and Foley. The main reason for the failure lies in the complex economic situation in May, June and July 1696, and the aftermath of a run on the Bank of England.¹ The principal cause of the adoption of the land bank proposals by the court in the first place had been the difficulty of obtaining supply for the war. Godolphin had stressed the 'necessity of Concluding' with the terms of the proposal, though they were 'very hard', 'or we must take a noble resolution of having no money at all to remitt, or to answer bills, & Consequently lett the Army starve'.²

On 3 August 1696 Gwyn informed Halifax that 'though Foley's and Harley's were at the head of it', the land bank was being called 'a cheat that could not perform what they pretended to'. Expressing anxiety over the 'running down of our friend Paul', Gwyn was apprehensive lest the accusation that the scheme was a 'cheat' might be taken further and blown up into a 'plot' against the government.³ The genuineness of the anger felt by Foley in particular at the collapse of the land bank tends to give the lie to allegations that the scheme was designed to fail. In the ensuing session of parliament Foley 'declared himself...an open enemy of the Bank [of England] in a very long speech, and did not stick to lay the blame upon others that the Land Bank did not succeed'.⁴ Stung to the quick by attacks on the bank in print that represented it as an example 'Of Jacobite Art', Foley was goaded into outspoken vindications of his conduct that merely rebounded to his disadvantage. According to A New Ballad upon the Land-Bank, Harley and Foley, 'With intent to damn the House of/ Commons, brought in/ A Bill full

1. See J.K. Horsefield, British Monetary Experiments (1960), p. 205; W.R. Scott, The Constitution and Finance of English, Scottish and Irish Joint-Stock Companies to 1720 (1912), iii. 252.

2. N.U.L. Portland MSS, PwA 476: Godolphin to the king, 22 May [1696].

3. Cited in Dennis Rubini, 'Politics and the Battle for the Banks', E.H.R., lxxxv (1970), 710.

4. V.C., i. 55: 10 November 1696; cf. ibid., p. 92: 1 December 1696.

of Sin,/ But when 'twas past, a Deus of/ One Souz or Penny/Of New Mill'd Money...They brought to the 'chequer'. 'Not a man to be found/ That would stand bound/ For Two Millions and a half'.¹ As Dennis Rubini remarks, 'the financial credit of the country managers was almost ruined' by the débâcle, though 'the junto ministers were to a considerable degree responsible for the Land Bank's failure'.²

The aggravation of relations between court and country resulting from the association and the failure of the land bank effectively led to the breakdown of the détente between Harley and Foley and Sunderland. Anthony Hammond imagined a dialogue between Foley and Sunderland's crony Guy going something like:³

Speaker If ye King to my Bank & me will be hearty
And to some other Projects, wch I can advance
Then I will come over, both I & my party,
And (I conceive) we can stop ye ambition of France.

H. Guy If the King cannot have you, but with projects & all
Pray put up your Trumpery, good Foley Paul.

It is fairly difficult to distinguish between Harley and Foley when discussing the land bank, but the latter appears to have been more wholeheartedly concerned with the scheme on principle, and it represents one of his final efforts as country leader before his death in 1699. In the winter session of 1696-97 Harley, Foley and Boyle were courted by Vernon and Guy to little avail. In the debates on Fenwick's attainder Harley spoke

1. A New Ballad upon the Land-Bank: Or, Credit Restored. To the Tune of All for Love and no Money [1696], broadsheet.

2. Rubini, 'Politics and the Battle for the Banks', pp. 711, 713. Hugh Chamberlen enumerated 'a preengagement of the present Lord Hallifax, then Mr Montague, to promote the money-Bank of England, & to oppose whatever appeared an obstruction to its progress' among the reasons for the land bank's failure in 1696 (B.L. Loan 29/129/12: to Harley, 10 June 1701).

3. Bod. MS Rawlinson D. 174: A[nthony] H[ammond], 1697 'A Dialogue: The Speaker to Harry Guy who was sent to Him with a Message from my Ld Sunderland'. It is ironic that Guy actually wrote to Harley about the land bank (B.L. Loan 29/137/6). Additional evidence of Harley's complicity in the scheme is a draft of Briscoe's unsuccessful bill in B.L. Harleian MSS, 1250, ff. 109-14 (I owe this reference to Professor Henry Horwitz) and in B.L. Loan 29/129/12. Cf. Burnet, iv. 308.

against the motion 'not in consideration of Fenwick, who, he was satisfied, was the worst of men', but in view of the treasons bill advocated for so long by the country party and which was now law. Shrewsbury, who had sought Harley's cooperation in vindicating his conduct from Fenwick's accusations that he had corresponded with St Germain, was quietly ignored, as Harley proceeded to launch a fierce attack on the ministry over naval affairs.¹

On the conclusion of the Peace of Ryswick in September 1697 political alignments entered a new phase. With the end of the war Sunderland's position in the ministry, continually undermined by the Junto, lost all aspect of stability. 'Several here have changed their style since the news of the peace', Guy informed Harley as early as 23 September, and by December 1697 Sunderland and Harley were corresponding on genuinely friendly terms. 'There is no man in the world whose advice I would so soon follow as yours', Sunderland wrote on 3 December, 'I have been used too much to courts, but I know not how to live in this, which I am now I doubt too old to learn'.² In the course of the month Trumbull resigned as secretary, and Shrewsbury resolved to retire into the country. Godolphin had already resigned in the final months of 1696. Only Sunderland held out against a Junto monopoly of power at court, but the Commons were out for his blood. 'My Lord Chamberlain hardly escapes any day', Vernon observed on 21 December, and when William 'spoke to My Lord Wharton to Engage his friends to stand by My Lord Chamberlain, His Lord^{sp} gave the King such an answer as hee thinks shews a great coldness between them'.³ Sunderland laid down his

1. V.C., i. 52-53: 10 November 1696; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 48-49, 213-14. Court supporters were apprehensive 'at the Courtship made to the Speaker & Mr Harley', suspecting 'an alteration' (V.C., i. 7: 12 October 1696).

2. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 588, 594. Cf. B.L. Loan 29/158/2.

3. V.C., i. 168, 169: 21, 23 December 1696.

staff. 'How far hee will act hereafter behind the Curtain I know not', Vernon wrote, 'but his Inclinations I fear are wholly turned from any thing that may bee called a Whig'.¹

The Junto, then, by the end of 1697, had taken the controls of government entirely into their own hands at a time during which the division between court and country was hardening once more to make its most definitive appearance of the reign during the standing army controversy and the General Election of 1698. 1697 also marked the end of the political apprenticeship of Robert Harley. His popularity as leader of the mottled alliance of Tories and country Whigs had been demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt, and his political future as opposition leader was assured. There was no place for him in the Junto's plans. Yet the true nature of his leadership was to be amply demonstrated during the standing army controversy. The running battle that was fought in print began before he was ready for it, and he was left to marshal his forces to secure a suitable reduction of the land forces as best he could. The standing army issue united the country party in the teeth of the administration of the Junto, and it affords the first real glimpse of Robert Harley manipulating the organ of public and parliamentary opinion which in years to come he was to master, the printing-press.

1. Ibid., i. 171: 27 December 1697.

Chapter Two

The Standing Army Controversy

...during the heat upon the Disbanding the Army...it fell to Mr H[arley]'s share to name what the numbers should be both by Sea and Land.

'Large Account: Revolution & Succession'.

On 23 November 1697 Harley arrived in London to find the town in an uproar.

'Every one is full of the common topic a standing army', he wrote, '& it is talked with heats on both sides: a sharp pamphlet is sold publicly called an Argument against a standing army'.¹ The standing army issue had been thrust to the centre of the confrontation between court and country with the conclusion of peace. The most potent symbol of arbitrary government was used to incite country gentlemen to demand full redress of grievances against the 'corruption' of the Crown. Parliament men arrived for the opening of the session extraordinarily early. Harley was exhorted on all sides to return with expedition to London, but country cabals had already commenced when he finally put in an appearance, and the day prior to his arrival the controversy in print over a standing army was precipitated by An Argument shewing, That a Standing Army is inconsistent with a Free Government.²

Harley referred to this pamphlet in observing on 27 November that 'The Argument against a standing army hath raised a great heat in the Town: There is very little prospect of moderate councils'.³ Court sympathisers were quick to recognise that 'all, who are in any way not well inclined to the government, though from very different principles and designs, join in their opinions for disbanding the army'.⁴ Great efforts were made to accommodate

1. B.L. Loan 29/188, f. 245.

2. B.L. Add. MSS, 30000A, ff. 379-80: Bonet's report, 23 November/4 December 1697; *ibid.*, 17677RR, f. 574: L'Hermitage's report, 23 November/3 December 1697. Cf. Lois G. Schworer, 'Chronology and Authorship of the Standing Army Tracts, 1697-1699', N. & Q., ccxi (1966), 384, where the Argument is wrongly dated October 1697.

3. B.L. Loan 29/188, f. 246.

4. C.S.P.D., 1697, p. 494: Ellis to Williamson, 30 November 1697.

the country leaders in an attempt to prevent total disbandment. Thomas Foley was 'sent for' by the court, and once more separated from the rest of the Harley/Foley group,¹ while Harley himself was consulted before the meeting of parliament on 3 December.² The outcome was a victory for Harley's vision of 'moderation'.

Though Harley's complicity in the production of the Argument against a standing army can surely be discounted as he failed to arrive in London before the pamphlet's publication, it would be wrong to alienate him, as some commentators have done, from the group of 'neo-Harringtonians' who disseminated anti-army propaganda from the Grecian Coffee-house in Devereux Court during the standing army controversy. Harley's contacts with the Old Whig enclave were still intact at this juncture. Professor Robbins, in her study of eighteenth-century commonwealthmen, however, curtly dismisses his connexions with the 'Whig canon', and stresses that his stock with these men quickly ran out.³ The patron of the 'neo-Harringtonians', the third earl of Shaftesbury, on the other hand, was always careful to point out his early relationship with Harley. 'He is my old friend', he sternly admonished his protégé William Stephens for his part in the attack on Harley in A Letter to the Author of the Memorial of the State of England in 1706, 'and in my young days was my guide, and leader in public affairs; nor have I ever broken friendship with him, though different judgments in

1. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 593. Schwoerer, in 'The Role of King William III of England in the Standing Army Controversy - 1697-99', J.B.S., v (1966), 84, erroneously conjectures that 'our friend in Essex Street' might refer to John Trenchard. She retains this inaccuracy in No Standing Armies! The Antiarmy Ideology in the Seventeenth Century (1975).

2. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 594: Sunderland to Harley, 3 and 4 December 1697.

3. Caroline Robbins, The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman (1959), p. 94. Cf. F.H. Heinemann, 'John Toland and the Age of Enlightenment', R.E.S., xx (1944), 136: 'that it was impossible to become dependent on Harley, and to remain a friend of Shaftesbury follows from the simplest logique du coeur'.

public affairs has long broken all correspondence between us'.¹ Moreover as Lord Ashley, Shaftesbury was instrumental in trying to persuade Harley to accept the office of auditor of the receipts on the death of Sir Robert Howard in 1698.² In fact, far from ostracising Harley during the standing army controversy, there is documentary proof to demonstrate his connivance in John Trenchard's anti-army pamphlets.³

It would be tempting to view Harley as the country party's chef de propagande during the standing army controversy, as he was party leader in parliament. The evidence, however, while illustrating his collaboration in the production of anti-army propaganda, is to the contrary. He had served his time as a politician: he was merely taking his first tentative steps in the literary world. But he learned a lot from the exigencies of the war in print over the standing army question. The lapsing of the licensing act in 1695 freed the press from undue restraints, and this new freedom first made its presence felt with any real force in 1697. What was more, the disbandment issue was one of the few in which not only could propaganda influence parliamentary affairs, but it could also effectively result in a different parliament. The triennial act made a general election in 1698 statutory, and it was clearly to the advantage of the country gentlemen not to have a standing army that would have to be maintained out of their pockets. The anti-army pamphleteers, therefore, aimed not only at persuading

1. Life, Unpublished Letters and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, earl of Shaftesbury, ed. Benjamin Rand (1900), p. 355: 17 July 1706 (cited hereafter as Rand, Letters).

2. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 451.

3. To be fair, Professor Robbins has somewhat qualified her views on Harley's part in the standing army controversy in her introduction to Two English Republican Tracts (1969), p. 32 and footnote. Moyle, she admits, 'seems to have been one of the new "country" amalgam of which Harley was the leader...Harley...assisted the cause of the pamphleteers against a standing army by moving the reduction of the number of troops in 1697'. The main reason for her review of Harley's role lies in the fact that he 'has been the subject of reconsideration recently'. Nonetheless her opinion is rather tentative, and she makes no attempt to connect Harley with any anti-army publications.

their representatives in parliament to vote for the disbandment of the army, they also attempted to pander to the desires of the electorate to secure an electoral victory. 'The truth is', wrote one court observer in explication of the country successes in the 1698 elections, 'people are so galled with taxes that they kick and wince at every one'.¹ In 1697 and 1698 it was not only opinion inside parliament which mattered, but public opinion in terms of the electorate.

If there was an anti-army chef de propagande during the standing army controversy it was John Trenchard. Caroline Robbins has rightly pointed out that 'There are certain categories of eighteenth-century publication which almost seem to defy the would-be bibliographer — that is, the pamphlet that was the joint product of several men, and the republication of these works usually catalogued under a couple or more names'.² This is palpably the case with the standing army tracts. Trenchard is usually attributed with many of these, though it seems he never wrote anything down himself, preferring to dictate to an amanuensis. Walter Moyle is regarded as co-author with Trenchard of the Argument against a standing army, but not of the subsequent Letter from the Author of the Argument against a Standing Army, to the Author of the Ballancing Letter, nor of the Short History of Standing Armies in England, nor indeed of the second part of the Argument itself.³ Yet it is clear that there were other collaborators in the work of dispersing anti-army literature from the Grecian Coffee-house. Luttrell countenanced the contemporary rumour that the initial Argument was written by 'a clubb of gentleman', mentioning one man, Edmund

1. C.S.P.D., 1698, p. 377: Cooke to Williamson, 19 August 1698.

2. Robbins, Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman, p. 392.

3. See Schwoerer, 'Chronology and Authorship', pp. 385, 387.

Waller, member for Agmondesham, by name, and implicating another, Littlebury, 'who carried it to the press'.¹

The Grecian Coffee-house was the centre for the dissemination of anti-army dogma. It was a well-known whig hang-out. Harley had been a frequenter in his early days, though there is no evidence to show whether or not this endured until 1697.² It seems strange at first that this whig stronghold should produce pamphlets so damaging to the interest of the Junto. Yet in essence it was pure whig ideology to damn a standing army, and it was the Junto that was thrust into the unfamiliar situation of having to advocate the retention of a sufficiently powerful military arm to guard against the possibility of further French aggression, while their country counterparts complained bitterly of court designs 'to keep an army of 30,000 men, to enslave the nation'.³ Trenchard and Moyle were Old Whigs, as was Shaftesbury who maintained the principles of his grandfather. He only entered the political arena as Lord Ashley in 1695 as member for Poole, and he followed the country line so strongly propounded by Harley and Foley.⁴ Later in his life, when all political allegiance had faded, Shaftesbury nonetheless reminded Harley of 'the early acquaintance and strict correspondence I had once the honour to maintain with you and your family, for which I had been bred almost from my infancy to have the highest regard'.⁵ His protégé John Toland ably summarised the reasons for Shaftesbury's disenchantment with the Junto in his first session in parliament. 'Three or four Bills in

1. Luttrell, iv. 313. Both Bonet and L'Hermitage reported in their dispatches that 'Le sieur Wheler Ecuyer et membre de la Chambre des Communes, qui a écrit le premier le Libelle contre une armée sur pié' went to Kensington with a pistol in his hand to sue for the king's protection against prosecution for the Argument (B.L. Add. MSS, 30000A, f. 405; *ibid.*, 17677SS, f. 87).

2. B.L. Loan 29/185, ff. 149, 159; H.M.C. Portland, iii. 472.

3. C.S.P.D., 1697, p. 484; cf. B.L. Loan 29/165/2; H.M.C. Portland, v. 646.

4. See Cobbett, v. 966n., for Shaftesbury's famous speech on the bill for the regulation of trials in cases of treason.

Parliament did quite take the scales from my eyes', he wrote, 'And who, I pray, cou'd endure to hear any Whigs oppose the Judge's Bill, the Triennial Bill, the Bill for regulating Tryals in cases of High Treason, and such like?' 'The business of the standing Army', he stressed, 'finish'd all',¹ From 1695 to 1698 Shaftesbury continued to advocate country measures, and with 'several Gent[lemen] in the House of Commons' who were his 'friends & of the same sentiments', he founded 'a little society by the name of the Independent Club'.² The club was neo-Harringtonian in inspiration.

Whether this society was identical with the circle which met at the Grecian is uncertain, but the two appear to have been mutually inclusive. Robert Molesworth was the intellectual mentor of the neo-Harringtonians, and in addition to Trenchard and Moyle, Andrew Fletcher and John Toland (both of whom are credited with tracts dealing with the militia) were part of the Grecian's clientele. Some country tory writers such as Charles Davenant and Anthony Hammond were almost certainly involved in standing army pamphlets in conjunction with the whigs, and so was Robert Harley.

Macaulay entertained the supposition that Trenchard and his entourage were disillusioned when Harley took the lead in reducing the army to the 7,000 establishment of Charles II. In 1698, according to Macaulay, 'both the disciples of Somers and the disciples of Trenchard were grumbling at Harley's resolution':³

The disciples of Somers maintained that, if it was right to have an army at all, it must be right to have an efficient army. The disciples of Trenchard complained that a great principle had been shamefully given up. On the vital issue, Standing Army or no Standing Army [Macaulay concluded], the Commons had pronounced an erroneous, a fatal decision.

1. [Pierre Desmaizeaux], A Collection of several pieces of Mr John Toland, Now first publish'd from his Original Manuscripts: with some Memoirs of his Life and Writings (1726), ii. 340-41 (cited hereafter as Toland, Works).

2. P.R.O. 30/24/21/225: biographical sketch by his son.

3. History of England, vi. 2747.

Harley's negotiations with the king had resulted in a concession that William might maintain a standing force of the size kept up by Charles II in 1680, before the augmentation of troops embarked upon by James II. This he regarded as moderate: a tiny standing force that could hardly be used for the subjugation of the political nation, but might, in conjunction with a more efficient militia, avert the threat of a French invasion. William's hopes were for an army of twice as many at the very least, but Harley would not go as far as that.¹ The standing army controversy illustrates precisely how far Harley had assumed the leadership of the country party. Though the country gentlemen were, according to one observer, 'very much set against everything that looks like a standing army' on the opening of parliament on 3 December 1697, Harley trusted that God would 'direct concerning the Army & deliver this simple nation from themselves'.² On 10 December in committee he proposed to disband all the troops levied since 1680, and a day later he was able to inform his father that 'the main question was...passed without a division: viz: That al the forces raisd since Sept: 29: 1680 shal be paid off & disbanded: so that I hope God hath mercy in store for this Kingdome'.³

Despite Harley's concession to the court there is no evidence to suggest that Trenchard and his followers viewed him as an apostate on this account, rather the reverse. In fact it is more than likely that Harley, on his arrival in London, conferred with his country colleagues to reach an agreement over a sufficiently small army that might nevertheless be a sop to the Crown in lieu of total and absolute disbandment. Hammond and Moyle were

1. In retrospect he related that his secret conferences with the king were 'never interrupted but for a little while during the heat upon the Disbanding the Army': 'that year of the second disbanding the army [1698] he did not send for me to take leave of him when he went; but he told me before and after, that I had treated him like a gentleman, and foretold what would happen' (B.L. Loan 29/165/2; H.M.C. Portland, iv. 452).

2. C.S.P.D., 1697, p. 498; B.L. Loan 29/188, f. 251.

3. Ibid., f. 254; cf. C.S.P.D., 1697, pp. 505-507; B.L. Add. MSS, 17677RR, f. 528: L'Hermitage's report, 10/20 December 1697.

ordered to bring in a bill to enable disbanded soldiers to exercise their trade 'in any town or corporation throughout this kingdom', and a further bill was introduced to regulate the militia to render it more efficient as a fighting force. These measures smack of cooperation between country members. But irrefutable proof that Trenchard did not fall out with Harley over the standing army issue is to be found in three letters that not only tie in Harley with the neo-Harringtonians, but also provide positive evidence of his involvement in the production of standing army tracts.¹

That Trenchard and Harley conferred over methods to most effectively disband the army is shown by the first undated letter between the two men. Presenting his proposals for disbandment, Trenchard wrote: 'This is the substance of what I would have done by the Commissioners, and I humbly conceive this method will more certainly disband the army than the method proposed'. Following up this clear case of collaboration over the question of disbandment, Trenchard wrote to Harley for information concerning the armies of Charles II and James II for use in his Short History of Standing Armies in England:

Sr I received yours for which I return you my thanks but those matters which are most materiall to my purpose are omitted in it as first

1. What forces king Charles the second kept up after disbanding the parliamentary army.

2. How and upon what pretences he increased them which I think was by adding more men to a company and then more companies to a regiment.

3. The account of his first raising his guards.

4. The occasion and time of raising and disbanding the Hounslow heath army and their numbers.

5. The time that the tangerines came to England.

6. The number of officers in the establishment you gave me and the pay of them and their soldiers.

6. [sic] The severall establishments in this reign.

7. The account of Shales his affair and the dissolution of the parliament upon it.

8. The establishment and pay and number of officers of King James his army.

1. B.L. Loan 29/282, unfoliated. I am grateful to Professors Horwitz and Schwoerer for independently bringing this reference to my attention.

Harley's virtually unrivalled knowledge of such things, derived in part from his activities on the commission of public accounts, caused Trenchard to approach the country leader, assuring him that 'These things are absolutely necessary to my purpose and I dont know where to gett them unless from you therefore if you are att leisure either this night or to morrow morning I will wait uppon you to discourse uppon these heads'.

As well as supplying concrete evidence of active association between Trenchard and Harley, these letters also indicate that the two men met to discuss tactics during the standing army controversy, and indeed the implication is that these meetings were not out of the ordinary. Trenchard asked Harley for an interview as if he had done so many times before: the tone of the letter is informal, not the aloof application for information which one might reasonably expect from two men who disagreed over the aims of the campaign against a standing army. And this cooperation clearly spanned three petitions from Trenchard for details to be used in his History, for Harley's reply evidently did not supply all that was required. 'I humbly thank you for the paper you sent me', Trenchard subsequently wrote, 'but what I most want is a list of the army that we now have, I therefore desire that you will correct and fill up the list I have sent you for I find there are severall mistakes. And if you will be pleased to add the gross number of the second establishment in this reign, as also those of King James his reign you will very much oblige me and you shall receive no further trouble'. 'Pray S^r', Trenchard urged, 'oblige me in it as soon as you can'.¹ Harley's efforts on Trenchard's behalf palpably assisted the production and dissemination of anti-army propaganda.

1. Ibid. Bound in with these letters is a printed broadsheet dated December 1698 and entitled, A List of all the Land-Forces now in England, and of what other Forces are in English Pay under the Care of the Earl of Ranelagh, Paymaster-General.

The Argument against a standing army had not remained unanswered for long, and soon a paper war of unparalleled intensity was being waged for and against a standing army. Two pamphlets appeared around the opening of parliament on 3 December.¹ Daniel Defoe launched a swingeing attack on the inadequacies and inconsistencies of the Argument, accusing the author of being 'a down-right Jacobite':²

sometimes you give high Encomiums of the King; and then under the Covert of what Kings may be, you sufficiently Banter him; sometimes the Army are Ragamuffins, sometimes Men of Conduct and Bravery; sometimes our Militia are brave Fellows, and able enough to Guard us, and sometimes so inconsiderable, that a small Army may Ruine us.

In emphasising that though 'Parliaments are Magnipotent...they are not Omnipotent', Defoe dented the country ideal of an uncorrupt, infallible Commons, and revealed the flaws and falsifications of the neo-Harringtonian idealisation of the mythical 'ancient constitution'. A second anonymous reply to the Argument also tried to highlight the impracticality of Old Whig beliefs. Putting forward two axioms, that the nation could be no means be safe without an army, and that maintaining an army did not necessarily mean 'certain and sudden Slavery', the author of Some Remarks Upon a late Paper also made much of Trenchard's and Moyle's unhelpful examples from history, particularly with regard to the militia of Elizabeth I. 'Believe me, Sir', he argued, 'she was not saved by Fleets, nor Militia, but by a Standing Army'. Significantly he concluded that the unrealistic author of the Argument was tilting at windmills. 'I am afraid', he scoffed, 'when he has done his best, his Militia will prove a guard only fit to defend his Commonwealths of Oceana and Utopia; Where alone, I fancy, he will be fit to Govern'.³

1. Schwoerer (op. cit., pp. 384-85) lists four titles between the appearance of the Argument and the opening of parliament, but Bonet and L'Hermitage name only two.

2. Some Reflections on a Pamphlet lately Publish'd, Entituled, An Argument Shewing that a Standing Army is inconsistent with a Free Government (1697), preface, p. 2.

3. Some Remarks Upon a late Paper (1697), pp. 7, 11, 17.

Some Remarks employed some interesting terminology. Though much of the tract was abusive, such as the suggestion that the author of the Argument was not to be trusted with 'Pens and Ink', but, like 'Madmen, from whom we take away all Weapons, by which they may do themselves or others an Injury', should be banned from the use of these things 'to besmear all who come in their reach', it nonetheless had its serious side. The author did not follow Defoe in blackening Trenchard and Moyle as Jacobites, but, tacitly acknowledging the whig split, he wished to know 'the Reason of this ...so Mortal Quarrel to the Whigs in general (since he seems to Profess himself a Whig)'. 'Perhaps', he went on, 'our Author is of the Opinion of a Gentleman, who told me, He was for Whigs as Whigs were 15 years ago'. The anonymous author of Some Remarks did not care overmuch for this useless distinction. 'I am — a — Whig', he was at pains to point out, 'and I fancy as hearty a Whig as the Author, yet I must own I am not for being a Whig as Whigs were 15 years ago'. This, then, was the demarcation line between the court whigs and the country whigs in the reign of William III, countenancing the description awarded Harley in Faults on Both Sides.¹

These abrasive attacks on the Argument against a standing army were followed just after parliament met (but before the debate on the army in committee) by a more conciliatory plea for compromise. A Letter, ballancing the Necessity of keeping a Land-Force in times of Peace, With the Dangers that may follow on it was, as Bonet noted, 'la Réponse qui a été le plus goutée de la Cour', and it was, and is, commonly attributed to lord chancellor Somers. The Ballancing-Letter (as it came to be called), according

1. Ibid., pp. 4-5. See above, pp. 4-5.

to Bonet:¹

n'y insulte pas les voisins, en les soupçonnant de vouloir rompre la Paix, on rejette cette pensée, mais on ajoute en même tems, que le meilleur Garant qu'on ait de la Paix, est de maintenir des forces, et de se tenir sur ses gardes.

'I am far from the thought of a Standing Army', Somers stressed, trimming his stance as a courtier in deference to Old Whig ideology, 'The Case at present is, Whether, considering the Circumstances that we and our Neighbors are now in, it may not be both prudent and necessary for us to keep up a reasonable Force from Year to Year'.²

The irony of a supposedly honourable peace that nevertheless had to be guaranteed by a powerful standing force was not lost, of course, on the country gentlemen, nor did Somers' promise that the maintenance of an army from year to year in strict deference to parliamentary precedent win over anyone. This was a last desperate attempt by the court to influence the outcome of events in the committee on the supply, due to meet on 10 December. Moreover the Ballancing-Letter, as Bonet noted, was answered within two days by the author of the Argument, in which 'la quelle l'Autheur represente, que la Paix n'est pas honorable, si on a besoin d'entretenir des forces'.³

Harley's connivance in the Letter from the Author of the Argument against a Standing Army, to the Author of the Ballancing Letter, though ostensibly by Trenchard, should not be ruled out, nor should his possible influence in the second part of the Argument itself. The latter contained a postscript 'containing Remarks on a late publish'd List of Irish Papists now in the French King's Service'. The list appeared on 14 December, printed, according to Bonet, 'par ordre de la Cour', and purported to be of the army of James II

1. B.L. Add. MSS, 30000A, f. 391: 10/20 December 1697. Schwoerer dates the Ballancing-Letter prior to 3 December (op. cit., p. 384), but Bonet's report would appear to indicate otherwise.

2. State Tracts, ii. 585.

3. B.L. Add. MSS, 30000A, f. 391.

in exile, 'ready (when called for)' to invade Britain. It was a purely empirical attempt to prove from inadequate data that the threat of a Jacobite restoration was serious enough and that this necessitated a standing force, if only as a defensive measure. Schwoerer tentatively suggests that it was drawn up by William Blathwayt, secretary at war.¹ This would appear to be a reasonable assumption, and for the same reasons it could be that Harley, fresh from his investigation into army accounts, was responsible for Some Queries for the better understanding of a List of King James's Irish and Popish forces in France.

Trenchard had cause to acknowledge Harley's wide knowledge of army affairs and army history during the standing army controversy, and it is quite likely that he was the same source for information on court estimates of the strength of James II. The use of queries was subsequently one of Harley's favourite propaganda vehicles. Even when attempting a more sophisticated polemical approach, Harley freely interweaved factual snippets into his writings, usually from parliamentary journals.² His mentality, as Swift was later to observe, was suited to a rhetorical style that consisted largely of 'few words and strong reasons', and his parliamentary speeches tended to conform to this pattern. When presented with an opportunity for prolonged argument he was often muddled and incoherent. A simple statement of scepticism concerning hypothetical estimates of opposition forces in the light of his experience of the inaccuracy of army estimates on the accounts commission was not beyond his capacity, in fact it was well-suited to his genius, for, as Bonet emphasised, 'Ses réponses consistent seulement en diverses questions'.³

1. Ibid., ff. 400, 403-404; Schwoerer, op. cit., p. 385. Schwoerer dates the List prior to December 1697, but Bonet stressed on 14 December that 'il paroit dans ce moment'.

2. See below, chapter three: 'The Paper War of 1701', passim.

3. B.L. Add. MSS, 30000A, f. 404: 17/27 December 1697.

Some Queries was published quickly in response to the court List which was represented as an answer to the Argument against a standing army, 'or to whatever has been, or ever shall be, writ upon that subject'.¹ If Trenchard was prepared to deal with the List in the postscript to the second part of the Argument, then the field was left open for another country apologist to pen the Queries, and Harley seems the likeliest candidate. The broadsheet was printed by Edward Jones in the Savoy. Harley is known to have had quite extensive dealings with Jones, and he patronised his printing-house considerably. When, during the heat over the impeachments in 1701, the Commons resolved to publish their proceedings, Harley, as speaker, appointed Edward Jones and Timothy Goodwin to print them. Under the Godolphin ministry the Gazette was printed and dispersed by Jones in addition to 'other papers of public Intelligence', and when Jones was 'drawing near his end', his patron, Thomas Spratt, bishop of Rochester, interposed with Harley on his behalf to entreat the continuance of Harley's 'kindness to his family', on account of the 'marks' of Harley's favour Jones had 'formerly receiv'd' upon Spratt's recommendation.² Some Queries, then, may have been Harley's first tentative venture in print, and perhaps his guiding hand can also be discerned in the publication of The Several Debates of the House of Commons in the reign of the late James II, pro, and contra, relating to the establishment of the militia and the disbanding of the army, Nov. 9 to Nov. 20, 1685. Harley was similarly ideally-placed for such a compilation. His knowledge of parliamentary history and procedure was second to none, and if he felt constrained to contribute something off his own bat to the controversy over a standing army in print, as a first exercise in propaganda that would not extend unduly his limited capacity for

1. Both broadsheets are reprinted in Somers Tracts, xi.

2. B.L. Loan 29/158/2: 2 February [1706]. Jones died in February 1706, see Plomer's Dictionary of...Printers and Booksellers...1668 to 1725 (1922), p. 174. Schwoerer erroneously refers to Jones as author of Some Queries, and suggests that this is Edward Jones, bishop of St Asaph (op. cit., p. 386).

polemics, the publication of reasons voiced against a standing army in more critical times would have constituted a convenient venture into the writer's world.

A further link with the anti-army pamphleteers was Harley's encouragement of John Toland's edition of Harrington's works. Toland embarked upon the project in 1699, and the Oceana appeared in 1700.¹ With the advent of Toland into the English political scene can be seen Harley's earliest contact with a recognised writer on the basis of master and employee. That Toland passed as 'Mr HARLEY's Creature' is well-known, but the details of the working arrangement are obscure.² 'I past for Mr HARLEY's friend, when he was oppos'd by the Court', Toland told William Penn, the Quaker, in 1705, when trying to revive his association with his old patron, 'But I protest to you, SIR, by all that's awful, that I have not spoke one word to Mr HARLEY, nor receiv'd one Letter or Message from him, since King WILLIAM died'. Subsequently Toland, in 1711, reminded Harley how their 'familiarity commenc'd, founded upon the same Love of Letters and Liberty...many years ago'.³

In September 1697 Toland fled from his native Ireland to escape the consequences of his notorious deist tract, Christianity not Mysterious. Molyneux wrote to John Locke informing him of Toland's troubles and that he was, 'by the imprudent Management, [that] had raised such an universal Outcry...at last, driven out of our Kingdom...and none here knows where he has directed his Course'.⁴ Harley's intelligence was better, and an Irish newsletter reported that Toland had successfully 'made his escape into

1. Oceana went to press on 11 July 1699 (B.L. Add. MSS, 4295, f. 10). For Harley's role, see Toland, Works, ii. 227.

2. Ibid., p. 345. Cf. Swift's Discourse, ed. F.H. Ellis (1967), p. 36.

3. Toland, Works, ii. 221, 345.

4. Ibid., I, xxv: 11 September 1697.

England, where he had best stay'.¹ In England Toland moved in the circle of neo-Harringtonians which met at the Grecian,² and his plight came to the notice of Shaftesbury, who was always ready to assist the worthy down-and-out with his patronage. Toland was suspected of having had a hand in the Argument against a standing army, and other anti-army tracts, and in the first months of 1698 he brought out his first solo effort on behalf of the anti-army cause when he published The Militia Reform'd.³

The Militia Reform'd was perhaps the most neo-Harringtonian of all the standing army tracts, and Toland hinted at Shaftesbury's encouragement.⁴ Certainly he was Shaftesbury's protégé in 1698. During the elections he arranged the publication, 'with his Lordship's privity', of Shaftesbury's influential The Danger of Mercenary Parliaments.⁵ One commentator writes of the 'original very friendly undisturbed relations' that existed between the two prior to Toland's publication of Shaftesbury's Inquiry concerning

1. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 586: Sir Richard Cox's newsletter, 14 September 1697.

2. For references to the Grecian in Toland's correspondence, see B.L. Add. MSS, 7121, f. 61; P.R.O. 30/24/20/105.

3. See B.L. Loan 29/17/12, where the Argument is attributed to Toland alone. See also Schwoerer, op. cit., p. 387.

4. 'The following Discourse (most noble Lord) begun at your Request'. The Militia Reform'd (1698) in State Tracts, ii. 594.

5. Letters from Shaftesbury to Molesworth [ed. Toland] (1721), p. xxi. There is considerable confusion both about the authorship of The Danger of Mercenary Parliaments and its date of publication. Partly this stems from Toland's 1722 reprint of the pamphlet, to the preface of which he added, 'By the Editor of the Earl of Shaftesbury's Letters to Lord Molesworth'. In other words, the preface of the 1722 edition of the tract was written by Toland, not the tract itself. (See F.H. Heinemann, 'Prolegomena to a Toland Bibliography', N. & Q., clxxxv (1943), 185-86.) It is dated 1690 in Cobbett, V, appendix, p. cvii, while Robbins dates it 1695 (op. cit., p. 110), and this error has been repeated by Quentin Skinner in his essay in Historical Perspectives: Essays in Honour of J.H. Plumb, ed. Neil McKendrick (1974). Skinner also attributes the pamphlet to Toland. The 1698 dating in State Tracts is correct.

Virtue without his consent in 1699.¹ Nonetheless as late as 1701, as one cynical contemporary noted, they corresponded 'as tenderly as if they used to lye with one another'.² Only after the accession of Queen Anne did Shaftesbury begin to be disillusioned with Toland, and this was not, as some historians suppose, on account of his protégé's relations with Harley, but because of his evident lack of moral fibre.³ But was Toland acquainted with Harley prior to the publication of the Militia Reform'd? For Harley to have been Shaftesbury's 'guide, and leader in public affairs' they must have been intimate during the earl's only session in the Commons, as Lord Ashley, from 1695 to 1698. For Shaftesbury to lay such an encomium on Harley they could hardly have fallen out by 1697, and we have evidence (noted above) of friendship between the two in 1698. So it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Shaftesbury would introduce Toland to his 'party leader'. As F.H. Heinemann observes, if Harley suggested the edition of Harrington's works, it is possible that he also suggested the Militia Reform'd,⁴

There were other intermediaries through which Harley and Toland might have met in 1698. John Methuen was Harley's friend. In fact he was suspected by the whigs of leaking a resolution of the ultra-whig Rose Club to recommit the question of disbandment. On 8 January 1698 Vernon wrote to Shrewsbury:⁵

Wee have had a long Debate to day in order to the bringing the house up to a greater number of Troopes then those that were in being in the year 1680. It was resolved last night at the Rose...When the question was proposed they were aware of it & Harley added these words pursuant to

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1. Heinemann, 'Toland and the Age of Enlightenment', p. 132.
 2. Bod. MS Montague, D. 1, f. 69: Stepney to Halifax, 3/14 December 1701.
 3. See Shaftesbury's letters to Wheelock, P.R.O. 30/24/20/80, 81.
 4. Heinemann, 'Prolegomena to a Toland Bibliography', p. 185.
 5. V.C., i. 177. The italics are mine. Toland's reason for going to Ireland in 1697 had been to take up a position as Methuen's secretary. See J.G. Simms, 'John Toland (1670-1722), a Donegal heretic', Irish Historical Studies, xvi (1968-69), 309.

their former vote upon which the Debate run whither it should stand part of the Question & Everything was argued over again...but they stuck to their vote & carried it upon the Division.

'Some think there is an under hand management & that it was resolved the Whiggs should be baffled in their project', Vernon concluded, shrewdly observing that 'It is suspected M^r Methuen is in this secret'. Harley, once again demonstrating his prowess as country leader, successfully headed off the court proposal, though, as he pointed out to his father, it had been intended as a 'surprise, contrary to all order', and it was only defeated after a debate that lasted eight hours.¹ If Vernon's supposition that Methuen was intriguing with Harley was correct, and there is no reason to assume otherwise, then it proves that meetings between the two men took place around the time that Toland fled from Ireland. Methuen had been in Ireland during the fracas caused by Christianity not Mysterious and he was acquainted with Toland.² It is quite likely, therefore, that he would introduce Toland to Harley on his own arrival back in England. Harley noted specifically that in the debate on 8 January concerning the recommitment of the question of disbandment both 'Methwin chancellor of Ireland & Molesworth' were for his proposal.³ Once more we come up against connexions between Harley and the neo-Harringtonians in 1697 and 1698. It could be that the origins of the important relationship between Harley and Toland are to be found in the exigencies of the standing army controversy.

The neo-Harringtonians used a standing army as a symbol of the disintegration of the fictitious 'ancient constitution' of king, lords and

1. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 595: 8 January 1698.

2. Ibid., pp. 588-89: Methuen to Harley, 27 September 1697. I am indebted to Professor Henry Horwitz for the suggestion that Harley may have become acquainted with Toland through Methuen.

3. B.L. Loan 29/189, f. 4.

commons, which the first earl of Shaftesbury had defended against all-comers, tyrant and democrat alike. They carefully picked Harrington's works for arguments that could be wielded in the cause of liberty and property, and their writings were couched in Harringtonian phraseology, regardless of the real basis of his philosophy, for, ironically, Harrington did not share the neo-Harringtonians' enthusiasm for the ancient constitution. His commonwealth of Oceana owed much to Machiavelli and had as its model the Roman republic. It was anchored firmly on an historical doctrine of feudalism — of a militia of freemen springing patriotically from the plough when danger threatened, not a standing army — and this entailed a view of the essential instability of the neo-Harringtonians' ancient constitution. The appeal of Harrington's doctrine to these men, as Professor Pocock points out, 'was that it was admirably suited to the expression of ideological opposition to the idea of a standing army, even though the construction of such an ideology had been no part of Harrington's intentions'.¹ It was just as shrewd to take this a stage further and advocate a militia on the lines laid down by Harrington for the commonwealth of Oceana as an alternative to a standing army, which effectively silenced the criticisms of those who felt the need for a powerful military arm in the face of the threat posed by the armed might of the France of Louis XIV.² It was not the picture drawn by

1. Pocock, op. cit., p. 562.

2. This was precisely the standpoint taken by Toland in the Militia Reform'd. As his 'first Proposition' for increasing the efficacy of the militia he put the following: 'That England consisting of Freemen and Servants, none be capable of serving in the Militia but the former. By Freemen I understand Men of Property, or Persons that are able to live of themselves; and those who cannot subsist in this Independence, I call Servants' (State Tracts, ii. 597). The first order of Harrington's 'Modell of the Common-Wealth of Oceana' divided 'the people into Freemen or Citizens, and Servants...for if they attain unto Liberty, that is, to live of themselves, they are Freemen or Citizens...This Order needeth no proof, in regard of the nature of servitude, which is inconsistent with Freedom or Participation of Government in a Common-wealth'. (James Harrington's Oceana, ed. S.B. Liljegren (1924), p. 64.) Cf. the Argument against a standing army, where it was argued that the militia could only be made effective as a fighting force if it were 'to consist of the same Persons as have the Property' (State Tracts, ii. 566).

Harrington of the idealistic Oceana which attracted the neo-Harringtonians, but his terminology — his emphasis on the importance of land-ownership, and his insistence on a militia, not a standing army.

Paradoxically, then, the subversive Harrington was recruited to bolster a constitution in which he did not believe, and which he had done his best to replace with his alternative system of Oceana. The 'ancient constitution' which he believed to be unstable was the ideal basis for the neo-Harringtonian state, a limited, mixed monarchy:¹

where the King enjoys all the prerogatives necessary to the Support of his Dignity, and the Protection of his People, and is only abridg'd from the Power of injuring his own Subjects: In short, the Man is loose, and the Beast only bound...an Empire of Laws, and not of Men.

'Such a Common-wealth's-man I only approve, as your Lordship formerly was, when you encourag'd me to reprint Harrington's Oceana', Toland reminded Harley (then earl of Oxford) in 1711, significantly adding the rider, 'tho' neither of us imagin'd the model it self to be practicable'.² Whether or not Harley was deeply involved in the production of anti-army tracts in 1697 and 1698 one thing is clear: he fully endorsed all the sentiments expressed in them. He believed in the preservation of the constitution 'in Crowne L^{ds} & Commons'. As he wrote in 1708 in 'Plaine English':³

were you not agst setting up officers & furnishing them with mony to oppose Country Gentlemen?...Were you not agst the Courts considering Returnes & influencing Elections? Were you not against closetting members? & their voting to be the tenure of their Places? Is it not yr Principle to be agst a standing Army?

1. Ibid., p. 565.

2. Toland, Works, ii. 227: 'Another Memorial for the Most Honourable the Earl of [Oxford]. London, Dec. 17, 1711'. There are four 'Memorials' in this collection. In the title-page the addressee is named as the earl of Shaftesbury, but as he was dead when two of them were written (dated 1713 and 1714) this cannot be accurate. As well as internal evidence to support the belief that the first two (dated 1711) were addressed to Harley, there is the fact that similar letters from Toland to Harley are extant in the Harley papers. See below, pp. 325-26.

3. B.L. Loan 29/10/1. All quotations are from 'Plaine English to all who are Honest, or would be so if they knew how: a Tract by Robert Harley, edited, with an introductory note by W.A. Speck and J.A. Downie', Literature and History, iii (1976), 100-10. Subsequent page references are supplied in the text within parentheses.

Toland's edition of Harrington's works, commissioned by Harley, not only devoted a preface to the exposition of the excellence of the mixed constitution of king, lords and commons, and its preservation by the Revolution, it also provided for a revision of Harrington's doctrine. As S.B. Liljegren noted in the introduction to his own edition of Oceana, which adheres religiously to the text of 1656, Toland 'also made free with the sense intended by Harrington, in a way which is rather unfortunate'.¹ One suspects that this was far from accidental, especially as Toland went so far in the preface as to say that Harrington allowed the ancient constitution to be 'the most free and best constituted in all the world', and 'only makes it a less perfect and more inequal form than that of his Oceana, wherein, he thinks, better provision is made against external violence or internal diseases'.² Not only did the neo-Harringtonians have their own perverse interpretation of what Harrington was trying to say, an interpretation which effectively turned his system on its head, they even had their own edition of his works!

Country ideology was, then, the foundation of opposition to a standing army. It could 'be kept up to prey upon our Entrails, and which must in the hands of an ill Prince (which we have the misfortune frequently to meet with) infallibly destroy our Constitution'.³ The country party made no bones about using the standing army affair to reaffirm the sovereignty of parliament. Would the court thwart the resolutions of the 'people' and greet country efforts to regulate the militia with sour grapes: no standing army, no defensive system at all? This is what Toland demanded to know in the Militia Reform'd, rehashing the arguments that had been used to expose ministerial interference in parliamentary affairs in the previous years, and

1. Oceana, ed. Liljegren, p. xiii.

2. The Oceana and other works of James Harrington, with an account of his Life, ed. Toland (1700), p. viii (the preface is dated 30 November 1699).

3. State Tracts, ii. 567.

echoing Harley's precepts on party configurations, regarding the imaginary differences with cynicism:¹

these Names are now of a very doubtful Signification. We hear of Court and Country, of apostate and adhering Whigs; nor are the Tories more united among themselves...such Distinctions as these of Whig and Tory, cannot miss of being often made with a great deal of Partiality, and Injustice; for, according to your predominant Passion, he's a Whig whom you love, and he that you hate's a Tory; and so on the contrary, as you happen to be engag'd in either Party.

Subsequently Toland observed that the Junto were 'so enrag'd...at their surprizing disappointment [over a standing army], that they never forgave those Whigs, who had the honesty and firmness to adhere to their old principles'. Here Harley and the neo-Harringtonians are embraced in one breath, and Toland went on to uphold some men 'lately employ'd' as whigs 'who were either never tainted with notions of arbitrary Power, or at least were never ingaged in arbitrary Proceedings'. Speaking specifically of Harley, Toland was adamant that 'I wholly did and do approve the sense he... had of our corrupt Ministry, and thank him for the strenuous efforts he made to dissolve it'.² And in the final analysis, although the anti-army propagandists won the war in print over a standing force, it was Robert Harley's leadership in parliament which guaranteed the reduction of the army to the establishment of 1680.

The revitalised court party which made its debut on 8 January 1698 with a design of obstructing the process of disbandment was a more determined body than during the first weeks of the session. Much of this new resolution stemmed from the knowledge that hostility to an army had waned since the peak attained during the opening days. It was the general opinion of those 'that best know the Parliament' that the vote for disbandment 'was the

1. State Tracts, ii. 609.

2. Toland, Works, ii. 342, 343, 346: 'Letter to Mr [Penn]', 26 June 1705.

effect of the gentlemen's first heat and aversion to a standing army'.¹ The fickle character of the opposition presented by the mass of independent backbenchers was again apparent, and it required all Harley's skill to prevent the court breaking through the Commons' resolution. But by February 1698 the country party, remarshalled by Harley and his lieutenants, had withstood the counter-offensive of the court, and divisions could clearly be seen throughout the ranks of court supporters.² On 8 February a land tax was proposed 'and chiefly managed by Harley, Musgrave, and that party', and Vernon observed that 'they were stiff in their point for proceeding to disband the army, without staying for all the quantams, and to have the whole scheme of this year's taxes laid before them at once'.³ With the end of the war, parliamentary reticence gave way to the wholehearted approval of taxation that had a country end in view — the disbandment of the army. A spontaneous separation of legislature and executive was contrived by the country leaders, without the approbation of the Crown, and the pattern that was to become very familiar in the next few years — the country party running affairs in the Commons to the extent of proposing and securing the traditional business of the ministry, supply — here was inaugurated by Harley, who pressed in person for appropriating clauses to the poll and coal acts so that the revenue would be directly employed for the speedy disbandment of the army. On 31 March 1698 an act supplying the king with the means to disband passed the Commons nem. con.⁴ Over the question of a standing army the Crown, to all intents and purposes, had been routed.

1. C.S.P.D., 1697, p. 513: Yard's newsletter, 14 December 1697.

2. B.L. Loan 29/189, f. 17; V.C., i. 476.

3. Ibid., ii. 3.

4. C.J., xii. 188.

The country party retained its vitality throughout the rigours of the General Election of 1698. The context of the election campaign was definitively court/country, and its propaganda provides the first real example of post-licensing act election propaganda. The court acknowledged the state of affairs by producing a broadsheet in which the Papist, Jacobite and Frenchified tory of the Queen Anne's reign caricature made his bow, along with the name to which historians refer unreservedly: the 'New Country-Party, so called'. The design was to separate the country whigs from the country tories through hyperbolic statements of tory support for things diametrically opposed to whig ideology. By this means Trenchard and his circle were exhorted to fall in with the 'Courtiers, so called' in preserving the Revolution Settlement, the Protestant religion, and the toleration act.¹ But the largest volume of election propaganda was directed at the activities of the court party by the country whigs themselves. As Feiling notes, 'The "New Country Party" drove everywhere a hot campaign against courtiers, taxes, placemen, and standing armies'.² Shaftesbury's own Danger of Mercenary Parliaments, which abounded with country rhetoric, was prominent among the country publications, and it stimulated a court reply which appeared on 21 July.³ In the same month a country offering went so far as to append a list of placemen who had been members of the previous parliament so that voters might be warned not to choose such men a second time.⁴ The very essence of government by parliament was examined in Considerations on the Nature of Parliaments, and our present Elections, which rehearsed country arguments in

1. H.M.C. Portland, viii. 54: A prospect taken of England divided in the election of the next Parliament (1698).

2. Keith Feiling, A History of the Tory Party 1640-1714 (1924), p. 329.

3. B.L. Loan 29/189, f. 35: [George Tollett] to Robert Harley, 21 July 1698: 'An Answer is this day come out to a paper intituled The Danger of Mercenary Parl[iamen]ts'.

4. [G.W.], A Letter to a Country Gentleman, setting forth the Cause of the Decay and Ruin of Trade (dated 16 July 1698), in Cobbett, V, app., p. xvi.

favour of 'a house of commons chosen truly by the people, incapable of pension and place': in this situation 'the king and kingdom had been incapable of misfortune', and there would have been no need for the 'People of England' to have brought about both Restoration and the Revolution.¹ The theme was consistent throughout: free proceedings in parliament were fundamental to the liberties of Englishmen, and, when things were otherwise, a standing or pensioner parliament was as destructive to these rights and privileges as a standing army.

Against the potency of the taxation issue and such spirited propaganda the Junto was very definitely reduced to the defensive. 'There seems to arise a strange spirit of distinguishing between the court and country party', Vernon noted, 'and visibly discovers itself in several elections'.² The effects of country propaganda encouraged the money-conscious electorate to think about the question of a standing army which would be maintained out of their own pockets. The net result of country tactics was the return of a high proportion of new members, and court supporters made desperate efforts to have 'every member under...consideration'.³ 'If there be any alteration it will not proceed from the new members, but from the change of opinions in some of the old', Harley wrote sanguinely to Henry Boyle, and court optimism that the ill-health of Charles II of Spain would result in a more conciliatory house of commons over the question of a standing army proved ill-founded.⁴ Unless those who had been committed to disbandment changed sides, then the question had been pre-empted. By December 1698 minds

1. Ibid., p. clv.

2. V.C., ii. 143: 2 August 1698.

3. C.S.P.D., 1698, p. 376. It was for similar reasons no doubt that a court/country list was drawn up estimating voting behaviour in the new parliament. B.L. Loan 29/25/12. See Henry Horwitz, 'Parties, Connections, and Parliamentary Politics, 1689-1714: Review and Revision', J.B.S., vi (1966), 45-69.

4. Cited in Ellis, 'The Whig Junto', p. 26. Cf. V.C., ii. 179-81.

had been made up within doors, and, with the next election three years away, it was the attitude of parliament which counted.

The controversy in print continued, but it was noticeable that most contributions came from a court side vainly trying to reverse the trend towards disbandment. After Trenchard's initial Short History of Standing Armies in England, which appeared on 25 November prior to the opening of parliament, the anti-army pamphleteers restricted their activities to debating particular points in relation to guards, garrisons and marines.¹ The paper war had lost its vitality. As one observer noted: 'Of the many pamphlets mention'd in the Advertisem^{ts} there are very few worth sending, that about the History of the Standing Armies is one of the best'.² The issue quickly reached a head in parliament, and, as Feiling notes, 'Harley was throughout the leader'.³ Ignoring the king's speech, the Commons, on 17 December, immediately resolved that all the land-forces in English pay exceeding Charles II's 1680 establishment of 7,000 men and officers should forthwith be paid and disbanded. The resolution was referred to Harley and other opposition members to prepare and bring in a bill to that effect, special instructions being given that the 7,000 were to consist of English subjects only. Harley had made the motion, and it was universally agreed that the house had made 'quick work with the forces'.⁴ The court made 'little, or no opposition', although nourishing vain hopes that 'the House will come up to allow of ten thousand, with which [it] will be pretty well satisfied'.⁵ There was to be no satisfaction for William III. The standing

1. See Schwoerer, op. cit., pp. 387-90.

2. Carlisle R.O., Lowther Correspondence: James Lowther to his father, Sir John Lowther of Whitehaven, 17 December 1698.

3. Feiling, op. cit., p. 331.

4. V.C., ii. 235; C.J., xii. 359.

5. Carlisle R.O., Lowther Corr., the same to the same, 24 December 1698.

army issue, it seemed, had blown itself out.¹

Subsequent proceedings in parliament resolved into a struggle for the upper hand: the conflict over disbandment merged into the wider contest for the management of affairs. At the very start of the session Somers noted pessimistically that 'there is at present no face of government', and as the weeks progressed Vernon perceived that 'the struggle is more for mastery than any thing else'.² After the crucial votes over disbandment he represented the court as 'a dispersed routed party', and, with the country proposal to go into a committee of ways and means to consider the supply, he reported resignedly that 'the management is passing into other hands', and he was able to see no way out of the impasse, for 'there are none [of the court] who take upon them any management'.³ In the wake of disbandment the navy passed under the scrutiny of the opposition. The ministry was in full retreat, and Harley's lead on the question of the naval arm resulted in the resignation of the first lord of the admiralty, Orford. The first member of the Junto had fallen, and this triggered off a significant government reshuffle in May 1699.⁴

1. The court displayed a rare instance of unity over the choice of a speaker. Sir Thomas Littleton was supported by the full weight of the Junto, while the country members were undecided who to nominate (see Bod. Carte MSS, 130, f. 394). Foley's candidature was not greeted with any enthusiasm, and Harley felt he could only carry it through an arrangement with the king (B.L. Loan 29/189, f. 43). Granville and Seymour were the most prominent country runners, though Musgrave and Harcourt were in the race, and Harley himself was regarded as an outsider, and the 'only person yt can carry it' (ibid., f. 44). He was tacitly supported by Anthony Hammond's Some Considerations upon the Choice of a Speaker which inveighed against Littleton and Seymour in stressing the importance of the speakership to free and impartial proceedings in parliament (for Hammond's authorship, see Bod. MS Rawlinson, A. 245, f. 64). Littleton was elected, primarily, as James Lowther remarked, because 'the others were not agreed who to sett up' (Carlisle R.O., Lowther Corr., to his father, 6 December 1698; cf. B.L. Loan 29/189, f. 45).

2. Feiling, op. cit., p. 332; V.C., ii. 245.

3. Ibid., pp. 258, 262, 267-68.

4. Ibid., pp. 241-42. See H.M.C. Portland, viii. 56-57, 57-61, Harley's notes for a speech in parliament on the navy, dated 9 March 1699. They include six of the seven resolutions reported on 27 March 1699, though worded differently. See C.J., xii. 618.

The appearance of defeat was more marked after a final desperate court fling to retain an army of 10,000 men at the very least. As in the previous year an attempt was made after the Christmas recess to recommit the question, and this was only headed off after a very long debate in which Harley played the leading country role. He continued to observe court manoeuvres with no little suspicion. 'Great indeavours are being used to disturb the bill for the army, or indeed to fling it out in the Lords', he wrote on 21 January, 'I pray God avert the mischief, for it seems to me nothing but a dissolving of the Government, for there is no medium I think but disbanding the army or keeping it up, shutting up the Exchequer, governing by sword and edicts'.¹ This time Harley's worst fears were allayed. The Lords found it safer to approve the measure without the division, and William was reduced to entreating a far from compliant Commons to allow him to retain his Dutch guards. Even this crumb of comfort was denied him, and Harley was instrumental in drawing up an address listing the reasons against complying with the king's request, at the same time retaliating with a motion for regulating the militia.

Naturally enough the king tried to accommodate Harley with a place in the ministry. He was offered the lucrative auditorship of the receipts, while it was rumoured that Godolphin was to be secretary and Rochester lord treasurer — the first time that the triumvirate of 1700 had been linked together in any way — but nothing came of it.² 'I know not whether I am rightly informed as to Mr Harley's irreconcilableness to the ministry', wrote Vernon on 5 March 1699, 'Some think he would not meddle with any

1. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 601.

2. Ibid., p. 600; Bod. Carte MSS, 228, f. 259: newsletter, 5 January 1699. It is interesting that in 1705 Harley wrote of the 'seven years' he had enjoyed Godolphin's friendship and protection (H.M.C. Bath, i. 73).

employment whatsoever, or if he would, he would not put himself under my Lord Chancellor, or Mr Montague, who are still called the ministers'.¹ The ministerial supporters recognised the 'Opposition the House makes to all Proposals that come from the Court',² but Harley was not prepared to accept anything other than a thoroughgoing ministerial upheaval. As his new associate Trumbull put it, quoting from Halifax's Maxims, 'changing hands without changing measures is as if a drunkard in a dropsy should change his Doctors and not his diet'.³ It was an established fact that affairs in the lower house at least were in the hands of the 'New Country Party', while the ministry merely went through the motions of being in control. The country leaders introduced legislation, carefully monitored its passage through the house, and took all policy decisions. The army was decisively disbanded. William's pleas concerning his Dutch guards were rejected, ignored and forgotten. Commons' resolutions on the state of the navy were presented to the king in the form of 'an humble Address...desiring, That he will be graciously pleased to take care, that the Mismanagements therein complained of may be prevented for the future'. The ascendancy of parliament was seen and acknowledged by all, and, contrary to the king's wishes, a commission was set up, ballotted for by the Commons, to look into the vexed question of his grants to his favourites of land forfeited from the rebels in Ireland. The court had lost all control, and the parliamentary opposition was in charge.⁴

The aftermath of the standing army controversy, then, saw the country party gradually erode the administration of the Junto whigs. A spate of stop-gap ministerial changes in 1699 was symptomatic of the general

1. V.C., ii.

2. Carlisle R.O., Lowther Corr., 18 February 1699.

3. H.M.C. Downshire, I. ii. 795. Cf. Halifax: Complete Works, ed. J.P. Kenyon (1969), p. 149; H.M.C. Downshire, I. i. 794: Harley to Trumbull, 31 October 1699.

4. C.J., xii. 618.

malaise. As one observer commented: 'The greatest men come hardly neare the Cowrt. Duke Shrewisberry (who is perfectly recovered) Earl Rochester and the like, absolutely decline comeing into bussieness'.¹ Early in 1700 in the midst of the heats over the Irish forfeitures Harley was offered a secretaryship, but he again declined.² Totally predominant within parliament (Paul Foley died in November 1699), James Lowther noted that 'Mr Harly now manages the whole business of the Supply & the House hath hitherto entirely approvd of his Scheme'.³ Ultimately the king offered to dismiss Somers to have been left £200,000 out of the Irish forfeitures which the Commons proposed to resume and use for the public. 'This was offered and pressed very [much]', Harley recalled, 'but I would never enter into that negotiation, or give any encouragement to it'.⁴ Thwarted, William deliberately engendered a confrontation between Lords and Commons, when the upper house suggested amendments to the Irish bill. In the first days of April 1700 the most critical time in the reign of William III was reached. On 10 April an abortive conference between the two houses led to a report that the Lords had thrown out the bill.⁵

While the report lasted that the bill was lost [Vernon reported], the outward door of the lobby [of the house of commons] was ordered to be locked up, and no Members permitted to stir out.

Mr Harley laid upon the deplorable state the nation was brought to, that the army was not disbanded, that credit was broke, that the Exchequer Bills must swallow up the Civil List. He proposed a declaratory vote that the army should be no longer kept up, since it was contrary to their Bill of Civil Rights, and recommended it to the House to consider what further resolutions they should take in the inquiry...After the Lords had sent the message that the bill was passed, then they began to change

1. H.M.C. Hope-Johnstone, pp. 110-11: [anon.] to the earl of Annandale, 15 August 1699.

2. V.C., ii. 435, 444: 20, 27 February 1700.

3. Carlisle R.O., Lowther Corr., 20 January 1700.

4. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 452.

5. V.C., iii. 20-21: 11 April 1700. Cf. *ibid.*, iii. 4 et seq.; Carlisle R.O., Lowther Corr., 13 April 1700; H.M.C. Portland, iii. 617-18.

their note, and said they were glad the danger was over. But they must now take care that they did not fall into the like hereafter, which would be unavoidable if they did not secure themselves against an ill ministry, and the influence of foreigners...At my Lord Chancellor's name a long debate arose, and all the great men on that side spoke with a warmth against him.

The seriousness of this situation cannot be overemphasised. The fracas over the Irish Forfeitures Bill was the culmination of a decade of country discontent. The circumstances surrounding the proceedings of the Commons on 10 April 1700 were all too reminiscent of events preceding the outbreak of the Civil War, and it is not beyond possibility that the outcome might have been the same had the Lords not broken the deadlock by giving way. The Revolution Settlement itself had been called into question. Harley reminded his father of the importance of the Irish bill 'to the nation and the very Constitution'.¹ 'The three first days of this week', Lowther wrote on 13 April, 'there was hardly any mention of any-thing but the Bill of the Land Tax, & Irish Forfeitures, & of the dangerous Consequences in Case it should miscarry'.² 'Everybody discovers more and more the danger and the wonderfulness of the rescue', Harley remarked the same day, 'So many minute things were ordered by the hand of God to come between us and ruin'. This sense of deliverance persisted, and Seymour waited on the king to tell him that 'he had come to congratulate him on the greatest deliverance God had ever given him'.³ The backlash of the standing army controversy, then, very nearly resulted in an open clash between the king and his Commons over the sovereignty of parliament.

But William realised that he had let things get out of hand. On 11 April he attended the Commons 'pretty early' to give his assent to the Irish bill. On 20 April Harley noted that for the first time there was 'now a prospect of a change'. Having had a clear indication of the disposition of the lower

1. Ibid., p. 617: 6 April 1700.

2. Carlisle R.O., Lowther Corr., James Lowther to his father.

3. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 618.

house towards Somers, the king dismissed him. In this way events precipitated by the standing army controversy finally resulted in the complete disintegration of the ministry that had managed the last stages of the war. The real end of the standing army controversy as such came only in April 1700 with the absolute acceptance by William III of the order of disbandment in the wake of the threat of renewed armed hostilities to secure the rights and privileges confirmed in 1689 in the bill of rights. The country party, under Harley's leadership, had realised the objectives it had fought for in parliament throughout the 1690s, and these gains were consolidated in the act of settlement.

Chapter Three

The Paper War of 1701

...the parties are every day writing and printing against one another with great bitterness, and the chiefs seem to have a hand in it...

James Vernon to the duke of Shrewsbury, 1 September 1701.

1701 was a watershed in English politics. Three deaths of the first magnitude in just over a year seriously threatened the security of the Protestant Succession, and resulted in the complete transformation of party alignments, with the terms whig and tory regaining relevance. The dismissal of Somers in April 1700 ushered in a period of hectic ministerial reconstruction: on 1 May the earl of Rochester initiated negotiations with Harley,¹ and by July, despite the failure to press Sir Thomas Trevor into accepting the great seal, meetings were being held regularly involving not only Harley and Rochester, but Sunderland, Godolphin and Shrewsbury, Guy and Vernon acting as brokers. Once again Harley refused an official place in the scheme, much to the astonishment of contemporaries. 'My countryman Mr Harly I don't hear to be yet preferred to any great station...which I cannot but much wonder at', James Brydges remarked to Thomas Coke, 'considering what reports and what grounds, as we thought for them, there were before I came out of town'.² Unlike his new allies in the Lords, Harley stuck to his country guns to ensure the integrity of the Commons, although it was clear that his ideal of a parliament untainted by placemen was impossible in practice.

1. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 619. Harley was sufficiently impressed with Rochester for his old acquaintance Francis Gwyn to express satisfaction 'to hear you so full of my noble friend' (ibid., p. 623: 29 July 1700).

2. H.M.C. Cowper, ii. 398: 26 May 1700. For the negotiations between Harley and Rochester, see B.L. Loan 29/147/7; between Harley and Godolphin, B.L. Loan 29/64/8-11, and Longleat House, Portland Miscellaneous MSS, ff. 11, 13. See also V.C., iii. 88-91, 96: 22, 25 June 1700.

On 30 July 1700 the duke of Gloucester, sole surviving offspring of the Protestant heir-apparent Princess Anne, died of smallpox. The spectre of a Papist restoration, or, worse, a commonwealth, was quickly unveiled. The discarded ministers, Somers and Montague in particular, were thought to be plotting the erection of the latter,¹ while, as Shaftesbury observed: 'those y^t are concerned for Monarchy are in perplexity about a Successor: fearing the Crown should fall again soon into y^e Peoples hands: who they think will hardly let it go out again'.² The parting of the ways had been reached by Harley and Shaftesbury and his circle: from this point their paths gradually but irrevocably diverged. Harley's vision of the 'ancient constitution' required king, lords and commons, and the first person he turned to was the monarchist, Rochester.³ The first step in the reorientation of political groupings from court and country to whig and tory was taken on the death of Gloucester. It only remained for the deaths of Charles II of Spain and the exiled James II to provide the stimulus to complete the realignment.

When challenged in later life with failing to safeguard the Hanoverian succession, Harley was bitten to the quick. It is probable that he regarded the peaceful accession of George I as his life's work in politics. He was, after all, co-architect with Godolphin and Rochester of the act of settlement that entailed the kingdom in the Hanoverian line. It was Harley who insisted on embodying in the statute clauses which realised for the

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 3: [anon. to anon.], n.d. [August 1700].

2. P.R.O. 30/24/20/13: to Benjamin Furly, 5 August [1700].

3. B.L. Loan 29/147/7: Rochester to Harley, 2 August [1700]: 'I am extreme sensible of ye kindness of your letter. It is a great blow indeed to ye publicke. I thinke, & may suggest a great many thoughts to any that are concerned for ye good of it, of which number no man more considerable then your selfe, & I shall be glad upon all occasions to confer with you, & to make my thoughts agree with yours'.

country party the objectives it had contested throughout the long years of parliamentary opposition, including that symbol of integrity, a place bill. For these reasons, it would appear, a 'Large Account' of Harley's conduct relating to the succession was drawn up in later years. According to this document, William, on the death of Gloucester, '(to use his own words) desired M^r H[arley]'s thoughts and care about', the issue of succession, upon which 'M^r H[arley] exerted himself', organising meetings with the clergy and other interested parties. The king's 'greatest fear was that the Whigs at the bottom hoped for a Common Wealth, & that the Torys would never come heartily into the Succession, and that between them both M^r H[arley] should miscarry'. Throughout the autumn months Rochester, Godolphin and Harley, aided and abetted by Sunderland, and with Guy as unofficial secretary, tried to pave the way for a firm and immediate settlement of the Crown in the Protestant line.¹

On 18 October Harley received commands from the king to come up to London with all despatch.² According to Harley's account, the king asked him to name a successor, to which Harley replied 'that it was not for his Dignity, nor would any one presume to do it'. Nonetheless the Hanoverians were chosen (there is evidence that William would have preferred the Crown to have gone to the House of Brandenburg if he had been given a free choice) and Harley assured him that 'all except the Common wealth people would come in to [the settlement]'. It being thought more prudent to deal with the succession in a new parliament, rather than in the old, a dissolution was

1. B.L. Loan 29/165/2. See the extensive series of coded letters from Guy to Harley in H.M.C. Portland, iii. 625-42: 31 August to 31 December 1700.

2. B.L. Loan 29/165/2; cf. H.M.C. Portland, iii. 633, and B.L. Loan 29/64/11: Godolphin to Harley, Tuesday [n.d., 1700]: 'my Ld Rochester thinking it convenient that he wth yr self & mee should wayt upon ye king this evening, his Maty has appointed it at 8; and my Lord desires to meet you at my house about 7 that from thence wee may goe to gether'. Harley was in the country attending on his father during Sir Edward Harley's last illness.

announced. Significantly Shaftesbury viewed it as 'a wrong measure, enough to ruine us all', and he blamed 'the extremity of our affaires' on 'these rash counccills', contemplating a possible tory majority with distaste. The 'New Country Party' was in the process of becoming a tory party.¹

Harley required a dissolution to secure the basis of the country administration. During the summer he had warned Vernon that the king 'had now a better opportunity to make himself easy than had offered itself these ten years', and that 'if it were let slip, he did not know that it was ever to be recovered'.²

He said the King's business must miscarry while blasted men had the conduct of it, whose avarice and oppressions would never be borne. If the King's business were in other hands, it could not but go on smoothly; that there was such a weight in a Court, that if things were not grossly mismanaged, they would never lose a question; and it required but little skill to foresee what would pass in a House of Commons, and what would not, so that those must be unpardonable who run a government upon rocks and shallows: the nation will rid themselves of such pilots one way or another. It was now a general complaint we had no ministry, no right management of public affairs; and if the King did not mind it [i.e. take care], a reformation would be wrought in a more disagreeable manner.

Strong words from Harley, and he was preaching a country solution to the problem. The integrity and sovereignty of the Commons had to be respected by the Crown before there could be any real reformation: if no unreasonable policies were adopted by the court party in the Commons, then there would be no reason to oppose them, and the parliamentary opposition would have no need to take the business of government into their own hands. Vernon, who had constantly advised Shrewsbury that Harley had 'for these two years past ...given what turn he pleased to the taxes, and could have made things worse than they are', knew that this was no idle threat, and shrewdly suspected

1. Original Letters of Locke, Sidney and Shaftesbury, ed. T. Forster (1830), p. 113: Shaftesbury to Benjamin Furly, 11 January 1701.

2. V.C., iii. 91-94.

'that what has been said to me has been enlarged upon at Hampton Court'.¹ In fact this, in brief, was the proposal for a new relationship between king and parliament put forward by Harley in his conferences with William III. Country grievances that were outstanding were embodied in the act of settlement, which effectively complemented the bill of rights of 1689. The slate was to be wiped clean as the basis of a new, clearer understanding between the monarch and his people. The linchpin of the arrangement was Harley's election as speaker in February 1701. Littleton was ordered by the king to stand down. Harley was supported by both the court and country parties: he was opposed only by those whigs personally irreconcilable to him, and outside the control of the court. In the fairly neutral position of speaker he could safeguard the integrity of the Commons, yet work for the better interests of the Crown at the same time. Robert Harley did not 'storm the court' in 1701, nor did he sacrifice his principles.² What he tried to achieve was the admirable but utterly futile exercise of maintaining parliamentary integrity in what he fondly imagined was the old country tradition: the Commons were to make provision for the safety of the nation and the suitable maintenance of the monarchy. This was the ideal solution he pressed on William III in the tense aftermath following the death of the duke of Gloucester. This was the arrangement embodied in the act of settlement, which, as Onslow rightly remarked, the king made 'a stipulation ...when he took [the opposition leaders] into the administration'.³ But such

1. Ibid.; cf. *ibid.*, ii. 415; iii. 66-67.

2. See Bod. Ballard MSS, 6, f. 35: Dr Gibson to Dr Charlett, 12 February 1700[01]: 'Mr Harley carry'd it for speaker against Sr Richd Onslow by some six score voices. His six years opposition to the Court followed by such a sudden turn to that side is made use of by Enemies to his disadvantage'. Cf. McInnes, Robert Harley, Puritan Politician, p. 59.

3. Burnet, iv. 497n.

a far-flung scheme was doomed to meet with failure in real life: and in the stormy parliament of 1701 all Harley's plans succeeded in doing was to set Lords and Commons at each other's throats. As William was to tell Harley in November 1701: 'Mr Speaker, your Project of the Succession has done me no good'.¹ Harley's colleagues in the lower house did not share his visionary dream of country moderation, and they let vent the pent-up frustrations of the previous decade in an orgy of retribution aimed at the 'corrupt' former ministers. Yet again the unorganised country backbenchers proved their talent for inscrutability.

Accompanying the political realignment in 1701, contributing greatly to it, and generally symptomatic of a period of instability, was a paper war of unprecedented extent and ferocity.² Harley had seen to the publication of country propaganda early in 1701 to try to pave the way to a moderate solution of the nation's problems. The writers he recruited for the job were Charles Davenant and John Toland. Davenant was a budding economist and the author of several interesting but dry tracts on the ways and means of raising supply for the war with France. He was involved with the anti-army pamphleteers, and was elected to parliament in 1698. His Essay upon Trade, published around the turn of the year 1698-99, afforded some diversion in the Harley camp, and Sir Edward was sent a copy.³ Soon he was at work on a pamphlet dealing with the Irish Forfeitures, and he hinted at his connexions with 'the old Whigs (who are now turned Tories)'.⁴ It was soon common knowledge that Davenant was preparing something to pave the way for the

1. B.L. Loan 29/165/2.

2. In his edition of Swift's Discourse, Frank Ellis refers to 'the Paper War, 1697-1702'. In fact there is a clear distinction between both the aims and the content of the party writers during the standing army controversy and the paper war of 1701.

3. B.L. Loan 29/189, f. 52: Harley to his father, 3 January 1699.

4. H.M.C. Cowper, ii. 389: Davenant to Thomas Coke, 1 July 1699.

majority report of the Irish Forfeitures commission.¹ His Discourse upon Grants and Resumptions, when it made its appearance, was an important and influential piece of country propaganda. Under the thin guise of various ill-fortuned historical characters the Junto was ridiculed, along with Portland, Sunderland and the king's other favourites, and the dark threat of impeachment was precisely directed at the king's servants. 'When the people of ENGLAND desire an Act of Resumption', Davenant grimly observed, in arguing for the application of the forfeited estates towards the payment of the national debt, 'the work must begin with impeaching corrupt ministers'.² The following year Harley supplied Davenant with records for his Essays upon I. The Ballance of Power. II. The Right of making War, Peace, and Alliances. III. Universal Monarchy. As 'Authorities' for his assertions he appended records containing 'many Precedents' for his views on the king's right to conclude partition treaties without the consent of parliament (and French occupation of fortresses in the Spanish Netherlands in November 1700 on the death of Charles II of Spain highlighted the inefficacy of the partition treaties), which, he claimed, had 'been carefully examined by the Author at the Tower'.³ In a letter to Harley, however, Davenant assured him that:⁴

your man has delivered me the records, of which about two months hence you will find I have made a plentiful use. The work goes on vigorously, but is infinitely of more labour than I expected.

A working relationship had developed between the two men, stretching back

1. V.C., ii. 373; Oldmixon, History, p. 198.

2. A Discourse upon Grants and Resumptions, Showing How our Ancestors Have Proceeded with such Ministers As have Procured to Themselves Grants of the Crown-Revenue; And that the Forfeited Estates ought to be Applied towards the Payment of the Publick Debts ([1699, but dated] 1700), p. 357.

3. Essays upon I. The Ballance of Power (1701), appendix, preface.

4. B.L. Loan 29/190, f. 17: 19 September 1700.

perhaps to the Discourse and forward through the paper war of 1701 and beyond. Moreover it is in his collaboration with Davenant that proof of Harley's activities as a political propagandist can be found.

Vernon had observed as early as 22 August 1700 that Davenant was 'preparing a book against the Spanish treaty'. 'I don't doubt', he continued, 'but we shall have many records brought to prove that treaties are not to be made without the consent of Parliament'.¹ The diligent Vernon was accurate once more, and Davenant's Essays were published to coincide with the debate in the new parliament in March 1701 when the revelation of the existence of a secret partition treaty was made. Exception was taken to the methods used by Davenant in his Essays in the heated atmosphere surrounding the question of the proper steps to be taken in case of renewed conflict with France. He deemed it more prudent to lie low for a while, and he made no further contributions to the controversy in print until his activities in conjunction with Harley in the late summer of 1701.

The probable beginnings of the relationship between Harley and John Toland were discussed in the previous chapter. By 1700 at the latest, on Toland's own testimony, he was on friendly terms with Harley, and by 1701 this had developed into a working partnership. Shaftesbury observed that Toland was meeting 'with so much Favour and Encouragement from Men of the greatest Worth', and among these Harley figured prominently.² In February, with the new parliament getting down to business, Toland brought out the Art of Governing by Partyes under the speaker's auspices in an attempt to bring about a truce between the warring factions in the Commons by exposing the methods employed by the court whigs when in power to divide and rule. In

1. V.C., iii. 132.

2. P.R.O. 30/24/21/231: to Toland, 21 July [1701].

1710, at the height of the Ministerial Revolution inspired by Harley, one observer, on noticing that the high tory chieftains had not yet come into play, remarked that 'this new Scheme of Harley's makes me believe he was author of a book wch was said to be Toland's, and I have read it over again since'. The book in question was The Art of Governing by Partyes. The letter continued:¹

'twas writ in the year the King of Spain died, dedicated to William the 3d King of E[ngland], S[cotland], F[rance], and Ireland, Statholder of G[uilderland] H[olland] Z[ealand] U[trecht] and Overysel Supreme Majistrat of the two most potent and florishing commonwealths in the Universe. I confess this extraordinary didication looks more like Toland's impudence of calling this Kingdome a commonwealth, but when I read in the book how he by the by wou'd have it understood for what reason he terms it a Common Wealth I think it Harley again, wch is England being a mickt Monarchy. King, Lords, and Commons, each a check upon the other wch is to be calculated for the good of the whole that it may more properly be called a Common Wealth then a Monarchy.

'If it shou'd prove Toland is realy the Author', Peter Wentworth perceptively suggested, 'I cou'd almost swere 'twas revised by [Harley], and that the report, Toland gave out himself, that Harley was his friend, was true'.

Wentworth's comments on the content of the Art of Governing by Partyes aptly sum up Harley's essential neo-Harringtonianism, and it was a fundamental Harleyite tract in which he certainly had a hand. Shaftesbury also enthused about its country attitude to politics, and Toland sent copies through the earl to their mutual associates in Holland.² The intent of the pamphlet was to realise a situation in parliament in accordance with Harley's scheme for a new understanding between monarch and people. Charles II, who opposed the first political proponent of neo-Harringtonianism, the first earl of Shaftesbury, was blamed for party divisions stemming from his

1. The Wentworth Papers 1705-1739, ed. J.J. Cartwright (1883), pp. 136-37: Peter Wentworth to Lord Raby, 18 August 1710.

2. Original Letters of...Shaftesbur, p. 123.

corruption of parliament:¹

This is the true Spring of all those pernicious Divisions, Names of Distinction, Parties, Factions, Clubs, and Cabals, which have ever since distracted, torn, and very nigh consumed us. High and Low Churchmen, Conformists and Fanaticks, Whigs and Tories, Loyalists and Rebels, Patriots and Courtiers, with the like opprobrious Nick-names, are the abominable Faults of his Policy.

Compare this with Harley's own remarks several years later in 'Plaine English':

one Revolution thrust on another until the Restauration...the old Cavaliers, & Parliamenteers joyned to Preserve the Liberty of the Country: This was a mortal Crime. these as now our ministers having other designs, must find other tools. They could not trust themselves in such hands; therefore Partyes must be made & kept up in the nation: for they act by this Principle, to divide the nation into Partys, then to joyne with that wch is the most unreasonable, that they in returne may be more devoted to them, & more ready to assist them in all their avaritious and ambitious Practices...Having thus, as I said, resolved not to go into the Interest of ye Nation, that being contrary to their private profit: they take al methods by Treaties abroad & Practices at home to support themselves & enslave us...These & other violences brought on the Revolution. (pp. 103-4.)

The sentiments are the same, and they remain the same in that other quintessential Harleyite tract, Faults on Both Sides. A country gospel in the tradition of the first earl of Shaftesbury is being propounded. Toland attacked bribery, corruption and placemen; called for the regulation of elections, citing The Danger of Mercenary Parliaments; electoral reform itself, with rotten boroughs like Old Sarum losing their representation in parliament in favour of the expanding new towns such as Manchester; and once more country theory was rehearsed in print. The Revolution had restored the rights and privileges of the people, Toland argued, 'the King fell in heartily with the Public Interest, his new Ministers served him faithfully for a considerable Time, and all our Affairs took a better Face both at home and abroad, by Land and Sea':

1. The Art of Governing by Partyes (1701), p. 7.

But see the Instability of human Councils; some of those surly Whigs grew by degrees the most pliant Gentlemen imaginable, they could think no Revenue too great for the King, nor would suffer his Prerogative to be lessened; they were on frivolous Pretences for keeping up a Standing Army to our further Peril and Charge, they filled all Places in their Disposal with their own Creatures...Surely these Gentlemen, if it were in their Power, would not suffer the Sun to shine on any but themselves and their Faction. But as this Language, this Partiality, this Conduct, were directly contrary to the Principles and Practices of the Whigs...so these Apostates were abandoned by their former Friends, and left to the Support of their own Interest, which appeared to be so very little with any Party, that the King did wisely cashier them.

Here, in miniature, Toland paraded the reasons for country recalcitrance in the previous decade. The Revolution Settlement had been so eroded by court policies that further reformation was necessary in the form of the act of settlement. The exercises in propaganda techniques learnt from Hampden in preparation for a new session of parliament are apparent throughout the Art of Governing by Parties. What if the Tories should try to dominate the new parliament?¹

then let them remember that they have to do with Whigs. Men that will neither be frightened nor flattered out of their Liberties; Men that will adhere to their Principles in spite of Discountenance, Prisons, Exile, or Proscriptions; and Men, in short, that may be cheated twice, will make sure Work the third Time...nine Parts in ten of the Kingdom are certainly in the Scale of Liberty. Now to leave Suppositions, it is notoriously known, that they were the Whigs themselves who bore hardest on some of the late Ministry, that they were Whigs who wrote all the Books against Standing Armies, or for making the Fleet and Militia useful; and that no Tory could openly oppose the Court but on a Whiggish bottom.

Though Toland wielded the pen, the arguments were Harley's. The moderate man was trampled underfoot in the conditions described by Toland:

no Quarter is given on any hand to those who will not inrol themselves in some Faction, but are disposed to bring things to an intire Union, or at least to hold the Balance so even betwixt the Parties that they may not destroy one another. These Men of Peace and publick Spirit are...branded with the Name of Trimmers; and...Latitudinarians; hated, as I said, by all the rest, but particularly persecuted by those designing Men who find their Account in the Dissentions of others, lest their Moderation and calm Admonitions should undeceive the World, and so put an End to this detestable Trade.

1. Ibid., pp. 31-33, 75-76.

The Art of Governing by Parties was Harley's manifesto for the new parliament: the language is very reminiscent of that employed by Harley himself in 'Plaine English'.¹ 'The Only Remedy against all the Mischief of Parties', Toland concluded, 'is a Parliament equally constituted';²

if this Parliament be of that healing Disposition, which all true Patriots most heartily desire, something may be offered that may not be altogether impracticable nor unsatisfactory towards abolishing these fatal Distinctions of Whig and Tory, and making us at least bear with one another in Religion, where we cannot agree.

William III had reigned now for twelve years: 'tis time to take another Course, more honourable for himself and acceptable to his People'.³

Placemen and pensioners must no longer be tolerated in violation of the free and impartial proceedings of parliament. How could parliament men 'vote freely, who are either prepossessed with the Hopes and Promises of enjoying Places, or the slavish Fears of losing them?' Parliamentary integrity was paramount.

Toland followed this piece of Harleyite propaganda with Limitations for the Next Foreign Successor, timed to coincide with the first vote of the Commons upon the question of the Protestant Succession, which, in addition to acknowledging the necessity of a speedy declaration of a Protestant successor to Princess Anne, demanded 'farther Provision be first made, for Security of the Rights and Liberties of the People'.⁴ Unfortunately after this promising start things started to get out of hand. The international situation was forcing reluctant tories to think in terms of a new continental war, and they were very loath to contemplate this action. From

1. Below, chapter seven.

2. The Art of Governing by Parties, pp. 103, 109-110.

3. Ibid., p. 44.

4. Cobbett, v. 1236-37.

the outset there had been a general demand that all treaties should be laid before the house. This led ultimately to revelations concerning the existence of partition treaties, and moves were speedily set on foot to impeach those whigs responsible in any way for the secret transactions leading to their conclusion. Somers, Montague (now earl of Halifax), Orford and Portland were singled out for this fate. Harley, forsaking his normal moderation, said openly that if their crime went unpunished it would soon lead to the ruin of English liberties.¹ He pursued the downfall of the whig leaders mercilessly, and for many years to come he was the object of whig outrage for his part in the impeachments. Yet it is easy to understand his zeal for the ruin of the Junto in this instance: his animosity was deeply rooted. But in pressing for the impeachments he encouraged the backbenchers to fly off the rails, and the first casualty was the king's civil list. On 5 May 'the Hott party in the House of Commons' deprived William of £100,000 of this and applied it to the public. 'This incident has put our Ministry into a very great disorder, as tending much to the diminution of their Credit with the king', Ellis informed Stepney, 'since they have so little authority with their party as not to be able to restrain them from doing unreasonable & Extravagant things only to lessen the king, & it is not doubted but it will put the King upon em playing the Whiggs again, as they are usually called'.²

Significantly Harleyites subsequently denied his complicity in the impeachments, which, Auditor Harley wrote, 'the Speaker endeavoured by all means to prevent; but the ferment was raised too high for his skill and application to prevent this unhappy step'. He blamed the eventual dissolution and the collapse of Harley's scheme on the failure to prevent the

1. B.L. Add. MSS, 30000E, f. 121: 1 April 1701; cf. McInnes, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

2. B.L. Add. MSS, 7074, f. 15: 6 May 1701; cf. C.J., xiii. 513: 5 May 1701.

impeachments.¹ Sunderland agreed, and, according to Harley, said: 'O silly, silly, Had they left alone Lord Portland and the Civil List, they might have hanged the other three in a Garret'.² Harley had managed to rectify the deficiency in the civil list by restoring the lost revenue in another form, but the pull of party precipitated by the impeachments was proving too strong a phenomenon to hold in check. The terms whig and tory were gradually gaining currency once more, as the whigs reasserted their former identity. A whiggish plot to embarrass the ministry over the international situation was openly suspected by contemporaries when a petition was handed in to the Commons from the county of Kent demanding that parliament should make immediate preparations for war in view of 'the dangerous estate of this kingdom, and of all Europe'. The Kentish petitioners were manhandled and imprisoned by the lower house, and this led to the presentation of Daniel Defoe's famous Legion-Letter to Harley as speaker of the house of commons. It purported to express the desires of the electorate ('two hundred thousand Englishmen' commanded that Harley deliver their Memorial to the Commons), and required the discharge of the Kentish petitioners and recognition of the 'growing power of France...That the French king be obliged to quit Flanders, or that his majesty be addressed to declare War against him...That suitable Supplies be granted to his majesty, for the putting all those necessary things in execution'.³ The Legion-Letter was signed 'Our Name is LEGION: And we are MANY', but, as Ellis pointed out, 'Whether there be more signs of Legion without doors, or within, is a question'.⁴

1. H.M.C. Portland, v. 646; cf. Longleat, Portland MSS, x. f. 132.

2. B.L. Loan 29/165/2.

3. Cobbett, v. 1251, 1252, 1256.

4. B.L. Add. MSS, 7074, f. 19: to the same, 16 May 1701.

Keith Feiling notes that 'from the date of the Kentish Petition, the back-benchers in the Commons got entirely out of hand'.¹ In spite of Harley's calls for moderation the tories went forward with plans to resurrect that stick with which to beat the government, the commission of public accounts. This was hardly likely to inspire confidence in Harley's ability to hold the independents in check. 'Yesterday Robin's nose was brought to the grindstone', Anthony Hammond cheerfully informed the displaced Thomas Coke, 'for in spite of all delays and arts, the Bill of Accounts came on'. Men like Hammond did not relish Harley's trimming, and Sir John Bolles, on the verge of lunacy, was incited to tell the Commons 'of millions unaccounted for, and of bargains made to cover 'em'.² It was manoeuvres like these that jeopardised Harley's arrangement with William, and while this was happening the confrontation with the Lords over the impeachments came to a head. The upper house stifled the bill for the accounts commission and dismissed all four impeachments on the grounds that the Commons had failed to make any case on the dates set (by the Lords themselves) for the trials. Suspicions were kindled that the king had encouraged this outcome, for what other reason, Henry St John asked, could there be for procrastination amongst his supporters?³

would they venture to protract the time and delay his journey for Holland where he is so much wanted and where he longs so much to be? Certainly not, and if more people do not come into play, and greater changes are not made, it's ten to one the old rogues will ride us once more, and those that are now called the new Ministry will be their sacrifice.

The end of the session effectively ended Harley's hopes for a new arrangement with William III. The country members in the Commons had not

1. Feiling, Tory Party, p. 350.

2. H.M.C. Cowper, ii. 428: 7 June 1701.

3. H.M.C. Downshire, I.ii. 803: 22 June 1701.

been prepared to temper their hostility towards the court despite the changed conditions brought about by the country leaders, and, instead, an open conflict had broken out with the Lords. It began to be said quite publicly that the same parliament could not reconvene, and throughout the summer the whigs, prompted by Somers and Sunderland, pressed for a dissolution that would bring to an end Harley's dismal experiment in non-party government. To influence a favourable outcome a paper war was launched in the last weeks of August that surpassed even the standing army controversy in the sheer bulk of printed pamphlets and broadsides that found their way onto the streets. The battle between Old Ministry and New Ministry, whig and tory, court and country, was on, and the printing-houses and printing-presses of London were the arsenals and ordnances.

Although Vernon was sure that the 'chiefs' had a hand in the production of propaganda during the paper war of 1701, Frank Ellis admits that 'Somers's role...is even more difficult to document than Harley's'.¹ Fortunately documents extant in the Harley papers have thrown considerable light on the contribution of the latter to the general deluge of printed papers, and, whether or not he was an active participant during the standing army controversy, he personally took a part in the penning of suitable polemical literature in 1701. His endeavours, moreover, succeed in shedding reflected illumination on the obscure exertions of Somers. Much of Harley's personal involvement at the level of author can be explained by his temporary loss of literary amanuenses. Davenant continued to lay low until reactivated by his party leader, and he went so far as to encourage the approaches of the French secretary Poussin, a situation which led ultimately to the notorious and disastrous meal at the Blue Posts in the Haymarket which earned for both his companions, Anthony Hammond and John

1. Swift's Discourse, ed. Ellis, p. 68.

Tredenham, and himself, the unenviable distinction of 'Poussineers'.¹

Toland, on the other hand, accompanied the earl of Macclesfield to the court of Hanover, and he rekindled his whig zeal en route. He was careful to point out in later life that from the death of William III to 1705 he neither 'spoke one word to Mr HARLEY, nor receiv'd one Letter or Message from him'.²

Contemporaries satirised Toland's mission to the court of Hanover. One set of printed queries asked:³

Whether Mr H[arle]y has not made choice of a very proper Envoy, in sending Toland to notify to the good Old Pr[inc]ess, that she owes the Crown to the Sp[ea]ke[r]? And whether, hereafter, if she finds her self oblig'd to make the one her Treasurer for his Honesty, she must not make the other Arch-b[ishop] for his Religion?

A country reply ridiculed this notion:⁴

Its a great sign our Man of Questions, knows nothing of the matter when he brings in Toland for the Speakers Envoy. Since its as certain as Truth it self he went at my L[ord] M[acclesfield's] Notion, who was such an Enemy to the Impeachments which Mr [Robert] H[arle]y stood up for... As for Toland he may make a tolerable good Lutheran Archbishop, but the Speaker has no such desire of being a Courtier as to sue to be Treasurer to a Princess whose great Age will not suffer her to finger any English Cash.

Nonetheless George Stepney referred to 'y^e deceitfull message of y^e Speaker' conveyed through Toland to the Dowager-Duchess Sophia.⁵ And Harley was quite probably one of 'quelques personnes des premiers dans le gouvernement' reputed to have directed the production of Toland's Anglia Libera: or, the

1. See *ibid.*, pp. 73-79.

2. Toland, *Works*, ii. 345: 'Letter to Mr [Penn], 26 June 1705'.

3. Some Queries, which may deserve Consideration [1701], broadsheet.

4. Some Queries which deserve no Consideration, answer'd Paragraph by Paragraph, only to satisfie the ridiculous enquiries of the trifling P[ee]r that made 'em Publick [1701], broadsheet. Harley's own copy of this paper is misplaced in a volume of correspondence relating to 1707, and it is dated 23 August 1701. B.L. Loan 29/194, ff. 186-89.

5. Bod. MS Montague, D. 1, f. 69.

Limitation and Succession of the Crown of England explain'd and asserted which appeared on 21 June 1701.¹ Toland presented the pamphlet to Sophia, and cultivated connexions with the court at Hanover, to the chagrin of his enemies in England. Anglia Libera had a tremendous reception on the continent. 'I am informed that on my return from Germany I am to have some distinguishing mark of their acknowledgement', Toland wrote on 19 July from Amsterdam, 'They have already put me in all their Gazettes for writing it, and look on me so farr to be a sort of Ambassador from the people, that whether I will or no they seriously advise me what to do and say at Hanover'. Megalomania apart, Anglia Libera was 'a translating as fast as may be into Dutch and French',² and the electress herself endorsed Toland's role at Hanover in assuring the duke of Newcastle that he had given her 'a faithful representation' of his merits.³ 'For this Honor (whereof you well know how much you are the Occasion)', Toland told Shaftesbury, 'I've my hearty thanks as well as for all y^r other favors...I wrote a few words to the Duke of Newcastle to testify my Duty and Gratitude'. 'The general opinion here is that our party can do nothing without my Lord Sunderland...in the approaching Dissolution of Parliament', he continued, severing by implication all connexion with Harley, 'I am afraid he'll never trust or forgive a sett of men [i.e. the Junto] that have so basely undermin'd and betray'd him'. Toland was throwing in his lot with the whigs, and he intended to stand for the new parliament in his own right. He forgot his association with Harley, and gambled on making his fortune under a whig ministry.

1. Cited in Heinemann, 'Prolegomena to a Toland Bibliography', p. 185.

2. P.R.O. 30/24/20/28: to Shaftesbury.

3. H.M.C. Portland, ii. 180: Sophia to Newcastle, 10 October 1701. Toland consistently acknowledged his debt to Newcastle (see Toland, Works, ii. 343, 348), but cynical observers doubted the association. Stepney related how Sophia had told him that Toland 'est protégé par plusieurs my Lords...chiefly Shaftsbury...& the Duke of New[castle] who is supposed to have lent him money to cloath himself (wch is likewise very improbable); but it is possible He was willing this fellow shou'd view the young Prince & judge if he might be a proper Match for his Daughter' (Bod. MS Montague, D. 1, f. 69).

With Toland in splendid isolation abroad the paper war got under way. At the end of the session both houses attempted to justify their proceedings by publishing extracts from their journals.¹ These official publications were followed by private ones on behalf of the 'new ministry' with regard to certain key issues, and some involved commentaries to forward the ministerial case.² In their wake came respective vindications of the Lords and the Commons arguing from precedents. Harley was suspected of being the author of one of these. Discussing 'our political bantering friend' (as they termed Harley), Henry St John informed Sir William Trumbull that the speaker 'had a paper ready for the press'. This he supposed to be 'that which I find in the newspapers styled a Vindication of the Rights of the Commons of England by a Member of Parliament'.³ Actually Sir Humphry Mackworth was author of the pamphlet of this title, as St John subsequently acknowledged, yet there is sufficient evidence to suggest Harley's involvement in the Justification of the Proceedings Of the Honourable the House of Commons, In the Last Sessions of Parliament, which may have been the tract to which St John was referring. 'Since Sir Humphrey Mackworth's Vindication of the rights of the Commons as to impeachments', Vernon wrote on 1 September, 'another book is come out in the same volume, called the "Vindication of the Proceedings of the Commons in the last Session", which is said to be writ by the Speaker'.⁴

1. The Several Proceedings and Resolutions of the House of Peers, In Relation to the Lords Impeached or Charged (1701); A State of the Proceedings in the House of Commons, With Relation to the Impeached Lords; And what happened thereupon between the Two Houses (1701).

2. The Several Proceedings and Resolutions of the House of Commons. In Relation to the Bill for Taking, Examining and Stating the Publick Accounts of the Kingdom, together with a Copy of the Bill (1701); The Several Proceedings and Resolutions of the House of Commons. In Relation to the Dangers that Threaten England, And the Liberties of Europe, From the late Succession to the Crown of Spain (1701).

3. H.M.C. Downshire, I. ii. 806-807: 24 August, 14 September 1701.

4. V.C., iii. 155-56.

It sets forth all their resolutions in relation to foreign affairs, and the King's answers approving of them, with a comment upon them, to show what prudent steps were made by the House, and how rash others were that would have had an immediate declaration of war, without giving time either to ourselves or our neighbours to be in a posture for it.

Vernon is clearly referring to the Justification, which asked:¹

What could the House of Commons have done more for the Interest of England, the Satisfaction of His Majesty, and the Encouragement of our Allies abroad?

Obj. They ought immediately to have address'd the King to declare War.

Answ. The Commons apprehended, that an immediate Declaration of War might be of fatal Consequence to England and Holland: 1st, Because neither of them were then prepared to make Resistance.

Harley's sentiments certainly, but there is no firm evidence that can tie down his authorship.²

Naturally enough, these publications did not go unanswered.³ With the campaign for a dissolution in full swing, moreover, the whigs resumed the offensive. Defoe's History of the Kentish Petition was accompanied late in August by Jura Populi Anglicani: or the Subject's Right of Petitioning set forth and Some Queries, which may deserve Consideration. Somers has been named as author of Jura Populi Anglicani, and though there is no evidence to support the attribution, it seems reasonable, if only for the fact that Harley himself singled out Somers in reply. Jura Populi Anglicani satirised the speaker personally. 'Is not R[obert] H[arley] a ring-leader in this Tory party?', it was asked, 'Is not his br[oth]er E[dward] a leading member':

Does not he attend all ordinances, and as constantly every week-day frequent the service of the church, for his is a church-party, in St Stephen's chapel, as he does the Conven[ti]cle every Lord's-day?...It is methinks hard to say how a faction blended with such a number of names noted for their inveteracy to the true Tory-principles, can be called a Tory party...But upon second thoughts the wonder will not seem so great;

1. A Justification of the Proceedings Of the Honourable the House of Commons, In the Last Sessions of Parliament (1701), p. 2.

2. See Bod. Nicols newspapers, xii. a. where it is ascribed on the title-page to Sir Bartholomew Shower.

3. See, for example, Some Remarks on the bill for taking, examining and stating the publick accounts of the kingdom (1701), in State Tracts, iii.

whatever difference might formerly have been between them, it will upon a fair examination now appear, that there is a great agreement in their principles.

This similarity in policy was used as a stick with which to beat the new ministry, particularly over the war. 'Whatever matter was offered that seemed to have the least tendency to war', the attack was pressed home, 'was violently opposed by the Sp[ea]ker, Mu[sgra]ve, Sey[mou]r, Sho[we]r, Fi[n]ch, H[o]w, Ha[rcou]rt, and all those who were entirely in the interest of that party'.¹ Some Queries, which may deserve Consideration also censured the tardiness to make the international situation secure. The first query wanted to know:

If it be not necessary to enquire on what occasion a Million of Louis d'Or's have come into England, since the death of the King of Spain; that so, according to the Event of that enquiry, some body may be thank'd, or may be hang'd.

Harley's own copy of this broadsheet, preserved in Loan 29, is annotated copiously in his hand. Although most of his comments are now indecipherable, one legible reference to 'The Peer that queries' indicates that Harley was aware of the author, perhaps Somers.² Evidently Harley's notes in the margin of the whig queries were no idle doodling, but the groundwork for a printed repost. It is possible that he had a hand in the paragraph by paragraph answer to the queries in the light of the copy preserved in the Harley papers and dated 23 August 1701.³ Be that as it may Davenant wrote to Harley on 7 September:⁴

I beg you would be pleased either to send me back the Queries, or, which I had rather, let me know when I may wait upon you for 'em.

1. Cobbett, V, appendix, pp. cxciv, ccxxxiv.

2. B.L. Loan 29/7/1. There is a second remark to the effect that 'The Author caused a Proclamation agst Louis d'ores in ye last Parlmt' which might pinpoint whom Harley thought responsible, but I have been unable to follow up the reference.

3. B.L. Loan 29/194, ff. 186-9. The title referred, perhaps significantly, to 'the ridiculous enquiries of the trifling P[ee]r that made 'em Publick'.

4. B.L. Loan 29/190, f. 96.

Davenant finally returned to the fray in August with the heavily Harleyite True Picture of a Modern Whig, which proved an effective retort to Jura Populi Anglicani. This time it was the modern whigs of the Junto who bore the brunt of pointed quips such as : 'If you talk or think of the Publick-Good, you will never become a right Modern Whig'. 'Whiglove' was warned by his friend 'Tom Double' to 'leave off calling thy self an Old Whig, it will do thee hurt with the Party. We reckon those Men our worst of Enemies'. The Old Whigs, according to 'Double', 'think us the very Rogues we know our selves to be, they have quitted our Side, and Vote every day with Seymour, Musgrave and Jack How': 'instead of being in the Flame we wish'd for, they went steddily on providing for the Kingdom's Safety'. 'Tom Double' personified perfectly the sort of whig the country gentlemen liked to think the Junto represented, who could 'reap no Advantage but by a long, bloody and expensive War, begun and carry'd on against all Right and Reason'. 'I can name you fifty of our Friends who have got...Fortunes since the Revolution, and from...poor Beginnings', 'Double' continued, satirising Somers in particular, and stressing that 'In describing my self, I have drawn most of their Pictures, and there are few of 'em that do not resemble me in some of my Features. Look generally into their Originals, and you will find 'em full as mean as mine'.¹

Turning to the clamour over a dissolution, Davenant concluded his tract with 'Double' responding to 'Whiglove''s: 'I doubt we shall hardly be able to Bully the Court into a Dissolution', with a more positive: 'Who knows if we make a great deal of Noise but that we may fright 'em to it'. This was an uncomfortably accurate representation of the situation in August 1701. Harley felt that more country propaganda was needed to unite the new ministry's

1. The True Picture of a Modern Whig (1701), pp. 7, 32, 37, 10, 11, 15, 32.

supporters both inside and outside parliament. As Davenant had done in the True Picture of a Modern Whig, Harley adopted a persona. But he took this a stage further in actually impersonating two hot whigs, Edward Clarke, M.P. for Taunton, and, since the standing army controversy, Junto spokesman in the Commons, and John Freke, a lawyer, and secretary, to all intents and purposes, of the whig 'College' that was thought to be directing the production and dissemination of whig propaganda during the paper war.¹ Through using the initials of these men, Harley, by penning spurious correspondence between the two, sought to expose and ridicule both the characters and the schemes of the modern whigs. There is a manuscript draft of The Taunton-Dean Letter, from E.C. to J.F. at the Grecian Coffee-house, dated 3 September 1701, and it is to this pamphlet, and the set of country counter-queries attached to it, that Davenant is most probably referring in his letter of 7 September.²

In the Taunton-Dean Letter, E.C. remarked upon 'the former Books and Papers you sent, which have had pretty good Effect'. One of these was a false vindication of Rochester called The True Patriot Vindicated, which E.C. supposedly read at a whig meeting in Exeter expecting an enthusiastic response. He was disappointed:

It did not take at all; They said, what is this to the main Point, this doth not carry on our Business? If my Lord R[ocheste]r be out, we shall have another in that will do us as much Mischief; it is not one Man's being out will do, we must have Root and Branch. Says another, I like well the blackening my Lord R[ocheste]r, Sir C[harles] H[edge]s the Secretary, Sir H[umphry] M[ackwor]th, Sir B[artholomew] Sh[owe]r, and

1. For Clarke and Freke, see W.L. Sachse, Lord Somers: a Political Portrait (1975), p. 116.

2. B.L. Loan 29/12/3. The complete text of the Taunton-Dean Letter is to be found in Appendix A, below.

every one that is remarkable of the Country Party, but then it must be by general Stories, by Whispers never to be trac'd up to Particulars, or Authors.

Having witnessed grass-roots whig activity and viewpoints, E.C. felt in a position to offer his friend advice:

Root and Branch again is the Word, and this must be our Drift and Aim: The Power of Parliaments must be retrench'd, and their Sitting quietly to do the Nation's Business must be prevented, otherwise it will be impossible to carry on our Designs, or secure what we have got; for tho' Finch, How, Harcourt, Shower, Musgrave, Seymour, and the rest of that Crew were kept out, you see other prying Fellows start up, and will never leave off looking into our Mysteries, and examining Accompts, to the Ruin of many honest Godly People.

Though far from subtle, Harley's propaganda effectively highlighted the aims of whig policy, and damned E.C. out of his own mouth. Turning to the paper war, E.C. continued:

Your Contrivance of Legion was a noble Work, and tho' it was seal'd up in the House, you printed, and we dispers'd it successfully; the Style is suited to the People, which we would be glad to inflame, and there are not only Reflections on particular Persons, but you touch the main Point against the Authority of Parliaments. The Queries do the same. The Authors of Jura Populi have done well, they overturn the Power of the Commons to commit, and thereby make them useless, and also show they are not the Representatives of the People...This Paper of The true Patriot vindicated, &c. has medled with Things in the last Reign...which may put the Enemy in mind of...our Friends former Actions...should some of our Friends have their Masks pull'd off we were ruin'd irrecoverably...there is nothing we can blame in others, of which we have not been ten times more guilty our selves.

Having opened the way for a direct attack on Somers, as leader of the whigs, Harley pressed it home with a sortie on the whig propaganda machine itself.

In conclusion E.C. unveiled his own pretensions as author:

I will lay this new Ministry as flat as a Flounder when once I begin to brandish my Pen. In this Paper-War I intend to manage I purpose to behave my self as I us'd to do in the House...But I will publish nothing till it has been well consider'd at the Colledg by my Lord S[ome]rs and my Lord H[alifa]x, in conjunction with your Self, Jacob Tonson, and two or three more of the ablest Politicians of our Party; and for fear of Recriminations, and least I should rub old Sores, I will not meddle with private Persons, but will stick to the most important Point, which is that of undermining the Constitution and Authority of Parliaments.

To convince his correspondent of his good judgment, E.C. produced 'a Paper of Queries, which they say were written at Exeter'. In this appendix Harley

pulled off his whig disguise to pen true country queries, 28 in all, that praised the new ministry and criticised the old, reserving the best sentiments for the prudent '161 who Voted against the Words Peace of Europe' in the Commons' address to the king at the opening of parliament.

The Taunton-Dean Letter, however, was merely the prelude to a full-scale rehearsal of country grievances against Somers. The paper war had not yet reached its zenith, and each contribution from one side brought a rejoinder from the other. It is significant that only one query exists in Harley's holograph of the Taunton-Dean Letter, and, as if to accentuate the real design of the broadsheet, it concerned Somers. Referring to his lowly origins, and clearly singling him out as the man responsible for the paper war, Harley asked:¹

whether a man from one hundred a year practice & al & no Gentleman attains to 6000 & be a peer he might not be contented without blowing al up in a flame?

On the back of a letter from William Bromley, dated 20 September 1701, Harley sketched out his attack on Somers.² The phrases he used ('we went always upon persons & not things'; 'How shal y^e dissolve this parlm^t, but by exposing persons, & how shal we expose Parlm^{ts} but by dissolving them') found their way into A Letter from the Grecian Coffee-house, In Answer to The Taunton-Dean Letter. To which is added, A Paper of Queries Sent from Worcester.³

The final lines of the Taunton-Dean Letter set the scene for a bitter assault on Somers' political morality. 'Tis reported here', E.C. wrote,

1. B.L. Loan 29/12/3.

2. B.L. Loan 29/128/3.

3. In B.L. Loan 29/7/1 there are two manuscript drafts of the Letter. One is a Harley holograph, and a subsequent draft is in another hand, either Davenant's or a clerk's, although it is emended in Harley's hand. The complete text of the Letter from the Grecian Coffee-house is to be found in Appendix A, below.

'That one of our Noble Friends grows cool in the Cause, and I have Letters hinting some such thing, at which we are all very much alarm'd; pray let me know the Truth by your next'. This referred to Somers, and the Letter from the Grecian Coffee-house opened:

According to my Promise I shall now give you an Answer at large to your Letter of Sept. 3. As I told you in my last, I have communicated it to our Noble Friend to keep him in Heart, and flatter him that he Heads our Party, who, you know, are all Heads, when we please.

In many ways the later pamphlet, much more extensive than the Taunton-Dean broadsheet, was a direct attack on Somers at a personal level in which Harley revealed for public edification the skeletons in the whig lord's cupboard, initially concerning a breach of parliamentary privilege that took place in 1679 resulting in his arrest by the serjeant at arms:¹

Our Noble Friend L[or]d S[omers] I made Bargains for him in a dark way [J.F. admitted], and was useful in squeezing out more Money than was at first thought upon; I also know him revengeful, and that he could not bear any one that he thought might reproach his Original, or any of his former Actions; upon that, I got Stories carried to him, that such a Gentleman said, he sent a Commission down to try Rioters of Worcester, only to catch some that had writ a Ballad of his L[ordshi]p's making too bold with some Books at Oxford, and keeping Bl[oun]t in Jayle, while he lay with his Wife.

A final query was sent by Harley to Davenant in a letter of 6 October which clinched the case against Somers:²

Q. If the proverb be true save a theif from the Gall[ows] he wil hang you if he can. by the same Rule sa[ve] a mans father from the Pillory & ye son wil endeavor to ruine you & your family.
are not both these equally grateful?

Naturally enough Somers' role in the proceedings of the last session in parliament was discussed, J.F. continued:³

1. A Letter from the Grecian Coffee-house (1701), p. 7. It is interesting that the original draft of the Letter (Harley's holograph) openly accused Somers of 'stealing' books at Oxford, but a more decorous phrase was substituted in the final version.

2. B.L. Loan 29/7/1. It is number XXXIII, the final Worcester Query.

3. A Letter from the Grecian Coffee-house, pp. 9-10.

our Noble Friend himself was fine and warm the last Day in the House of Lords, when he began the Cry, Withdraw, Withdraw, Clear the House, Clear Clear the House, after his Majesty was come in with his Robes and Crown; this was a noble undaunted Stroke, after hussing the Commons.

Harley duly completed his lampoon on Somers, writing to Davenant on 6 October:¹

The enclosed are but poor & confused materials, you are desired to alter, transpose, leave out or burne them, they are al yrs.

The printed Letter was dated 3 October 1701. It was, surely, the second of the pamphlets referred to by Davenant in a letter to Thomas Coke dated 6 October, and the Taunton-Dean Letter was the first:²

There are some papers come out lately, which have been taken very much in town. The authors are unknown, but their performance has met with a general approbation. Your friends here have thought you will not take it amiss to be put to a guinea charge. I have therefore undertaken to send you forty of one sort of the papers, and eighteen of the other to give away among your acquaintances. They will be as antidotes against the poison that is spread about by the other side, who spare no cost to scatter their libels upon the Parliament round the kingdom.

Harley's use of a mock form marks a considerable advance in the employment and appreciation of propaganda techniques. Gone was the simple dry narration of facts and arguments. Something more subtle was being attempted in trying to stimulate divisions in the ranks of the opposition by insinuations that considerable ill-feeling already existed to threaten the breakdown of party functions. Of course no-one would be taken in, and this surely was not what Harley was hoping to achieve. By ridiculing his adversaries he endeavoured to take the edge off their propaganda in a similar way. Harley was aiming above all to please his own committed supporters: men who were already adherents of country ideology. His was defensive propaganda, designed to act, as Davenant told Coke, as an 'antidote' to whig 'poison'. Yet the advance in

1. B.L. Loan 29/7/1. The respective contributions of Harley and Davenant to the completed pamphlet are considered in more detail than can be attempted here in my article, 'Robert Harley, Charles Davenant and the Authorship of the Worcester Queries', Literature and History, iii (1976), 83-99.

2. H.M.C. Cowper, ii. 436-37.

literary skill is nonetheless apparent, and it is worth noting, as Frank Ellis points out, that Davenant's True Picture of a Modern Whig was also 'a very different kind of work from Davenants' earlier compilations of precedents and statistics'. This, Ellis surmises, was due to the 'wit and humour' of the earl of Peterborough.¹ It would appear, however, that Harley supplied the initiative for the mock Taunton-Dean Letter and the Letter from the Grecian Coffee-house, and probably his connivance in the True Picture should not be ruled out, although it cannot be documented.² After all, the two men were certainly collaborating from September 1701 onwards. True, there was nothing original in the use of mock form as such, and the paper war had witnessed a proliferation of false vindications, but the fact that Harley decided to use one on at least two separate occasions is evidence of a more sophisticated approach to propaganda. He no longer wished merely to prove the rightness of his argument through the presentation of irrefutable facts, he also wanted to ridicule the opposition for the amusement of his own supporters.

Ironically enough Harley himself praised country silence in the face of whig provocation in print. In the Letter from the Grecian Coffee-house J.F. stressed the 'necessity of aspersing all of the Country-party, till we can provoke some of their Leaders to appear in this Paper-War',³

None of their Chiefs yet come out, which makes me fear they intend to keep Things in quiet; but we must cry out, No Moderation, No Moderation. I thought Jura Populi's false Quotations would draw some of them to Answer; but they use that and other of our Writings with as much Contempt as they do you, or the Sol[icito]r G[enera]l, when you speak in the House.

1. Swift's Discourse, ed. Ellis, p. 75n.

2. 'Davenant's tract A True Picture of a Modern Whig (1701), probably inspired by Harley' (Two English Republican Tracts, ed. Caroline Robbins, pp. 32-33). Cf. below, pp. 110-111.

3. A Letter from the Grecian Coffee-house, p. 5.

This Sullenness of the Country-party is but a bad Sign; it shews they think themselves satisfied with the Strength of their Cabal, and their Interest with the People, but I hope in God we shall Ly and Rail them out of that.

Harley did not have any sort of effective control over the lampoons and pamphlets that ran from the pens of independent men such as Anthony Hammond and Sir Humphry Mackworth, but he attempted to regulate the campaign by regular contributions of Harleyite propaganda. To do this he was not afraid to put pen to paper himself, and in this way he did direct the output and aims of country propaganda across the board. On Davenant's testimony country gentlemen were encouraged to disseminate papers in the provinces, and though it was unlikely that the king could be unduly influenced by what appeared in print, anything that could swing public opinion away from the idea of a dissolution was fulfilling a sterling service to the country cause, and, in the final analysis, should the worst come to the worst it could hardly hinder the election campaign to publicise the proceedings of the Commons in the previous parliament in justification of their conduct. By September 1701 the paper war had settled down to a grim retrenched action over the question of dissolution.

Apart from blackening Somers' character, one of the prime functions of Harley's venture into print was the insinuation that if the whigs had their way parliament would no longer be allowed to legislate and scrutinize ministerial policy without interference. What is more, his use of hyperbole is quite striking. Though he disagreed with E.C.'s predilections for attacking men not measures (the official raison d'être of the country party, after all, was to change measures, not to concentrate merely on bringing miscreants to account), J.F. enumerated things on which there could be no disagreement in whig ranks:¹

1. Ibid., p. 3.

I. This Parliament is to be Dissolved.

II. That no Parliament must sit quietly, or be suffered to examine Miscarriages.

III. That the Nation be made weary of Parliaments. And I will add another of my own.

IV. That Moderation be avoided, let both Sides be exasperated.

All this will tend to Impunity to our Friends, and by keeping up Parties, preserve us in Power (whatever our Reputation be) which I find nothing else will do: And we must be for humbling the House of Commons, unless we could hope to see our Power flourish there once more.

Having established that 'you and I agree in Principles, as the World foolishly calls it', J.F. proceeded to press home his argument, and, at the same time, to clinch Harley's characterization of the whig ogre:¹

Now how shall we dissolve this Parliament, but by exposing Persons? And how shall we expose Parliaments, but by dissolving them with Contempt? And to satisfy you more in this Point, the way of our Party is to go upon Persons, and not Things. Those that herd with us, are naturally Selfish, Peevish, Narrow-Spirited, Ill-natured, Conceited of Themselves, Envious at any Abilities in others, loving to find Fault; in short, Hateful and Hating one another: Therefore having these Tools to work with, we must follow Nature.

Giving a supposed whig's-eye view of the country gentlemen, which, of course, redounded to their own advantage, Harley made political hay out of abuse aimed apparently at his own party:

The bulk of those Sots and Puts who call themselves The Gentlemen of England [J.F. continued], are desirous to be quiet, and to unite, it is that we must prevent; therefore let us blacken one Party, and if they Reply and return true Reflections for the Lies we invent, then the other Party is exasperated and so the variance kept up, and the Cullies and Brutes quarrel for our Profit and our Pleasure.

In listing the methods used by the whigs to perpetuate party divisions, and by giving a history of their struggles against 'Phlegmatick Rascals, [who,] by tneir damn'd Moderation, would undo us and disband our Party', Harley sought to undermine the total credibility of the whig propagandists. 'Tho' there was no such Speech made by my Lord Rochester in Poland, yet still aver

1. Ibid., p. 4. A measure of Harley's success in handling mock form may be the fact that this passage has been cited by one historian as a genuine piece of correspondence from Harley 'to a friend, c. 1701', and is viewed as a tirade against the tory party. (A.D. MacLachlan, 'The Road to Peace, 1710-1713', B.A.T.G.R., pp. 201-202, and n. 22.)

it', J.F. ran on, 'You will grow bolder by often telling these sort of Stories, and will find belief with your self and the hearers'. Maintaining the paramount importance of keeping passions inflamed throughout, and persisting in his digs at our 'Noble Friend', Lord Somers, Harley brought the tract to its conclusion. 'Thus you see what Diligence and Art is necessary', was the ironic message of the Letter, 'if you can but keep People hot and warm, our Business will be done'.¹

The Worcester Queries stated the essential premises of Harley's propaganda without the benefit of mock form. As in the Taunton-Dean Letter, one whig supported his argument by a set of printed queries that were unmistakably penned by country sympathisers. Returning to Some Queries, which may deserve Consideration, the country case was put forward in striking pose, and in succession it was asked:²

Whether that Lye of Louis d'Ors being given to Members, had ever been invented, if some Persons had not been afraid this Parliament would examine into Accounts, and discover the Pensions given in former Salary-Parliaments?...

Whether the Outcry against the Parliaments prudent Steps in order to War, was not stirr'd up to save a Lord or two from Impeachments?...

Whether the Kentish Petition had ever been heard of, if the Faction could have stirr'd up (as they endeavoured) the Weavers, or Shoe-Makers, or any other Mob to insult the House of Commons?...

Whether to all impartial Men it be not a shrewd Sign of Justice in the late Prosecutions, that they were carried on by the very same Members, of both House, who promoted that Worthy Bill, by which they divested themselves of their own Priviledges?

On these points, the defence chose to rest.

But the outcome of the paper war was very far from being decided, and in the final analysis the efficacy of Harley's propaganda must be judged by its success. Davenant, after his negotiations with Poussin were cut short by the Frenchman's expulsion, threw himself once more into the controversy in print.

1. Letter from the Grecian Coffee-house, pp. 4, 5, 6-7, 8.

2. Ibid., p. 11. The Queries are also given in their entirety below, in Appendix A.

St John told Trumbull at the end of September that the learned doctor was:¹
 writing a book in two parts, one to shew the justice that lies on the side of the H[ouse] of Austria in this quarrel, and the game England ought to play with respect to it; the other what method our proceedings against the impeached Lords must take in the next session.

Tempus Adest: Or, A War Inevitable appeared in November 1701 in reply to Defoe's ironic Reasons against a War with France. It shows the change in direction in country thinking in relation to international affairs on the death of James II in exile at St Germain on 5 September and the proclamation of his son as King James III by Louis XIV, which, as Harley noted, 'gave a handle for stirring up a ferment in the nation', leading to war. Even Poussin was disturbed at Davenant planning 'un nouvel ouvrage sur les affaires presentes de l'Europe, et la necessité de la guerre'.² And as the nation teetered on the brink of war, the question of dissolution was also poised on a knife-edge. William had not given his consent to a new parliament, despite being closetted by the whigs on his return from the continent, although he had made clear his dissatisfaction with Harley's succession scheme. Somers was known to be making secret journeys to Hampton Court, yet it was expected that the old parliament would reconvene on 27 November.³ Just as the country party was beginning to think the battle over dissolution had been won, parliament was dissolved on 11 November, much to the surprise of the minions of both parties. 'The King is desirous to meet a Parliament of good Englishmen and Protestants, in order to which he dissolves us, and thus we are sent into the country with libels affixed to our backs'.⁴ St

1. H.M.C. Downshire, I. ii. 808: 30 September 1701. Cf. Luttrell, v. 100: 16 September 1701: 'Dr Davenant is writing of a book against the sitting of parliament to shew the necessity and equity of a war against France from England and Holland'.

2. B.L. Loan 29/165/2; P.R.O. 31/3/189/62, cited in Ellis, p. 76.

3. See H.M.C. Cowper, ii. 438; B.L. Loan 29/165/2.

4. H.M.C. Downshire, I. ii. 810-11: to Trumbull, 12 November 1701.

John's state of the case was not far from the accepted view. Godolphin resigned immediately, and contemporaries, regarding it as 'a breaking of the first linke of the chaine', expected the rest to 'fall off, one after another'. Harley was expected to follow suit.¹ The paper war had failed to preserve Harley's non-party scheme.

A secondary skirmish emerged from the action over dissolution during the elections to the new parliament. A new, vital distinction between whig and tory, stimulated by the events of 1701, could be discerned by many onlookers. Luttrell phrased his notes on the London elections in terms of 'the whiggish party' and the 'church party'.² To eyes accustomed for so long to reading court and country labels the change of emphasis is readily apparent. There are very few references to a 'church party' before 1701, and the term soon became interchangeable with 'tory party' in the everyday usage of Queen Anne's reign.³ Whig similarly ceased to be synonymous with the court in party terms. During the election campaign of November-December 1701 this divergence in terminology began to show itself in the political propaganda disseminated by the whigs. The whole of what was known as the country party was lumped together in a blacklist of 'Poussineers' and their adherents, and the inference was that they were all tories. Nor was the label of 'Poussineer' reserved for Davenant, Hammond and Tredenham, but it was extended to embrace all the more prominent members of their party.⁴ Davenant was fully occupied in justifying his conduct, and the necessity of doing so was reinforced by the publication of at least two false vindications from whig pens.⁵ 'I have

1. B.L. Add. MSS, 7074, ff. 55-56: Ellis to Stepney, 11 November 1701.

2. Luttrell, v. 110-11: 18, 20 November 1701.

3. See Feiling, Tory Party, p. 316.

4. Bod. MS Rawlinson, D. 918, ff. 165-68.

5. A full and true Relation of a horrid and detestable Conspiracy against the Lives, Estates and Reputations of Three Worthy Members of this Present Parliament (1701); A Vindication of Dr Charles Davenant, &c (1701).

been at Grays Inn for some time', he wrote on 6 October, 'and am preparing something for the press, which I hope will be of great service to the public, and a full vindication of myself from all the aspersions of the libellers'.¹ This, presumably, was the second part of the True Picture of a Modern Whig, called Tom Double Return'd out of the Country, which appeared in January 1702.

Harley's involvement in the production of Davenant's subsequent writings seems almost certain. On 26 December 1701 Davenant wrote:²

What you gave me in charge went last night to the press, and will be public to-morrow. I have put a st[op] upon what was crossed out. I beg you will send to Mr Winnington for his papers, for I am at a full stand without them. I would likewise borrow your printed account of the Irish forfeitures for mine is lost. If you have a brief account of the English grants it would be of use to me. I likewise want my Lord Orford's contingent accounts, which I beg you to lend me.

Davenant was clearly shouldering a heavy burden of responsibility for the production of Harleyite propaganda, and he concluded by wishing Harley 'a happier Christmas...than can possibly be expected by me'. By the end of the reign of William III Harley had to a large degree formulated his views on the press and the problem of its regulation. Under the Godolphin ministry he would eventually be able to put many of his theories into practice. His relationships, limited as they proved to be, with Charles Davenant and John Toland were the prototypes of the deeper associations he was to forge with Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift. His attitude to propaganda and printed political literature in general can perhaps be best gauged at this juncture by examining his reaction to Archbishop Tenison's projected bill for press censorship sent to him as speaker of the house of commons:³

1. H.M.C. Cowper, ii. 437.

2. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 30. Omissions are supplied from the original, B.L. Loan 29/190, f. 131.

3. Lambeth Palace Library, MS 930, f. 25: Robert Harley to Archbishop Tenison, 8 January 1701/2. Cf. P.O.A.S., vii. 570.

I receiv'd your Graces commands with great respect & Duty, & wil always be ready to contribute the utmost I can to ye Public Service, & particularly allaying those heats & annimositys wch are greatly encreasd by the many scandalous Lying Pamphlets wch are dayly propagated by designing knaves to ye scandal not only of the nation but of common christianity; tho I have no doubt but there are sufficient authoritys given by the Laws in being for suppressing such enormitys, whenever it shal be thought fit to put those Laws in execution, yet a new Law may, perhaps, mend some defects: the Draught of a Bill, wch I herewith returne to your Grace, contains very good methods to have a Printer or Author answerable for every thing wch is published, but there must be some severer course taken afterwards wth the Libellers, wch present Laws are sufficient for.

Though he no doubt regarded the curbing of the worst excesses of party malice in print as a worthwhile exercise, Harley was always able to see the impracticability of proscription as a policy. Men no longer lost their ears, yet it had never proved an effective deterrent against seditious libel even when they had. Harley's was a more positive answer to the problem, involving the output of counter-propaganda. In taking part in the paper war he had in effect endorsed the methods adopted by the party writers of both sides, and it would have been hypocritical to have advocated severe punishment for libel, more especially as the second part of Davenant's True Picture of a Modern Whig was judged libellous by the house of lords on 12 May 1702.

Harley never at any time in his career attempted to operate a system of total proscription, and even the stamp duty on newspapers introduced under his auspices in 1712 was, as we shall see, a very ambiguous measure. So he backpeddled in his answer to Tenison's proposals:

If your Grace wil be pleasd to have it begun in ye House of Lords & if either House are inclind to make it stronger, it is easy for them to make additions; this caution is necessary that it have not any pecuniary penalty when sent down to ye commons; I crave leave to add that I have al the zeale imaginable for his maties service, & shal be ready to obey any commands where with your Grace wil be pleasd to honor [me].

Needless to say, nothing came of Tenison's projected bill.

To most observers in January 1702, however, Harley did not seem to be particularly zealous in William's service. Harley stood for the speakership against the court candidate Littleton, and squeezed home against the odds by a mere four votes. He had refused to be the court's nominee for the chair,

and the contest was a fierce one. Hedges was removed from the secretaryship for supporting Harley, and on 25 January Rochester was also dismissed.¹ The game had gone full-circle, and Harley's scheme had failed. The new parliament was already being called 'the highest Tory Parlm^t', and the impasse between a court at odds with the majority in the Commons was being renewed. Country cabals were meeting once more to discuss tactics, while the king was reduced to filling the ranks of the government with political lightweights and mediocrities such as Hedges' replacement Manchester. Early in January 1702 Harley had what proved to be his last interview with William III on any sort of business, and, according to Harley, the king 'bewailed his Condition'.² But the conditions did not have time to jell, and the direction the opposition would have taken under the new regime is far from clear, for the king died as a result of a riding accident on 8 March 1702, and the very different political world of Queen Anne, polarised as it proved to be around whigs and tories, was ushered in almost prematurely.³

1. For the speakership, see B.L. Add. MSS, 7074, ff. 73-78; Carlisle R.O., Lowther Corr., James Lowther to his father, 27, 30 December 1701; H.M.C. Portland, iv. 28-29, v. 646; B.L. Loan 29/165/2.

2. Ibid.

3. One letter to Harley in relation to the press in these unsettled months is worth quoting, as it is possible that it relates to James Drake's History of the Last Parliament. B.L. Loan 29/35/24: J.H.[?] to Harley, 16 February 1702: 'I have writt a Treatise in Justification of the proceedings of the Commons relating to the late Impeachments, and in defence of their rights in other parliamentary affairs, wherein I plead from some new Heads of Argument the Determination of the Four questions following, in favour of the House.

Whether the Honourable House of Commons did Act by a Just Right in not submitting to the Tyme of Trial appointed by the peers, without their Consent?

Whether the Right Honourable the House of Peers did Act by a just Right in proceeding to Tryal, while the Commons desisted from prosecuting? [etc.]...

The mention'd treatise hath been ready for the press several months agoe, which I did forbear to publish, as being resolv'd not to awaken the remembrance of the Impeachments: But seeing that matter is now like to be so far under the Consideration of the House, as to assert their priviledges relating thereto, I have thought it my duty humbly to offer my design'd service for publick good, and creating a right understanding between the two houses, Being ready to obey the commands of the Honourable House by further reserving or publishing the said Treatise, as they shall think fitt to order'.

Chapter Four

The Triumvirate

The Duke, the Treasurer and yourself are called the Triumvirate, and reckoned the spring of all public affairs; and that your interests and counsels are so united and linked together that they cannot be broken, nor in any danger of it during this reign.

Stanley West to Robert Harley, 29 August 1704.

In recent years much has been made of Harley's relationship with Marlborough and Godolphin prior to his appointment as secretary of state in May 1704.¹

Although in retrospect he emphasised that until the accession of Queen Anne he had had 'no habits...with Lord Marlborough', Harley was to write of the 'seven years' he had enjoyed Godolphin's protection and friendship, dating back, presumably, to 1698.² The act of settlement was drawn up by Harley in conjunction with Godolphin and Rochester. When the 'New Country' ministry disintegrated on the dissolution of parliament in November 1701 regular meetings between these men were instituted.³ It comes as no surprise, then, to find Godolphin consulting Harley on the queen's first speech to parliament. On the day of William's death he requested the speaker 'to make a draught of it yourself, and appoint us to come to your house to morrow night to see it'. 'I agree entirely', he added, 'the best way will be to go on...as if no occasion of interruption had happened'.⁴ The principal feeling is one of continuity from the country cabals of the last years of the reign of William III: the triumvirate did not suddenly spring into being on the accession of Queen Anne, it was inherited from the era of her predecessor.

1. See Henry L. Snyder, 'Godolphin and Harley: a Study of their Partnership in Politics', H.L.Q., xxx (1966-67), 241-71; Angus McInnes, 'The Appointment of Harley in 1704', H.J., xi (1968), 255-71.

2. B.L. Loan 29/165/2; H.M.C. Bath, i. 73 (dated 21 July 1705).

3. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 33-34.

4. Ibid. Cf. Longleat House, Portland Miscellaneous MSS (hereafter P.M.V.), f. 57: Godolphin to Harley, Wednesday night at 10, [10 March 1702?]: 'I thank you for ye favr of ye Lre & the draught enclosed wch I think Contains every things that is necessary & proper'.

After all, Queen Anne's first ministry was very similar in structure to the 'new ministry' of 1701, with the majority of the new appointments going to staunch supporters of the country party in the 1690s. Harley carried on as speaker without an official post in the administration, but where he was best placed to regulate proceedings in the Commons. He was not a member of the cabinet, nor of the privy council, but he was instrumental in composing queen's speeches and in settling the civil list, and he attended interviews with Queen Anne through the use of her backstairs.¹ It is strange to find him meeting not only with Marlborough and Godolphin, but also with Rochester and Nottingham. Without an official position in the government he was nonetheless accepted as an equal on all sides.² Having founded a correspondence with several influential men in Holland he was called upon to 'exert himself' on Marlborough's behalf to 'find proper methods to obtain their good opinion which was very much wanted, even till the year 1704'.³ Soon Church affairs devolved upon him as a result of his extensive dealings with clergymen of all shades of opinion throughout the kingdom. The convocation controversy that had fanned the flames in 1701 gave way, on the accession of a 'Church of England queen', to calls for the reestablishment of Anglican supremacy and the suppression of dissent. Godolphin, notoriously unsuccessful in his attempts to understand the motivations of the clergy, believing 'a discreet clergyman [to be] almost as rare as a black swan', was quite happy to leave things in Harley's capable hands. By the autumn of 1702 he was responsible for ecclesiastical preferment. 'I shall not move in anything of that kind', wrote Godolphin on 4 November, 'but as you will guide me'. It was Robert Harley who was behind the gift of Queen Anne's Bounty and its administration.⁴

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 34, 38, 43, 47; B.L. Loan 29/190, ff. 160, 184.

2. Longleat, P.M.V., f. 110.

3. B.L. Loan 29/165/2. See B.L. Loan 29/160/7; Harley's letters to Nicolaus Witsen, Burgomaster of Amsterdam.

4. H.M.C. Bath, i. 63; H.M.C. Portland, iv. 50; Longleat, P.M.V., f. 110.

Discussing contingency plans for regular meetings of prominent court supporters in the Commons in preparation for the winter session in 1703, Godolphin was at pains to point out that 'Besides these meetings...it is necessary above all the rest that the Duke of Marlborough and you and I should meet regularly, at least twice a week if not oftener, to advise upon everything that shall occur'.¹ An 'inner cabinet', which usually met on Sundays after the official cabinet council, was influential in the formation of ministerial policy, and in this Harley had a say, and a very important one. It was the simple fact that the Godolphin administration was based on a country coalition that provided Harley's raison d'être in the triumvirate. As leader of the country party in the 1690s he was experienced in the direction of independent backbenchers. Harley's 'Rule in Politicks', as Swift was later to note, 'was to watch Incidents as they come, and then turn them to the Advantage of what he pursues, rather than pretend to foresee them at a great distance'.² Harley had tried to work out an elaborate scheme in which the backbenchers had had a part to play in 1701, and it had been a disastrous failure. His future efforts were spent in trying to coax and cajole the country gentlemen to do things almost in spite of themselves. Marlborough and Godolphin had great need of a manipulator of men, and they gave Harley carte-blanche to organise the court supporters in the Commons as he felt necessary. 'I have been with Mr Secretary Hedges and left with him the papers of names and settled the method he is to take in concerting matters from time to time', Godolphin assured Harley on 4 November 1703, 'I believe he will take to his part very faithfully and diligently and be desirous on all occasions to receive his

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 75: 4 November 1703. My italics.

2. Swift, Prose Works, vii. 73.

instructions from you'. Harley called the tune, and no less a personage than the secretary of state was to dance to it accordingly. Strangely enough, Harley, who had been such a stickler in matters touching on the independence of the Commons when the Junto had tried to organise court supporters during the 1690s, seems to have been totally unconscious of any anomaly when it came to the question of his own handling of fractious backbenchers.¹

Because the structure of the government was a coalition between High Churchmen, moderate tories and Old Whigs, tension could hardly be avoided. Nottingham came to believe a 'Coalition-scheme' to be 'impracticable', and similar sentiments were displayed by other high tories.² He wished for the exclusion of all who held any whig sympathies, and eventually he told the queen that he felt unable to serve her with the cabinet as it was then constituted.³ On the other hand Marlborough and Godolphin had come to appreciate the inadvisability of encompassing the high tory chieftains within their essentially broad-based ministry, and sought Nottingham's ouster.⁴ Aware of these things Harley's cabinet-making activities were not confined to the lower house. From 1703 onwards he made approaches to independent whig lords who could function within the framework of the Godolphin ministry. He opened negotiations with the duke of Newcastle in particular with a view to winning his support to counterbalance the imminent loss of High Church backing in the Lords. Robert Monckton, the broker in these overtures, wrote optimistically that soon the lord treasurer might be 'as much in debt' to Harley 'upon the account of the one House as he is for the other'.⁵

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 75 (my italics). Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 53-54, 58.

2. Cited in The Divided Society, ed. G.S. Holmes and W.A. Speck (1967), p. 168.

3. See B.L. Loan 29/70/9: Robert Harley to Edward Harley, 22 April 1704.

4. See Coxe, i. 131-34.

5. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 59: 3 April 1703.

On Nottingham's resignation Harley's work for the government received official status. 'It is scarce worth while congratulating you', wrote Thomas Foley on Harley's being sworn a member of the privy council, 'for having that in name, which before you had in reality'.¹ Intimates of those in power recognised that the triumvirate had existed long before Harley's appointment as secretary of state. The country party of the reign of William III had left a legacy to the whig/tory-dominated political world of Queen Anne. The fall of Nottingham, Jersey and Seymour, following Rochester's premature disgrace in 1703, signalled the final break-up of the coalition which had made up the 'new ministry' in the face of the threat posed by the Junto whigs. Yet Harley continued to view political problems in terms of what the 'gentlemen of England' could be coaxed to do, not in opposition, but in support of the triumvirate. Throughout his career he displayed a remarkable proclivity for flogging dead horses. His non-party schemes always had the agreement forged with William III in the act of settlement as their prototype. The problem of separating executive and legislature was to be solved by cooperation and mutual trust: Queen Anne leaving the administering of her realm to scrupulous ministers who would see both her and her kingdom right without invading the rights and privileges of the 'people'; men who would respect the sanctity of monarchy without exposing the liberty and property of the subject. As Harley said, Anne was 'the first Prince I ever did belong to', and yet he felt uncomfortable in office in view of his former country principles.² 'You may well call me a new courtier', he replied to James Grahme's letter of congratulation on his appointment as secretary on 1 June 1704, 'I shall scarce ever attain to be an old one unless I have the favour of some of your precepts'.³

1. B.L. Loan 29/136/4: 3 May 1704.

2. Longleat, P.M.V., f. 113: Harley to Godolphin, 21 July 1705 (draft).

3. H.M.C. Westmorland et al, p. 337. Cf. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 85-86.

Another area over which Harley assumed responsibility was the press, although he did not always see eye to eye with Godolphin on ministerial policy. The experiences of the paper war, and his own role as propagandist in conjunction with Charles Davenant and John Toland, led to the formation of a more positive policy in Harley's mind in relation to the press. In the first months of Queen Anne's reign considerable energy was expended by the house of lords in the prosecution of libels that reflected on the conduct of the upper house during the deadlock over the impeachments. As speaker of the house of commons, of course, Harley was involved in an official capacity, and it is somewhat ironic to find Davenant's Tom Double Return'd out of the Country one of the pamphlets proscribed by the Lords.¹ On 28 March 1702 Queen Anne issued a proclamation 'for Restraining the Spreading False News, and Printing and Publishing of Irreligious and Seditious Papers and Libels'. While the government concentrated officially on proscription, Harley's attitude to the problem acknowledged that party conflict was too virulent a phenomenon to facilitate the suppression of party propaganda. The development of the press since the lapsing of the licensing act led Harley to think in terms of more than the simple one-off publication with which he had hitherto been concerned. He was beginning to realise the full potential of a government propaganda machine, adapting the tactics used by the whigs to disseminate political literature in 1701. Periodicals allowed a more sustained propaganda programme to be undertaken. Instead of proscription, then, Harley proposed to counteract the bad effects of anti-ministerial propaganda through the publication and dissemination of counter-propaganda.

1. For the proceedings of the Lords in relation to libels, see Cobbett, vi. 18-24. James Drake's History of the Last Parliament was also judged libellous by the upper house on 12 May 1702.

The first indication of the way Harley was thinking occurs in a letter from Harley to Godolphin, dated 9 August 1702, which discussed the outcome of the elections to Queen Anne's first parliament:¹

as near as I can guess...tho there are many Violent Whigs left out, yet those who come in their places will be for moderate & safe counsils, unless deceiv'd by the artifice of some few hot men, whom I hope the Government will take care to prevent, by applying proper antidotes...I cannot, but upon this occasion, again take the liberty to offer to your Ldp that it will be of great service to have some discreet writer of the Governments side, if it were only to state facts right; for the Generality err for want of knowledg, & being imposd upon by the storys raisd by ill designing men.

Clearly Harley had previously tried to rouse the lord treasurer's interest in the press as a force to unite potential supporters of the government. Although it is impossible to say with any real certainty whether Harley had a particular writer in mind to fulfil the projected role of counter-propagandist to supply correct information to the 'people', great efforts have been made to ante-date the relations of Robert Harley and Daniel Defoe. Recently one authority has gone so far as to state that the speaker 'almost certainly...had Defoe in mind as the able writer',² and it is true that Defoe, who had been the principal opponent of the country party in print during both the standing army controversy and the paper war of 1701, made the first of his not infrequent volte-faces to offer his pen to the new ministry. Acknowledging that he knew Harley 'only by character', Defoe asked William Paterson 'to make my acknowledgments'. It seems he received 'hopes' of Harley's favour, which is scarcely remarkable, as the speaker would be well aware of the potency of the pen of 'the Author of the True-Born Englishman', and would be unlikely to spurn an opportunity of neutralising the whig propaganda it was prone to disseminate.³

1. B.L. Add. MSS, 28055, f. 3.

2. J.R. Sutherland, Daniel Defoe: a Critical Study (1971), p. 8.

3. See H.M.C. Portland, iv. 61-62: Defoe to Paterson, April 1703. All subsequent references to Defoe's letters will be from The Letters of Daniel Defoe, ed. G.H. Healey (1955), hereafter cited as Defoe, Letters.

But if we are searching for a name to fit the description of the 'discreet writer' advocated by Harley, we need go no further than the intermediary approached by Defoe. Paterson, of course, was a writer himself, and Harley had assisted him in the past.¹ That Defoe should ask him to intercede with the speaker on his behalf is merely indicative of Paterson's own prior interest with Harley. Three days before Harley urged Godolphin to employ a ministerial propagandist, Paterson informed him:²

I had not access to my Lord Treasurer till yesterday. He received me very favourably...and promised I should not want access to such public papers as I might want in the way of my study, or anything else he could help me to; and expressed his sense of my capacity for these kind of things far beyond my merit.

'These kind of things' were, in this case, economic matters, and Paterson was working in the field of finance.³ But there was ample opportunity for Harley to improve the situation. It is possible that it was Paterson's readiness to receive permanent employment in the government's service that sparked off in Harley's mind the idea of an unofficial ministerial apologist, and Paterson's interviews with the lord treasurer certainly seem to have been arranged with this end in view. Harley's letter of 9 August to Godolphin continued:

This morning I receiv'd a letter from Mr Paterson...I believe his circumstances are very difficult at present & he as unwilling to let it be known, her Maties bounty to him would I believe be seasonable & quicken his diligence to serve her.

A second meeting between Godolphin and Paterson duly took place, after which the lord treasurer pointedly remarked to Harley:⁴

I thank you for yr hint of appointing some body to write for us, I have spoken of it to Ld Nottingham who has promised to take care of it, indeed it is his business.

1. See H.M.C. Portland, iv. 18: Paterson to Harley, 19, 27 May 1701.

2. Ibid., p. 43: the same to the same, 6 August 1702.

3. Ibid., viii. 104: 7 September 1702: 'Things proposed to be done in the ensuing Session of Parliament', chiefly financial.

4. B.L. Loan 29/190, f. 207: 18 August 1702 (my italics). This crucial sentence is omitted in the transcription in H.M.C. Portland, iv. 44.

Godolphin was notoriously unimaginative when it came to influencing people or events. Clearly he was not ready for a fully-fledged ministerial propaganda machine. Responsibility for the press officially fell under the jurisdiction of the secretaries of state, so Godolphin placed Harley's unwelcome call to activity in Nottingham's lap. The lord treasurer's attitude to dealings with men of the ilk of Defoe and Paterson is perhaps summed up most clearly in a note to Harley:¹

I have perused the enclosed Ltr wch I return you, ther's no doubt but the man can be servicable in any of the methods in his Ltrs, supposing him to bee sincere; you can best judg of that, I own my self perhaps too apt to suspect those sort of fellows, but on ye other side, none but such fellows will be employed in such things.

Subsequently Godolphin wrote to Harley about Paterson. 'Mr Paterson has been with me full of many notions for the public, both in foreign and domestic affairs', he informed the speaker, 'I am apt to think the most that can be made of him will be by his correspondence and the intelligence he may give'.² Harley's scheme for managing the press was not to be given official approbation, and after this rebuff there is no evidence to suggest that he pursued Defoe's offer to write for the government. Paterson was relegated to the more mundane position of intelligence agent; the inauguration of a propaganda machine was forestalled.

Despite having his fingers burned over the press, Harley continued to act unofficially as the ministry's chef de propagande. Nottingham displayed no urgency to practise either an active policy in relation to the press, nor indeed to embark upon an effective system of proscription. Once again it was Harley who recognised the possible ill consequences of Defoe's The Shortest Way with the Dissenters, published in December 1702 while the controversy in

1. B.L. Loan 29/64/17: 'Ascension Day' [1704?]. The subject of the note is unidentified. Could it refer to Defoe?

2. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 45: 20 August 1702.

parliament over occasional conformity was brewing. Godolphin wrote to Nottingham:¹

I had last night some talk wth the speaker & he has had a mind to speak to you abt a book lately come out, Called, a short way wth ye Dissenters. he seem'd to think it absolutely necessary to ye service of ye Government that yr Lp shd endeavour to discover who was the Author of it.

The ministry's desultory attitude to the press is highlighted in the lord treasurer's note, and Nottingham's failure to apprehend Defoe is exemplary of the inefficacy of the machinery of proscription. Several suspects, including Defoe, were rounded up. He escaped and fled, evading for five months all ministerial efforts to arrest him. On 3 January 1703 Nottingham issued a warrant for his arrest, and the Gazette announced a reward of £50 for information leading to his apprehension. On 24 February he was indicted before the justices of oyer and terminer for writing and publishing a seditious libel, and, the government's impotence showing, the Commons ordered the offending tract to be burnt by the common hangman. In her speech a few days later Queen Anne postulated that:²

it might have been for the Publick Service, to have had some further Laws for restraining the great Licence, which is Assumed, of Publishing and Spreading Scandalous Pamphlets and Libels; but as far as the present Laws will extend, I hope you will all do your Duty in your respective Stations, to Prevent and Punish such Pernicious Practices.

In lieu of an effective policy in relation to the press, the government was reduced to the advocacy of stiffer penalties for libel.

Although Defoe was finally apprehended in May 1703, and although he received an exemplary punishment, this was not the answer to the problem.³

1. B.L. Add. MSS, 29589, f. 400: n.d. [14 December 1702?]; cf. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 53: Godolphin to Harley, 14 December 1702.

2. Cobbett, vi. 145. Frank Ellis writes that it 'would be futile now to speculate about the motives of Harley's action' in recommending Defoe's apprehension, but it seems quite clear to me in view of Harley's own condemnation of latitudinarianism and interest in the press. P.O.A.S., vi. 548.

3. He was ordered to stand in the pillory three times, fined 200 marks, required to find surety for his good behaviour for seven years, and imprisoned during her majesty's pleasure until all was performed. See J.R. Moore, Defoe in the Pillory and Other Studies (1939), *passim*.

Nottingham ineffectually urged him to reveal the 'Sett of Men...with whom [he] used to Concert Matters, of this Nature', while Godolphin and the queen expressed no little interest in his interrogation. Harley's concern was of a different sort. On 28 May he received a message from Defoe through Paterson.¹ It was a cry for help. Harley hoped to impress on the lord treasurer the potential of the situation. Defoe would be an ideal 'discreet writer': the need for surety for his good behaviour would secure his total discretion. Circumspectly the speaker suggested Defoe's employment in Scotland. 'I thank you for your hints about Scotland', Godolphin replied on 13 August 1703, 'De Foe would be the properest person in the world for that transaction, but I doubt the rigour of his punishment t'other day [in the pillory] will have made it scarce practicable to engage him'. Nonetheless Harley secured Godolphin's approbation for negotiating with Defoe. 'If you have any means of sounding him', he continued, 'I wish you would try it... it must be done by you'.² Carefully coaxing Godolphin to reach a decision, Harley insinuated that although Defoe was 'much oppressed in his mind with his usage...he lays the harshness he hath sufferd upon particular persons, and would be willing to serve the Queen':³

Your Lordship can judge whether he be worth it. There is a private attempt amongst his friends to raise the 200 Marks for his fine. He is a very capable man, and if his fine be satisfied without any other knowledge but that he alone be acquainted with it that it is the Queen's bounty to him and Grace, he may do service, and this may perhaps engage him better than any after rewards, and keep him more under the power of an obligation. This is entirely submitted to your Lordship's judgement.

'I have found it proper to read some paragraphs of your letter to the Queen', Godolphin replied on 26 September, 'What you propose about Defoe may be done when you will, and how you will'. The first round had been won in the

1. Defoe, Letters, p. 8: Defoe [to William Penn], 12 July 1703; *ibid.*, pp. 4-7: D.F. to Paterson, April 1703, endorsed by Harley, 'Received from Mr Wm Paterson, Fryday May 28: 1703: at one a clock'. Cf. B.L. Add. MSS, 29589, ff. 28, 45.

2. Longleat, P.M.V., ff. 166-67.

3. Blenheim MSS, B2-33; cf. H.M.C. Eighth Report, p. 43b.

struggle to engage a government apologist.¹

Another writer was involved with Harley and Godolphin in these months. Although no measures had been taken to prevent the introduction of an occasional bill in 1702, the triumvirate had no desire to see a repeat performance of the fracas which greeted the failure of the bill in the Lords in February 1703, and steps were being taken accordingly. On 9 November, the day parliament reassembled, Godolphin informed Harley of his contingency plans for foiling the bill should it be reintroduced. Harley's meetings with court supporters in the Commons were part of the lord treasurer's scheme.² In addition, Charles Davenant was commissioned to write against the implementation of an occasional conformity bill. On 19 October he wrote to Godolphin:³

I here send your Lordshippe what I have been doing these last two Months. The Design of the Work is to recommend Moderation, as the Interest of Both Sides...& having strenuously opposd the intended Bill about Occasional Conformity, I doe not judg it safe to Produce my Thoughts upon that Head unlesse I am let in to know how far it may consist with the present Measures.

Davenant had trimmed his High Church sails in deference to the moderate predilections of the triumvirate, admitting that his new book, Essays upon Peace at Home and War Abroad, went 'against the declard sence of my party', but he was prepared to do so 'without any fear of disoblging my old friends being resolved to follow no party when I am going a wrong way'. For similar reasons, no doubt, his pen had been silent since the accession of Queen Anne and the formation of her first moderate administration. He clearly believed his ship had come in, and had high hopes of government employment, and a political career in parliament. Godolphin observed that Davenant was inclined to express 'much submission & uneasiness at the same

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 68.

2. See Henry L. Snyder, 'The Defeat of the Occasional Conformity Bill and the Tack: a Study in the Techniques of Parliamentary Management in the Reign of Queen Anne', B.I.H.R., xli (1968), 174-75.

3. B.L. Add. MSS, 28055, ff. 13-14.

time', lest his expected preferment should incapacitate him from sitting in the Commons. 'I doubt', Godolphin opined, 'he is at bottom vain enough to think it would be too great a loss to the public if he should exclude himself'.¹ This reluctance to accept employment as a commissioner of the excise, despite Godolphin's willingness to accommodate Davenant, led to hard times for the writer,² but at last his pride was salved and his exigencies relieved by his appointment as inspector-general of the customs which, Luttrell noted on 29 May 1703, 'has, besides perquisites, a salary of 1000l. per ann.'³ Only then, it appears, did he resharpen his quill.

Godolphin's complicity in the production of Essays on Peace at Home and War Abroad is fully countenanced by Davenant's letter of 19 October 1703. He explained at length the purpose of the book:⁴

I have endeavoured to show in general what Measures will be best at Home in this present Juncture. What I lay down is by no means intended to those who Rule, but is addressd to the Great & Little Vulgar, & is offerd as a Cure, & to Heal the Divisions that are among us...Upon the whole Matter, if after reading the Table of Contents, without Looking into the main work, your Lordshippe thinks the Heads in general not seasonable to be now treated on, I shall make a full stop. But if I am left to my own discretion, I shall publish the Book.

The lord treasurer's acquiescence in Davenant's statements on occasional conformity in particular can be strongly asserted. The doctor was very specific:

If your Lordshippe has not Leisure to Read the 11th Section I shall leave that part of it quite out which relates to the Bill for Occasional Conformity, as taking it for granted that silence there suits best with the present Measures...[But] if 'tis thought fit this whole section should be printed...I beg to have the Manuscript back in three Days, because if it will doe any Good, it should be in the Presse quickly, & Publishd before the Parliament sits.

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1. Longleat, P.M.V., ff. 170-71; H.M.C. Portland, iv. 52.
 2. Ibid., pp. 48, 50, 52; B.L. Add. MSS, 4291, f. 3v.
 3. Luttrell, v. 302.
 4. B.L. Add. MSS, 28055, ff. 13-14.

While Godolphin's role in these transactions is easy to follow, Harley's part, if any cannot be documented, although, in view of his relations with Davenant, it would have been strange indeed if he was not privy to the publication of the Essays. Furthermore there is reason to believe that Defoe's release was engineered as part of the same government campaign in print against the occasional bill. The whole issue illustrated the possible benefits of a permanent government propaganda machine, and Godolphin's approbation of Davenant's contribution to the debate, and his agreement to freeing Defoe in the first days of November 1703, were steps in the required direction. 'Everyone is not a Daniel deFoe that has a party to pay a Fine for him', William Pittis observed in Heraclitus Ridens on 6 November, 'I hear that he is Bail'd out, he must have great Interest indeed that he could find sufficient Bail for his Behavior for seven years'.¹ Defoe immediately sought ministerial sanction for some 'papers' he had prepared for publication on his 'Enlargement'.² One of these, which he himself viewed as a vindication of his intentions in writing the Shortest Way, was A Challenge of Peace. It appeared on 23 November and urged 'both Parties' to reach a settlement of their differences, as 'this would be the Shortest Way with the Dissenters, and Sacheverell's bloody Flag would be a Fool to it'.³ As an effective complement to Davenant's Essays, the Challenge of Peace can be taken as Defoe's first venture in print on behalf of the Godolphin administration. The lord treasurer had a ministerial propaganda machine whether or not he wanted one, and the stimulus for the foundation came from Robert Harley.

1. [William Pittis], Heraclitus Ridens, i. 28: 2-6 November 1703. On 4 November Godolphin told Harley that he had 'taken care in the matter of De Foe' (H.M.C. Portland, iv. 75).

2. Defoe, Letters, p. 9: to James Stancliffe, 9 November 1703.

3. A Challenge of Peace, Address'd to the Whole Nation. With an Enquiry into the Ways and Means for bringing it to pass (1703), p. 23.

The occasional offerings of Davenant and Defoe were quickly supplemented by a regular press organ disseminating government propaganda. There were two sides to Davenant's Essays. In discussing the war he sought to unite the nation behind the queen's administration. Harley wished to extend this theme.¹ Although Scotland had been the bait to lure Godolphin into accepting Defoe's services for the ministry, there is no evidence to suggest that on his release from Newgate he was intended for the north. He became Harley's peculiar responsibility, Godolphin not even knowing 'where or how to send to De Foe', and contacting him only through the speaker.² Defoe was destined to be the government writer Harley had advocated for so long. In February 1704 a new periodical made its appearance in London. The first paragraph echoed Harley's advice to Godolphin expressed in his letter of 9 August 1702:³

THIS Paper is the Foundation of a very large and useful Design, which... may contribute to Setting the Affairs of Europe in a Clearer Light, and to prevent the various uncertain Accounts, and the Partial Reflections of our Street-Scriblers...which have at least this Effect, That People are possest with wrong Notions of Things.

Defoe proceeded in the ensuing months to build up a picture of the might of France to unite the nation in the struggle for the safety of Europe and the security of the Protestant Succession, and to assuage growing war-weariness. Rather than ignoring the threat posed by the French king's policies of aggrandisement, the Review exhorted Englishmen to act to prevent the subjugation of European liberty. This could hardly fail to be misinterpreted, and Defoe, as author of the Review, was quickly accused of being in the French interest. Forced to digress to account for his behaviour, Defoe

1. 'One of the main purposes of the Review...was to keep before the eyes of politically conscious Englishmen the doctrines enunciated by Davenant in his Essays' (Douglas Coombs, The Conduct of the Dutch: British Opinion and the Dutch Alliance during the War of the Spanish Succession (1958), p. 87).

2. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 155: Godolphin to Harley, n.d.

3. Review, i. 1. For the fluctuating political course of the Review, see my unpublished M.Litt. thesis, 'Daniel Defoe's Review and Other Political Writings in the Reign of Queen Anne' (University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1973). As all points have been fully treated there concerning the themes of the Review, quotation here will be kept to a minimum.

pointed out that he was not an alarmist, but:¹

like the Geese in the Capitol, If the Roman Soldiers should have killed them, for frightening them out of their Sleep, they would have soon found the Gauls at their backs, and have blamed themselves for the mistake. I leave all Men to judge whether those Geese Gagg'd for the Gauls, or for the Romans, and whether the Gauls would not have been glad to Cut their Throats, for telling the Romans who were a coming.

'Methinks', Defoe had previously explained, 'having the true Picture of our Adversary should be useful to instruct us in our needful Preparations'.²

Unfortunately for Defoe, Godolphin was one of those taken in by the complex political manoeuvring of the Review. Five days before the Review's apologia setting out Defoe's design in magnifying the power of France appeared in print (and, coincidentally, the approximate time taken for the compilation of an edition of the paper), on 29 June 1704 the lord treasurer wrote to Harley, now, as secretary of state, officially responsible for the press:³

I should not have troubled you again so soon but that the enclosed print, more scandalous in my opinion than the 'Observator' himself, is fallen into my hands. I don't know what course can be taken with effect to find out the author; but I think no pains or expense could be, or be thought, too much to bring him to the punishment he deserves...this magnifying of France is a thing so odious in England, that I can't think any jury would acquit this man if discovered.

Now the character of Harley's activities as the ministry's unofficial chef de propagande can clearly be seen: Godolphin was patently unaware that Defoe was author of the Review, or that he was writing indirectly in support of the government, and it illustrates the lord treasurer's naive attitude towards propaganda in general and the press in particular. On 4 July the Review's apologia appeared: three days later Defoe wrote to Harley:⁴

1. Review, i. 155.

2. Ibid., p. 25.

3. H.M.C. Bath, i. 58-59.

4. Defoe, Letters, p. 26.

I Confess my Self also Something Impatient to have it from your Self, that I had Explain'd the Review to your Satisfaction and That in Reading it you have been Pleas'd to Note the Caution I Mention'd That it was to be wrott Not as if the Objectors Were of Such quality as to whom The Stile Shou'd be Unsuitable.

No less a person than the lord high treasurer of England had indirectly precipitated the Review's exposition of editorial policy. Quite obviously Harley had passed on the complaints received from Godolphin, and Defoe had penned an immediate defence, talking 'à la Vulgaire' so as not to give the game away. He continued to address a general audience, but was careful not to offend any 'objectors' who might be 'Persons of Character'. Harley regarded the Review as the government's most potent organ of propaganda, and once this had been explained, Defoe's pro-ministerial writings brought him his pardon. Less than a month after his apologia appeared, Godolphin informed Harley: 'I return you the blank warrant signed by the Queen for D[efoe]'s pardon. Her Majesty commands me to tell you she approves entirely of what you have promised him, and will make it good'.¹ Godolphin had been forced to accept the existence of a ministerial press organ willy-nilly, and, in turn, Robert Harley had acquired the services of a writer and a paper that, in conjunction, would effectively spearhead the government's election campaign in 1705.

While waiting for the launching of the Review, there is evidence to suggest that Harley had cultivated connexions with other writers, and that the intention had been to influence the content of periodicals. Heraclitus Ridens appeared in 1703 'perhaps with Harley's encouragement'.² The author was William Pittis, a staunch tory, who had penned answers to Defoe's True-Born Englishman and History of the Kentish Petition in 1701, in addition to

1. H.M.C. Bath, i. 61: 31 July 1704.

2. P.O.A.S., vii. 168, n. 6.

laying encomiums at the speaker's door. The dedication to his laudatory poem The Patriots in 1702 singled out Harley for particular praise:¹

I could in particular delight my self with displaying Your shining Character, acquaint the World with Your more particular Virtues, speak of your Indefatigable diligence; which even amidst the cares that attend the Chair, and an unhealthful Constitution of Body, can never be diverted from the Service of your Country...Your Knowledge in Parliamentary Affairs; Your Skill in the most abstruse Parts of History, and Your unwearied Application in search after the most hidden Records

while the poem itself devoted a considerable section to lines such as:

Just are his Thoughts, and daring is his Mind,
Boundless in Care, in Goodness unconfin'd,
Watchful to see neglected Wrongs Redress'd,
And amidst Injuries serene his Breast.

Wonderful stuff to a man more used to depreciation than admiration, yet there is no documentary evidence to support the claim that 'Pittis was actually in Harley's employ soon after Anne came to the throne', or that 'Pittis looked on the new Secretary as a patron and protector'.² Harley may have tacitly encouraged Pittis to write Heraclitus Ridens in the light of his contributions to the country cause in 1701, but it would soon be apparent that the new periodical was the vehicle not of moderate 'country' policies, but of extreme High Church views. Its main function seems to have been to counter Defoe and John Tutchin's Observator, and a month after the inauguration of the Review Pittis was prosecuted for libel by the grand jury, and Heraclitus Ridens rode no more: complete sets of the journal were advertised in the Review during July 1704. Moreover if Pittis did look upon Harley as a benefactor he was to be badly disappointed when indicted in the course of 1705 for his activities in popularising the Memorial of the Church of England.³

1. Cited in Theodore F.M. Newton, 'William Pittis and Queen Anne Journalism', Modern Philology, xxxiii (1935-36), 184.

2. Ibid., pp. 183-84.

3. See below, chapter six.

There is a similar paucity of facts on which to base any sort of judgment when it comes to assessing the possibility of Harley's connivance in the Observer, although in this case the dearth is at least alleviated by the existence of a few letters from the author, John Tutchin. The question is further clouded by Tutchin's prosecution in 1704 for reflecting upon the ministry in the Observer. Tutchin had perennially risked displeasing the authorities since his indictment in 1700 for his verse satire on William III, The Foreigners. On 1 April 1702 he began to publish the Observer, and he was in danger of further brushes with the law on several occasions for injudicious comments upon the government, both houses of parliament, and private individuals. In April 1703 he was prosecuted by the attorney-general Northey, ostensibly for reflecting upon the earl of Albemarle, but the case was dismissed by the grand jury. Finally, however, he was arraigned in the Commons for seditious libel in the issue of the Observer for 8-11 December 1703, which touched on occasional conformity, and on 3 January 1704 it was ordered that 'Tutchin the author, How the printer, and Bragg the publisher of that paper, should be taken into the custody of the serjeant at arms'.¹

Tutchin chose to abscond, and Heraclitus Ridens ridiculed the 'Secretary' of the whigs, forced 'to hold a Pen in the Mint'. He allegedly approached Harley, and offered to lay down the Observer to escape prosecution. 'You have heard I suppose of his three Letters to Mr Speaker', Pittis wrote, 'the Contents of which are so common'.² On 25 February a proclamation promising a reward for the apprehension of the three wanted men was issued, but Tutchin

1. Cobbett, vi. 327-28; C.J., xiv. 269-70.

2. Heraclitus Ridens, ii. 45: 4-8 January 1704; *ibid.*, ii. 59: 26-29 February 1704. Cf. Observer, ii. 94, 95.

refused to surrender until Harley was appointed secretary of state. 'I have had concerns with all the Secretaries of State for several years past', he wrote to Harley on 24 May 1704, offering information for 'the service of my country...not for my private advantage'.¹ It is to be hoped that Tutchin's disinterestedness was genuine, for, despite his belated cooperation, an information was brought against him on 29 May. As he later remarked to Harley, Hedges, the other secretary of state, 'used me so very civilly, when I surrender'd my self to him upon the Proclamation, that I never think my self obliged to apply to him again'.² On 4 November 1704 his trial began.

Much to the surprise of those concerned in conducting the prosecution, Tutchin survived due to a flaw in the proceedings. A complex technical error in the information resulted from a discontinuance after the return of the Venire Facias on 23 October: to be valid the writ of Distringas needed to be issued on the day the Venire Facias expired, whereas in fact it was not issued until the day after, 24 October. The attorney-general, Edward Northey, a staunch tory, speculated that 'somebody [had] done it on purpose'. In defence, lord chief justice Holt, a friend of Harley's, stated it was 'plain...as can be' that the defect had been a genuine error.³ It was in consequence declared that 'the Distringas is naught, and all the proceedings thereupon are null'. Strangely there was no retrial, and on 8 June 1705 Tutchin was discharged.

Although, as Dr Horsley observes, 'there was no proof' of connivance in Tutchin's acquittal, it has been assumed, quite reasonably, that he had been

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 86. Tutchin supplied Harley with memoranda on clandestine trade with France, and a Jacobite conventicle in Norwich. See *ibid.*, pp. 86, 90-91, 92, 114; B.L. Loan 29/191, ff. 106, 118.

2. B.L. Loan 29/159/11: 23 April 1705.

3. State Trials, ed. Howell, xiv. 1131, 1158.

secretly assisted by whig agents.¹ On the other hand papers extant in the Portland deposit implicate not the Junto, but Robert Harley. Supporting his public claims to have offered to discontinue the Observator, Tutchin wrote to Harley on 20 October 1704:²

I have Notice of Tryal from the Attorney General the second sitting 4th November. I think I have offered as fair as any one in my Circumstances could do. I have often told yr Honr that I would lay down the Paper provided the prosecution agst me might cease. and now I leave it to yor Honors consideration how much it will be for the Interest of the Government, to have a person prosecuted for vindicating the Rights of the Kingdom, the Queens Right to the Crown and the Hannover Succession, agst so many Libells as have been written agst all of these Titles and Rights and wch have pass'd without prosecution: All which Libells I shall produce in Court at my Tryall, that the Jury may Judge, Whether ye Prosecution agt me, be not partial and malicious.

I designed never more to have written after the finishing of the 2d Volumn, and accordingly writt my last, taking a farewell of the World, but that last Paper of mine was not printed, but the Paper was continued by another hand contrary to my Knowledge or Direction, I being then Incognito by reason of the Order of ye Commons agst me. But when I found that I must be prosecuted, & that partially and unfairly, as I have since found, I took it up again, and shall continue it 'till the prosecution ceases; and no Man living shall know the Strength of my Cause, 'till I come on my Tryal, tho in the mean time I will publish the paper oftner then before to satisfye the people of my Cause.

I can only make the same offer to yor Honr as before, I will write no more, provided on Monday next, the first day of Term, a Noli Prosequi be brought and my Bayl be discharg'd. But if I am continued to be prosecuted, I shall continue to write: I am sure I have transgress'd no Law: I have done the Government and my Country service, as yor Honr very well Knows; And do leave it to yr own Conscience, whether you believe that by my Wrighting I have had a malicious & Traiterous Design to overturn the Government as is set forth in the Information.

Harley sent Tutchin's letter to the attorney-general privately, but to no avail.³ Northey explained that 'having begun the p[ro]secution agst him by order of her Majesty signified to me by Mr Secretary Hedges, I can not undertake to determine any thing in this matter without the like direction, you being pleased to mention in y^{rs} y^t y^e sending the inclosed to me is not by order'.⁴

1. Lee Sonsteng Horsley, 'The Trial of John Tutchin, Author of the Observator', Yearbook of English Studies, iii (1973), 137.

2. B.L. Loan 29/152/2.

3. See B.L. Loan 29/263, pp. 38-39 (Harley's letter-book as secretary).

4. B.L. Loan 29/152/2: 25 October 1704.

Harley could not secure a writ of Noli Prosequi against Tutchin. Hedges had spearheaded the prosecution; Northey, another partisan tory, had been given the task of finding Tutchin guilty; Robin 'Hog' Stephens, the High Church messenger of the press, had provided proof of Tutchin's authorship of the Observer in question. Even Godolphin singled out the Observer as particularly odious, and subsequently Marlborough threatened to 'find some friend that will break his and the printer's bones'.¹ Ironically enough Tutchin apparently did meet with a violent death in 1707, although it is uncertain which of his many antagonists was responsible. Accustomed, like Defoe, to walking within the shadow of the law, it is not difficult to believe Tutchin's complaint that his trial was being staged by his enemies. Harley could not work openly, yet it is curiously convenient that such an untidy legal loophole saved Tutchin from a fate similar to that which befell Defoe, and it is worth pointing out that James Drake also escaped punishment for his Mercurius Pollicicus in 1706 through a flaw in the wording of the information brought against him.² Coincidence seems almost to be stretched too far: Harley was never in favour of harsh proscriptive measures.

The familiarity expressed by Tutchin in his letter to Harley needs to be explained. He alleged to have 'often told' the secretary of his willingness to lay down the Observer. Did this mean that Harley ordinarily had some control over what the paper printed? It is possible that he found it a convenient organ for propaganda purposes on an occasional basis, especially prior to the inauguration of the Review, for, it should be stressed, Tutchin was an Old Whig. His patron, it appears, was Lord Haversham, who, as Sir John Thompson, had been a political ally of Harley's in the 1690s. Breaking with the Junto early in Anne's reign after staunchly supporting Somers,

1. H.M.C. Bath, i. 59, 105.

2. See below, chapter six.

Halifax and Orford over the impeachments, Haversham became something of a political maverick, best known for his annual speech in the house of lords, 'Haversham's bomb', as it came to be called. After his fall in 1708 Harley drifted back into an alliance with Haversham, with William Bromley acting as intermediary.¹ The Observer, then, generally printed views not far removed from Harley's own, though couched in a more extreme form of whig rhetoric. While it is certain that Harley would not have subscribed to Tutchin's violent anti-clericalism, at several points along the dividing-line between ideas that can safely be classified as Old Whig, and those that are more specifically based on 'country theory', the designs of Tutchin and Harley merged. Before the emergence of the Review, Harley's connexions with the Observer may not have been inconsiderable. The relationship he appears to have cultivated with Tutchin can be traced with confidence back to the beginning of Anne's reign. In September 1702 the speaker instituted enquiries into the whereabouts of the author of the Observer, ostensibly on account of the intelligence work Tutchin performed for the ministry on an occasional basis. 'Tutchin never would let us know how to send to him directly', Thomas Frankland, the postmaster, replied, though the writer was later traced to Allan's Coffee-house near Charing Cross.² 'I daily expected that some great Minister of State would have recommended you to Her Majesties favour', the Observer's 'Country-man' professed on 3 June 1704.³ Clearly Tutchin expected some sort of patronage from Harley, and the implication is that Harley was under some sort of obligation to the author of the Observer for services rendered. Perhaps Harley was instrumental in stifling the proceedings against Tutchin in November 1704; certainly he interceded with the attorney-general on his behalf.

1. See below, chapter seven.

2. H.M.C. Portland, viii. 109, 111. See also B.L. Loan 29/286, unfoliated; Tutchin to Harley, 5 April 1703.

3.. Observer, iii. 21: 31 May-3 June 1704.

I have intimated that there were grounds for Tutchin's insinuation that the proceedings instituted against him were partial. 'Why are not the Authors of some Books found out', he complained, 'and those that are found, why are not they Punish'd?' The ministerial machinery of proscription was heavily weighted in favour of the tories. Harley's appointment as secretary went some way to levelling the scales of justice. 'You have now a Proclamation for the Discovery of the Author, Printer and Publisher of the Legions Address', Tutchin continued, 'one is gone to see his Uncle in the Country, and another is gone a Nutting before the Nutts are Ripe; and I fancy some Body knew their Guilt before they took a Country Journey'.¹ 'I have taken up the disperser of the Address', Hedges informed Harley on 28 September 1704, 'one Sammen a weaver, a tool of De Foe's'.² Erasmus Lewis, Harley's under-secretary, told him of Hedges' activities in 'examining printers and publishers of pamphlets'. The investigation may have been sparked off by intelligence supplied by an anonymous informer in June. 'If Dan Foe be the supposed author of the libel titled "Legions Address to the Lords"', he wrote, 'you will find him at Captain Roger's at the city of Canterbury'.³ Unfortunately for Hedges, Sammen, when interrogated, refused to give information 'against others', though there was 'sufficient evidence' to indict him with complicity in the distribution of the pamphlet. The outcome was the prosecution of Rawlins the printer for Legion's humble address to the Lords.⁴

The peculiar circumstances surrounding the production of Legion's humble address serve to illustrate the strange relationship between Defoe and

1. Ibid. Nutt, of course, was the publisher of Legion's humble address.

2. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 138.

3. Ibid., p. 93: J.W. to Robert Harley, 14 June 1704.

4. Ibid., p. 144. Hedges pursued Rawlins with determination, see the letters concerning his apprehension in P.R.O., S.P. 44/105/90, 135, 152; S.P. 34/4/42-43, 46-47, and Pat Rogers, 'An Eighteenth-Century Alarm: Defoe, Sir Justinian Isham and the Secretaries of State', Northamptonshire Past & Present, iv (1971-72), 383-87.

Harley in 1704. The pamphlet concerned the case of Ashby versus White. Matthew Ashby had been prevented from using his vote in the elections at Aylesbury, so he commenced and prosecuted an action at common law against William White, mayor of Aylesbury, and others. Harley was closely involved in the affair as speaker of the house of commons, and of course it bulked high in country considerations; but the Commons found Ashby guilty of a breach of parliamentary privilege in bringing his action. This caused a confrontation with the Lords, who proceeded to reverse judgment in favour of the plaintiff. The issue proved an emotive one, and the furore had not died down by the General Election of 1705. In the pamphlet here in question, Defoe rehearsed the arguments put forward in the Legion-Letter of 1701, and he stated categorically that 'it cannot be Just...that the People may endure the Tyranny of 500 Usurpers more than of One', inveighing against the unconstitutional proceedings of the lower house. 'To Deprive any Freeholder of his Rights in Election of Members to Serve in Parliament...as was Practised in the Case of the Election at Aylesbury', he continued, exhorting the Lords to amend the abuse, 'is a Manifest Invasion of those very Liberties which it is the House of Commons Business to Protect and Defend'.¹

Defoe's line in Legion's humble address has been assumed to be contrary to Harley's: certainly it went against the majority of tory supporters in the Commons. Harley had stood out against the Kentish Petitioners in 1701. Yet then it had been a case of trying to stifle what he believed to be the whig lords' attempt to hinder the proceedings of the Commons. Defoe, in the Legion-Letters, was defending the rights and privileges of freeholders, and this was the country doctrine propounded by Harley. In 1708 one poem, recently ascribed to Joseph Browne, accused the two men of meeting 'slyly at

1. Legion's humble address to the Lords (1704), recto, p. 2.

the Vine,/ To spin out Legion-Letters o'er [their] Wine'.¹ It is just possible that this was a very intimate dig at the beginnings of the Defoe-Harley relationship in 1704. They did meet, or at least directed messages to coffee-houses, their dealings shrouded in secrecy.² Discussing a poem which was perhaps Defoe's, The Address, published 1704, which echoed points made in Legion's humble address, Frank Ellis writes that there is no 'unequivocal evidence' of Harley's influence such as one might expect to find in April of that year. 'Instead', Ellis observes, 'one finds a remarkable independence...[Defoe] even taunts Harley for failing to order the printing of the Commons' debate on the second bill to prevent occasional conformity'.³ On the other hand there are suggestions that Harley encouraged Defoe to cultivate such an independent attitude. Reduced to virtual compliance in Godolphin's policies himself, he may well have found it healthy to air more independent views through Defoe's pen. Certainly he protected the author of Legion's address to the Lords, much to the chagrin of tory colleagues.⁴

Two other tracts published in 1704 point to Defoe's dual attitude to ministerial policy. Though the Review supported the views laid down by Davenant in his Essays, Defoe criticised the book in a separate pamphlet.⁵ Similarly his Essay upon the Regulation of the Press, published on 7 January 1704, was restrained in its views on the high tory bill to control the press which was introduced in the Commons that month. On 18 January there was a

1. P.O.A.S., vii. 324.

2. See Defoe, Letters, pp. 12-13: Defoe to Harley, 12, [16], May 1704.

3. P.O.A.S., vi. 631-32.

4. Rawlins wrote to Harley on 31 January 1705 offering to make 'an Ingenious [sic], Full and Free Confession of the Fact, and of whom I received the [Address], which I am ready to confirm to yr Honr,' and to apprehend the author in return for the suspension of prosecution. B.L. Loan 29/155/1. Clearly Harley did not act on Rawlins' revelations.

5. Some Remarks on the First Chapter Of Dr Davenant's Essays (1704).

division on a second reading, and in February it was so loaded with amendments that it was allowed to lie. But there is evidence to suggest that Defoe penned more than just the equivocal Essay in reaction to the High Church attempt to muzzle the whig press. On 1 April 1704 an informer wrote to Harley as speaker of the house of commons:¹

Falling three or four nights agoe into some strange company, after a little discourse I discover'd their sentiments, but found them the exact reverse of my own, which for a further discovery I still concealed, & to use one of their own expressions was a sheep in wolf's clothing. I so far succeeded in it, that they imagined me to be one of their own dissenting sanctified fraternity, & communicated the enclosed to me, which I was inform'd, was only handed about amongst their own purified party. Whether yor wisdom will think it fitt to take any notice of it, or no, may it be for the best; But upon occasion, I shall be ready & can make oath from whom I receiv'd it; & that he told me the author was Dan[ie]l De: Foe whose bail, whether they have not forfeited their obligation for his good behaviour in writing; (after ye perusal of this paper) Yre Honour may judge.

Enclosed was a printed broadsheet, To the Honourable The C[ommon]s of England Assembled in P[arliament]. The Humble Petition and Representation of the True Loyal and always Obedient Church of England, Relating to the Bill for Restraining the Press, which, in mock form, ridiculed the real motives of High Churchmen in wanting the press regulated, 'Because we do find that these Damn'd Whigs are a little too hard for us, when we come to Down Right Arguments, Demonstration, &c.'²

What were Harley's views on the bill to restrain the press? It seems unlikely that he should give his approbation to the measure having just secured the inauguration of an unofficial ministerial press organ. The suppression of the whig propagandists, moreover, was viewed by Defoe as the

1. B.L. Loan 29/162/5: R.A. to Harley. Frank Ellis feels that the composition of the equivocal Essay on the Regulation of the Press 'must have seemed to [Defoe] an act of penance' (P.O.A.S., vi. 645n.).

2. This broadsheet is not attributed to Defoe in Moore's Checklist, nor in M.E. Novak's bibliography of Defoe's writings in the New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature. In fact, apart from the extant copy in the Harley papers (preserved along with the letter in B.L. Loan 29/162/5), I know of no other example of this interesting broadsheet.

prelude to an occasional conformity act and the eventual repeal of the toleration act. Defoe did not always reveal all to Harley: he was guilty of some double-dealing from the first. But Harley did not deliver him into the hands of his tory adversaries in 1704, although he had the motive, the power, and the opportunity. Instead, when the hunt was on for the author of Legion's humble address in September 1704, Defoe was packed off on a tour of the eastern counties of England in Harley's service. While he was en route it was reported that he was to be apprehended, not for the Legion-Letter, but for reflecting on admiral Rooke in the Master Mercury.¹ Defoe returned to London, accosted Stephens, the messenger of the press, and forced him to admit that the rumour was false. Yet the Master Mercury was most probably another double-edged piece of Defoean propaganda.² The problem is one of assessing Harley's knowledge of such things. Clearly his colleagues were blissfully unaware of his secret dealings with many of the 'scribblers' of his day. Hedges was totally ignorant of Harley's employment of Defoe, for instance, and the relationship between the two men might have been deeper than on first impression it appears to have been. Harley's press policy ran through some narrow, but deep, channels in the first years of Anne's reign, when he had yet to convince Godolphin of the value of a comprehensive government propaganda machine. The inauguration of the Review was the first giant step in the required direction, and he would have been reluctant to forgo the benefits of his newly-acquired tool at the expense of a High Church attempt to muzzle the press.

The Review was designed to cover the inadequacies of the official Gazette as a press organ, but Harley's rise in official circles as secretary meant

1. Luttrell, v. 469: 26 September 1704.

2. See Defoe, Letters, pp. 58-62. Frank Ellis and Henry Snyder are preparing a facsimile edition of The Master Mercury for the Augustan Reprint Society, see N. & Q., ccxvii (1972), 28-29.

that, in addition to responsibility for proscription, he also had the task of inserting news items in the official paper. The two secretaries shared the profits of the Gazette: the 'moyety' was one of the perks of office.¹ Initially in this special area Hedges, the senior minister, played the major part, much to the detriment of the quality of the paper. The experienced Gazetteer, Robert Yard, had retired in 1702. For economic reasons (or so it was claimed in retrospect) the post remained unfilled, and responsibility for actually editing the Gazette devolved on the inexperienced former French translator of the paper, Charles Delafaye. Although in theory the four under-secretaries were supposed to scrutinize the Gazette for inaccuracies before publication, this was performed somewhat perfunctorily, and the official paper inevitably acquired a deserved name for unreliability. Delafaye's editorship was far from distinguished. As Laurence Hanson observes, his 'conduct of the Gazette in 1704 and 1705 roused a storm of criticism from divers quarters'.²

This sad state of affairs was recognised even by Godolphin, and he himself desired a reformation. The Gazette carried all official printed matter, and Marlborough usually sent reports from the continent to be included in each edition. Delafaye's errors and omissions soon became too glaring to pass, and on 5 September 1705 Godolphin informed Harley:³

I must at the same [time] trouble you in a matter for which the Duke of Marlborough, in one of his letters to me, shows more concern and trouble than I have known him do on almost any other occasion. It is upon something being omitted to be printed in the London 'Gazette' of the account sent over by Mr Cardonnel, of what had passed upon his march to attack the French in their camp.

1. See B.L. Loan 29/162/9 for Harley's Gazette accounts from 15 November 1705 to 3 September 1707.

2. Laurence Hanson, Government and the Press 1695-1763 (1936), p. 86.

3. H.M.C. Bath, i. 75.

He sent me the enclosed paper with the lines drawn under the writing as you will see them. I suppose those lines under which the strokes are drawn are what he complains are left out. I cannot charge my memory so as to remember particularly how this omission came to pass, but I beg you will recollect what you can of it, and endeavour to satisfy him in it, by Friday's post. As I remember his letter to the States was printed in French and English; but this is not the first, though much the sorest, occasion of complaint about the 'Gazette'.

As well as illustrating Godolphin's limited capacity for the press, this incident serves to demonstrate Marlborough's more sophisticated approach to official literature at least. Eventually the duke refused to let the Gazette carry the more important news items he wished to see in print, insisting that Harley edited these separately and sent them to Jacques de Fonvive, widely regarded as the most experienced and reliable newsman of his day, for inclusion in his popular Post Man. 'As all truths may not be proper to be in the "Gazette"', Marlborough told Harley on 6 May 1706, 'I desire the favour of you that during this campaign when I send in your letter as I now do a paper of news, you will let it be inserted in the "Postman", and what is to be in the "Gazette" Mr Cardonel will send it to the office as formerly'. 'I shall depend on your friendship and judgment', Marlborough added in a post-script, 'to leave out what you may think improper'.¹

Fonvive's ministerial activities did not pass unnoticed. One satirist advised 'little scriblers' to:²

....deal in News, and write whate'er you will,
But mind you Scribe on the right Side still:
Then you may Letters from Althea bring,
If like Fontvive, 'tis with a just Design
To please the Government, or serve the Queen.
So writes D'Foe, an Author now in Vogue,
Who was so lately Pill'ty'd for a Rogue;
Therefore let his Example, yours be made;
Neither of Fines nor Pillories be afraid.

Fonvive may have escaped less lightly in print if unofficial government enquiries about the possibility of his taking over the editorship of the

1. Ibid., p. 81.

2. P.O.A.S., vii. 171-72.

Gazette itself. Hedges, probably after consultation with Harley, offered a post in the secretary's office to Fonvive. Significantly, Fonvive chose to reply to Harley, sarcastically thanking him for the intended favour, which, in his judgment, was 'no way of preferment'. 'I never heard of any clerk but one who found that place a stirrup', he stressed listing his reasons for the inefficacy of the Gazette:¹

The writing of the Gazette, though judged trifling by such who never tried the difficulties thereof, requires more learning than some imagine, and a great deal of care to avoid blunders and contradictions; and as it must take up a man's whole time ought to have a suitable encouragement, and I dare say that the committing the writing of it to a young clerk, and the revising of it to the four under-secretaries, which was done upon pretence of saving copy money, has been one of the chief causes of the decay of the Gazette; and the Secretaries of State would have got more money...had they given 500*l.* a year to a gentleman of parts who made it his sole business to secure that place to himself for his life; which he could not have pretended to but by being careful and diligent in his employment.

Fonvive demanded £400 a year to edit the Gazette, in view of the fact that his Post Man brought him an annual revenue of £600. He trusted that this would not be considered 'exorbitant': 'it would be the highest piece of imprudence in me to part with it but upon a valuable consideration', he concluded, 'If I am capable to write the Gazette, as your Honours seem to think, it is not unreasonable in me to ask the same terms as Mr Yard had'.

Fonvive did not get his £400 p.a., nor did the Gazette retain an efficient editor. But on Hedges' ouster by the earl of Sunderland in December 1706, Harley made Delafaye Gazetteer, supervised by the under-secretaries Joseph Addison and Erasmus Lewis, and it became policy for ministers 'to communicate such parts of their letters as they think fit to be published'.² 'What Harley had in mind', P.M. Handover observes, 'was a reconstruction of the Gazette which would turn it into a recognized department, if still a minor one, in

1. H.M.C. Portland, viii. 187-88: 18 July 1705.

2. Ibid., p. 216.

the charge of a man acceptable to ministers and capable of editing without being called into account'.¹ The appointment of Richard Steele as Gazetteer in 1707 and the granting of the printing of the Gazette to Jacob Tonson on the death of Edward Jones were, no doubt, steps in the required direction, but at the same time they moved the paper out of an orbit that was beginning to centre on Robert Harley, and caused a reorientation around Sunderland.

There is some confusion concerning Steele's appointment. Swift believed he was recommended to Harley by Arthur Maynwaring, at the time auditor of the imprest, and that Harley was responsible for Steele's nomination. If so, it nevertheless fails to counter the fact that in office Steele always tended to look to Sunderland.² Sunderland's appointment as secretary was a fundamental stumbling-block for the triumvirate: as Angus McInnes observes, 'for the triumvirate Sunderland's triumph was the beginning of the end'.³ Harley had been totally against the move, and had coached the queen in her defence against the encroaches of the abhorred Junto. The Gazetteership was indeed a meaningless affair when set against the backcloth of the out-and-out power struggle which soon consumed the ministry, but it was symptomatic of a far from insignificant loss of Harley's influence over ministerial propaganda.⁴ The Gazette became firmly lodged in the hands of unwelcome colleagues, while Defoe, absent throughout 1707 in Edinburgh, was forced to treat ad nauseam of the union with Scotland in the Review in accordance with the wishes of the government, and regardless of Harley's private predilections. There is evidence that Sunderland tried to influence Defoe in 1707, and,

1. P.M. Handover, A History of the London Gazette 1665-1965 (1965), p. 37.

2. See Calhoun Winton, Captain Steele (1964), p. 92n: 'in all probability Addison suggested Steele's name to Sunderland, who approved and sent the nomination via Mainwaring to Harley...as a tactful gesture'.

3. McInnes, 'Robert Harley, Secretary of State', p. 121 (unpublished M.A. thesis, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1961).

4. Steele worked in Sunderland's office, see his letters to Sunderland in 1707 concerning the function of the Gazette, The Correspondence of Richard Steele, ed. Rae Blanchard (2nd edn., 1968), pp. 21-25.

indeed, that Godolphin purposely deprived Harley of his personal propagandist by insisting on patronising him himself.¹ The unofficial propaganda machine, nurtured so carefully by Harley, and in the face of such a distinct lack of enthusiasm on Godolphin's part, of which Defoe's Review was the one totally successful manifestation, was, by the end of 1707, under Sunderland's influence, on the verge of total collapse.

1. Defoe, Letters, pp. 202n, 216n, 227-29, 249. See J.A. Downie, 'Daniel Defoe and the General Election of 1708 in Scotland', Eighteenth-Century Studies, viii (1974-75), 317-18, 321, and below, pp. 214-16.

Chapter Five

The Memorial of the Church of England: a Case Study

Just publish'd The Memorial of the Church of England, a Pamphlet in 4to, wherein divers intrigues of a great Minister of State are discovered, and the Designs of the Whigs for destroying the Church are manifested.

Thomas Hearne's diary, 9 July 1705.

The events surrounding the publication of The Memorial of the Church of England in the first days of July 1705 provide a case study of Harley's press policy during his time in office as secretary of state. In the wake of the 1705 election campaign, chiefly managed by Harley for the ministry, the appearance of this pamphlet, a full-blooded High Church attack on the Godolphin administration and its policy of 'moderation', caused an outcry. In the succeeding months Harley can be seen pursuing an active policy of proscription on one of the few occasions in his career, not only in attempting to discover the author of the offending tract, but also in his investigations into a number of other publications from both whigs and Tories that tried to cash in on the controversy it had precipitated. In addition Harley was instrumental in arranging for the printing of counter-propaganda which defended the ministry from the censure passed in the Memorial, and, incidentally, which upheld his own conduct, simultaneously coming under fire. The conditions were extraordinary, and so were Harley's activities in meeting the exigency. He was officially responsible for the prevention and suppression of outspoken criticism of the administration, and for the prosecution of offenders if and when apprehended. He was also expected to counter the possible detrimental effects of opposition propaganda. From May 1705 onwards, well into 1706, he vigorously carried out these duties: it remains to be seen how effectively he reacted to the challenge.

The accession of a Church of England queen had been seen by its zealots as a deliverance from 'Egyptian bondage', and they anticipated a journey out of the 'wilderness', and into the 'promised land'. When the first occasional bill was stifled in a conflict between the two houses of parliament in 1703 and Rochester resigned in disgrace, the first few doubts stirred uneasily in high tory minds. Behind the scenes, the triumvirate began to work against the reintroduction of the occasional bill, and plotted the downfall of Nottingham, Jersey and Seymour. The failure of the second occasional bill, and the ousting of the high tory leaders were met with plans to overturn the 'Middle Way', and in November 1704 a third occasional bill was introduced with the intention of tacking this one to the supply bill.¹

When Robert Harley was 'unfortunately pressed'² into office as secretary, the change was not taken as being 'from Tories to Whiggs', but from 'violence to Moderation'.³ The whigs were not being admitted into the government by the door through which the high tory leaders had departed. In fact Harley's careful cultivation of support in the Commons counterbalanced the loss of the tory lords. He was accompanied into office by St John, Mansel and Harcourt, staunch tories to a man (St John had even been one of the sponsors of the first occasional bill). By these means Harley retained tory support in the lower house, and this was vital in the struggle over the tack. His management resulted in a split in tory ranks. When it came to a vote, only 134 members (136 with tellers) voted for the tack. The rest of the party either voted outright against the motion, or abstained, slipping out of the house without entering the division lobbies.⁴

1. Defoe, Letters, p. 67: Defoe to Harley, 2 November 1704.

2. Harley's phrase, cited in Geoffrey Holmes, British Politics in the Age of Anne (1967), p. 266.

3. B.L. Lansdowne MSS, 773, f. 30: Davenant to his son, 21 April 1704.

4. See P.M. Ansell, 'Harley's Parliamentary Management', B.I.H.R., xxxiv (1961), 92-97.

The decision to tack the occasional bill to the supply bill shaped electoral strategy in 1705, and led directly to the publication of the Memorial. The failure of the tack led to the formation of a scheme in Harley's mind. It demonstrated that the division between whig and tory was traversable once more, and it presented a second opportunity to implement a policy of genuine non-party government such as he had tried without success to carry into effect in 1701. 'I took up my principles not to lay them down because they please not the factious & humorsome', he told William Stratford in no uncertain terms in the course of 1705, 'I have for twelve years past & more every session had the ill word of both parties as they were mad in their Turnes: I must therefore stil persist to do them good against their will'.¹ This important statement of anti-party sentiment highlights Harley's dream of a 'country' coalition. He wished to turn the clock back to the days of William III's reign. In the first years of Anne's reign the high tories had prevented the inauguration of a country system of government, as the backbenchers in the Commons had done before them in 1701. Now a third chance had offered itself, and Harley insisted on doing the country gentlemen good 'against their will'. The terminology employed by Harley in 1705 is crucial: he consistently urged not the tories, but 'the country gentlemen of England' to found the political state on a firm country bottom. By isolating the extremists on either side, the tackers and the adherents of the Junto, he sought to administer through a centre party for the common weal of the Crown and the propertied classes.

Harley's preparations for the General Election of 1705 had his non-party scheme in view. He mounted a campaign aimed almost exclusively at the tackers.²

1. B.L. Loan 29/171/2: 10 October 1705.

2. See W.A. Speck, Tory and Whig: The Struggle in the Constituencies, 1701-1715 (1970), pp. 100-102.

Defoe's Review figured prominently in his plans. It was the principal organ of ministerial propaganda throughout the campaign. Defoe laid down his cloak of anonymous neutrality to come down firmly on the side of the government, manoeuvring against the interest of the tackers:¹

you must not Choose a Tacker [he admonished the electorate], unless you will Destroy our Peace, Divide our Strength, Pull Down the Church, let in the French, and Depose the Queen.

Let all that are willing to do this, Vote for Tackers; and all that Vote for Tackers, must be supposed willing to do this.

Following Harley's directions in advocating a non-party government comprising all moderates, whig and tory, but rejecting the extremists, Defoe urged the moderate tories in particular, those who had refused to give their approbation to the tack, to divide from the tackers. The tack had provided an opportunity for the practical application of country principles: for a Commons free from the corruption of the Crown, but at liberty to work for the public good; for a parliament untainted by the clamour of party: and to do this the neutralising effects of the tack in breaking down the barriers erected between the two political blocs had to be perpetuated. The policy looked to the past for guidance and example, to the 'New Country Party' that had fought the General Election of 1698 in opposition to the court. Now the country gentlemen were being exhorted to remember their former patterns of political behaviour, not in opposition to the court, but to emancipate the nation from the tyranny of the men of party. The moderates had to be prised apart from their extremist colleagues and wedged into the centre to liberate the Godolphin ministry from exigencies caused by the party system. Throughout May 1705 the ministerial propagandists singled out the tackers. 'Was there but 134 Churchmen in the House of Commons?', Defoe demanded, 'Or must none be of the Church, but such as would run her upon the Rocks, and force her to

1. Review, ii. 99.

Blood and Persecution'.¹

The terminology employed by the Review during the elections is interesting. Whenever possible Defoe avoided the labels whig and tory, preferring to refer to tackers and sneakers, High Church and moderate tories, Low Churchmen and dissenters.²

'Tis our Desire the Government should be in the Hands of Churchmen [he wrote], 'tis our free Choice, that we should have a Church Parliament, only let them be Men of Peace, other Qualifications may be requisite, but this is absolutely necessary.

These were strange words to come gushing from the pen of the author of the Shortest Way with the Dissenters, but peace, temper and moderation were the government slogans, and Defoe sought to advise all parties. The tackers were not to be tolerated, but moderate tories could be the bulwark of English liberties.³

they are most truly Zealous for the Church of England, that with Temper, Moderation, and Christian Charity, maintain her Principles without the Ruine and Destruction of any Body; studying to Unite the Churches Safety, and the Publick Interest together, by promoting the Peace of all Parties; this is Moderation, and on this the Safety of the Church of England, does depend.

Before long, however, it became apparent that there were two distinct election campaigns: while the ministry sought to minimise party differences, the parties themselves aimed at closing ranks, making the division between whig and tory decisive. Junto apologists blackened all tories as tackers, and, in turn, the old battle-cry, 'the Church in Danger', was raised again. By the end of May it was clear that the parties had won, and that Harley's plans for the abandonment of party distinctions had failed.⁴

1. Ibid., pp. 73-76.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 196.

4. See Speck, Tory and Whig, pp. 100-102. Only around 44 tackers were purged, not nearly so many as Harley had anticipated.

Harley hoped to attach as many moderate tories to the cause of the ministry even at this late stage, by pressing for the nomination of a tory as government choice for the speakership. This, however, quickly resolved itself into a struggle between the tacker, William Bromley, and the Junto adherent, John Smith. 'The first dispute will be to fill the chair', he wrote to Marlborough on 29 June, 'and that will be between Mr Smith and Mr Bromley'.¹ Harley was unhappy with Smith's nomination. He wanted a candidate who, as St John remarked to Marlborough, 'the Whigs would have voted for, and who might have reconciled a great many of those people to him, that may cease to be Tories, but can never become Whigs'.² The problem of finding such a man, though, was grave. Harley refused to stand a fourth time for the chair: he was vastly overworked in the dual capacity of speaker and secretary, with 'no Person to overlook all as they ought'.³ He had groomed Harcourt as an alternative candidate, but the tories would not have him, and in the end Godolphin had plumped for Smith.⁴

As to the speaker those Gent: who like not Mr Smith have no body to thank but themselves [Harley reproached Baron Price on 14 August]; they might have had another, the Sollicitor [Harcourt], but they would not come in to him, nor to any one else; so that they have no reason to complain who have forced this upon themselves...The Parliament is to meet October 25th to do business; and if our friends will not be stark mad, it is easy to place things in the hands of the Gentlemen of England without giving themselves up into the hands of [the whigs]...

It is significant that in trying to cajole the moderate tories to support Smith, both Harley and St John consistently referred to the 'country gentlemen'. The first breach between Harley and Godolphin occurred over the

1. Blenheim MSS, A1-25, cited in W.A. Speck's unpublished Oxford D.Phil thesis, 'The House of Commons 1702-1714: a Study in Political Organization' (1965), i. 142.

2. Coxe, i. 349: 27 July 1705.

3. B.L. Loan 29/267/5: autobiographical notes for his son, 11 September 1723; cf. B.L. Loan 29/192, f. 256: Harley to Price, 14 August 1705 (copy).

4. Ibid. Cf. ibid., f. 251: Price to Harley, 11 August 1705.

speakership. Not content with a Junto nominee as government candidate, the lord treasurer resolved to jettison the tories once and for all and to throw in his lot with the whigs. This Harley, the apostle of non-party government, opposed, but he could only convince Godolphin of the viability of moderate tory support by inveigling them to vote for Smith, as government candidate, in great numbers. 'The chief affair which is under consideration at home, is the choice of a Speaker, and it seems to be for the public service to fix upon Mr Smith', Harley informed Marlborough on 26 July, 'It is of great consequence not only not to be baffled in it, but that it be carried with a very great majority'.¹ During the course of the summer, Harley mounted a campaign designed to result in a landslide victory for Smith in the contest over the speakership. St John wrote to Thomas Coke on 19 September:²

The real foundation of difference between the two parties is removed, and [the queen] seems to throw herself upon the gentlemen of England, who had much better have her at the head of 'em than any ringleaders of fashion. Unless gentlemen can show that her administration puts the Church or the State in danger, they must own the contest to be about persons: and if it be so, can any honest man hesitate which side to take.

Unfortunately the purpose of the Memorial of the Church of England was precisely to argue that the Church was in danger under the queen's administration. Highlighting the danger from the forces of dissent and latitudinarianism, the Memorialist claimed to see 'a vast difference between that Moderation which is a Vertue, and a part of the Moral Duty of every Christian; and the Moderation so Fashionable, and so much Recommended of late, which is nothing but Lukewarmness in Religion, and Indifference in every thing that relates to the Service of God, and the Interest of his

1. Blenheim MSS, A1-25, 26 July 1705, cited in Speck, 'The House of Commons', p. 145.

2. H.M.C. Cowper, iii. 63-64.

Ch[ur]ch'.¹ While Harley urged the 'gentlemen of England' to come to terms with the Godolphin ministry, in language shot through with country rhetoric, and before the Review turned to focus on the speakership issue, the Memorial pre-empted the campaign by stating in blunt terms the hopes and fears of the High Churchmen under the same administration. The tackers were not slow to grasp the urgency of the situation. All the time that Harley was ineffectually urging Godolphin to reconsider the decision to fall in with the Junto, warning him that 'the embodying of gentlemen (country gentlemen I mean) against the Queen's service is what is to be avoided', the Memorial was eating the ground away beneath his feet. The Memorial was the acme of the High Church campaign against 'False Moderation' and it aimed to prevent the implementation of a non-party scheme once and for all: as W.A. Speck remarks,² it was 'in effect a declaration of war between the "tackers" and the ministry'. Its message rendered somewhat fatuous Harley's claims that 'if the gentlemen of England are made sensible that the Queen is the Head, and not a Party, everything will be easy'.³ Clearly everything was going to be far from easy, and Godolphin severed his retreat to the tories by appointing the whig, William Cowper, lord keeper in the place of the tory, Sir Nathan Wright, on the eve of the speakership contest in October 1705. Harley's plans were redundant, and the Memorial had been one of the chief contributory factors in his failure to convince the moderate tories of the ministry's moderate intentions.

Why was the Memorial so potent a piece of High Church propaganda? First and foremost, it claimed that despite outward appearances, and the prosperity

1. The Memorial of the Church of England, Humbly Offer'd to the Consideration of all True Lovers of our Church and Constitution (1705), p. 27. All subsequent page references to this tract are supplied in the text within parentheses.

2. W.A. Speck, 'The Choice of a Speaker in 1705', B.I.H.R., xxxvi (1964), p. 26.

3. H.M.C. Bath, i. 74-75: Harley to Godolphin, 4 September 1705.

promised under the patronage of Queen Anne, the Church of England was not in a very flourishing condition. Though the 'sudden death' of William III had 'disappointed, mortified and humbl'd the Dissenters, and their Abettors the Whiggs':

All attempts to settle [the Church] on a Perpetual Foundation [i.e. occasional bills] have been Oppos'd, and render'd Ineffectual by M[iniste]rs, who owe their present Grandeur to its Protection, and who with a Prevarication [sic] as shameful as their Ingratitude, pretend to Vote and Speak for it themselves, while they Solicite and Bribe others with Pensions and Places to be Against it. (pp. 4-5.)

The activities of the triumvirate had not passed unnoticed, nor had the deliberate ousting of the high tory leaders. 'It is hard to assign any Plausible Reason for this Conduct of the L[ord] T[reasurer]', the Memorialist opined, 'that when this Story shall come to be impartially written, it will find Belief with Posterity' (p. 6). Godolphin's former 'New Country' allies, Rochester, Nottingham, Jersey, Seymour and Buckingham, had all been disgraced because the duumvirs were not prepared to put up with rivals for the queen's favour. The country line so important to Harley was here used with a vengeance against the Godolphin ministry, and, in view of his own measures to control the unruly tory backbenchers, not without a modicum of truth. And it is rather ironic that in 1708 Harley also censured the duumvirs most vehemently in 'Plaine English' on account of their monopoly of royal favour. To allow all of this to come about, the Memorial alleged, moderation was trumped up to serve the turn of the ministry in their conflict with the adherents of the Church, while the triumvirate fell back on the old excuses of Trimmers throughout the years:

That the Times will not bear any other Measures; That they are as hearty and as firm to the Interests of the Ch[ur]ch as ever; but the Enemies of it are very Numerous and Powerful; and must not be Provoked at this Juncture; That the Q[ueen] must have the Hearts of all Her People, and in order to it give equal Encouragement to all Her Loving Subjects, without Distinction of Parties; That the Old Seditious, Rebellious Race of F[anati]cks and Wh[igs] is extinct, and their Leaven worn out. (pp. 9-10.)

Conversely, the Memorialist argued the reasonableness and necessity of an occasional bill at that juncture, and he pointed out that it might be dangerous to delay it. He professed the dissenters to be dissatisfied with liberty of conscience. The time was ripe and the moment auspicious for the implementation of measures to secure the foundation of the Church of England and to prevent it from being eroded by the decaying forces of dissent. The lord treasurer bore the brunt of this frontal assault on government policy:

Out of an idle Jealousy, that the E[ar]l of R[ocheste]r and some other L[or]ds of Great Merit and Authority, might Rise to an Equal Degree of Credit, and Rival them in the Q[uee]ns Esteem, they have brought themselves to a Necessity of Courting and Truckling to Wh[arto]n, S[ome]rs, and H[alifa]x, their old Enemies, who Insult them with the Scorn that is due to such Mean Politicks, and such Poor Submissions. (p. 21.)

In short, the Memorial alleged, the situation in the government was not much better than that in the Church. In trying to achieve a balance in the ministry, the lord treasurer had merely succeeded in providing an opportunity for the whigs to reassert themselves, and immeasurably strengthen their interest at the expense of weakening the administration. Again, it is ironic that the Memorialist was issuing the same complaints and warnings in public about the possible consequences of a rapprochement with the Junto that were being aired in private by Robert Harley.

The Memorial denied that the Churchmen intended to prosecute the dissenters should power be placed in their hands once more. The toleration act prevented this happening, and all true Churchmen subscribed to this, urging the clergy to instruct their congregations 'in the Nature of True Moderation, and exhort 'em to the Practice of it' (p. 27). Once again, in the style of the country party, the rights of the Commons were upheld in defiance of the house of lords: 'these Privileges had a Being', it was alleged, 'long before the Race of Lords existed' (p. 43). The mythical saxon 'ancient constitution' still carried weight whenever the theme of authority was being debated, and, of course, Harley believed in the laws and customs of the saxons.¹ The Aylesbury

1. See B.L. Loan 29/189, f. 100: Geo. Hickes to Harley, 18 June [1699].

case was reviewed in this light, and tacking was also justified on the grounds of precedent (p. 51). Apprehension was voiced over the act of security passed by the Presbyterian Scottish parliament: this, the Memorialist claimed, was more calculated to raise anxieties among the confederates than the tack. Significantly the Memorial also inveighed in favour of a self-denying ordinance to reduce government influence in the Commons. While Harley exhorted the 'country gentlemen of England' to rally in support of the Godolphin ministry, the Memorialist demanded more parliamentary freedom from the encroachments of the court. Harley's anomalous position in the ministry is well-illustrated by the Memorial, as it is certain that much of what was advocated unequivocally was approved just as unequivocally by Harley. The vestiges of the struggle between court and country in the 1690s were quite apparent in the exigencies of 1705, as the Memorial urged the adoption of country policies in print in the name of the Church, while they were propounded in private by Harley in the name of 'moderation' and the public good. In requiring the 'true Sons of the Ch[ur]ch' to rally round her to implement protective measures, the Memorial of the Church of England indicted the Godolphin ministry across the board.

Retaliation in print was swift. On 9 July Defoe assured Harley that he had already 'Answerd This high Church Legion', pointedly dedicating it to Godolphin. On the following day he sent Harley 'the Rough of the Answer', requesting him to give 'any hint' he felt appropriate, which would be 'added' to the printer's copy. 'If you please to give me Leave', he wrote, 'I would address it to My Ld Treasurer or to your Self; it should be in the press to Day if possible'.¹ On 17 July The High-Church Legion: or, the Memorial Examin'd was published, designed to discredit the 'Satyr upon Moderation'. The Review had pre-empted this rejoinder in the issue for 12 July, which inveighed self-righteously against 'the Virulent Pamphlet'. The unofficial

1. Defoe, Letters, pp. 90-91.

ministerial press organ continued to dispute the contentions of the Memorial until well into August, 'the Subject', as Defoe acquainted Lord Halifax, 'being before This book [the High-Church Legion] came Out, Entred Upon the Same Article, Vizt The Danger of the Church'.¹

Meanwhile the hunt was on for the men responsible for the production of the Memorial. On 10 July a warrant was issued to Robert Stephens and Richard Heywood, messengers of the press, for the apprehension of David Edwards and his wife 'for Printing, Publishing & Dispersing Scandalous Libels'.² On the same day Defoe wrote to Harley to tell him: 'I am Told Dr Atterbury is Author of the Memorall and...Geo: Sawbridge and Abell Roper are the Publishers'. He added that Henry Poley, M.P. for Westlow, had given 'a great Encomium of the book Very Publickly'.³ Evidently the author of the Rehearsal, Charles Leslie, was also one of the first suspects. 'I Perswade my Self Now Sir you are Concinc't Lesly has Not been the Author', Defoe observed when delivering to Harley six copies of the High-Church Legion, 'I am fully possess't with a Belief that Not him, No Nor Dr D[ra]ke, But the Latter as a Tool, an Amanuensis'.⁴ Defoe expanded his views on the subject of the authorship of the Memorial in assuring Halifax that although Drake 'Might be The Drudge or Rather Amanuensis in the work — his Master the Duke of Bucks is as plainly Pictur'd to me with his Pen in his hand Correcting, Dictating, and Instructing, as if I had been of the Club with Them'.⁵

There were several grains of truth in Defoe's conjectures. Drake was widely suspected of being the author of the Memorial, and Poley was likewise

1. Ibid., p. 93: Defoe to Halifax, 16 July 1705; cf. Review, ii. 165-300.

2. P.R.O., S.P. 44/77/19; cf. Hearne, i. 4: 12 July 1705.

3. Defoe, Letters, p. 91.

4. Ibid., p. 92: to Harley, [16 July 1705?].

5. Ibid., p. 94: to Halifax, 16 July 1705.

believed to have had a hand in it. Nothing was ever proved against either. Only in 1711, after Drake's death, was the pamphlet publicly proclaimed to have been his, when an edition appeared 'To which is added An Introductory Preface, Wherein is contain'd the Life and Death of the Author, And Reasons for this present Publication'. The editor claimed to possess proof of Drake's authorship, 'which I had from himself some time before his Death [in 1707], with an Assurance that M^r Poley (likewise deceas'd) was his Assistant in the Law-Part of those Excellent Sheets'.¹ Defoe's accusation that Drake was merely acting as the amanuensis of the recently dismissed Buckingham, however, was widely credited in 1705. 'Tis said the Duke of Buckingham is Author of the Pamphlett call'd The Memorial of the Church of England', Hearne noted on 14 July, 'and that he has sent to the L^d Treasurer to desist from making further search concerning that particular, being ready at any time to defend w^t he has said in it'.² It is quite possible that Buckingham, bitter over his replacement by Newcastle as lord privy seal in March 1705 as the culmination of Harley's campaign to drum up support among the independent whigs prior to the elections, should express his acrimony in an assault on the policy of the ministry he had just left, but Davenant informed his son that although 'the Town would needs beleive twas written by D^r Drake & supervised by the duke of Buckingham...I was always satisfied of the contrary from his Grace himself...I take him not capable of committing Insanabilis Injurias or of Pushing his Resentments beyond Retreat'.³ Yet despite Davenant's confidence in Buckingham's

1. The Memorial of the Church of England (1711), p. iii.

2. Hearne, i. 6.

3. B.L. Add. MSS, 4291, ff. 40-41: 18 January 1706.

innocence, the ministry did not dismiss his name too lightly from their list of suspects. On 23 July Newcastle wrote to Harley about the Memorial:¹

I never saw a pamphlet stuffed with more gall, more falsehoods, and indeed more trivial stuff, the greatest part of it. Indeed the style of this scandalous libel is as imperious as King John, himself, full of groundless assertions, but sure he was as short-sighted as when he sent the fair one to be imprisoned by you, for there is a general detestation against the book.

Although the 'fair one' is a mystery, this cryptic reference points to John Sheffield, duke of Buckingham, 'King John', as he was affectionately known.

'I don't know particularly what Drake has written', Godolphin informed Harley on 1 October, 'but I can easily imagine his great patron and his great zeal together may have encouraged him to meddle toomuch'.²

Investigations into the printing of the Memorial appear to have been hindered by the shadowy figure of the High Church messenger of the press, Robin 'Hog' Stephens, who was accused by many of partiality in his dealings with tory party hacks, and by none more than Defoe. Unfortunately we are indebted to Defoe for much of what we know about Stephens during Anne's reign, and this makes it difficult to weigh the probability of his report to Harley that 'Your Messenger Stevens (too Much a friend to That Party) Took Such Care of the Orders given him to Discover the Printers, that Some houres before his Search, a Person was Sent Privately to all the BookSellers'. Defoe's biassed testimony is supported by the quondam messenger, John Gellibrand, who, anxious to be restored to his former position, and whose sympathies were whig, assured Harley that 'the discovery of this book might ...easily have been made...if you had not been tricked by M^r Stephens yo^r messenger to y^e press'.³

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 211-12.

2. H.M.C. Bath, i. 64 (wrongly dated 1704; cf. Longleat, Portland MSS, vii. f. 23v). The original is undated, but quite clearly refers to 1705.

3. Defoe, Letters, p. 91: [10 July 1705]; B.L. Loan 29/192, f. 214; 13 July 1705; cf. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 207.

Yet Stephens' approbation of all that had been said in the Memorial seems probable. On 21 July Hearne noted that 'A Bookseller having Reprinted The Memorial of the Church of England, answer'd Paragraph by Paragraph, the Copies are seized'.¹ The pamphlet had merely served as a vehicle for the further dissemination of the views expressed in the Memorial itself, and the complicity of the messenger in failing to prevent its appearance is suggested by Defoe's prior warning to Harley:²

I am Concern'd to See your Orders betraid and Buffoon'd. That wretch Stephens Makes the Governmt perfectly Impotent in These Matters and the Booksellers and he Together make sport at your Orders.

Indeed Sir I write This without private Design or ill will to the Man. His being a Rogue was Usefull to me, and I brib'd him allways to my Advantage, But in this Case They act undr his patronage.

An Instance of This you will have Tomorro', when The Memoriall is to be publish't Answer'd Paragraph by Paragraph.

As This is Done Purely to Sell the book, which The Town is Eager for, and which I Think the Governmt is highly Concernd to prevent, So The Answers are Allways Triffles, and the Design, which is Dispersing the Originall, is fully Answer'd.

The inefficacy of government orders to prevent the publication of offensive pamphlets is demonstrated by the Memorial. It had already been 'considered' paragraph by paragraph, and now it was to be supposedly 'answered'. Harley was urged to send for Stephens:

and Severely Reprimand him, Charge him in it, you May Effectually Damn This project in its Embrio, for he knows the hand it Comes by and may Go and Seize it in the press, and will be Frighted by your Threats, For Villains are Allways Cowards.

It appears that Harley took Defoe's advice, confiscating copies of the 'answer' prior to their publication. The temptation to sell the Memorial, either for monetary gain or on grounds of principle, was too strong. On 23 July Hearne noted triumphantly in his diary:³

1. Hearne, i. 12.

2. Defoe, Letters, pp. 92-93: [16 July 1705?].

3. Hearne, i. 12.

the Manifesto of ye Church of England that was endeavoured to be supprest, is now againe publicly sold ab[ou]t streets at London, the Bookseller being resolved to take ye Benefit of his Copy, & stand the Test of the Law, & ye pretended Remarks that are printed with it strengthen & not confute the Assertions of ye Author.

Already the Memorial was being awarded quasi-official status as the 'manifesto' of the Church party. The failure of ministerial attempts at proscription is fully apparent.

Further defences of the views expressed by the Memorialist were soon forthcoming. William Pittis, clearly disillusioned with Harley by 1705, was in the forefront of those who were determined to stand up and be counted in the cause. On 12 June he began publishing the staunch tory Whipping-Post,¹ and he proceeded to accuse the ministry of bias in the case of Defoe's The Dyet of Poland, which was allowed to go unprosecuted while the Memorial was proscribed. In fact the verse satire was only published with Harley's approbation after the appearance of the Memorial, as counter-propaganda.² Pittis immediately penned a papagraph by paragraph consideration of the Dyet of Poland which had attacked and poked fun at all the high tory leaders. He also ridiculed the thanksgiving sermon delivered before the queen on 23 August by the dean of Lincoln, Dr Willis, and, following the presenting of the Memorial by the grand jury on 31 August, he included the poem Fire and Faggot: or the City Bonfire in the Whipping-Post in defiance of the jury's decision to have the offending pamphlet burned at the hands of the common hangman at the sessions house, the exchange, and the Palace

1. See Newton, 'William Pittis and Queen Anne Journalism', pp. 169 et seq.

2. This at least appears to have been the case, although it is probable that the poem was circulated in MS some time before Defoe secured Harley's permission for it to be published. The first mention of the existence of a MS poem is in June 1704, when Defoe professed himself to be 'a Little in Pain for the Dyet' (Letters, pp. 19, 26). Yet it is first mentioned to be in print on 20 July 1705 by L'Hermitage (B.L. Add. MSS, 17677AAA, f. 375v), and it is significant that Pittis answered it the same month, as if it had only just been published. Cf. P.O.A.S., vii. 74-75; Newton, op. cit., p. 176.

Yard in Westminster in turn in the first weeks of September. Hearne noted on 17 September that 'Two Warrants are out for seizing the Author and Publisher of the Whipping-Post for Reflecting on Dr Willis's Sermon preached before y^e Queen'.¹ On 11 October Pittis was committed to Newgate, where he added to his difficulties by admitting responsibility for The Case of the Church of England's Memorial Fairly Stated. James Drake also ran into trouble at this time for 'reflecting on the government' in Mercurius Politicus over the Aylesbury case, but these were isolated arrests, and it was becoming patently obvious that proscription in itself was not proving to be sufficient to counteract the High Church offensive in print.²

While proscription was an official process, and, as such, had to be countenanced by Godolphin, approved by the queen, and undertaken by both secretaries of state, the other side of the coin, the production of counter-propaganda, was entirely in Harley's hands on account of its unofficial footing. And Harley did not restrict himself to the approbation of Defoe's High-Church Legion, Dyet of Poland, and the admirable series of pro-government essays in the Review. Newcastle wrote to Harley on this subject. 'There is some well-meaning man has taken upon him to dedicate an answer [to the Memorial] to my Lord Treasurer', he remarked upon the appearance of the High-Church Legion, 'but I hope by what I observed by the reading of it, that some abler pen will undertake it, for certainly they lie very open and may be lashed to the quick'.³ In the late summer or early autumn of 1705 The Memorial of the State of England, In Vindication of the Queen, the Church, and the Administration was published. Although clearly the work of a whig, it upheld in particular the conduct and character of 'The Right

1. Hearne, i. 45; cf. Newton, op. cit., pp. 175-76; P.O.A.S., vii. 167-68.

2. See below, chapter six.

3. B.L. Loan 29/192, f. 221: 23 July 1705.

Honourable Mr Secretary Harley', speculating why he was 'not once nam'd or characteriz'd in the Memorial, which was not done by our High-Flying-Politicians out of Design to render him suspected':¹

for he's so much of Englishman, that, temerarious and unthinking as they are, they could not hope to make him pass, even with the most credulous of their own implicate Herd, for a Friend to their Cause. But all mention of him was omitted either out of Hope or Fear; being too considerable to be neglected or forgot. If they fear'd to irritate him, and to rouse so formidable an Adversary, their Caution is certainly to be commended: For none in the Three Kingdoms better understands the extent of the Peoples Liberty, the Bounds of the Prince's Prerogative, the Privileges of Parliaments, or the Force and Tenor of our Laws; all which Qualifications, with his consummate Literature, render him indeed the most capable of any to encounter those, who would confound all our Rights, and bring us under a slavish and barbarous Subjection...in every Party he always hated extreams, which are apt to carry the best too far, and he has often generously endeavour'd to bring those of all sides to a right Understanding and Love of the true old English Government.

The sentiments are palpably Harleyite, and they owe much to country theory.

In fact they smack of the neo-Harringtonianism of the 1690s, which is hardly surprising, for they were written at Harley's instigation by John Toland.

Toland's stock with the court at Hanover soon ran out, and he was forced to sue for subsidies once more. Shaftesbury refused to continue his regular patronage, 'not only', as he explained to his steward, 'because of my private affaires y^t require Retrenchment...but because of the Person, whose prophane & loose Ways over-ballance all the Good (I think) that either he has done or can do; unless he reforms much more'.² Toland later denied receiving support from the Junto, and he professed to owe his survival to Newcastle and Shaftesbury. On his return to England he assured Shaftesbury in the course of the summer of 1705 that:³

1. [John Toland], The Memorial of the State of England (1705), pp. 68-69.

2. P.R.O. 30/24/20/80: Shaftesbury to John Wheelock, n.d.; cf. *ibid.*, 30/24/20/81: the same to the same, 27 November 1703.

3. Toland, Works, ii. 348; P.R.O. 30/24/21/237, n.d.

I am now in some manner altering my Circumstances: for what my Lord Somers' Ministry wou'd not give me, and what I wou'd not ask of my Lord Nottingham's Ministry, the present Ministry unsought has offer'd, and I am willing to accept.

Toland, of course, was embroidering a little in implying that Harley's patronage was 'unsought'. On 26 June he had written to William Penn, giving him a full account of his conduct, and asking him to intercede with the secretary.¹ Penn got in touch with Harley, writing:²

I send the enclosed by the author. If you will not help him to help you what can he hope for? Do something I beg, after kind words and fair looks. He has hung too long upon expectations, and that is the plague of Courts. Pray look kindly upon it to Lord Treasurer to-morrow.

The enclosure, for Harley's eyes, was from Toland.³ He acknowledged the ill construction that his enemies would put on his behaviour in approaching one 'to whom I have the honour to be so well known', but he claimed to have 'learnt by experience and observation on whom to depend, and how to behave myself in such a complication of parties, principles and designs'. The prodigal son had returned, feeling badly treated by the world 'for declining to be a mercenary tool', and for the future:

if I have any learning or ability, I desire to be entirely directed by your orders in all I may do for the future: wherein it shall be my continual endeavour to recommend myself to your care by my diligence and fidelity. A method may be easily found to make me useful to yourself and the public, without incurring the censure of any faction or letting it be known to your best friends, till I have time and opportunity to wear off those prejudices which my own want of experience and the treachery of others have raised against me...In short, Sir, I am sure 'tis in your power, and I hope 'tis in your will, to make me a new man without changing my old principles.

It was fortuitous that Toland's petition arrived when Harley was looking for someone to pen a further retort to the Memorial. On 22 October Toland

1. Toland, Works, ii. 337-353: 'Letter to Mr [Penn] London, June 26, 1705'.

2. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 230.

3. B.L. Loan 29/192, f. 269: anon. to Harley, 28 August 1705. (Although the letter is in Toland's hand, the editor of H.M.C. Portland, iv records it as anonymous.)

sent Shaftesbury a copy of the Memorial of the State of England, asking him 'not to take notice to any man liveing that I am author...for the Printer himself knows no more of the author than the great Turk':¹

By this Memorial you may perceive what sort of Tory I am grown, and at the same time what sort of politicians they are at the Grecian, who (as I am informed...) report that I am become a Tory...it is really your fault, if this book be not so good as you wou'd have it, since my Design of Seeing you some weeks ago was to advise about it. However it has given full Satisfaction to him that encourag'd the work.

The editor of Toland's Works, Pierre Desmaizeaux, noted that the Memorial was:²

publish'd without the name of the Author, by the direction of Mr HARLEY, Secretary of State, and one of [Toland's] Patrons and Benefactors, against the Memorial of the Church of England, written by Counsellor POOLEY and Dr DRAKE.

Toland himself later reminded Harley that the tract was written at his 'allowance and encouragement', while Burnet postulated that the secretary 'procured the Memorial of the State of England to be writ'.³ Harley's part is further clarified by a letter from Toland, dated 14 December 1705, and printed by Desmaizeaux:⁴

All this time I have been a silent but not an idle Spectator...It is no small satisfaction to me, that the judgement of the Queen, the Parliament, and the Ministry, do so unanimously concur with the Book, which (under your Protection) I have publish'd for their service...It had the honour to be attributed by good judges to several eminent persons, and among the rest to you; where it had most certainly fix'd, were it not for the Character given therein of your self.

Toland apologised for not having had the opportunity to receive Harley's approbation of the pamphlet before it went to the press, 'having finish'd it in a very few days, without any to advise me, but Mr P[enn], being in the

1. P.R.O. 30/24/20/105.

2. Toland, Works, I. lix.

3. Ibid., ii. 228; N.U.L. Portland MSS, Pw2 Hy 661: Harley to Burnet, 22 July 1706? (draft); cf. B.L. Loan 29/128/5: the same to the same, n.d.

4. Toland, Works, ii. 354-57. For contact between Harley and Desmaizeaux, see B.L. Loan 29/133/8, and H.M.C. Portland, v. 323, 329.

country'.¹

The Memorial of the State of England was designed specifically as an antidote to the Memorial of the Church of England: it was a full-scale defence of the Godolphin ministry. Pointing to suspicions of Drake's connivance in the offensive pamphlet, Toland remarked that:

Had the Memorialist's own Example been deem'd a good Pattern to follow, or that prevailing Custom were a sufficient warrant for such a Practice, 'twere easy perhaps to trace and discover the true Author; or, if there was a Club of them, 'twere easier still to exercise our Satyr on their Characters, as a certain Duke [Buckingham] and a Doctor [Drake], a Lawyer [Poley] and a Poet [Ned Ward] (the two last I believe unjustly) have already experienc'd from other hands on this very account.

Pittis, Leslie and Drake figured in another of Toland's asides as the authors of their respective High Church journals:

If the Whigs have their Observator, have not the Tories their Rehearsal? The Review does not take more liberty than the Whipping Post, nor is he a wilder Politician than the Mercury.

Drake also received dishonourable mention in connexion with his History of the Last Parliament, while, in criticising the attack made by the Memorialist on Davenant's Essays, Toland noted that he must be 'as singular a Projector as Sir Humphry [Mackworth], the other Don Quixote of the Church'.² Strangely enough, the State-Memorialist had gone through the whole gamut of government suspects as author of the Memorial, for Harley's investigations were pointing the finger of accusation not at Buckingham and Drake, but at Mackworth, Poley and Ward.

On 26 June 1705 it was ordered in cabinet that 'y^e Queen should order y^e

1. Toland, Works, ii. 354-57. Singular proof of the genuineness of the correspondence printed by Desmaizeaux is to be found in the final sentence: 'Having sent one of the first [copies of the Memorial] (under the feign'd name of Mr FREEMAN) to Mr SHOWER the Dissenting Minister, I receiv'd the Answer which I send you inclos'd'. Although Desmaizeaux correctly dated this letter 24 October 1705 (the original is preserved in the Harley papers in B.L. Loan 29/192, f. 374), it is dated 27 October 1705 and printed as a genuine letter not to Toland, but to Harley himself, in H.M.C. Portland, iv. 268.

2. The Memorial of the State of England, pp. 2, 38, 53.

Justices of Peace, & judges to quicken the suppressing of Libels'.¹ Although this state of comparative readiness was not very evident on the appearance of the Memorial, the first fruits of the recommendation were the presenting of the pamphlet by the grand juries of London and Middlesex on 31 August. Sir Salathiel Lovell commended himself to Harley on account of his 'zeale and assertion' in drawing and obtaining the presentment, especially as it appeared to be instrumental in sparking off 'suitable Addresses throughout the Nation' that endorsed the judgment of the jury 'with good effect'.² In her speech on the opening of parliament, the queen reminded both houses that 'there have not been wanting some so very malicious, as even in print to suggest the Church of England, as by law established, to be in danger at this time'. Lords and Commons concurred, with only slightly differing wording, 'in every thing, that may tend to discourage and punish such incendiaries'.³ On 6 December the question of the danger of the Church was raised once more in both houses, however, and the ministry succeeded in passing a resolution that:⁴

the Church of England, as by Law established...is now, by God's Blessing, under the happy Reign of her Majesty, in a most safe and flourishing Condition; and that whoever goes about to suggest, and insinuate, that the Church is in danger under her Majesty's Administration, is an Enemy to the Queen, the Church, and the Kingdom.

This paved the way to a full-scale offensive on the authors of libels in 1706 (which will be the subject of the next chapter), for Queen Anne declared her intention to 'proceed with the utmost severity the law shall allow of, against the authors or spreaders of the said seditious and

1. B.L. Loan 29/9/17.

2. B.L. Loan 29/150/3: 26 July 1707; cf. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 246.

3. Cobbett, vi. 452,455: 27 October, 6 November 1705.

4. C.J., xv. 58.

scandalous reports'. Accordingly judges were ordered to take steps 'for the speedy apprehension, prosecution and punishment of all such persons, who have or shall at any time hereafter offend herein'. Special mention was made of the Memorial in promoting 'the said seditious and scandalous reports', and a reward of £200 was offered for information leading to the discovery of the author of the pamphlet, and the apprehension of 'David Edwards, of the parish of St Dunstan's in the west, London...printer and publisher of the said libel', who had absconded.¹

Harley had been on the trail of Edwards since the grand jury had named him, 'a notorious criminal (convicted in that court for printing and publishing a seditious and treasonable libel, for which he was fined and pilloried, and was now fled from justice)', as the printer of the Memorial. Stephens, the messenger of the press, had failed to apprehend Edwards according to his warrant of 10 July, and in the autumn of 1705 Harley recruited an out-of-work printer, Robert Clare, as a government informer in an effort to track down the authors and printers of anti-ministerial pamphlets from the inside. Harley maintained Clare with a gift of £5, upon receipt of which the latter wrote on 6 September: 'tho' at present I have done nothing that has merited, or may merit, your Honour's Favour towards me; yet I hope to give...full Satisfaction in what you shall command'.² One

1. Cobbett, vi. 510-11.

2. B.L. Loan 29/130/5. There are reports on published pamphlets by Clare extant from 26 September until 12 December 1705, although his diligence left a lot to be desired. Many supplied nothing more than the bare title of the tracts listed, with no indication of author, printer or publisher, while the High-Church Legion was tentatively attributed to either 'De Foe, or Tutchin'. Clearly Harley himself knew as much about the production of pamphlets as Clare, whose principal method of enquiry appears to have been guesswork. When criticised, Clare fell back on promises of what he would achieve were he to be offered a permanent place on the government's payroll. He similarly suggested printing some remarks on the queen's speech on the opening of parliament on 27 October, with Harley, if he thought proper, scrutinising the copy 'before printed, and the sheets after, before publish'd'. Above all, Clare desired to be 'Establish'd', but Harley merely responded by complaining that he 'was not sharp enough' in his 'Quest'.

of his tasks was to track down Edwards. On 17 October he was able to inform Harley that 'upon farther Enquiry after Mr Edwards, I am inform'd he is with his Mother (or some other Relation) in Flintshire in Wales'. Clare claimed to know 'ye Place or Town in ye said shire'.¹

Edwards had previously written to Harley on 1 October. In brief his story was that in the middle of June 1705 he had been visited at his printing house by two women, one a middle-aged gentlewoman who wore a 'Vizard Mask' on all her meetings with him, the other her companion, a younger woman, perhaps her servant. Assuring him that the work was 'for the Advantage of the Church', the gentlewoman presented Edwards with the manuscript of the Memorial of the Church of England, asking him to print 250 copies within a fortnight. Edwards claimed to have tried to discourage her, advising the employment of another High Church printer of notoriety, George Sawbridge, instead. She declined, 'saying that he had been thought of for it, but they did not approve of him'. Accordingly Edwards met the order. In his letter Edwards acquainted Harley with the knowledge that his wife was making a diligent search for the women involved. She believed the gentlewoman to be one Mrs Garret, who had been seen in the company of none other than Poley. Moreover she claimed to have successfully traced the younger woman, one Susannah Gough, a nurse. 'I must confess, I did not expect to find Nurse norr [my wife] neither', Edwards subsequently told Harley, 'but I cou'd not perswade my woman to keep at Home, but she wou'd pursue 'em, and I believe

1. Ibid. Harley's relations with Clare petered out when the latter presented a petition, stating his case, at the beginning of December 1705, which told of the dire straits he had been reduced to, 'having no other Business but what I serve your Honour in...in which, tho' I do not as I would, or you might desire, 'tis only for want of Publick Power' (B.L. Loan 29/130/4; cf. H.M.C. Portland, viii. 376, for the petition). Correspondence thereafter ceases, it being probable that Harley had doubts about the prudence of extending his patronage on a grand scale to an informer who had failed at any time to produce intelligence of real value. Clare's reports, such as they are, have been printed with a full commentary by Henry Snyder. See 'The Reports of a Press Spy for Robert Harley: New Bibliographical Data for the Reign of Queen Anne', The Library, xxi (1967), 326-45.

now to some purpose'. In conclusion, Edwards requested an interview for his wife, she 'having a great deale to ye purpose'.¹

Edwards' reluctance to come forward without some sort of bargain with the government is partly explained by his suspicions about the men responsible for writing the Memorial. It was Harley, no doubt, who prompted him to write an apology for his conduct and to send it via his brother, Thomas Edwards, to the lord treasurer, Godolphin.² In this letter he spoke at some length of the delicacy of the situation:

I am willing to satisfy my Lord to the utmost of my Power, so far as I know of, whose concern'd in it, and shall do it with all the sincerity that can be desir'd. But suppose there be Greatness and Wealth in the case, tall Trees, which may prove difficult to Climb up to the Top of, and perhaps I can't prove I saw it writ; I can prove the delivery of the Books, the places, and to whom, by several credible witnesses, and consequently who writ it; it may be done by things printed for the same Party, by Hand and stile, &c. The whole matter, if done as I shall direct, will be fully prov'd: But a miscarriage in management of Affairs may happen, I humbly hope, that if Great Trees can't be pull'd down, his Lordship will not destroy a Shrub.

Edwards fixed his suspicion of authorship firmly on Sir Humphry Mackworth. As most of his evidence was circumstantial, it is hardly surprising that Edwards tried to insure himself from ministerial wrath should his scheme for trapping the author of the Memorial come unstuck. On the date agreed for Edwards to hand over the completed order of printed books, the gentlewoman called, but they were not yet stitched. Clearly anxious, and suspicious of being followed, she resolved to 'come no more', and, instead, she decided to 'send for them', using an 'Indented Paper' as her token to authorise delivery to her representatives. On the completion of the order

1. N.U.L. Portland MSS, Pw2 Hy 566, 567: Edwards to Harley, 1 October 1705, and n.d. (endorsed by Harley: 'D. Edwards abt ye Memoriall'). Details of Edwards' testimony are taken from his deposition before the secretaries of state (ibid., Pw2 Hy 572; cf. B.L. Loan 29/5/4), which may be found quoted in full below, appendix B.

2. N.U.L. Portland MSS, Pw2 Hy 565: 'D. Edwards to Thomas Edwards, at the Right Honourable the Lord Treasurer's in St James's, 29 December 1705'.

of 250 copies of the Memorial, a porter brought Edwards a letter from the Mitre Tavern, and, on the production of the indented paper, he was given 200 copies of the pamphlet, which was all his bag would hold. Two other porters called for the remaining books 'one after the other' to find Edwards not at home, but the final 50 copies were delivered to a fourth messenger, one 'Povey a Porter; that plies at Lincolns Inn'.

On the publication of the Memorial, Harley's warrant for Edwards' arrest resulted in the apprehension of Mrs Edwards and three of the employees of his printing-house. Edwards himself managed to escape, and he sent his wife to ask Harley for bail should he cooperate in the discovery of the author of the Memorial.¹ He believed the letter sent from the Mitre Tavern by the first porter to be in the handwriting of one William Shiers, with whom he had previously done business. Shiers was employed in the Mine Office by Sir Humphry Mackworth. Edwards had formerly printed a pamphlet concerning the Aylesbury case, Pro Aris & Focis: he recognised the handwriting as that of William Shiers, and he had seen George Strahan, a bookseller near the exchange, carry the proofs of this book to the house of Mackworth on Snow Hill. This, then, was the evidence which interested Harley, and the net spun by Edwards enmeshed a wide circle of individuals, but with Mackworth most deeply intertwined.

When Mrs Edwards was discharged out of custody, she allegedly applied to Mackworth for assistance. Unable to arrange an audience with him, Edwards sent a letter by his attorney Thomas Mackworth. Shiers replied on behalf of Sir Humphry, disclaiming all knowledge of the affair. Edwards conveyed a second letter to Sir Humphry Mackworth by one Aerskine Walker. The message was once more refuted, yet, Edwards claimed, George Strahan had proposed to him that they should become partners in the publication of a further batch

1. B.L. Loan 29/38/1, n.d.

of the Memorial (in fact Strahan was successfully prosecuted for publishing a later edition of the pamphlet), and Strahan had agreed with the suggestion that Mackworth was involved in the production of the tract, though 'there were more Persons concern'd in it than S^r Humphrey'. On the basis of this evidence, Godolphin forwarded Edwards' letter to Harley, asking him to examine Thomas Edwards and the messenger who brought the information, 'that upon your speaking with them you may give such orders as you think proper'. 'It will be necessary to seize some persons before the noise of [Edwards'] coming in or being taken', he added, 'or else they will run away'.¹ On 10 January Edwards promised to disclose all he knew about the Memorial, on condition that the proceedings instituted against him were softened. 'I have sent an Account of Persons and Papers to my Wife', he wrote, 'I have given you Really and Truly the Naked Truth as far as I know at present'.²

On 12 January a proclamation was issued, which read:³

For the further Encouraging the Discovery and Apprehension of the Author or Authors of ...the Memoriall...It is hereby declared by her Majtys Order, that if David Edwards...who printed the said lybell, shall, within four days after the date hereof, discover or cause to be discovered the Author or Authors of the said Lybell, he and his Wife and Servants concernd in the Printing thereof, shall be pardoned, & indemnified.

On the same day Mary Edwards was examined by the secretaries of state. In her deposition she implicated Aerskine Walker and John Davis in carrying messages from Sir Humphry Mackworth at Nando's Coffee-house, and she claimed to have confronted Mackworth and John Ward without success on her husband's information that 'Sheers, Powell & Strahan three persons belonging to S^r

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 278.

2. B.L. Loan 29/193, f. 6; cf. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 278.

3. B.L. Loan 29/5/5; cf. N.U.L. Portland MSS, Pw2 Hy 569: note to the same effect in Godolphin's hand, 12 January 1706.

Humphrey Mackworth, are supposed to be the Persons that were concerned in takeing away the Bookes from the Mytre Tavern, as he had given reason to beleive'.¹ Edwards advised Harley to arrest Shiers, Strahan and Powell at one go, along with all the porters involved, to prevent collusion. He offered additional information. Davis was allegedly given a letter in the same hand as the copy of the Memorial, and told to take it to Edwards the printer. The reply was to be taken to Nando's Coffee-house, where Davis was to ask for Sir Humphry:²

Davis accordingly brought the Letter, and I not being at home, my wife writ an Answer to it, That the Books were not ready. Davis carry'd the Answer to Nando's, and ask'd for Sir Humphrey. Sir Humphrey comes out to the Entry, receives it of Davis, and Cry's 'tis very well...Davis farther confess'd [Edwards alleged], That the said Sir Humphrey sent him immediately with a Letter to Mr Pooley's Chambers at Lincolns Inn.

These events supposedly took place around 15 June 1705. Povey was accused of carrying away the last 50 copies of the Memorial, though, as Edwards said, he 'wou'd fain deny it (being as we are Inform'd) M^r Pooley's Porter'.

Though parts of Edwards' testimony appear a little contrived, not the least aspect of this being his ability to remember additional information with monotonous but convenient regularity, there was enough to convince Harley of the possibility of Mackworth's complicity in the production of the Memorial. On 15 January Edwards surrendered himself into the custody of the messenger of the press, providing Harley with a list of the persons implicated in his deposition. This, copied in Harley's hand, was annotated with notes and queries on the case, and the names of the several messengers employed in apprehending the suspects.³ Clearly he was taking Edwards'

1. B.L. Loan 29/193, ff. 14-18; cf. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 279.

2. B.L. Loan 29/193, ff. 19-20: Edwards to Harley, 12 January 1706.

3. Ibid., f. 22. This, along with other papers relating to the investigation into the genesis of the Memorial, is transcribed in full below, Appendix B.

revelations with sufficient seriousness to warrant a thorough investigation. On 17 January the process of interrogation commenced. Although the witnesses backed up some parts of Edwards' story, the case was by no means clear-cut. Susannah Gough, in particular, denied, and continued to deny, all knowledge of the Memorial, or of her alleged visits to Edwards' printing-house.¹ Nonetheless Harley determined to give an account of the examinations at the cabinet meeting held that evening. Mackworth, Poley and John Ward (M.P. for Newton) had all been implicated, and the cabinet agreed on the wording of a message to the Commons, the draft of which ran:²

Her Matie in pursuance of the address of both Houses put out a Proclamation in wch was an encoragmt for the discovery of the Author or Authors of the Memorial of the Church of England &c. The Printer of wch Book being now in custody, & several other Persons being examind, in whose depositions there appears the names of some members of this House her Maties tenderness for anything wch hath the appearance of your Privilege hath inclind her to command me to acquaint you before she directs any further proceedings in the said examination.

Accordingly Harley acquainted the house with the queen's message on 21 January, upon which it was resolved to present a humble address to the queen thanking her for her 'tender regard' to the privileges of the Commons, and authorising 'a further examination into the Authors of the libel mentioned in the said message'.³

Needless to say, the interrogations had proceeded behind the scenes while the queen's message was under consideration. On 18 January William Wise, one of Edwards' assistants in the printing-house, on being shown the letters from Shiers to Thomas Mackworth, swore he recognised the handwriting: 'Pro Aris & Focis and Liberty & Property were both written in the same hand, and

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1. B.L. Loan 29/5/5-6; cf. B.L. Loan 29/137/3: 'Goffe' to Harley, n.d.
 2. B.L. Loan 29/9/26.
 3. Cobbett, vi. 512.

had the same leaning of the Letters, He, this Examinant, being concerned in Printing both those Pamphlets'. The following day Mary Edwards supplied further information against Strahan. Taxing him with her belief that Sir Humphrey Mackworth was the author of the Memorial, Strahan replied:¹

laughing; he wil never do any thing for you or your husband, for he is a base principled Man that never did a fair thing by any body, nor wil he do it by you; Oh, says this Examinant, he wil have more honor sure than to let my husband starve; He laughed at that, and sayd, he has a great deal of Honor indeed, you'l find.

Strahan told her that she would 'not be able to prove it against Sir Humphry Mackworth', but he offered to 'get 20 guineas for her' if she let him compare the holograph of the Memorial with his holograph of Pro Aris & Focis. Edwards, however, had warned his wife that he 'was a cunning Scotchman and might snatch the copy from her', so she refused to relinquish her evidence. Of course there was more than a shade of the theatrical about all this, but Harley was sufficiently impressed to confront Strahan with the testimony of Mary Edwards. The proceedings of 19 January 1706 were strictly recorded, and as such they not only demonstrate Harley's willingness to believe Edwards, but also provide a unique blow-by-blow account of an interrogation conducted under his auspices. The exact words of each protagonist were carefully transcribed, Strahan and Shiers carefully and persistently denying all that had been imputed to them:²

Mr Secretary Harley...Mr Strahan, You have had a great deal of time, You have been treated with great Indulgence; I must own that you have not been candid...

Strahan...I cannot tell what false witnesses may say.

Mr Sec. Harley...You must not use them so, Do not mistake your selves; None shall protect you.

Mr Sec. Hedges...You have taken great liberty to charge other persons with saying false things, when we know them to be contrary.

1. B.L. Loan 29/5/5-6.

2. Ibid. In view of the unique nature of this document, it forms part of the second appendix to this thesis, where it is transcribed in its entirety. See below, Appendix B.

The interviews of Strahan and Shiers, Wise and Mrs Edwards, progressed very slowly, with Harley's impatience and frustration beginning to tell when he was unable to trap Strahan into saying where he had carried the holograph of Pro Aris & Focis: 'See how y^e prevaricate in this thing', Harley shouted, 'where did y^e carry the Copy?'

Harley's management of the interrogations failed to uncover the author of the Memorial. Edwards wrote to the secretary, 'With submission to your Great Wisdom and Goodness', to question whether he had not shown 'too much Lenity to Mr Strahan'. All the time that his testimony remained unsupported, Edwards' credibility was waning. 'If you had laid him up the first day, he would have deliver'd up the copy, but going home, and having time to Consult, there is no question but he has delivered it to Sir Humphrey', he informed Harley, 'I found by his behaviour yesterday how it was'. Edwards' solution was a more ruthless interrogation, anticipating Strahan's submission to the third degree:¹

I know he's a niggardly covetous fellow, Touch his Pocket, or make him neglect his Business, and he'll squeek presently: I find he has been Tutor'd, as Davies has been, to Invalidate what we say; but had it not been in your Honour's presence, he durst not to have been so rude, for he knows, I wou'd have kick't him. I defy all the World to say I have done an ill thing or a base Action; the worst they cou'd ever say of me, is, That I was a Jacobite, and I have suffer'd severely for it. You have a Great Party (tho' most ungrateful to me) to deal with. To be sure they'll baffle me if they can, I find it too plain, as far as they can get Ground, which I'll demonstrate...Sr Humphrey...has tamper'd, and Davies ought to be shut up close. You find that Gilbert own'd what pass'd between my wife and him. You find that Fox own'd too what she had said, tho' not so freely [Gilbert and Fox were ticket-porters]. I was mighty glad to see the Woman [Gough] dress'd [as Edwards' alleged she was when delivering the manuscript of the Memorial], now I am fully satisfy'd 'tis she, and had I gone with her that night, as I thought I might, I am confident, I cou'd have had all out. I wish they don't do my poor Woman any mischief; for she will be a Plagay thorn in their sides.

1. N.U.L. Portland MSS, Pw2 Hy 568:[20 January 1706].

Two days later Edwards remonstrated with Harley once again, professing to see taking place the cover-up that he had feared all along:¹

I think I have not fair Play...to take up one that's no more like [the woman in the vizard mask] than I am, gives an opportunity for ye other to fly...The Messengers let some loose altogether in a Room, for Mr Mackworth to whisper the Nurse, and Mr Powell and Mr Strahan to talk together. 'Tis not the way to find out the Truth of things.

On 25 January the suspects were examined before the cabinet in the cockpit. In attendance were Cowper, Newcastle, Ormonde, Pembroke, Hedges and Harley.² Edwards openly proclaimed that a deal had been done with the witnesses, and that, for evidence, 'the widdow of ye Coffi House can prove that Davies has been treated with'. But although it was ordered that Shiers should 'be taken into custody for being concern'd in printing & publishing the seditious libel entitled the memorial &c',³ the outcome was again unsatisfactory. Afterwards Edwards made a statement, which was recorded at length:⁴

I have nothing further to say. I would have surrendered my selfe sooner, but I was willing to make the matter out plainly. My meaning that Great Men might crush me, was, in case I should offer at the Discovery, and not make it out. I meant likewise the great Party these would be against me. I took this letter to come from Sir Humphry because it is in the same hand as Pro Aris & Focis was in...When I saw this Letter the Copy of Pro Aris & Focis, came fresh into my mind & I have seen Strahan carry the Proofs into ye Mine office...I have no grounds to tax Mr Poley & Mr Ward ...I can't charge Mr Ward. I have no other Grounds than the Discourse of the Town, and that my wife heard they were all three together at Hamstead writing of it.

No further findings of any note were made in the case of the Memorial of the Church of England. On 18 January Davenant informed his son that 'by his dexterity & diligence', Harley had cleared the duke of Buckingham and James

1. B.L. Loan 29/193, f. 37: 22 January 1706; cf. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 281.

2. B.L. Loan 29/9/25; cf. Luttrell, vi. 10.

3. B.L. Loan 29/9/25; B.L. Loan 29/5/8. There was also an order to 'Inquire after Sheers his wife'. On 27 January she told her husband that Harley had granted him bail (B.L. Loan 29/35/20).

4. B.L. Loan 29/5/8.

Drake of suspicion of authorship, 'the Authors being now traced': 'They are three violent Tories of the House of Commons whose names will be known against next Post'. On 29 January he had to admit that 'Nothing new has been produced concerning the Memorial or it's Authors'.¹ 'They cannot find out y^e Author of y^e Memorial', Thomas Hearne noted gleefully on 27 January, 'All y^t affects S^r Humph. Mackworth, M^r Poley, & M^r Ward is y^t 150 of 'em as soon as printed off were sent to y^e first as many to y^e 2^d & 100 to y^e last'.

William Stephens, under prosecution on his own account, said quite openly that 'the Secretarys are in the Dark ab^t the Author of the Memorial of the Ch[urch] of Engl[and] & do not know who to fix it on'. As time passed, increasing scorn was poured on the ministry's investigations. Hearne wrote in his diary that:²

Sr Jeff. Jeffreys, being wth Mr Secretary Harley, told him, that he thought he could tell from what corner the Memorial came. Mr Secretary hearing this, desir'd he would inform him: to whom he reply'd that he did not doubt but it came from ye Whiggish Party & Low Church Men, & was writ by them on purpose to throw the odium on ye Honest part of ye Nation.

Edwards was condemned on all sides, the common story being that he:³

pretended to make a Discovery, but could do nothing more than (upon Examination) fix it upon Three Gentlemen of the House of Commons, and relate that a Woman in a Masque, with another bare-fac'd, brought the Manuscript to him, and made a Bargain with him to have 350 [sic] printed Copies for it, which he deliver'd to four Porters sent to him by the persons concern'd. But, though the Woman that came to Edwards the Printer without a Masque and some of the Porters were taken up, yet it was impossible to carry on the Discovery any farther: Which gave occasion to a Member of the House of Commons (Mr Poley) to say, That it was not usual to accuse Members of their House of being concern'd in any thing to the Government, without naming them.

David Edwards was not the only individual to criticise Harley's handling of the investigation into the authorship of the Memorial. After the examination of the suspects in the cockpit on 25 January, William Cowper, the

1. B.L. Add. MSS, 4291, ff. 40-41, 44.

2. Hearne, i. 169-70. Hearne's diary is a rich source for High Church opinion of the ministry's proceedings into the production of the Memorial.

3. The Memorial...To which is added An Introductory Preface (1711), pp. vi-vii.

lord keeper, noted in his diary that he, like Edwards, had been 'Convinc'd, by Similitude of hands, that Sheers, S^r H. Mackworth's Manuensis, writt the Letter sent by the Porter for 250 Books to the Printer'. He was similarly dissatisfied with the examinations themselves and the way in which they had been conducted. He judged Harley to be 'extream bad' at the techniques of interrogation, and he was not without his suspicions that this might have been put on deliberately 'to hinder the Discovery'. According to Cowper, Harley 'manag'd neither with Cunning nor Gravity, to imprint any Awe on those examined; by which he spoil'd the thing in his former Examinations'. It is curious that Edwards' misgivings should be echoed by Cowper, despite the apparent lack of complacency in interrogation demonstrated by Harley in the transcription of the examination of Shiers and Strahan before the two secretaries on 19 January. Of course we must take into account Harley's tone and general interrogatory manner, but if the transcription is accurate, he went out of his way to indict Strahan of perjury. Cowper, although he admitted that the business was 'Not finish'd yet', was of the firm opinion that Harley was 'evidently unwilling to prosecute the Authors of Libells'.¹

Several things must be said on this score. In the first place Cowper was vindictively prejudiced against Harley. 'If any Man was ever born under a Necessity of being a Knave', he observed, 'he was'. A strong whig bias coloured all his dealings with the secretary, whom he regarded without compunction as a tory sympathiser. When the proclamation for the discovery of the author or authors of the Memorial was under discussion in the cabinet on 20 December 1705, Cowper observed with suspicion the debate over the sum to be offered as a reward: 'Myself & L[or]d T[reasure]r, privately, & Mr Smith were for £500; but Secretary Harley spoke twice, & labour'd mightily to have it but £200'. The latter figure was chosen, which allowed

1. The Private Diary of William, First Earl Cowper, ed. E.C. Hawtrey (1833), pp. 36-37, 39 (hereafter cited as Cowper's Diary).

Cowper to conclude that 'the Secretary knew or conjectured who were the Authors, & had no Mind they should be discovered'.¹ Tempting as the idea might be, there is no evidence to support this conjecture, and Harley's enthusiastic response to Edwards' revelations would seem to suggest that unless he was playing an unusually deep game, even for him, and he was in the secret of the Memorial's genesis all along, he was genuinely hopeful that they would lead to the discovery of the author of the pamphlet.

Cowper's allegations did not stop there: when the affair was again under consideration on 17 January 1706, he noted that Harley opened the 'Discovery' resulting from Edwards' testimony 'very confus'dly'. He criticised the queen's message to the Commons concerning their rights and privileges under the extraordinary conditions of an investigation into the possible implication of three of its members in sedition, in which we once more see Harley's personal conflict in conscience between loyalty to the ministry and regard to the integrity of parliament, 'as unusual, tending to stifle the Discovery, so numerous an Assembly being unfit for that Matter; yet could not prevail'. Clearly the lord keeper had prejudged the case, and had convinced himself of Harley's prevarication, so that he viewed Harley's message to the Commons, no doubt designed to meet the requirements of parliamentary procedure, as a further example of Robin the Trickster's machiavellian cunning, in allowing the High Churchmen time to cover their tracks by acquainting them of Mackworth's involvement in the enquiries taking place before the investigation had reached a satisfactory outcome. The lord keeper quickly spotted Harley's supposed reluctance to merely tell the house that the ministry's proceedings in relation to the Memorial involved some of its members, without presenting a full state of the case at

1. Ibid., pp. 33, 29.

that time, so that they might have the Commons' 'leave to p[ro]ceed without Controversy hereafter', but he observed that Harley 'could not avoid doing accordingly, & it succeeded as designed, the House recommending it back to the Queen'.¹

Cowper's opinions led Trevelyan to conclude that Harley was 'unwilling to employ his private agents and sources of information against a brother Tory'.² This, as we have seen, was patently not so. He had used Clare to help locate Edwards, and he had given the latter enough rope to hang himself, Mackworth, Poley and half the tory party. William Bromley did not share Cowper's dissatisfaction with the lack of urgency to proscribe the Memorial. 'I hear The Memorial has been burnt by ye Hands of the Common Hangman', he wrote to Arthur Charlett on 8 September 1705, 'I wish all Libels were so treated, & the like Endeavors used to discover, & punish the Authors of them, as have been upon this Occasion'.³ And Thomas Hearne had no illusions about the harshness of Harley's treatment of suspects. He related the tale of Powell's experiences under the rigours of interrogation. Powell, 'an Honest Non-Juring Gentleman, who had formerly been Secretary to two or three Church of England B[isho]ps':⁴

was summoned to attend the Council at White-Hall abt Sr Humph. Mackworth, (whom the spight and Malice of wicked Designing Courtiers would gladly make ye Author of ye Memorial) & being then under some Indisposition of Body, and obliged to wait from 5 to 12 Clock at Night in a cold damp Room, increas'd his Distemper to yt Degree yt he paid his last Debt to Nature with in a day or two after, & may justly be reckon'd to die a Martyr for ye Memorial.

Shiers and Strahan were held without being charged until they brought their

1. Ibid., pp. 35-36.

2. G.M. Trevelyan, England Under Queen Anne (Fontana edn.), ii. 100.

3. Bod. Ballard MSS, 38, f. 144.

4. Hearne, i. 180.

writs of habeas corpus and were admitted to bail. Hearne was informed by a friend of Shiers 'y^t the whole design of taking him, & y^e rest into Custody was only to pump and Fish some things out of them, with a design, if possible to fix the Memorial on Sr Humph. & some other Honest Gentlemen'. William Shippen, the tory M.P., was so bold as to banter Harley's management of the case, and he was speedily cut down to size. He too was interrogated and prosecuted, although he denied all knowledge of the Memorial.¹ Harley took his job seriously enough despite contemporary evidence to the contrary. He was even styled the 'president of the pillory' by one party poet.² He wrote to Marlborough in the aftermath of the investigation into the Memorial:³

The Judges have begun to make Examples of the Libellers & Printers, Sawbridge who printed a second Impression of the Memoriall...Pittis who wrote a sham answer to it, in order to publish it, besides many other Vile Libels, is sentenced to the Pillory, fined 100 Marks; and to find suretys for the good behaviour for two years. Stephens & some others are to come to judgment next weeke. Some few examples will cure, in great measure, this Abominable Vice.

Despite Cowper's contention, then, it appears that Harley did make every effort to track down the elusive author of the Memorial. He continued to pump Edwards for information, accounting him 'a real penitent for the mischief he has done the nation'.⁴ He began to offer him financial support,⁵ while desperation brought strange attempts at self-justification. At one point Edwards named the wife of William Bromley as the lady in the mask. 'I was very cautious what I delivered', he wrote, 'for fear of being wrong, but, by all the transactions maturely connected together, 'twas Mr Bromley's lady

1. Ibid., p. 174; B.L. Loan 29/5/9; Luttrell, vi. 57.

2. A Dialogue between Louis le Petite, and Harlequin le Grand [1708], preface.

3. Longleat, Portland MSS, v. f. 11: 26 April/7 May 1706 (copy).

4. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 294, 277-78.

5. Harley's accounts as secretary of state include many payments to Edwards from June 1706 onwards through 1707, B.L. Loan 29/163/5-7.

brought me the copies, and I wish she might be viewed'.¹ It is unlikely that Harley acted on this particular impulse: as Edwards remarked, 'They make such hectoring and bouncing that they'll lay me in a jail for my life, and...I can't find the woman'. More secret approaches were made to Sir Humphry Mackworth himself. He was even accused of the authorship to his face:²

you are the author of the Memorial [he was told]. He made strange at it, and said he believ'd the Government had a mind to make a Plot against him, and they had a mind to hire Irish Evidence against him...Mr Edwards is a very honest man [he was told], and I am sure, would abhor taxing you with it, if he was not certaine of it...he printed the Pro Aris & Focis, and Defence of Liberty and Property for yourself. At which...He was struck with a sort of Amazement...

Of course it is hardly surprising that Mackworth should be amazed if he were indeed innocent of complicity in the production of the Memorial, and Edwards' confident assertion that 'Mr Pooley and Sr Humphrey are the Authors of it; and I don't question but I shall make it appear', carries no weight against Mackworth's denials. Harley had given Edwards enough time and resources to come up with concrete evidence, but the simple fact was that there was no proof to incriminate Mackworth. Edwards could surmise as much as he liked, accuse Mackworth of complicity to his face, present masses of circumstantial data, but there was not one iota of incontrovertible evidence on which to indict Sir Humphrey. And even though Harley continued to support Edwards with funds to continue his investigation, with Susannah Gough bound over to the next session of oyer and terminer, regardless of her pleas of innocence, he must have known that he was on a wild-goose chase.³

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 292: Edwards to Harley, 29 March 1706.

2. N.U.L. Portland MSS, Pw2 Hy 570: the same to the same, 18 April 1706.

3. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 303, 314; B.L. Loan 29/193, ff. 126, 207, 367; B.L. Loan 29/194, f. 147; B.L. Loan 29/284, unfoliated; B.L. Loan 29/295, unfoliated; N.U.L. Portland MSS, Pw2 Hy 571. Edwards was released on 7 May 1706: as late as March 1707 Harley was being assured that the net was tightening around Mackworth (B.L. Loan 29/295). Edwards also petitioned Harley for the printing of customs house material, and finally for the place of messenger, but he never managed to come up with evidence against Mackworth.

A second point of fundamental importance is Drake's posthumous acceptance of responsibility for the Memorial. Now Trevelyan, when discussing Harley's 'slackness' in pursuing the author, presumes that it was Drake whom Cowper wished to prosecute.¹ But the whigs were after a bigger political fish. If Drake's authorship is to be accepted, then Harley would have been committing a grave injustice in succumbing to whig pressure for an immediate public indictment of Mackworth, without more substantial evidence of his complicity. Drake, on the other hand, was apprehended and prosecuted for views expressed in Mercurius Politicus. As the editor of the 1711 edition of the Memorial observed, in spite of Harley's efforts:²

the Author of the MEMORIAL remain'd still undiscover'd...But he being violently suspected, and obnoxious upon other Accounts to some Persons then in Power, was bound over for some Assertions in Mercurius Politicus (which he undertook to write Weekly even in the midst of these Enquiries) and being try'd for them, was clear'd upon a flaw in the Information.

One final test might be made to try to clarify the situation: using stylistic analysis it might prove possible to attribute the Memorial on internal evidence. Mackworth's known writings are preoccupied with the rights and privileges of the Commons, and the Memorial went to great lengths to defend these prerogatives in the conflict with the Lords over the Aylesbury-men. His Vindication of the Rights of the Commons of England of 1701 was followed in 1704 by Free Parliaments; or a Vindication of the fundamental Right of the Commons of England in Parliament assembled. Pro Aris & Focis, upon which much of David Edwards' allegations appeared to hang, was also concerned with the Aylesbury case. Yet this pamphlet is without an author in the standard works of bibliography for the period, and if it was Mackworth's work, then it constitutes an addition to an already

1. Trevelyan, op. cit., ii. 100.

2. The Memorial (1711), pp. ix, x.

ill-defined canon, for the writings of not only Sir Humphry himself, but also of James Drake, are a bibliographer's nightmare, without the added complication of Poley's role in the composition of the Memorial. And Drake was interested in parliamentary procedure himself.

A possible way out of this impasse might be to conjecture that Drake was Mackworth's amanuensis in the writing of the Memorial, if he was not Buckingham's. It was indeed a powerful package for Drake to venture on the strength of his own arm without equally powerful protection, and there can be no question of the quality of the veil shrouding him and preventing his prosecution for the Memorial. He had collaborated with other Tories in the past: perhaps he did so again.¹ 'Patrons thou canst not want, where Merit shines', one contemporary satire observed at this time, 'Mackworth and Pooley will support thy Lines'.² The shadowy figure of Mackworth, 'the general Pamphleteer of the Party',³ still clouds any attempt to unravel the complications of the case. Drake's posthumous acceptance of the Memorial must place the greatest, though not the only, weight of guilt on his shoulders. Poley was also clearly involved. So far responsibility can be laid with some certainty. But who else was involved? John Ward can be discounted, even David Edwards admitted that he had only implicated him on the basis of common fame. And similarly there is nothing but the opinion of the town on which to indict Buckingham. Yet someone was sufficiently involved to see a fresh edition of the Memorial through the press in 1711. There are many facets of the Edwards' case that approach real cloak-and-dagger intrigue. The simple fact that it would have been much safer and

1. Anthony Hammond assisted in his History of the Last Parliament (1701), see Bod. MS Rawlinson, A. 245, f. 67.

2. P.O.A.S., vii. 162.

3. Defoe's phrase, used in the Review, iii. 166.

easier for Edwards to name a lowly 'scribler' rather than to try to enmesh a political figure of Mackworth's significance, if it was nothing but the workings of his fancy, tends to lend weight to the authenticity of his testimony. Certainly he was hoping to escape prosecution himself, but if he were simply looking for a conviction to do this then if he had pointed the finger at Drake, then Drake no doubt would have been committed. Certainly in the depths of his anxiety Edwards embroidered, and he was remarkably proficient in coming up with additional incriminatory, but circumstantial, information when the investigation seemed to be getting no further. But unless he was really a very artful dodger, set on by the High Churchmen to deceive Harley and to guard Drake by leaving the secretary to catch a lot of red herrings, his story has a ring of truth. Throughout the enquiry he warned against a cover-up, and although he had expressed from the start his uneasiness lest he should be unable to substantiate his case, he made persistent claims that the witnesses were being allowed to get away with collusion.

Was Harley candid in his management of the enquiry? If he had been privy to the publication of the Memorial in the first place, he might have seen fit, as Cowper alleged, to hide the authors from prosecution. In turn Edwards might have expected a reward for not giving the game away, and Harley continued to make payments to the man until well into 1707. This might also explain the inexpert handling of the interrogations, the discrepancy apparent between Cowper's testimony and the carefully-compiled minutes of the examinations which took place on 19 January 1706, and Harley's evident inability to prevent the cover-up and the interference with the witnesses that Edwards warned against. But to give this credence would be to fly in the face of such potent evidence to the contrary. No, Harley's reluctance to commit Mackworth without some sort of proof is balanced by his willingness to continue the investigation throughout 1706 and well into 1707 when everyone else had forgotten the affair. If, as Cowper chose to think, he

was ineffective as an interrogator, this must be marked as a blot on his technique in examining witnesses, a task for which, of course, he had not been trained, and not as evidence of a malicious design to thwart the discovery of the men responsible for the production of the Memorial.

Finally, was Harley's failure to make anything of his long investigation into Mackworth's alleged complicity not simply the result of a mistaken assumption? Some room for doubt remains. Why, for example, did the 1711 edition of the Memorial take such great pains in the introductory preface to attribute the pamphlet to Drake and Poley if not to remove lingering suspicions that others had been involved in the original publication? Under the Oxford ministry, which was becoming ever more tory-oriented, the encomiums laid upon the head of the administration as an 'indefatigable Patriot', who had borne the brunt of both the investigation into the Memorial itself in 1706, and the criticism that accompanied the enquiry, smack of ingratiation. According to the 1711 editor, Drake bore no malice for his prosecution. Selflessly, he accepted that:

it was [Harley's] business as Secretary of State to be diligent in the Enquiries he was put upon by the Chief Minister; and whoever liv'd to see the result of two or three Years, would find that Gentleman a better Friend to the Church and Monarchy than those that were Pretenders to a much greater Affection.

The republication of the Memorial in 1711 was a symbolic call for indemnity by those High Church champions who had lampooned Harley in the past, and Sir Humphry Mackworth might well have included himself in this category. But James Drake, unless fresh evidence appears to indict Mackworth more firmly, will continue to have The Memorial of the Church of England attributed to his pen, and Harley's efforts to trace the men responsible for the pamphlet, despite the considerable energies he expended in the investigation, will be accounted unsuccessful.

Chapter Six

Government and the Press: 'The Purge of 1706'

When I had the honour to be Secretary of State I did by an impartial Prosecution silence most of [the ill-natured scriblers] untill a Party of men for their own ends supported them against the Laws & my Prosecution.

Oxford to Marlborough, 19/30 October 1711.

Harley's efforts to proscribe other active party hacks in the months that the investigation into the authorship of the Memorial of the Church of England was making its slow progress were much more straightforward, and as such they provide a more accurate picture of his policy in this sphere. In discussing the 'purge of 1706', Angus McInnes writes:¹

Even if, for a time, it did succeed in stilling the flow of seditious writing — and this is by no means certain — it clearly did not act as a permanent check...Still more uncertain is the real source and significance of the prosecutions. Who prompted them — Harley, Godolphin, the Queen? Why was 1706 chosen?...Whatever the truth of the matter, one thing is certain. The actual mechanics of the purge were entrusted to Harley.

As secretary of state, of course, Harley, in conjunction with Sir Charles Hedges, was responsible for proscription. But it is possible to answer most of McInnes' queries, and the following account will endeavour to do so. The major point raised, however, the dating of the 'purge', is surely obvious. The Memorial of the Church of England was the first full-blooded attack on the Godolphin administration in print, and it reflected on the lord treasurer himself, and indeed on the prudence of Queen Anne in allowing the implementation of the policies advocated by her chief minister. This could not be permitted to pass unnoticed and unchecked. It precipitated not only an attempt at proscription — and the previous chapter gives some idea how very rudimentary the ministerial machine was in its official dealings with the press — but a flood of further writings either for or against the sentiments expressed therein, and in this second batch of pamphlets Harley and Marlborough were not left unmolested. 1706 was not 'chosen' for an

1. Angus McInnes, 'Robert Harley, Secretary of State', pp. 73-74.

exemplary purge of the press. It was simply the first time the triumvirate actively felt the need to flex its muscles in a sustained attempt to track down those responsible for a series of seditious and libellous tracts. Hitherto there had been isolated incidents, and a number of 'scribblers', like Defoe and Tutchin, had been prosecuted as a result of government policy. But this had been a manifestation of an almost amateurish attitude to the press on the part of officialdom, and Harley's endeavours to place the ministerial press policy on a more technical basis had met with an unenthusiastic response from his fellow ministers. The exigencies of the situation in 1705, however, when a deluge of pamphlets followed the Memorial into print, all of which were principally concerned with a single issue — which party, whig or tory, should be taken in by the government — necessitated extraordinary ministerial action to prevent things getting completely out of hand. Like 1701 it was a paper war, sparked off by the tack, sustained in the election campaign, renewed by the Memorial itself, and nourished by its aftermath. The activities of the government in proscribing offenders did not stem the tide of anti-ministerial propaganda, despite Harley's retrospective claims, it had to run its course; but Harley was as much in control as he could be of the very difficult situation, selectively prosecuting the most virulent libels, and throwing a shield around the administration through the dissemination of counter-propaganda.

Even Harley was shocked and saddened by the virulence of the party hacks, and he deliberately embarked on a policy of proscription. Yet it was avowedly selective, and he only hoped to take the edge of the paper war by punishing its worst excesses, and he felt sure that 'some few examples' would suffice to silence the more outspoken attacks on the government.¹ These had to embrace both whigs and tories: he did not wish to see mass prosecutions

1. Longleat, Portland MSS, v. f. 11.

and indiscriminate pilloryings. In fact after subjecting some offenders to public trial, Harley felt they had been sufficiently corrected to stand no need of additional reformation. This was not entirely motivated by humanitarian zeal. He himself had played the part of 'scribler', and Defoe and Toland, in his employ, were using the same rhetoric as the offending writers, but in support of the government, not in opposition. Having accepted the medium of the press with all its anomalies, a sense of fair play prevented Harley taking drastic steps against the party hacks who scribbled to the tune of great men. His attitude was not appreciated by the ministerial whigs. As Trevelyan remarks, 'Whether or not Harley's slackness in these acts of party vengeance had been at all due to humanity and good sense, it was regarded as mere double-dealing by...the Whigs'.¹ Men like Cowper called for the utmost repression of the tory press. In turn Harley believed that the whigs, in wishing to censor High Church propaganda while allowing whig writers to publish unchecked, were contravening the spirit of the 'purge'. It had to be impartial, caring little for distinctions between whig and tory. Only pamphlets of a particularly virulent and malicious nature tending to sedition were to be proscribed under Harley's regime: the everyday party publication could be sold in peace

John Toland's attempt to justify the conduct of the Godolphin ministry in the Memorial of the State of England did not fail to attract attention in print. On 5 January 1706 Thomas Hearne noted in his diary:²

There is a Pamphlett come out...call'd A Letter to ye Author of ye Memorial, wch tho' it pretends to Wipe off the Slurs cast upon the Ministry of K. Wm. by ye Memorialists, yet it blackens ye Character of ye Duke of Marlborough, reflecting upon his Management in last Campaign ...It also Reflects upon Mr Secretary Harley &c. But the Author

1. Trevelyan, op. cit., ii. 100.

2. Hearne, i. 158.

discovering thro' the greatest p[ar]t of ye Letter yt he is a Whig, he may Libell with Impunity.

The government moved much more quickly than Hearne anticipated to prosecute the man responsible for this particular libel. Davenant wrote to his son on 18 January:¹

There was publishd about 3 weeks agoe one of the most virulent Libells that was ever read as well as the falsest, the malice of which was particularly levelld at the Duke of Marlborough...& at Mr Harley. At first twas thought some Red hot Tory had writ the Pamphlet. It was at last traced to Parson Stevens he who preachd the famous sermon before the House of Commons on the 30th of January about 8 Yeares agoe.

Following up Secretary Harley's 'dexterity & diligence', the cabinet had examinations relating to Stephens under consideration on 16 January, and the following day Luttrell noted the rumour that 'Mr Steevens, minister of Sutton near Epsom...will be prosecuted for reflecting on the duke of Marlborough and secretary Harley, in his letter to the author of the Memorial'.²

The Letter to the Author of the Memorial of the State of England was indeed a vicious assault on Marlborough and Harley. If Godolphin reaped the dubious praise of the Memorial, the other triumvirs were fully recompensed in the Letter, which professed agreement with three parts of Toland's pamphlet, but took umbrage at his sycophantic defence of the ministry, which he had 'so much exalted and extolled'. After vilifying the captain-general with great freedom, Harley was subjected to perhaps his most extensive public censure hitherto:³

There is a certain Gentleman, which I would have taken no more notice of than your Memorialist has done, but that you seem to be angry that he was left out of that Book...a Man who had deserted and betray'd all Parties... I shall not...dispute the Matter with you, whether this grand Omission

1. B.L. Add. MSS, 4291, f. 40.

2. B.L. Loan 29/9/26; Luttrell, vi. 7; cf. Hearne, i. 164.

3. A Letter to the Author of the Memorial of the State of England (1705), pp. 28-30.

was occasioned either by hope of his assistance, or fear that he might betray their Secrets, or any other inducement, so long as you agree with me that it could not be out of Love...You say indeed that he hated extremes in all Parties, had you said he is hated extremely in all Parties, you had varied less from the Mark than from the Words...if his literature was as extreme and consummate as these last mentioned qualities he might well pass for the most Learned Man of his Time.

Here Stephens set the precedent for the standard whig judgment on Harley's conduct and intellect which has been repeated throughout the intervening decades to Macaulay's time and beyond:¹

by establishing an opinion of his great Knowledge, by inveighing much against the ill management of the Revenue, by popular harangues, and by affecting to draw all business to his own hands, by endeavouring (through his skill in the Rules and Methods of the House of Commons) to obstruct and defeat all Motions which were not of his own making, he insinuated himself into the good liking of a credulous and unwary party.

Thus far had the split between Harley and Shaftesbury and his circle grown by 1706!

Godolphin wrote to Harley on 22 January concerning the Letter. He had been approached by the attorney-general Northey, who wished to prosecute Stephens in the duke of Marlborough's name. 'I told him I thought the Duke of Marlborough's mind would be to have him prosecuted in both your names or in neither', the lord treasurer informed the secretary, 'and so indeed I understood him before he went out of town'.² Four days later Stephens appeared in the Queen's Bench on his recognizance far from repentant:³

not in His Canonical Habit but in a grey Riding Coat wth a Whip in His Hand & look'd very bluff...[he had] ye Impudence when he was taken to say, that he believ'd Robin Harley would not prosecute him; if he did, that he knew well how to pull an old House upon his Head; and that he thought the Duke of Marlborough would not neither, but if he did, yt he knew wt to say to him too.

He was to be disappointed, for no-one took any notice of his threats.

Northey had orders to prosecute, and he read an information against Stephens

1. Ibid., p. 31. See below, chapter eleven, pp. 363, et seq.

2. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 281.

3. Hearne, i. 169-70.

at the bar of the Queen's Bench on 12 February. Despite a public recantation, published in the Flying-Post on 14 March, he was sentenced on 6 May to stand twice in the pillory and to pay a fine of 100 marks.¹ At that point Marlborough interceded with the queen on the writer's behalf, and after a brief exchange of letters between Harley and lord chief justice Holt, Stephens was excused the pillory.²

The ostensible reason behind Stephens' pardon was the ill-example it would be to pillory a man of the cloth. There were, however, extenuating circumstances, and the case for Stephens' authorship of the Letter was not as cut-and-dried as it has been represented by historians.³ Davenant had prematurely observed that Stephens, 'a hairebraind whig', had 'ownd the Book', but he pointed out that 'Parts of it are plainly above his capacity'. He gave credence to the contemporary rumour that 'Trenchard, Rawlins & his Republican clubbe are more than suspected to have had their share in the Composition'.⁴ And, despite Douglas Coombs' contention that there is no contemporary evidence to indict Rawlins with complicity in the production of the Letter, papers extant in the Portland deposit name Rawlins as author. Rawlins was patently concerned lest any insinuation that he was responsible for the Letter should reach Harley's ears. Unsolicited, he wrote to the secretary on 15 February denying any part 'in ye makeing & publishing [the] book, for wch [Stephens] is now under question'. The basis of his anxiety was a letter that had been found on Stephens' person when he was arrested. The letter was from Rawlins, advising Stephens to give leave

1. Luttrell, vi. 15, 44.

2. Ibid., p. 45; H.M.C. Portland, iv. 303; P.R.O. 30/24/20/116.

3. See Douglas Coombs, 'William Stephens and the Letter to the Author of the Memorial of the State of England (1706)', B.I.H.R., xxxii (1959), 24-37.

4. B.L. Add. MSS, 4291, ff. 40-41.

to Benjamin Bragg, the publisher of the Letter, to print 1000 more copies.

Rawlins understood that it was this letter that had occasioned the 'jealousy' that he was involved in the genesis of the pamphlet for which Stephens was being prosecuted. He sought to explain himself, admitting his known friendship with Stephens, and claiming that he had been approached by the latter for advice: '& tho I could by no means approve of what he had done, (& should have told him so, if he had consulted me sooner) yet when it was passd recovery, I thought my self obligd, as a friend & old acquaintance to assist him in what I thought lawfull'. Rawlins alleged that Bragg had offered 'to own the book & stand to the consequences, Provided he might have Liberty to print 1000 more of them for himself'. 'I advisd [Stephens] to give [Bragg] leave to print 1000 more', Rawlins admitted, adding somewhat speciously that this 'advice cannot be interpreted a design to prejudice ye Government or any person concernd in the book, since it was sufficiently publishd before'. All this, of course, tended rather to implicate Rawlins rather than the reverse, and Harley quite clearly thought so. Rawlins was particularly horrified at being thought 'the Author of a Book, wch contains in it so many passages contrary to my own knowledge, & constantly avowed principles'.¹

Now this, it must be remembered, was not Davenant's assessment of Rawlins' political creed. He was a neo-Harringtonian — a commonwealthman — or, as the tories would have it, a republican. And, as if to countenance Davenant's report of the affair, Rawlins proceeded to comment on Stephens' intellectual capacities:

I hear it is the opinion of some that Mr Stephens is not capable of writeing such a book, tho I must crave Leave to differ from them in that Particular; since the first part seems to me the proper Province of a

1. B.L. Loan 29/155/1: Thomas Rawlins to Robert Harley, 15 February 1706.

clergyman; & as for the later part, either he or any body else must needs be capable, that wil content himselfe to take up storys upon trust, & such random discourses, & flying reports wch they hear at Coffee houses, & other places of public resort, & conversation; & sett them down without due examination or inquiry into their truth likelihood or coherence. This, Sr, in my opinion is a performance neither to be envyd, or admird, & cannot surely require greater abilitys than Mr Stephens is master of.

Curiously enough, Stephens went some way to support Rawlins' contention that he had been inordinately influenced by common fame. He, like Toland, was one of Shaftesbury's pensioners.¹ On 26 January, on his appearance on his recognizance in the Queen's Bench, he gave the earl an account of the Letter:²

That your Ldp has heard of my late trouble I perceive by ye bountifull relief you were pleased to send me...I suppose you have seen ye book for writing whereof I was detected by Mr Harely [sic] who bound me to apeare in ye Queens bench court on ye first Day of this Terme: where I apeared with my Baile but there was no information against me. but I must apear on ye last day of this Terme, & then (if they intend to prosecute me) an information will be brought. I meant no harme to ye Duke of Marlborough ...I was led into an ill opinion of ye Duke's conduct, w[hic]h I published, yt his Grace might take notice w[ha]t ye world says. 'twas a rash & imprudent thing in me to doe so: but many people think yt ye book will doe good tho' it be not a fitt undertaking for such poor fellows as I am to bind Great men to yr good behaviour...I was discovered by ye Messengers of ye Press who found out ye printer. Mr Harly generously told me yt he from his heart forgave we w[ha]t was sayd of him in ye Book. 'Twas Toland's abominable flattery of him in ye State Memoriall w[hic]h led me to publish all ye scandall I had heard of him...'tis better to let men know ye worst yt is sayd of 'em than to flatter 'em. Scandall do's less harm than flattery.

Stephens' dubiously laudable motives received some sort of pardon from Harley in more ways than one, for it is clear that the secretary was also instrumental in getting the libellous parson out of the pillory. Harley clarified his position in relation to Stephens' alleged authorship of the Letter in two letters, one to Rawlins and one to Marlborough, which explained what the writer actually meant when he admitted 'writing' the pamphlet. Later in the year Rawlins once again wrote to Harley unsolicited to refute the rumour that Stephens had 'thought fitt to impose upon your

1. See P.R.O. 30/24/20/80: Shaftesbury to John Wheelock, n.d., [1703].

2. P.R.O. 30/24/20/111.

selfe & others a story of my being the Author of the book for wch he was sentenced, at least that I gave him the copy, all written with my own hand'. Claiming to have taken out a writ against Stephens for slander, Rawlins naturally enough wished to dispel any notions Harley might have of his involvement in the Letter. Harley, illustrating perfectly his limited objectives in pursuing a policy of proscription, while at the same time encapsulating his personal indifference to abusive printed attacks on his character, administered to Rawlins a severe rap across the knuckles:¹

The book which was owned by Mr Stephens had it reflected upon no one but myself, I should have taken care to have prevented any Prosecution as I was not unserviceable in preserving the unhappy man from ye Execution of ye Sentence. This was the consideration which weighed wth me not to return you any answer to your first letter, because what Mr Stephens said to me could never have come to your ears but from himself, and I thought he could have best explained the manner of his doing it. I am not willing to leave the Town without rectifying a mistake in that letter of his of which you are pleased to send me a copy in yor second by giving you a true state of ye Fact, wch is this, some time after Mr Stephens's first Examination he came voluntarily to me & said, that he was no more than Transcriber of that Book & that was it he meant when he said, he wrote it all, that the Book was brought to him in Manuscript by yourself, and that he was not the Author of one word of it; Then and not till then I shewed him that letter of yors which was taken about him, & wch was the occasion of his being asked at his first Examination, Whether any one else had any hand in it; This is al that was done in that matter relating to yor self, neither has wt he then said been publickly taken notice of by me either to do you any prejudice or him any service.

Davenant's conjecture that the 'republican clubbe' had had a hand in the penning of the Letter appears to be borne out by the facts. The pamphlet is one of those difficult pieces that was the work of more than one hand.

Although there is no proof of Trenchard's complicity, Rawlins certainly fell under direct suspicion of authorship, although no action was taken against him. 'Your Grace may please to remember that the Authors of Parson Stephen his Memorial, &c were furnished with Materials for their scandal by Letters wrote by an Officer in the Army', Harley informed Marlborough on 21 June,

1. B.L. Loan 29/155/1: Thomas Rawlins to Harley, 12 September 1706; Harley to Rawlins, 8 October 1706 (copy).

'One of these Originals have fallen into my hands'.¹ The secretary, at least, was convinced that Stephens was not alone in his guilt.

A fourth name was bandied about in connexion with the Letter. The tories were far from passive when Stephens failed to meet his fate in the pillory. Dyer, in particular, inveighed against the waiving of the sentence in his newsletter, and, as Hearne noted, as soon as Stephens' recantation appeared in print and 'made no Defence to y^e Information...y^e way was paved to his Pardon and...he knew very well that his old Friends y^e Whiggs (whose Amanuensis he was) would not leave him in y^e lurch'.² One broadside poem alleged that 'Stephens stile' was 'Begun by Shaftesbury', while contemporary notes on at least one copy of the Letter attribute it to the earl of Shaftesbury.³ And, much to his chagrin, Shaftesbury's name had also cropped up in Stephens' defence. 'The early apology you made me for your late unfortunate piece of work gave me indeed some sort of satisfaction', he was admonished, 'which might have lasted, had your public apologies been answerable'. In his recantation in the Flying-Post, Stephens had blamed the principles propounded in the Letter on impressions received from his friends in conversation. Shaftesbury's patronage of the parson was not unknown, and the earl was uneasy lest he might be embraced in this blanket categorisation. He assured Stephens that in the Letter he had gone 'contrary to any notions you had drawn from my conversations', and he felt compromised by the parson's failure to distinguish these from the coffee-house conversations he had had with men of the kidney of Thomas Rawlins.⁴ His

1. Longleat, Portland MSS, v. f. 49: 21 June/2 July 1706 (copy). My italics. The mysterious correspondence to which Harley was referring was that of Major Cranstoun, preserved in the Harley papers, and the particular letter, transcribed in H.M.C. Portland, iv. 250-55, was dated 1 October 1705. There are three extant copies of this letter, in addition to copies of subsequent missives, see *ibid.*, *passim*.

2. Hearne, i. 243.

3. P.O.A.S., vii. 161.

4. Rand, Letters, pp. 354-55: 17 July 1706. Cf. above, pp. 47-48.

anxiety was well-grounded, for Marlborough and Godolphin were convinced that Shaftesbury had sued on Stephens' behalf.¹

It is curious that both Toland and Stephens should write to Shaftesbury for his approbation after the publication of their separate pamphlets, and yet it emphasises the indifference with which the neo-Harringtonians now viewed the State-Memorialist. Toland was shocked to see his book fall under their censure. He categorically attributed the Letter to Thomas 'Raulins', with Stephens as merely the publisher.² Rawlins was his old acquaintance, and he could not understand his intention in answering the clearly whiggish defence of the Godolphin administration, especially from the assault made on it in the High Church Memorial. On Harley's instigation Toland composed a rejoinder to the Letter. This, 'A Defence of her Majesty's administration: particularly, against the notorious forgeries and calumnies with which his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, and the right honourable Mr Secretary Harley, are scandalously defam'd and aspers'd in a late scurrilous Invective', 'was immediately put to the press; but for some particular reasons it was suppress'd, when six or seven sheets were already printed'.³ Two years later, Toland, still seeking official employment, remonstrated with Harley:⁴

I may take it as my text that I own myself disappointed; for this time two years I made sure of some preferment before now, not only because my Lord Treasurer was pleased to promise I should be taken care of when he received so favourably my letter to Mr Penn, and by reason of the

1. Shaftesbury came up against 'this imaginary & false ground of prejudice' in 1707 when negotiating for a position for his protégé, Thomas Micklethwayt. See the correspondence between Shaftesbury, Sir John Cropley and Robert Molesworth, in Rand, Letters, p. 384; P.R.O. 30/24/20/136, 139, 140.

2. Toland, Works, I, lx. For evidence of relations between Rawlins and Toland in 1699, see B.L. Add. MSS, 4295, f. 6. Along with John Trenchard, Rawlins was appointed trustee of the forfeited estates in Ireland in 1700.

3. Toland, Works, I, lx.

4. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 408: 16 May 1707. Cf. Toland, Works, ii. 337-53.

particular service I was generally acknowledged to have done him in writing The Memorial of the State, with the further pains I was at in making My Lord Marlborough's Defence, it being none of my fault that it was not published, though without receiving as much as copy-money for either.

There is little to suggest that Toland wrote anything to Harley's direction after the Memorial of the State of England which was published, except a latin manuscript that the secretary had discovered, Oratio Philippica. This piece of original anti-French propaganda entitled 'Oratio ad excitandas contra Galliam Britannos' was given to Toland to edit and see through the press 'in the beginning of the year 1707'.¹ At that time one of Harley's agents, John Netterville, reported a curious conversation he had had with one 'Mr Bret, a nonjurant minister':²

He asked me if I had an interest in serving Toland. I said very little. Said he, 'Mr Penn, your friend, has a great interest;' advised me to get Mr Penn to speak to Mr Toland, that he might speak to Mr Harley, with whom he is mighty great, that Mr Harley might press Lord Treasurer to do me justice; for, added he, 'Toland is Secretary Harley's champion or penman to write as he desires as to the subject matter.'

Toland's great 'influence' with Harley resulted in his trip to Germany in Harley's service in 1707 as little more than a spy.³ He spent the time informing all who crossed his path that he had been sent 'from severall people of quality in England'. The secretary's supposed 'champion' was not employed in any capacity again by his patron.⁴

If Toland was not employed to answer the Letter, it nonetheless had its fair share of printed criticism. One anonymous author answered it paragraph by paragraph. Hearne attributed this to Defoe, to whom he also attributed

1. Toland, Works, I. lxi; cf. Heinemann, 'Prolegomena to a Toland Bibliography', p. 185.

2. H.M.C. Portland, viii. 279.

3. Ibid., ix. 289-90.

4. Ibid., iv. 456: E. Howe to Harley, 11 October 1707; cf. *ibid.*, Lewis to the same, same date; J. D'Alais to Lewis, same date. See below, pp. 325-26 for the final stage in the Toland-Harley relationship.

the Memorial of the State of England itself.¹ This seems unfounded, but Defoe did rally to the defence of his benefactors in Remarks on the Letter to the Author of the State-Memorial. Naming Stephens as author, Defoe was not slow to indict him as merely the amanuensis of the malcontents:²

To usher this Book into the World, it was necessary to find such a Thing, of which Hudibras gives a very significant Description.

a Tool
Which Wise Men work with, call'd a F[ool].

In fact he insinuated that Stephens was working not in the interest of the whigs, but of the High Churchmen. After vindicating Marlborough at length, Defoe turned to discuss the Letter's treatment of Harley, 'tho' in Truth, he has the Misfortune to find nothing to his Purpose here'. He took Stephens to task for the supposition that as Harley was not mentioned in the Memorial of the Church of England, he himself was a High Churchman, or at least a friend in need. Defoe thought he would have been nearer the mark:

Had he happen'd to say, they car'd not to bring to Remembrance...that Great Statesman [who] handed them on to their Occasional Bills, Tackings, Dangerous Experiments, &c. and seeing beyond their Reach, drove them like Solomon's fool, to the Correction of the Stocks, and made their Fury their Destruction.

Stressing Harley's dislike of party, and, especially, the extremes of party, Defoe pointed out that 'these Extreams of all Partys are the only Things dangerous to this Nation's prosperity', concluding with a four-page eulogy on the present ministers, 'tho' M[embe]rs write Memorials, Parsons write Railing Accusations, Divines turn Callumniators, and Tools work their own Ruin to gratify a Party'.

Defoe continued to attack Stephens in the Review, but he himself was under heavy fire from High Church writers in the spring of 1706. A number of

1. Hearne, i. 166. A rare copy of A Letter to the Author of the Memorial of the State of England Answer'd Paragraph by Paragraph (1706) is to be found in the John Rylands Library.

2. Remarks on the Letter to the Author of the State-Memorial (1706), pp. 3, 30, 31-35. On Harley's orders, it seems, over 2000 copies of this tract were distributed throughout the country and left in coffee-houses. See Defoe, Letters, pp. 115-18: 'Remarks &c. Sent into the Country' [April 1706?].

pamphlets sought to expose his 'false moderation',¹ and, finally, Joseph Browne undertook a 'Rehearsal of the Review' in A Dialogue between Church and No-Church, which, as far as I can gather, ran for seven issues in April and May 1706.² Defoe professed himself amazed at Browne's affrontery. 'Of all the Men in the Town', he wrote, 'I did not expect to be Attack'd by Dr Brown, for sundry Reasons'.³ One very good reason was the fact that Browne was at the time languishing in Newgate, under prosecution by Harley for publishing the libellous poem commemorating Cowper's elevation to the great seal, The Country Parson's Honest Advice to that Judicious Lawyer, and Worthy Minister of State, My Lord Keeper:

Be Wise as Somerset, as Somers Brave,
 As Pembroke Airy, and as Richmond Grave;
 Humble as Orford be; and Wharton's Zeal
 For Church and Loyalty wou'd fit thee well;
 Like Sarum I wou'd have thee love the Church;
 He scorns to leave his Mother in the Lurch.
 For the well governing your Family,
 Let pious Haversham thy Pattern be:
 And if it be thy Fate again to Marry,
 And Seymour's Daughter will thy Year out tarry,
 May'st thou use her as Mohun his tender Wife;
 And may she lead his virtuous Lady's Life.
 To sum up all; Devonshire's Chastity,
Bolton's Merit, Godolphin's Probity,
Halifax his Modesty, Essex's Sense,
Mountague's Management, and Culpepper's Pence,
Tenison's Learning, and Southampton's Wit,
 Will make thee for an able States-man fit.

On 1 February Browne was examined before Erasmus Lewis in the secretary's office where he confessed that he had given Hugh Meers a manuscript copy of the poem to print. He was immediately committed to Newgate and indicted for libel on 12 February.⁴

1. See my unpublished thesis, 'Daniel Defoe's Review and Other Political Writings in the Reign of Queen Anne', pp. 128-34.

2. I am aware of no original issues of this periodical. Seven Dialogues are reprinted in Harvard University Library's collection of State Tracts: Containing Many Necessary Observations and Reflections on the State of our Affairs at Home and Abroad; with Some Secret Memoirs. By the Author of the Examiner (1715), i. 1-43.

3. Review, iii. 169.

4. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 283; B.L. Loan 29/193, ff. 56-57; Luttrell, vi. 12, 15; Hearne, i. 176, 178.

It seems that at this point Harley tried to advise Browne not to pursue further 'the Trade of little Scriblers'. Browne chose to rely on his own judgment, and he accused the secretary of false arrest in a printed Letter, in which he claimed that Harley had 'wisely resolved, like a Great Man, as well as a Great Minister, to ruin the Trade of little Scriblers, as you are pleas'd to term such as write better Sense than great Secretaries'. He reminded Harley that he had in fact told him he was not the author of the Country Parson's Honest Advice, but only that he had handed a copy of the poem to Meers: he claimed to have told Erasmus Lewis 'the Hands from whom I received it...without any Reserve, as likewise, that it had been handed about in Manuscript, as I was well inform'd, some Days before I saw it'. 'The Printer upon Oath informs you, he had such a Paper from my Hands', Browne confirmed, 'but never said I was the Author, or desired the Publication'.¹ Harley's response was to send a copy of the Letter to the attorney-general Northey. 'I desire you will be pleas'd to peruse the enclos'd Pamphlet, entitul'd a Letter &c by D^r Brown, and let me have your opinion whether any passages of it are penal, and how far the Author of it may be prosecuted', he wrote, 'It is a notorious falsehood he asserts that no Oath was made, for M^r Borret has the Original Affidavit of Meers the Printer'.² Harley's press policy had teeth, even if he did not care to make much use of them.

Browne's confession that he handed the copy of the poem to Meers has allowed one scholar to conclude, despite the allegations made in the Letter to...Mr Secretary Harley, that 'there can be no doubt that Browne wrote The Country Parson's Honest Advice'.³ Yet although Defoe cleverly pointed out

1. A Letter to the Right Honourable Mr Secretary Harley, by Dr Browne: Occasion'd from his late Commitment to New-Gate (1706), pp. 8, 5, 6, 8.

2. B.L. Loan 29/263: 22 February 1706.

3. P.O.A.S., vii. 154.

the contradiction between Browne's contention that he was 'ignorant of the Author to this Day', and his subsequent offer to 'produce the Author',¹ there is interesting evidence to support the doctor's claims. On 29 May one Anne Watkins made a statement that Browne had copied the libellous poem out of her volume of lampoons. She further alleged that she had copied it from one Patrick Roberts, who was also ignorant of the poet responsible for the verses, 'some time since Christmas'. These transactions were supposed to have taken place some time before the poem appeared in print, and Watkins' testimony appears to bear out Browne's arguments in the Letter to...Harley.² He was a High Churchman, and he did see the anti-whig broadsheet through the press, but some doubts remains whether or not he composed the verses for which he was pilloried. This could well explain Browne's incautious resentment for his treatment at Harley's hands, and in fact he was pilloried only once for the poem, but twice more for his impudence in the Letter.³

Browne had made several very unwise assertions not only in the Letter, but also in his Dialogue between Church and No-Church. According to the 'Rehearsal of the Review', Defoe had:⁴

purchas'd a Patent to sell Scandal by Retail, and make a Monopoly of it, that if any Person presume to Trade in it beside himself, they shall be prosecuted according to Law, as practised in the S[ecretary']s O[ffic]e.

The Dialogue quickly ran into trouble with the authorities:⁵

so that it was rarely any one of them was Publish'd, but the Copies [were] presently seiz'd by the then Secretary of State's Order, by reason there were some facts then clearing, that wou'd be a manifest Prejudice to the underhand Practices of a Great Minister, who kept Hirelings at Work to do his State-Drudgery.

1. Letter to...Mr Secretary Harley, pp. 9, 10; Review, iii. 171.

2. B.L. Loan 29/193, ff. 172-73: the deposition of Anne Watkins. It is noteworthy that Frank Ellis has uncovered 12 manuscripts of the poem, but only three printed broadsheets, which might be indicative of its circulation in manuscript prior to being printed, especially as the variants in the titles are quite distinct, suggesting that they were copied from hand to hand, rather than from a printed edition (P.O.A.S., vii. 642-43).

3. Luttrell, vi. 43, 52, 107.

4. 'Dialogue IV' in State Tracts (1715), i. 22.

5. Ibid., preface, sig. A2.

In fact Harley seems to have silenced the 'Rehearsal of the Review'. The last Review taken notice of by Browne was the issue for 18 May 1706: on 24 May Browne asked Harley for leave 'to wait on you and offer such testimonies of my submission as may satisfy you that I am thoroughly convinced of my error'.¹ Three appearances in the pillory appear to have taken the edge off Browne's submissiveness. On Harley's fall from office in 1708 several poems supposedly written by some 'Favourites' of his condemned his policy of 'large Fines, and Pil[lori]es'. Browne's hand can be discerned in these. One in particular, an 'Epigram' to Harley, pointed out that:²

Had'st thou in Pow'r, been merciful and good,
As Great Men ought to be, and Christians shou'd,
The little Scriblers would have sung thy Praise,
And soften'd thy Misfortunes with their Lays...

William Pittis would no doubt have concurred in these sentiments. On 11 October 1705 he was committed to Newgate for printing his poem Fire and Faggot in the Whipping-Post. When examined by Harley he admitted responsibility for The Case of the Church of England's Memorial Fairly Stated after he had, allegedly, been given 'the most solemn Assurances, that such a Confession should be of no Prejudice to him'.³ He was sentenced to stand in the pillory three times, and to pay a fine of 100 marks. 'Like Pittis, I wou'd have you love the Church,' one poem ran, 'But not like him, be by her left i'th'Lurch'.⁴ Like Browne, Pittis retaliated against his imprisonment. In A Hymn to Confinement he stated his case against his persecutors, and echoed Browne's allegations of ill-usage in the secretary's office. 'You told me when I was under examination before you', Pittis wrote to Harley, 'that, rather than my necessities should make me comply with booksellers' requests

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 306.

2. [Robert Mann?], A Dialogue between Louis le Petite, and Harlequin le Grand [1708], pp. vii-viii. For Browne's complicity, see P.O.A.S., vii. 322-29. As well as being sentenced to the pillory, Browne was fined a total of 80 marks for the Country Parson's Honest Advice and the Letter to...Harley.

3. [William Pittis], The Secret History of the Mitre and Purse (1714), p. 29; cf. Newton, 'William Pittis and Queen Anne Journalism', pp. 184-85.

4. P.O.A.S., vii. 167-68.

in writing what they should put me upon, you would be assistant to me yourself':¹

I must beg leave to remind you, that I have kept up to the tenour of your commands in writing but one little pamphlet since [my prosecution], which I made bold to present you bound up in blue Turkey leather, by the penny post, and is entitled, "Two Campaigns in One Panegyric Essay" in honour of his Grace of Marlborough.

It was probably this effort which led Godolphin to write to Harley:²

I shall not trouble you with anything in answer to your letter about the pamphlets you have directed, only, that relating to the Duke of Marlborough being a little nice I hope you will make him read it before it be printed.

As Pittis' essay was not published it would appear that Marlborough made some objection to the 'nice' subject. Harley had made an attempt at reformation in Pittis' case, yet he was finally rebuffed by the Hymn to Confinement. Harley had few illusions about the Pittis who was pilloried. He was the author of 'many other Vile Libels' besides the Case of the Church of England's Memorial Fairly Stated.³ 'I hear Pittis is gone down to Oxford', he warned Stratford in September 1706, 'I wish some young Fellows [are] not drawn in by that pithful [sic] creature to play the fool, & bring a reflection on the university'.⁴ There was no love lost between the two after 1706, and Pittis was one of the first to jump on the fallen figure of Oxford on the accession of George I.

Pittis had his own theories on Harley's investigation into the Memorial itself. Not only did he accuse the secretary of inciting Drake and Poley to write the pamphlet:⁵

after he had in Vain beat the Bush for a Discovery, and taken up William

1. H.M.C. Portland, viii. 200-201: n.d.

2. Ibid., iv. 289-90: [10 March 1706].

3. Longleat, Portland MSS, v. f. 11: Harley to Marlborough, 26 April/7 May 1706 (copy).

4. B.L. Loan 29/171/2: 6 September 1706.

5. [William Pittis], The Secret History of the Mitre and Purse, pp. 28-29.

Shippen Esq; for running him and his Messengers off the Scent...he contented himself with causing Dr Drake to be apprehended, and bound over to be Prosecuted upon bare Suspicion...

In fact Drake was prosecuted for Mercurius Politicus. On 14 February he was tried in the Guildhall before lord chief justice Holt on an information brought by the attorney-general, Northey:¹

After a long Tryal the Jury found ye Dr guilty of writing the said Pamphlett but ye word (Nor) was laid in ye Information instead of (Not) as is in ye Pamphlet, so that ye Verdict is special & to be consider'd by the Judges.

On 6 November Drake was acquitted on an error in the indictment: two days later Northey and Harcourt were summoned to the cabinet council meeting 'about ye cause agst Dr Drake & ye judgmt of ye court about nor, (or) not. they both give an account of it'.² Northey lodged a writ of error in the Lords, but the case was still pending on Drake's death in 1707. The experiences of Drake, Pittis and Browne would appear to give the lie to Cowper's accusations of slackness of Harley's part in pursuing High Church authors of libels against the ministry. Nonetheless the coincidence with the Tutchin case is striking, down to the convenient but plausible error that found a loophole in the law to avoid a decision either way: in many ways the whole affair smacks of Harley's handling. Perhaps Drake took Harley's hint to lay down his pen, unlike Browne and Pittis, for, as far as we know, he wrote nothing more after Mercurius Politicus until his death.³

A final case study of Harley's proscriptive practices in 1706 is provided by the parliamentary outcry over the appearance in print of a letter from Sir Rowland Gwynne to the earl of Stamford. The idea that a

1. Hearne, i. 186; cf. Luttrell, vi. 16.

2. B.L. Loan 29/9/40: 8 December 1706.

3. A number of more routine enquiries were on Harley's books in 1706: Ned Ward was pilloried twice for his burlesque poem, Hudibras Redivivus (Luttrell, vi. 57; Hearne, i. 179-80; Boyer, Annals, v. 489); Charles Leslie was sought for reflecting on the kingdom of Scotland in the Rehearsal (Hearne, i. 207); and there was an investigation without success into a pamphlet called, The History of the Revolution (ibid., p. 240).

representative of the heir-presumptive to the English throne, if not the Dowager-Duchess Sophia herself, should be sent over to reside in England to smooth over the possible deleterious conditions arising from the future death of Queen Anne had been current in the country for some months when Lord Haversham brought the matter to the forefront of the political stage in a speech in the Lords on 15 November 1705 in which he proposed a motion to invite the Hanoverians into the kingdom.¹ This stimulated a court/country confrontation in the winter session, the outcome of which was the regency act, catering for the immediate setting up of a council of regency on the queen's death to pave the way for the peaceful succession of the Hanoverian heir. But there was life in the issue still when A Letter from H.R.H. the Princess Sophia, Electress of Brunswick and Luneburg, to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, with another from Hannover, written by Sir Rowland Gwynne to the Right Honourable the Earl of Stamford appeared in print discussing the possibility of inviting over the heir to the throne. On 8 March 1706 a complaint was made in the Commons about the pamphlet and several passages were read, after which it was resolved upon a division that it was scandalous and that it highly reflected on the queen, Sophia, and both houses of parliament, and that an address should be made to the queen to apprehend the author, printer and publisher of the tract.² The Lords concurred in the address to the queen, and it was agreed that the men responsible for the production of the Letter should be prosecuted when found.

1. The Lord Haversham's Speech in the House of Peers, on Thursday, November 15, 1705 (1705), p. 4. For Harley's sentiments, see N.U.L. Portland MSS, Pw2 Hy 623: Harley to How, 18/27 November 1705 (draft): 'the High project is at last sprung, & those who thought they wanted to stand right in ye opinion of ye nation with relation to the Protestant Succession have thought of no other way to clear themselves but by making a motion in ye House of Lords to cal over the next successor...they say there remains but two ways to ruine ye Succession, Force & this method'.

2. See Hearne, i. 202-203, 205, 207; Cobbett, vi. 519-32 (much of Gwynne's letter, plus the whole of Sophia's, is reprinted *ibid.*).

In fact the printed letters were genuine, and for once the ministry was well in control of the situation. Godolphin told Harley that:¹

when the Queen has received the Address of both Houses about Sir R. Gwyn's letter it will be right for her Majesty to give you commands to acquaint Monsieur Schultz with what has been done by the Parliament upon that matter, and desire him to communicate it to the Court of Hanover.

Marlborough also desired to speak to the secretary about the issues raised by the incident. Clearly on this occasion the triumvirate was ahead of parliament, and only awaited official instructions to take steps to apprehend the men responsible for the publication of the offending pamphlet. On 8 June orders were issued for a search for Charles Gildon, thought to be the publisher of the Letter. On the 14th he was committed to Newgate.² He was forced to lie in prison as his case was held over to the next term in the court of Queen's Bench, but in May 1707 he was found guilty of publishing a 'Scandalous, False, and Malicious Libel, tending to create a Misunderstanding between her Majesty and the Princess Sophia'.³ He was fined £100, and, according to Oldmixon, he was only prevented from being pilloried through the 'interposition' of Arthur Maynwaring.⁴ Sir Rowland Gwynne was allowed to go free, but his political career suffered a setback. 'Tis said her Majesty design'd to have made S^r Rowland Gwynne her Resident at Hamburg (wch is a very good Post)', Hearne observed, 'before this disobliging Letter of his came out, w^{ch} hath given such high offence'.⁵ In this, the tidiest case of proscription in the course of the 'purge', the potential of the government's press policy is to be seen.

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 289.

2. P.R.O., S.P. 44/77/36-37.

3. Boyer, Annals, v. 489.

4. Oldmixon, History, pp. 368-69.

5. Hearne, i. 207.

The fact that Maynwaring was instrumental in Gildon's escape from the pillory is significant, for it points to a perceptible shift in influence in relation to the press in the ranks of the ministry itself by 1707. This stems, of course, from the replacement of Hedges by Sunderland as secretary of state in December 1706. Sunderland was not prepared, as the senior secretary (Harley stayed in the northern department), to forgo the authority that went with the southern department. Subsequently Harley blamed the failure of his policy of selective exemplary proscription on the activities of 'a Party of men [who] for their own ends supported [the party writers] against the Laws & my Prosecution'.¹ Clearly the whigs were responsible for this with their increased interest in the administration. Slowly official authority for the press slipped out of Harley's hands to be shared jointly by the two secretaries, and, finally, to become virtually the sole responsibility of the earl of Sunderland.

Harley's plans for the resurrection of a country scheme were thwarted by the outcome of the speakership contest in October 1705 when 17 court Tories disobeyed ministerial directives to vote for the whig candidate, and polled instead for the tacker Bromley.² To this dispute over strategy, an accompanying divergence arose within the triumvirate over policy after the allied victory at Ramillies in May 1706. Harley, still advocating what was essentially country policy, urged the government to listen to the favourable overtures for peace then emanating from France. Marlborough and Godolphin held the alternative belief that a policy of attrition was more suitable in the circumstances, and that Louis XIV could be brought to his knees. In this way the opportunity to put an end to the war was lost. One of Harley's

1. Coxe, iii. 253-54.

2. Speck, 'The Choice of a Speaker', p. 29.

bitterest complaints about the duumvirs in later years was their failure to make peace after Ramillies, and Swift was subsequently to exploit this theme in his most memorable peace pamphlets. 'I think the Prince or State offendes as much against reason & justice', Harley noted, 'that omitteth a faire occasion of making an honourable & safe peace, as they wch rashly & causles more unjust war'.¹

It is significant that the Review also diverged from the government line after Ramillies to align itself perfectly with the views Harley was putting forward in cabinet. 'In my humble opinion', Harley noted in one of his cabinet memoranda in the summer of 1706, 'ye Queen & States have no other aime than to restore the Ballance of Power in Europe that every one may securely enjoy what appertains to them of Right'.² Those magical country terms, 'right', 'liberty' and 'property' permeate Harley's memoranda on the question of peace. Strangely enough, Defoe also adopted similar country phraseology in what would appear to be a pronouncement of the secretary's quintessential attitude to the war:³

I make no doubt, that this is a most just War begun upon the best Foundations; and perhaps the only just Foundations of a War, viz. Peace; 'tis a War for Peace and Liberty; all the pretensions, Declarations and Claims of the Confederacy are to reduce not France, but the exorbitant Power of France, all the profest Intentions of the Nation in this War, is to restore a lasting Peace to Europe, and bring France to Reason: Nor indeed, can any thing else be a due Foundation of War, the Blood of the many thousands of People, that fall in the publick Quarrels of Princes, can no other way be accounted for but Defence of native and just Right, and preserving the publick Peace, and Good of the Country.

War dyes of Course, when e're Oppressions cease;
They only justly fight, that fight for Peace.

Harley had accepted the War of the Spanish Succession as necessary to secure the safety of the English succession. As far as he was concerned the war had

1. B.L. Loan 29/10/1. Edward Harley dated the split in the triumvirate from Ramillies, see H.M.C. Portland, v. 647.

2. B.L. Loan 29/9/34.

3. Review, iii. 262.

been won by 1706 through victories at Blenheim and Ramillies. Returning to this country stance, he:¹

advised the Queen to command the Duke of Marlborough to march into France, when there was no army to oppose him, or else to hearken to the overtures of peace, that were then made by France, telling the Queen that nothing could be so fatal to her people as the carrying on a lingering war, which must destroy the trade and exhaust the strength of her kingdom.

And Harley was supported by Defoe in the Review:²

England is possess'd of such a vast Wealth, both in Trade, People, and Dominion, that she wants nothing to secure her...but Peace — Union at Home, and Peace Abroad is all she wants...England thrives best by Peace.

The Review, then, in the course of the crucial year 1706 began to be less a ministerial press organ, and more the mouthpiece for the propagation of the private views of Robert Harley. Godolphin, pressed increasingly by the Junto to admit one of their number into the ranks of the government in an official capacity, can scarcely have failed to realise it. Sunderland was the man mooted for elevation, and the required post was the senior secretaryship. Harley was Queen Anne's adviser against such a move. 'I am of the opinion', she informed her lord treasurer, 'that making a party man secretary of state, when there are so many of their friends in employment of all kinds already, is throwing myself into the hands of a party, which is a thing I have been desirous to avoid'.³ Harley wrote cynically to Newcastle on 10 September, 'though there have been many felicitations given and taken by "Monsieur le Comte de petite Biere" [Sunderland], yet I do not find he is in possession. It makes some inquiring people at a stand and a gaze to consider whence this delay springs'.⁴ But Godolphin was being subjected to

1. H.M.C. Portland, v. 647: 'Auditor Harley's "Memoir"'. Cf. Longleat, Portland MSS, x. ff. 132-33.

2. Review, iii. 278.

3. Coxe, ii. 2: 30 August 1706.

4. H.M.C. Portland, ii. 196.

severe pressure from the Junto. On 17 September Sunderland bluntly told his aunt, the duchess of Marlborough, that the question of his appointment as secretary had been fully considered by Somers, Halifax and himself, and that they had come to a final resolution 'that this and what other things have been promised must be done, or we and the lord treasurer must have nothing more to do together about business'.¹ On 20 November a showdown between Godolphin and Harley might have taken place, had not the secretary deemed it more prudent to give way. On 3 December 1706 Sunderland entered the ranks of the government.²

Harley had given in to Godolphin's demands that Sunderland should be appointed secretary of state: he had not submitted to the Junto. Throughout 1707 he plotted their ruin. But he was obliged to do this without the aid of a propagandist. Toland was in Germany, while Defoe had left for Scotland ostensibly to observe the progress of the act of union through the Scottish parliament. Though in his letters he continued to tell Harley in advance the subjects the Review intended to deal with, the focus was turned firmly on the union. 'I have been Considering About Treating of Union in the Review', Defoe wrote on 13 September, 'and Unless your Judgmt and Ordrs Differ believ as I shall Mannage it, it Must be Usefull, but beg hints from you if you find it Otherwise'.³ Not only did Harley evidently not disapprove of Defoe writing on one of the few topics upon which the government was, at least superficially, united; he neglected to reply to any of his agent's letters in 1707 for a period of six months, during which time, with union

1. Coxe, ii. 4.

2. See Snyder, 'Godolphin and Harley', pp. 260-62; cf. G.V. Bennett, 'Robert Harley, the Godolphin ministry, and the Bishoprics Crisis of 1707', E.H.R., lxxxii (1967), 732-35.

3. Defoe, Letters, p. 128.

duly declared, the Review moved on, after taking Harley's silence as his blessing, to begin 'a long Series of Discourses on the Reciprocall Duties of the Two Nations One to Another and to the Union'.¹

While one secretary refused to burden Defoe with correspondence, the writer noted that he had received 'severall Letters and some hints...from the Other Newly alter'd part of an office' near Harley. This suggests the office of the other secretary, and Defoe was careful to ask Harley if he would 'Suffer nothing of that to be to my prejudice'. On a subsequent occasion he told Harley that he had received information, 'I kno' Not How true, that My Ld S[underland?] is No Friend to me On an Occasion which Concerns your Self'. Defoe left the 'perticulars' of this offence 'till I have the Honor to see you', but, despite these cryptic pieces of evidence, it is true that he was closest to Sunderland than any other minister after Harley's fall from office in 1708.² On 12 June Harley broke his silence to inform Defoe that he was no longer responsible to him, but to the lord treasurer himself. For some reason Godolphin wanted to deprive his colleague of his most potent propagandist. 'I have set up my Rest', Harley wrote somewhat resignedly, 'and therefore':³

it is not in their power to disappoint me. I count upon all that impotent malice, inveterate spleen can do, by misrepresentations and notorious forgeries to do me hurt. I am prepared for all. And the wrath is greater ag[ains]t me because their Weakness as well as villanous Arts happen to be detected.

Harley was to be proved right: for the time being the relationship between Harley, Defoe and the Review had ended.

It is interesting that one High Church poet lampooned the Review and the Godolphin ministry in the months after Harley's influence had been

1. Ibid., p. 211: Defoe to Harley, 18 March 1707.

2. Ibid., pp. 202, 216: the same to the same, [13 February], 22 April 1707. See also Downie, 'Defoe and the General Election of 1708 in Scotland', pp. 320-21, 327.

3. Defoe, Letters, p. 227; cf. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 156: Godolphin to Harley, n.d. [1707?].

surrendered. For proof of whig schemes he urged his readers to turn to the press:¹

...Witness the Review,
 Their Oracle, inspired by the Three
Directors of the Whiggish Ministry,
 Conscience and Arms and Mammon, joyn'd as One
 To finish what's so piously begun.

As Frank Ellis points out, it is not the triumvirate of Marlborough, Godolphin and Harley to which the poet is referring, but that of Marlborough, Godolphin and Cowper, the lord chancellor, who was the traditional keeper of the queen's conscience. This rare manuscript poem, then, provides evidence of tory attitudes to the Review in the autumn of 1707, when, with Harley out of favour, Godolphin had turned to Cowper as a 'sounding-board' for ideas on policy.²

But this is merely one example of the way in which Sunderland progressively usurped Harley's authority over the press. The Gazette, under the editorship of Richard Steele, was hardly the vehicle for Harleyite views. For the first time since the standing army controversy Harley was without a private propagandist to whom he could turn for the publication of Harleyite philosophy. Official literature was controlled by Sunderland. When Harley wanted proceedings in the Greg case to be made public to dispel suspicions of his own complicity in his employee's treasonable correspondence with France, Sunderland prevaricated: 'What you mention about Printing the Proceedings against Greg', he wrote, 'I believe will be proper to be consider'd, when the Lords [of the committee appointed to examine the case] meet'.³ Harley was almost crucified by insinuations revolving around the

1. P.O.A.S., vii. 292. The only extant copy of Switch and Spur found by Ellis is in B.L. Lansdowne MSS, 852, f. 131.

2. For the 'triumvirate' of Marlborough, Godolphin and Cowper in the autumn of 1707, see Henry L. Snyder, 'The formulation of foreign and domestic policy in the reign of Queen Anne: Memoranda by Lord Chancellor Cowper of Conversations with Lord Treasurer Godolphin', H.J., xi (1968), 144-60.

3. B.L. Loan 29/158/1: 20 January 1707/8.

Greg affair, and he never really forgave those who sought his downfall. Henry Snyder observes that 'Sunderland took charge of the inquiry, hoping to incriminate Harley'.¹ For some time the threat of impeachment hung over him, while the mere suspicion of his guilt during the investigation was allowed to do untold damage to his reputation. Notes in Harley's hand for a speech in the Commons on 5 March 1708 in relation to the proceedings in the Greg case demonstrate how urgently Harley wanted the affair settled. 'They will see [Greg] in the Votes again', he wrote, 'Let there be some end of it'. 'Next Monday all the Votes will be printed', he pointed out reproachfully, 'That is sending me through the Kingdome again, but I can bear it'.² By the beginning of 1708 the man who had held official responsibility for the press and who had conducted the 'purge of 1706' was feeling the backlash in the hands of his opponents. But not only had the official press machine passed into other hands: the unofficial press machine he had strived to inaugurate under the Godolphin ministry had been dismantled, and its most potent organ, Defoe's Review, was under new management. Defoe returned to London at the turn of the year, with 'No hand to Act or Tongue to speak Now but by his Ldpps Directions, to whom I Resolve to be Not Onely a Faithfull but a punctuall Servt'.³ Godolphin was the new patron of the Review, and Harley was soon to be ousted to make way for the Junto to take complete control of the administration.

1. Snyder, 'Godolphin and Harley', p. 268; cf. Holmes, British Politics, p. 115.

2. B.L. Loan 29/266. For parliamentary proceedings relating to the Greg case, see Cobbett, vi. 668-725.

3. Defoe, Letters, p. 249: Defoe to Harley, 5 January 1707[/08].

Plain English from Robert Harley

It would make one mad, I had almost said as mad, as your Westminster men, to think what they have us to: That a nation & city wch hath stood the shock of Fire, Plague, Forreign warrs, hombred commotions & confusions I say to see such a flourishing nation in two or three years time despoyled of its strength, & lead to the very brink of ruine by five or six juglers.

Draft of a political pamphlet in Harley's hand.¹

By the autumn of 1707 the internecine struggle between Harley and the Junto threatened to destroy the Godolphin ministry. While the whigs demanded the secretary's removal, Harley concerted schemes with tory friends with the connivance of the queen herself. The focal-point of this confrontation was the elevation of two High Church divines, Dr Offspring Blackall and Sir William Dawes, to the sees of Exeter and Chester, in direct opposition to the wishes of the Junto.² The whig lords suspected Harley to be the man responsible for the queen's decision, and once more they tortured Godolphin with threats of reprisals — a projected attack on the admiralty and the management of Marlborough's brother, George Churchill — and the withdrawal of their support from the administration. In September 1707 the political situation was such that both Marlborough and Godolphin were convinced that an accommodation with the Junto would have to be reached, or the ministry would be unable to survive the winter session in parliament. Harley was still advocating a 'country' system of government, with men supporting the queen's administration disinterestedly in parliament as long as this was seen to be pursuing policies that kept the public good closely at heart.³ At the beginning of December 1707 he tried once again to put such a system into operation. Though the agents of this attempt at non-party government

1. B.L. Loan 29/12/7.

2. For an excellent account of the affair, see Bennett, 'Harley, the Godolphin ministry, and the Bishoprics Crisis', pp. 726-46.

3. See, in particular, H.M.C. Bath, i. 110: Harley to Godolphin, 15 October 1706. Cf. B.L. Loan 29/171/2; N.U.L. Portland MSS, Pw2 Hy 662.

were the tories who naturally formed the majority of independent backbenchers in the Commons, it was not essentially a tory scheme,¹ and finally Godolphin 'fixed his game to make a party of Whig & Tories...that had never been in play'.²

The duumvir's resolution was of a more fragile nature than the enthusiastic Harley's, and Godolphin soon realised, after a few frights in parliament, that a coalition between the extreme wings of both parties would result in the government's defeat. At a meeting of government supporters held, as usual, at the house of the chancellor of the exchequer, Henry Boyle, on 14 January 1708 (ironically, one of those meetings which Harley himself had done much to inaugurate in the first years of the reign), the secretary presented his plans for the last time.³ From then on, with the lord treasurer blocking the way to the implementation of his proposals, Harley's scheme, as Holmes and Speck aptly put it, 'went underground'.⁴ There were secret approaches to tories, but on the behalf of Harley himself, not with Godolphin's blessing. Finally these came to the lord treasurer's ears. Having been continually assured by Harley that not only did he not have any 'ideas' of his own, but that in his view the natural basis of the queen's government rested on Marlborough and himself, Godolphin not surprisingly felt betrayed.⁵ Again Harley tried the old platitudes, but they were by now meaningless. 'I have received your letter', Godolphin wrote on

1. This is made very clear in Harley's correspondence at this time with Newcastle, B.L. Loan 29/237, f. 103; cf. H.M.C. Bath, i. 188. Snyder's account of the manoeuvres of December 1707 is comprehensive and convincing, 'Godolphin and Harley', pp. 263 et seq. Cf. Speck, 'The House of Commons', i. 183-85.

2. P.R.O. 30/24/20/141: Sir John Cropley to the earl of Shaftesbury, 30 December 1707; see Snyder, 'Godolphin and Harley', p. 267.

3. See Harley's memorandum for this meeting in B.L. Loan 29/9/51.

4. G.S. Holmes and W.A. Speck, 'The Fall of Harley in 1708 Reconsidered', E.H.R., lxxx (1965), 684. The evidence relating to Harley's fall is presented comprehensively *ibid.*, pp. 673-98. I agree, however, with the strictures passed on the conclusions of Holmes and Speck in Snyder, pp. 263-71.

5. See H.M.C. Bath, i. 181; Coxe, ii. 173; Snyder, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-62.

30 January 1708:¹

and am very sorry for what has happened to lose the good opinion I had so much inclination to have of you, but I cannot help seeing and hearing, nor believing my senses. I am very far from having deserved it from you. God forgive you!

In an account of Harley's character and career which was intended for his History of the Four Last Years of the Queen, designed as a justification of the Oxford ministry's peace programme, but never published in his lifetime, Swift wrote:²

The late ministry about two years before their fall [in 1710], had prevailed with her Majesty much against her inclination to dismiss him from her service, for which they cannot justly be blamed, since he had endeavoured the same thing against them, and very narrowly failed.

He forwarded a draft of this account to Harley, and it is preserved in the Portland papers at Longleat. Curiously enough it is not emended at this point.³ This of course is a very different account from that given in 1710 in Faults on Both Sides when Harley was trying desperately to accommodate individual members of the old ministry:⁴

the party gave out that he had been working underhand to throw out the very ministers themselves, whereas the utmost of his aim could be to reform or ballance; for to think of displacing and disgracing them at that time of day, was fit for no man in his wits.

The reaction to the news that Queen Anne was contemplating the formation of a government without Marlborough and Godolphin demonstrated the impossibility of administering through Harley. He was obliged to resign. Although it is clear that his plan, as Addison observed, 'came to light before its time',⁵ while the friendships on which he placed so much faith failed him,⁶ Swift was certain that it was 'the greatest piece of Court skill that has been

1. H.M.C. Bath, i. 190.

2. Swift, Prose Works, viii. 73-75.

3. Longleat, Portland MSS, xiii. ff. 47-8; cf. H.M.C. Bath, i. 226.

4. Somers Tracts, xii. 693.

5. Letters of Joseph Addison, ed. W. Graham (1941), p. 95.

6. P.R.O. 30/24/21/145: Cropley to Shaftesbury, [11 February 1708?].

acted these many years'.¹ More cynically, Lady Wentworth wrote to Lord Raby on 10 February: 'It was all the report of the town yesterday that the Duke of Molberry and Lord Treasurer were both put out, but it is now only turned to Secretary Harloe'.² Whatever the ins and outs of the intense power struggle that enveloped the ministry at the beginning of February 1708, the outcome was the dissolution of the partnership that had stretched back to the old country party days of the 1690s. A new foundation was needed upon which the country system envisaged by Harley could be erected.

Several satires on Harley were, not surprisingly, published to celebrate his fall: as one set of verses put it, 'Harlequin le Grand' was unfortunate enough to have 'become the Subject of Lampoon,/ For all the little Scribblers of the Town'.³ Erasmus Lewis wrote to Harley in his retirement on 19 June on the appearance of this pamphlet:⁴

I hear there is a very scurrilous pamphlet in the press, wherein I have the honour to be introduced holding a familiar conversation with you, who are distinguished by the name of Harlequin le Grand as your servant is by that of Louis le Petit. Mr Man is I am told the author, or at least has contributed the materials to it, but as I never in my life ate or drunk in his company, much less have you ever been free with him, I cannot conceive how he should pretend to be able to draw your picture or mine. As for his baseness I do not wonder at it, because I know he inveighed against you in all public places the minute you were out, though I never told you so before, because I knew you as little cared to hear such stories as I cared to relate them.

In the Dialogue, Harley's conduct as secretary was freely censured in relation to the press:⁵

Did you not use to promise the poor Scriblers, you would never take any Advantage of their Confessions to you, and then oblige me to come in Evidence against them upon their Prosecutions? Then did you not use to promise, you would not punish 'em, but let 'em depend on you, 'till you

1. Swift, Corr., i. 71; cf. Cowper's Diary, p. 43.
2. Wentworth Papers, p. 76 (wrongly dated 1709).
3. A Dialogue between Louis le Petite, and Harlequin le Grand, p. iii.
4. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 493.
5. Dialogue, p. 18.

had compleated their Ruin? Did you not use to promise those that would plead guilty, all the Favours you were capable of conferring on them, which were Fines, Pillories, and Imprisonments?

Louis le Petite's accusations smack of the case of William Pittis, while Joseph Browne has been named as author of the prefatory poems, and indeed of the Dialogue itself.¹ Perhaps the pamphlet was a joint effort, compiled from materials supplied, as Lewis suggested to Harley, by Robert Mann.

'What would you have done with your T[oo]ls at G[uil]d-Hall, against the whole Tribe of Authors, Printers, and Publishers, had not I been your standing Ev[iden]ce?', Louis asked, admonishing Harlequin for 'punishing one for being the Author of a Libel, that was hatch'd among our selves'. And the Dialogue also drifted close to the truth when Louis admitted that Harlequin 'did but dissemble with the C[our]t, when you made such a Splutter to hunt out the Church-Memorialist, and afterwards turn'd State-Memorialist your self'.²

In this political climate Harley himself once more turned pamphleteer, isolated as he was from those who had formerly been his propagandists. As soon as he was out of office he gradually began to review the state of the nation, and he placed the blame for the poor conditions on the shoulders of Marlborough and Godolphin, who, having taken over the reins of kingship in their own right, were protracting the war for their own profit. This, at least, is what he allegedly saw happening, and he composed various sets of queries, apparently with publication as a vague aim, to illustrate the dangers to which the nation was being exposed by the duumvirs.³

1. P.O.A.S., vii. 322; W.L. Payne, 'Defoe in the Pamphlets', Philological Quarterly, lii (1973), 91. Additional evidence that Browne may have been involved in the publication of the Dialogue is the fact that it is reprinted, along with a number of his works, including the Dialogues in which he rehearsed the Review, in Harvard University Library's collection of State Tracts, and there are a number of references to Defoe in both that suggest the complicity of the same author in each. Browne may also have been the author of another attack on Harley, The Welsh-Monster: or, the Rise and Downfal Of that late Upstart, the R[igh]t H[onoura]ble Innuendo Scribble.

2. Dialogue, pp. 13-14, 4.

3. B.L. Loan 29/10/22, 25: 31 March, 15 April, 14 May and n.d., 1708.

...Whether our ministers think it their Interest to reduce France or Brittain?...Whether Volpone has not been snard wthout his mask?... Whether those who have been Bullied once wil not always submit to be kick'd?...How long a nation wil suffer themselves to be cheated by names? ...Whether those who have got the greatest wealth in the Nation, have not made the greatest improvent of the names whig & tory?...How comes it that there are two Kings of Brandford, & never a sovereigne at London?...Is it not more wonderful that the two K[ing]s of Brentford should subdue the sovereigne of London?...What do the Dutch mean by representing this Island as an ass with two men upon her back & spurring her?...Whether Ingratitude is not one great reason of Volpone's fear? A Tyrant ungrateful is always afraid.

Here, in successive drafts of queries from March to May 1708, Harley aired his views on the state of the nation, and his changing attitude to the duumvirate can be documented. Volpone, a nickname persistently applied to Godolphin, can hardly be misconstrued, and the two men on the ass's back were surely meant to signify Marlborough and his colleague in the treasury. By the summer of 1708 Harley was ready to lay all the ills of the kingdom at the door of these 'mock kings'. The definitive anti-Marlborough thesis finally emerged from these somewhat limited initial exercises in the form of the manuscript tract, 'Plaine English to all who are Honest, or would be so if they knew how'.¹

'Plaine English' anticipated in many ways the arguments that ultimately saw the light of day in Swift's Conduct of the Allies. Employing country rhetoric throughout, and embodying the thoughts and desires of the independent country gentlemen, 'Plaine English' was addressed to 'Men, Brethren, Fathers & Countrymen', and it set out to speak in their language without affectation:

I beseech you give attention while I speak to you the words of Truth and Soberness. I have for many years been no negligent or incurious observer of what has passd upon the Stage of the World; And now on recollecting, I find we are fallen into the latter days. Indeed into the very dreggs of them for the mischiefs I have seen perpetrated for at least fifty years are now united in one stream & come Rolling down with fury upon us; I see the same Hands who acted what was clamord agst in former Reigns. (p. 102.)

Expressing what many country gentlemen were beginning to feel in their

1. All quotations are from the edition of the tract by W.A. Speck and J.A. Downie, Literature & History, iii (1976), 100-110. Page references are supplied within the text in parentheses.

hearts, while the nation languished under the burden of a long and expensive war, Harley claimed that not only had the lesson of the Civil War been ignored, but that even the events of 1688 had failed to halt the growth of corruption in the state. Having 'very briefly' accounted for the 'violences' which 'brought on the Revolution', with the encouragement of parties as the prime instance of court intervention in parliament, Harley turned to the political scene of the succeeding twenty years, exhorting his audience to 'consider...if any thing of that kind has been done since':

I do...not take pleasure in raking into a Dunghil nor should I expose ye crimes of Great men if they showed an ounce of Repentance or amendmt.

But who can be silent when he sees his mother Bound Stript & ravishd & not stir to her assistance? Shal the Titles or Beauty of ye Ravisher, shal his pretences or oths deceive me? Those oths those imprecations wch have been as often broke as made: those oths that neither of them beleive or dare trust each other in...This provokes me to cry aloud & not spare but to lift up my voice to warne my fellow subjects that they may not twice be brought to ye brink of Ruine by the same methods & the same men ...I shal strip them of their disguises & shew them as they are in themselves. (p. 104.)

At this point Harley launched a severe indictment of the political morality not only of the duumvirate, but of the whole circle surrounding them which he christened the 'Family'. It was accused of fomenting faction in religion, while 'Preferments in the meantime fall to the share of none but those who flatter, & professe fealty to the Duumvirate':

In vaine has the law taken care that Homage should be performd to ye crown, that they swear to hold of that only. In vaine are men obliged to swear that no Prince or Prelate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, pre-eminence or Authority within these Realms but the Queen.: unless you worship this Golden image all other things are vaine: Parts, Learning, Probity, the voice of the People, I had almost said the voice of the Crowne, are not sufficient recommendation. (p. 104.)

'As to ye civil Government', Harley continued, 'it is visible in whose hands al power is and let us see how they use it':

the chiefest places of Profit & Trust are shared by the family; they let their vassals have nothing that they can keep themselves or give to their own kindred. Whoever stands in their way must be removed at any expence... It is needless to enumerate particulars to my honest Countryman. Let him but consider man by man those who make the greatest noise for these usurpers: & He will from his own observation be able to forme a true judgmt. (p. 105.)

These transparent references to Sunderland's appointment, Harley's own fall, and the crisis over the bishoprics, when the queen dared to suggest two men worthy of preferment herself, without consulting her ministers and securing their approbation, were merely part of the picture sketched by Harley, however, as he proceeded to take the Godolphin ministry to task over the management of the public funds. 'This is a very large field', he pointed out, '& is most proper for the disquisition of the Parliament'. For these reasons, ominously professing it unfit to anticipate a parliamentary enquiry, Harley proposed merely to give 'a General Sketch':

For these six years there have been the most liberal and most effectual grants that ever people gave to their sovereign; you will say it is very easy to manage and Govern a full Purse but I must tell my honest Countryman there will be a heavy after Reckoning. Even the Civil List will produce a Debt that will startle him while a multitude of the greatest & most preferred Offices and Pensions together with the privy Purse are engrossed at Home, and an uninhabitable Palace is erecting...What should I name selling of Places, which is so common that every chairman knows it and the Brokers who act therein. In short necessary services are starved to enrich an overgrown family. Spaine is sacrific'd to their ambition & avarice, our fleet made so unwieldy & expensive in order to make an army necessary, & a ship cannot be built without some of the family having a footing in it & in one word you have nowhere abroad the army you pay for, neither are any accounts made up at home which relate to the Warr. Every year we are amused with chimerical designs in order to cover the cheats & misapplications of money and whilst one family share amongst them the wealth of the nation, who have more yearly coming in from the Public... than Queen Elizabeth had to succour France, relieve Holland, secure Ireland & fight with Spain. (p. 105.)

Touching the country gentlemen on their tenderest spot, their pockets, Harley, in terms reminiscent of the arguments used against a descent on France in the early 1690s when the use of the fleet as the main defensive arm was being advocated in the Commons,¹ not only supplied a vivid and

1. Above, pp. 20-22. Harley's allegations about the army are supported by documents in B.L. Loan 29/45/2, 4-5. On 8 October 1707 Sir Philip Meadows expressed satisfaction to find that Harley had 'at last obtained more positive Orders for ye sending of Troops to Spain'. 'Plaine English' clearly shows that Harley was suspicious of the duumvirate's handling of the war in Spain, and, indeed, that he thought them guilty of the misappropriation of funds designed for the peninsular war. Could these be the 'mismanagements of the ministers' which he allegedly 'faithfully discovered to the queen' some time before his fall? (Faults on Both Sides, in Somers Tracts, xii. 693.)

disturbing picture of taxes supposedly levied to support the war-effort being surreptitiously 'rolled into the Long Bottomless Purse', he applied salt to the wound in suggesting that:

of this immense sum which they annually hoard up, not one of them has thought fit to lay out one shilling upon land; They will not give so small a [Heritage] as that to their Country of their fidelity, neither will they pay one farthing to the Public Rates while the Poor freeholder stoops down under the heavy weight of multiplied and continued taxes. Like their predecessors the Jewish zealots, they bind heavy burdens and hard to be borne upon mens shoulders, but will not touch them themselves with the top of their fingers; no wonder the Landed man is so hard pressed when our Task masters feel not the least part of it themselves. (pp. 105-106.)

Passages such as these were aimed to dig deep into the country psyche, and the essential neo-Harringtonianism evident throughout the tract reveals Harley's mentality for what it was — still imbued with the country theory of his younger days.

'Thus my Honest Countrymen, I have given you a very short view of great mischiefs', Harley concluded, 'those you feel, those w^{ch} you at present groan under, & such until God be merciful and the Parliamt virtuous & boldly exert themselves, you & yr posterity wil for ever be subjected to through an insatiable avarice & boundless thirst of Power'. What was the remedy? Firstly he urged his audience to examine 'the methods used to support this ill gotten wealth & power' (p. 106). The answer lay in the insidious and artificial division into whig and tory, Harley argued: 'let me Appeal to you al both whigs & torys from what quarter you have reason to fear Danger', he urged, 'do but confer notes together, & you will find the same Persons have every year amusd Each of you, & raild at one Party to the other, while they cheated and abused you both':

Their chieftest Art is to keep up Factions amongst us. This they learnt in that virtuous Court [of Charles II] where they had their education, but they have far out done those times. The nation was then divided into those who were jealous for their Liberty & Property on the one hand, & others who were alarmd with the fear of a designe to overthrow the church & monarchy. And tho now the foundations of those Partys are abolished; yet is the Fury & Rage stil kept up by wicked arts. (p. 106.)

This time anticipating the arguments that were to be employed two years later in Faults on Both Sides, Harley urged a general reconciliation of the imaginary differences that divided the nation. 'And wil you still go on blinded with mutual Rage agst each other', he demanded, 'while they warme themselves at your intestine fires & are secured by your wilful blindness':

Unite upon common Principles, agst those who would rend you & then you wil quickly give the enemies to the Public their just Doom. Consider this & be no longer tools to those who make a prey of you & recommend themselves to each Party by slandering the other. Let me ask you seriously have you any regard to ye Principles each of you profess? Then how can you promote the interest of those who study to overturne everything either of you would set up, & have no pretence to any Principle but to dash you to peices agst one another, in order to set up themselves. (pp. 106-107.)

This was a powerful argument, and Harley proceeded to go through the supposed tenets of faith of each party in turn, to demonstrate how these were directly contrary to the state of affairs existing under the auspices of the Family: favourites, bribery and corruption in parliament, these things fell under the scrutiny of the man who wished to speak plain English. 'As to influencing Returnes, & Elections', he continued, 'Speak O Cornewal & Answer thou O Scotland and ye rest of ye island between wil witness against them' (p. 107). Harley wanted to know if there had been 'any endeavours to make ye Gent. of England poor both in spirit & purse that they may the more easily be Governed'. Certain of a positive response, he did not hesitate to point out that such corrupt practices could hardly be maintained without a standing army, 'and wil you suffer them', he asked, 'to hope for your assistance in establishing that!' (p. 107).

Harley also took the liberty of speaking 'as plainly [to] you who are calld Tories', and he claimed to be unable to see how they could profess allegiance to the constitution in church and state when the monarchy was being undermined by 'mock kings'. 'Is it not apparent to all ye world', he enquired, 'that all artifices are used to expose & lessen the Crowne & at the same time to magnifie themselves?' The lesson of the abortive invasion

of Scotland by the Pretender in March 1708 was sufficient, Harley felt, to signify who were the favourites of the court of St Germain: 'They have the marks upon them' (p. 108). Finally, the ailment diagnosed, he exhorted both parties to rouse themselves:

be assur'd that as soon as they see you have purgd out ye opium you have taken, & begin to rouse yr selves & act upon true principles, these Heathen magicians wil never stand before you. Their guilt & consciousness of their own treachery makes them fearful, & they seem to have made provision for the storme by the vast sums of mony they have in more places than one beyond the sea. (p. 109.)

The cure was simple once the illness was recognised. All that was needed was awareness of the dangers threatening the nation:

Therefore my Honest Countrymen do as I do speak plaine English in yr markets, to yr neighbours, to one another, to yr representatives & tell them you expect they should speak plaine English, for wch purpose liberty of speech is granted. And you need not doubt of being delivered from the evils you fear and those others you have just reason to fear. (p. 109.)

'Plaine English' was never published in Harley's life-time. Yet Harley wrote to Stratford on 26 September 1708: 'I have some reason to beleive by hints that are sent to me that you wil quickly see something in writing'.¹ If this was not 'Plaine English', what was it? 'There's a dream from Harwich which sells well, and is reckon'd a very cunning and insinuating paper', Peter Wentworth informed Lord Raby four months later on 25 January 1709, ''tis too scurrilous and I think a little too big to be put in a letter; most people I have talk't with of it will have it Harley's stile, by what you will see 'tis reckoned no foolish thing'.² Wentworth was not far from the mark, for An Account of a Dream at Harwich. In a Letter to a Member of Parliament about the Camisars, dated 21 December 1708, contained the whole of Harley's argument about the blindness of the people, but placed

1. B.L. Loan 29/171/2.

2. Wentworth Papers, p. 74; cf. Cobbett, vi. 76ln.

within an allegorical framework.

That the Dream was a Harleyite pamphlet can be proved beyond doubt. 'I hear the Dream was made use of as an argument for the motion of giving thanks to his Grace [the duke of Marlborough]', Harley's son, Edward, noted on 30 January 1709, 'Lord William P[owle]t said that he was sure somebody was the author of it, a discovery worthy of his Lordship's penetration'.

'Though the taking notice of that libel was said to be contrary to the direction of the persons thought to be most concerned in it', Edward Harley continued, 'yet Mr Lechmere's zeal could not forbear it on that occasion. He, I hear, explained it all, and said that it ought to be censured, but the House burst out in a loud laugh and nothing was determined that way'.¹

The Dream, in one edition, was signed 'A.M.', which was immediately taken by contemporaries to signify Robin's 'heifer', Abigail Masham.² There were few illusions that the pamphlet was anything other than a direct Harleyite attempt to undermine the credibility of the Godolphin ministry.

Convincing additional evidence of Harley's complicity in the production of the Dream is internal. The narrator, having been 'on a sudden taken with a Drouiness so insupportable...I was forc'd to submit to it', fell into a dream in which he had a vision of a land that had a remarkable allegorical similarity to the state of the nation under the duumvirate:

I...soon found my self in a Croud of People holding their Fingers in their Ears, and most of them had their Eyes fast, but all half-shut: and with them carry'd into, and mix'd with another Croud, where I saw nothing but Disorder and Confusion, Treachery and Violence; every one complaining of his Neighbour, but none so much as attempting to put a stop to the mischief. Some were undermining Foundations, others plucking up Fences;

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 517-18: to his aunt, Abigail Harley. Cf. H.M.C. Bath, i. 195.

2. These initials have caused the Dream to be attributed, quite mistakenly, to Arthur Maynwaring. There are at least two different editions of the pamphlet: one, the B.L. copy (press-mark 3901. b. 22.), is 8 pages long; the other (Bod. G. Pamph. 820 [10]), is a better edition of smaller folio size, pp. i + 15, with the colophon: 'London, Printed for B.Bragg in Pater-noster-Row. M.DCC.VIII'. In this edition the account is signed 'A—r M—m'. All quotations conform to this edition, and page references are supplied in the text within parentheses.

some were untiling Churches, others forcing the Town-House to maintain the Riot. (p. 4.)

The strange town, then, was Britain under the administration of the duumvirs. The supporters of the family were looting the nation, undermining the constitution and the church, and corrupting the parliament, while the silent majority of country gentlemen, the 'people', were transfixed. The image of blindness — hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil — was endorsed by the revelation that among the crowd 'were a sort of Fellows... with great Bags of Sugar-Plums; and if one of them did but open an Eye, or lift a Finger from an Ear, one of these presently pop'd a Sugar-Plum in his Mouth, and he sprung immediately into his old Posture' (p. 5). With the citizens drugged into compliance one is reminded of 'Plaine English', where Harley likened the people to an opium-ridden, blind and selfish mass.

The narrator went on to describe certain characters. The Junto and their adherents are readily identifiable as 'a great number of Men with impudent Faces, some of them shabby, others very well dress'd, and many with Coronets on their Heads', who ran about 'to increase the Distraction'. 'They had written on their Backs, in pretty plain Characters (The LIARS) which I did not perceive they were in the least uneasy at' (pp. 4-5). 'To my apprehension', A.M. continued, 'all was going to Destruction...for some of the chief Magistrates of the Town...calling for Clerks and Papers, I thought, would do something; but to my surprize it was only to order a Collection, for the better Maintenance of a Puppet-Shew' (p. 6).¹

From a ridge overlooking the town, a horseman in golden armour surveyed the disorder with satisfaction. This 'Judas Iscariot' figure was clearly meant to represent Marlborough. He was discomfited by a second rider in

1. The Dream was published to incite the opposition to concerted action against the government in the winter session of 1708-09. One of the main concerns of the country elements in the run up to the meeting of parliament was that supplies would be meekly offered without an attempt to have grievances redressed. 'Parliament is to meet tomorrow', Robert Pitt wrote to Thomas Pitt on 15 November, 'to choose Sir Richard Onslow Speaker, vote supplies pro forma, and little else; for all matters which used to be its business are now arranged in private meetings' (H.M.C. Fortescue, i. 38).

polished steel, who 'had on his right Arm a heavy Cramp', and also by a 'shining Youth' to whom he was forced to perform courteously, but behind whose back he scowled and mumbled. The first, clad in armour of polished steel, was almost certainly Harley's ally, the earl of Peterborough, recalled from the peninsular war early in 1707 prior to the catastrophic allied defeat at Almanza which effectively lost control of Spain. The cramp on his arm refers to the restraint continually placed upon him by Marlborough, until his command of the British troops in Spain was handed over to the whig favourite, Galway. Peterborough was used persistently as a counter to whig exaggerations of Marlborough's pre-eminence as a general, a figurehead who suited admirably Harley's claims that Spain was being sacrificed so that Marlborough could win futile victories in Flanders. He was a prominent feature of the tory propaganda campaign in 1708.¹ The 'shining Youth' was the young Prince George of Hanover, and the insinuation was that Marlborough preferred to support the Pretender to perpetuate his own power. He could not oppose the Hanoverian succession openly, but he was nonetheless, as 'Plaine English' had put it, the 'favourite' of the court of St Germain. (pp. 7-8.)

Godolphin was characterised unmistakably as:

An old swarthy Man, his Countenance peevish and scornful, sitting on a round Ball, on the Edge of a Precipice; his Seat ever tottering...[on account of] five or six Jugglers — who only with their Breath shook and fasten'd it at their pleasure. (p. 8.)

This, with the lord treasurer teetering on his throne and totally subject to the whims of the Junto, is a peculiarly apt description of the situation into which Godolphin had been manoeuvred, and it is particularly noteworthy that in 'Plaine English' and elsewhere Harley was inordinately fond of the

1. For Peterborough and his role in the War of the Spanish Succession, see Trevelyan, England Under Queen Anne, ii. passim. Trevelyan discusses the motives which may have influenced Marlborough to make such a (in his opinion) disastrous choice as commander of the forces in the peninsula. It is interesting, in view of his later championing of Peterborough, to speculate on Harley's possible part in the decision. (Ibid., pp. 79-81.)

term 'jugglers', and its corollaries 'conjurors', 'heathen magicians', and 'imposters', all of which were mooted as alternatives in the first draft of 'Plaine English'.

Attention was suddenly diverted to a fire which had broken out in the northern end of the town. The analogy with the abortive invasion of Scotland was transparent, and it was noticeable that this false alarm 'recover'd many from their Blindness, and made them think of their Danger':

But presently I saw the old Man on the Hill shake his Stick, and these mounted up to him by several Paths in a trice, kneel'd down, receiv'd his Blessing, and swore they would never see or hear again while he liv'd.

The same thing happened when 'half a dozen pert young fellows' standing close by the narrator, 'swore they would see things mended, and bring down the Conjuror':

I was pleas'd with them [A.M. observed]; but in a moment some cunning Whipsters came down the Hill, pick'd their Pockets, and carry'd them up to him; where being touch'd with his Stick, they came down again, and ran about the Croud swearing all was well. (p. 9.)

This seems a covert reference to the Harleian putsch in the winter of 1707-8 and the failure of those who had, perhaps, promised to support him against the duumvirs, when offered advancement and pensions by Godolphin.¹

The narrator was pleased to observe that there was 'a Set of grave Persons' who refused to be part of the general blindness. These, 'shrugging their Shoulders, and making Signs of Discontent', caused no little disturbance in the features of the old man and the horseman in golden armour:

No Inchantment had power over these; they were some of 'em in square Caps, others in Habit and Mien seem'd Persons of Quality; some were in Gowns like our Judges, others like our Clergymen; some dress'd like Gentlemen, and some few in long Clokes and little Bands...these were the true Friends of the Town, whose Virtue had preserv'd them from the Conjurors Power.

These, of course, were the Harleyites and their adherents among the supporters of the Church of England, the country gentlemen who refused to fall in with the measures of the duumvirate and the Pretender. A.M. followed

1. The 'enchanted white wand' imagery was characteristic of Harley's rhetoric. See, for example, H.M.C. Downshire, I. ii. 794: Robert Harley [endorsement] to [Sir William Trumbull], 31 October 1699.

this patriotic band:

we came to one [place] all Mourning; there I saw those Persons, who had first past the Croud, all looking up to a Place like a Throne.

And there sat, under a Purple Shade, one whose every Look and every Motion, spoke Majesty, and Goodness, Justice, and Truth. Sad and dejected was the Posture, yet calm and serene; none that look'd that way but bless'd, and every Tongue prais'd this Appearance; some few from the Croud excepted, who with envious Eyes paid a forc'd Homage, while they whisper'd Curses; and their Looks, disorder'd with various Passions, distinguished them from the rest. (pp. 10-12.)

Quite patently, this was Queen Anne, in mourning for the recent death of Prince George of Denmark, her husband, and, of course, equally in mourning for the sad state of the nation. She was not alone:

On the right hand sat an oldish Woman, of a fair Countenance, a youthful Dress; her Chin and Nose turning up, her Eyes glaring like Lightening, blasted all she had power over with strange Diseases. Out of her Nostrils came a sulphurous Smoke, and out of her Mouth Flames of Fire. Her Hair was frizled, and adorn'd with spoils of ruin'd People...her Garment was all stain'd with Tears and Blood...She cast her Eyes often with Rage and Fury on that bright Appearance I have describ'd, over whom having no force, she toss'd her Head with Disdain, and glared about on her Votaries, till we saw several possest with her. One was a bulky Figure in white from the Altar, who lay a while convuls'd, then ran distracted among a Bacchanalian Crew, follow'd by many in like sort, and such Habit. (p. 12.)

Immediately apparent as a characterisation of the duchess of Marlborough, this sketch was moreover a personification of the Family, and a catalogue of their crimes and excesses. Not content with looting the nation, and receiving the homage of her 'Votaries', the creature desired absolute dominion and the outward trappings of kingship. Compare this with the section in 'Plaine English' where Harley contrasts the 'mock suns' with the 'true sun'; the sun imagery is carried over into the Dream in the bright appearance of the queen. The 'imposter' or would-be 'usurper' even mocked the true sons of the Church by exacting due reverence from among the ranks of the clergy. The 'bulky Figure in white' was a point of some confusion:¹

at first [it] lay between the A[rch-]B[ishop] of C[anterbury] and the B[ishop] of S[alisbury]; but the B[ishop] of S[alisbury] carries it clearly without dispute...

1. Wentworth Papers, p. 75: Peter Wentworth to Lord Raby, 28 January 1709.

The firm alliance which existed between the Marlboroughs and Gilbert Burnet was well-known, and it was fitting that he should be characterised as the Family's anti-priest.

It remained for the narrator to draw together the threads of his vision, and to conclude with a moral. For this he approached a sage by-stander:

The first...under the Purple Shade, is the Guardian Angel of the Town [A.M. was told] and all the Neighbouring Villages, and is design'd by Fate to be their Preserver and Deliverer: But that other Figure...has Permission for a determin'd time to fix her Seat, with audacious Impudence, hard by the Angel; and with her Darkness to obscure its Light, intercepting every good Influence; and has power to cause all the Distractions...or all the Villanies both in the Croud and on the Hills, are contriv'd and acted by Fiends, under her Direction; yet her Power is limited, and the Angel has hitherto sav'd the Town from the last Desolation; without whose Controul this Pest had long e'er now burnt it to Ashes, and deliver'd the Spoil to the Robbers. (p. 13.)

On the forehead of the fury, producing a telling analogy with the beast in the book of Revelation, were the letters 'M.M.T.U.', signifying that the day of deliverance was nigh when the town would be freed for ever from the malevolence of the anti-queen. Then:

all Inchantment shall cease, the Juglers shall no more preserve the Conjuror from falling down the Precipice...the Horseman in Golden Armour shall no longer restrain [the people] from totally destroying the Robbers; every Body will then see and hear, and bring the Miscreants and Deceivers to their deserv'd Punishment. (p. 14.)

'Tis agreed by all pamphlet readers', Peter Wentworth wrote, 'that there's nothing obscure in the Dream, but every one readily understands what the author means'. Clearly the Dream at Harwich caused a significant flutter on the contemporary political scene: it was the subject of discussions in parliament, and the centre of contention over the more obscure symbols, all of which the authors no doubt intended when they chose to work through the medium of allegory. 'For a long [time?] the letters (MMTU) was a pusseler', Wentworth confessed, 'but now 'tis known to have no more in them then what you may find in the fifth Cap. of Daniel, meme meme tekkel uphrasin, Hebrew words'.¹ In fact Wentworth did not give this little

1. Ibid.

piece of symbolism its due. 'Plaine English' was inundated with obscure biblical allusion: this one was much more effective as it rendered consistent the attempt to draw parallels between the downfall of the Family and the downfall of anti-Christ as portrayed in the Revelation of St John.

The Junto was convinced of the potency of the Dream. A key to the allegory was swiftly compiled to keep the masses, somewhat ironically, in a state of ignorance. 'I thought 'twas not proper for me to send you the Harwich Dream till I cou'd send you with it another sort of interpretation then the ill-natured auther wou'd have given to't', Wentworth wrote unrepentantly to Raby, 'tho' this is not so good as it might have been, but it will have this good effect that it will pass upon the mob'. A Harleyite had gained the same impression concerning the intention of the Interpretation of the Harwich Dream, writing to Edward Harley on 8 March 1709:¹

I could not get ye Explanation of ye Harwich Dream to send ye by this Post, but am promised it to morrow. If I had thought it worth yr reading I had sent it you sooner. The Piece seems calculated for ye Mob to take ym off from ye obvious meaning, or else to suggest to their Emissarys some colourable Interpretation.

Naturally the Interpretation inverted the meaning of the Dream. The crowd 'with their Fingers in their Ears, and their Eyes shut', far from being drugged and unaware of impending danger, were in fact 'an unhappy set of People in England, obstinate, and ignorant of their own Happiness, under the most Glorious and Successful Reign, the mildest Government, and most careful Ministry that ever was, will be still Deaf and Blind to their own Interest'. And of course the characterisations were altered, so that the horseman in golden armour was Louis XIV, the old man the pope, the soldier in armour of polished steel, Marlborough, and the 'shining Youth',

1. B.L. Loan 29/195, f. 166v; W. Thomas to Edward Harley. This section is omitted from the transcription in H.M.C. Portland, iv. 521-22.

inevitably, was the Prince of Hanover. With these clues to deciphering the Dream, the rest of the allegory was correspondingly easier to interpret in a vein favourable to the Godolphin ministry under the protectorate of the Junto.¹

Nonetheless the ministry felt sufficiently threatened to turn out a further rejoinder to the Dream in the supposed form of a sequel. This whig defence, which supplied 'all the Omissions and Defects in the First Dream', singled-out Harley for especial abuse. According to this pamphlet, Harley, 'a little, dapper black Man, that seem'd mightily out of Humour, and yet as full of Business, as if the whole Weight of the Government lay on his Shoulders', was working in the interest of 'one Monsieur St George'. His task was to oust 'the Great Warrior, and another Peer with a white Staff in his Hand': 'They must be both remov'd', the 'little, dapper black Man' cried, 'or else we are undone'.² The Dream at Harwich was evidently an effective piece of country propaganda, and it provoked a battery of retorts. Of course Harley's part in the penning of the pamphlet, in the absence of documentation, cannot be proved, but it can be strongly asserted. It was a Harleyite tract, and Edward Harley supplies enough hints to suggest that he was in on the secret, and both Wentworth and Powlet attributed it, if not to Harley himself, to Harley's group. In addition we have stylistic evidence not only in the form of general intent, but in observing the occasions on which the actual language and imagery coincide with the indisputedly Harleian 'Plaine English'. It appears that he merely decided his English, in the original tract, was just a little too plain, and might succeed in bringing down on his head the impeachment he had only narrowly escaped over the Greg case.

1. The Interpretation of the Harwich Dream. In a Letter to a Reverend Member of the Convocation. By Don Pedro de la Verdad, the Famous Spanish Interpreter of Cardinal Portocarero's Dream on the Death of King Charles II of Spain (1709), p. 2.

2. An Account of a Second Dream at Harwich (1709), p. 8.

The Dream, however, was only part of the programme of anti-ministerial propaganda inspired by Harley in the winter of 1708-9. 'Plaine English' also found an outlet in a slightly altered framework in The Speech of Caius Memmius, Tribune, to the People of Rome. Translated from Sallust. The same themes are present in both the manuscript and the published pamphlet. The opening paragraph of the Speech echoed the seeming reluctance of the man forced to speak plain English:

The present Circumstances of our Affairs, the Power of the prevailing Faction, your tame Submission, the Loss of all Justice, and the Danger of speaking Truth, are such Discouragements, that I should be silent, as well as others, at this time, if my Concern for my Country were not above all other Considerations.

The calls to 'patria' are Roman in inspiration, as are the invocations to 'friends' and 'countrymen': but they also had found a place in 'Plaine English':

Our Slaves, My Countrymen, our purchas'd Slaves have Spirit enough to disobey the unjust Commands of their Masters: Shall we, who were born Free, stand still and patiently suffer the Yoke to be put about our Necks?

The similarity of sentiment is, I believe, readily recognisable: the Speech was a naked attack on the duumvirate:

Not long since, we thought we had reason to complain of the squandering the publick Mony, and of the exorbitant Riches and excessive Power of some particular Persons; but now those very Persons are so far from being contented to go off with Impunity, that they have again work'd themselves into Power.

Compare this with the claim made in 'Plaine English' that 'the same Hands who acted what was clamord agst in former Reigns' (p. 102) were responsible for undermining the very constitution:¹

In a word, whilst we lavish our Treasure, and husband the War, a Man may venture to prophesy, That unless the Gods are pleas'd to work a Miracle for Us at Home, as they have done many Abroad, the Time is not far off,

1. The Speech of Caius Memmius, Tribune, to the People of Rome. Translated from Sallust (Amsterdam, 1656 [for London, 1708]), pp. 1, 2, 4.

in which this antient and noble Frame of Government will be totally demolish'd; and We, that have been so often Conquerors, shall be no longer Freemen.

The indelible stamp of country theory is once again apparent.

Of course the government took pains to counter this attack on its morality in a pamphlet in which Livy was 'introduc'd to correct Sallust, and to teach his Translators Sober Reflections and Good Morals',¹ but the country offensive in print continued, and mock speeches were followed by real speeches. The first was the annual speech by Lord Haversham. It is ironic that in 1707 Harley had sponsored an attack on Haversham's speech:² this time he quite clearly assisted in its composition. How had this relationship come about? From his resignation Harley had been urged by tories on all sides to resurrect the party. 'You broke the party, unite it again, their sufferings have made them wise', St John advised him, 'There is no hope I am fully convinced but in the Church of England party, nor in that neither on the foot it now stands, and without more confidence than is yet re-established between them and us'.³ Harley was soon making approaches to William Bromley, prospective tory candidate for the speakership, with William Stratford acting as intermediary.⁴ At the time that he was drafting 'Plaine English' he pointed out the 'practices' used by the Family to perpetuate their power, and, in a miniature rehearsal of the arguments used in the manuscript tract, he sought to unite Bromley to his scheme to forge an effective opposition to the government in the forthcoming parliamentary session.⁵ Bromley was in a way the linchpin of his scheme, and by the end

1. Two Speeches for One: Or, Sallust corrected by Livy [1709], p. 1.

2. See B.L. Loan 29/25/9: N.M. to Erasmus Lewis, 7 December 1707.

3. H.M.C. Bath, i. 191-92: 11 October 1708.

4. See B.L. Loan 29/171/2.

5. B.L. Loan 29/128/3: Harley to Bromley, 20 August 1708 (copy), endorsed by Harley, 'sent 23 Aug. 1708' (the MS draft of 'Plaine English' is dated 24 August 1708). Cf. Bromley's reply, H.M.C. Portland, iv. 505.

of December the rapprochement between the two men, colleagues of the previous reign, had grown to embrace an even older acquaintance, Haversham, who, as Sir John Thompson, had been one of the earliest influences on the young Robert Harley on his entrance into the Commons. 'L^d Haversham desires you will give him & me leave to waite upon you together', Bromley wrote on 24 December, adding subsequently on 7 January 1709 that 'The noble Lord says, He shall be at home all Day to morrow, & y^t y^r Time shall be his'.¹

Obviously a meeting of some sort was planned for 8 January. But with what end in view? In fact Harley was being consulted about Haversham's speech. On 12 January, with the members ordered to attend, the Lords took into consideration the state of the nation, in relation to the late intended invasion of Scotland. Haversham opened the debate, as Oldmixon noted, 'with his annual speech, which seemed to be prepared for that occasion, and was not without some strokes in it, levelled against the ministry'. Haversham's strokes were cutting, especially with such pointed biblical allusions as: 'even among the Apostles themselves, he that bore the bag proved the traitor'. And this vicious dig at Godolphin was far from being the only censure passed by Haversham upon the management of the duumvirate. He himself had moved to consider the Scotch invasion (as it was called), and he left no illusions in the minds of his audience what tack he would take:²

My lords; Were not Hochstet and Ramillies as glorious victories, and as great mortifications to the French king, as our taking of Lisle, or reducing of Ghent? and yet after such entire victories, such repeated defeats, had not this haughty neighbour of ours, the presumption, the last year, to attempt the setting a Pretender upon her majesty's throne? ...his chief dependence was upon the encouragement and promises of assistance he had from hence; and yet, notwithstanding all our enquiries,

1. B.L. Loan 29/310, unfoliated; cf. B.L. Loan 29/128/3: 5 January 1709; B.L. Loan 29/308/2: Haversham to Harley, n.d. [1708-9].

2. Cobbett, vi. 762-66. All quotations are from this reprint of Haversham's speech.

is it not as great a mystery to this day as it was, who the persons amongst us are, who were concerned in this black and unnatural treason?

It is significant that in 'Plaine English', Harley also devoted space to the consideration of the attempted invasion of Scotland. 'Could this have been attempted without enemys?', he demanded, 'It is then y^r Duty O my Countrymen! to examine whence this arose...the Dark Lanthorne will give light enough to every considering honest Britain to show him who is ye Guido Faux who carryes it'. Harley's desire for an enquiry predates Haversham's outburst in the Lords by some months, but the language and purport are nevertheless the same. Compare Haversham's contention that:

There is another encouragement, which [the Pretender] has, my lords, and that is, the weak and defenceless condition of Scotland, the deficiency of force, and the ill state of your garrisons there, at the time of the Invasion, notwithstanding the certain accounts and knowledge we had of it...

with Harley's exhortation to:

weigh these particulars seriously; whose Interest & Practice it hath been to embroil Scotland? Whose particular Duty it was to have immediate provision to have repelled the invaders in case they had landed. Consider how long it was after the design was Published to ye whole nation, before any orders were given to make provision by land agst them, and then you will see how long a time had they landed the Rebels would have had to have come to joyne them without opposition. (p. 108.)

Haversham called for papers relating to the affair to be laid before the house:

What, my lords, will no alarm awaken us? Will the scales never fall off from our eyes? Must some men's mighty services prevent our looking into others great miscarriages? And must this poor nation be eternally sawn asunder by the struggles of contending parties?

This message was hammered home in terms peculiarly reminiscent of the Dream and of 'Plaine English'.

The outcome of this debate on the state of the nation was a further debate in the Lords on the Scotch Invasion on 25 February. It was again opened by Haversham, who illustrated the lack of preparation by the government for an invasion which they knew was about to be attempted:¹

1. Ibid., pp. 766-74.

It will not, I presume, be denied me, that, upon the 23rd of February [1708], Mr Boyle [Harley's replacement as secretary of state] received certain intelligence, that the intended armament at Dunkirk was designed for Scotland...[yet] the regular forces in Scotland, upon the 25th of February, 1708, were not above 1,500 men.

It was the old, old story of Almanza over again, for, as Haversham made no bones about stressing, on 20 December 1707 parliament had raised the establishment of forces in Scotland from 2,834 to 5,932, although nothing had, by 7 March 1708, been done about it. Clearly, in country eyes, the Godolphin ministry had been guilty of mismanagement. In raising the number of forces in Scotland, parliament had, at the same time, voted a supply of £13,098 17s. 2d. for the maintenance of the Scottish garrisons in 1708:

I cannot but think your lordships will be greatly surprized [Haversham continued], when you find in what a wretched condition they were...I believe there has been enough now said, to justify those Lords for moving this enquiry, and shall add but this word, that if there be no greater care taken for the future, then there was at this time of such imminent danger, it will be the greatest miracle in the world, if, without a miracle, the Pretender be not placed upon that throne.

This savage indictment of the incompetence of the Godolphin ministry was welcomed by the Harley camp, and care was taken to publish both speeches and to disseminate them. 'This day seven Lord Haversham made a speech', Peter Wentworth informed Lord Raby, 'and last friday they cry'd it about the streets'.¹ Abigail Harley was at pains to reassure her nephew Edward that she had seen a copy of Haversham's speech although she had neglected to tell him. On 8 February Harley himself made a few jottings on the theme of the invasion. 'This is a great affair, great in it self, dark in its contrivance & useful in its effects', he observed, 'what excuses wil they give who invited him? wil they trust them again? those who were taken up [were given] the equivalent since for their silence...Is there not a favourite writer who tells ye world that person. was to land at Inverness'.² These confused notes serve at least to document Harley's views on the invasion attempt, and the complicity of the Marlboroughs. Several prominent Jacobites were taken up.

1. Wentworth Papers, p. 70: 18 January 1709.

2. B.L. Loan 29/195, f. 161: 7 February 1709; B.L. Loan 29/12/6.

at the time of the invasion, and several, including the duke of Hamilton, were sent to London for examination. Hamilton secured his liberty by striking a bargain with the Junto: he agreed to organise his supporters to vote for Junto nominees in the forthcoming Scottish elections. After the elections the prime target was the ouster of the duke of Queensberry.¹ All these factors prompted Harley to focus on the ministerial failure to secure Scotland against the threat of invasion, and it is more than likely that he collaborated in An Account of the late Scotch Invasion, as it was opened by Lord Haversham, in the House of Lords, on Friday the 25th of February, 1708-9; with some Observations that were made in the House of Commons, and true copies of authentic Papers, in a Letter from a gentleman in South Britain, to his friend in North Britain. The Commons, boasting the largest whig majority since the Revolution, had resolved that 'timely and effectual care was taken by those employed under her majesty, at the time of the intended Invasion of Scotland, to disappoint the designs of her majesty's enemies both at home and abroad'.² But the printed Account of the Scotch Invasion observed:

That the same papers being laid before the House of Commons, pursuant to their Address, produced the like observations there [as were made in the Lords], and that the Scots gentlemen concurred with the English, in blaming the conduct of the ministry; affirming it was such as gave great encouragement to the enemies of the government; while its friends look on their country to be perfectly given up...After all the observations made upon the papers, the consideration of them ended in the House of Commons, in the Resolution above mentioned. The gentlemen that were against this Resolution, desired that all the papers laid before the House, relating to the intended Invasion of Scotland, might be printed, that the world might see and judge, how well-grounded it was. But those, who had justified the ministry in their debates, and voted for the Resolution, would not suffer the papers to be printed, so that the question was carried in the negative.

1. See P.W.J. Riley, The English Ministers and Scotland, 1707-1727 (1964), pp. 105-113. For Harley's views on the Scottish election results and the attempt to oust Queensberry, see B.L. Loan 29/171/2: Harley to Stratford, 10 October 1708; H.M.C. Portland, iv. 7: 16 October 1700 [for 1708] (the letter is misplaced: the original in B.L. Loan 29/190, f. 22 is dated 1708).

2. Cobbett, vi. 774. Haversham's Account is reprinted *ibid.*

Baulked from registering their objections in print the country gentlemen did the next best thing in publishing an account of the debate.

A final piece of opposition propaganda was the printed broadsheet of Sir Simon Harcourt's speech before the house of commons on the occasion of his being unseated on petition as member for Abingdon. He directed a parting blow at the ministry. 'Tis said Sir Simon will print his speech, which they tell me is more artfully worded than Lord Haversham's', Wentworth noted on 25 January, while Edward Harley observed that the result of the petition had made 'a great noise in town':¹

both parties are liberal of ill names to them. Sir S. H[arcourt] they say called a great man rogue and rascal as they construe his words, which were to this effect, 'A person that has long since abandoned all truth, justice, honour, honesty, gratitude &c.' I think this is pretty plain.

Harcourt's actual words, as printed, dissembled about naming Godolphin as the man who incited the petition against the Abingdon election return, but the insinuation was plainly levelled at the lord treasurer as:²

a person, the most abandoned wretch in the world, who had long quitted all notions of right and wrong, all sense of truth and justice, of honour and conscience. Whatever his dark purposes were, it is our happiness and the nation's, that they were entirely disappointed in the choice of this parliament. I cannot directly point him out, but whoever he was, I have so much charity, as sincerely to wish he may feel, and be truly sensible of the honour and impartial justice of a British parliament.

The propaganda campaign sketched out in 'Plaine English', then, had subjected the duumvirate and the 'jugglers' who kept them in office to a constant barrage of invective in the winter session of 1708-9. Which tracts were Harley's individual efforts, if any, is difficult to say, but the concertedness of the attack on the ministry strongly suggests a guiding-hand, and in all probability that guiding-hand was Harley's. The tory party in the Commons was the tool with which Harley had had to work, but the scheme was not a tory one, and it is interesting to note the rhetoric of the opposition's

1. Wentworth Papers, p. 74; H.M.C. Portland, iv. 517.

2. Cobbett, vi. 778-79.

anti-ministerial propaganda. Some sort of rapprochement had been reached with the tories, but the arguments employed owed much to country theory.¹ The group of men involved in the production and dissemination of opposition propaganda during these months can be identified with some certainty. Haversham clearly had had, and continued to have, an important part to play, in collaboration with both Harley and Bromley. Harcourt's speech was no doubt another joint undertaking. St John should not be excluded from complicity, especially in 'Plaine English', while one man who was almost definitely in on the secret was Thomas Mansel, with whom Harley was staying during the period in which, most probably, 'Plaine English' was drafted.² Francis Atterbury, the High Church writer of both political and spiritual tracts, may well have also been involved.³ In the course of the summer of 1709 this coterie of writers and politicians was once again working on propaganda designed to meet the requirements of concerting opposition tactics on the opening of the parliamentary session. As early as 12 July Harley informed Stratford that 'Our Draughts & other writings seem to be neer finished having travelld to & again between this & the north',⁴ while Mansel felt that he would be 'glad to find that there are more Lord H[aversham]'s, and that they would print for the good of the public, who don't yet see their state'.⁵

1. During the elections Lewis informed Harley that 'the notion of extinguishing the names of Whig and Tory and assuming the distinctions of Court and Country party, which the great men were once themselves fond of, seems now to be taken up by their adversaries' (H.M.C. Portland, iv. 490).

2. Harley enclosed a letter to St John in the missive in which he told Stratford to expect 'something in writing', which may have included a draft of 'Plaine English' (B.L. Loan 29/171/2: 26 September 1708). The MS of 'Plaine English' is dated 24 August 1708: on 20 August Harley sent a letter to Stratford endorsed 'Margam, Glamorganshire', Mansel's country seat (ibid.).

3. See B.L. Loan 29/125/3: Atterbury to Harley, n.d.: 'these Papers...are very handsomely drawn up...They may, perhaps, be touched over again in a Few Places, without hurting them, if they are designed for ye Press'.

4. B.L. Loan 29/171/3. The 'writings' here referred to have not been identified.

5. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 528: Mansel to Harley, 10 November 1709.

Assistance was forthcoming from an unlikely quarter. Trevelyan notes that 'the publication that did most harm to the Ministry [in 1709] was a book of the lowest order, the New Atlantis [sic], wherein Mrs Manley, a woman of no character, regaled the public with brutal stories, for the most part entirely false, about public men and their wives, especially Whigs and above all the Marlboroughs'.¹ Of course Trevelyan was in a sense smoothing over Macaulay's use of this 'novel' to indict Marlborough. Whig propagandists had made no bones about using Harley and Mrs Masham as targets for their 'garbage' (to adopt Trevelyan's phrase). Arthur Maynwaring, who was so closely allied with the Family that in 1708 he wrote Advice to the Electors of Great Britain in collaboration with the duchess of Marlborough herself,² has been named as responsible for one particularly abusive and unsavoury poem in this vein:³

Oh! that some truly zealous Friend
 Wou'd give the Bitch a Potion,
 While Harley's Mouth at lower End
 Were set to meet the Motion.

Or that they'd send her brawny Bum,
 As hard as Alablaster,
 'Twou'd make a pretty Sort of Drum,
 To serve her little Master.

Mrs Manley's accusation of deviant sexual behaviour among the Marlboroughs was no worse than Maynwaring's efforts on the other side, as accusations of venereal disease were flung at Abigail Masham, with Harley cited as correspondent to her adultery. The combination of such things was meant to prove the ruin of the Pretender:

1. Trevelyan, op. cit., iii. 62.

2. See Henry L. Snyder, 'Daniel Defoe, the Duchess of Marlborough, and the Advice to the Electors of Great Britain', H.L.Q., xxix (1965-66), 53-62.

3. 'Masham Display'd: To the Tune of the Dame of Honour', in P.O.A.S., vii. 319-21. Although only distributed in MS in 1708, this poem was sufficiently well-known to merit an answer, which, as Ellis notes, 'survives in more copies than the poem itself' (ibid., p. 317). It is interesting that the answer first levied the charge to be repeated in the New Atalantis, that Godolphin was the duchess of Marlborough's lover!

Then if the French should send her King,
 We'll turn her Touch-hole to him,
 With Fire and Smoak, and t'other thing,
 Oh! we shall quite undo him.

It is not beyond probability that Harley was privy to the publication of the New Atalantis. When part of the Oxford ministry's propaganda machine in 1711, Manley wrote several letters to solicit rewards for her services:¹

I had the fortune two years ago to publish some pieces for which I suffered imprisonment, injured my health, and prejudiced my little fortune. Though the performances were very indifferent, yet they were reckoned to do some service, having been the first public attempt made against those designs and that Ministry, which have been since so happily changed.

My friends have told me that I had some little pretence to be considered for what I had done as well as suffered, and my Lord Peterborough as well as Mr Granville have promised to recommend me to your Lordship's protection; I hope I may venture to add that I had once the honour of a note from your Lordship, to command my attendance, which I endeavoured in vain.

Although the duchess of Marlborough was convinced that Mrs Manley 'kept correspondence with two of the favourite persons in the book, my Lord Peterborough and Mr Harley',² it seems unlikely that there was any direct contact between the author of the New Atalantis and the man who spoke plain English. Manley undoubtedly felt she deserved 'some Regard for exposing the enemies of our Constitution; for having, with hazzard to my self, first circulated their vices and opened the eyes of the crowd, who were dazzled by the shine of power into awe and Reverence of their persons'.³ But the first extant letter between the two is dated 12 May 1710, when, sending Harley a copy of her new Memoirs of Europe, Mrs Manley remarked that her 'respect' prevented her from waiting upon Harley in person, 'lest I be thought to have the honour of your acquaintance which I can only covet,

1. H.M.C. Portland, v. 55: 19 July 1711.

2. Cited in Gwendolyn B. Needham, 'Mary de la Riviere Manley, Tory Defender', H.L.Q., xii (1948-49), 265.

3. B.L. Loan 29/38/1: to Harley, n.d., 'Sunday the 16th', [between August 1710 and May 1711].

never hope'.¹ This is not the tone of a woman intimate with Harley. Her books had helped his propaganda campaign: no doubt he encouraged her, perhaps monetarily. This would be especially necessary after the publication of the second part of the New Atalantis on 20 October 1709, when Mrs Manley was proscribed as author of the offensive pamphlet. According to her autobiography:²

They us'd several Arguments to make her discover who were the Persons concern'd with her in writing her Books; or at least from where she had receiv'd Information of some special Facts, which they thought were above her own Intelligence...she said then it must be by Inspiration, because knowing her own Innocence she could account for it no other way...

It seems likely that her 'inspiration' was Harley, who was in a good position to send her 'special Facts' without ever becoming personally involved with the writer. She was released on bail on 5 November 1709, and the charges against her were dismissed on 13 February 1710 when a much more important tract, Sacheverell's sermon on the text, In perils among false brethren, was causing the ministry even more embarrassment, and in much more damaging ways, than the New Atalantis.

It is ironic, in view of Harley's efforts to disseminate anti-ministerial propaganda, that the pamphlet which most influenced the change of government in 1710 was Sacheverell's sermon. As Trevelyan remarks, before the trial of Sacheverell, 'the change of national opinion...found no adequate voice in literature, journalism or public speech'.³ Whatever plans Harley had laid against the opening of the winter session in parliament were rendered superfluous by Sacheverell's impeachment. On 5 November the fiery divine

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 541.

2. Cited in Needham, 'Manley, Tory Defender', pp. 264-65. For Mrs Manley, the New Atalantis, and the growth of the novel, see J.J. Richetti, Popular Fiction Before Richardson (1969), pp. 119-67. In Defoe's Narratives: Situations and Structures (1975), Richetti names Manley's duchess of Marlborough as 'the classic female villain of the...chronique scandaleuse' (p. 194). Obviously Richetti is concerned with the New Atalantis as a literary genre, not a political pamphlet, and his comments on political matters tend to be wayward. For Mrs Manley's relations with the Oxford ministry, see below, chapter ten, pp. 328-29, 354, 358.

3. Trevelyan, op. cit., iii. 62.

preached his sermon is St Paul's: by the beginning of December 1709 a second edition was already needed. Soon it was being said that Sacheverell, in warning against latitudinarianism, had preached not only against the act of toleration, but against the Revolution itself. Partly in order 'to cut [Godolphin's] last line of retreat to the Tory party, and therefore isolate him in preparation for his removal, when the time was ripe', and partly with the aim of inflicting on Sacheverell 'an "exemplary punishment" — one that would effectively deter clergymen of his kidney from using their pulpits in future to disseminate political "poison"', the ministry proceeded, against Godolphin's better judgment, to advocate impeachment.¹ 'So solemn a prosecution for such a scribble will make the Doctor and his performance much more considerable than either of them could have been on any other account', Stratford wrote to Harley on 21 December, a week after the Commons had resolved to impeach Sacheverell:² curiously enough, the pompous figure of the High Church bigot, a wind-bag of hot air and a perfect example of the oath-swearing Jacobite, brought about what perhaps the whole tory party inside and outside parliament could not have achieved without his unwitting assistance; the downfall of the Godolphin ministry and the resurrection in office of the tory party.

While this was the unqualified view of High Churchmen, Harley's stance was more equivocal. As one of his associates shrewdly observed, 'an absolute acquittal [for Sacheverell] would rather tend to promote a high Tory scheme than to ruin the interest of the Junto',³ and this Harley did not want. In fact he used the opportunity presented by the impeachment to cement alliances

1. Geoffrey Holmes, The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell (1972), pp. 85, 228. This study is an excellent corrective to the previously held view of the impeachment as 'an act of the grossest political folly and myopia'. This, he stresses, 'is based on almost total misunderstanding of [the whigs'] motives and aims, and a serious misjudgement of the political calibre of their leaders' (ibid., p. 78).

2. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 530.

3. Ibid., p. 537: [the earl of Orrery to Harley, 14?] March 1710.

with a number of dissatisfied whig notables such as Shrewsbury, Peterborough, Rivers and Somerset.¹ Arriving in London on 6 or 7 January 1710, Harley's speech in parliament on the Sacheverell affair 'was so cryptic "that the House could not certainly discover from his expressions whether he spake for or against him"'.² Yet his return to the metropolis was crucial, as he was able to reestablish personal contact with Queen Anne in an attempt to convince her that the season was propitious for the rejection of the Family. Exploiting the appointments crisis on the death of Essex on 10 January, when the queen tried, against Marlborough's advice, to give his several posts to Earl Rivers and Mrs Masham's kinsman Hill, Harley demonstrated the ministry's failure to make a stand with the captain-general. In 1708 Marlborough had been a sine qua non of any ministry: the appointments crisis was the first overt indication that this was perhaps no longer the case. When this setback was followed by the débâcle of the Sacheverell trial, when, against the most solemn expectations of the ministry, the Commons pressed for a public hearing, and prepared Westminster Hall for a matchless display of public opinion in favour of the Doctor,³ this influenced not only the destiny of the demagogue himself, but also that of the Godolphin ministry.

Harley could hardly have failed to have been pleased with the outcome of the Sacheverell trial. True, the Doctor was found guilty; but a mild sentence best suited a Harleyite scheme. The loss of the 'no preferment vote' on 21 March meant that the ostensible whig victory was really a triumph for the opposition in parliament as a whole, and more particularly for the High Churchmen. Yet the Revolution had nonetheless been justified by Sacheverell's

1. Holmes, Trial of Sacheverell, pp. 112-13, 208.

2. Cited *ibid.*, p. 101.

3. See *ibid.*, p. 111. The night before the prosecution was due to present its case on 2 March the previously whig mob of London indulged in an orgy of retribution against Sacheverell's antagonists.

successful impeachment. From now on Harley was in an excellent position to persuade the queen that a change of ministry was not only desirable, but a viable proposition. On 3 April the duchess of Marlborough had a stormy 'last interview' with her erstwhile friend, and in doing so she surrendered the remaining vestige of any political influence she might have retained over the queen. The fury had had its day, the enchantment was broken. The way was now open to the reestablishment of the state as prophesied in the Dream at Harwich. Ten days later, when Godolphin was at Newmarket, the politically inoffensive earl of Kent, who had been appointed through Sarah's influence in 1704, was dismissed from his post as lord chamberlain. Significantly, it was not a tory who entered the ranks of the government, but an independent whig, the vastly experienced duke of Shrewsbury, with whom Harley had been cultivating an understanding since 1708. Harley's plans had been awarded royal approbation, and the first direct blow had been struck against the influence of the Family.¹ An initial foothold in the ministry had been gained by the Harleyites, and yet it had been the hyperbole of Henry Sacheverell, not the plain speaking of Robert Harley, that had finally set the wheels of change in motion.

1. Godolphin admitted that he 'knew nothing of the Duke of Shrewsburrys coming in, that he believ'd it was owing, to the Queens Estrangement from the Duchess' (The Diary of Sir David Hamilton 1709-1714, ed. Philip Roberts (1975), p. 8). For additional information regarding Harley's negotiations with Shrewsbury, see Cowper's Diary, p. 43.

Chapter Eight

The Ministerial Revolution of 1710

...so sudden and so entire a change of the ministry is scarce to be found in our history...

Burnet, History of His Own Time, vi. 10-11.

The appointment of Shrewsbury was merely the prelude to a far-reaching reconstruction of the queen's government. In June the earl of Sunderland, the bête noire of both Harley and Queen Anne, was dismissed. Tremendous blows had been struck against the interest of the Family, but one more ouster was needed before the ministry could be decisively reoriented, that of the lord treasurer Godolphin himself. The queen hesitated about sacrificing so worthy a servant, until, prompted by Harley to 'preserve your character and spirit and speak to Lord Treasurer. Get quit of him', and satisfied from the lips of Godolphin himself that he could not sever his connexion with the duchess of Marlborough, 'their Relation being so near, and their Circumstances so united', she dismissed him ungraciously on 8 August 1710.¹ Thereafter Harley set about trying to persuade the remaining whigs and moderates to retain their places in the new regime. He assured Cowper that 'A Whig Game [was] intended at bottom': there was even to be some sort of arrangement with the Junto, something Harley had never felt desirable or practicable before, and Marlborough was to keep his place as captain-general 'if he would go into [the queen's] Measures, and not divide and make partys'.² To some extent the lesson of the previous decade had been learnt by Harley. His vision of a country system of politics was less idealistic than before, it was tempered by practicality. Yet it was, quite clearly, a coalition scheme: there was to be no sell-out to the High Churchmen. In conjunction, whigs and country Tories would reconstitute a brave new political world.

1. B.L. Loan 29/10/19: 3 July 1710; Hamilton's Diary, p. 9.

2. Cowper's Diary, p. 43; Hamilton's Diary, p. 21.

Needless to say, propaganda was employed to pave the way to this comprehensive change of government. In the bulk of publications precipitated by the Sacheverell trial, revamped during the ministerial upheavals, and continued through the 1710 elections and beyond, there is a distinct proportion of printed matter which can be classified as 'Harleyite' as opposed to either whig or tory. The persistent message reiterated over and over by the Harleyite propagandists was one of moderation, unity and the evil of party. Faults on Both Sides: Or, An Essay upon the Original Cause, Progress, and Mischievous Consequences of the Factions in this Nation, that most Harleyite of Harleyite pamphlets, traced party divisions, as Toland and Harley had previously done before it, back to the reign of Charles II. The furore over the occasional bills was blamed as the means by which outworn party labels had been revived to perpetuate meaningless party distinctions. The 'Fault-Finder' urged men 'to bury their animosities, and labour to reconcile their inaginary differences...[as] they have been all along deceived and cheated'.¹

Who was the 'Fault-Finder'? One of the weaknesses of the opposition from 1708 to 1710 had been its failure to find an effective and prolific propagandist. Harley himself was regarded by many as the author of Faults on Both Sides, while Defoe was also named as a possible author. But another writer had been recruited by Harley, and today it is generally accepted that the pamphlet was written at Harley's instigation and direction by Simon Clement.² Little attempt has been made hitherto to explain or trace the connexion between Harley and an obscure, failed merchant, for Clement, like

1. Somers Tracts, xii. 706. All quotations are from this edition.

2. Burnet, vi. 12: Onslow's note. Cf. Holmes and Speck, 'The Fall of Harley in 1708 Reconsidered', p. 677n.

Defoe, was originally in trade. In 1695 he published A Short Discourse Concerning the Coyne, for which, on 3 December, he received a reward out of the king's secret service money as 'his Majesty's free gift and royal bounty towards the charge of printing'.¹ The following year he fell into hard times when a ship he had subsidised in company with several other merchants, the Regina, infringed the navigation laws by being manned by less than three-quarters of her crew English seamen, and he turned towards writing to redress his losses as best he could.² He was rewarded by being appointed secretary to the earl of Bellomont, governor of New York and New England, but Bellomont soon reported himself disillusioned with Clement, 'who was to have come over as his secretary, [but who] disappointed him dirtily'.³ As early as 1698 Clement was suspected as being sympathetic to Harley's 'New Country' party, and when Bellomont managed to intercept one of Clement's letters to England relating to the Kidd affair he was careful to inform Somers of the contents.⁴

The earliest certain contact between Harley and Clement of which we have evidence was in 1704, when Clement sent the secretary a manuscript draft of 'The Case of Prohibitions of Commerce & Corespondence wth our Enemys truly represented. In a letter to a member of the hon[oura]ble house of Co^mons'. Although it seems never to have been published, the covering letter from Clement makes it clear that this was not his first dealings with Harley. 'If you shall be at y^e [cabinet] Council tomorrow', he wrote, 'I pray you to get M^r Higgs's Petition refer'd, but if you do not get abroad, I beg the favour

1. C.T.B., xvii. 768.

2. See The Catalogue of the Goldsmiths' Library of Economic Literature, ed. Margaret Canney and David Knott (1970), i. 3101, 3267, 3487.

3. C.T.P., lvii. 230; cf. C.T.B., xii. 184; *ibid.*, xiv. 160.

4. H.M.C. Portland, viii. 74: Bellomont to Somers, 7 March 1700.

of you to recommend it to S^r Charles Hedges'.¹ Throughout his time as secretary Harley pushed Clement's memorials about trade in the cabinet. These covered a large area of projects for the import of pitch and tar from unfrequented Swedish ports for naval stores. After receiving a letter from Clement dated 21 July 1705, Harley brought the matter to the attention of his colleagues on 26 July.² The affair was protracted. That Harley championed Clement's case, however, is perfectly clear. 'I take the liberty to enclose a Memoriall of Mr Clement', he wrote to George Churchill on 23 September 1707, '& humbly...desire you to put an end to this matter one way or other'.³ Churchill replied immediately, and Harley's persistence paid off, for there are payments recorded to Clement in 1708 for bringing tar and pitch into England.⁴

Contact between the two men was continued, and Clement's private affairs were in such dire straits by 1709 that he saw 'no other way to escape ruin' other than through Harley's assistance.⁵ It would be pointless to speculate in Clement's possible collaboration in other Harleyite pamphlets prior to Faults on Both Sides in view of the lack of evidence on which to base any analysis, but it seems clear that it was at this point that Harley employed him to draft an essay on party, and it is not beyond possibility that Harley dictated the tract. That he supervised the publication of Faults seems indisputable. It was quintessentially Harleyite, and Clement was rewarded for his pains. Oldmixon named Clement, 'a New-England Jobber in Service and Pay', as one of the ministerial propagandists as late as 1711,⁶ and from 1711

1. B.L. Loan 29/287, unfoliated. The MS tract is preserved *ibid.* For Clement's trading activities between 1700 and 1704, see C.T.B., xviii. 267.

2. B.L. Loan 29/293, unfoliated (cf. *ibid.* *passim*); B.L. Loan 29/9/18-19, 35; cf. B.L. Loan 29/10/23, and H.M.C. Portland, viii. 277, 344-45, 377.

3. B.L. Loan 29/265, unfoliated.

4. H.M.C. Portland, viii. 296: 24 September 1707; C.T.B., xxii. 306.

5. B.L. Loan 29/39.

6. Oldmixon, History, p. 476.

he was a member of the earl of Peterborough's mission to the court of Vienna.

Clement was Peterborough's private secretary, and he stayed on in Vienna when his employer returned to England, but without any visible means of support. When he tried to claim from the treasury he got into difficulties. 'On his Lpps coming for England he left Mr Clement at Vienna, but I do not find he had any Orders to doe so', Harley was informed:¹

or that Mr Clement hath any character, Nor hath he a Privy Seale, or any allowance settled in forme by the Secretary of State whereby to Entitle him to apply to your Ldpp for money.

The Earle of Peterborow drew a Bill on your Lpp from Vienna the 13th of July 1712 for 400*l*. for the said Mr Clements payable three months after the date. But I doe not find that his Bill or any other money hath been paid him from the Treasury.

Clement's son Dennis tried to intercede with Harley, now Oxford, on his father's behalf:

The Earle of Peterborow hath comanded me to attend Yor Lords[hi]p on behalf of my father Mr Clement now at Vienna, where for ye Support of his Character he hath contracted such depts [sic], that unless Yor Lords[hi]p will be pleas'd to think of some method to discharge, he must unavoidably perish in a Goal [sic]; but as on so many occasions Your Ldsp hath express'd a Friendship for my Father, so I do humbly hope in this very great extremity, he will finde ye effects of it, by a remittance of what yr Lordsp shall think sufficient to enable him to return home.

As well as providing additional, clinching, evidence of Harley's patronage of Clement, it is interesting to note that Clement got his money, and that he was still in Vienna on a government salary of sorts on the accession of George I.²

Having traced Harley's relations with Clement to their source, we must return to Faults on Both Sides itself. The outburst of popular acclaim in print for Sacheverell caused, inevitably, a whig reaction. Defoe ridiculed

1. B.L. Loan 29/29/22: anon., n.d. Enclosed is a copy of Peterborough's letter to Oxford of 13 July 1712 for payment 'to Mr Simon Clement on the Queen's account at Vienna'. The petition is endorsed (but not in Harley's hand): 'Mr Clements Memorial. See what he has had thow'.

2. C.T.B., xxvii. 180; *ibid.*, xxix. 209.

his progress through the midlands prior to taking up preferment in North Wales, while Ben Hoadly, in a mock pamphlet called The Thoughts of an Honest Tory, purported to give the real views of a true-blue tory regarding Sacheverell. Naturally enough this rebounded to the detriment of both the Doctor and his party. But Hoadly's tract gave a handle for Faults on Both Sides, which was fulsome in its praise of Harley's policies. 'If his conduct shall be impartially considered', Clement postulated, 'it will be found that his actions have shewn him much more a patriot and a true whig than his adversaries'; a whig, that is, in the original meaning of the term. From time to time the guise of the author of the pamphlet seems to slip to allow us to recognise Harley himself prompting Clement. 'I will...own to you that I have always espoused the true whig principle', Faults ran, 'that is, to be heartily affected to the court and ministry when they act uprightly for the publick good, and as heartily to oppose them when they do otherwise'. Whose voice is this, Clement's, or Harley's? The present conditions required all honest men to support the queen's government: 'having lost the support of her dear consort', she needed 'faithful advisers to open her mind to', and the best measures were those that would 'render their sovereign safe and easy, and restrain the power and ambition of some men that were grown too great'.¹

Once again we come up against the Harleian balance between monarchy and the people: his ideal system required cooperation between the two, not the monopolisation of royal favour by one set of servants. Faults took care to distinguish between the 'ill designs of the junto', and the whigs en masse:

all those of the whig party who shall abandon [such practices] and heartily concur in the promotion of the publick good, will be as freely admitted to employments, and as well regarded as ever; nothing being more desired than a coalition of the honestest men of both sides.

The main concern of Faults was to assure supporters of the old ministry that the rejection of the Family did not necessarily mean a tory monopoly of posts in the new regime. Junto tactics to forestall the change of government were

1. Somers Tracts, xii. 694, 701, 695.

fourfold, and Faults on Both Sides instanced each for the edification of the public: firstly, the Junto had urged the 'states of Holland' to order their envoy, Vryberg, to present a memorial 'to desire her majesty not to change her ministers'; 'their next attempt was to play the bank upon her majesty'; thirdly, they tried 'to persuade [the people] that this change of the ministers will fall the stocks'; and, finally, they hoped to give the impression that the new ministry would destroy 'publick and private credit ...bring all things into confusion, and disable us from carrying on the war'.¹ Though Clement called these 'maxims invented by knaves to cheat fools', there was little doubt that a credit crisis was in the offing, as a last desperate attempt to retain a whig-controlled administration.² This was the main factor that Harley battled against in the first crucial months of his ministry, and Godolphin was convinced that he would find it impossible. As one Harleyite account of the conduct of the Oxford ministry put it:³

These are some of the difficulties Mr Harley had to struggle with, which both his Friends & Enemies thought unsurmountable, for the Lord Godolphin at a meeting at the Duke of Devons House, where were present the Ld Cowper, Mr Secretary Boyle & others, having laid before them the Present state of the Treasury...he saw Mr Harley in a sculler alone rowing against Wind & Tide without any Person to assist him; & then he left it to those Lords to determine how long it was possible for one man to support an administration surrounded with such difficulties, this brought all those Lords to the resolution of quitting their employments.

Faults on Both Sides, naturally enough, stimulated a large batch of rejoinders from both whigs and tories. Joseph Trapp, a High Churchman who was later to have dealings with the Oxford ministry as a propagandist, quite clearly believed, as the title of his pamphlet suggested, that there were

1. Ibid., pp. 696-98.

2. See B.W. Hill, 'The Change of Government and the "Loss of the City", 1710-1711', Economic History Review, xxiv (1971), 395-411.

3. B.L. Loan 29/52/1.

Most Faults on One Side, while the first issue of The Medley, edited by John Oldmixon and Arthur Maynwaring, was devoted to finding Faults in the Fault-Finder. Other whig apologists took Clement to task for his remarks on the peninsular war and the battle of Almanza.¹ These took the debate into October 1710. Defoe, in the meantime, was being rebuked for his supposed part in the production of Faults. One epigrammist thought that:²

He thinks he's mighty honest, when
He tells the Faults of other Men;
And rails against the Government,
For Errors in Mismanagement,
But 'tis the Effect of Discontent,
And knavish Partiality.

Finally, however, it appears that Defoe did enter the fray in one of the ministerial rejoinders to those who found faults in Faults. Clement penned a second part to the original pamphlet, and a Vindication of the Faults on Both Sides. These were published early in December and in the new year respectively, but Defoe, it seems, had beaten Clement to it in A Supplement to the Faults on Both Sides, published in October 1710.³

Defoe's return to the Harley fold must be explained. He had served his whig employers diligently and loyally throughout the lean years of 1708 and 1709, and had backed them up to the hilt during the Sacheverell trial and its aftermath. On Sunderland's fall from office, he angrily denounced the failure to make a stand in his support, and condemned whig policy on Harley's fall when the 'Game was all in their own Hands [and] It was in their Power to have Crush'd the [tory] Party, and to have kept them where they were, viz.

1. An Answer to that part of the pamphlet entitul'd, Faults on Both Sides, which relates to the deficiency of the English Army in Spain, at the time of the battle of Almanza (1710); see Mary Ransome, 'The Press in the General Election of 1710', Cambridge Historical Journal, vi (1939), 214-16.

2. 'An Epigram on Dan. De F—', in Whig and Tory: Or, Wit on both Sides (1712), pp. 31-33.

3. Moore, Checklist, pp. 79-80. Additional evidence of Defoe's part in the controversy over Faults on Both Sides may be the extant MS of a Defoe holograph, 'Mistakes On all Sides: Or, An Enquiry into the Vulgar Errors of the State', in the Harley papers at Brampton Bryan, box 117. This MS has not previously been noticed.

Undermost for ever'. Nor was there much indication of the volte-face to come when Defoe declared to all the world that 'My Lord S[underlan]d leaves ...Office with the most unblemish'd Character that ever I read of any Statesman in the World', Harley, one supposes, included. When Godolphin was ousted the Review vowed that 'If Tories, if Jacobites, if High-Flyers, if Mad-Men of any kind are to stay in, or come in, I am against them, I ask them no Favour, I make no Court to them, nor am I going about to please them'. 'I hate turning sides', Defoe assured his audience, 'never did turn in my Life, nor can I ever heartily trust a Man that does'.¹

It is ironic that all the time he was publishing cant such as this, Defoe was trying to pave the way to a reunion with his former employer. He wrote to Harley on 17 July:²

I can Not but Think that Now is The Time to find Out and Improve Those blessed Mediums of This Nations happyness, which lye between The wild Extremes of all Partyes, and which I know you have long Wisht for.

I kno' Sir you are blest with Principles of Peace and Concern for your Country and a True Tast of its Liberty, and Intrest, which are Now Sadly Embarrast...I have had but a Small View of Things; yet I have Room Enough to See and Lament Preposterous Conduct On Every Side. I can Not but hope That Heaven has yet Reserv'd you to be the Restorer of your Country by yet bringing Exasperated Parties and the Respective Mad-Men to Their Politick Sences, And Healing the Breaches on both Sides which have Thus wounded The Nation.

If I can be Usefull to So Good a work without the Least View of private advantage I should be Very Glad, and for This Reason I presume to Renew the Liberty of Writeing to you which was Once My honour and Advantage, and which I hope I have done Nothing to forfeit.

From July onwards the Review gradually began to assume a Harleyite stance, in readiness for the final outcome of the ministerial revolution (though he was careful not to cut his last line of retreat to the whigs should things come unstuck). A conference took place between the two men, after which Defoe wrote:³

1. Review, vii. 137, 142, 234, 261.

2. Defoe, Letters, pp. 270-71.

3. Ibid., p. 272: 28 July 1710.

Since I had the honor of Seeing you, I can Assure you by Experience, I find, That Acquainting Some People They are Not all to be Devoured, and Eaten up — will have all the Effect upon Them Could be wish't for; Assureing Them That Moderate Councils are at the Bottom of all These Things, That the Old Mad Party are Not Comeing in; That his Grace the D of S[hresbur]y and your self &c. Are at the head of This Mannagement and That Neither have been Mov'd however ill Treated to forsake the Principles you allways Own'd...These Things Make Strong Impressions, and Well Improved May bring all to Rights again.

Quite evidently, Defoe was referring to the newly-published Faults on Both Sides, which endeavoured to do exactly what he praised the Harley regime for, and of course Harley was fully in accord with Defoe's views. In fact he had been trying to persuade Shrewsbury to take the lord treasurer's staff, a move that would perhaps have checked the fall in the stocks, and might have convinced the whigs that a tory ministry was not to be the result of the upheavals of the summer. The whig dukes of Somerset and Newcastle were also being consulted deferentially by Harley, and he was making desperate efforts to accommodate Cowper, Somers and Halifax, all the while approaching anyone of influence to assure them of the true principles upon which the incoming ministry was to be based.¹ Unfortunately Shrewsbury declared himself totally unfit for the post of lord treasurer, 'an employment I do not in the least understand and have not a head turned for': he believed a treasury commission with Harley at the head would solve the problem, 'because you then come naturally into the Cabinet Council, where you are so much wanted'.² Finally, on Godolphin's dismissal on 8 August, the treasury was duly put in commission and stacked with Harleyites. Harley himself took the post of chancellor of the exchequer, becoming second lord, leaving Poulett (who had been proving somewhat refractory) to head the

1. Harley did not neglect to keep influential tories informed of developments: Rochester, Buckingham and Mansel were in touch with events, see H.M.C. Portland, iv. 535-36, 546; N.L.W. Penrice & Margam MSS, L 686, 689. Country tories, even those who later took a leading part in the October Club, were also approached, especially Charles Caesar and Sir Robert Davers (see B.L. Loan 29/129/2; H.M.C. Portland, iv. 573, 595).

2. H.M.C. Bath, i. 198: Shrewsbury to [Harley, 22 July 1710]. Cf. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 552: Somerset to Harley, 26 July [1710].

commission. Benson, Paget and Mansel, staunch Harleyites to a man, made up the numbers when it became clear that no whigs could be bought off with places in the treasury. The complexion of the changeover was readily apparent to all.¹

'I can Not but heartily Congratulate you On the happy Recovery of your Honors and Trusts in The Governmt', Defoe wrote to Harley on 12 August, 'Providence Sir Seems to Cast me back Upon you (I write that with Joy) and Layes me at your Door; at the Very Juncture when She blesses you with The Means of doing For me, what your Bounty shall prompt to'.² Of course this was hardly a coincidence: Defoe had been keeping all his options open. The Review had already embarked upon the task of countering the credit crisis. Now it turned wholeheartedly to the job with Harley in the driving-seat once more:

To cry out we are all undone, is to make it be so; to run down the publick Credit, to break our Bank, to tear our selves to pieces — Who do we serve? — This is to Ruin the whole Nation, and give our selves up to France...'Tis every Man's Interest therefore, to support Credit, Establish the Currency of their Annuities, &c. and stand by the Bank of England.

Simultaneously Defoe attempted to cajole his readers into accepting the new administration. 'High-Flying is no more consistent with the Administration now, than it was before', he wrote, ''Tis Moderation only, must do the Thing ...the only Policy of the Ministry, is Moderation, and that's still a Whigg, and hated as Whigg'.³

But the fall of the stocks was fast proving too strong a phenomenon to counter by the propaganda machine at Harley's disposal. Defoe requested a meeting 'to Lay before you Some Measures I am Takeing to Serve...when Every

1. For Poulett's views on the ministry, see H.M.C. Portland, iv. 543 and B.L. Add. MSS, 22222, f. 189. Of the whigs, Richard Hampden was reported to have been offered a place on the treasury board. (Wentworth Papers, p. 135.)

2. Defoe, Letters, p. 273.

3. Review, vii. 234-36, 254.

Man Thinks 'tis in his Power to wound the Government, Thro' the Sides of The Treasury, and to Run Down Their Masters by running Down the Public Credit'. He desired to wait on Harley 'with those sheets I shewed you, finished from the press'.¹ This apparently refers to Defoe's Essay upon Publick Credit which attempted to demonstrate how little the stocks really depended on one government or another. The pamphlet was published on 23 August, and Defoe assiduously obscured his own identity. 'The Subject is nice', he wrote, 'the Age abusive, the Town full of Observers and Reviewers, who Write to please and content the Notions of Men, who, directed by their Interest and Parties, differ even with themselves':

CREDIT is a Consequence, not a Cause: the Effect of a Substance, not a Substance; 'tis the Sun-shine, not the Sun; the quickening SOMETHING, Call it what you will, that gives Life to Trade, gives Being to the Branches, and Moisture to the Root; 'tis the Oil of the Wheel, the Marrow in the Bones, the Blood in the Veins, and the Spirits in the Heart of all the Negoce, Trade, Cash, and Commerce in the World.

If this was so, Defoe argued, then credit was by definition in 'no way dependent upon Persons, Parliaments, or any particular Men, or Sett of Men, as such, in the World; but upon their Conduct and Just Behaviour'. This was 'apparent, even by its nature'. Thus to blame the fall in the stocks on the change of ministry was absurd: 'if Men of Moderation, and Men of Integrity come in', Defoe concluded convincingly, 'I see no room to fear, but our Credit shall revive as well under a New Ministry as an old'.²

This Essay was overtly Harleyite, and recognised as such. Defoe played on the fact that the Review was not the medium through which the disgruntled whigs should be addressed. 'I am Convinc't And Thorowly Assur'd, you Sir have in View the True Intrest of your Country, and Think it an Unaccountable blindness, That hides it From Some, who Ought to See it as well as I', he told Harley, nonetheless 'The people are Out of humour and Allarm'd, and to

1. Defoe, Letters, p. 273.

2. An Essay upon Publick Credit (1710), pp. 5, 9, 10, 26-27.

speaking to Them in the Public Paper I write, would be to do no good at all. Yet They should be Spoken to'. To this end he proposed further essays upon loans and upon banks. For endorsement of the prudence of this suggestion, he pointed to the Essay upon Publick Credit, which, he claimed, 'has done More Service Than I Expected, in which The Town does me too much Honour, in Supposing it well Enough done to be your Own'.¹

An Essay upon Publick Credit was not the only pamphlet attributed to Harley in these months by a town eager to chart the course of the ministerial revolution. Francis Hare surveyed the literature published on the question of war and peace in The Management of the War. In a Letter to a Tory-Member.²

I don't know whether you will agree with me, when I tell you, I think the Letter from a Foreign Minister the most artful Performance of them all; the rest seem to be the Works of under Agents, from Directions and Hints mark'd out for them; but this I take to be the Work of the chief Operator himself; who, if he was not at leisure to write more largely, has in this short Piece sufficiently shewn, what a Right he has to the Esteem the World have long had for him; there being in it some quick and crafty Turns, and an affected Appearance of Fairness, with which he gilds over the blackest Poison of Malice and Invention.

Hare would have been more scandalised, no doubt, had he realised that Abel Boyer was the true author of A Letter from a Foreign Minister in England to Monsieur Pettecum, although he was correct in assuming that Harley was privy to its publication. On 17 October Boyer wrote to Harley, 'I presumed some days ago to send you...a paper of my own composing, which has been well received both at home and abroad, where I hear it has been translated'.³ At the end of July, while the Dutch were pressing Queen Anne not to reject her whig ministers, A Letter from Monsieur Pett[ecu]m to Monsieur B[u]ys. Faithfully Translated from the French was published. It purported to be authentic comments by the French plenipotentiaries at Gertruydenberg

1. Defoe, Letters, pp. 275-77: Defoe to Harley, 2, 5 September 1710. An Essay upon Loans was published on 21 October 1710, but there does not seem to have been an essay upon banks.

2. The Management of the War (1711), p. 3. According to Henry Snyder, 'the tract was edited by Maynwaring'. See 'Daniel Defoe, Arthur Maynwaring, Robert Walpole, and Abel Boyer: Some Considerations of Authorship', H.L.Q., xxxiii (1969-70), 148n.

3. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 615.

regarding the ministerial changes in Britain, and it was, naturally enough, another whig defensive measure to prevent an entire reconstruction of the government. The Examiner devoted considerable space in its early issues to refuting the Letter. Clearly Boyer designed to curry favour with Harley by doing the same. The Letter from a Foreign Minister in England to Monsieur Pettecum was dated 'London, Sept. 15. 1710.', and it defended the ministerial revolution and upheld Harley's conduct. In the first number of his Political State Boyer virtually accepted responsibility for the Letter: as Henry Snyder points out, this was the pamphlet to which Boyer was referring in his letter to Harley.¹

Boyer had periodically tried to gain Harley's patronage since his appointment as secretary of state in 1704. At first he offered intelligence, and Harley appears to have encouraged this information, although hints that he might publish a journal of the duke of Marlborough's successful Blenheim campaign to Germany came to nought. Thereafter correspondence ceases until immediately after Godolphin's dismissal in 1710.² On 15 August Boyer wrote to the newly-appointed chancellor of the exchequer, recognised by all as the leader of the new ministry. It is evident that they had already had a meeting, for Boyer had had the opportunity to congratulate Harley on his 'Advancement to so high a Station...in Person, as I did yesterday morning'. Ostensibly he was offering a scheme to support credit by using the resources of the Huguenots in London in conjunction with Dutch exiles:³

if you should condescend to send for seven or eight of ye most eminent & substantial merchants & Brokers of those two nations, and give them

1. Snyder, 'Defoe, Maynwaring, Walpole, and Boyer', pp. 148-50.

2. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 94, 111, 141; B.L. Loan 29/127/4. The letter transcribed in H.M.C. Portland, iv. 527-28, and dated 18 October 1709, would appear to be identical with one printed *ibid.*, p. 141, and dated 18 October 1704. It clearly refers to 1704, and I suggest that the 1709 dating is in error. There is no original of this 1709 letter in B.L. Loan 29/195.

3. B.L. Loan 29/127/4.

Assurances, that ye next Parliament will effectually make good all Parliamentary engagements, ye same would dispell ye alarm which, upon ye sinking of ye stocks, has seiz'd their spirits: All which may be prevented by one word from a Person of so Great Weight as your self.

Listing the most important men who should be approached, Boyer hoped that Harley would 'pardon the Boldness of this Overture, since it results from ye entire devotion I profess to your Service':

And which encourages me to hope, that you will permit me to shelter my self under your Powerful Protection; and that being sensible of my sincere & hearty zeal & in having never given ye least occasion of offence to either Party by my writings: you will generously be pleas'd to think of me, for some small place or other, of which you may think me capable; my Pen now scarce affording me a slender subsistence.

It is to be supposed, from this letter, that Harley had connived in Boyer's writings in support of the new ministry. 'I am now printing something towards the history of the last ministry and Parliament', Boyer continued in his letter of 17 October, 'in which, I hope I have given such a fair account of the great things you have done for this nation, as may in some measure contribute to allaying the present ferment'. This, as Henry Snyder observes, referred to An Essay towards the History of the Last Ministry and Parliament. Once again, evidence to support this assumption is to be found in the Political State, a periodical which was universally known to be Boyer's, which began to appear in the first month of 1711, and revealed a new, far less partisan, author.¹ The Essay, in fact, is avowedly Harleyite, and there are hints that Boyer had been writing to Harley's directions. How else, is it to be supposed, did Boyer unerringly instance the failure to make peace after the battle of Ramillies as the fatal error of the Godolphin ministry? According to this pamphlet, Harley, 'having free access to her majesty...acquainted her with many things which others endeavoured to have kept from her knowledge, particularly some advances made

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 615; Snyder, 'Defoe, Maynwaring, Walpole, and Boyer', pp. 148-49.

by France towards a general peace, after the battle of Ramillies'.¹ In many ways this defence of the Harley ministry was taken right into its opponents' camp, foreshadowing the later withering censure of the management of the Godolphin ministry by Swift in The Conduct of the Allies. But it also dealt with the credit crisis and the likelihood of a new parliament, problems that were threatening to ruin the new regime. One observer noted that the Essay was 'publish'd and much dispers'd in Town and Countrey' to 'justify the Change of the Ministry, and promote the Elections of the Friends to it'.² Abel Boyer performed valuable work in print for the Harley ministry, but he went unrewarded.³

It is significant that all three Harleyite pamphleteers so far discussed were, or had been, whigs of one sort or another. This is no coincidence, for, paradoxically, Harley was having more trouble dealing with the publications and propaganda of his tory colleagues, than with whig attacks on the new administration. Most tories wished for a thorough reconstruction of the ministry. Hanmer reminded Prior that 'a new ministry with an old parliament will be worse than the gospel absurdity of a piece of new cloth in an old garment, or new wine in old bottles'.⁴ All the time that Harley was trying desperately to reconcile the remaining ministers to the regime, the High Churchmen demanded a dissolution, a move calculated to bring Harley's plans to nought. And, of course, the High Flyers had their own views on the form anti-whig propaganda should take. Publications proclaiming Sacheverell as the champion of the Church were unloaded onto the streets, and the result was a High Church fever which gravely jeopardised Harley's chances of retaining a moderate 'country' administration embracing both whigs and

1. An Essay towards the History of the Last Ministry and Parliament (1710), in Somers Tracts, xiii. 52.

2. Cited in Snyder, 'Defoe, Maynwaring, Walpole, and Boyer', pp. 148-49.

3. See below, chapter ten, pp. 320-22.

4. H.M.C. Bath, iii. 437: 15 June 1710.

tories. Sacheverell's 'progress' was being carefully monitored by the tory propagandists, and Bromley's attitude to the spectacle illustrates how far removed his vision of the change of government was from Harley's own. 'Every Post brings forth fresh Accounts how well the D^r is every where received in his Progress', Bromley wrote to Charlett on 1 July, 'He was very welcome to us in Warwickshire'. He opined that Sacheverell's prosecution 'has taken such a Turn as must be of great service to our common Interest', adding the rider, 'if those that have it in their Power will make ye right use of it'.¹ This, of course, was precisely what Harley was not willing to do, and the consequences of the 'progress' were what he most feared. Bromley, in his enthusiasm, however, assured Charlett on Godolphin's dismissal, that 'Now the greatest Difficulty is got over, I cannot beleive others will be able to stand long in the way'. He added ominously that 'Good little Pamphlets will be seasonable, I hope due care will be taken to disperse them'.²

Defoe had done sterling service to the whig cause before making his peace with Harley by issuing anti-Sacheverell propaganda. His pamphlets The Ban[bur]y Apes, and Dr Sacheverell's Disappointment at Worcester, which satirised the doctor's reception at those towns, were felt to be sufficiently in line with Harleyite views to merit their rehash, in almost the same words, in August in A New Map of the Laborious and Painful Travels Of our Blessed High Church Apostle.³ As Harley had by then had several meetings with Defoe, it seems probable that he actually gave his approval to this pamphlet, for the popular clamour in Sacheverell's name threatened to result in a tory landslide should parliament be dissolved, and this was becoming an increasingly likely event.

1. Bod. Ballard MSS, 38, f. 147.

2. Ibid., f. 150; cf. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 563: Bromley to Harley, 12 August 1710.

3. Moore, Checklist, pp. 72-74.

Throughout August and the first days of September Harley had been making efforts to secure approval of the new regime by Somers, Boyle, Devonshire and Orford. Somers in particular, under pressure from Halifax and Newcastle, Harley's brokers, was known to be wavering. 'This new world as the Dutch say occasions great speculations', Cropley wrote to Shaftesbury, who was also being approached by Harley at the time, 'and many whigs doe doubt whether my Lord Sommers will lay down or no but y^t point I dont doubt'. He was certain that 'he will lay down', but, as he pointed out, 'I take it as much for granted he is & has acted so coldly y^t he has some views of his own'.¹ Latterly Somers had fallen out with Godolphin, and he seriously seems to have considered throwing in his lot with his old adversary, Harley. Halifax, as Cropley observed, was 'ye plenipotentiary for the whole whig Interest'. He had been caballing with Harley from early in the year, and he had tried to forestall the credit crisis, while his fellow whigs were urging it on. Harley himself concurred in the opinion that 'his service with the Bank has been a manifest indication of his sincerity', and Halifax had waxed lyrical on Harley's appointment to his old position of chancellor of the exchequer.² Robert Monckton, in his capacity as go-between, was similarly confident that Newcastle and Halifax would be able to persuade Somers and Cowper at least to retain their positions in the new administration.³ Orford, Boyle, Devonshire and Wharton, presently in Ireland as lord-lieutenant, were also expected to help ring in the new.

In retaliation, however, Godolphin was exerting the residue of his influence to convince the waverers that the new regime could not survive.

1. P.R.O. 30/24/21/165: n.d. [September 1710].

2. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 571: Monckton to Harley, 21 August 1710; *ibid.*, p. 560: Halifax to Harley, 10 August 1710.

3. For letters concerning these negotiations, see *ibid.*, pp. 554-58, 560, 570-77, 595-96, 599, 604; *ibid.*, ii. 210-21.

Boyle, in particular, was reminded of his obligations. While Harley confidently told Cropley that 'he was in a mighty tempest but hoped to see fair weather, he could answer the Q[ueen] would be wanting in nothing to carry on the war til a good peace was made', Godolphin assured his quondam colleagues that Harley would never manage to ride out the storm.¹ But 'the deciding factor', as Geoffrey Holmes points out, 'was Harley's refusal to guarantee that the existing Parliament would sit out its full statutory life'.² Parliament was dissolved on 18 September: two days later Somers, Devonshire and Boyle were reluctantly dismissed. Harley still had hopes of persuading Cowper to retain the great seal (it is significant that Harcourt was appointed attorney-general), and, however improbable it may seem, Wharton to stay on as lord-lieutenant.³ But meetings were concerted between those turned out, and Wharton joined their ranks on his arrival from Ireland, unwilling to serve with men 'who were takeing measures contrary to those he had always pursued'.⁴ On 23 September Cowper finally surrendered his seals of office. Harley's plans were once again in ruins. As Halifax remarked to his fellow apostate Newcastle three days later, 'Our friends have quite gone off the stage'.⁵ A new parliament had been called, and the tories were on the rampage.

Harley had been alive to the dangers of a tory resurrection, but he had tried to choose men who had cultivated country connexions in the past.

1. P.R.O. 30/24/21/165. Harley was always bitter about the manner in which Godolphin prevented his associates from staying in office. One of the heads of a memorial of his life was 'How Ld Cowper & Ld Carleton [Boyle] were brought to give up the seals contrary to their Promise'. Longleat, Portland MSS, x. f. 133v. Cf. Hamilton's Diary, p. 19: 7 October 1710.

2. Holmes, British Politics, p. 112.

3. Cowper's Diary, pp. 43-44; Oldmixon, History, p. 450.

4. Addison Letters, p. 240: Addison to Joshua Dawson, 23 September 1710.

5. H.M.C. Portland, ii. 221.

Boyle, in particular, was one of these, and in many ways he and Cowper were the linchpin of his scheme. When both men resigned his plans crumbled.

Rochester and Buckingham had worked amicably with Harley before, but there was no place for the intractable Nottingham, 'Harley's bitterest foe',¹ in the new set-up, and although Jersey was mooted for the admiralty, it was ultimately put in commission. Even Bromley, Haversham and St John, who had been Harley's closest associates in the lean years of 1708 and 1709, were not assured of places in the new ministry. Haversham remained in the cold, while Henry St John would not have advanced higher than his old post of secretary at war, finally allotted to Granville, had Boyle stayed on as secretary, and he would not, therefore, have been in the cabinet. Bromley became speaker. Dartmouth, Poulett, Benson, Paget and Mansel were staunch Harleyites, as was Granville, and they would have acted to orders had the whig ministers remained in a coalition. Harley sought to minimise any possibility of an overbearing character toppling the delicate balance of whig and tory he was hoping to achieve. Shrewsbury was to assist in this task. Somerset, who fondly believed himself the key to all the ministerial changes, was quickly disillusioned, and he returned to caballing impotently with the ousted whigs. St John would, perhaps, have suffered a similar fate as secretary at war. It is the crux of the rivalry of the four subsequent years that he did enter the cabinet in 1710.

Harley was warned on all sides that the tories viewed him merely as:²

a necessary ladder, but that as soon as the building had got its foundation they would throw away that part of the scaffolding, that those that had got up by him could not keep him reared to the frame, but that those that would find other ways of climbing now they were shewn the way would soon kick him down.

1. Holmes, British Politics, p. 270.

2. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 574-75: Monckton to Harley, 23 August 1710. Cf. Cowper's Diary, p. 46: Harley and Shrewsbury were 'afraid of the old Torys overrunning 'em, & willing for a while at least to have a little Counter-balance'. Similar sentiments were voiced by others at the time.

St John made his stance on the political issues at stake in 1710 perfectly clear by resorting to printed propaganda himself. He was not only responsible, in conjunction with Francis Atterbury, John Freind and Matthew Prior, for the inauguration of the 'right-wing' organ, The Examiner, which made its bow five days before Godolphin's dismissal, he laid down the themes of which it was to treat in A Letter to the Examiner. This openly and determinedly censured the conduct of the old ministry, hoping thereby to cut Harley's line of retreat to the whigs when the tory character of the new regime became clear, and it went totally contrary to the atmosphere of confidence he was trying to inspire in the allies. Since 1706, the Letter claimed, the continental war had not been in the true interests of England:¹

To restore the Spanish Monarchy to the House of Austria, who by their own Supineness, and by the Perfidy of the French, had lost it; and to regain a Barrier for Holland which lay naked and open to the Insults of France; were the Wise and Generous Motives, which engag'd Britain in the present War. We engag'd as Confederates, but we have been made to proceed as Principals: Principals in expence of Blood and of Treasure, whilst hardly a Second Place in Respect and Dignity is allow'd to us.

IN the Year 1706, the last of these two Motives was effectually answer'd by the Reduction of the Netherlands; or might have been so, by the Concessions, which 'tis Notorious that the Enemy offer'd. But the first Motive remain'd still in its full Force; and...from that Point of Time to this Hour, France has continu'd like a great Town Invested indeed on every Part, but Attack'd only in one.

While Harley would concur wholeheartedly in these arguments here was a classic case of there being a time and a place for everything, and the time for home truths was quite clearly when the ministry was consolidated in power, not while an effort was being made to cajole the whigs and the allies into accepting the new order in Britain. But St John, pursuing peculiarly tory aims, had no desire to curry favour with his adversaries, and he felt no constraint in answering Bromley's call for the distribution of 'Good little Pamphlets'. In fact the General Election of 1710, held in October, witnessed a barrage of tory tracts, and the Examiner was the vanguard of the

1. Swift, Prose Works, iii. 222-23.

tory offensive in the battle with the whigs, while Harley's forces were held in reserve. Defoe vainly tried to reconcile the new ministry with the old, and he continued to follow this theme in the Review until well into 1711, but he was a lone Harleyite skirmisher. Boyer never gained Harley's trust, while Clement was no more than an occasional propagandist, unable to pen words to order as Defoe did. Toland had made contact with his old employer yet again in August 1710, but by then his stock with Harley had run out.¹ Another hand was needed to address the tories, and, if possible, to counteract the extreme views propagated by the Examiner. Harley found this hand in Jonathan Swift.

It has been claimed, somewhat improbably, that St John owed his post in the new ministry to his sponsorship of the Examiner.² Certainly it cannot be denied that he was the man behind the paper at its inception. Both the periodical itself and the Letter to the Examiner provoked a rumpus amongst the whigs. Maynwaring immediately set up The Whig-Examiner (which later became the Medley) to combat the potency of its propaganda, while Cowper felt strongly enough to pen an answering Letter to Isaac Bickerstaff, the fictitious editor of Steele's Tatler, and this was hardly calculated to assist in persuading him to retain the seals of office. St John, either deliberately or unwittingly, did all he could to ensure the failure of his ostensible mentor's plans for a moderate country administration.³ Like Godolphin's experiences trying to control the party men in his ministry, Harley learned how supremely difficult it was for a 'manager' in politics to govern effectively in the conditions generated by the conflict between whig and tory. The fiery propaganda disseminated by the Examiner during the

1. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 572: Toland to Harley, 2 September 1710.

2. D.H. Stevens, Party Politics and English Journalism 1702-1742 (1916), pp. 31-32.

3. For a whig reaction to St John's Letter, see Hamilton's Diary, p. 17.

elections was not likely to achieve the desired objective of a balanced parliament, either, and Harley was no doubt well aware of this fact. 'It could well be, therefore', W.A. Speck postulates, 'that he got Swift onto the paper in order to moderate its tone'.¹

Unfortunately the details of Swift's cooptation onto the editorial board of the Examiner are missing. He himself claimed that the previous authors, who had been responsible for the first twelve Examiners, had 'grown weary with the Work, or otherwise employed, the determination was, that I should continue it'.² Nonetheless St John did not recruit Swift, and one wonders how much say he had in the disposal of his brainchild. Swift did not meet St John until 11 November, by which time he had already contributed two issues to the Examiner.³ His dealings had been almost exclusively with Harley. Swift's politics have been complicated unnecessarily by his apparent change of party in 1710. W.A. Speck has put forward a convincing argument to show that Swift, like Harley, 'split tickets' on different issues.⁴ The complicating factor in the political psychology of both men was their stance on religious matters and their unequivocal support for the Church of England. This ostensibly tory outlook was tempered by an otherwise thoroughgoing Old Whig attitude to politics. This Swift learned at the feet of his mentor, Sir William Temple, in the 1690s. His first tract, A Discourse upon the Contests and Dissensions between the Nobles and the Commons in Athens and Rome, was published during the paper war of 1701 and it censured Harley and his associates for attacking men not measures. Thenceforward Swift cultivated connexions with Kit-Cat whigs, Somers (to whom his Tale of a Tub was dedicated), Addison and Steele. He was in England

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1. 'The Examiner Examined', Focus: Swift, ed. C. Rawson (1971), pp. 145-46.
 2. Swift, Prose Works, viii. 123.
 3. Journal to Stella, 11 November 1710.
 4. 'Swift's Politics', [Dublin] University Review, iv (1967), 67.

in 1708 attempting to negotiate the gift of the first-fruits for the clergy of Ireland. He contributed papers to the Tatler, and made quite a name for himself in the close circle of whigs surrounding his writer friends, but he got no change out of Godolphin. In the wake of the lord treasurer's dismissal, Swift arrived in London once again on 7 September 1710 to try his luck over the first-fruits a second time. He was greeted far from amicably by the outgoing men, Godolphin in particular, and he was soon 'talking treason' against the old ministers, comforted by the knowledge that Harley had 'formerly made some advances' in his direction.¹ The nature of these overtures is far from clear, but negotiating the first-fruits entailed personal contact with Harley and the new ministers, and Swift soon resolved to ditch a sinking ship, 'weary of the caresses of great men out of place'.² Instead he composed a biting satirical poem at the expense of the fallen lord treasurer, The Virtues of Sid Hamet the Magician's Rod, shot through with phallic imagery, and far above the usual doggerel on political topics. It was this lampoon, one supposes, that reminded Harley of the wounded and dangerous Dr Swift.³

By 30 September Swift had arranged a meeting with Harley through the offices of Erasmus Lewis. "'Tis good to see what a lamentable confession the Whigs all make me of my ill usage; but I mind them not', he wrote, 'I am already represented to Harley as a discontented person':

that was used ill for not being Whig enough; and I hope for good usage from him. The Tories dryly tell me, I may make my fortune, if I please; but I do not understand them, or rather, I do understand them.

Swift was not to be disappointed. His first meeting with Harley on 4 October

1. Journal to Stella, 10 September 1710; Swift, Corr., i. 173: Swift to Archbishop King, 9 September 1710.

2. Ibid., p. 178: Swift to Dean Stearne, 26 September 1710.

3. Harley assured Swift that he 'smoked' him as author of Sid Hamet (Journal to Stella, 8 November 1710). For the poem, and an introduction and notes, see P.O.A.S., vii. 475-79.

went better than he could have hoped, and a second was immediately arranged. 'I am inclined half to believe what some friends have told me, that he would do everything to bring me over', he wrote after the audience. 'No man has been ever treated better by another', he reiterated a week later, now fully prepared to credit that Harley 'has a mind to gain me over'. Not only had the matter of the first-fruits gone so well that the business seemed almost complete, but the new prime minister was clearly making an effort to win over a potent propagandist to the government's side.¹

Harley's only hope for a moderate administration now that the whigs had resigned en masse, was to persuade the vast tory majority returned in the October elections not to seek reprisals against the old ministry. He had, of course, wished for a less overwhelming tory victory at the polls. Swift had recognised as early as 6 October that 'Mr Harley himself would not let the Tories be too numerous' in the new parliament, but he was powerless to prevent the landslide that occurred. Defoe, in the Review, optimistically prophesied events on the opening of parliament, and the reaction of the new tory members:²

When they come thither, they will not run the Mad length that is expected of them; they will Act upon the Revolution Principle, keep within the Circle of the Law, proceed with Temper, Moderation, and Justice, to Support the same Interest which we all have carried on, and all wish to be well carried on — And this I call being Whiggish, or acting as Whigs.

Defoe, however, was addressing the whigs in the fond hope that they would remain calm under the tory onslaught and not rock the boat. He was recognised as a whig. As he himself declared concerning the Review, 'All the World will bear me Witness it is not a Tory Paper'.³ But Harley needed a tory paper:

1. Journal to Stella, 30 September, 7, 10, 14 October 1710. All references to Swift's letters to Stella are to the entries in the Journal for the dates supplied in the text.

2. Review, vii. 383.

3. Ibid., p. 377.

and he needed a writer to cajole the tories into pursuing more moderate, disinterested measures in parliament. It was typically Harleian to choose a quondam whig to address the tories in the hope of urging them to follow the path of moderation.¹ In his retrospective account Swift endorses these assumptions:²

Mr Harley told me he and his Friends knew very well what useful Things I had written against the Principles of the late discarded Faction; and that my personal Esteem for several among them would not make me a favourer of their Cause: That there was now an entirely new Scene, that the Queen was resolved to employ none but those who were Friends to the Constitution of Church and State: that their great Difficulty lay in the Want of some good Pen, to keep up the Spirits raised in the People, to assert the Principles, and justify the Proceedings of the new Ministers.

Swift was to try to reconcile the average tory squire to the true nature of the system envisaged by the prime minister, much in the same way as Defoe, through the Review, was, at the time, trying to convince the whigs that an out-and-out High-Flying administration was not the desired outcome of the change of government. These were the two sides to Harley's press policy in the months immediately following the General Election of 1710, as he strove to implement the country measures he had advocated for so long against all the odds.

An agreement seems to have been reached on 21 October when Swift once more met Harley, this time for dinner.³ Prior met Swift on 27 October. Significantly it is two days later that we first learn from the Journal to Stella that Swift was writing on a fairly regular basis. The Examiner for 2

1. It is worth noting here that Harley's contacts with tory writers never seem to have paid off. He had trouble with both Browne and Pittis, and only Davenant appears to have got in touch with him on his return to office. On 27 August he wrote: 'Sir Thomas Double (for he is now a knight) with whom I still correspond, told me yesterday, with a deep groan, at St James's coffee house where he often comes, that this advantage in Spain (the term he gave it) would in its effects prove as fatal a blow to the modern Whigs, as to the King of France' (H.M.C. Portland, iv. 577). Davenant was named by the whigs as author of both the Essay upon Publick Credit and the Letter to the Examiner (Hamilton's Diary, p. 17), but there is no evidence to suggest that Harley made use of his pen on his return to power. Cf. Journal to Stella, 5 November 1710.

2. Swift, Prose Works, viii. 123.

3. Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 406; Journal to Stella, 15 October 1710.

November, the first of Swift's contributions, proclaimed a resolution 'to converse in equal Freedom with the deserving Men of both Parties' in justifying the late changes in government in the teeth of 'a General who hath been so long successful Abroad; and might think himself injured, if the entire Ministry were not of his own Nomination'.¹ From 29 October onwards there are frequent references in Swift's letters to his writings, and these give the impression that the authorship of the Examiner had become a full-time occupation.

The more moderate line taken by the paper for some considerable time after 2 November 1710 bears out the assumption that Swift was coopted onto the Examiner for that very purpose. Significantly the subject of war and peace largely disappeared from its pages and the equivocal attitude to Marlborough was indicative of a change in editorial policy (though Wharton quickly replaced the captain-general as 'whipping boy'). True, Swift drew up 'A Bill of British Ingratitude' to the duke to illustrate that whatever was claimed by the whigs, his successes in war had not passed unnoticed or unrewarded. 'Yet if one studies the essay', Irvin Ehrenpreis points out, 'one must admit that with all its brilliance, it does not blame the Duke for any faults but cupidity and ambition'.² The principal aim of the Examiner at this time was to answer whig criticism of the change of government and of Marlborough's position in the new regime, it was not to attack the general himself. On 1 January 1711 Swift told Stella to:

Get the Examiners, and read them; the last nine or ten are full of the reasons for the late change, and of the abuses of the last ministry; and the great men assure me they are all true. They are written by their encouragement and direction.

1. Swift, Prose Works, iii. 3-4.

2. Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 527; Swift, Prose Works, iii. 23. For Swift's attacks on Wharton, see Pat Rogers, 'Swift and Cicero: the Character of Verres', Quarterly Journal of Speech, lxi (1975), 71-75.

This can be taken as a candid statement of the new policy for the Examiner: its brief was to justify the change in the ministry by exposing the mismanagements of the whigs, rather than to go on the offensive to indict deliberate malpractice. Though no doubt satisfying the desires of the tory country gentlemen, the tone was nevertheless more conciliatory than the manifesto spelled out in St John's Letter to the Examiner. It was incompetence rather than dishonesty that was being censured by Swift's pen.

In admitting that the Examiner was a ministerial press organ, and that it met with the requirements of the ministers themselves, Swift was always scrupulous to maintain his integrity as a writer. Although it was attacked for being 'written by a Club', and that 'very great Hands have Fingers in it', Swift emphasised that 'The paper I hold lies at my mercy, and I can govern it as I please'.¹ This was not to prove strictly true in the following months, and throughout his time as author he was given hints to keep to the government line. And there patently were meetings to concert policy for the Examiner. St John, Freind, Prior and Harley all were in fairly constant contact with Swift. After such a meeting on 11 November, when Swift and St John first made each other's acquaintance, the Examiner declared a new statement of intent:²

IT must be avowed, that for some Years past, there have been few Things more wanted in England, than such a Paper as this ought to be; and such as I will endeavour to make it, as long as it shall be found of any Use, without entring into the Violences of either Party. Considering the many grievous Misrepresentations of Persons and Things, it is highly requisite, at this Juncture, that the People throughout the Kingdom, should, if possible, be set right in their Opinions by some impartial Hand; which hath never yet been attempted: Those who have hitherto undertaken it, being upon every Account the least qualified of all Human-kind for such a Work.

1. Swift, Prose Works, iii. 30; cf. Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 408.

2. Swift, Prose Works, iii. 13-18.

As W.A. Speck observes, this paper 'marks but a stage in Swift's full conversion to Toryism. On examination it is quintessentially Harleian'.¹ The programme laid down in the Letter to the Examiner was officially laid to rest (though if dead, it did not lie down): Harley was once more flexing his muscles over the press. 'I would be glad to ask a Question about two Great Men of the late Ministry, how they came to be Whigs?', Swift demanded, 'And by what figure of Speech, half a Dozen others, lately put into great Employments, can be called Tories?' The opening paragraph of Examiner no. 15 echoed the claims of the Review of six years previously to impartiality. There was little doubt by 1710 that the Review was a whig organ, whatever its genesis, but Harley still had a genuinely neutral press organ in mind, and he hoped that Swift could live up to his ideal:

to let the remote and uninstructed Part of the Nation see, that they have been misled on both Sides, by mad, ridiculous Extreame, at a wide Distance on each Side from the Truth; while the right Path is so broad and plain, as to be easily kept, if they were once put into it.

This is a far cry from the extremism of St John, and the tone of the Examiner under Swift's auspices can be seen to have swung from this exalted position of disinterested patriot to a High-Flying tory standpoint in the course of the first six months of 1711 as he fell under the spell of the secretary and forgot the dictums of the moderate head of the ministry. It was impossible in Queen Anne's reign to write a periodical for any length of time without it inclining to either the whigs or the tories.

Harley could deprive St John of his own personal sway over the propaganda disseminated by the Examiner, but he could not get away from the fact that, as secretary of state, St John was responsible for all the tasks in relation to the press for which he himself had been responsible under Godolphin. Proscription in particular was St John's special duty, in conjunction with

1. Speck, 'The Examiner Examined', p. 150.

Dartmouth, and while Harley might be able to rely on Dartmouth's discretion, he was to become increasingly aware of St John's overbearing influence. In the last four years of Queen Anne's reign, of course, we know, with the benefit of hindsight, that an out-and-out power struggle gradually developed between the 'colonel' and the 'captain'. This has recently been the subject of a full-length study.¹ Control of the press was at the centre of this fight to the death, and Swift was the principal object of the conflict as he assumed from 1711 onwards to all intents and purposes the position of chef de propagande of the Oxford ministry. The quarrel was not always an open one, but it was never far beneath the surface. The role of the press in the Oxford ministry is, therefore, an equivocal one, and it must be assessed accordingly. By the time of the assassination attempt on Harley by the marquis de Guiscard in March 1711 the new regime was more or less established, if not entirely stable. But already serious fissures could be seen on the superstructure of the administration, and cracks could also be discerned in the foundations as the October Club withdrew its support from the ministers. The ministerial revolution was over, but the wider contest for control of the new ministry had only just begun.

1. Sheila Biddle, Bolingbroke and Harley (1975).

Chapter Nine

Defoe and Swift under the Oxford ministry

...Foe and Swift, fellow Labourers, in the Service of the White-Staff...

Oldmixon, Maynwaring, p. 276.

Swift is sometimes credited with wielding real power in the Oxford ministry. Some writers refer to 'inner cabinet meetings', beginning in the spring of 1711, to which he was invited, and in which he played a decisive role.¹ But the evidence for his influence tends to emanate from Swift himself, and, largely, in his letters to Stella. There are, of course, at least two ways of looking at this correspondence: the first is simply that he exaggerated his own importance, either deliberately or unconsciously; the second, to which advocates of the influential Swift theory must certainly adhere, is that he consciously played down his immense interest with the ministers, concealing the secrets of his involvement.² From 1711 Swift took a large share of responsibility for the press under the Oxford ministry: not only the Examiner fell within his sphere of influence, even after he had ended his own contributions to the paper, the other principal tory press organ, Abel Roper's Post-Boy, was evidently in Swift's pocket. 'Roper is my humble Slave', he once confessed, and there are good grounds for calling the Post-Boy 'the ministerial paper'.³ But Swift's influence was restricted to the area over which his pen did make him supremely important — the press. He had been recruited to the government's service by Harley to moderate the tone of tory propaganda. This was his task, and he was ultimately rewarded with an Irish deanery. Swift liked to emphasise his independence. He refused to take money for his writings, though obsessed with his own impecuniosity.

1. The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, ed. F. Elrington Ball (1910-14), i. 212n; J.M. Murry, Jonathan Swift (1954), p. 171. Swift added fuel to the flames in his Memoirs of the late Change. See Swift, Prose Works, viii. 124. Cf. Speck, 'The Examiner Examined', pp. 153-54.

2. See Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 654.

3. Journal to Stella, 21 March 1712; Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 577.

Oldmixon took a jaundiced view of Swift's scrupulosity. He felt that Harley 'paid Foe better than he did Swift' because he thought him 'the shrewder Head of the Two for Business'.¹ In fact it was Swift's insistence on retaining his integrity as a writer that complicated his association with the ministers. For, argue it as much as he liked, he was a fellow labourer with Defoe in the service of the prime minister, and in many ways he was no better than 'the fellow that was pilloryed, I have forgot his name', though he did enter Harley's house by the front door rather than by the back — when the porter let him!

A crystal-clear illustration of Swift's false position as chef de propagande is the attitude taken by both Oxford and Bolingbroke towards his mooted history of the peace-making. A distinction must be made between what may be termed his 'commissioned' and his 'non-commissioned' works, and the History of the Four Last Years of the Queen fell decidedly within the latter category.² After he finished writing the Examiner there were only three 'commissioned' works, that is those penned to the ministry's directions and at its instigation, though not necessarily in direct collaboration with any particular men (I discount here Swift's 'occasional' assistance in the drafting of queen's speeches and Hanmer's Representation), rather than those written and printed on Swift's own initiative. Although the latter were undoubtedly useful, it is the 'commissioned' writings which highlight his curious relations with the government, and with the prime minister. The Conduct of the Allies and Remarks on the Barrier Treaty are the best examples of Swift working in harmony with the ministers. To these should be

1. Oldmixon, Maynwaring, p. 276. Cf. Murry, op. cit., pp. 171-74; Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 555. In B.L. Loan 29/158/9 there is a MS dated 8 September 1711, and in Swift's hand it reads: 'Dr Swift's Bill: For a dinner I lost by yr Ldship's dining abroad — 0-2-6'.

2. For a progressive account of Swift's efforts to interest the ministers in his project, see the Journal to Stella, 9 October 1712 onwards, passim.

added The Publick Spirit of the Whigs, which, although entirely Swift's own work, was written in defence of Oxford and to his requirements. The following narrative will deal principally with these pieces.

Defoe's role as ministerial propagandist was in total contrast to that assumed by Swift. Not only was he given the much more difficult task of addressing the dissident whigs throughout the negotiations for peace, his main recommendation was his prolific output. As a pamphleteer Swift was second to none, but as an everyday railing, mud-slinging propagandist he did not match Defoe, who 'wrote Answers as readily as the supposed author of Swift's Tale'.¹ Swift's incomparable prose had little effect on the scribbling skirmishers who were constantly tearing at the coat-tails of the government. As Richard Cook observes, 'the immediate raison d'être of Swift's Tory pamphlets was the molding of public opinion for particular political ends, and it is in terms of these persuasive goals that the tracts can be best understood'.² The Examiner and the Conduct of the Allies did not attempt to preach to the unconverted in parliament. They sought to provide cogent reasons that could be followed and propounded by government supporters in the Commons, but, in addition, they appealed to the mass of country gentlemen, traditionally tory in sympathy, outside parliament, who paid the taxes that maintained the war-machine. Such lofty goals were not for Defoe. He was left to pick up the arguments where Swift left off. The learned doctor had pointed to the game, and Defoe dutifully pursued it through the mires of Grub Street. Whenever Swift descended to such depths he regarded it as a great effort to indulge in the abuse Defoe continually

1. Pat Rogers, Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture (1972), p. 320.

2. Richard I. Cook, Jonathan Swift as a Tory Pamphleteer (1967), p. 31.

dealt in. Yet Oxford knew the value of Defoe's propaganda. He had long known the importance of the sort of message Swift was trying to put across. It was the same rallying-cry he had sent echoing back and forth along the years during the standing army controversy and the paper wars of the previous decade. But he also recognised the overwhelming need for a propagandist like Defoe to battle daily with the hacks who made no pretence to the erudition of Dr Swift. This is not to belittle Defoe's role, for it was supremely difficult and it was a dirty one. Whether Defoe could have matched Swift's brilliant efforts in the Conduct is debatable, but it seems equally unlikely that Swift could have produced pamphlets to order as Defoe was required to do, and that was what made Defoe so valuable an asset to Harley.

It is for these reasons that Swift was chosen for the really important tasks, those that needed to have considerable care lavished on their birth. The Conduct of the Allies is the perfect example of the 'major work'. But Swift's independent attitude was unsuited to the commonplace exigencies of political propaganda. Oxford had to know where he was, and he had to be sure that the required pamphlet would meet the desired deadline. Swift made it quite clear that he was not the man for this sort of work, he loved to play the courtier far too much, he did not relish the traditional life of the party hack. One observer gives a description of him in 1713, as W.A. Speck points out, as 'the complete hanger-on at court':¹

Dr Swift came into the coffee-house, and had a bow from everybody but me [wrote White Kennett]. When I came to the antechamber to wait before prayers, Dr Swift was the principal man of talk and business, and acted as a Master of Requests...He was promising Mr Thorold to undertake with my Lord Treasurer, that, according to his petition, he should obtain a salary of two hundred pounds per annum, as minister of the English Church at Rotterdam. He stopped F[rancis] Gwyn, Esq., going in with the red bag to

1. Speck, 'Swift's Politics', p. 54; Correspondence, ed. Ball, ii. 414-15.

the Queen, and told him aloud he had something to say to him from my Lord Treasurer. He talked with the son of Dr Davenant to be sent abroad, and took out his pocket-book and wrote down several things, as memoranda, to do for him. He turned to the fire, and took out his gold watch, and telling him the time of day, complained it was very late. A gentleman said he was too fast. 'How can I help it', says the Doctor, 'if the courtiers give me a watch that won't go right?'

Swift refused to take money, but he pressed for preferment. He played the part of the gentleman, but also that of the sponger. He affected to ignore the great and grace the humble, so that once, as he gleefully informed Stella, Oxford was obliged to hunt him 'thrice about the room'. When the Saturday club resumed its meetings after a break of some months, Swift was offended that 'other Rabble', such as Ormonde, Anglesey, Poulett and Dartmouth, should have the audacity to 'intrude, and...pretend as good a Title as I'.¹ But of course Oxford knew his man; he had played on Swift's vanity when angling for him to take over the editorship of the Examiner, and the doctor had swallowed the bait, hook, line and sinker. With his experience in handling men of Swift's character, Oxford was throughout able to convince him that he was privy to his designs, and that he was being let in to some momentous secret.

Despite the absurd claims of some of his biographers,² Defoe had no such pretensions. He wanted preferment sure enough, but if none was forthcoming — and it never was — he was more than willing to be accommodated with hard cash to relieve his importunities.³ He indulged in self-deception and liked to think that he had preserved his integrity as a writer, but it was precisely this feature of his psyche that rendered him so very useful to Oxford. His

1. Journal to Stella, 9, 15 January 1713.

2. Professor J.R. Moore imagined that 'Defoe dared to give the advice which seems to have shaped Harley's success', and he referred to 'those frequent and secret conferences...which exerted such a profound influence...on the nation's affairs' (Daniel Defoe: Citizen of the Modern World (1958), pp. 155, 184).

3. Secret service records of payments to 'Claude Guilot' (Defoe's alias) preserved in the P.R.O. total £850 in the period 1710-14 (Stevens, op. cit., p. 57). Cf. B.L. Loan 29/10/5: £200 to Guilot, 1714 dates.

conscience could always be eased by the application of specie. With Swift it was a more difficult matter, and bribes had to be in the form of treats to dinner. Yet it was Defoe who defended Oxford in print during the proceedings relating to his impeachment in 1715, although their association had always been on the foot of master and employee, and he did it without any real hopes of reward. The one cog of the ministerial press machine over which Swift did not exercise any influence was his fellow labourer Defoe. Between them, each hardly acknowledging the existence of the other, they constituted an enviably effective team for the dissemination of propaganda. This was the culmination of twenty years of political experience. The machine he had tried to build under Godolphin finally materialised when Oxford was himself lord treasurer and prime minister in all but title.

After his efforts on behalf of the incoming ministry in the late summer of 1710, Defoe, on his own suggestion, returned for a time to Scotland.¹ He continued to defend the ministerial revolution in print while in his northern outpost, although mortified when Swift attacked the status of the author of the Review and questioned both his moral worth and his intellectual capacity. In his chagrin he responded to Swift's jibes in a prolonged retort quite out of proportion to the initial insult.² The fellow labourers failed to start on a friendly foot, and this was never remedied. Nonetheless Defoe joined Swift in censuring the stock-jobbers and those who lived purely by the manipulation of public credit in an attempt to end the credit crisis. He returned to London early in 1711, and he tried to interest Harley in 'a Small Tract' on the lottery, and 'a Small pamphlett of 2 or 3 sheets at Most' on

1. He was equipped with a cipher, which he used for a while in his letters to Harley. This, in Defoe's hand, has been preserved in B.L. Loan 29/32/7, endorsed by Harley: 'Cypher D: F: 1710. Octbr 10'. In his edition of Defoe's letters, G.H. Healey was unaware of the existence of this document.

2. Swift, Prose Works, iii. 13-18; Review, vii. 450. See Cook, op. cit., pp. 94-96; Michael Shinagel, Daniel Defoe and Middle-Class Gentility (1968), pp. 81-87.

the Greenshields case.¹ Neither tract managed to rouse Harley's enthusiasm, and this is perhaps symptomatic of a general uneasiness that crept into his association with the prime minister around this time. When Harley was wounded by Guiscard in March 1711, Defoe was cut off completely from his benefactor at a juncture during which his stock was sinking as the popularity of the Examiner gained ground. Writing in May, John Gay, in The Present State of Wit, reexamined the basis of the Review's claims to a monopoly of 'moderation'. He felt that because of Defoe's 'excellent Natural Parts', the handling of moderate propaganda in the hands of the Review 'might...have flourish'd some time longer, had not the Controversie been taken up by much abler Hands'. The emergence of Swift's Examiner curtailed Defoe's further success, in Gay's eyes, as 'The Examiner is a Paper, which all Men, who speak without Prejudice, allow to be well Writ'.² But it seems to have been more than simply Swift's rapid rise in influence that jeopardised Defoe's relations with Harley, for Defoe had once again been playing a double-game with his employer. One pamphlet he is now acknowledged to have written, Atalantis Major, was widely circulated in Scotland. Unbelievably Defoe wrote to Harley about it:³

[it] is a Bitter Invective against the D of Argyle, the E of Mar, and the Election of the Peers. It is Certainly Written by Some English man, and I have Some Guess at the Man, but dare not be positive. I have hitherto kept this also from the Press, and believ it will be Impossible for them to get it printed here after the Measures I have Taken. The Party I Got it of pretends the Coppy Came from England, but I am of Another Opinion. I shall Trouble you no farther about it because if possible I can get it Coppyed, I will Transmit the Coppy by Next post, for I have the Originall in My hand. They Expect I shall Encourage and assist them in the Mannageing it, and Till I can Take a Coppy I shall not Undeciev them.

1. Defoe, Letters, pp. 317, 320-21: Defoe to Harley, 26 February, 3 March 1711. On 1 March the Lords reversed the decision of the Scottish courts to imprison Greenshields, a Scottish episcopal dissenter. Cf. Swift, Prose Works, iii. 100-101; Review, vii. nos. 153, 155.

2. The Present State of Wit, in a Letter to a Friend in the Country (1711), pp. 7-8.

3. Defoe, Letters, p. 307 and footnote.

'I beg your favourable Construction of My Conduct in an Age So Nice as this', Defoe concluded, and the editor of his letters draws attention to 'the outrageous equivocations' of these two paragraphs. But, he postulates, 'There is no evidence that Harley penetrated the deception'. Perhaps not, but he had his ear close to the ground even in Scotland, and it is quite likely that he was informed of Defoe's authorship.

On 19 June Defoe wrote to Harley, by that time earl of Oxford and lord treasurer:¹

I am Very Unhappy Not in My Private Affairs Onely, which are Mellancholly, and Ruinous, from the Discontinuance of your Favour, But in Not haveing The Occasion and Honor of Layeing before your Ldpp Severall Matters of Importance Relateing to the Publick.

I had Once My Lord The honor of your Promise That if I did any Thing Offensive you would be your Self my Reprover, and would not be Dissobliged Till I had first your Mind for my Governmt. God is My Wittness if I knew any Thing in which I Should Dissplease your Ldpp I would Avoid it Dilligently. If my Lord I am Not So Usefull a Servant as I would be, I hope I have been Usefull, and still May be So, and it must be want of Opportunity Not fidellity of Dilligence if it is Otherwise.

Defoe desired to 'Humbly Lay my Case at your Ldpps Feet', and Oxford did not relinquish the hold he had over his propagandist. Defoe's plea was the plea of a guilty man. It is hard to believe he had deluded himself sufficiently to forget that he had attempted to deceive his employer over Atalantis Major. He had been publishing heavily Harleyite pamphlets in an almost transparent effort to curry favour. He had censured the emerging October Club in The Secret History of the October Club, while Eleven Opinions about Mr H[arley] was a complete justification of the man and the change of government. 'The Jacobite, Papist and French', Defoe pointed out, 'all look upon Mr H[arley] as the most Dangerous Enemy they have, a Sworn, Mortal Opposer of their Interest, and the greatest Obstruction to the Success of their Designs'. Moderation was still the motto of the Harley ministry, and

1. Ibid., p. 331.

among 'Men of Moderation, who shun the Extreame of Parties', Defoe claimed to find 'very few, if any, but what have an Opinion of Mr H[arley] very much to his Advantage'.¹ On 19 June Defoe begged leave to acquaint Oxford with 'Something Relateing to The Trade to the South Seas, which abundance speak Evill of because They do Not Understand'. The inauguration of the South Sea Company was the linchpin of the arrangement the prime minister had been trying to reach with the whig financiers. From May 1711 onwards the Oxford ministry was on a much surer financial footing, and Harley's elevation to the peerage and appointment as lord treasurer, ostensibly as a recognition of his services after the assassination attempt, really mark the end of the ministerial revolution. A week later Defoe reminded Oxford of his opinions on the South Sea scheme. 'I would Gladly have Spoken Six words to your Ldpp on the Subject of the South Sea Affaire', he wrote, 'in which I Perswade My Self I May do Some Service in print'. This time his proposal was given Oxford's seal of approval, and on 28 June the Review launched a series of papers dealing with the south sea trade. Significantly Defoe wrote to Oxford once more on 13 July:²

I can No way Express My humble Thankfulness to your Ldpp for The Relief which The Return of your Goodness and Bounty has been to Me Unless I should give you The Trouble of a Sad Account...I Extreamey wish for an Occasion to Render my Self Usefull, as The best Method to shew my Self Gratefull.

The old association was returning to normality.

There was another reason for Oxford's reluctance to sever his connexion with Defoe. 'By this time Harley had found a new friend and pamphleteer in Swift', James Sutherland observes, 'Defoe could not have been ignorant of

1. Eleven Opinions about Mr H[arley]; with Observations (1711), pp. 61, 81. See H.M.C. Portland, iv. 697.

2. Defoe, Letters, pp. 331, 333, 334. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 338: the same to the same, 17 July 1711: 'In Persuance of your Ldpps Orders of Putting My Thoughts in writeing on the Subject of The Trade to the South-Seas, I have Enclosed to your Ldpp a Short General...I have put a Stop to what I was Saying in Print Till I may kno' if my Thoughts are of any Consideration in your Ldpps Judgent'.

the friendship of the two men, and of the work that Swift was doing for the ministry; it was common knowledge'.¹ This is true, but Swift had ended his run of contributions to the Examiner by 19 June 1711, and it is to be suspected that Oxford had taken the decision to relieve him of the responsibility of editorship during May. For some time he had been following St John's suggestions, and the tone of the paper had reverted to its original more extreme line. Swift's independence meant that Oxford could not bully him whenever he stepped out of line, as he could Defoe. In this situation Oxford no doubt recognised Defoe's great worth as a propagandist: the fact that he was personally dependent on the prime minister and no-one else, and that he was pliable.

Swift's initial conversion to the views of St John occurred in the weeks of January 1711. Throughout that month he attended frequent 'business' conferences with the secretary. The alteration of Swift's opinions as expressed not only in the Examiner, but also in the Journal to Stella, is quite remarkable, as he and St John turned to collaborate in a more extensive press policy. Compare Swift's anxious observation of 7 January:

I must talk politics. I protest I am afraid we shall all be embroiled with parties...I think our friends press a little too hard on the duke of Marlborough. The country members are violent to have past faults enquired into, and they have reason; but I do not observe the ministry to be very fond of it. In my opinion we have nothing to save us but a Peace...I tell the ministry this as much as I dare...but I doubt they let personal quarrels mingle too much with their proceedings.

with the conspirator's whisper of 31 January:

I was forwarding an impeachment against a certain great person; that was two of my businesses with the secretary, were they not worthy ones?

In the midst of all this activity with St John, Swift did not see Harley.

On 4 February he received a message from the prime minister, 'desiring to

1. James Sutherland, Defoe (1937), pp. 184-85.

to know whether I was alive'. It is clear that Swift's sympathies turned from the 'right Path' which he had advocated in the Examiner of 16 November into the more extreme one he had denounced in these weeks when he was in almost constant contact with St John to the exclusion of the prime minister.

Four successive papers mirrored the conversion. On 25 January the whigs and the old ministry were subjected to a withering assault in which their hypothetical return to power was discussed and the measures they would immediately implement were listed:¹

Ordered, That a Bill be brought in for repealing the Sacramental Test...
Another, for constituting a General for Life; with Instructions to the
Committee, that Care may be taken to make the War last as long as the
Life of the said General.

A Bill of Attainder against James Duke of Ormonde; John Duke of
Buckingham; Lawrence Earl of Rochester; Sir Simon Harcourt, Knight; Robert
Harley, Henry St John Esqrs. Abigail Masham, and others, for High Treason
against the Junta.

Resolved, That Sarah Dutchess of Marlborough, hath been a most dutiful,
just, and grateful Servant to her Majesty.

Resolved, That to advise the Dissolution of a Whig Parliament, or the
Removal of a Whig Ministry, was in order to bring in Popery and the
Pretender; and that the said Advice was High Treason.

Resolved, That by the Original Contract the Government of this Realm is
by a Junta, and a King or Queen; but the Administration solely in the
Junta.

This frontal attack, perpetrated at a time when Harley was feverishly trying to forestall the sinking of credit, was hardly the way to reconcile the old ministry and the new. On 12 January Swift had observed that 'Harley has the procuring of five or six millions on his shoulders, and the Whigs will not lend a groat; which is the only reason of the fall of the stocks'. The moderate path was being mined by the extremist wrecker St John, who wished for the ruin of the whigs once and for all, and 'to fill the employments of the kingdom, down to the meanest, with Tories'.² In the ensuing issue of the

1. Swift, Prose Works, iii. 71-72.

2. Viscount Bolingbroke, A Letter to Sir William Windham (1753), p. 22.

Examiner Swift compared the virtues of the two regimes. Harley was upheld as the first minister 'of late Years, who ventured to restore the forgotten Custom of treating his PRINCE with Duty and Respect', but perhaps of more significance was Swift's treatment of St John, who 'From his Youth, by applying those admirable Talents of Nature, and Improvements of Art to publick Business, grew eminent in Court and Parliament, at an Age when the Generality of Mankind is employed in Trifles and Folly'.¹

On 8 February Swift contributed the paper 'widely regarded as the finest of his weekly essays', the 'letter to Crassus' in which he censured the avarice of Marlborough.² Gone is the equivocation of the earlier 'Bill of British Ingratitude'. The 'letter to Crassus' was a full-blooded attack on the captain-general, one which would seem to fit the bill of 'forwarding an impeachment against a certain great person'.³ The probability is that Swift and St John collaborated on the issue. Swift wrote to Stella on 7 March:

the Examiners...are written very finely, as you judge. I do not think they are too severe on the duke; they only tax him of avarice, and his avarice has ruined us. You may count upon all things in them to be true.

Finally, on 15 February, the Examiner returned to the original Letter to the Examiner which had lain unnoticed for so long. This surely represented a new phase in Swift's writings on behalf of the Harley ministry, and one with which the prime minister would not have been too enamoured, if the truth was that Swift had been drafted onto the paper to counteract the extremism of the early issues. Discussing the 'Conduct of the late Ministry, the shameful Mismanagements in Spain, or the wrong Steps in the Treaty of Peace', themes which the Letter had urged the paper to pursue, but which had been largely

1. Swift, Prose Works, iii. 79-80.

2. Ibid., pp. 83-85; Speck, 'The Examiner Examined', p. 141.

3. Above, p. 289; cf. Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 530.

neglected under Swift's more moderate regime, the author now proposed to view them 'in a Discourse by it self, rather than take up room here, and break into the Design of this Paper, from whence I have resolved to banish Controversy as much as possible'.¹ Despite this platitude, it brought light to bear on the way the editorial policy of the Examiner had diverged from its original principles, and, with the October Club beginning to make its presence felt in parliament, there are grounds for suspecting that St John had deliberately wished for this state of affairs to be revealed.

Throughout January 1711, then, Swift had been closetted with St John. On 6 February Harley sent him a bankbill for £50 for writing the Examiner. Thwarted from exercising personal influence over the paper in these weeks, he resorted to exerting pressure on Swift to acknowledge his obligations by offering him payment for his services. Needless to say, Swift was offended. Had he accepted the proffered money the obvious implication would have been that he was answerable to Harley for what he published in the Examiner. Several considerations would have followed on from this, not the least being that Harley could, in theory, dictate to Swift what he should write, countering St John's growing influence, and, if the worst should come to the worst, he could be removed from the paper.² It is almost certain that Swift was unaware of any of this, and that he presumed that in following St John's hints in penning the Examiner he was pleasing Harley. 'We are plagued here with an October Club', he reported to Stella on 18 February, 'who...meet every evening...to consult affairs, and drive things on to extreams against the Whigs, to call the old ministry to account'. 'The ministry is for gentler measures', he blithely continued, seemingly oblivious

1. Swift, Prose Works, iii. 87-88. Could this be the earliest reference to the Conduct of the Allies?

2. Journal to Stella, 6, 7 February 1711; cf. Murry, op. cit., p. 171.

of St John's strong sympathy with the October men, and the propaganda he had been disseminating in the Examiner. It was Harley who advocated moderation. 'The ministry is upon a very narrow bottom, and stand like an Isthmus between the Whigs on one side, and the violent Tories on the other', he reiterated on 4 March, clearly not aligning St John with the latter, 'they are able seamen, but the tempest is too great, the ship too rotten, and the crew all against them'. He failed to observe that the boatswain also wished to sail with the wind.

The formation of the October Club was one of the most effective indictments of Harley's country politics, for the October men themselves were independent country gentlemen, and their motto was 'we will not be Harl'd'.¹ They were dissatisfied with Harley's management, and this is symptomatic of how far his ideology had diverged from the rest of the country members, and the methods he had to resort to in the succeeding twelve months to silence criticism of his administration bear a striking resemblance to those of the Junto in the 1690s and the duumvirate in the first eight years of Queen Anne's reign. On his appointment as lord treasurer he began to buy off the most vociferous October men with places and pensions. Sir John Pakington was given a pension of £800 p.a. 'provided it could be kept secret and credited in the government's accounts under a fictitious name'.² This was totally reminiscent of secret service payments to M.P.s in William's reign, a practice censured most vehemently by the country opposition under Harley, but it smacks of nothing so much as the excesses of Walpole when in office, as does Oxford's creation of twelve peers at one stroke at the turn of the difficult year 1711 to defend the ministry's peace programme. Thus far had he sacrificed his idealism for the

1. For the October Club, see the excellent article by H.T. Dickinson, 'The October Club', H.L.Q., xxxiii (1969-70), 155-73.

2. Ibid., p. 164. Caesar became treasurer of the navy, while Byerley, Finch and Wyndham were also given petty positions in the ministry.

practicality of moderate government above party. The first step along this line had been his attempts to woo the whig ministers in August and September 1710. But the emergence of the October Club prevented any chance Harley had of governing above party in accord with country precepts, and it is a gauge of his disillusionment with the mass of country backbenchers that he was prepared to sacrifice his principles.

Not only did Harley offer Swift money in the weeks around the turn of January/February 1711, when the Examiner was reasserting some of its old views, and the October Club was making its presence felt in parliament,¹ he also dated his split with St John from this time. 'The beginning of February 1710[11] there began to be a separation in the House of Commons, and Mr Secretary St John began listing a party, and set up for governing the House'.² Certainly St John hoped to infiltrate the October Club to his own advantage. At this point a meeting was arranged where Rochester and Harley attempted 'to calm the spirit of division and ambition'.³ Of all this Swift seems blissfully ignorant, which, as W.A. Speck observes, 'casts grave doubts on some of the interpretations placed on his relationship' with Harley and St John.⁴ Meanwhile the Examiner continued to mark out a more rugged path in censure of the old ministry, with increasing deference to the wishes of the author of the Letter to the Examiner.⁵

1. The first day on which the tory backbenchers took affairs into their own hands in the Commons was 5 February 1711. See Dickinson, 'The October Club', p. 155.

2. H.M.C. Portland, v. 464: 'the earl of Oxford's Account of Public Affairs'.

3. Cobbett, VI, appendix, p. ccxlv: 'Oxford's brief Account of Public Affairs'. Rochester's authority in the new ministry must not be overlooked. Until his death in May 1711 he was a useful prop for Harley.

4. Speck, 'The Examiner Examined', p. 153; cf. Biddle, Bolingbroke and Harley, p. 5.

5. Swift, Prose Works, iii. 94-95; cf. Murry, op. cit., p. 180; Wentworth Papers, p. 180.

Swift's first doubts about the strength of the friendship between Harley and St John occurred after Guiscard's attempt to assassinate the prime minister on 8 March 1711. In the Examiner Swift gave an account of the affair which, he noted in retrospect, he had from St John:¹

The Murderer confessed in Newgate, that his chief Design was against Mr Secretary St John, who happened to change Seats with Mr Harley, for more Convenience of examining the Criminal: And being asked what provoked him to stab the Chancellor? He said, that not being able to come at the Secretary, as he intended, it was some Satisfaction to murder the Person whom he thought Mr St John loved best.

This representation, as Swift himself later admitted, had the effect of giving 'Mr St John all the merit, while Mr Harley remained with nothing but the danger and the pain', but, he claimed, the Examiner in question had been 'perused' by the secretary 'before it was printed', and, significantly, he 'made no alteration in that passage'. Naturally enough, St John's callous affectation that Guiscard's blow had been meant for himself outraged the Harley camp, and we know that the prime minister himself was unusually touchy about accounts of the affair.² Swift was forced to defend his account by assuring his audience that he had merely been quoting Guiscard when giving his version of what had taken place, and he refused to print a full narrative of the assassination attempt, leaving it to his amanuensis Mrs Manley. 'I was afraid of disobliging Mr Harley or St John in one critical point about it', he explained to Stella, 'and would not do it myself'.³

It seems the assassination affair had repercussions on Swift's role as Examiner. While Harley lay sick he fell more and more under the sway of St John, and what Ehrenpreis describes as a love-affair of the mind developed.

1. Swift, Prose Works, viii. 128. For the Examiner's account, *ibid.*, iii. 106-110. See also H.T. Dickinson, 'The Attempt to Assassinate Harley, 1711', History Today, xv (1965), 788-95.

2. See in particular his MS notes on his own copy of Boyer's Political State, dated 8 May 1711, in which he corrected the account of the stabbing, especially concerning the part played by St John, using words such as 'groundless' and 'false' (B.L. Loan 29/166/2).

3. Journal to Stella, 16 April 1711. For Mrs Manley's relations with the Oxford ministry, see below pp. 328-29.

It was on Harley's return to the political scene some weeks later that Swift finally caught wind of the fact that all was not well between the 'colonel' and the 'captain'. 'I am heartily sorry to find my friend the secretary stand a little ticklish with the rest of the ministry', he wrote on 27 April, 'there have been one or two disobliging things that have happened, too long to tell'. The first of these was the débâcle over the leather duty, which St John mishandled badly (perhaps deliberately) in the Commons during Harley's absence.¹ The second was the secretary's defence of his friend, James Brydges, the paymaster-general, from charges of mismanagement and corruption under the Godolphin ministry. Swift at last discovered the uneasiness present in the ranks of the government over the escapades of the secretary, three months after it flared up. He set about to reconcile the prime minister and St John, but the efficacy of his healing powers must be doubted. On 18 May Swift sought out St John 'about some business': the following day 'the Saturday Club...met, with the addition of the duke of Shrewsbury'. After the others had left, Swift and Harley sat alone for two hours, 'where we talked through a great deal of matters I had a mind to settle with him'. Four weeks later Swift completed his series of regular contributions to the Examiner.

The two events were not unconnected. Swift did not see Oxford from 27 May until 21 June. Clearly the decision for him to relinquish the editorship of the Examiner was taken in the week that Harley was elevated to the peerage as earl of Oxford and Mortimer, and this might well have been the business he transacted with St John and Harley on 18 and 19 May. 'One cannot

1. The bill was thrown out by the Commons with St John not even present. The following day he blithely introduced a tax on hides and skins in its place, and this duly passed the house. See Dickinson, 'October Club', p. 162. Cf. Longleat, Portland MSS, x. f. 134: 'Heads for a Memoriall for the E. of Oxford': 'The perverseness of some of the Tory's during the time that Mr H[arley] lay sick of his Wounds'.

avoid thinking', writes Dr Speck, 'that he was glad to relinquish a post which had brought him directly into the firing line between the chief ministers'.¹ True, as the episode of the Examiner's account of the Guiscard demonstrates beyond doubt, but there are reasons to suspect that Swift's laying down was not really voluntary. In my view he wished simply to reassess his position on the paper, especially as the ill-feeling between the prime minister and the secretary was so apparent, but he did not necessarily envisage giving up his position. In fact he was probably enough of an egoist to believe himself virtually indispensable as Examiner. 'As for the Examiner', Swift informed Stella on 7 June:

I have heard a whisper, that after that of this day, which tells what this parliament has done, you will hardly find them so good. I prophecy they will be trash for the future; and methinks in this day's Examiner the author talks doubtfully, as if he would write no more.

Ostensibly the end of the parliamentary session had reduced the need for a periodical designed to reconcile the backbench Tories to the ministry and its moderate country policies. The tone of Swift's letter to Stella, however, suggests that he was leaving the paper with reluctance. Seeking a redefinition of his position, with the object, no doubt, a reassertion of his essential independence, Swift had been told that if he was to nourish such an independent attitude on a ministerial paper, then his services were no longer required. Harley was not prepared to watch the Examiner turn into an extremist organ. 'If they go on', Swift continued to Stella, speaking about the Examiners, 'they may probably be by some other hand, which in my opinion is a thousand pities; but who can help it?'²

As Swift was leaving Oxford's house by the front door, Defoe was surreptitiously admitted by the back. The real evidence of Swift's laying

1. Speck, 'The Examiner Examined', p. 154.

2. This is Deane Swift's reading of the letter of 7 June, but it is relegated to a footnote by Harold Williams in his edition of the Journal.

down the Examiner is as scanty as the details of his recruitment. But his relations with the prime minister had altered quite considerably after the Guiscard affair, and they continued to change as Swift grew increasingly sceptical of Oxford's policies in the summer of 1711. The friendship he formerly expressed for the prime minister also languished and he saw less and less of Oxford.¹ Swift's vanity had been pricked, and he began to experience doubts about his true position in relation to the ministers as his new-found confidence started to give way once more to his old paranoia.²

They think me useful; they pretend they were afraid of none but me, and that they resolved to have me; they have often confessed this; yet all makes little impression. — Pox of these speculations! They give me the spleen; and that is a disease I was not born to.

Yet tensions eased, and at the end of July Oxford again offered Swift £50, desiring 'to be well' with the writer once more, and although the doctor affected to be 'in a rage' he was soon writing on behalf of the government again. He wrote to Stella on 15 August:

Do you know, that I have ventured all my credit with those great ministers to clear some misunderstandings betwixt them; and if there be no breach, I ought to have the merit of it? 'Tis a plaguy ticklish piece of work, and a man hazards losing both sides. 'Tis a pity the world does not know my virtue.

Ten days later he made the first overt reference to the Conduct of the Allies. The importance of the pamphlet was such that it rendered a reconciliation between Oxford and Swift essential.

When the secret 'Jersey stage' of the peace negotiations between France and Britain were completed, Matthew Prior was despatched to formulate preliminaries upon which the actual treating could be based.³ In the middle

1. Journal to Stella, 26 June, 3 July 1711. It is noteworthy that the new society set up by Swift and St John around this time, ostensibly 'to advance conversation and friendship', did not include Oxford.

2. Ibid., 29 June 1711.

3. The best introduction to the peace negotiations is A.D. MacLachlan, 'The Road to Peace 1710-1713', B.A.T.G.R., pp. 197-215. For a full-length study, see the same author's unpublished Cambridge University Ph.D. thesis (1964).

of August 1711 he returned to England bringing in his train the French diplomat Mesnager. In September the public articles were signed, and preparations were made to pave the way to their revelation. Harley's government had been swept into office on a tidal wave of war-weariness, and he worked wholeheartedly for the Dutch acceptance of the Mesnager convention. Willem Buys was sent from Holland to investigate the mission, in response to a message forwarded to Heinsius by Oxford, in which he offered the pensionary 'what I proposed and laboured much to have brought about in Sep^r 1706, I mean a League offensive & defensive between the Two nations to take place after the Peace'.¹ Significantly Swift revealed that he was working on something important on Prior's return from France. To whet the town's appetite he published A New Journey to Paris on 11 September, his first effective contribution to the peace campaign after his role as Examiner. Its undertones were perfectly serious, although it was in mock form.

But there was nothing in Defoe's pamphlets on the peace that could be described as mock. While Swift penned the occasional piece for publication, Defoe was the ministry's apologist and whipping-boy. For months the Review had carried papers on the state of war and peace and the government's intentions:²

To give up Spain to the House of Bourbon [he wrote], is a Thing so absurd, so ridiculous, you ought as soon to think of giving up Ireland to them, the Reasons may hold on both Sides alike, and the Ruin of the English Commerce may be Argu'd equally from both...if we must make Peace with the giving up of Spain, I hope, Gentlemen, you will not do it Sword in hand; it is Time enough for that, when you are beaten again...that Spain should be abandon'd...never enter'd into any Men's Heads.

1. B.L. Loan 29/266, unfoliated: Oxford to Heinsius, 24 July/ 4 August 1711 (copy). Cf. B.L. Loan 29/9/38: memo in Harley's hand, dated 22 September 1706: 'the continuation of the Alliance depends upon the foundation of a Union between the two maritime powers'.

2. Review, viii. 279.

One critic wanted to know how he could profess to independence in his writings, when he was so obviously in the pocket of the ministry, and he expected the Review 'to endeavour to prove...That it is impossible to have a good Peace, without giving Spain to France', in order to support the clandestine peace negotiations. Defoe sprang to his own defence:¹

he that tells of Bribery, and Writing to please, is, first, A Knave, in charging me with what he cannot prove; and, secondly, A Fool, in putting more Value upon the Review, and its Author also, than he pretends to, and suggesting, that his Pen is of such Consequence to the present Ministry, as to make it worth their while.

Nonetheless Defoe was not spared from opposition recriminations, as he energetically propounded the government line in battle with the skirmishers of Grub Street throughout October and November 1711. 'I Believ My Lord I Need not give your Ldpp an Account how I am Treated in Print by The Observator', he wrote on 30 November, 'for Espouseing The just article of Peace'.² His Reasons why this Nation Ought to put a Speedy End to this Expensive War: With a Brief Essay, at the Probable Conditions On Which the Peace Now Negotiating, may be Founded. Also An Enquiry into the Obligations Britain lies under to the Allies; and how far she is obliged not to make Peace without them, its title self-explanatory, anticipated Swift's major contribution to the peace campaign in spotlighting the manner in which allied war aims had evolved:³

The first Pretence...The Reducing the Exorbitant Power of France; by Degrees...was dropt...And then, we had it Chang'd for these Words; For the Obtaining a Lasting, Safe, and Honourable Peace.

Now, he alleged, the whigs, in their chagrin at the change of government, 'Chang'd the Title a Second Time, and call'd it a War for recovering the whole Monarchy of Spain', despite the fact that the original objective of

1. Ibid., pp. 346, 339.

2. Defoe, Letters, p. 362.

3. Reasons why this Nation Ought to put a Speedy End to this Expensive War (1711), pp. 12, 26 et seq.

the war had been achieved, and this point needed no further demonstration than to examine the state of the enemy, 'so Broken and Reduced by this long War'. Yet Defoe's writings, important though they were, were simply a side-show to the promulgation of the ministerial stance in its nakedness. The prime illustration of the twin roles of Defoe and Swift as propagandists for the Oxford ministry is the vast difference between the former's minor rehearsals of criticism of the allies and the whigs, which prepared the ground for Swift, and the latter's definitive accusations in The Conduct of the Allies, and of the Late Ministry, in Beginning and Carrying on the Present War.

Swift had served his apprenticeship as propagandist for the Oxford ministry on the Examiner. He had succeeded in transforming the vague feelings of country Tories into sophisticated statements of political doctrine, and in justifying the conduct of the peace party he was given ample opportunity to exercise his theory: he was called upon to formulate cogent arguments to endorse the war-weariness evident just below the surface in the mass of country gentlemen. To do this he was required to censure the conduct of the allies and the old ministry to explain the necessity of separate overtures for peace. In so doing he was not sacrificing his integrity: he had been a firm supporter of the established church, and he had been a persistent critic of stockjobbers and warmongers.¹ His association with St John reaffirmed his beliefs.² Swift's natural country whiggery found a vent for its expression under Oxford. The problem that immediately concerns us here, however, is whether St John or Oxford played a larger part in the composition of the

1. Swift, Prose Works, iii. 5: in this the first of his contributions to the Examiner, he censured 'that power, which, according to the old maxim, was used to follow land', and which, during the course of the war, had quite clearly 'gone over to money'; see Speck, 'The Conflict in Society', B.A.T.G.R., pp. 148 et seq.

2. As early as 1709 St John complained about the growth of the monied interest, 'a sort of property...not known twenty years ago, [which] is now increased to be almost equal to the terra firma of our island' (Bod. MS Eng. Misc. E. 180, f. 4: to Lord Orrery, 9 July 1709).

Conduct of the Allies. Most authorities play down the prime minister's role to emphasise the secretary's collaboration with Swift in the finished product. Dr MacLachlan provides the most advanced statement of this thesis:¹

the inspiration was St John's: the violent assault on the Dutch - and Swift wrote with real hatred - was but the outcome of the Secretary's intention to make them 'swallow' the peace 'with a pox', and the destruction of 'King Marlborough', the result of his determination to rid the ministry of the one man who could frustrate his policies. These polemics may have taken their cue from Harley's presumed policies, but they went far beyond any pressure or persuasion he may have wished to put on Heinsius and Buys, and they contradicted his attempts to retain moderate support. Far from Swift's being the tool of the chief minister, the chief minister was forced to trim his sails to the hurricance produced by Swift's - and St John's - propaganda.

While MacLachlan is right to point out that:

St John disapproved of the carefully contrived releases and disingenuous promises [which Oxford] eked out to Heinsius and van Huls. He preferred shock tactics - silence followed by a fait accompli delivered to The Hague by the hectoring ambassador, Lord Strafford...

Oxford was lord treasurer, and the peace, despite the beliefs of a previous generation of historians, was carried on his way. The public announcement of the Mesnager talks was carefully planned, and the path prepared by a suitable batch of ministerial propaganda supplied, in the main, by Defoe.²

I take a considerably different view of the steps that led to the production of the Conduct of the Allies. Once again I feel that Oxford was behind the pamphlet, as he had had the final say while Swift was editor of the Examiner. In assessing St John's extremism Dr MacLachlan takes no account of Oxford's 'Plaine English': not even Swift's pamphlet equalled the rhetoric of this severe indictment of the conduct of the Marlboroughs. It is unlikely that he was unaware of the deep resentment Oxford still felt towards the 'Family'.³ The

1. MacLachlan, B.A.T.G.R., pp. 210-11; cf. Murry, op. cit., p. 197: Swift was 'briefed chiefly...in the Conduct by Bolingbroke'; Journal to Stella, ed. Williams, ii. 408n: 'St John chiefly supplied Swift with facts and suggestions'.

2. See Coombs, The Conduct of the Dutch, p. 258.

3. See, for instance, the preface to Swift's pamphlet (pp. 5-6): 'our Grievances are...that the grossest Impositions have been submitted to for the Advancement of private Wealth and Power'.

image of Marlborough as 'king' is used earliest by Harley himself in 1708. Certainly there is enough to suggest that far from wishing to moderate the tone of the Conduct of the Allies, Oxford added fuel to the flames in suggesting further examples of allied malpractice that were incorporated into subsequent editions. He had spent almost eighteen months trying to convince the Dutch that he was not anticipating a sell-out to France, but that he wanted to conclude peace at the earliest favourable opportunity. If they were not aware that he meant business by November 1711 then it is quite likely that he himself sponsored the hard line taken in the Conduct. After the revelation of the Mesnager convention, Swift's pamphlet simply cut Britain's line of retreat on the question of a settlement. The die had been cast, and December 1711 was the 'peace crisis'. Oxford wanted a settlement, and the publication of the Conduct of the Allies told the country Tories once and for all that the Oxford ministry was going to spare no effort to obtain a speedy, safe, and lasting peace.

This is not to deny that there are problems in assessing Oxford's participation in the composition of the pamphlet, whereas there is little doubt that St John was an active collaborator. Swift continually submitted the manuscript of the Conduct to the secretary for his examination, and he even went to Hampton Court with it in his pocket.¹ On the other hand Swift wrote to Stella on 30 October about the tract:

the ministers reckon it will do abundance of good, and open the eyes of the nation, who are half bewitched against a Peace. Few of this generation can remember any thing but war and taxes, and they think it is as it should be: whereas 'tis certain we are the most undone people in Europe, as I am afraid I shall make appear beyond all contradiction.

It is inconceivable that Oxford was not one of the 'ministers' to whom Swift was referring: and the doctor was at pains to point out that 'three or four

1. Journal to Stella, 16 November 1711.

great people' had been consulted in his attempts to verify all the claims made in the tract. The manuscript was circulated freely and alterations were made by consecutive ministers. When the work was finally completed and sent to the printer, copies were provided for 'the great men' on 26 November, prior to publication. Oxford 'had it by him on the table' when Swift called on the day of publication, 27 November, and it is hard to believe that the prime minister could not have prevented the pamphlet being made public had he expressed reservations about its contents. At this time he possessed all the powers of a prime minister: he was not subject to the overweening influence of St John. Yet he confined his curiosity to an enquiry 'about the matter in the title page'. Though the latin inscription is largely unimportant, his interest in the Conduct is not. Presumably he had not seen the title-page, but 'Heds for a Memoriall for the E[arl] of Oxford', preserved in the Portland papers at Longleat, in drawing attention to the vast increase in the cost of the war after 1709, refer the reader to the 'state of war and peace & Conduct of the Allies'.¹ If the pamphlet was St John's pigeon, as MacLachlan and others would like to think, it was fostered by Oxford as soon as it hatched, and he took it to his bosom.

Of great significance in this respect is the fact that as soon as the Conduct of the Allies began to 'make a noise', and a second edition was deemed necessary, Swift noted that 'lord treasurer made one or two small additions'.² Now for the theory of St John's overbearing pressure on Oxford's more moderate policies to be tenable, it would seem reasonable to assume that these emendations modified the extreme tone of the pamphlet. The alterations can be readily identified, of course, simply by comparing

1. Longleat, Portland MSS, x. f. 133.

2. Journal to Stella, 29 November 1711.

the first and second editions. There were in fact four minor additions to the tract, as well as numerous typographical corrections. None of the additions attempted to moderate Swift's attack on the allies in any way: on the contrary they accentuated it. The first was a point of fact, concerning the number of men at the battles of Blenheim and Ramillies, which pressed home Swift's point that the process of maintaining a Dutch garrison in each conquered town in the Spanish Netherlands correspondingly reduced the number of men they put in the field, 'for they make no Scruple of employing the Troops of their Quota':¹

This is at length arrived, by several Steps, to such a Height, that there are at present in the Field, not so many Forces under the Duke of Marlborough's Command in Flanders, as Britain alone maintains for that Service, nor have been for some Years past.

The other additions are of more substance. Oxford, it seems, was responsible for a further example of how the Emperor had 'treated the Queen, to whom he owes such infinite Obligations':

Her Majesty borrowed Two hundred thousand Pounds from the Genoese, and sent it to Barcelona, for the Payment of the Spanish Army: This Mony was to be re-coined into the current Species of Catalonia, which by the Alloy is lower in Value 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ per Cent. The Queen expected, as she had Reason, to have the Benefit of this Re-coinage, offering to apply it All to the Use of the War; but King Charles, instead of consenting to this, made a Grant of the Coinage to one of his Courtiers; which put a stop to the Work: And when it was represented, that the Army would Starve by this Delay, his Majesty only replied, Let them Starve! and would not recal his Grant. (pp. 32-33.)

Clearly not only St John supplied Swift with anecdotes concerning allied malpractice. Again in reference to the Spanish theatre, a footnote on the threat of Spain being united with Austria was added to the second edition of the Conduct, explaining that at the outset of hostilities:

We and Holland, as well as Portugal, were so apprehensive of this, that, by the 25th Article of the Offensive Alliance, his Portuguese Majesty

1. Swift, Prose Works, vi. 30-31. Subsequent references to the Conduct of the Allies are to this edition, and they are given in the text within parentheses.

was not to acknowledge the Arch-Duke for King of Spain, till the two late Emperors had made a Cession to Charles of the said Monarchy. (p. 51.)

This was something St John could not have been aware of at the time. The final addition was very minor, but it tied in well with Oxford's quintessential political ideology. 'An absolute Government may endure a long War', the new edition read, 'but it hath generally been ruinous to Free Countries' (p. 60). The lesson of the Nine Years War had not been wasted on the prime minister, nor had the long years when he had been in permanent opposition to the court. He had considered a continental war essential in 1702 to preserve the security of the Protestant Succession. This he felt had been realised by the battle of Ramillies in 1706, but, the Conduct emphasised, 'the General and the Ministry having refused to accept the very Advantagious Offers of a Peace, after the Battle of Ramellies, were forced to take in a Set of Men, with a previous Bargain, to skreen them from the Consequences of that Miscarriage' (p. 43). Again it must be stressed that this is not St John's view, it is almost exclusively Harleian. At the time St John was not in the cabinet, but Harley had drawn up 'Some short heads of remarque upon the French proposal' to make general the knowledge of French peace overtures 'which others endeavoured to have kept from [the Queen]'.¹

As well as providing a sample of the genuine flavour of the Conduct of the Allies, it must be noted that these were additions to the first edition of the pamphlet, not deletions. There were no deletions outside typographical emendations. We must conclude, therefore, that some at least were the work of Oxford. On 30 November Swift wrote:

I did some business with lord treasurer, and have been all this afternoon with the printer, adding something to the second edition...it tells abundance of most important facts which were not at all known.

1. B.L. Loan 29/9/36; cf. above, pp. 210-12.

No doubt some of these came from St John, but the prime minister was a far from passive collaborator. Following the additions to the second edition he desired further emendations. Swift was with him on the morning of 3 December, discussing these matters, and they were finally incorporated into the printed pamphlet in the fourth edition. Swift's own testimony makes clear that this was the final edition to which he himself made any alterations, and any subsequent variants must be attributed to successive printers.¹ Only one major addition was made to the pamphlet at this stage. Returning to the progressive reduction of Dutch forces in the field, Oxford evidently wished to press home to Swift's audience the fact that this was going on while British troops were being augmented, totally contrary to the terms of the Grand Alliance:

The Troops we maintain in Flanders, (as appears by the Votes of the House of Commons for the Year, 1709.) are Forty thousand the original Quota; Ten thousand the first Augmentation; three thousand Palatines; four thousand six hundred thirty nine Saxons; Bothmer's Regiment of eight hundred Men; and a further Augmentation taken that Year into the Service of about two thousand; making in the whole upwards of sixty thousand. (p. 30.)

Even without considering Oxford's probable responsibility for supplying Swift with 'hints' during the composition of the first edition of the Conduct, the additions which we can be fairly certain were his illustrate his approbation of the principal thesis of the pamphlet:

that no Nation was ever so long or so scandalously abused by the Folly, the Temerity, the Corruption, the Ambition of its domestick Enemies; or treated with so much Insolence, Injustice and Ingratitude by its foreign Friends. (p. 15.)

The first part of this thesis, which dealt with the nation's domestic enemies, had been the principal theme of 'Plaine English', and the stress on the failure to make peace in 1706 is the corollary of the argument employed therein. It is on the mismanagement of the allies that the Conduct is so striking, and this can be readily traced back to St John's Letter to

1. It is for this reason that Herbert Davis follows the text of the fourth edition in The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, vi. 1-65.

the Examiner. Yet Oxford, far from playing down the censure of the allies, and in particular the Dutch, chose to reinforce the thesis by emphasising British contributions to the war-effort over and above the quotas required under the terms of the Grand Alliance, and this all the while that the allies were proportionately failing to meet their quotas. The design was to justify the government's nice distinction between separate treating and a separate, concluded peace, which would have been contrary to the terms of the Grand Alliance: by demonstrating how both the Dutch and the Austrians had continually transgressed the letter of the alliance, Oxford hoped to draw the sting of opposition attacks on the ministry's peace programme. The Conduct of the Allies was timed precisely to meet the opening of parliament.

Yet Oxford still contrived to get egg on his face when the session began. He had delayed the opening until sufficient court supporters had made their way to London: he was well aware of the critical nature of the ministry's peace proposals. By 7 December he felt secure: he was proved disastrously wrong in one of his least impressive displays of parliamentary management. The motion 'No Peace without Spain', which Nottingham had done so much to lay the groundwork for in 1707, was carried by the Lords, and Nottingham himself crossed over to the whigs in return for the guaranteed passage of a diluted occasional conformity bill. 'This has happened entirely by my lord treasurer's neglect', Swift wrote sourly, 'who did not take timely care to make up all his strength, although every one of us gave him caution enough ...It is a mighty blow and loss of reputation to lord treasurer, and may end in his ruin'. Paradoxically, it is the 'peace crisis' that best illustrates Swift's limited conception of ministerial affairs, for he was convinced that the government would fall. Even St John tried to reassure him without success, as he gloomily forecast Oxford losing his head, while 'I should have the advantage of him; for...I should only be hanged, and so carry my body entire to the grave'. 'Here are the first steps towards the ruin of an excellent ministry', he wrote on 9 December, 'for I look upon

them as certainly ruined'.¹

Swift had good reason to be apprehensive of a change of government, for he had continued to draw attention to himself by following up Oxford's hints for a 'ballad' to be written about Nottingham. An Excellent New Song, 'two degrees above Grubstreet', was published on 6 December. In it Swift supplied Nottingham with the speech which, it was common knowledge, he intended to make the next day in the Lords on the peace. Despite a strong mutual antipathy, Nottingham had expected a major position in the Harley ministry on its formation: all subsequent attempts to accommodate him had failed, and when he got neither the lord presidency on Rochester's death in May 1711, nor the privy seal when Newcastle died in July, he connived with Marlborough and Godolphin against the ministerial peace programme. The essence of the poem, therefore, was that no-one should make peace, no matter how favourable, while Nottingham was 'Not in game', and it is clear that Swift got most of the raw material for An Excellent New Song from Oxford and Dartmouth.²

An Orator dismal of Nottinghamshire,
Who has forty Years let out his Conscience to hire,
Out of Zeal for his Country, and want of a Place,
Is come up, vi & armis, to break the Queen's Peace.
He has vamp't an old Speech, and the Court to their sorrow,
Shall hear Him harangue against PRIOR to Morrow:
When once he begins, he never will flinch,
But repeats the same Note a whole Day, like a Finch.

Swift did not assist his case by penning a biting satire on the queen's favourite, the whig duchess of Somerset, at the height of the peace crisis in December. If one act effectively blocked his hopes of preferment in

1. Journal to Stella, 7, 9, 11 December 1711

2. P.O.A.S., vii. 526-27. Godolphin once wrote to Harley about the 'gibberish language that Ld Nottingham made so famous' (B.L. Loan 29/64/3), while in The Dyet of Poland Defoe scathingly observed that:

In all vast Poland's far extended Round,
No Man was known so emptily profound.
Polite in Words, a stiff and formal Tongue,
And speaks to little Purpose, very long.

(P.O.A.S., vii. 87.)

England, it was the publication of the Windsor Prophecy, which warned against placing too much trust in the red-haired duchess:¹

Root out these Carrots, O Thou, whose name
Is backwards and forwards always the same [Anna];
And keep close to thee always that name,
Which backwards and forwards is almost the same [Masham].
And England, wouldst thou be happy still,
Bury those Carrots under a Hill [Mrs Masham's maiden-name].

For three weeks, from 7 to 29 December 1711, Swift was in a state of trepidation over the outcome of the 'peace crisis'. His apprehensions were suddenly dispersed, and his total ignorance of what had been going on can be sensed, from his jubilant letter to Stella:

I have broke open my letter, and tore it into the bargain; to let you know, that we are all safe; the queen has made no less than twelve lords to have a majority; nine new ones, the other three peers sons; and has turned out the duke of Somerset. She is awaked at last, and so is lord treasurer: I want nothing now but to see the duchess out. But we shall do without her. We are all extremely happy.

Oxford, needless to say, had not suddenly 'awaked' to his situation: he had planned these unwholesome contingency measures as soon as the motion of 'No Peace without Spain' had been passed by the Lords. It is also a measure of his commitment to peace: by one unorthodox stroke he ensured the success of the peace programme, but at the expense of his integrity. If anyone had attempted to pull off such a ruse in the 1690s he would have led the outcry. But he was forced to turn the weapons of his opponents against them. 'If the ministry be not sure of a Peace', Swift wrote on 1 January 1712 on Marlborough's dismissal, 'I shall wonder at this step, and do not approve it at best'. This from the man who had written the Conduct of the Allies! With the cynicism of age, Oxford had been constrained to temper his youthful idealism with a healthy dose of common sense. Peace had been vital, and now peace was won.

1. Swift, Poetical Works, ed. Herbert Davis (1967), p. 97. See Hamilton's Diary, pp. 40-41, 47, 54; and Philip Roberts, 'Swift, Queen Anne, and The Windsor Prophecy', Philological Quarterly, xlix (1970), 254-58.

The efficacy of the Conduct of the Allies is beyond dispute. As Swift told Stella, during the debate on the conduct of the allies in the Commons, which led to several resolutions censuring the failure of both the Dutch and the Emperor to fulfil their treaty obligations, 'those who spoke, drew all their arguments from my book, and their votes confirm all I write...all agree, that it was my book that spirited them to these resolutions'. When the votes were printed, Swift observed with satisfaction that they were 'almost quotations from it; and would never have passed, if that book had not been written'.¹ Even allowing for Swift's pardonable exaggeration, the Conduct fulfilled its designated role perfectly: it made no attempt to win over the whigs; it was designed to destroy their arguments, and to provide ministerial supporters, in the absence of party whips, with a cogent line to take, and this they followed closely. Then Swift sat back in almost sublime neutrality, refusing to dirty his hands in controversy with the party hacks: his 'commissioned' pamphlet was his quintessential statement of faith, he did not need to expand on it or to defend it; as far as he was concerned it was irrefutable. But the Conduct did not lack critics, and they had to be contradicted by some ministerial writer in the cause of government morale. Defoe was the man for the job. The professional was thrown into the fray to protect the ministerial stance from the opposition skirmishers, and, as Douglas Coombs pertinently observes:²

the unfortunate Defoe, in the Review, in his correspondence with Oxford, and, finally, in some of the most unconvincing pamphlets he ever wrote, was gradually forced to toe the line that Swift had marked out with such enthusiasm.

In fact it seems that Defoe himself penned two 'answers' to the Conduct of the Allies, anonymously of course, and it is to his credit that he did

1. Journal to Stella, 4, 8 February 1712.

2. Coombs, Conduct of the Dutch, p. 280.

not abandon the Dutch he was wont to champion out of hand. A Defence of the Allies and the Late Ministry, although it praised the steps taken by the government towards a general peace, was what its title suggests, 'A Detection of the Manifest Frauds and Falsities, in a late Pamphlet, Entitled, The Conduct of the Allies and of the Late Ministry, in the Beginning and Carrying on the War'. A Justification of the Dutch From several late Scandalous Reflections, on the other hand, went on the offensive to contend that 'the Dutch insist upon, and require no more than what they ought to have'.¹ Gradually he modified his views on the allies in accord with Oxford's predilections: he never resorted to open revolt. The Emperor bore the brunt of his propaganda. Defoe, in the Review, admitted that he:

could not but reflect, and that with Regret, how many Years ago this War had been finish'd in a happy, safe and honourable Peace, had the former Emperors but exerted themselves, as by their Interest, and their firm Engagements to the Allies, they were bound to do.

'But the Case is plain', he postulated, 'the true German Principle is, to hold what they have, and make us fight for the rest'.² He followed this line not only in the Review, upon which Oxford would naturally enough keep a check, but in pamphlets. Imperial Gratitude, Drawn from a Modest View Of The Emperor Ch[ar]les VI...Being a farther View of the Deficiencies of our Confederates alleged that 'the Sum of the Case is this; The Emperor will part with nothing, and we must fight on till we get him all'. Defoe asked all men to judge 'whether it is reasonable that we should carry on the War to oblige, and in dependence upon, the Promises of SUCH an Ally?'.³

1. A Justification of the Dutch (1712), p. 31.

2. Review, viii. 461-63. See Lawrence Postan III, 'Defoe and the Peace Campaign, 1710-1713: a Reconsideration', H.L.Q., xxvii (1963-64), 1-20.

3. Imperial Gratitude (1712), p. 76.

While Defoe was writing pamphlets on all sides of the question of war and peace, Swift worked slowly at another 'commissioned' tract dealing with the same problems. 'I dined to day in the City with my Printer to finish something I am doing about the Barrier Treaty', he wrote on 16 February, 'but it is not quite done'. On 20 February he corrected some sheets of the pamphlet, 'wch must be finished to morrow'. In the Conduct of the Allies he had hinted that he might consider the barrier treaty 'at a proper Occasion, in a Discourse by it self' (p. 49). On 21 February Some Remarks on the Barrier Treaty made its appearance, censuring Dutch high-handedness in the peace negotiations, and their overbearing demands for a secure barrier. The opening paragraph of the pamphlet summed up its thesis:¹

Imagine a reasonable Person in China, were reading the following Treaty, and one who was ignorant of our Affairs, or our Geography; He would conceive their High Mightinesses the States-General, to be some vast powerful Commonwealth, like that of Rome, and Her Majesty to be a Petty Prince, like one of those to whom that Republick would sometimes send a Diadem for a Present, when they behaved themselves well; otherwise could depose at pleasure, and place whom they thought fit in their stead. Such a Man would think, that the States had taken our Prince and Us into their Protection; and in return honoured us so far, as to make use of our Troops as some small Assistance in their Conquests, and the enlargement of their Empire, or to prevent the Incursions of Barbarians upon some of their outlying Provinces.

This biting commentary on British treaty commitments also provoked whig rejoinders, especially as the tract had been timed to provide materials for public appreciation of the debates that had been going on in the Commons during the previous weeks concerning the conduct of the allies. But it was not Swift who was called upon to defend his viewpoints: he had Defoe to do that for him. Remarks on the Barrier Treaty marked the end of Swift's major propaganda contributions to the Oxford ministry's peace campaign. On 26 February he told Stella that he had 'now nothing to do'. Furthermore, he

1. Swift, Prose Works, vi. 87. Defoe had already commented on the Dutch attitude to the peace-making in Reasons why this Nation Ought to put a Speedy End to this Expensive War, where he pointed out that Britain was not 'under the Tutelage of the Dutch...This is making such an Idol of the Dutch, as the Dutch themselves do not desire, or can have any reason to expect' (p. 37).

he was ill with shingles from the end of March right through to May. In the meantime a bill to limit the press was making slow progress through the Commons. Swift noted that 'the Pamphleteers make good use of their Time for there come out 3 or 4 every day'.¹ When the date set for the inauguration of a stamp duty on newspapers and pamphlets, 1 August 1712, drew near, Swift sprung into action, publishing in the last fortnight of July 'at least 7 penny Papers of my own, besides some of other Peoples', but these were minor 'non-commissioned' broadsheets for the most part. It had been left to Defoe to carry through the campaign against the allies.²

On 23 February, two days after the publication of Swift's Remarks, the Review concurred with the resolutions of the Commons expressing dissatisfaction with the conduct of the allies:³

1. The State of our late Parliament Resolves can be understood to mean no more, than to tell you all, That the true Reason why this War had not been long ago ended, has been the Deficiency of the Confederates, in their Quota's and Proportions, and tells you in particular where they are, and whose Fault it has been.
2. That if these Quota's and Proportions had been paid duly, and the Forces Furnish'd, there had been no more need to Debate about carrying on the War, or making a Peace, but all had been over long ago.
3. That a Treaty of Peace is most Reasonable for us now, if it were only to let our Allies see, That if they will not do their part we must be Fools no longer.
4. And that if they will have us make no Peace, but the War must go on, they must be more Just and more Punctual for the future.

This equivocal statement (for Defoe chose to play down the attack on the Dutch) was soon followed by A Further Search into the Conduct of the Allies, And the Late Ministry, As to Peace and War which actually developed the theme propounded in Swift's pamphlet. Defoe noted that:⁴

The Reception a former Work of this Kind has met with in the World, and the little which has been said against it, as to Matters of Fact, must be

1. Journal to Stella, 10 March 1712.

2. Ibid., 7 August 1712. For his contributions see *ibid.*, ed. Williams, pp. 553-54, n. 10, and Frank H. Ellis, 'Swift's Seventh Penny Paper', T.L.S. 10 May 1974, p. 506; cf. David Woolley, 'Swift's Seventh Penny Paper', T.L.S., 17 May 1974, p. 528.

3. Review, viii. 579-80.

4. A Further Search (1712), pp. 3-5.

acknowledged to be all owing to the Truth, coming with an irresistible Force upon the Minds of Men, and which always carries its own Evidence along with it.

He admitted that 'few imagined' the failure of the allies to meet quotas 'to be so surprizing, the Account so large, and the Particulars so many, as they appear to be':

also one Thing is obtain'd by this Report of the House of Commons, which the Credit of a single Author was by no Means sufficient for, (viz.) that the Dutch had any Share in the Deficiency, and in the Injuries which this Nation has suffered under the Weight of this Confederacy.

Perhaps Defoe himself had been taken aback by the revelation of Dutch malpractice: perhaps he was simply following Oxford's directions; either way he abandoned his erstwhile favourites. Finally he was even prepared to entertain the possibility of going to war against the Dutch. On 5 June he wrote to the prime minister about his publications against the allies:¹

The Sincerity of My Design is My Appology to your Ldpp for the Performance. It is written without Doores, and for The Use of Those Cheifly, who kno' Nothing but without Doores. I hope it May be Usefull to Undeceiv an abused people, and Let Them see How The wholl Nation was... Imposed Upon...I Send also another book...in Answer to The Dutch Memorialls, in all which your Ldpp will perciev an Honest but Artless Design of Opening the Eyes of a people So Imposed Upon, and So Tenacious of Their Own Mistakes, as Leads Them to a world of Troublesome and Dangerous Excesses...it is My satisfaction to be Serving your Intrest and doeing the people good together; I am farr from Exciting the people against The Dutch, and believ it is not the Governments View to Injure or to Break with The Dutch; but it Seems Necessary, and I believ it is your Ldpps Aim, to have the Dutch Friends and Not Masters; Confederates not Governours; and to keep us from a Dutch as well as a French Mannagement.

Defoe was to address the amorphous 'people': Swift was used to cajole the men in parliament. One opponent had pointed this out in print on the appearance of the Conduct of the Allies:²

It must be own'd they have been very industrious to find Advocates suitable to their Cause. They have furnish'd the Review with Arguments,

1. Defoe, Letters, pp. 376-77. The pamphlets to which Defoe is referring are not identifiable with any certainty. Healey suggests Reasons against Fighting (1712) as the first, and A Further Search, on the grounds that its title included 'Also a Reply to the Several Letters and Memorials of the States-General', as the second.

2. Remarks On a False, Scandalous, and Seditious Libel, Intituled, The Conduct of the Allies (1711), p. 2.

and the Post-Boy with History: But the one being never Read, and the other only Laugh'd at, it was necessary at the Opening of a New Session, to have a Master Genius take the Work in Hand.

While the tone is satirical, the point is made nevertheless. And while Defoe chose to believe he was addressing the people, he was quite patently acting as Swift's whipping-boy with the party hacks who were after his blood. Far from stressing the view that it was not the ministry's desire to cause a breach with the Dutch, moreover, Defoe's final pronouncement on the peace question, published on 26 July 1712, was a blunt pamphlet, The Justice and Necessity of a War with Holland, In Case the Dutch Do not come into Her Majesty's Measures, Stated and Examined. Thus far had his early reluctance to support the attack on the allies decreased.

For his apostasy from the whig cause Defoe was fair game for all who wished to accuse him of writing to directions for money. In the preface to volume VIII of the Review, written on the introduction of the stamp duty, Defoe dealt with his critics:

I thought...I had given such Proof, that I could neither be Brib'd from the Truth, or Threaten'd, or Terrified from my Principles...I am now hunted with a full cry...by my own Friends...Condemn'd by common Clamour, as Writing for Money, Writing for particular Persons, Writing by great Men's Direction, being Dictated to, and the like; every tittle of which, I have the Testimony of my own Conscience, is abominably false.

This wonderful pliancy of conscience was the feature which had attracted Oxford to Defoe in the first place. On 18 August Defoe wrote to the prime minister. As James Sutherland observes:¹

No biographer of Defoe can afford to neglect this singularly revealing letter...He seems to be trying to convince himself that he has never sold his pen to Harley, and he is hoping Harley will agree...He felt at times the need of being reassured about the honesty of his political conduct, and he cast about for reasons to justify it. He wanted to feel that he had always remained independent, and in telling Harley that he had never been bribed he was really trying to tell himself.

1. Sutherland, Defoe, p. 192.

Herein lies the difference between Defoe and Swift as propagandists under the Oxford ministry. Swift wished to retain his integrity as a writer, and it remained intact: Defoe also wished to delude himself with the chimera of independence, but he was too ready to be bribed into acquiescence by Oxford and this is demonstrated perfectly by his gradual alignment with government propaganda requirements in the course of 1712. By the time the stamp duty was brought into operation the domestic battle for peace had been won, and the first and most important stage in the relationship of Defoe and Swift with the Oxford ministry was over. Defoe's letter to Oxford of 18 August 1712, shot through with the delicious unconscious irony so apparent in Moll Flanders, is a fitting comment on their dual roles:¹

God and your Ldpp are witnesses for me Against This Generation, in That your Goodness to me was founded On No Principles of Bribery and Corruption, but a generous Compassion to a Man Oppressed by Power without a Crime, and Abandon'd, Even Then, by Those he Sacrificed himself to Serve...Your Ldpp has allways acted with Me On Such foundations of Meer abstracted Bounty and Goodness, That it has Not So Much as Suggested The Least Expectation on your part That I Should act This way or That, Leaving me at full Liberty to Persue My Own Reason and Principle; And above all Enabling Me to Declare my Innocence In the Black Charge of Bribery.

What Ever your Ldpp has done for me, you Never So much as Intimated, (tho' Ever So Remotely) That you Expected from me The Least Byass in what I should write, or That her Majties Bounty to me was Intended to Guide my Opinion; Your Ldpp has too Much Honour in your principle to look That way, Or to Think me worth your Notice, if I Could have been So Moved; and How would These people blush Should I Own to Them, That Her Majties Bounty, which I Now Enjoy, was procur'd for me by your Ldpps Intercession...This My Lord Gives Me Room to Declare, as I do in Print Every day, That I am Neither Employ'd, Dictated to, or Rewarded for, or in, what I write by any Person Undr Heaven; And I Make This Acknowledgement with Thankfullness to your Ldpp, and as a Testimony to your great Goodness to me; That your Ldpp Never lay'd The least Injunction on Me of One kind or Other To Write or Not to write This or That in any Case whatsoever.

1. Defoe, Letters, pp. 379-80.

Chapter Ten

Government and the Press under the Oxford ministry

On the first Day of the Term [in 1711], fourteen Book-sellers, Printers, or Publishers, who had been seiz'd, and confin'd by Warrants from Secretary St John, a great Pains-Taker in such dirty Work, appear'd at the Queens-Bench Bar, for printing and publishing some Pamphlets and Ballads on the Managers of the Peace. At the same Time...these Managers had, besides Dr Swift, Mr Prior, and Mr Friend, mention'd by the Annalist [Boyer], Mr Daniel de Foe, Mr Abel Roper, and one Clements, a New-England Jobber in Service and Pay.

Oldmixon, History of England, p. 476.

Although Defoe and Swift were the biggest wheels in the government's propaganda machine, there were other cogs to ensure its smooth functioning. A team of writers surrounded Swift on the tory side. Defoe, again in contrast to Swift, was a loner: similarly, he played no part in the official process of proscription, another weapon in the Oxford ministry's armament against the opponents of the regime. The government's official press policy eventually resulted in the institution of a stamp duty on printed matter. Oldmixon believed that this was in lieu of a more comprehensive piece of legislation to restrain the whiggish press. 'It was another Instance of the Ingratitude of these Men, in offering to lay the least Restraint upon Printing', he postulated, 'for...They were chiefly indebted to it for their present Strength, by the greatest Abuses of it that ever was known'.¹ This signal tribute to the efficacy of the government's peace campaign in print, however, raises questions about the stamp duty. Why should a ministry with an effective press machine wish to limit the scope of its own propaganda? Or was the aim not merely one of damping down the heated exchange in print between the supporters and the opponents of the Oxford ministry before it escalated into a potentially inflammatory situation? Henry St John has been singled-out as responsible for the measure. Professor Ehrenpreis suggests

1. Oldmixon, History, pp. 494-95. 'The Earl of Godolphin had the last Contempt for Pamphlets, and always despis'd the Press', Oldmixon stressed (ibid., p. 456).

that the secretary, 'as a new repressive measure', 'invented' the stamp act, and that his attitude to the press throughout 'was much more like Swift's than like Oxford's'.¹ Under the Godolphin ministry, Harley, as secretary, had been officially responsible for the press. As lord treasurer he no longer had the same jurisdiction, and St John was known to have strong views of his own. Oldmixon awarded St John pride of place as 'the greatest Libeller and State Ballad-maker in Britain', and he stressed that the Post-Boy was 'supported by...Mr St John', if not 'his News-Paper'.² As we have noted, St John launched the Examiner, and Harley was forced to moderate the extreme tory stance it took up by bringing Swift into play. Was, then, the prime minister really dependent on his secretary for official action in relation to the press, and reduced to relying on the cooperation of a man who increasingly displayed a willingness to become leader of the tory party in his own right?

There is an important qualification to be made on St John's press activities, and it is almost always overlooked: there was another secretary of state. The earl of Dartmouth, as secretary for the southern department, was senior secretary, and, until his removal to the office of lord privy seal in August 1713, he was scrupulously loyal to Oxford. Thereafter William Bromley, in the same position, was just as willing to consider himself answerable to the prime minister: in fact the ministerial reshuffle of August 1713 counted as a real triumph over Bolingbroke's growing influence. He had been long manoeuvring against Dartmouth, and he had at last forced his resignation, but the appointment of Bromley was a signal illustration of Oxford's continuing favour with Queen Anne, as it reinforced

1. Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 568.

2. Oldmixon, History, pp. 472, 476.

his position at the head of the ministry. This raises the question of Bolingbroke's eagerness for Dartmouth's removal. Dartmouth is too often dismissed in studies of the Oxford ministry. He was an important figure, the intermediary between the earl of Jersey, the broker in the 'secret stage' of the peace preliminaries with France, and Oxford. St John was kept in ignorance of the existence of negotiations until as late as May 1711.¹ Dartmouth did not forgo his authority in relation to the press as senior secretary: as Harley had always had Hedges to consider when he was in a position similar to St John's, the 'captain' had the Harleyite Dartmouth.

Dartmouth was instrumental in the disposal of the Gazetteership on his appointment of secretary, and it is significant that he allowed himself to be guided by Harley although solicited on all sides. Abel Roper had many champions,² but Harley preferred to retain the services of Richard Steele as yet another instance of the moderate inclinations of the incoming ministry. When, on the mass resignation of the whig ministers, Steele was dismissed, it was to Harley that Boyer addressed his petition. As early as 15 August he had taken the liberty of writing to Harley about the Gazette:³

which is at present perfunctorily written by a young Clerk to ye original author, who, tis suppos'd, bestows his best thoughts & pains upon ye Tatler: if therefore it was thought fit to tale ye Gazette from him, I leave it, Sir, to your consideration, whether I may be a proper person to write it.

He continued to sound his own praises on 17 October:⁴

Mr Steel having resigned his place of Gazetteer, several of my friends would persuade me that few men are better qualified than myself to succeed him. But though I am not so vain as to believe them, yet I will not be so far wanting to myself as to neglect this opportunity of putting your honour in mind of the most humble and most devoted of all your servants.

1. For the extensive correspondence between Dartmouth and Jersey, see H.M.C. Dartmouth, i. passim; and Staffordshire R.O., Dartmouth MSS, D (W) 1778. I. ii. 135, 252; D (W) 1778. V. 147.

2. Both the earl of Denbigh and the duke of Leeds wrote to Dartmouth on Roper's behalf. Ibid., D (W) 1778. I. ii. 161; H.M.C. Dartmouth, i. 296.

3. B.L. Loan 29/127/4.

4. H.M.C. Portland, iv. 615.

Boyer did not get the Gazetteership, which reverted to the system in operation on Harley's appointment as secretary of state in 1704, with two clerks compiling each edition of the Gazette from directives supplied by the ministers.¹ Until well into 1711, however, Boyer continued to believe that he would be accommodated by the government. His Political State was almost a fifth ministerial paper in the first months of the year (along with the Examiner, the Review, the Post-Boy, and the Gazette), but his bluff was called during the build up to the 'peace crisis' in the autumn of 1711. In September he began publishing the Protestant Post-Boy in opposition to Roper. Soon he crossed swords with Swift, who wrote to Stella on 10 October:

A rogue that writes a news-paper called The Protestant Post-Boy, has reflected on me in one of his papers; but the secretary has taken him up, and he shall have a squeeze extraordinary. He says, that an ambitious Tantivy, missing of his towering hopes of preferment in Ireland, is come over to vent his spleen on the late ministry, &c. I'll Tantivy him with a vengeance.

Swift was as good as his word. 'One Boyer, a French dog, has abused me in a pamphlet, and I have got him up in a messenger's hands', he wrote on 16 October, 'the secretary promises me to swinge him'. On 25 October a warrant was issued for Boyer to meet his recognizance in the Queen's Bench for writing An Account of the State and Progress of the Present Negotiations for Peace, while Benjamin Harris and Sarah Popping were prosecuted for printing various numbers of the Protestant Post-Boy.²

Despite this apparent proof of his anti-ministerial activities, Boyer attempted to intercede with Oxford, writing on 19 November:³

However I may have been represented to you by my own profest, or your Lordship's conceal'd Enemies, I hope I have given both your Lordship & the

1. Dartmouth's part in this process is well-documented, and he inserted official missives not only in the Gazette, but also in the Post-Boy, St John's 'News-Paper'. See B.L. Loan 29/11/9; H.M.C. Dartmouth, i. 297, 306; Staffordshire R.O., Dartmouth MSS, D (W) 1778. V. 188.

2. P.R.O. S.P. 44/77/129-30, 132.

3. B.L. Loan 29/127/4.

world sufficient & repeated Proofs how heartily I am devoted to your service...I profess myself, my Lord, as ready upon all occasions within my poor Sphere to render ye most acceptable service to your Lordship. But as I have not been importunate to solicit a Reward for any thing I have hitherto done, so I was lately extreamly surpriz'd for being, on the contrary, prosecuted by Mr Secretary St John, for a pamphlet wherein I mainly design'd to serve your Lordship, in case, which seem'd not impossible, the Negotiations should break off; as I may demonstrate if you'll vouchsafe to give me the Permission to wait upon your Lordship.

Such equivocations failed to impress Oxford: Boyer's prosecution was carried through. Boyer turned from petition to vengeance. In the Political State for 1727 he reprinted St John's Occasional Writer with 'a few seasonable Castigations and Annotations'. Provoked by St John's comments on Walpole's 'uncommon Prosecution of Hawkers and Pamphleteers', Boyer wrote:¹

This Reflection comes with very ill Grace from the Occasional Writer: For what Man in Power ever used it with more Wantonness, Insolence, and Severity, than HENRY ST JOHN, while Secretary of State? His Barbarities in such Prosecutions is notorious — Among the rest, a harmless Woman that kept a Pamphlet-Shop without Temple-Bar, for selling the Hanover Ballad, and Publishing the Protestant Post Boy, (Written by Mr Philip Horneck and Mr A. Boyer, the Editor of this Political State) was by him committed to Newgate, where she died with hard Usage...Mr BOYER himself, was by this hare brain'd Titan's Order twice taken into Custody, and prosecuted upon very slight Pretences.

It is interesting, in connexion with various contemporary references to St John's harsh proscriptive practices under the Oxford ministry, that there appear to have been no prosecutions for printing, publishing or writing seditious books from the return to power of Robert Harley until September 1711 when the government was, not surprisingly, anxious about the outcome of its peace campaign. It is patently false to allege that Boyer's arrest was made 'upon very slight Pretences': he had written in censure of the government's peace policy, and it was palpably seditious in intent, designed to incite people against the steps taken by the ministry towards a settlement with France. This is also clearly the case with regard to the other

1. Cited in Phyllis J. Guskin, 'The Authorship of the "Protestant Post-Boy", 1711-12', N. & Q., ccxx (1975), 489-90.

thirteen prosecutions made in September 1711 by St John (it seems). 'The pamphleteers begin to be very busy against the ministry', Swift observed on 21 September, 'I have begged Mr secretary to make examples of one or two of them; and he assures me he will. They are very bold and abusive'. Another onlooker informed John Chetwynd that 'We are fain to send messengers among your printers and booksellers to stop a little this madness and folly of the press'.¹ This representation of affairs is far removed from the whigs' allegations of mass prosecutions on flimsy grounds: if anything the Oxford ministry appears to have been previously a little too tolerant in its dealings with the party hacks, as the prime minister bent over backwards to avoid causing further unrest among the party men. But by the autumn of 1711 the situation had so deteriorated that even Marlborough urged Oxford to do something to restrain the press, when his strategy of siege warfare along the Ne plus ultra line of French fortifications in Flanders came under attack. On 19 October he wrote to Oxford: 'the title of one [libel] is Bouchain, and the other an answer to it', he complained, 'the authors of these papers...are not only my Enemyes, they are yours to[o], my Lord, they are Enemyes to the Queen, and poyson to Her subjects'.²

In fact Marlborough's apologist, Francis Hare, who was later to take Swift to task for his reflections on Marlborough in the Conduct of the Allies, had been responsible for the initial pamphlet on Bouchain. What Marlborough disliked, no doubt, was not Hare's paper, but Mrs Manley's answer, to which Oxford himself was privy.³ Oxford returned this swingeing reply to the duke on 19/30 October 1711:⁴

1. Staffordshire R.O., Chetwynd Diplomatic MSS, D. 649/8: George Tilson to Jn. Chetwynd, 16 October 1711.

2. Longleat, Portland MSS, iv. ff. 148-49.

3. On 2 October Mrs Manley forwarded 'Dr Hare's pamphlet of Bouchain' to Oxford, with the assurance that she had penned the ministerial reply (H.M.C. Portland, v. 96).

4. Longleat, Portland MSS, v. ff. 253-54, printed in Coxe, iii. 253-54,

When I had the honour to be Secretary of State I did by an impartial Prosecution silence most of them untill a Party of men for their own ends supported them against the Laws & my Prosecution...I have made it so familiar to my self by some years experience that as I know I am every week if not every day in some Libel or other so I would willingly compound that all the ill-natured scriblers should have licence to write ten times more against me upon condition they would write agt nobody else. I do assure your Grace I neither know nor desire to know any of the Authors and I heartily wish this barbarous War was at an end; I shall be very ready to take my part in suppressing them.

The Queen ordered last Sunday night in Cabinet That the Authors of all Libells shall be impartially sought out and punished.

Marlborough most probably knew about Hare's pamphlet, and Oxford knew that he knew: his bluff was called, and Mrs Manley was not prosecuted although the prime minister was aware of her part in the exchange. At this time a comparatively insignificant writer, Francis Hoffman, was supplying Oxford with information about the Marlboroughs, writings:¹

At the same time that the outed family are applauded above measure, and bloated on the success at Bouchain, I find they double their malice against your Lordship, and spare no cost to encourage pamphlets against the ministry. 'Tis a notion in the pamphlet shops that Whiggish libels sell best, so industrious are they to propagate against scandal and falsehood. The taking of Bouchain now animates them afresh, 'tis a mighty glorious thing for them to be as long in taking a little town as our ancestors have been in reducing all France.

Oxford's rebuff to Marlborough's call for action to combat the party hacks displays his quintessential indifference to attacks on his own person in print, but it also illustrates his control over the government's policy in relation to the press: although St John was the principal instrument of correction, Oxford had the final say in the proscriptive policy of the ministry.

Oxford was advised on all sides about the press. One anonymous correspondent, amazed to find the lord treasurer's 'Management...so bad in one point', warned him that:²

1. H.M.C. Portland, v. 94-95: n.d. [September 1711]. Cf. B.L. Loan 29/147/1: to Oxford, 22 September 1711, in which Hoffman proposed a counter-propaganda solution to the problem, offering to publish 'An Account of Church ills and State ills' to expose the malpractices of 'the outed Family', who, he alleged, were disseminating anti-Oxford propaganda.

2. B.L. Loan 29/162/5: anon. to Oxford, 19 November 1711.

Your greatest secrets are daily betrayed to your greatest enemies by some little wretches whom you allow to be about you whom perhaps you do not directly trust very much but they make it their business to get in effectually about yourself your children[and]your friends and servants and by such means pry into your secrets which they immediately carry to your enemies who hold them in pay for that purpose. Toland betrays what he knows to the Whigg Lords. De Foe does the same to the Whiggs in the City. Boyer discovers all to the French Refugees both here and abroad.

We have noted the relations of both Defoe and Boyer with Oxford, but Toland was also trying to smooth his way to yet another reconciliation with his former benefactor after his disastrous conduct in Germany. He wrote to the prime minister on 6 June 1711, feeling it:¹

strange if a person of my liberal education and experience in foreign Courts (to mention no other qualifications) should not be found useful in some things to so learned as well as so politic a Minister, to whom I have been gaining all the credit abroad that was possible.

Toland sent Oxford a 'Scheme of Coalition' in which he censured 'a clandestine negociation with France!', urging the prime minister to 'be the author of a happy Coalition between the true friends of their Country, which are the moderate Whigs and the moderate Tories'.² He objected to Oxford's 'tools', Swift and Prior, attacking the Conduct of the Allies, 'the Examiner, and such other open opposers of the Protestant line'. In a letter of 7 December he was blunt enough to tell Oxford that 'instead...of your Priors and your Swifts, you ought to dispatch me privately this minute to Hanover'.³ He never again penetrated Oxford's counsels, and the prime minister assured Cowper, perhaps equivocally, that 'he had not seen Toland in 2 Years' on 15 March 1712.⁴ Their names were linked in print when the 1701 broadsheet Some Queries, which may deserve Consideration was reprinted,

1. H.M.C. Portland, v. 4.

2. Toland, Works, ii. 215-19: 'A Memorial for the Most Honourable the Earl of [Oxford] containing A Scheme of Coalition'.

3. Ibid., pp. 222, 237; H.M.C. Portland, v. 127. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 120: the same to the same, 3 December 1711.

4. Cowper's Diary, p. 55.

but the next printed link between the two was when Toland drew parallels between Oxford and Monk, with the obvious insinuation that the prime minister was working for a Jacobite successor, in The Art of Restoring.¹

Not only whigs were prosecuted by the government in the autumn of 1711, despite the recriminations of the whigs themselves. On 28 September St John signed a warrant for the apprehension of Henry Hills and Thomas Harrison 'for publishing and vending a scandalous and seditious Libel, called A Welcome to the Medal'. Mrs Popping was also implicated in the publication of the offending poem, and on 17 October a recognizance was issued for Maria Garbutt to appear in the Queen's Bench to give evidence against her. Two weeks earlier William Pittis had been the subject of enquiries instituted by St John 'for being concerned in publishing A Welcome to the Medal', and on 3 December 1711 a recognizance was issued in his name.² Paradoxically, A Welcome to the Medal; Or, An Excellent New Song, Call'd The Constitution Restor'd in 1711 is attributed by Frank Ellis to Daniel Defoe.³

Prior to the attempted invasion of Scotland in 1708 Norbert Roettier had struck a propaganda medal claiming the kingdom of Great Britain for James III. Defoe published at least two pamphlets in prose to counter the receipt in 1711 of a copy of this medal by Scottish Jacobites.⁴ A Welcome to the Medal, published in September 1711, was a poem in a Jacobite vein:⁵

Let's joy in the Medal with James the IIIId's Face
And the Advocates that pleaded for him:
Tho' the Nation renounces the whole Popish Race,
Great Lewis of France will restore him.

1. See H.M.C. Portland, v. 259-60: Toland to Oxford, [c. 1712]; and above, p. 94.

2. P.R.O. S.P. 44/77/127-28.

3. P.O.A.S., vii. 491-94.

4. See Defoe, Letters, p. 350.

5. P.O.A.S., vii. 495-503.

What tho' we did swear to the Protestant Heir,
 And roundly Abjur'd the Pretender;
 Our Oaths must give place to the True Royal Race,
 Or our High Faith will want a Defender.

By such Great Examples all People will find,
 That the Jacobites are in no Peril
 For the Prince at St Germain's to speak out their Mind,
 Or to drink a full Bumper to Sorrel.

According to Ellis, this is 'an uninhibited Jacobite song, another example of total irony...in A Welcome to the Medal Defoe never seems to drop his disguise...only its exaggeration gives away the anti-Jacobite intent of the poem'. For Defoe's authorship he points to 'evidence...of the usual circumstantial kinds'.¹ It is possible to view the poem as ironical, but it is equally likely that the poet was horribly serious, and although it uses hyperbole, this may be due to genuine enthusiasm for the cause, rather than distaste for the Jacobite idea. Certainly there is nothing to suggest Defoe's authorship with any safety, and Ellis' stylistic gymnastics serve merely to illustrate the dangers of concentrating purely on internal evidence to attribute political writings. Ellis notes that 'Hills and... Harrison...were ordered to be prosecuted...but the author was never discovered'. Perhaps not, but the ministry had its eye on Pittis, and it is yet to be proven at all satisfactorily that he was simply apprehended on the basis of mistaken identity. Similarly Defoe's authorship will have to be demonstrated much more fully before it can be confidently put forward as probable.

Of the fourteen printers, publishers and authors confined by St John on recognizances to the Queen's Bench on the first day of term, none were detained on 28 November when the term ended, although it is true that Mrs Popping was immediately recommitted for printing numbers 36 to 38 of the

1. Ibid., p. 493.

Protestant Post-Boy on 3 December; also issued with a recognizance that day, as we have noted, was William Pittis.¹ This hardly ties in with the picture of harsh repressive measures taken to control the press which the whig writers liked to draw. In fact I have only been able to find the names of two men prosecuted for actually writing libellous pamphlets in the autumn of 1711, Boyer and Pittis, and the latter was a rabid Jacobite! The remainder of the prosecutions listed with such venom by Oldmixon concerned those involved in the process of printing and vending the libels. This appears to have been part of a deliberate press policy, designed to control the press by concentrating not on the unfortunate 'scribber', but on the means of production, which, in any case, was almost certainly subsidised by the whig lords.

Part of this unwillingness to prosecute the authors themselves may stem from the government's awareness of the extent of its own propaganda machine, and Oxford was recruiting all the time. Mrs Manley and Abel Roper in particular were patronised by the ministry. 'I have got an under spur-leather to write an Examiner again, and the secretary and I will now and then send hints', Swift told Stella on 5 December 1711, 'but we would have it a little upon the Grub-street, to be a match for their writers'. The authors of the Examiner in its later years, which had to be revived to deal with Maynwaring's and Oldmixon's Medley, were, successively, Mrs Manley, William Oldisworth and Joseph Browne, while, according to Oldmixon, Roper was awarded with a 'Place in the Secretary's Office', arranged by 'Mr Robert Harley', in order to utilise Roper 'to print Libels on the Duke and Dutchess of Marlborough, the Earl of Godolphin, the Earl of Wharton, the Lord Somers,

1. P.R.O. S.P. 44/77/130, 132, 133. According to Phyllis Guskin (op. cit., p. 490), Harrison was also committed on 3 December, although his name does not appear in the records cited.

and all the Illustrious Patriots who were remov'd'.¹ While Roper quickly made his arrangement with the Oxford ministry, Mrs Manley was initially not so fortunate. Although responsible for the printed narrative of Guiscard's assassination attempt, with Swift sending her hints, and even writing the first page of the account himself,² she was still without a reliable means of recommending herself to Oxford when she took over the Examiner, despite writing to the prime minister on several occasions during the summer of 1711. St John promised to intercede with Oxford on her behalf, as did Peterborough and Granville, but on 2 October she once more 'presumed' to lay the circumstances of her case before the treasurer:³

in hopes Mr St John has spoken for me as he had the goodness to promise ...I beg you to know that I wrote Monsieur De Guiscard's Narrative, and that 'Examiner' of Anthony and Fulvia, where by Agrippa's character your Lordship's was designed.

She felt that if she had 'either instructions or encouragement', she 'might succeed better'. Her interest with the ministry improved, with Swift keeping a check on the Examiner, for which, in January 1712, she was threatened with arrest when he proved unable to prevent the 'severity' of two issues dealing with the newly-ousted Marlborough, although he had 'often scratched out passages from papers and pamphlets sent me before they were printed' for that very reason.⁴ Yet Swift had a sneaking regard for Mrs Manley's capacities, assuring Stella that she had 'very generous principles for one of her sort; and a great deal of good sense and invention'. She retained her position as unofficial ministerial propagandist, and her relations with Oxford persisted until the death of Queen Anne.

1. Oldmixon, History, p. 100.

2. Journal to Stella, 16 April 1711.

3. H.M.C. Portland, v. 95-96; cf. ibid., p. 55: the same to the same, 19 July 1711; Journal to Stella, 3 July 1711.

4. Ibid., 25, 28 January 1712.

It was during the spring of 1712, as Defoe defended his views in print, that Swift gradually assumed the role of the Oxford ministry's chef de propagande. Semi-official duties followed on from the success of the Conduct of the Allies and Remarks on the Barrier-Treaty. Sir Thomas Hanmer, chairman of the committee for drawing up a representation of the state of the nation, 'where all the wrong steps of the Allies & late Ministry about the War will be mentiond', approached Swift to assist in its phrasing. St John, Hanmer, Benson, the Harleyite chancellor of the exchequer, and Swift put their heads together. The finished product, according to Swift, was a 'Pepperer', and 'the finest that ever was writ'.¹ Also at this time he was involved as overseer for ministerial pamphlet literature. Mrs Manley was only one of the 'understrappers' he supervised. Sacheverell asked him to sue on behalf of his protégé Joseph Trapp, and though Swift thought the latter 'a Coxcomb, and the tother...not very deep', Trapp was soon made chaplain to Bolingbroke on his elevation to the peerage.² Dr King was given the Gazetteership at the start of the year, apparently at Swift's instigation, until his friend Charles Ford took over from him on 1 July, also on Swift's recommendation, and he 'got 200l. a year settled on the Employment by the Secrtys of State besides the Perquisites'.³ Swift became increasingly intimate with Arbuthnot during the course of the year, and he praised the physician's 'John Bull' pamphlets so highly that Stella thought he was himself their author. In fact he may have assisted Arbuthnot if only by seeing them through the press. At this time he was often on business with his printer on the behalf of others. Moreover he did actively

1. Ibid., 20-27 February, 5, 8 March 1712. The representation was included by Swift in his History of the Four Last Years of the Queen. See Swift, Prose Works, vii. 80-94.

2. Journal to Stella, 17 March, 17 July 1712.

3. Ibid., 31 December 1711, 3 January, 1 July 1712.

collaborate with Arbuthnot on a poem, A Fable of the Widow and her Cat, 'a ballad made by several hands, I know not whom. I believe lord treasurer had a finger in it; I added three stanzas; I suppose Dr Arbuthnott had the greatest share'. Naturally Swift saw the poem through the press, along with 'some other little prints' he had been 'over-seeing...and a pamphlet made by one of my understrappers', The Representation of the Loyal Subjects of Albinia.¹ 'I have nothing to do now boys', he wrote on 29 February, aptly summing up his position as propagandist, 'and yet I was dictating some Trifles this morning to a Printer'. This same busyness was quite apparent on the introduction of the stamp duty when he rushed many pamphlets into print, both of his own composition and those 'of other Peoples'.

What, then, was Swift's viewpoint on the stamp duty? On 17 January 1712 the queen sent a message to the Commons, and Swift named St John as the man responsible for the inclusion of the paragraph relating to the press:²

Her majesty finds it necessary to observe, how great licence is taken in publishing false and scandalous Libels, such as are a reproach to any government. This evil seems to be grown too strong for the laws now in force; it is therefore recommended to you to find a remedy equal to the mischief.

The Commons' address to the queen in reply to this message ran:

We are very sensible how much the Liberty of the Press is abused, by turning it into such a licentiousness as is a just reproach to the nation; since not only false and scandalous libels are printed and published against your majesty's government, but the most horrid blasphemies against God and religion: and we beg leave humbly to assure your majesty, That we will do our utmost to find out a remedy equal to this mischief, and that may effectually cure it.

St John, as government manager in the lower house, was no doubt responsible for seeing this address through the Commons, and Swift derived most of his

1. Journal to Stella, 4, 31 January, 10, 17 March, 17 June 1712. For the relations of Swift and Arbuthnot, see Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 507-10.

2. Cobbett, vi. 1063-65; C.J., xvii. 28. An identical paragraph was inserted in the queen's message to the Lords, but the whig majority in the upper house resulted in a more equivocal response.

information about the bill for restraining the press from the secretary. But considerable doubt remains over whether St John was solely responsible for the drafting of both the message and the address, and the confident statement that the institution of the stamp duty was the climax of 'Bolingbroke's repressive campaign' is based more on assertion than evidence.¹ Certainly St John had to see the bill through the Commons, but it is noteworthy that a motion that all printing-presses should be registered, 'and...the author, printer, and publisher of every book set his name and place of abode thereto', a similar system to that in operation prior to the lapsing of the licensing act in 1695, was dropped in favour of a duty on all newspapers and pamphlets. The aim, it seems, was not absolute repression, but the regulation of the press through the reduction of the number of copies in circulation of each political treatise. From the beginning of the 'peace crisis' the government had been overwhelmed with attacks on its policies, and indeed on its integrity. With attack after attack on the peace negotiations the government was hard pressed to defend itself, and the easiest way out was simply to close the flood-gates on the deluge of anti-ministerial writings.

Oxford had not been equivocating when he told Marlborough that, by the queen's command, the authors of libels would be 'impartially sought out and punished'. This, not the insistence of St John, was surely the genesis of the queen's message to the Commons about the press, and the bill for restraining the press itself. There is no indication that a reluctant prime minister had been pressurised into the institution of a stamp duty. On the other hand there is evidence of Oxford's great interest in the workings of the stamp duty: weekly reports were sent to him recording the number of

1. Stevens, Party Politics and English Journalism, p. 33.

stamps bought by each newspaper, and although they present considerable problems when it comes to interpreting the figures, they must have supplied Oxford with an idea of the effectiveness of the measure on the circulation figures of the papers involved. The act, passed on 22 May, levied a halfpenny tax on broadsheets, and a penny tax on pamphlets up to and including a folio sheet. It is doubtful whether the government really expected to levy vast amounts of revenue in this way. As David Stevens remarks, the duty was not imposed 'chiefly for revenue purposes, but with the hope that the charges might prove prohibitive for the Whig journals'.¹ In terms of realpolitik it was simply the best way of controlling the press now that the domestic battle for peace had been won, and it is not merely coincidental that it was introduced immediately after the victory was apparent. The design was to relieve the pressure on the overburdened ministerial propagandists.

Although there is (as far as I am aware) no documentary evidence to prove St John's management of the bill to regulate the press, a memorandum preserved in the Harley papers illuminates Oxford's views on the subject. 'About Regulating the Press', Harley noted about this time, 'see Scobells Collection fol. 44 & 45 part 1st 3 ordonances'.² Scobell's collection of acts passed after the execution of Charles I includes 'An Act against Unlicensed and Scandalous Books and Pamphlets, and for better Regulating of Printing'.³ This measure, enacted in 1651, was meant to act as a check on the uncontrolled publication of political pamphlets without the imposition of a strict system of censorship, and it may have been the model for the 1712 stamp act. At any rate, the aims of the two were very similar. Like the duty levied by the Oxford ministry, the revenue, half of which was to go to

1. Ibid.

2. B.L. Loan 29/10/5.

3. A Collection of Several Acts of Parliament, Published in the Years 1648, 1649, 1650, and 1651. By Henry Scobell Esq. (1651), pp. 44-45.

the commonwealth, and half to relieve the importunities of the poor of the stationers' company, was a secondary consideration.

What was the effect of the stamp duty on the circulation of the press? On 7 August Swift observed that 'the Observator is fallen, the Medleys are jumbled together with the Flying-post, the Examiner is deadly sick, the Spectator keeps up, and doubles its price. I know not how long it will hold'. Defoe, in the Review, had warned that 'Little Taxes raise great Sums of Money, Great Taxes none at all; Little Taxes give Spirit to Trade, Great Ones smother it', and though he went on to postulate that 'to stop the press in General, is not in the Design', the imposition of the stamp duty was the final nail in the coffin of the already declining Review.¹ Although Defoe, like Addison and Steele, made contingency plans the paper never really carried the blow, and struggled on until the end of its nine-year span in June 1713. The figures sent to Oxford bear out this impression of weakness: compared to the number of stamps sold on the inauguration of the tax, by mid-1713 they had almost halved, and although papers sold illegally without stamps must have played a part in this decline, the circulation almost certainly decreased drastically.² Pamphlets similarly declined in numbers from the peak reached during the 'peace crisis'.³ And yet the new tax did not result in an absolute decline in the virulence of whig propaganda. 'These devils of Grubstreet rogues, that write the Flying-Post and Medley in one paper, will not be quiet', Swift had to confess on 28 October 1712:

They are always mauling lord treasurer, lord Bolingbroke and me. We have the dog under prosecution, but Bolingbroke is not active enough; but I

1. Review, viii. 700.

2. B.L. Loan 29/280, ff. 83, 90-107. See J.M. Price, 'A Note on the Circulation of the London Press, 1704-1714', B.I.H.R., xxxi (1958), 215-224; Henry L. Snyder, 'The Circulation of Newspapers in the reign of Queen Anne', The Library, 5th series, xxiii (1968), 206-35.

3. Price, op. cit., p. 218; W.T. Morgan, A Bibliography of British History 1700-1715 (1934-42), v. 78-80.

hope to swinge him. He is a Scotch rogue, one Ridpath. They get out upon bail, and write on. We take them again, and get fresh bail; and so it goes round.

If the stamp duty was intended to silence the whig scriblers it did not succeed. Bolingbroke's proscriptive efforts continued to fail to prevent the publication of whig libels on the ministry. Echoing the verdict of opponents of the regime, Ehrenpreis regards to stamp act as a last desperate measure to hold in check the anti-ministerial propagandists when all else had come to nought. St John 'had arrested printers or writers when he could', he writes, 'but the prosecutions had failed'.¹ Yet it is significant that Swift should indict the secretary of complacency in his dealings with the press, and there are indications that his policy tended to be dilettante at the best of times. The 'man of mercury' was less equipped than Oxford to carry through a comprehensive press policy. The prime minister organised the production of ministerial propaganda, while it is ironic that the secretary's most notable success in prosecution in 1713 involved Daniel Defoe. St John mislaid the manuscript of the Conduct of the Allies, and he neglected to supply Swift with 'some very necessary Papers' to be included in Remarks on the Barrier-Treaty, the pamphlet being published without them.² Several business meetings between Swift and St John culminated at dinner with things left undone: 'after dinner is after dinner', Swift wrote on 26 February 1712, 'An old saying and a true'.

Despite the introduction of the stamp duty on 1 August 1712, then, the situation was still sufficiently worrying for the government to refer to the press once again in the queen's speech on the opening of parliament on 9 April 1713. Swift had a hand in the drafting of this carefully-worded

1. Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 568; cf. Hanson, Government and the Press, p. 62.

2. Journal to Stella, 20 February 1712. A prime example of Bolingbroke's dilatoriness in relation to the press was his failure to exploit Swift's Some free Thoughts upon the present State of Affairs in the summer of 1714. See Swift, Prose Works, VIII. xxiii-xxviii.

speech, which announced the signing of the Peace of Utrecht:¹

I cannot however but expresly mention My Displeasure at the Unparallel'd Licentiousness in publishing Seditious and Scandalous Libels.

The Impunity such Practices have met with, has encourag'd the Blaspheming every Thing Sacred, and the Propagating Opinions tending to the Overthrow of all Religion and Government.

Prosecutions have been order'd, but it will require some New Law to put a Stop to this growing Evil, and your best Endeavours in your respective Stations to Discourage it.

A prime factor in this strongly-worded message was, most probably, the publication late in March 1713 of a particularly nasty poem, The British Embassadress's Speech to the French King, 'the cursedest Libel in Verse... that ever was seen' (as Swift put it), printed by William Hurt, who also printed Ridpath's Flying-Post. The connexion between the two was not lost on the ministry: Ridpath had just been found guilty of writing libels in February, but he was free on bail when the poem was published. In May, when prosecutions for libel were hotting up after the queen's speech, he fled to France, leaving Hurt to stand trial. On 27 June the printer was sentenced to stand twice in the pillory, to pay a fine of £50, and to be imprisoned for two years until the fine was paid. Clearly the British Embassadress's Speech was regarded with no little distaste by the Oxford ministry. It was purely a propaganda attempt to incite the opponents of the government to strong action, and it was printed on small sheets of paper, 'handed about, but not sold'.² On 25 March an informer sent a copy of the poem to Oxford who forwarded it to Dartmouth, and the secretary took steps to discover the men responsible for perhaps the most savage indictment of the Oxford ministry in print:³

1. Swift, Prose Works, vi. 202-203; cf. Journal to Stella, 8 March 1713: 'I dined with Ld Treasr...He shewd me some of the Qu—'s Speech, wch I corrected in sevrall Places and penned the vote of Address of thanks for the Speech'. Various drafts of the speech are to be found in B.L. Loan 29/7/9, 11, 14; H.M.C. Portland, v. 276-77.

2. Journal to Stella, 23 March 1713.

3. P.O.A.S., vii. 590-96. See H.M.C. Dartmouth, i. 315; the poem is still extant in the Dartmouth MSS in Staffordshire R.O., D (W) 1778. I. ii. 367.

Oxford reigns Prime Minister of State,
 Ruling the Nation at a mighty Rate;
 And like a Conjurer with his Magick Wand,
 Does both the Parliament and Queen command.

Queen Anne was accused, along with her ministers, 'To Honour and their Country equal Foes', of Jacobitism, and 'In order to effect this grand Design/ And baffle all the Hanoverian Line', she had turned out the whigs. The present ministers were:

Wretches, whose Indigence has made 'em bold,
 And will betray their Native Land for Gold.
Oxford's the Chief of this abandon'd Clan;
 Him you must court, for he's your only Man.
 Give him but Gold enough, your Work is done,
 He'll bribe the Senate, and then all's your own.

This was the advice offered to James III:

Keep but that wily Trickster still your Friend,
 He'll crown your Wishes with a prosperous End.
 Now is your time to push for Britain's Crown,
 And fix King James the Third upon the Throne:
 A powerful Fleet prepare, you need no more,
 But only land him on his Native Shore;
 They'll soon depose the present reigning Thing,
 And in her Stead proclaim your Favourite King.

Defoe was, somewhat improbably, accused by the whigs of writing the British Embassadress's Speech, and in the Review for 7 May 1713, in which he bade a fond farewell to the exiled Ridpath, he dealt with the unkind suggestion that he had been in trouble with the law on account of this 'insolent and unmannerly Libel'. Yet, paradoxically, it had been Defoe who had felt the first backlash of the new hard line on libels when he was prosecuted for his ironic pamphlets, Reasons against the Succession of the House of Hanover, and And What if the Pretender should come? From the conclusion of the domestic struggle for peace onwards the main occupation of the party scriblers had been the safety of the Protestant Succession. Early in 1713 Defoe, following earlier pamphlets and a series of essays in the Review that warned against complacency over the succession, but assured the nation of its security under the present government, attempted to drive the required message home ironically. At the same time he reminded the

public at large that Anne was only mortal in An Answer to a Question that Nobody Thinks of, viz., But what if the Queen should die?¹ But Defoe had made enemies as a ministerial propagandist. He had hitherto escaped prosecution by the Oxford ministry, while the whigs, though not actually silenced, had been subjected to increasing government harassment. Three whigs in particular had felt the lash of the law: Ridpath, Thomas Burnet, who was free on bail but under prosecution for defending Marlborough in A Certain Information of a Certain Discourse, that Happen'd at a Certain Gentleman's House in a Certain Country, and William Benson, who had libelled the queen in 1711 in A Letter to Sir J[acob] B[anks], by Birth a Swede, but Naturaliz'd, and a M[embe]r of the Present P[arliamen]t. These three plotted Defoe's downfall, and contrived to seize the manuscripts of his three recent controversial pamphlets (their titles at least were misleading) at the printer's. Having done this, they took them to the whig lord chief justice, Parker, who had Defoe committed to Newgate on 11 April.²

On 12 April Defoe wrote to Oxford from Newgate to inform him of his unexpected predicament, naming Benson, Burnet and Ridpath, 'all Three Under prosecution from the Governmt for Scandalous pamphlets', as the men who had managed to put him in gaol. 'The Pretences Are Sevl, Some too simple to Name', Defoe continued, 'But they were heard to Say that they had all been prosecuted and the Review had a full Liberty, but They would bring him in whether the Ministry would or no'.³ Defoe was released on bail on 13 April, but Parker wrote to Oxford two days later:

1. For these pamphlets, see Sutherland, Daniel Defoe: A Critical Study, pp. 60-67.

2. Oldmixon's version of the incident records that Benson, aided by his friends, 'spar'd neither Pains nor Expence...and in a few Days he got into his own Possession the Original Manuscripts of all those three Pamphlets, written in D. Foe's own Hand...all the three being prov'd by one of the Printer's Servants, before the Lord Chief Justice Parker, to be the Hand-writing of D. Foe, his Lordship granted a Warrant to take him up; which being done...his Lordship committed him to Newgate' (History, pp. 509-10).

3. Defoe, Letters, pp. 405-406.

I have had a Complaint laid before me upon Oath against severall Libells ...I have taken up and bound to appeare the first day of the Term Danl De Foe who appeares to be the Author of them, and to have sent great Numbers of some of them into the North. The Printer and Publisher have given Information of the Author, and have likewise readily brought in their Servants to give Evidence against him; however, I have bound them over likewise that they may be sure to be forth coming. The person that made the first Complaint is fully bent upon prosecuting for these libells. However, I send them and the Informations against De Foe to Your Lordship believing that probably Your Lordship will think it for the Honour of her Maty and the Ministry that directions be given to the Attorney Generall to prosecute at her Maties charge and that the reason why it has not been done already, is that such Scribbles have not faln within Your Lordships Notice.

This, of course, was not the case, but it is clear that Defoe was the victim of a concerted effort to secure his prosecution for his ministerial writings.¹ Earlier in the year he had been committed to the debtors' prison for an old debt, and the circumstances suggest that this had been arranged by his adversaries. He was confined for eleven days until his release on 3 April through Oxford's intervention. According to Defoe, the creditor, who accepted £150, 'and of that but 25 in Money', had been owed £1500.² Defoe was at liberty for no more than a week before Benson secured his committal to Newgate. On once again extricating himself through Oxford's offices, he emphasised that if Parker's invitation to pursue the matter was declined, 'This Mr Benson will bring an Information On purpose to Trye if I can Obtain a Stop to be put to Their Proceedings by Noli Pros, which will give Them an Occasion of Railing, which is what They Desire'.³

The whigs did not require a Noli prosequi to begin railing at Defoe. Judas Discover'd, and Catch'd at last: Or, Daniel de Foe in Lobs Pound was carefully timed to appear as soon as he was arrested, and it bears testimony to the whig nature of the attacks on Defoe. It was a savage indictment of

1. P.R.O. S.P. 34/21/241: 15 April 1713.

2. The Mercator, no. 101: 12-14 January 1714. Cf. Defoe, Letters, pp. 400-402: Defoe to Oxford, 1 April 1713.

3. Ibid., p. 411: the same to the same, 19 April 1713.

his apostasy:¹

Of all the Writers that have Prostituted their Pens, either to encourage Faction, oblige a Party, or for their own Mercenary Ends; the Person here mentioned is the Vilest. An Animal who shifts his Shape oftner than Proteus, and goes backwards and forwards like a Hunted Hare; a thorough-pac'd, true-bred Hypocrite, an High-Church-Man one Day, and a Rank Whig the next.

Claiming that Defoe had been accused of 'High-Treason; so that he now remains in Custody', the pamphlet exploited the fact that he was once more in custody on 22 April. He had warned Oxford that he intended to 'Complain Loudly of the Oppression':²

Ile Petition (I mean in Print) to be brought to Tryall, and shall have abundant Room to Expose Them for attacking me in a Thing they can not make Out; and Thus the pretence of being protected by your Ldpp or the Ministry will be quite Taken away.

The pages of the Review echoed to his cries of injustice, but he was arrested for his pains, and held until 3 May when he had issued a public apology for his free abuse of lord chief justice Parker.³ While he was in the Queen's Bench another correspondent wrote to Oxford:⁴

I was in great hope when the happy Peace was ratified that the enemys to our Government durst not have appear'd so openly, is there no Law, no help, no hemp for such miscreants? - if the authour of the inclos'd who so lately took his tryal doth not meet wth a just reward for his villanys; that rascally party will grow rampant. a whipping at the cart tail may cure the rascall of the itch of writing, & teach the whole faction more manners than to abuse their betters - but if a pillory or pecuniary punishment be inflicted the rogue will get an estate - My Lord the broken hosier Dan: De foe was ever a villain when in trade, & since his turning Author Proteo mutabilior: has abused Magistrates, debauched mens principles & often endeavoured by his writings to set the Nation in a flame - I hope there is sufficient matter to hang him: for there is no party or cause tho' ever so honest can make him so.

These sentiments could have been written by the author of Judas Discover'd: clearly there was a witch-hunt on for Defoe.

1. Judas Discover'd, and Catch'd at last (1713), pp. 3, 6.

2. Defoe, Letters, p. 411: 19 April 1713.

3. See Review, ix. nos. 84, 85, 89, 91.

4. B.L. Loan 29/11/7: anon. to Oxford, 28 April 1713.

Even after Defoe's release on 3 May he was not free of the threat of prosecution. In October it cropped up again, and Defoe was:¹

Surprized...That Notwithstanding all That has been Said, and your Ldpps Orders...They are proceeding Formally Against me On Account of The Old affair of the Three Pamphlets, and That if your Ldpp is Not pleased to Interpose, I shall be Made a Sacrifize to a Party who would Sacrifiz your Ldpp and the queen also, if it Lay in Their Power.

Although Oxford assured Defoe of his personal protection, the attorney-general Northey impressed on the writer 'That there is No Other way to be Effectually safe but to Obtain her Majties Pardon'. Defoe duly petitioned the queen, but learned to his horror on 26 October that Northey, 'Timerous and Cautious to a Fault', had ordered his prosecution to be heard unless he was directed otherwise, so that, as he told Oxford, 'if The Pardon be not Obtain'd before I am Obliged to plead, I Shall Still be brought upon The Stage'. Finally his pardon came through just in time.²

This protracted episode makes one wonder how the whig pamphleteers escaped conviction, and tends to endorse suspicions that they were shielded to a large extent by the whig lords. While Defoe suffered anxious moments in 1713 concerning the government's official line on his writings, Swift's time was yet to come. He, too, did not survive the Oxford ministry without being threatened with prosecution. Richard Steele quickly replaced Ridpath as the leading whig skirmisher: as Defoe informed Oxford, he was 'The New Champion of The Party'.³ Swift soon crossed swords with his old friend, when, in the newly-founded Guardian, Steele responded to the aspersions cast upon Marlborough by Oldisworth in the Examiner by attacking the editor of the government organ personally, describing him as a 'miscreant'. This,

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1. Defoe, Letters, p. 415: Defoe to Oxford, 9 October 1713.
 2. Ibid., p. 422. The draft of his pardon, in P.R.O. S.P. 34/37, is dated 17 November 1713.
 3. Defoe, Letters, p. 430: Defoe to Oxford, 19 February 1714.

he emphasised, meant 'unbeliever', and he left no doubts that he regarded Swift as ultimately responsible for the Examiner. William Oldisworth was the real editor, and he staunchly denied Swift's complicity, although it would be true to say that he did wield some influence over the content of the paper, including material if and when it suited him.¹ At the time of Steele's attack on the Examiner, Swift had just been preferred to the deanery of St Patrick's, and he was clearly unhappy about the aspersions cast on his character. In a letter to Addison, with whom he had tentatively reestablished contact on the successful staging of Cato, Swift denounced Steele's 'baseness, ingratitude, and injustice'.²

Steele replied to Swift in person, affirming his belief that Swift was 'an accomplice of the Examiner's', and ridiculing his claims that it had been his intercession with the prime minister that had ensured Steele's retention of his place in the stamp office. 'They laugh at you', Steele wrote, 'if they make you believe your interdisposition has kept me thus long in office'.³ But Steele could afford to be generous: he intended to stand for parliament, and resigned his place on 4 June to allow him to do so.⁴ In the Guardian for 23 May he made a half-hearted attempt at a public apology. The breach had been closed, but only temporarily. On 1 June Swift left for Ireland to be installed in his new position. It was his first visit since the establishment of the Oxford ministry. During his absence the crisis which had been brewing between Oxford and Bolingbroke came to a head. Government solidarity had been crucial until peace had been signed

1. Guardian, 28 April, 12 May 1713; cf. Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 681. For Swift's 'hints' to Oldisworth, who was also on the government's pay-roll, see Journal to Stella, 15, 31 January 1713; Swift also wrote the Examiner for 2 February 1713.

2. Swift, Corr., i. 348: Swift to Addison, 13 May 1713.

3. Ibid., p. 351: Steele to Swift, 19 May 1713.

4. Correspondence of Steele, pp. 79-80: Steele to Oxford, 4 June 1713.

at Utrecht, even though the two men quarrelled over St John's viscountcy, and his subsequent trip to France in August 1712. Significantly it was in the session of parliament beginning on 9 April 1713 that Oxford discerned the first indications of a real split, 'during which time', he later noted, 'a confederation was made against the Treasurer'.¹ At the end of the session Bolingbroke remarked unequivocally to Auditor Harley that 'if your brother will not set himself at the head of the Church party, somebody must'.² 'My Lord Treasurer desires you will make all possible haste over, for we want you extremely', Erasmus Lewis wrote to Swift in Ireland, 'you might certainly be of great use to us, by your endeavours to reconcile, and by representing to them the infallible consequences of these divisions'.³ When Swift arrived back in London on 9 September 1713, however, the affair had been decided, and it had ended in rout for Oxford's opponents.⁴

1. H.M.C. Portland, v. 466.

2. Ibid., p. 660; cf. *ibid.*, p. 300: Bolingbroke to Oxford, [June 1713].

3. Swift, Corr., i. 374, 378.

4. See Geoffrey Holmes, 'Harley, St John and the Death of the Tory Party', B.A.T.G.R., pp. 224-25. The most confused section of Professor Ehrenpreis' biography of Swift concerns the autumn of 1713, and it is due to his incorrect analysis of the power struggle of July-August 1713. As Holmes puts it: 'It was fought out in the corridors of Kensington and Whitehall... Oxford's opponents...were forced to submit not just to his continued premiership, but to a remodelling of ministerial offices which directly curtailed their own departmental authority and placed "Treasurer's men" at almost every strategic point available'. Discussing the cabal formed by Bolingbroke, Harcourt, Atterbury (now bishop of Rochester) and Lady Masham, Ehrenpreis writes: 'As one more bold sign of the strength behind the cabal ...the Lord Treasurer in mid-August, had to allow his friend Dartmouth to give up the office of Secretary of State...and see it go to the high-flying Speaker Bromley, while Dartmouth was made a harmless Lord Privy Seal'. Representing Bromley's promotion as a triumph for the Bolingbroke faction, Ehrenpreis stresses that Oxford 'had to let Bromley displace Dartmouth as Secretary' (Swift, ii. 669, 672). In fact Bromley was a Harleyite, and Oxford, not Bolingbroke, persuaded him to enter the ministry to counteract the 'captain's' growing support. He similarly states erroneously that the outcome of the General Election of 1713 was 'a slightly weakened majority for the government'. The net result of these mistakes is to falsify Swift's position on his return from Ireland. He is represented as trying to uphold Oxford's withering interest in the ministry at a time when it was in fact the highest it had been at any time since his elevation to the peerage, and appointment as lord treasurer. See Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 671-79.

Swift's first contribution to the common fund of ministerial propaganda on his return from Ireland was published in November 1713. In the month of his election as M.P. for Stockbridge, Steele had turned, in the Guardian for 7 August, to the question of the demolition of Dunkirk, required under the terms of Utrecht, but demonstrably not carried out. Ministerial writers quickly accused him of insolence to Queen Anne, Oldisworth, in the Examiner for 24 August, echoing the arguments of Defoe's The Honour and Prerogative of the Queen's Majesty Vindicated and Defended Against The Unexampled Insolence of the Author of the Guardian.¹ These rejoinders only succeeded in sparking off a minor paper war on the issue, in which the ministerial propagandists were hard pressed, Steele publishing The Importance of Dunkirk Considered in the form of a letter to the bailiff of his constituency, John Snow. It was during these weeks that Swift arrived in London, with the election campaign in full-swing, and he resolved to make an example of his adversary against the proposed meeting of parliament on 12 November. In The Importance of the Guardian Considered he accused Steele once more of ingratitude to Oxford, the man who had appointed him Gazetteer in 1707, and who had allowed him to retain his place in the stamp office. Further scuffles ensued, with far more serious consequences for both parties. The Guardian folded at the beginning of October 1713, but Steele immediately launched The Englishman, and opened subscriptions for a large work, which finally appeared in the middle of January 1714 (after many delays over publication) with the title, The Crisis. The theme was unequivocal, and the security of the Protestant Succession, its apparent fragility exposed by the queen's near-fatal illness in the last days of December 1713, was emphasised and pushed to the forefront of the political scene.

1. See J.R. Moore, 'Defoe, Steele, and the Demolition of Dunkirk', H.L.Q., xiii (1949-50), 279-302.

Parliament was due to meet on 16 February 1714. As Professor Ehrenpreis notes, 'Swift's friends badly wanted an authoritative reply to the Whigs' masterstroke before the debates began'. On 23 February his response went on sale, The Publick Spirit of the Whigs: Set Forth in Their Generous Encouragement of the Author of the Crisis, which 'deserves on several grounds to be described as one of his finest works'.¹ But Swift did not enjoy writing the pamphlet, labelling it 'the most disgusting Task that ever I undertook: I could have with more Ease have written three dull Pamphlets, than remarked upon the Falsehoods and Absurdities of One'.² Yet it was a cutting attack not only on the fatuousness of Steele's exercise in verbosity, but on the whig propaganda machine per se. The stamp act had failed to silence the whigs because they were too well subsidised by wealthy aristocrats. The impetus for much of the government's propaganda came out of Oxford's private pocket: he had only a tiny fund for intelligence services.³ Boldly denying that there was in any way a crisis, or that the ministry had done anything 'tending towards bringing in the Pretender, or to weaken the Succession in the House of Hanover', Swift made a liberal use of invective to undermine Steele's position, ridiculing the clamour made by the pamphlet in question, and its absurd dedication to the clergy. Of particular note is Swift's evaluation of 'the present Writers' on the whig side, among whom he professed to recollect 'but three of any great Distinction, which are the Flying-Post, Mr Dunton, and the Author of the Crisis'.⁴

1. Ehrenpreis, Swift, ii. 702.

2. Swift, Prose Works, viii. 66-67.

3. 'It was now more needfull for him to enlarge his intelligence [on his appointment as lord treasurer], tho never one Farthing of Allowance for it' (B.L. Loan 29/267/5: autobiographical notes in Oxford's hand for his son, dated 11 September 1723: 'a short Breviary of what hath come to my knowledg of Public Affairs...This Paper serves only to give an acct of my oeconomical management'.)

4. Swift, Prose Works, viii. 31. Dunton's pamphlets Neck or Nothing and The Impeachment roused ministerial wrath, see Defoe, Letters, p. 438, and N.U.L. Portland MSS, Pw2 Hy 956: Francis Hoffman to Oxford, n.d.

Steele received more than just the lash of Swift's pen. On 2 March, in her speech on the opening of parliament, Queen Anne spoke out against 'some who have arrived to that Height of Malice as to insinuate, that the Protestant Succession in the House of Hanover is in Danger under my Government'. This pointed reference to Steele's pamphlet occasioned a Commons' assurance that they would 'on all Occasions shew their just Abhorrence of the licentious Practices, in publishing scandalous Papers, and spreading seditious Rumours'.¹ Ten days later complaints were raised in the lower house in accordance with this address concerning three pamphlets by Steele: the issue of the Englishman for 16-19 January 1714; the Crisis; and the Englishman: Being the Close of the Paper so called. Steele's trial at the bar of the house of commons was the most publicised attack on the freedom of the press in the reign. Significantly Auditor Harley made the formal complaint against Steele's writings: Oxford kept control over the press until the end, despite the fact that he was at the time losing political power to Bolingbroke. On 18 March Steele made his defence, assisted by the ablest whig heads in the Commons - Walpole and Stanhope - but though memorable speeches were made in favour of the defendant and against the conduct of the ministry, the court supporters insisted on the question. Steele was found guilty of writing a seditious libel by 245 votes to 152 and he was expelled the house.²

But Swift did not escape unscathed from his exchange with Steele. In the Lords the queen's speech was turned against the government's own writer, when Wharton, holding up a copy of Swift's pamphlet, said he knew a libel of the sort condemned by the queen. Oxford denied all knowledge of the matter, and a resolution was passed that the Publick Spirit of the Whigs

1. C.J., xvii. 474, 483.

2. See Cobbett, vi. 1265-1327. For a whig commentary on the trial, see Oldmixon, History, pp. 541-45.

was a 'false, malicious and factious libel'. Swift bitterly lamented the inadequacies of the protection afforded 'those who scribble for the Government' in a letter to Peterborough.¹ John Barber, the printer, and John Morpew, the publisher, were taken into custody, while steps were taken for Swift's apprehension, Wharton emphasising that:²

They had nothing to do either with the Publisher or Printer, but that it highly concerned the honour of that august assembly to find out the villain, who was the Author of the false and scandalous libel.

Paradoxically the whigs seem to have had better cover for their writers than the government itself, as both Defoe and Swift were embroiled with the law as a result of a witch-hunt incited by the opposition. But Swift's relations with the prime minister became crystal-clear at this critical stage in his career. Oxford denied him, but he nonetheless sent him his thirty pieces of silver. Swift, independent as he liked to be, admitted to Peterborough that he 'scribbled' for the government, and he felt entitled to accept the proffered coin when Oxford wrote to him on 4 March:³

I have heard that some honest men who are very innocent, are under trouble touching a printed pamphlet, a friend of mine, an obscure person, but charitable, puts the enclosed bill in your hands to answer such exigencys as their case may immediately require. and i find he wil do more, this being only for the present.

If this comes safe to your hands it is enough.

No doubt Swift could salve his conscience with the belief that Oxford's bill for £100 was to relieve the importunities of the men involved in the production of the Publick Spirit, but it is clear that the prime minister was in the position of a benevolent employer taking care of his coterie of propagandists. Although he inveighed against the pamphlet in the Lords as malicious, it was one of Swift's 'commissioned' works. Swift had not sought the advice of the ministers for its composition, but it fitted their requirements.

1. Swift, Corr., ii. 138: 18 May 1714.

2. Cobbett, vi. 1263.

3. Swift, Corr., ii. 12.

This had been Swift's mistake, and it marks a difference between Defoe, who wrote reams of propaganda unsupervised by Oxford which never overstepped the line, and the doctor, who let his spleen get the better of him unless kept in check. In discussing Steele's overflowing praise for the union, Swift had libelled the Scots in a completely unnecessary digression as 'a poor, fierce, Northern people' who were little better than parasites on the body of the English, and who, moreover, were ready to invade their host in risking the safety of the Protestant Succession in threatening, in 1713, to repeal the act of union.¹ Steele had represented the Scots as worth more than the 45 M.P.s and 16 peers they had in parliament. Not so said Swift. 'Scotland in the Taxes is obliged to contribute one Penny for every forty Pence laid upon England', he wrote, 'and the Representatives they send to Parliament are about a thirteenth'.² Clearly, in relation to the revenue yielded by taxation in Scotland, if anything the Scots were in fact over-represented in parliament.

It was this passage on Scotland that got Swift into trouble. The pamphlet was voted 'highly dishonourable and scandalous to the Scotch Nation, tending to the Destruction of the Constitution'. On 9 March, after the examinations of Barber and Morpew, it was ordered that a humble address be presented to the queen:

That Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to issue Her Royal Proclamation, with a Promise of such Reward as Her Majesty shall think fit, to any Person who shall discover the Author of the Pamphlet.

On 11 March the address was presented to Anne, in which, assuring her that they had begun their 'Endeavours to Suppress Seditious Papers (which Your Majesty was pleased to take Notice of in Your most Gracious Speech from the Throne)', the Lords acquainted her with the steps so far taken to 'Discover

1. Proposals to lay a duty on malt uniformly throughout Great Britain, which the Scots claimed was a breach of the act of union, were exploited by the whig lords, who joined with the Scots in a motion to introduce a bill to dissolve the union. On 1 June 1713 it was defeated by 71 votes to 67. See Cobbett, vi. 1215-19.

2. Swift, Prose Works, viii. 50-51.

the Author, Printer, and Publisher' of the Publick Spirit of the Whigs. 'I Thank you for the Concern you shew for Suppressing all Seditious Libels', the queen replied, 'And have given Order for a Proclamation according as is desired'.¹ A reward of £300 was duly offered for information leading to the apprehension of the author of the libellous pamphlet. Swift suggested that the smallness of the sum was evidence 'that the Queen and Ministry had no Desire to have our supposed Author taken into Custody', and Boyer, himself prosecuted for libel in the last months of Queen Anne's reign, agreed that the doctor 'escaped discovery and punishment' because he was 'under the wings of some great men'.² Wharton pressed for the rigorous interrogation of Barber, his journeymen, and his servants, but this had been anticipated by the earl of Mar, secretary of state for Scotland, who informed the Lords on 6 March 'That he had already ordered John Barber to be prosecuted, which put a sudden stop to all farther enquiries about the matter, in a parliamentary way'.³ Undoubtedly this was at Oxford's request, and a screen was thus conveniently lowered on the findings of the secretaries. The enquiry had been specially staged to satisfy whig clamours without really achieving anything. Despite his doleful prognostication to Peterborough, the Oxford ministry did look after its writers as best it could, and Swift was never in any real danger of prosecution. Nonetheless the incident successfully dissuaded him from making any other contributions to ministerial propaganda in the final months of the reign. His relationship with the Oxford ministry was effectively over.

1. Cobbett, vi. 1264-65.

2. Swift, Prose Works, viii. 30; Boyer, Political State (1719), vii. 233-36. For Boyer's prosecution, see *ibid.*, (1727), xxxiii. 156; H.M.C. Portland, v. 470, 473: newsletters, 6, 20 July 1714.

3. Cobbett, vi. 1263. Nottingham was intimately involved in the witch-hunt for his old antagonist Swift. See Maurice Quinlan, 'The Prosecution of Swift's Public Spirit of the Whigs', Texas Studies in Literature and Language, ix (1967), 167-84.

On 31 May 1714 Swift removed to Upper Letcomb in Berkshire 'upon finding it impossible after above two years endeavor to reconcile My Lord Treasurer, and My Lord Bolingbroke: from the quarrel between which two great men all our misfortunes proceeded'. He subsequently claimed that:¹

it was my lot to have been daily conversant with the persons then in power; never absent in times of business or conversation, until a few weeks before her Majesty's death; and a witness of almost every step they made in the course of their administration.

Though one might question the ingenuousness of the first statement, and the truth of the latter, it was now a fact that the relationship between the 'colonel' and the 'captain' had broken down irrevocably. Despite the successes of the summer of 1713, Oxford had been unable to consolidate his gains. There were two sets of reasons for this failure, one public, one private. At the time of his triumph, he had finalised the marriage of his son to the wealthy heiress of his late intimate, the duke of Newcastle. For perhaps the first time he invoked the queen's displeasure by requesting that the dukedom should be conferred on his son. He later bitterly regretted the 'never enough to be lamented folly in mentioning to her Majesty the titles'.² This faux pas was followed in November 1713 by the death of his favourite daughter, and this threw the prime minister into a bout of lethargy, which culminated in his appearing before the queen drunk, disorientated, and thoroughly unfit for business. This gave the Bolingbroke 'cabal' the opportunity to regain lost ground, and the means to do so was the split which occurred in the ranks of the tory party after the making of peace had brought the Protestant Succession issue to the forefront of

1. Swift, Prose Works, viii. 76; VII. xxxiii (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 181-83 for Herbert Davis' evaluation of Swift's claim). For the breakdown of the relations of Oxford and Bolingbroke, see Holmes' essay in B.A.T.G.R., pp. 216-37. Their relations have also been the subject of a recent full-length study, Sheila Biddle, Bolingbroke and Harley (1975). Although this fails to supersede any of Holmes' more concise judgments, the existence of two reliable narratives negates my detailing the deterioration of the relationship at any length in a dissertation on Harley and the press.

2. H.M.C. Portland, v. 466.

affairs. 'I find by all the Pamphlets they give up the distinction of Whig & Tory', Lewis wrote to Dartmouth during the 1713 elections, but the structure of politics was not reverting to one of court and country, but to one of Hanoverian and Jacobite. 'Whimsical' tories like Hanmer and Anglesey joined forces with the whigs in support of the Hanoverians. This undermined the basis of Oxford's administration, and afforded room to manoeuvre for his routed opponents. Bolingbroke was sitting on the fence over the succession, but he was leaning ever more backwards towards the Pretender, in the hope that by persuading him to turn Protestant, he might yet forestall a whig monopoly of favour, which seemed likely under a Hanoverian successor. The first months of 1714 saw a prolonged but nonetheless intense struggle for power between Oxford and Bolingbroke. On two occasions his resolution wavered, and the prime minister toyed with the idea of resignation.¹ Finally he made a determined attempt to wreck Bolingbroke's schemes, and stand by the Hanoverian settlement he had done so much to bring about. In May he was concerting policy once more with Dartmouth, and seeing the queen on business. 'The Dragon dy's hard', Arbuthnot informed Swift on 26 June, 'He is now kicking & cuffing about him like the divill'.² Swift refused to come to his aid, although he sent him the assurance that 'In your publick capacity you have often angered me to the heart, but, as a private man, never once'.³ In fact Some free Thoughts upon the present State of Affairs would have rebounded to Oxford's detriment had it been promptly published by Bolingbroke. As it was he did not remain lord treasurer for very long. On 27 July a weary monarch took his staff, and on

1. H.M.C. Dartmouth, i. 319: 1 October 1713. See Holmes, B.A.T.G.R., p. 226; B.L. Loan 29/138/5: Oxford to Harcourt, 15 March 1714 (copy); H.M.C. Portland, v. 400: Harcourt to Oxford, 17 March 1714; B.L. Loan 29/10/10-11.

2. Swift, Corr., ii. 41. Oxford was nicknamed the Dragon, as Swift explained, 'by contraries' in view of his mildness. For Dartmouth and Oxford, see Staffordshire R.O., Dartmouth MSS, D (W) 1778. I. ii. 468: Oxford to Dartmouth, 30 May 1714; cf. H.M.C. Portland, v. 406-407.

3. Swift, Corr., ii. 44-45: 3 July 1714.

31 July she placed it in the hands of the duke of Shrewsbury. The next day she died. It was the end of an era, and the whigs were triumphant.

With Oxford's dismissal the government press machine ground to a halt. It had, of course, been running down for the last few months, but Oxford retained his control over the press to the end. Although the Review had folded in June 1713, its raison d'être diminished by the Peace of Utrecht, Defoe had moved on to provide assistance to a new ministerial paper concerned solely with trade, The Mercator. From the outset it was suspected that the Mercator had government backing, and its initial sales figures, based on the weekly return of stamps, indicate a circulation of well over a thousand per issue, far in excess of that enjoyed by the Review at the time. Defoe saw no need to pursue the topic of commerce in the Review, 'when an Account, vouch'd by such Authorities, shall come out three times a Week'.¹ Soon he was on the editorial board, assisting Arthur Moore, chief manager of the treaty of commerce with France (which Defoe had previously treated in a pamphlet), and, it seems, Charles Davenant, who once again was writing under Oxford's auspices.² 'I Hope I have not been an Unprofitable Servant in the New Undertakeing which I am Embarkt in', Defoe wrote to Oxford on 1 August 1713, and by 1714 it appears that Defoe was editing the paper single-handedly.³ 'Nothing is More plain', Defoe informed the prime minister during the elections:

than that The Disputes upon the Subject of the Commerce with France, are Carryed on, Not Meerly as a Dispute about Trade, which Most of The people Now So hot about it Understand little of, and an Opportunity which They think is given Them, to Raise a Tumult against the Ministry, and Enflame The People.

A rival whig paper on trade, The British Merchant, written, as Oldmixon

1. Review, ix. 209-10.

2. Oldmixon, History, pp. 518-19. Defoe was certainly involved with Moore, who was his intermediary in the autumn of 1713 when it seemed likely that he would be prosecuted by Northey for his three 'treasonable' tracts. See Defoe, Letters, p. 415.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 414, 418-19: 1 August, [c. 22 October], 1713.

noted, by Henry Martin, bailiff of Southwark, 'an ingenious judicious Man', was quickly launched, and the controversy continued in print throughout the final year of the Oxford ministry.¹ Defoe was also instrumental in an attempt to quieten the dissenters. His Letter to the Dissenters, 'of which I had a hint from your Ldpp', was yet another work attributed to Oxford's pen by common fame. Defoe observed bitterly that the whigs had of late:²

Taken...Such Measures to stifle Every thing that is not for their Turn by Clamouring at it in their flyeing Post and by their New Corresponding Letters, that Nothing Can be Spread into the Country but by Force of Mannagement, and Indeed No printer will now print at his Own Charge, which is the Reason The world is Over-run with their Pamphlets, which they disperse privately Two or three Editions at a Time, and No Man stirrs a hand to Oppose Them because They Must do it at Their Own hazard and Expence.

A year earlier Lord Harley had noted that the whigs and dissenters had:³

resolved that they would one and all do what in them lay to prevent a peace, & made a collection for printing all the virulent pamphlets that have been wrote agt the Q[ueen] and this ministry, in 2 voluems.

This, he stressed, he had had from 'a good hand'. In the final years of the Oxford ministry the whigs had assumed the offensive in print, and a barrage of anti-government propaganda overwhelmed the stretched resources of the ministerial propaganda machine, subsidised in the main, as it was, by the private pocket of the prime minister. Yet it had been Oxford who had taught his opponents to appreciate the value and importance of printed propaganda, and it is a tribute to his careful building of the government machine that it did not crack up completely under the strain. The whig lords backed the witch-hunts for the ministry's two most potent propagandists, Defoe and Swift: Wharton even launched the attack on the author of the Publick Spirit of the Whigs. Oxford, not Bolingbroke, had organised the defences: Mar, who

1. Oldmixon, History, pp. 518-19. Cf. Defoe, Letters, pp. 414 et seq for references to the Mercator in 1713 and 1714.

2. Ibid., pp. 427, 424: 25 December, 31 October 1713.

3. Brampton Bryan, Harley MSS, Box 117: Lord Harley to [Auditor Harley?], 7 October 1712.

had been one of the prime minister's nominees in the cabinet reshuffle of August 1713, headed off the pursuit of the worried Swift. The publication and aftermath of the Crisis was in many ways the culmination of the whig programme in print, and although there had been some anxious moments, Oxford and his supporters had managed to cope with a difficult situation, and this had been rendered more critical by the deep divisions then manifesting themselves within the ranks of the government.¹

It is significant that Bolingbroke made no attempt to hold on to the propaganda machine assembled by Oxford. It fell apart remarkably quickly on his dismissal. The last issue of the Mercator was dated 20 July 1714, while the Examiner ended for good with the issue for 26 July. The next day, of course, Oxford was no longer lord treasurer. Both Oldisworth and Defoe were on his pay-roll. Defoe received his final payment from Oxford, his quarterly £100, on 26 July.² Mrs Manley also was remunerated for her services to the ministry around this time with a bill for £50.³ Thereafter there appears to have been no fund for propaganda purposes, and Bolingbroke was either unable or unwilling to imitate Oxford in dispensing money for such items out of his own purse. The Review had ceased to exist long before the demise of the Mercator and the Examiner, of course, and the Post-Boy had lost much of whatever vitality it had possessed. Oxford had made the effort to reward his propagandists while it remained in his power to do so. Only Ford retained his post on the Gazette — for three weeks after the death of Queen Anne until Samuel Buckley, the staunch whig editor of the Daily Courant, replaced Swift's nominee as Gazetteer.

1. Steele's trial was held on 18 March: three days later Oxford had written to Harcourt offering to resign (B.L. Loan 29/138/5).

2. Journal to Stella, 12 March 1713; Stevens, op. cit., p. 67; Defoe, Letters, p. 442n; Hanson, Government and the Press, p. 96.

3. H.M.C. Portland, v. 453-54, 458.

Defoe wrote on. Like the grateful tenth leper he was so fond of quoting, Defoe continued to defend Oxford in print when the power to reward was no longer his, and when, under the Hanoverians, it was dangerous even to associate with the disgraced ex-minister. 'The Surprissing Turn given by The Imediate hand of Providence to the State of things Since my Last has been the Reason why I have not Persued what I was upon for Vindicateing your Ldpps person and Conduct and Exposeing your Enemyes as I had proposed to your Ldpp', Defoe wrote on 3 August, after the queen's death, and he assured Oxford that this defence 'was actually in the Press and part of it Printed off'.¹ Defoe did not abandon his benefactor. While Swift lay low and failed to acknowledge until the danger had passed that he had been close to Oxford, Defoe penned a series of apologies, even against Oxford's own better judgment. Even in defeat, the propaganda machine assembled so painstakingly by Oxford over the years did not totally fail him.

1. Defoe, Letters, pp. 443-44. This projected work has not been identified with any certainty. Healey suggests an early version of the Secret History of the White Staff published in October 1714 (*ibid.*, n). It seems unlikely, however, that the pamphlet to which Defoe was referring was ever published in the changed circumstances arising from the death of Queen Anne. A MS which could fit the bill, in Defoe's hand and previously unknown, is preserved in the Harley papers in the possession of Mr Christopher Harley of Brampton Bryan Hall. Evidently 'Humanum est Errare: Mistakes On all Sides: Or, An Enquiry into the Vulgar Errors of the State' was sent to Oxford at some stage for his approbation. As far as I am aware it was never published. It is to be found in Box 117 of the Harley papers at Brampton Bryan.

Chapter Eleven

Impeachment and After

The Favourites of Princes have in all ages & Countries of the World been used like the Tennis-balls of Fortune, which they have toss'd to & fro & up & down with the Rocket of their tempers & inclinations, as they appear'd more vigorous in the beginning of their Exercises, or less-active in the pursuit & end of them.

'The Fate of Favourites'.¹

On 6 August Oxford wrote to the new king offering his congratulations on his accession to the throne. 'I had the honour in the two preceding reigns to express my love to my country by promoting what is now come to pass', he pointed out, 'your Majesty's succession to the crowns of these kingdoms'.² Subsequently he insinuated that the whigs contrived to keep him from George I in case his service to the Hanoverian cause would be revealed, although he had intimated to the king that he desired to retire from politics after his exertions on behalf of the dead queen. 'I need not mention the Letters or the living Evidence I have to produce on this Head', Oxford wrote to Auditor Harley, implying that his sole motivation had been the safety of the Protestant Succession.³ This was no mere cant: of the three men who had assisted William III in the drafting of the act of settlement only Oxford was still alive in 1714.⁴ In many ways it is true that of living Englishmen the former lord treasurer had done the most to ensure the peaceful succession of the House of Hanover. There is no evidence to suggest that he ever communicated with the court of St Germain with any other aim than to keep in touch with events there. Oxford alleged that the Hanoverians had

1. Bod. MS Rawlinson D. 37 (this is a panegyric on Oxford after his fall).

2. H.M.C. Portland, v. 484 (draft).

3. B.L. Loan 29/70/10: 13 February 1717 (copy).

4. Rochester died in 1711; Godolphin in 1712. This means, of course, that only Oxford himself knew the truth of his protestations concerning the act of settlement.

offered him £200,000 and more for him to distribute as he thought fit to secure their accession to the British throne. He refused on the grounds that it was his duty to 'secure their coming in safely & unanimously'. 'The Danger', he stressed, 'was in their Conduct after they were come in...for he was resolved to retire'. He claimed to have been proved 'a true Prophet' for George I came to the crown 'without any opposition'.¹

Oxford had his wish to be allowed to retire: but he did not live in peace for very long. After greeting the king in September 1714 he removed to Cambridgeshire until the coronation on 18 October. He then resolved to go immediately to Brampton Bryan, but ill-health prevented him, and 'a fit of the Gravel and Strangury confined him till the 19 Jan'. Bolingbroke's flight to the court of the Pretender in anticipation of impeachment proved to be the cue for a determined attack on Oxford.² The events of 1701 had never been forgotten by the whig lords, and Coningsby pressed hard for an impeachment as compensation for Harley preeminence on the marches of Wales in the previous twenty-five years, giving credence to printed reports that Oxford similarly intended to abscond on the appointment, on 11 April 1715, of a secret committee to enquire into the mismanagements of the late ministry. Auditor Harley leapt to his feet in the Commons to justify his brother's conduct, replying to Coningsby's taunts:³

the person that Lord means is so far either from absconding or flying, that he came last night to his own house in London, where he is resolved to remain, being determined to justify his conduct, which, if he could not do, he would think his blood too small a sacrifice to atone for anything he had done against the liberties of his country.

1. B.L. Loan 29/36/5. This is a continuation of the 'Large Account: Revolution & Succession' from the point at which it leaves off in B.L. Loan 29/165/2 (p. 23 onwards). Cf. B.L. Add. MSS, 34515, ff. 17 et seq.

2. B.L. Loan 29/36/5. As early as 22 August 1714 Oxford was warned that Bolingbroke would be 'your ruine beyond all you can thinke off, if you don't in tyme secure him and be before hand with him, he is the vilest of wretches, and such a project he is upon, that will make your whole affairs shake' (B.L. Loan 29/162/5: anon. to Oxford).

3. H.M.C. Portland, v. 664; cf. B.L. Loan 29/36/5.

In print Oxford was subjected to a barrage of whig invective, spear-headed by Ridpath, who had returned from exile. Mrs Manley generously offered to undertake 'a true account of the charges made just before the death of the Queen', but there is no evidence to suggest Oxford's approval of the project, and he was defended single-handedly by Defoe, who was anxious to make his peace with the whigs at the same time. He was soon embroiled with the law. On 28 August 1714 he was apprehended for writing a paragraph in Hurt's Flying-Post. Ridpath and Hurt had parted company, and in his chagrin, Hurt agreed, on Defoe's suggestion, to print a rival Flying-Post. 'The use They make of this', Defoe told Oxford on 31 August, 'is that I have Insulted my Lord Anglesey and that your Ldpp has Employd me to do So'.¹ Defoe claimed to have been merely editing Ridpath's original copy of the attack on Anglesey, a staunch Hanoverian tory, and a member of the council of regency governing in the king's name until his arrival from Hanover, which accused him of Jacobitism. Oxford severed his connexion with Defoe, who similarly claimed to have had no correspondence with the fallen minister after George I landed in England.² He nonetheless defended Oxford in three parts of The Secret History of the White-Staff, and subsequently in An Account of the Conduct of Robert, Earl of Oxford.

Each pamphlet attracted a number of replies. The Secret History was widely believed to have been written in collaboration with Oxford himself. 'The report about the author of the "White Staff", though industriously

1. H.M.C. Portland, v. 491: Mrs Manley to Oxford, 30 August 1714; Defoe, Letters, pp. 445-47; cf. H.M.C. Portland, v. 491: newsletter, 28 August 1714. Defoe came to trial on 15 July 1715, and although he was found guilty sentence was never passed: the next day Oxford was carried to the Tower.

2. Defoe, An Appeal to Honour and Justice, Tho' it be of his Worst Enemies (1715) in Daniel Defoe, ed. James T. Boulton (1965), p. 194. In fact George I arrived on 18 September and the last extant letter from Defoe to Oxford is dated 28 September 1714 (Defoe, Letters, pp. 447-48).

propagated, begins like others that have such a foundation to die of itself', Stratford wrote on 24 November, 'But though your old enemies contrived it, I am afraid your Lordship's old friends had the greatest share in spreading it'.¹ It is possible, of course, to be cynical, and to suspect Defoe of making his peace with the whigs by maliciously publishing pamphlets that were bound to hinder, rather than help, Oxford's cause. In his private correspondence, Oxford himself pointed to this possibility in no uncertain terms:²

Though I have been betraid; & insulted by libels under pretext as if I had wrote or encoragd or known of any of the writings pretendedly for me, but in truth only to give a handle to Answers, pessimum Genus Laudatium; yet will not I returne the injury; but they shal find no body go further than my self on reasonable grounds to vindicate the Queens administration; and our constitution without any regard to myself.

The whigs were reluctant to believe that Oxford had not collaborated in the Secret History. Oldmixon, who penned the whig rejoinders, was emphatic:³

One cannot doubt but, the Secret History of the White Staff, a pamphlet Foe wrote soon after King George's Accession to the Throne, was by the Earl of Oxford's Direction, and that the most natural Hints for it came from him, because the whole Treatise is calculated for his Vindication; and Foe depended upon him too much, to dare to publish any such thing without his Participation and Consent.

Certainly the Secret History appears to be a genuine vindication of Oxford:⁴

The Staff proceeded with a steady Resolution to maintain the Authority and Power he possess'd, and had, as before, successfully frustrated and disappointed all the Measures of those who would have overthrown and pulled him down: But it was apparent, that Victory being obtained, he had no farther Schemes of Opposition to pursue; that it was not in his Design

1. H.M.C. Portland, v. 501.

2. B.L. Loan 29/171/4: to Stratford, 12 March 1715.

3. Oldmixon, History, p. 537. Oldmixon was almost certainly the author of the three parts of A Detection of the Sophistry and Falsities of the Pamphlet, entitul'd, the Secret History of the White Staff (1714-15). Pittis was responsible for The History of the Mitre and Purse, in which, the first and second parts of the White Staff are fully considered (1714) and Queen Anne Vindicated from the Base Aspersions of some late Pamphlets (1714/15). Considerations upon the Secret History of the White-Staff (1714) has been attributed, without any real certainty, to Bolingbroke himself.

4. The Secret History of the White-Staff (1714), pp. 19-20.

to crush and ruin the Persons he struggled with, or to erect any Dominion over them, as Britains; that he had no State-Tyranny to erect, no secret Designs to betray the Constitution, and this Negative introduced a War between him and those who, to outward Appearance, were in the same Interest with him, which at last broke out into a Flame, which produced unlooked for Events.

The whole tone of the pamphlet is conciliatory, its theme moderation. It sought to remind the whigs of the leniency with which they had been treated by the quondam lord treasurer. The whole of Part II of the tract was devoted to proving that he was the sworn enemy of all Jacobites, while the final part dealt with the reasons why both sides became 'Haters of the STAFF';¹

Either Side were impatient of having any Controul upon their Measures; and, being bent upon the perfecting their own Designs, any Middle between those Extremes must, of Necessity, differ with both. Moderate Councils were those the STAFF purpos'd to establish, that he might have kept a Balance between two furious Parties.

This was, in fact, a reasonable representation of what had gone wrong for Oxford in the course of his ministry, but the parties still had no sympathy for coalition policies, and the Secret History was, ironically, attacked by whigs and tories, Hanoverians and Jacobites alike.

Oxford had been aware in August 1714 that Defoe was planning a vindication of his conduct.² But was he privy to the Secret History? There is no evidence that he was, while he himself persistently denied all knowledge of the pamphlet. 'I thought I had been famous for being against vindications my self, by Prints', he wrote to Stratford on 22 March, 'or giving any answer to Libels but contempt';³

formerly I was blam'd for things I did not do; & now they pretend to father Libels upon me, wch I was so far from knowing of them, that I never to this day read them: and I can make it appear that they ownd they

1. Ibid., Part III (1715), p. 76.

2. Above, p. 355.

3. B.L. Loan 29/171/4.

knew so much but only took that handle to vent their malice & spite. In the twilight of his political career the press finally caught up with its elusive quarry, and he began to feel the points of the whig pens. Paradoxically it was when his conduct was being vindicated that he was least comfortable under the scrutiny of the whig pamphleteers, he did not mind their acrimony. In the London Gazette for 5-9 July 1715 the man who was formerly accustomed to insert paragraphs in the official newspaper as a matter of course paid to insert his last important message:¹

Whereas some Months since a Pamphlet, Entituled The Secret History of the White Staff, and lately another Pamphlet Entituled, An Account of the Conduct of Robert Earl of Oxford, have been Printed and Published, these are to inform the Publick that neither of the said Pamphlets have been written by the said Earl, or with his Knowledge, or by his Direction or Encouragement; but on the contrary he has reason to believe from several passages therein contained, that it was the Intention of the Author or Authors to do him a Prejudice, and that the last of the said Pamphlets is Published at this Juncture to that end.

The advertisement was signed 'Oxford', and whatever impressions we might form about his complicity in the Secret History, this categorical denial of Defoe's pamphlets must weigh heavily against the ex-minister's prior knowledge of their publication. Apparently he advised Defoe to put off 'what [he] was upon for Vindicateing [Oxford's] person and Conduct'.² The appearance of An Account of the Conduct of Robert, Earl of Oxford in June/July 1715 came at a critical time for its subject. On 10 June he had been impeached; the articles of impeachment were brought against him on 7 July, and on 9 July it was ordered that Oxford should be committed to the Tower of London, whence he was carried on the 16th. In an apparently futile attempt to mitigate his growing frustration he made notes on the whig writers while in the Tower. Ridpath he tacitly compared with himself, 'a fellow that run

1. I quote from the MS copy of this notice in the Harley papers in the possession of Mr Christopher Harley of Brampton Bryan Hall, on occasional deposit in Herefordshire R.O. (Harley papers, Box 117).

2. Defoe, Letters, p. 444. This may account for the existence of the MS of 'Mistakes On all Sides' in the Harley papers at Brampton Bryan (Box 117).

his country rather than abide its justice'. Steele, he felt, was 'not capable of writing or acting any more than nature design'd', and that he was an incendiary, a 'blower of a Bellows...to Gun Powder'. Boyer, who had tried so hard to gain Oxford's patronage, was finely drawn as 'The Greatest Scoundrel in y^e world that understands neither French nor English'. One wonders whether his inaccurate account of the assassination attempt still rankled in Oxford's mind. Even Fonvive, the moderate editor of the Post Man, was satirised as 'a Little toothdrawer [who] has got above fifteen thousand pounds by News viz. cheating the Postage & having the common prints come frank'.¹

Oxford spent two years in the Tower, during which time he suffered a further acute bout of illness.² He recovered in October 1715, and afterwards he worked on his vindication in parliament.³ On 26 June 1716 the proceedings in the house of commons against him petered out, and Oxford, in a 'Brief State' of his case, sought advice 'how far in prudence he should move the Judges for to be Baild. The Law is for it; bit if inclination & power do not concur it wil be fruitless'. He was still lodged in the Tower when he petitioned parliament to be brought to trial the following May. The date fixed for proceedings to commence was 24 June 1717, but a dispute ensued between the two houses as to whether he should be tried first for high treason or for high crimes and misdemeanours. The trial was adjourned and Oxford successively remanded until 1 July, when Harcourt proposed to

1. B.L. Loan 29/38/6: 17 December 1715. Significantly Defoe's name is omitted from the list.

2. Oxford's illnesses on his loss of power perhaps give more support to these lines of Dr Johnson's in The Vanity of Human Wishes than is usually allowed:

What gave great Villiers to th' assassin's knife,
And fixed disease on Harley's closing life?...

What but their wish indulg'd in courts to shine,
And pow'r too great to keep, or to resign?

(See Selected Poems of Johnson and Goldsmith, ed. A Rudrun and P. Dixon (1965), p. 45 and n).

3. See B.L. Loan 29/38/5: Lord Oxford's 'Meditations in the Tower'.

discharge the defendant of the two treason articles unless the Commons came to prosecute them. Sunderland opposed the motion, intending to prolong Oxford's discomfort, postulating that 'if he was discharg'd of any for want of Prosecution, he ought to be discharg'd of all'. The question, 'in the strangest termes', was drawn up:¹

thus by the Infinite goodness of the Almighty & his overruleing Providence the Man who was his most inveterate Enemy is made the Instrument of his Absolute Discharge & Deliverance; which was far beyond all the expectations of his Friends.

It was a fitting judgment, for it is relatively clear that the trial and Oxford's long sojourn in the Tower had been deliberately contrived by the whigs. He was accused of misdemeanours 'under an Administration wherein he was Notoriously the first Minister & chief director', but Richard Hampden, a member of the secret committee appointed to draw up the articles of impeachment, alleged 'nine days before the trial':

that there never had been produced to the Committee any Evidence to prove the Articles, that the Lord Oxford's Answer had never been read in the secret committee, & that it was a most scandalous Proceedings, which he was resolv'd to expose in the House.

He never did, but Oxford's conduct was tacitly justified by his discharge, which was greeted on 1 July 1717 with 'Huzza's & Claps &c'. He never again took an active part in politics, and he was forbid the court at the express order of George I. He lived a life of retirement until his death in May 1724 on a visit to London.

Harley's reputation as a man and a politician was perverted by Macaulay in the last century. The lines of Pope's muse are generally forgotten:²

In vain to Desarts thy Retreat is made;
The Muse attends thee to the silent Shade:

1. B.L. Loan 29/36/5; B.L. Loan 29/52/1; B.L. Loan 29/1/1-7; B.L. Loan 29/266: 'Robinson's Acct of Ld Oxford's tryal', MS, 19 pp.

2. 'Epistle to Robert Earl of Oxford, and Earl Mortimer', ll. 27-40, in the one-volume Twickenham edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, ed. John Butt (1963), pp. 313-14.

'Tis hers, the brave Man's latest Steps to trace,
Re-judge his Acts, and dignify Disgrace.

Another Harleyite expressed similar sentiments a generation later, when the dowager-duchess of Marlborough published an account of her conduct. The memory of one 'grievously misrepresented by all Parties, for the great Crime of being of none' was defended against the duchess' slights:¹

perhaps some better Hand may be tempted to finish the Piece, which we have only sketch'd, and whenever this shall be done, the Earl of Oxford will be known to Posterity for a perfect Statesman.

Instead Macaulay was ruthless in his indictment of Harley as a man whose intellect was 'both small and slow', and who 'was unable to take a large view of any subject'. To Churchill, Harley was 'a base and hardy hypocrite', while W.A. Shaw delighted in disparaging 'the sinister, unpractical brain which later was responsible for sponsoring if not for originating the fantasy of the South Sea Company'.² Swift's posthumous vindications of the Oxford ministry were insufficient to alter markedly this prejudice, and Harley continued until the last decade to be presented in print in terms of black and white as the arch-villain corrupting the sanctity of Marlborough's golden memory. Only Feiling of an earlier generation of historians really seems to have appreciated that there was more to Harley as a statesman than merely the cant of Macaulay, and, as it has so often proved, Feiling's judgments have been endorsed by documents not available to him. The examination of Harley's voluminous papers has allowed a more accurate assessment of his aims, and only with this development has his statesmanship been genuinely appreciated. Pope's muse has at last seen her candour copied:

(No Hireling she, no Prostitute to Praise)...
Thro' Fortune's Cloud One truly Great can see,
Nor fears to tell, that MORTIMER is He.

1. A Continuation of the Review of a Late Treatise (1742), pp. 56-61.

2. Macaulay, History, p. 2406; Winston Churchill, Marlborough, his Life and Times (1933-38), ii. 311; [W.A. Shaw], C.T.B., introduction to vols. XI-XVII, p. 1.

If, in the final analysis, Robert Harley's dream of a country coalition did not materialise in office, this hardly qualifies as evidence with which to indict him of mediocrity. It is not his failure that is striking, for he had chosen a task for himself that was well-nigh impossible, but his achievement in engineering a ministerial revolution which produced a moderate ministry that had a modicum of success for a time before he was obliged to turn towards the more thoroughbred tory elements among the court supporters. In so doing he sacrificed his country principles of the absolute sanctity and independence of a parliament free from the interference of a government which sought to direct proceedings for its own ends. The urgency for peace caused him to placate the members of the October Club with bribes and places, and to create a government majority in the Lords to force through the ministry's peace programme. These were ruthless steps, but he considered them necessary. The motto of coalition did not strike a sympathetic chord in the ears of the independent backbenchers in the Commons and, in view of the conflict between whig and tory which had permeated almost every feature of life in the reign of Queen Anne, this is hardly surprising. Harley himself had fostered an aggressive stance when urged to fall in with the schemes of the Junto in the 1690s. The party men were not likely to forget their bitter rivalry overnight at the bidding of one man.

But what is impressive is that 'a dull puzzleheaded man', who, by maintaining 'a high reputation for wisdom', had managed to manoeuvre himself into a position in which he was 'master of the fate of Europe', should contrive to keep so many balls in court for four long years as prime minister, defying all attempts to dislodge him.¹ And though his arch-rival

1. Macaulay, History, p.2409: 'he was pronounced to be a deep read, deep thinking gentleman, not a fine talker, but fitter to direct affairs of state than all the fine talkers in the world. This character he long supported with that cunning which is frequently found in company with ambitious and unquiet mediocrity...In this way he got and long kept a high reputation for wisdom'.

Bolingbroke scorned Harley's ideal of government above party at the time, he attempted to put his theories into practice himself in the 1720s when he tried to organise an opposition coalition in parliament to counter the entrenched whig government of Walpole. Dissident whigs, tories, and out-and-out Jacobites were covered by the one all-embracing definition of a country party. This resembled nothing so much as Harley's achievement in opposition in the 1690s, the New Country Party. Where Harley had succeeded, Bolingbroke failed, and although Harley too had failed in his attempts to resurrect his country amalgam in office, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Perhaps Harley's old friend the earl of Shaftesbury was more accurate in his estimate of the prime minister's worth, when, in 1712, he came to the conclusion that the whigs had never had 'a genius equal to oppose to him', even Somers, and that he had 'a head, indeed, but too able'.¹

The press is one sphere which serves to illustrate Harley's skill as a politician, and it exorcizes once and for all Macaulay's spectre of a man of merely average ability, for he was a true pioneer in techniques of government propaganda and counter-propaganda. The knowledge of the workings of the press and the value of propaganda gained in parliament in the course of the reign of William III put Harley in good stead to implement a policy in relation to the press when in office as secretary of state. He saw the need for an unofficial ministerial press organ to balance the official Gazette, and Defoe's Review was the first paper of its type. It aimed to explain ministerial policy decisions to uncommitted moderates and to otherwise ignorant government supporters. There were no party whips in the early eighteenth century, and, therefore, no system by which party adherents could be rallied on policy matters. Harley realised the value of printed reminders about party lines at the opening of each parliamentary session during his

1. Rand, Letters, p. 512.

political apprenticeship, and the standing army affair gave the first opportunity for the practical application of a principle that was to be developed and extended during the paper war of 1701 and the important election campaign of 1705. One of Harley's first steps as a member of the triumvirate that took office on William's death was to organise meetings for government supporters in the Commons - meetings at which policy could be concerted and elucidated. He backed up these gatherings by an active press policy, the full extent of which can only be appreciated at the time of its fullest scope when he himself was lord treasurer. The governments of William III's reign had not possessed a propaganda machine; on the accession of Queen Anne there was no recognised ministerial propagandist and all official printed matter had been carried by the Gazette: in 1714 Swift, Defoe and a host of minor writers scribbled to the tune of the government, while no less than five ministerial press organs were in existence in 1713 - the Gazette, the Review, the Examiner, the Post-Boy, and the Mercator. It was a propaganda machine with the potential outlined here that Walpole inherited from the Oxford ministry, and he had Harley to thank for its design and assembly: Walpole may have used different organs to control the press and disseminate propaganda, but their prototypes were Harleian.

What, then, was Harley's attitude to the press? He was not in favour of censorship per se, although he felt that some sort of restraint was necessary to prevent writers taking too great a licence with the servants of the state and the church. He practised proscription, but his was never a negative policy, and he refused to victimise individual writers unless there were good grounds for so doing. Throughout his career he cared little about personal attacks on his character in print. 'I thought I had been famous for being against vindications of my self, by Prints', he wrote on one occasion, and this is fully endorsed by his readily wishing upon himself all that the 'ill-natured scriblers' chose to write 'upon condition they would write ag^t

nobody else'.¹ If anything he seemed to relish the irony of the better-written lampoon. On his 50th birthday Oxford gave Swift 'a scurrilous printed paper of bad verses on himself, under the name of the English Catiline, and made me read them to the company':²

Hail Mighty Hero of the British Race,
Famous for Cunning now, as once for Grace;
Whate'er the Arts of former Times could do,
Is, to your Glory, far out-done by you.
Nero rejoyc'd to see his Flaming Rome,
But you at once whole Kingdoms can consume;
And owing 'tis to your Great Arts alone,
That they are better pleas'd to be undone...
...tho' no Man thy Word could ever trust,
Yet they believe that thou art True and Just.

No doubt Harley's own experiences as a pamphleteer assisted him in viewing such attacks with interest rather than with distaste: Godolphin would have blenched at each line. Harley developed a sense of fellowship with the 'scribler', and it was this facet that mitigated his vindictiveness in pursuing the party hacks. As he assured Marlborough in 1706, 'some few examples' would be sufficient to cure the 'Abominable Vice' of libel.³ He was empathetic to the lot of the propagandist, and this enabled him to organise a coterie of writers who worked according to his directions.

Harley saw to the production of propaganda that had a definite objective - the separation of moderate tories and extreme tories in 1705; the justification of the change of ministry in 1710 and 1711; and the success of the government's peace programme in 1711 and 1712. He approved the stamp act, but not to the absolute silencing of the whig press, and it is doubtful if he ever wanted such a repressive system of censorship. It is clear that Harley appreciated the power of the press. But what did he think

1. B.L. Loan 29/171/4; Longleat, Portland MSS, v. f. 253.

2. Journal to Stella, 5 December 1711; P.O.A.S., vii. 521.

3. Longleat, Portland MSS, v. f. 11: 26 April/7 May 1706 (copy).

his propaganda would achieve? There were two main sorts: one was positive, directed towards some specific goal, and the best example is Swift's peace propaganda; the second was negative, and was concerned mainly with countering the arguments and the invective of opposition propagandists - Harley himself penned efforts that fall into this category during 1701, and Defoe constantly dealt in this kind of mud-slinging. Neither type, it must be pointed out, was expected to win over political opponents: Harley realised that no amount of pamphleteering could influence committed party men. Bernard Shaw once postulated that:¹

It has been said that the French Revolution was the work of Voltaire, Rousseau and the Encyclopedists. It seems to me to have been the work of men who had observed that virtuous indignation, caustic criticism, conclusive argument and indestructive pamphleteering, even when done by the most earnest and witty literary geniuses, were as useless as praying.

Harley believed this, and what he required was the channelling of sentiments already held by his supporters into a formulated programme of action: he was not principally aiming at conversion. It was not Swift's pamphlets or his poetry that led to peace, but the actions of men in parliament, and his propaganda was designed to provide arguments for these men. It was no coincidence that Swift was able to write to Stella that in the debate on the conduct of the allies 'those who spoke, drew all their arguments from my book'.² In some ways Harley's attitude to propaganda anticipated that of Goebbels: it centred on the slogan and the rallying-cry to unite men who were already committed to action. Of course he would rather have had public opinion on his side, but it was significant that it was only at election-times that he bothered to try to influence the political nation en masse, and then Defoe was chiefly employed, his prolific output being his main recommendation to a man supported in print by so able a writer as Swift.

1. Major Barbara (Penguin edn., 1974), preface, p. 28. Auden's epitaph on Yeats is particularly apt for Swift: 'Mad Ireland hurt you into poetry./ Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,/ For poetry makes nothing happen' ('In Memory of W.B. Yeats' in Collected Shorter Poems of W.H. Auden (1966), p. 142).

2. Journal to Stella, 4 February 1712.

It is important to view Harley's career as a whole, and to approach any analysis of his ideology accordingly. His prominence in the 1690s tends to be examined as merely the prelude to his later greatness and not as an integral, formative part of his career. Many of the things he was trying to achieve in Anne's reign can only be understood as natural throwbacks to the policies he was endorsing in opposition. He wished to emulate in office the achievements of the country party in opposition, and to do this he had to change the structure of politics to eradicate what he regarded as the futile and insidious division into whig and tory. He was, at bottom, attempting nothing less than a radical reconstruction of the relationship between crown, parliament and people. For him the Revolution had failed to settle affairs on a secure basis. The court was not to interfere in parliament, yet there had to be a strong system of government. His way out of the impasse was through the abandonment of outworn party labels, and, with cooperation as the watchword, the act of settlement of 1701 was the new foundation. But Harley was never able to impress his theories on his fellows. Finally he resolved to do the country members good against their own wishes, and he was forced to sacrifice his political (but not his personal) integrity.¹ But if Harley did fail in his vision of a country system of government, he did secure the safety of the Protestant Succession, making a peace that meant victory in the war for the English succession. Ironically to do so Harley found it necessary to practise in office the parliamentary management for which he had censured both the Junto and the duumvirate when they had been in his position, and, if anything, he did it more effectively. In more ways than one Walpole was his natural successor as prime minister. He inherited not only Harley's propaganda machine, but his intelligence system.

1. Even his political opponents stopped short at censuring Harley for cupidity, 'the Lust of Money not being his predominant Vice' (Oldmixon, History, p. 102; cf. B.L. Loan 29/127/7: Harley to W. Brenand, 27 June 1707 (copy); B.L. Loan 29/267/5).

Appendix A

Two tracts by Robert Harley:-

- i) The Taunton-Dean Letter, From E.C. to J.F. at the Grecian Coffee-house
(London, 1701). B.L. press-mark 1856. g. 14. (83).

Dear Sir,

I Came yesterday from Exeter to this Town where I receiv'd your last Letter, and am glad to find by it you are well return'd from Tunbridge: I fear much we have not improv'd our pretious Opportunities as we ought, for want of constant Meetings at the College, which, I hope, you will now keep up as formerly. I gave you an Account of the distributing of the former Books and Papers you sent, which have had pretty good Effect; but this last Parcel, which was you know The true Patriot Vindicated, &c. I am at a stand what to do with them till I have further Directions; for tho' you gave me a Hint that the two Noble Lords had a Hand in Writing it, yet an Accident hath happen'd which makes me cautious of giving them out, and that is this: At our Club on Monday night I produc'd one of 'em, and, having first cry'd it up, I read it to the Company: It did not take at all; They said, what is this to the main Point, this doth not carry on our Business? If my Lord R[ocheste]r be out, we shall have another in that will do us as much Mischief; it is not one Man's being out will do, we must have Root and Branch. Says another, I like well the blackening my Lord R[ocheste]r, Sir C. H[edge]s the Secretary, Sir H. M[ackwor]th, Sir B. Sh[owe]r, and every one that is remarkable of the Country Party, but then it must be by general Stories, by Whispers never to be trac'd up to Particulars, or Authors. Troth, said our grave Friend Mr. G. my Neighbour is in the right; I was then in Business, and I can well remember the Facts are false which are alledg'd in that Paper; As for Instance, the Earl of Rochester was not Lord Treasurer when the Customs were levied; nay so far from it, that the Treasury was in Commission, and he was not of that Commission.

And as to that of cutting Leaves out of the Hearth-Book, it was done by the Farmers, and a Relation of mine smarts for it to this day; for that Lord afterwards made the said Farmers pay thirty thousand Pound, for which I and they are bound to curse him.

As for his Dispute about Religion; I was then in Town, and he was applauded for it; he himself ridicul'd the Priests in King James's Presence, and would not suffer the Protestant Divines to dispute what, he said, he could answer himself; and I once heard the B[isho]p of S[alisbu]ry, tho' his Enemy, cry him up to the Skies for his manner of Proceeding in that Affair:

Therefore Gentlemen, quoth Mr. G. tho' I hate that Lord for the Reason I told you, such Stories as these will do us no good, but rather hurt our Cause when they are detected.

I was willing to tell you this for your Direction; Mr. G. is a Church-goer in earnest, and you know such Men are not to be confided in, but we must keep them with us till our Designs are ripe; I know they will leave us at last, but then I hope in God we shall not need them. In fine, Sir, if you will take my Judgment, keep to this single Point, to write against Parliaments, and to make any Parliament impracticable; for since that mischevious Device of the Triennial Bill we must not expect to see good Days in Parliament: You know how near we have been to Ruin in every Session since; Accidents and good Management, through Providence, have preserv'd us, and therefore, tho' I approve of blackning all the active Members who will not comply with us, yet that does the Work but by halves, old Root and Branch again is the Word, and this must be our Drift and Aim: The Power of Parliaments must be retrench'd, and their Sitting quietly to do the Nation's Business must be prevented, otherwise it will be impossible to carry on our Designs, or secure what we have got; for tho' Finch, How, Harcourt, Shower, Musgrave, Seymour, and the rest of that Crew were kept out, you see other prying Fellows start up, and will never leave off looking into our Mysteries, and examining Accompts, to the Ruin of many honest Godly People. Your Contrivance of Legion was a noble Work, and tho' it was seal'd up in the House, you printed, and we dispers'd it successfully; the Style is suited to the People, which we would be glad to inflame, and there are not only Reflections on particular Persons, but you touch the main Point against the Authority of Parliaments. The Queries do the same. The Authors also of Jura Populi have done well, they overturn the Power of the Commons to commit, and thereby make them useless, and also show that they are not the Representatives of the People: These are right Strokes and must have a good Effect, for they will encourage many Persons to have the House of Commons in Contempt, or provoke the Commons to vindicate themselves, and thereby we may hope to see them embroil'd.

I hope you are satisfy'd P. K[in]g deserves the Commendation I gave him: He proves as useful by his Pen, as he does by his Tongue in the House. I beg you again to be cautious what is suffer'd to come abroad by our Friends, that their Zeal may not hurt us. This Paper of The true Patriot Vindicated, &c. has medled with Things in the last Reign, and touches upon Addresses, which puts People in mind of our Friends Addresses to King James, and of Regulations and Plots for him with our Friends the Scots, which you know will

be very prejud[ic]ial at present in these Parts; therefore again I intreat you that all Particulars may be avoided, which may put the Enemy in mind of any of our Friends former Actions; do all you can to expose Parliaments, to promote Quarrels between the two Houses, and Factions in the House of Commons. It would not be amiss if you should write something to stir up the Weavers, or, as we did last Winter, the Shoemakers, to make a Tumult; any thing, in short, that tends to Disorder is for our Benefit; but all Care must be taken that while we are weak our chief Friends may not be expos'd, for tho' our Party make a Noise, under the Rose, we are in a very low Condition, and may compare our selves to an Army made up all of Drums, Kettle-Drums, and Trumpets, without any real Strength to resort to, should some of our Friends have their Masks pull'd off we were ruin'd irrecoverably. If it should be known that my Neighbour, now in a great Post, kiss'd King James's Hand; that he, and others, ran away from his present Majesty, while those whom we now call Jacobites were raising Forces, and associating for him at Exeter. If our Friends who have Libell'd King W[illiam], and were in Plots against him till they got Places, should be nam'd, we were undone: If the Dissenters knew how much we have promoted Socinianism; if our Burroughs knew how many of our Party have receiv'd Pensions, and how we have all along oppos'd all Publick Acts that have been offer'd in the House of Commons, it would quite destroy our Interest in the Country: In short, there is nothing we can blame in others, of which we have not been ten times more guilty our selves; therefore I beg you would advise such of our Friends as intend to write, to let alone Particulars, and stick at Generals, 'tis the Method I myself intend to take: For having nothing else to do, and being full of that Melancholy to which my adult Complexion inclines me, I have Thoughts of Scribbling something for the Service of the Cause; and indeed the ill Breeding I have met with these three last Sessions, has made me almost resolve to speak no more: Why should a Man wast his Lungs when Gantlemen [sic] will not vouchsafe to hear him? Flesh and Blood cannot bear to see half the House go out to make Water whenever I rise up to begin my Speech; when I am in my sententious Vein uttering Maxims of State deeper than those of Machiavel, I am no more hearken'd to than Paul Joddrel when he reads a Mony-Bill. This uncivil Usage has made me determin to turn my Parts another way, for 'tis not fit the prodigious Tallents which I have from Nature should be burried in a Napkin. Know then I have taken up a Resolution to become an Author: Tho' no Body would hear me speak, perhaps I shall meet with some Body that will read my Works, and you shall see I will lay this new Ministry as flat

as a Flounder when once I begin to brandish my Pen. In this Paper-War I intend to mannage I purpose to behave my self as I am us'd to do in the House, where I let them Speech it for ten hours, then did I come at the Close with a parcel of such knotty and convincing Reasons, as made both Sides call out, The Question, The Question, The Question, before I had a quarter finish'd; so now I mean to wait and see all that the Adversary can write, and receive all their Fire, then at last will I discharge all my dreadful Tire of Cannon, and if Gantlemen [sic] will but be quiet, and have Patience to hear or read one another, you shall find I am able to answer whatever the Enemy has said, or can say hereafter: But I will publish nothing till it has been well consider'd at the Colledg by my Lord S[ome]rs and my Lord H[alifa]x, in conjunction with your Self, Jacob Tonson, and two or three more of the ablest Politicians of our Party; and for fear of Recriminations, and least I should rub old Sores, I will not meddle with private Persons, but will stick to the most important Point, which is that of undermining the Constitution and Authority of Parliaments: And that you may see how much I am in the right, and to show you what our Provocations have produc'd, inclos'd I send you a Paper of Queries, which they say were written at Exeter, in a drinking Club there, and are maliciously spread about this Town in Writing; I am afraid they contain several Truths which will puzzle us to answer.

Once more be cautious what is done; particular Men have many Friends, but the House of Commons in general may be Libell'd with Success. 'Tis reported here, That one of our Noble Friends grows cool in the Cause, and I have Letters hinting some such thing, at which we are all very much alarm'd; pray let me know the Truth by your next; God send there may not be a great many more Deserters. I am

Your ever affectionate Friend

Taunton-Dean,

and Servant,

Sept. 3. 1701.

E[dward] C[larke].

The EXETER Queries.

I. Whither that can be call'd a wise or an honest Ministry that has spent Fifty Millions, Granted away all the Crown-Lands, and brought the Kingdom into a Debt of Eighteen Millions?

II. Whither when the Seamen and Soldiers are all starving for want of Pay, and only the Ministers of State, Commissioners of the Revenues, and their Tools, are grown Rich, it may not be convenient to take from the One what

they have got by cheating the Publick, and pay to the Other what they have so dearly earn'd?

III. Whither it be not fit to inquire how some from very small Gentlemen, with no Estates, have obtain'd to be Lords with exorbitant ones, and whither our Deficiencies be not owing to their Superabundance?

IV. Whither Rogues of all sorts only having thriven by the last War, and honest Men suffer'd, it be not to be wonder'd that the one are impatient for, and the other desire to consider before they enter into another?

V. Whither the Nation has suffer'd more, or the late Ministers got more by the Management of the last War?

VI. Whither the Papists or Protestants have most Obligations to those who Negotiated the Peace, when the one have ever since been most barbarously persecuted abroad, and the other most notoriously favour'd at home?

VII. Whither they were more the King of France's Friends or the King of England's Enemies who advis'd the Treaty of Partition, by which the One gain'd nothing, and the Other made sure either of the Spanish Monarchy for his Grandson, or the best Part of it, in Europe, for himself?

VIII. Whither the House of Commons were more to blame who did not expel Sir J[ohn] T[hompso]n when he was convicted of drinking King James's Health, and daily taken down for reviling King William, or those who made him Com[missione]r of the Ad[miralt]y and Lord H[aversha]m, when he had no other Pretence to either?

IX. Whither if my Lord M[arlbor]ough had led the Army in King James's Defence against the P[rince] of O[range] my Lord S[ome]rs and Mr. M[ontag]ue could have defeated it? And whither he who, contrary to his own private Interest, perswaded a Standing Army to save the Liberties of England, be likeliest to preserve them, or they who have endeavour'd to keep one up only to support themselves?

X. Whither Sir Christopher Musgrave and others who lost great Places rather than comply with King James, or those who since have so plainly convinc'd us that they would stick at nothing either to obtain or keep 'em, are fittest to be entrusted?

XI. Whither or no a House of Commons, compos'd of Gentlemen of Quality and Estates, guided by their Duty to their Country only, are not to be preferr'd before a Band of Court-Slaves and Pensioners, under the absolute Conduct of such a Leader as was M[ontag]ue?

XII. Whither they were not more dangerous Enemies to Liberty who so often suspended the Habeas Corpus Bill, than they who committed a few Brib'd and Corrupted Electors?

XIII. Whither the Sol[icito]r Gen[eral] had not forgot both his Law and Honesty, when he made Cornish's Case a Precedent to cut off Sir John Fenwick? And whither that Attainder was obtain'd more out of Anger to Sir John, or Partiality to some he could have accus'd?

XIV. Whither B[isho]ps who have dy'd their white Sleeves [sic] in Blood, are not fitter to wear blue ones?

XV. Whither the Party who brought in the Bills against Sir Charles Duncomb and to Erect a New East India Company, did not give as high Instances of invading Property, as any we can find in the French or Turkish Government?

XVI. Whither it were not happy for K[nigh]t and B[arto]n that they had in the T[reasur]y a Partner in their false Endorsements? And whither the History of the Birth and Progress of the Exchequer-Bills were not fitter for a Pillory than a Patent?

XVII. Whither a Reformation carry'd on by publick Robbers, Adulterers and Drunkards, and supported by Murtherers; or Addresses promoted by Sodomites and Bardashes, ought to have most Reverence? Ask Sir R.T. Mr. N. Mr. H. &c.

XVIII. Whither the Dissenters are more pleas'd with those who procur'd their Bill of Tolleration, or more angry with those who promoted the Bill against the Papists? And whither the Papists and Dissenters, from the time of their happy Union under King James, have not ever since corresponded well together?

XIX. Whither the Guilty are not like to be safe, where, not contented with a Majority of the Jury of their own packing, they insist upon being Judges on their own Tryals, and have a Hand in Penning that Question by which they pretend to be acquitted?

XX. Whither, in the Case above-mention'd, more Impudence has been shown by the Persons accus'd, or more Corruption and Baseness by their Defenders?

XXI. Whither a Person convicted of scandalous Lying did not make a better Figure on his Knee crying for Mercy in the House of Commons, than standing up in defiance of Justice in the House of Lords?

XXII. Whither any Member that would accept of Grant or Place under the late Administration, if he would come up to their Terms, was ever disappointed?

XXIII. Whither Sir J[ohn] B[olle]s was not as fit to sit in the Chair of the Committee for the Succession-Bill, as the Lord Sp[ence]r to propose who should be next Successor?

XXIV. Whither J[oh]n F[re]k[e] is not rather to be thought a fly Conveyer of Bribes, and a good Proler after Grants of Crown-Lands, than an able Politician? And in which Capacity he has done his Patron the best Service?

XXV. Whither G[eor]ge D[]n is not in the right to solicit for my Lord

Or[for]d in the Court of Requests, when he himself has an Accompt of Sixteen thousand Pounds to make up with the House of Commons? And whither such a Sum extorted from the Seamen may not be as well apply'd to Greenwich Hospital, as the Fines of the French Smuglers?

XXVI. Whither the 161 who Voted against the Words Peace of Europe had not some Reason to suspect those Words, when they were made use of by the French King in all his Memorials, and when they were the pretended Inducement and Foundation of the Partition-Treaty?

XXVII. Whither it be for the Honour either of King or People, that so many Upstart Mushrooms, who never did or dar'd do any thing in their Country's Cause, should live in Splendor and Luxury, while so many brave Officers, Soldiers, and Seamen, perish for want of what the others so profusely lavish?

XXVIII. Whither they can be thought good Patriots, who having for so many Years plunder'd the Kingdom of its Treasure, would at last Rob it of its Liberties, by invading the Privileges, Honour, and Authority, of the House of Commons?

LONDON; Printed in the Year, 1701.

ii) A Letter from the Grecian Coffee-house, In Answer to The Taunton-Dean Letter. To which is added, A Paper of Queries Sent from Worcester (London, 1701). B.L. press-mark 515. 1. 8. (15).

[p. 3]

To his Worthy Friend,
E.C. Esq; at Taunton-Dean.

October 3. 1701.

Dear Friend

According to my Promise I shall now give you an Answer at large to your Letter of Sept. 3. As I told you in my last, I have communicated it to our Noble Friend to keep him in Heart, and flatter him that he Heads our Party, who, you know, are all Heads, when we please: I shall give you his Opinion, and my own Directions, for to so choice a Friend as you, I will only unbosom my Self, and tell you what I conceal even from him. The Truth is, you and I agree in Principles, as the World foolishly calls it; that is, in Interest and Temper, and I find your Dictates in your Letter to concur with my Thoughts as to the end; but I must tell you that you do not see so far as my Self in the means to attain it: You know, I love to go regularly to work, and therefore, First, I lay down the Positions we agree in, and then shall shew you how my Endeavours and Yours tend both to the same end. We agree then,

I. This Parliament is to be Dissolved,

II. That no Parliament must sit quietly, or be suffered to examine Miscarriages.

III. That the Nation be made weary of Parliaments. And I will add another of my own.

IV. That Moderation be avoided, let both Sides be exasperated.

All this will tend to Impunity to our Friends, and by keeping up Parties, preserve us in Power (whatever our Reputation be) which I find nothing else will do: And we must be for humbling the House of Commons, unless we could hope to see our Power flourish there once more, that they would make such a [p. 4] vote as was made Sabbati 4 Decemb. 1680.

"Ordered, That Mr. Speaker do issue out his Warrant to the Serjeant at Arms attending this House, to apprehend and bring in Custody, such Persons as shall be named to Mr. Speaker by Mr. Arnold, a Member of this House." Now how shall we dissolve this Parliament, but by exposing Persons? And how shall we expose Parliaments, but by dissolving them with Contempt? And to satisfy you more in this Point, the way of our Party is to go upon Persons,

and not Things. Those that herd with us, are naturally Selfish, Peevish, Narrow-Spirited, Ill-natured, Conceited of Themselves, Envious at any Abilities in others, loving to find Fault; in short, Hateful and Hating one another: Therefore having these Tools to work with, we must follow Nature: You must say and do Things spiteful, if it were but to please our Party: You must give them Somebody to worry, or else they will turn upon us, or worry one another. But this is not all, I have a deeper Reach in promoting Personal Reflections, it tends to keep up the Parties. The bulk of those Sots and Puts who call themselves The Gentlemen of England, are desirous to be quiet, and to unite, it is that we must prevent; therefore let us blacken one Party, and if they Reply and return true Reflections for the Lies we invent, then the other Party is exasperated, and so the variance kept up, and the Cullies and Brutes quarrel for our Profit and our Pleasure; and to tell you in your Ear, it is necessary to take this Method in respect to our Noble Friend: Some Years ago he was wavering, and if I had not got my self Master of so many of his Secrets, I know not where he would have been: but now I have him safe, and guide him as securely as you can Sir W[illiam] Y[oun]g.

I cannot go off this of proceeding upon particular Men, I could write a Volume upon it, and what great Things I have done with it. Did not I keep W[illiam] A[s]h close to us, when he was unsteady some Years ago, by letting him know I could discover his, and his Brother's Voting for King James in the Great Vote that was carry'd but by One in his Parliament; and that King James said, he was more beholding to the two A[s]h's than to his own Servants? It is true, since that we have another Ty upon him.

Let me tell you another piece of my Skill, which I never told you before, one of the best Places in England was given to Sir T[homas] L[ittleto]n, I have by Whispers and other ways contrived it so, L[or]d H[at]t[on] is angry he had not, and the other that has it is not satisfied, therefore let not your splenetick Temper make you despair: Let the Country-party be lazy, which is their Character; they do not so much as vindicate themselves in plain Points against our Pamphlets, and what the L[ord]s have printed; but we must bestir our selves, by good Conduct and Diligence we may turn every thing to Discord, out of which is to arise our Harmony. You may remember [p. 5] your self, we thought all past retrieve; we had affronted the last Parliament at the end of the first Session, so we spread it abroad it would be dissolved, and wrote a Book of [sic] two and a Ballad against the House.

Then the next Sessions we drove both Houses to the side of a Precipice upon the Irish Bill; and the Letter framed at the College did Service, and had done more had it not come so late out; in short, we made it impossible that Parliament should meet again.

Then we filled the World with Noise there should be Addresses to restore our Noble Friend to his Place; and when, upon his remove, no Body else was turn'd out, and that the Word was, No Body should be put in, or out, but according to their Fitness or Unfitness, and Things stood still as they were, I saw these Phlegmatick Rascals, by their damn'd Moderation, would undo us and disband our Party; and therefore to prevent it, when they would not begin with our Friends, tho' they had the Majority, nor so much as call for Kidd's Business, or meddle with Personal Matters, but pursue the publick Affairs, and search into Corruption, we found it necessary, tho' the lesser Party, to fall upon them, to accuse those that had not been so many Weeks in the Ministry, as Ours had Years: And thus we raised a Mist to conceal our Friends, and annoy our Enemies.

Then we let loose Legion, and stirr'd up the Kentish Madmen, whose Confidence and Frenzy have been serviceable: I was fain to set a grave Fellow upon one of them, who is the only one of Estate and Sense; he was leaving them, but I got my Friend to flatter him into Perseverance. The graving their Heads, and the Feast, hath pleas'd those Fools; and they are as well satisfied with being printed in the News-paper, that the Grand-Jury thank'd them, as if it had been true, when there was nothing like it. The History of the Kentish Petition is an admirable Book, it is very sawcy, full of Lies and Romantick Stories, which will serve to intoxicate our own Party, and exasperate the Parliament: And this of Libels that are publish'd, furnishes me with another Argument for the necessity of aspersing all of the Country-party, till we can provoke some of their Leaders to appear in this Paper-War: None of their Chiefs yet come out, which makes me fear they intend to keep Things in quiet; but we must cry out, No Moderation, No Moderation. I thought Jura Populi's false Quotations would draw some of them to Answer; but they use that and other of our Writings with as much Contempt as they do you, or the Sol[icito]r G[enera]l, when you speak in the House. This Sullenness of the Country-party is but a bad Sign; it shews they think themselves satisfied with the Strength of their Cabal, and their Interest with the People, but I hope in God we shall Ly and Rail them out of that.

Some Friends have been with me to complain of my L[or]d S[omer]s's Usage of them in his Book, Intituled, A full Account of the Proceedings in

Relation to Captain Kidd, in two Letters. I gave them good Words, but under the Rose, they deserved to be treated as Fools, Cowards, Scoundrels, and poor-spirited Fellows. One told me at Richard's, That they said the Book was worse than hanging Kidd in Chains, for it kept him stinking under their Noses, when his L[orshi]p ought to wish every Body should forget him.

[p. 6] Another laid a Dish of Coffee with me, (which is my highest Wager) that the Book was answered; and to prove it, called the Hawker for Kidd's Tryal, and read the last Words, viz.

[Kidd] "My Lord, it is a very hard Sentence, for my part I am the Innocentest Person of them all." I am sorry they were left in. And also page the 9th, where the King's Evidence saith, "Kidd told him he had good Friends in England would bring him off for killing the Gunner; and made me pay my Wager. But however, upon the whole, it will be all for the better, for his L[ordshi]p hath raised and published so many Scandalous Stories of particular Men, that it cannot but grumble in their Gizards, and make them ill-humour'd, tho' they pretend to scorn and condemn them.

But a Volume would not contain all my great Deeds, and deep Contrivances, I stick to the Motto on my Box, Acheronta Movebo; tho' my Friends call me positive John, I will shew the World that Lilbourn, Massaniello, and other great Men that have attempted to make Disturbances, are not to be compared to me, they wanted my Art, and my Address; I have raised the Storms, managed Great Men, made my self Master of their Spirits, and yet kept my self out of Danger; whereas Lilbourn and Wildman for presenting the Parliament a bold, daring Petition, intituled, "The earnest Petition of many trueborn People of this Nation" were imprisoned seven Months for High Treason, and yet it was not half so bad as the Kentish, and they intended to have got a hundred thousand Hands to it; but for keeping Clubs, and contributing Money to carry it on, they were voted Traitors, and ordered to be try'd for their Lives. And had Massaniello practised my Rule, he had not so soon miscarried, he should have divided the Spoil amongst his Followers, and not burnt it; but I have created Dependencies by disposing of Livings, Places, and Pensions, and thereby kept both Giving and Taking in my Power; thus I have out done them and kept my self safe. You must take me for your Example, the common Principles of Old Whigs is but for a shew, and to draw others in to us, we must turn our selves to every thing, and be any thing, and the more wee see our Party decline, we must talk the louder; and speak valiant Words; therefore take my Advice, Cry down Moderation, except before some few People, where it will do us hurt; Heat and Passion is the distinguishing Character

of our Party; If we would not be moderate when we were in Power, can we ever expect to recover Power by Moderation? Speak boldly, and against Persons, 'tis no matter whether it be true so it be but bitter, and may serve to blacken, or exasperate our Enemies; this still tends to keep up the distinction of our Party, and, depend upon it, a malicious Lye is more heeded, and propagated, than any true Vindication.

Tho' there was no such Speech made by my Lord Rochester in Poland, yet still aver it, tho' Dr. South in a Letter, lately written to his Bookseller, has positively denied the whole Matter. But to contradict you, how few are there that will give themselves the trouble to call upon Mr. Bennet at the Half-Moon in Paul's Church Yard? You are quite in the wrong to [p. 7] think that we have done ill to make personal Reflections: Pray was it not the Course by which we got others out, and our selves in, about ten Years ago? I am told, you think we did indiscreetly to fall upon the M[arquess] of N[orman]by, only because his Wit and Skill in the House, gave him so great an Advantage over some of our Friends. I know as well as you that the late Arch-bishop of Canterbury, Dr. Tillotson, did commend him for his Behaviour in the High Commission Court, declaring that the Opposition he constantly gave to what was then a doing, was at that time a greater Service to the Church, than if at first he had declined Acting there. I know he was not in the Commission when the Bishop of London was suspended, and that to his utmost he opposed the Proceedings against Magdalen College, and was outvoted. But are not all these Particulars almost forgotten now, though these Considerations made us at first so fond of him, even at the Revolution, when we ran down furiously all the rest of King James's Court; and have not the malicious Turns we give to Things a fresh Odour in the Nostrils of the People? Besides we can never forgive the Marquis: He was the sole Means of bringing on in the House of L[ord]s, the Inquiries into the Partition Treaty, which has open'd an ugly Scene, and brought scurvy Reflections upon our Noble Friend, and indeed upon all our Party. You will grow bolder by often telling these sort of Stories, and will find belief with your self and the hearers; and since you desire my Instructions, find out the Passions and Inclinations of People; this is one of my Arts, and accordingly I have made it succeed, and thereby keep some true to us, that else would have gone off.

Our Noble Friend L[or]d S[omers] I made Bargains for him in a dark way, and was useful in squeezing out more Money than was at first thought upon; I also know him revengeful, and that he could not bear any one that he thought might reproach his Original, or any of his former Actions; upon that,

I got Stories carried to him, that such a Gentleman said, he had saved his L[ordshi]p's Father from the Pillory; that another said, he sent a Commission down to try Rioters of Worcester, only to catch some that had writ a Ballad of his L[ordshi]p's making too bold with some Books at Oxford, and keeping Bl[oun]t in Jayle, while he lay with his Wife; That another said, the Commons had a good Precedent of Commitment, and then read this Vote.

"Martis 15. Aprilis, 1679.

A Complaint.....by one Adam Powel Under-Sheriff of the City of Worcester, in arresting Robert Hill, a Menial Servant of the said Sir Scroop How, at the Suit of one John Somers an Attorney, contrary to the Rights and Priviledges of Parliament."

"Ordered,

That the said Adam Powel, and John Somers be sent for in Custody of the Serjeant at Arms, attending this House, to Answer their Breach of Priviledge, &c.

That others said, he had gutted P[owy]s House, and took away the very Pins out of the Windows, tho' the K[ing] paid for fitting it up.

[p. 8] Then I told him it would be impossible to keep our own Party from parting of several Things, if he was not zealously with them; they could discover his Treaty with Ro: Brent in King James's time, and the Letter wrote to recommend him to the intended Parliament, with more of that kind; This hath kept him exactly close to us, that he cannot start but at the Peril of having his Life come out in Print; For all which Reasons he has been liberal of his Guineas and Venison in the Country, to carry on the Cause.

I am tormented with Objections from some of our lukewarm Friends, and think-skull'd Fellows, who were of former Parliaments, they are still vexing me with these Questions; How shall we be able to justify what we did formerly, if what is written by our Party must go for Doctrin? Did we not punish Sheridon, Dr. Nalson, Thompson, and Forty others in King Charles's time, for Speaking or Writing against Parliaments? Were not Baldwin and Dyer, and others, taken in Custody about the New Observator, and meddling with Parliament Affairs in 1691? Was there not a Proclamation with 500l. Reward, for but printing our Friend's Names about the Mony? Did we not Mar. 7. 1697. condemn Duncomb's Case, and order it to be burnt by the Hangman? And March the 19th, 1697. we rejected a Petition of the Lord Colepeper Baron of Thoreswey; and on Mar. 26. 1698. rejected several Petitions, among others, one from the Inhabitants of Folkstowne in the County of Kent. And

when Duncomb's Bill has pass'd the Commons, and the Lords had thrown it out, and discharged him; did not we, Mar. 1697. make high Votes upon it, and order Precedents to be searched? And on Mar. 25. 1697.

"Resolved,

That no Person committed by this House, can, during the same Sessions, be discharged by any other Authority whatsoever.

Charles Duncomb, Esq; having been committed by Order of this House, and afterwards discharged by the Order of the House of Lords, without the Consent of this House,

Resolved,

That the said Charles Duncomb be taken into the Custody of the Serjeant at Arms attending this House.

And Mar. 31. 1698. he is remanded to the Tower."

I repeat these Objections to you, that you may be prepared to give an Answer; and that which must satisfy our Friends, is, Then was Then, and Now is Now. Then we had the Power and exercised it on our Enemies, now we have lost the Power, let us Rail at those that would turn it upon us: When a House of Commons is not for Me and my Friends, I will and must be against them: This is a Rule will carry you through many Difficulties.

Thus you see what Diligence and Art is necessary; and if you can but keep People hot and warm, our Business will be done.

[p. 9] What you hint at about Dissenters, is well considered, and this is the best way to keep our Soldiers to their Colours; for since Money is not so flush as formerly, tho' Thanks to our Noble Friends, Necessity has made them liberal; yet this way must be taken, you must frighten all that have Accounts to pass: Those that have pillaged the Publick, those that are in Offices, and know they deserve them not, or understand them not, will fear lest others should think so too. Frighten the Dissenters that their Liberty of Conscience shall be lost; To others you may whisper, they shall again buy good Pennyworths of Church-Lands; and to encourage you, I'll tell you the success I had in a particular Instance; You know that W[illiam] P[alme]s had the Tellers place given his Son for pretending to be cunning, and teaching the Yorkshire Men to Vote, whom he carry'd and shew'd to my L[or]d P[ortlan]d as his Squadron, but made the Gentlemen believe, they made that Lord only a civil Visit. I told him roundly, it was expected he should now bestir himself; I shewed him that P[arkhur]st's Case had been his own formerly. I brought him to the Book, and shewed him the Votes, Martis 2 Octob. 1666,

"Ordered,

That William Palmes, Receiver-General for the County of Rutland, Esq; be sent for in Custody of the Serjeant at Arms, or his Deputy, for his Misdemeanour and Abuse in detaining the Monies due to the indigent, loyal Officers.

Sabbati 22 Dec. 1666. Mr. Palmes is discharged, paying his Fees."

This hath done good you may see by the Yorkshire Address, though there was one had like to have done hurt, by unseasonably moving, the King might be desired to levy Mony himself, that is not ripe yet: But, in short, you will find his Son-in-Law, and the rest of them, will come up as warm as ever; so that you shall hear them Rave again in the House.

I cannot but once more mention the Necessity of decrying Moderation, and making every Body hot; a moderate Modern Whig is a Contradiction; besides, twenty unforeseen Advantages arise from it. Did not L[or]d H[aversha]m's hot Expressions break up the Conference, which else would at last have ended in a Committee of both Houses, and an Understanding between the Lord [sic] and Commons; Which must have brought on a fair Hearing, and God knows what would have been the Consequence, to have let the Lords judge upon the Partition-Treaty, which they had already condemned. And Lord Bellomont's Articles and Letters would have shew'd the Design of Kidd was to get 100000l. and a new Grant was desired to cheat Sir E. Harrison.

Thus you see the great Benefit of stirring up Passions; and our Noble Friend himself was fine and warm the last Day in the House of Lords, when he began the Cry, Withdraw, Withdraw, Clear the House, Clear Clear the House, after his Majesty was come in with his Robes and Crown; this was a noble undaunted Stroke, after hussing [sic] the Commons: And if one that must not now be named will not come into us [Sunderland], we must return to our old way of speaking against him. [p. 10]

But it is time to conclude; I will only add this one Point of Advice, Endeavour all you can to keep up Parties and Distinctions; it is no matter how little Light our Friends have, so they, like Sampson's Foxes, draw two ways, and have Fire at their Tails: The Light of Understanding doth not belong to our Party - Tools [sic, misread for 'fools' in the MS], therefore besure [sic] they carry the Firebrand of Discention.

I hope the Jacobites will not swear upon their King's Death, however think of an Abjuration, or some new Oath, such an one as some of the other Side will not take (as was once said in the House); pray turn your Mind to contrive one strait enough, you need not fear our Friends, for we that

Believe nothing, will Swear any thing: And do not take up a Resolution against Speaking, for tho' the Parliament should continue unmannerly to you, and refuse to hear you, yet that may be of use upon several Occasions to make the House thin when the Question is going to be put.

Thus have I open'd to you, my dearest Friend, my Mind; and to requite you for your Exeter Queries, I send you a Paper, which I just now receiv'd by the Post without a Name, but I guess they are made at Worcester.

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate Friend and Servant,

J[ohn] F[reke].

[p. 11]

The Worcester Queries.

I Whether that Lye of Louis d'Ors being given to Members, had ever been invented, if some Persons had not been afraid this Parliament would examine into Accounts, and discover the Pensions given in former Salary-Parliaments?

II Whether a Reward of 1000*l*. can procure any probable Proof of any one Louis d'Ors being given, unless for the Partition-Treaty?

III Who are the most likely to have taken French Mony, they who advised the Partition-Treaty so much to the Advantage of France, or the M[arquess] of N[orman]by who first arraigned and expos'd it to the Censure of both Houses of Parliament?

IV Whether the Devil did not owe them a Shame, who were drawn in by the said Marquis to make up a Majority to condemn a Treaty, of which themselves were found out afterwards to be the principal Advisers?

V Whether, by quoting the Prophet's giving leave to bow down in the House of Rimmon, the Writer intended to defend the M[arquess] of N[orman]by, or to slight Holy Scripture, since it certainly implies one or t'other?

VI Whether the Price of Louis d'Ors was not lowered by Order in England about the time the first Partition-Treaty was in agitation?

VII Whether the Outcry against the Parliaments prudent Steps in order to War, was not stirr'd up to save a Lord or two from Impeachments?

VIII Whether the Kentish Petition had ever been heard of, if the Faction could have stirr'd up (as they endeavoured) the Weavers, or Shooe-Makers [sic], or any other Mob to insult the House of Commons? [p. 13 (for 12)]

IX Whether the Kentish Libellers ought not to have been sent to Moor-fields instead of the Gate-house?

X Whether those Lords and Commoners, who resigned up their Privilege for the good of the People, have not done an Act worthy of the Old Greeks and

Romans?

XI Whether to all impartial Men it be not a shrewd Sign of Justice in the late Prosecutions, that they were carried on by the very same Members, of both Houses, who promoted that Worthy Bill, by which they divested themselves of their own Priviledges?

XII Whether the great Lawyer ought not to ask Pardon of some Lords, for drawing them into so Scandalous a Project as that of Kidd's?

XIII Whether his Lordship, in his Vindication of Lord Bellomont, p. 24. where he saith, The Parties concern'd (to recover their Goods) had no occasion to go to the Chancery, &c. which had no Jurisdiction in the Case; has not given an instance of his Sincerity in omitting the Stat. 27. H. 8. C. 4. which says expressly, "The Lord Chancellor shall nominate the Persons who are to determine, &c. in the Case of Piracy?"

XIV Whether it was intended the honest Merchant should have his Goods, the Grantees, and all Officers ordered to be assisting to them? And in the next Edition, his Lordship is desired to shew this is not against Law.

XV Whether a Ship of 30 Guns, and 70 or 80 Men, was likely to take and subdue four strong Pirates, who had got One hundred thousand Pounds?

XVI How the Sol[icitor] G[enera]l is said to have outdone himself who made the same Speech, word for word, in two Parliaments; unless the Author of the Vindication of the Earl of Bellamont [sic], furnished him with his Precedents, tho' nothing to the purpose?

XVII Whether when the Receiver of Worcester-shire, let the King's Money be taken from him at Gerard's Cross, if any one had robb'd the High-way-men, and taken the Mony from them, the Grant of it would have been good, and the Publick must have lost it?

XVIII Who procured that Money to be forgiven to the Receiver?

XIX Whether Kidd had ever been hang'd, if Bolton and other Pyrates had been on his Jury? Or if the L[or]d O[rfor]d would not have been a good Judge upon the L[or]d S[omer]s for the same Crime?

XX Whether it cost the Government more to take Bolton in the Indies, or it cost Bolton more to escape here by Whitaker's means, and those who imployed him?

[p. 13] XXI Whether the Letter to L[or]d S[omer]s and others, to get a new Grant of what Kidd had taken Pyratically, to above 20000*l*. value, and more hoped for, was not a plain Discovery that Rapine, and not suppressing of Pyrates, was designed? And if Sir E. Harrison had been left out of that Grant, as was intended, it had not been as honest a Gripe to Sir Edmund, as

his Presbyterian Gripe was to the Earl? And Query, Whether it is not a sad thing, when Thieves cannot be true to one another?

XXII Whether a Man from 2 or 300l. a Year Practice, and Estate, and no Gentleman, might not be contented with 6000l. a year, and a Title, without setting the Nation in a Flame?¹

XXIII Whether they, who, when they have opportunity, speak so much ill of their own Friends, ought to be believed when they print Lies of those they hate?

XXIV The Society for Reformation are desired to tell whether Perjury, Ingratitude, Adultery, Lying and Slandering, be against any of the Ten Commandments?

XXV Whether the late King James's closetting Members, of the Faction which is now stirring up Grand Juries, who are but such as the Under-Sheriffs name, to closet his Majesty for a new Parliament, be most warrantable?

XXVI Whether he that headed a Rebellion at the Temple against his Superiors, would stick at doing the like in the Kingdom for his own Advantage?

XXVII Whether the Faction of Modern Whigs would blush if a Catalogue of the Lies they have printed, were shewed to them?

XXVIII Whether the L[or]d H[aversham] who accused the Commons of Partiality in not impeaching all the Criminals, is not guilty of the same when he names some who passed Grants, and leaves out the rest who did the same thing?

XXIX Whether any one thing that the Modern Whigs complain of to be done by this Parliament, has not been acted by themselves in a much higher degree, when they had Power?

XXX Whether the Author who prints a List of those taken in Custody, ought not to have named their Crimes? And whether the Members of the Colleges of Newgate may not as justly complain of the Hardship they undergo, and print the Sessions-Kalendar for their Justification?

[p. 14] XXXI Whether it is possible for any House of Commons to be of Service to the Nation, upon the Notions the Modern Whigs have printed? And whether a Court of Pipe-powder is not allowed more Authority, than these Criminal Scriblers do the Commons? And it is desired they would print a Scheme of the Government they would have upon those Principles, which plainly overthrow all Government by Parliaments.

XXXII Whether the same Men that publish and invent these Lies and Reproaches of their innocent Fellow-Subjects, have not blasphemed his Sacred Majesty to

1. A draft of this query in Harley's hand is to be found in B.L. Loan 29/12/3.

a higher degree, when he did not please their Humour?

XXXIII If the Proverb be true, Save a Thief from the Gallows, he will hang you if he can; by the same Rule, Save a Man's Father from the Pillory, and the Son will endeavour to Ruin You and your Family: Are not both these equally grateful?¹

FINIS

1. The final Worcester Query was included by Harley in his letter of 6 October 1701 to Davenant in which he sent the draft of the Letter from the Grecian Coffee-house. See B.L. Loan 29/7/1 and above, pp. 103-104.

Appendix B

Documents relating to the investigation into the authorship of The Memorial of the Church of England (1705):-

i) N.U.L. Portland MSS, Pw2 Hy 572: 'Examination of David Edwards of the Parish of S^t. Dunstan in the West, Printer'.

This Examinant saith that some time about the middle of June last a Gentlewoman in a Vizard Mask came to this Examinant's House and brought a Copy to be printed as he was told by his Wife when he came home. That about the 18th of June or within two or three days of the same, the same Gentlewoman came again, and found this Examinant at home, and She produced the Copy which he now produces [exhibit no. 3], and told him it was recommended to him and approved by both the Universities, and it was for the Advantage of the Church; But She continuing masked he scrupled the doing of it, and told her he had had a great deal of trouble already, and desired her to carry it to M^r Sawbridge, but She declined that saying he had been thought of for it, but they did not approve of him. He then desired Sawbridge might be joyned with him in Printing it, but she said that must not be; he must do it by himself; and after some persuasions he undertook to print it, she assuring him that there was no harm in it, but that it would be the making of him, and She pressed him to have it printed of in a fortnight, and desired his Note promising the same, for the satisfaction of the Gentleman she brought the Copy from, which accordingly he gave her; and she agreed with him to have Two hundred and fifty books for the Copy. That about a fortnight after the said Gentlewoman came to this Examinant again to demand the books, but they were not stitched: She was then out of order, and he gave her some Brandy to drink, but she would not let him see her Face, but told him she was sorry she could not let him see her Face, but he should see her hereafter in Public to his advantage: And at her going away she seemed frightened, and said to this Examinant, For Gods sake M^r Edwards break all. She had another Woman with her. The night following the said Gentlewoman came again for the Books, but they were not yet ready. This Examinant then asked her; Why she was in so great a fright the night before; She said, I hope You will prove honourable to me, for I see a man standing at the Swan Door, which I am afraid is to Dog me. He told her she need not suspect that; but he wished he had not meddled with the book, for he had undergone a great deal of trouble about these private matters, and when any thing of Publick Concern was to be done, it

was carried to other people. She said he had now other sort of people to deal with, and there was no doubt but they would stand by him, and this would be the making of him. He desired her to stay half an hour, and she should have the Books, but she seemed under Concern; and said they should send for them, for she would come no more; and accordingly the next day a Porter came to him with a Letter [exhibit no. 4] from the Mitre Tavern, which Letter he now produces, and takes it to be written in M^r Sheere's hand [see M^r Shiers Examⁿ No. 12], from the likeness of one had has had from him since, and which is now in Mr Thomas Mackworth's hands, and further that it is like the hand that the Copy of Pro Aris et Focis was written in [see Wise his Depos. No. 11], and of which he saw M^r Strahan a Bookseller near the Royal Exchange carry the Proof Sheet to S^r Humphry Mackworth's House upon Snow hill.

This Examinant further saith that with the said Letter the Porter brought an Indented Paper [exhibit no. 5]; which was the token agreed on with the said Gentlewoman for delivering two hundred and fifty Books: But the bag the Porter brought holding but two hundred, the other fifty were left behind. And the Examinant writ an answer to the said Letter, that he apprehended trouble, and hoped they would take care to indemnify him. That afterwards there came two Porters one after the other for the said fifty Books, but this Examinant not being at home, the said fifty Books were afterwards delivered to Povey a Porter; that plies at Lincolns Inn, who accordingly carried them away. Immediately after the Publication of the said Books, this Examinant's Wife and three of his Servants were taken into custody for publishing the same, and he himself was forced to abscond. That when his Wife was discharged out of Custody, this Examinant sent her to S^r Humphrey Mackworth to desire his care of him, and that he might not be ruined, but his Wife not finding S^r Humphrey Mackworth, this Examinant writ a Letter to the same purpose to him, which M^r Thomas Mackworth undertook to send to S^r Humphrey Mackworth. And in answer to the said Letter, this Examinant received a Letter from M^r Sheeres S^r Humphrey Mackworth's Servant [exhibit no. 6], saying his Master knew nothing of the matter, and the said Letter is now in M^r Thomas Mackworth an Attorney's hands. After this the Examinant sent another Letter to S^r Humphrey Mackworth by one M^r Walker, who being refused seeing S^r Humphrey, prevailed upon M^r Sheeres to carry the Letter up to S^r Humphrey; And M^r Sheeres [M^r Shiers Examⁿ No. 12] brought him down an Answer that S^r Humphrey knew nothing of the matter; and Sheeres asked him if he knew what was in the Letter, Walker replied, Yes,

and you will know e're long. This M^r Walker told this Examinant, when he returned from S^r Humphrey Mackworth's. This Examinant further says, that the day after the said Books were published, he met with M^r Strahan a Bookseller, who lives near the Royal Exchange [see M^r Strahan's Examⁿ No. 13], and as they were going together by Water, Strahan pulled out one of the Printed Memorials, that was just published, and told this Examinant that it was his, the Examinant's, doing, and said he knew the Author, and asked him, if he knew the Author; this Examinant said he took it to be S^r Humphrey Mackworth, Strahan said there were more People concerned in it, than S^r Humphrey, and asked this Examinant if he would let him in as a Partner. [D. Edwards's Examination No. 1]

ii) B.L. Loan 29/193, f. 22: 'Names of Persons and Messengers to seize them, 15-16 Jan[uary 1706]', in Harley's hand.

Davis }
 Povey } Porters
 Fox }

Gilbert A Porter in Rain Alley at Sign of y^e Gentleman & Porter.

The Gentlewoman }
 The Woman } — with M^r Tho Mackworths House.

George Strahan Bookseller

Sheeres }
 Powell } S^r H. Mackworths servants.
 Strahan }

M^r Thomas Mackworth

Mem^{dum} To examine M^{rs} Edwards as to what Strahan said to her about the Copy. To Examine M^r Edwards as to his refusing to Print Pro Aris & Focis till?

Davis the Porter	—	Ravell
Povey the Porter	—	Thornburgh
Fox the Porter	—	Brown
Gilbert the Porter	—	Dagley.
The Woman at M ^r Mackworths		{ Wilson & Hayward
		{ Wilcox, Smith, Thornburgh
Strahan Bookseller	—	Wilson & Hayward
Mr Aerskine Walker		The Drawer Thomas at the Devil
		The Drawer Thomas at the Mytre

iii) B.L. Loan 29/5/6: the examinations of George Strahan and William Shiers, 'Saturday Jan^{ry}. 19. 170⁵₆'. (In a clerk's hand.)

Mr Edwards called in.

Mr S. Harley When Strahan was upon the Water, Who took out the Book he or you!

Mr Edw^{ds} Strahan.

Mr S. Harley Recollect yo^r self.

Mr Edw^{ds} I am positive, very positive on that.

Mr Edw^{ds} went out.

Mr Strahan called in.

Mr Secretary Harley.

Mr Strahan, You have had a great deal of time, You have been treated with great indulgence; I must own that you have not been candid. Severall Circumstances are certainly true that y^u have denyed; there is proof in two or three particulars, and in others, there are Circumstances.

Strahan. Whatever Circumstances ——— I cannot tell what false Witnesses may say.

Mr Sec. Harley. You must not use them so, Do not mistake your selves; None shall protect you.

Mr Sec. Hedges. You have taken great liberty to charge other persons with saying false things, when we know them to the contrary.

Mr S. Harley. Where did you carry the [^{proof}~~Copy~~-of] [sic] Pro Aris & Focis?

Strahan. I carried it to the widdow's Coffeehouse at the corner of Bloomsbury, to Mr Downs, that is now abroad wth Mr Thynn.

Mr Sec. Harley. See how y^u prevaricate in this thing, Mr Downs is gone away. Where did y^u carry the Copy? We do not ask y^u now about the proof sheet?

Strahan. I flung it by in the Shop as wast paper.

Mr S. Harley. The Boy swears it to be the same hand wth the Letter.

Strahan. If that is y^e hand I do not know it. I cannot think it is y^e hand.

Mr S. Harley. When did y^u last see y^e Copy of y^e Aris & Focis.

Mr S. Hedges. Is he upon Oath?

Mr S. Harley. He is charged; he is charged to have said he knew the Author of the Memorial.

Strahan. I solemnly declare, I do not know the Author.

Mr S. Hedges. What did y^u say the other day, of w^t passed between Edwards and You upon the Water?

Strahan. I said, that he told me I knew the Author.

- M^r S. Hedges. You had a Book then, who had y^u it from?
 Strahan. From him.
- M^r S. Harley. You owned here you had the Book behind the Counter.
 Strahan. I think in the Boat: I had fifty or more of them about that time.
- M^r Secr Harley. Was it before you were upon the Water?
 Strahan. I cannot tell. Much about that time.
- M^r S. Harley. It is plain you desired to be let in partner.
 Strahan. I did so, when he shewed me the Book and desired me to promote it.
- M^r Sec Harley. Recollect yourself.
 Strahan. I never said, I knew the Author, but have had the publishing of it. He sent me some and I disposed of them.
- M^r S Hedges. Did not y^u enter them in yo^r Book?
 Strahan. I never kept a Book in my life.
- M^r S. Hedges. How then do y^u keep an acco^t of them?
 Strahan. They write the number upon the back of y^e Paper.
- M^r Sec Hedges. Do you never keep a Note upon such an occasion?
 Strahan. No.
- M^r S. Hedges. How do y^u know what to pay for?
 Strahan. I have seen him since; He told me himself.
- M^r S Hedges. Have not you a private Note?
 Strahan. No; I never kept a private Note in my life.
- M^r S. Hedges. You have declared, that there are severall persons concerned.
 M^r S Harley. There are other particulars. You told the woman you would help her to twenty pounds.
- Strahan. I utterly deny it, if I were to dy next minute.
- M^r S. Harley. This confirms the other, that y^u knew the Author. What shd she get by it. He desired to be tender of you.
 Strahan. He knows he owes me money.
- M^r S Harley. When such men as y^u meddle wth the Governm^t they must lay hold of y^u.
 Strahan. Most justly.
- The last part of M^r Edwards's Examination read.
- Strahan. I do solemnly declare it false; He never named S^r Humphry Mackworth.
- M^r S. Hedges. Did y^u produce the Book in the Boat?
 Strahan. I do not remember positively. If I did, it is more then I know. If I did then I had got y^e Copy before.

- M^r S. Hedges. Now y^u take upon y^u to deny things, contrary to what y^u said last time.
- Strahan. I do verily believe I cannot remember as to y^e Circumstances.
- M^r S. Harley. Can it be imagined he sh^d [blank] the Book when he w^d not let y^u come in partner.
- M^r S Hedges. Did he ask y^u if y^u knew the Author?
- Strahan. He asked me if I knew the Author, I said, No.
- M^r S Harley. Where did y^u carry the proof sheet of [blank].
- Strahan. I told yo^r hono^r just now; to no body else. I believe I might to others, several friends that I consult with when I publish anything. I will be hard I should bring them upon the Stage. The person I carried it to is out of town. I sh^d name him if I had his leave. There is none in town that I carried it to; the person that corrected it is in the Country.
- M^r S. Harley. He swears he saw y^u going into the Mine Office.
- Strahan. I own he said so.
- M^r S. Harley. You heard what the Boy said to Shiere's hand. Did Shieres ever see y^e Aris et focis or the Proof sheet.
- Strahan. Not to the best of my knowledge.
- M^r S. Harley. You desired to see this Copy to compare it wth that of Aris & focis.
- Strahan. I never desired to compare it. I would have told them if it was the same hand. It was a remarkable hand.
- M^r S. Harley. When did you see M^r Sacheveral.
- Strahan. Never but once in my life, when I was at Oxford.
- M^r S. Harley. Never in town? Recollect yor self.
- Strahan. Never before or since, I am positive. I will take my oath upon it. It was the begining of October or the end of September, and never but then.
- M^r S. Hedges. How came you to see him then?
- Strahan. I had a Book for him. Ovid's Works.
- M^r S. Hedges. How came you to carry a Book for a stranger?
- Strahan. His pupil M^r Mackworth wrote to me for it, & having business there, I carried it to him.
- M^r S. Harley. What is y^e Porter's name that y^u use to S^r Humphry Mackworth.
- Strahan. I do not know.
- M^r S. Harley. Or to M^r Shiere's or M^r Powell.
- Strahan. Sometimes there [sic] own men; no particular porter, to y^e best of my memory.

- M^r S. Harley. Does a Brother of yo^{rs} live wth S^r Humphry Mackworth?
 Strahan. Formerly there was; an elder Brother lately come from Italy, where he had been wth M^r Scudamore L^d Scudamore's Brother. He lives now wth my Mother in law near Leicester fields.
- M^r S. Harley. When did he come into England?
 Strahan. Last September or October.
- M^r S. Harley. What is his name.
 Strahan. William.
- M^r S. Harley. Have y^u any more Brothers.
 Strahan. Yes. There is one James, in the Excise, and another Patrick a Cabinet maker.
- M^r S. Harley. The elder Brother is William
 Strahan. Yes.
- M^r Edwards called in.
- M^r S. Harley. M^r Edwards. Something y^u did say of a Discourse between M^r Strahan & you about this Copy.
 Edwards. When I was at the Bear Tavern wth him I told him I had a Letter that was the same hand wth the Copy of Pro Aris & focis. Bring the Letter sayd M^r Strahan, We will compare them. I have the copy by me.
- M^r S. Harley. What passed about the Copy of the Memorial, when he came to y^r wife to desire to see it, after y^u were in trouble.
- M^r Edwards. I said no more as to the Letter. I never talked any thing ab^t the Copy of the Memorial before we were at the Bear, he was at our House a month before. he had been wth S^r Humphry Mackworth or wth the other persons. S^r Humphry was gone out of town.
- Strahan. What was the occasion of my going to your house.
 Edwards. I never talkt to y^u of it, to say that y^u knew y^e Author. I knew y^e hand was not the same.
- M^r S. Hedges. How came y^u to see for the Copy? Was it curiosity?
 Strahan. He told me of it; he believed I knew the hand. I told him positively, If I can assist you, I will tell you. I said the same as to the Letter at y^e Bear; but to say; But to say [sic], I had the Copy by me, the Lord knows less. I have not seen it these three or four months, if I was to receive a million of money.
- M^r S. Hedges. May be you have burnt it.
 Strahan. I will take my oath, I never did.

- M^r S. Harley. You own the correcting it.
- Strahan. I did leave I did leave [sic] out some dangerous things.
- M^r S. Harley. The Author corrected it six times.
- Strahan. Indeed I was cautious. I did suspect it because it came by the penny post. (The Deposition read). I do not remember whether M^r Downs was at the Coffeehouse, when I carried him the proof.
- M^r S. Harley. Why did you name him?
- Strahan. Because I was there to look for him. he used that Coffeehouse when in Town.
- Mrs Edwards called in.
- M^r S. Harley. Pray M^{rs} Edw^{ds} give an acco^t of w^t passed between y^u and M^r Strahan.
- M^{rs} Edwards. He askt me, Who I thought was the Author. I told him I believed S^r Humphry Mackworth. Then you have a man says he will take no care of y^u nor yo^r husband. Give me the Copy to compare, but my husband charged me not to let him have it lest they sh^d keep it from me. When he came to our house I told him, it was lockt up in my husband's Desk. He sayd then he had the Copy of Aris & focis. He said he was going to S^r Humphry Mackworth and says he, if y^u will give it me, I will bring y^u 20 Guineys, if it be y^e same hand. Three weeks after I came out of custody he sent for me. I went to his Shop, hoping it was for money; he only asked me how I was used, and other questions of that nature. But I hoped some money had been left wth him by S^r Humphry.
- Strahan. I had occasion to go to her shop after he printed for me.
- M^{rs} Edw^{ds} Do not put me off so.
- M^r S. Harley. Do y^u remember then why did y^u send for her.
- Strahan. Out of curiosity.
- M^r S. Harley. Can you make any man believe that, If you had not a concern in it.
- Strahan. I profess, I had not.
- M^r S. Harley. Have y^u any thing to answer to this matter.
- Strahan. I desire it may be read.
- M^r S. Harley. She says, y^u sent for her by her man W^m Wise, That she came to y^u in hopes of money from S^r Humphry Mackworth.
- Strahan. I do not remember I ever sent for her; if I did, when she did come, I own I did ask her questions about herself and her

husband for my own curiosity, how they had treated her, whether the Apprentices had swore ag^t them.

M^{rs} Ed. I did not then tell him of y^e Author the first time I came to him.

Strahan. I desire to take notice of that.

M^r S. Harley. What w^d you infer from thence.

Strahan. Only that it may be taken notice of.

M^r Strahan's Examination read.

M^r Strahan. I said that if I had seen it I threw it by among wast paper. I might see M^r Sacheverell once or twice at Oxford, I might see him in the street.

M^r S. Hedges. You know a great deal; the matter is charged directly upon you ———

Strahan. I am a young man; I am very ready ———

M^r S. Hedges. You would do very well to consider wth yo^r self. You may not have another opportunity.

Strahan. I am but just come into the World, I would do all the Service in y^e World.

M^r S. Hedges. I will assure y^u 'tis no triviall matter.

Strahan. I do not think it triviall; I would declare all. I wish I had the Copy.

Goes out.

* * * * *

M^r Shiers called in.

M^r S. Harley. M^r Shiers. How came y^u to tell the Messenger, you did not know M^r Powell?

M^r Shiers. I know severall Powells. but none that lives wth S^r Humphry Mackworth.

M^r S. Harley. Do y^u know the hand (shewing him the little letter.)

M^r Shiers. (Looking a good while) No; I do not.

M^r S. Harley. Consider again; Did y^u ever see that paper before?

M^r Shiers. Never S^r. No; S^r. I never did.

M^r S. Harley. Do you know that hand (shewing him the bigger Letter).

M^r Shiers. Yes, I do.

M^r S. Harley. Whose hand do you take it to be.

M^r Shiers. I take it to be my own.

M^r S. Harley. It is yo^r own.

M^r Shiers. It is my hand.

- M^r S. Harley. Do you know that hand (shewing a piece of y^e Copy of y^e Memorial).
- M^r Shiers. No S^r I do not.
- M^r S. Harley. Did y^u never see that paper.
- M^r Shiers. Never.
- M^r S. Hedges. Be sincere.
- M^r Shiers. I will to be sure.
- M^r S. Harley. Did y^u never see this (Giving him the Indented paper).
- M^r Shiers. I never did — I am positive.
- M^r S. Harley. Do you remember nothing of yo^r being at the Mitre Tavern near S^t Dunstons Church.
- M^r Shiers. I have not been at a Tavern these 3 years but wth the Court of Directors. I never was at that Tavern. I do not know it. I know not where it is.
- M^r S. Harley. It is fit y^u sh^d know one particular, There is oath made that this hand is the same wth that of the Copy of a Pamphlet called Pro aris et focis, by this Circumstance, As soon as the Printer saw it he said this is y^e hand of Pro aris et focis. I suppose y^u have seen the print of it.
- M^r Shiers. I remember I saw the Paper, but remember nothing of the Contents of it; not a tittle of the Contents of it.
- M^r S. Harley. This Copy w^{ch} was first brought (for I must tell y^u it was changed six times) the hand from w^{ch} it was set was the same wth this.
- M^r Shiers. I am sorry any person sh^d be so forward to swear. I have other business. I never copyed any paper for any press, except about our own Mines.
- M^r S. Harley. There is oath made too That Strahan the Bookseller was seen carry the proof sheet of that paper to y^e Mine Office in Angel Court. There are three Evidences.
- M^r Shiers. I can assure you I know nothing of it.
- M^r S. Harley. Shows him y^e little Letter again.
- M^r Shiers. I will assure you, I do not know this hand; I never saw that hand in my life.
- M^r S. Harley. These two hands (of y^e two L^{res}) are very like.
- M^r Shiers. They differ as much as black & white.
- M^r S. Harley. (Compares the two hands.) W^t say y^u to that?
- M^r Shiers. I can assure you tis none of my hand.

- M^r S. Harley. The [p's] are alike so are the [e's] the same.
- M^r Shiers. I never made such an [L] seldom One hand may be like another, but I can assure you that is not mine.
- M^r S. Harley. Do y^u know anything of any Books brought to a Tavern by a Porter.
- M^r Shiers. Not one cross syllable; I have a great deal of business in my Office.
- M^r S. Harley. Do y^u belong to S^r Humphry or to the Mine Office.
- M^r Shiers. To y^e Mine Office solely. I have formerly belonged to S^r Humphry.
- M^r S. Harley. What was the occasion of writing this Letter (read it.
- M^r Shiers. I do remember that Letter, it was upon occasion of a Letter that was wrote.
- M^r S. Harley. Why is it not dated?
- M^r Shiers. S^r Humphry had rec^d a Letter from M^r Mackworth; he desired me to write to him; and told me the substance of what I sh^d write. I writt it accordingly.
- M^r S. Harley. Do you know the Gentleman that came wth the Letter.
- M^r Shiers. No I did not.
- M^r S. Harley. Pray did any body else bring a Letter or speak wth y^u relating to this matter but this Letter.
- M^r Shiers. Yes, I remember there was a Gentleman; he would have spoke with S^r Humphry, but he was busy; but (as I take it) he would not send up his business.
- M^r S. Harley. By the Letter there seems to have been kept a Diary (reads a passage out of the Letter) Is not that the meaning of it.
- M^r Shiers. That was a Rule my Father gave me, to take some Notes of w^t I did, w^{ch} I have done these twenty years wherever I was.
- M^r S. Harley. How did you apply that to S^r Humphry?
- M^r Shiers. I did the same for S^r Humphry while I was wth him. I remember y^e D of Beaufort when he was charged wth being in y^e Popish Plot was cleared by his serv^{ts} having kept such a Diary.
- M^r S. Harley. No. The D. of Beaufort was never charged wth the Popish Plot. It was in the matter of My Lord Stafford. The Buttler remember'd my L^d had been there such a time.

This is so remarkable a thing; that nobody but w^d keep a Diary for it. Consider did the Gentleman give you any Letter? or did y^u bring him any Message?

- M^r Shiers. I believe I might. I have it down. I have it down in paper what the message was.
- M^r S. Harley. Was M^r [Thomas] M[ackworth] also in the room?
- M^r Shiers. Yes.
- M^r S. Hedges. When was that?
- M^r Shiers. Before S^r Humphry went into Wales.
- M^r S. Harley. When was that?
- M^r Shiers. Really I cannot tell.
- M^r S. Harley. Here was a Gentleman come to charge him wth things of so high a nature. When there was a Letter from him. Certainly yo^r Zeal for the Governm^t w^d have induced you to give notice of it. Was it before he went into Wales?
- M^r Shiers. Yes, certainly.
- M^r S. Harley. Do y^u remember nothing of the discourse? Do not y^u know the Gentleman's Name?
- M^r Shiers. I never saw him before nor since that I know.
- M^r S. Harley. You do take notice of things.
- M^r Shiers. When I was wth S^r Humphry I did, and I did enter the Message from S^r Humphry.
- M^r S. Harley. Pray let us see that matter right.
- M^r S. Hedges. What did y^u do wth the Letter?
- M^r Shiers. I gave it to S^r Humphry.
- M^r S. Harley. It was before S^r Humphry went into Wales.
- M^r Shiers. I believe it was.
- M^r S. Harley. Do you know one Fox a Porter.
- M^r Shiers. No, I do not.
- M^r S. Harley. What porter do you imploy?
- M^r Shiers. I have no occasion to imploy any. I can send my own man.
- M^r S. Hedges. You do not send yo^r men wth burdens.
- M^r Shiers. We have no occasion for any such thing.
- M^r Shiers Examination read.
- M^r Shiers. May not I have a Copy!
- M^r S. Harley. Yes.
- M^r Shiers. When?
- M^r S. Harley. When y^u will send for it. Read it yo^r self, and alter what y^u think fit to make it yo^r Answer.

M^r Shiers reads, and when he came to that part that says it was before S^r Humphry went into Wales ———

M^r Shiers. I believe it must be when he came back. — I am sure it must be so.

M^r S. Harley. Put it as you will have it.

M^r Shiers. S^r I cannot tell the time till I look upon those Notes to direct me.

M^r S. Harley. Set it in yo^r own words.

M^r Shiers. [Directs M^r Jones] Letter to S^r Humphry —

M^r S. Harley. Sit down, and mend it your self.

M^r Shiers. [To M^r Jones] Please to put in, he does not remember the time when. A multitude of business runs through my hands. I sh^d be very ready if I knew any thing at all of it. [Reads & directs to strike out more]

M^r S. Hedges. There was another Letter. There were two Letters.

M^r Shiers. There was a Letter in answer to a Letter writ by M^r Mackworth.

M^r S. Hedges. Besides that, there was a Gentleman brought a Letter from another Gentleman.

M^r Shiers. He said he desired to speak to S^r Humphry. I desired him to send up his message; I believe he sent up y^e Letter but I have it down.

M^r S. Hedges. Can you recollect the Message or the Answer?

M^r Shiers. [having read the Examination] This is right.

M^r S. Harley. Please to put yo^r name.

M^r Shiers. I desire to have a Copy.

M^r S. Harley. Pray S^r either 'tis yo^r answer or tis not.

M^r Shiers signs [deletion] & goes out.

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