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FORGETTING THE REPEALERS:
RELIGIOUS TOLERATION AND HISTORICAL AMNESIA
IN LATER STUART ENGLAND*

by Scott Sowerby

The erasure of the repealers from the historical record began with the failure to give the group a name. The men and women who rallied together for religious toleration in England in 1687 saw no need to name themselves. They presented themselves as a large group of concerned citizens. Their common cause was to enact a new ‘Magna Carta for liberty of conscience’ that would include the repeal of the laws that penalized both Protestant nonconformity and Roman Catholicism.¹ They were visionaries. They claimed that their program had universal benefits and was not designed to aid a mere clique or party. They thought of themselves as those who were ‘zealous for Liberty of

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¹ The quotation is from William Penn and the slogan appears to have been his invention, although others subsequently adopted it. See [William Penn], *The Great and Popular Objection against the Repeal of the Penal Laws & Tests Briefly Stated and Consider'd* (London, 1688, Wing P1298A), 6, 8, 10, 22; Scott Sowerby, ‘Of Different Complexions: Religious Diversity and National Identity in James II’s Toleration Campaign,’ *English Historical Review*, cxxiv (2009), 39–43, 48–9.

Conscience’ and who ‘had appeared forward for the Establishment of Liberty of Conscience’.² These were descriptions, but they were not names.

Since the repeal movement did not name itself, in order to investigate it, we must apply a label. The term ‘repealer’ is an apt description for a group that sought to rescind the penal laws. Until recently, the Oxford English Dictionary dated the first emergence of the word to 1765, with a reference from Blackstone’s Commentaries to ‘the makers, repealers, and interpreters of the English laws’. But the term did in fact appear nearly a century earlier, in 1687, although it did not pass into general use and disappeared shortly after the Revolution of 1688–9. It was applied to the repeal movement by a handful of hostile observers. It was not in itself particularly disparaging, but it was occasionally modified to give it a pejorative sense, as in the phrase ‘as rank a Repealer as any is in England’.³ It served as a convenient anchor to ground those terms of abuse.

Over the course of eighteen months from April 1687 to October 1688, the repealers pressed for a broad-based religious toleration that would include both Protestant nonconformists and Catholics and would establish their rights to political participation as well as freedom of worship. They sought the legislative repeal of various laws including the Test Act of 1673, which required all public officeholders to take the sacrament in the Church of England; the Test Act of 1678, which barred Catholics from sitting in

² Publick Occurrences Truly Stated (hereafter Publick Occurrences), no. 21 (10 July 1688), no. 12 (8 May 1688).

³ [Thomas Brown?], Heraclitus Ridens Redivivus (n.p., [1688], Wing B5059), 4. Brown published his pamphlet at some point between March and June 1688; see the reference in British Library, London (hereafter BL), Add. MS 36707, fo. 36v, letter to James Harrington, 21 June 1688. The pamphlet went through two more editions later that year (Wing B5060, B5060A). For contemporary uses of the word ‘repealer’, see also [George Savile, marquess of Halifax], A Letter to a Dissenter (London, [1687], Wing H311), 4; [Samuel Johnson], A Letter from a Freeholder (London, [1688], Wing J834), 1; Historical Manuscripts Commission (hereafter HMC), Portland, iii, 406; John Tutchin, An Heroick Poem upon the Late Expedition of His Majesty (London, 1689, Wing T3377), 9. The 1687 usage by Halifax was added to the online edition of the Oxford English Dictionary in 2009.

Parliament; the Elizabethan and Jacobean recusancy statutes that required all adults to attend Church of England services every Sunday; and the statute of Charles II that levied a fine on anyone who attended a nonconformist conventicle.⁴ The repealers also argued for a new law that would declare religious freedom to be inviolable. In pressing for these changes, they decisively changed the politics of the English court by encouraging the Catholic king, James II, to dissolve his first parliament and to mount an electoral campaign for a new, pro-toleration parliament. In so doing, they helped to trigger the so-called ‘Glorious’ Revolution of 1688–9 and to shape the post-revolution settlement that brought a parliamentary Act of Toleration. Because repeal was never achieved and many of its objectives were co-opted in the revolutionary settlement, the repealer movement has been overlooked by scholars. Its existence and influence can, however, be traced in its publications and in its grassroots organizing throughout England, especially in the parliamentary boroughs.

About eighty pro-repeal tracts were published in 1687 and 1688. These printed works, and the many hostile responses to them, set the public agenda of England for much of the latter half of James II’s reign. As one observer put it, ‘Many Pamphlets [are] published to show what absolute necessity there is for all people to give their Consent for the Repealing of the Test Acts . . . this truly imployes at this time most peoples Tongues Pro & Contra as well [as] all the Press’.⁵ Alongside the repeal pamphlets, a pro-repeal newspaper was published by Henry Care and continued under the editorship of Elkanah

⁴ Statutes 25 Car. II. c. 2; 30 Car. II. stat. 2, c. 1; 1 Eliz. c. 2; 23 Eliz. c. 1; 3 Jac. I. c. 4; 22 Car. II. c. 1. For a summary of the various Tudor and Stuart statutes penalizing nonconformity, see [Henry Care], Draconica: or, an Abstract of all the Penal-Laws Touching Matters of Religion (London, 1687, Wing C510).

⁵ Folger Shakespeare Library, V.a.469, William Westby, ‘A Continuation of my Memoiers [sic],’ fo. 12, entry for 9 Feb. 1688.

Settle after Care's death in August 1688. This paper, Publick Occurrences Truly Stated, emitted thirty-four issues before the repealer movement came to a halt in October 1688. In addition, approximately sixty addresses pledging support for the repeal campaign were sent to the king from various English counties, towns, churches and constituencies. At least twenty-eight town councils came to be controlled by repealers, including important centers such as Canterbury, Exeter, Gloucester, Reading, Bedford, Cambridge, Nottingham and Carlisle. Repeal was a widespread, active and successful movement.

The repealer movement was not confined to an elite of writers and courtiers but included considerable numbers of ordinary citizens. It was not limited to London but extended the length and breadth of the country, from Canterbury to Carlisle and from East Anglia to the West Country. It conducted an impressive publishing campaign. Yet the pamphlets produced by the repealers have never been read as a whole. Those authored by noted figures such as William Penn, the whig journalist Henry Care and the Quaker polemicist Ann Docwra have been discussed mainly within the context of the biographies of the authors who wrote them and not as part of a wider movement.⁶ The repealer newspaper, Publick Occurrences Truly Stated, has occasionally been mined for

⁶ On Penn, see Vincent Buranelli, The King & the Quaker: A Study of William Penn and James II (Philadelphia, 1962), 119–35; J. R. Jones, 'A Representative of the Alternative Society of Restoration England?' in Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (eds.), The World of William Penn (Philadelphia, 1986), 63–6; Mary K. Geiter, William Penn (Harlow, 2000), 56–7. On Care, who was a nonconformist and may have been a Presbyterian, see Lois G. Schwoerer, The Ingenious Mr. Henry Care, Restoration Publicist (Baltimore, 2001), 23, 193–217; Tim Harris, London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis (Cambridge, 1987), 120. On Docwra, see Jacqueline Broad and Karen Green, A History of Women's Political Thought in Europe, 1400–1700 (Cambridge, 2009), 235–40; Sarah Apetrei, Women, Feminism and Religion in Early Enlightenment England (Cambridge, 2010), 160–8. For a valuable discussion of four of the repeal pamphlets, see Gary S. De Krey, 'Reformation and "Arbitrary Government": London Dissenters and James II's Polity of Toleration, 1687–1688,' in Jason McElligott (ed.), Fear, Exclusion and Revolution: Roger Morrice and Britain in the 1680s (Aldershot, 2006), 26–7; for a more cursory reading of a few of the pamphlets, see J. R. Jones, The Revolution of 1688 in England (London, 1972), 109–111, 116. George Hilton Jones perhaps spoke for many when he dismissed the repeal pamphlets as unworthy of sustained attention, noting that 'Perusal of such material is tedious': see his Convergent Forces: Immediate Causes of the Revolution of 1688 in England (Ames, 1990), 80.

factual information about political events, but when discussed as an organ of opinion it has generally been seen as a defense of the king's point of view rather than as the mouthpiece of any broader group.⁷

What was true of ideas was also true of activity. The successful takeover of town councils by pro-repeal groups has been consistently undervalued. James II's campaign to regulate the parliamentary boroughs and appoint pro-repeal electors has been widely interpreted as a failed attempt to muzzle the House of Commons by controlling its electorate. A movement of positive values has been consistently portrayed in a negative light. The fact that twenty-eight of these councils sent pro-repeal addresses to James has been taken not as evidence of authentic public opinion but of royal propaganda imposed upon the localities. Addresses of thanks to the king, both from these councils and from a wide array of local groups, have been seen as patently insincere, the offerings of obsequious timeservers seeking to please an imperious monarch. Many of the timeservers, historians alleged, were unreliable and would surely turn against the king at the first opportunity.⁸

Historians have conceded that some individuals, notably William Penn and Henry Care, were genuinely committed to the cause of repeal. To these two are usually added Stephen Lobb, the Congregationalist, and Vincent Alsop, the Presbyterian. These four,

⁷ Jones, Revolution of 1688, 148, 150; R. B. Walker, 'The Newspaper Press in the Reign of William III,' Historical Journal, xvii (1974), 693–4.

⁸ J. P. Kenyon, Robert Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, 1641–1702 (London, 1958), 189–90; Douglas R. Lacey, Dissent and Parliamentary Politics in England, 1661–1689 (New Brunswick, N.J., 1969), 180–1; John Miller, James II: A Study in Kingship (London, 1978), 172; B. R. White, 'The Twilight of Puritanism in the Years Before and After 1688,' in Ole Peter Grell, Jonathan I. Israel and Nicholas Tyacke (eds.), From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England (Oxford, 1991), 312; Paul D. Halliday, Dismembering the Body Politic: Partisan Politics in England's Towns, 1650–1730 (Cambridge, 1998), 239, 247–9, 260–1; Tim Harris, Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685–1720 (London, 2006), 216–24, 230–5, 263–4; Steve Pincus, 1688: The First Modern Revolution (New Haven, 2009), 185–6.

however, have been seen as outliers even in the denominations of which they were a part. Most Quakers, Congregationalists and Presbyterians have been characterized as discomfited by the pro-repeal lobbying of these men.⁹ Indeed, historians have minimized the examples of Penn, Lobb and Alsop by identifying other members of their respective denominations who dissented from their views. Thus the repeal campaign could not command the support of all Quakers, Baptists or Presbyterians, which has been taken to mean that it was not popular.¹⁰ Such a test of unanimity would surely depopulate Stuart England of all its political affiliations.

If the repealers are written back into history, then much of the narrative of later Stuart politics can be written around them. Their significance is seen most clearly in interpretations of James II, the Glorious Revolution, and the Act of Toleration. If the repealers are left out of the narrative, then James appears to be a deluded monarch with no popular support, while the revolution seems an inevitable reaction to the king's delusions, and the post-revolution Toleration Act becomes a beneficent gift to nonconformists as a reward for their good behavior under the previous regime. This entire history takes on a different shape when the repealers are brought back in. James becomes an audacious monarch, trying to make the impossible possible by relying on

⁹ Edmund Calamy, Memoirs of the Life of the Late Rev[erend] Mr John Howe (London, 1724), 135; Thomas Babington Macaulay, The History of England from the Accession of James the Second, ed. Charles Harding Firth, 6 vols. (London, 1913–15), ii, 883, 944; William C. Braithwaite, The Second Period of Quakerism (London, 1919), 142–5; Lacey, Dissent, 203, 215; Pincus, 1688, 204. See also Gordon J. Schochet, 'The Act of Toleration and the Failure of Comprehension: Persecution, Nonconformity, and Religious Indifference,' in Dale Hoak and Mordechai Feingold (eds.), The World of William and Mary (Stanford, 1996), 178–9, where Henry Care is labelled a 'pro-Catholic apologist'.

¹⁰ Macaulay, History of England, ii, 871–4; Roger Thomas, 'The Seven Bishops and their Petition, 18 May 1688,' Journal of Ecclesiastical History, xii (1961), 57–8, 62; Lacey, Dissent, 180–2, 211–12; R. A. Beddard, 'Vincent Alsop and the Emancipation of Restoration Dissent,' Journal of Ecclesiastical History, xxiv (1973), 173–81; W. A. Speck, Reluctant Revolutionaries: Englishmen and the Revolution of 1688 (Oxford, 1988), 183; John Miller, Cities Divided: Politics and Religion in English Provincial Towns, 1660–1722 (Oxford, 2007), 229–31; Pincus, 1688, 180, 199–209.

repealer support, the Glorious Revolution seems like a conservative counter-revolution designed to maintain Anglican privilege in the face of repealer demands, and the Toleration Act looks like a strategic concession by a harried majority designed to prevent the exiled king from continuing to garner support from nonconformist activists. If the repealer movement did not in fact occur, then the former is the correct story, and the familiar narrative of the Glorious Revolution remains as it has often been told. But given how readily the narrative can be retold, it seems worthwhile to reconsider the evidence for a popular pro-repeal movement.

The existence of the repealer movement could be established through a detailed examination of each of the eighty repealer publications, sixty repealer addresses, and twenty-eight repealer councils. Such an exhaustive approach cannot, however, be attempted in the modest scope of an essay.¹¹ An alternative approach would be to examine the processes by which the repealer movement was forgotten. The energy poured into suppressing the memory of the movement reveals a kind of negative image of the movement itself. When scribes reused vellum in the early modern period, they often left behind a ghostly palimpsest of the original text known as the scriptio inferior or the underwriting. The erasure of the repealer movement also left behind a kind of palimpsest, and in this underwriting the outlines of the movement can be traced.

Four phases of forgetting can be reconstructed from the available evidence. The first phase began while the movement was still in existence, as its opponents sought to deny that it had any popular support. This process of delegitimization was not entirely successful, but it planted some of the seeds for the later phases of forgetting. The second

¹¹ For a more thorough account, see Scott Sowerby, 'James II's Revolution: The Politics of Religious Toleration in England, 1685–1689' (Harvard Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2006).

phase began with the invasion of William of Orange in November 1688, as the former supporters of the movement sought to bury evidence that they had ever aligned themselves with James II, while their political enemies sought to dig up the evidence as quickly as they buried it. At the same time, many English leaders saw that it was not in the interest of the new Williamite regime to admit that James II's toleration campaign had possessed any popular basis and so did not encourage any public airing of grievances against the repealers.

The third phase began after the main protagonists of both the repealer movement and the Glorious Revolution had died and a generational changeover had occurred. At this point, which can be dated roughly to 1730, the custody of the memory of the revolution passed from those who had first-hand experience of it. The repeal campaign was no longer a matter for personal score-settling. Instead, it became subsumed within a larger narrative about the development of the English constitution. As the Glorious Revolution came to be celebrated as a foundational moment in the evolution of English liberty, anything that suggested that the revolution might not have been universally popular needed to be explained away. Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the era of nation-building or 'whig' historiography in England, the pro-repeal cause shrank in historical retellings until it became only the machinations of a handful of foreign interlopers and 'traitors'. There was certainly no sense in which it had been a popular movement.

The fourth phase began with the advent of professional historiography in the twentieth century. This phase was surprisingly similar in emphasis to the third. Although there was some recognition that the number of supporters of repeal was greater

than previously acknowledged, their campaign was still seen as the work of an unrepresentative handful, many of whom had corrupt motivations. Indeed, what is perhaps most interesting about the fourth phase is the way in which the emphases and interpretations of the earlier phases spilled over into it. It is possible to draw direct links between the delegitimization of the repealers in the seventeenth century and the dismissive treatment of the repealers by twentieth-century historians.

I

The repealers never became the parliamentary movement they hoped to be. After the writs were sent out in September 1688, only six members of any kind were elected, including three of the king's nominees and three opponents. Then the writs were abruptly recalled due to the imminent invasion of William of Orange.¹² The repealers did, however, succeed in becoming a potent movement out of doors. To have a chance at electing a repealer parliament, they needed to place themselves in positions of influence in the constituencies. This they accomplished with the assistance of the king.

King James sent his agents across the country to identify sympathetic men who could be appointed to leading positions in the parliamentary boroughs. The king's agents, who were known as the 'regulators', have often been depicted as bureaucrats who were paid to implement a top-down agenda of heavy-handed coercion.¹³ But a closer look at their backgrounds reveals that they can hardly be seen as typical bureaucrats, for a

¹² Elections were held at Droitwich, Rochester and Queenborough; see Worcestershire Record Office, reference 6497, bulk accession 8445, parcel 1 (minute book of Droitwich, 1676–1883), fo. 28v; Medway Archives, Rochester City Council 1227/1974/RCA/A1/02 (Rochester minute book, 1653–1698), fo. 260; Centre for Kentish Studies, Qb/RPp, poll books for Queenborough.

¹³ J. R. Jones, 'James II's Whig Collaborators,' *Historical Journal*, iii (1960), 68, 71–2; Jones, *Revolution of 1688*, 144; Basil Duke Henning (ed.), *The House of Commons, 1660–1690*, 3 vols. (London, 1983), i, 41; Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, 244.

majority of them were Baptist ministers from London.¹⁴ Their occupations suggest that the regulating campaign may have had a popular base.

The regulators were probably fewer than fifteen in number. Thirteen are certainly known and of these at least ten were Baptists. Nine were pastors of Baptist churches, all but one in the capital.¹⁵ Their congregations met across a swathe of London and its suburbs: Nehemiah Cox and William Collins at Petty France in Westminster; Richard Adams, William Marner and James Jones in Southwark; Thomas Plant at the Barbican; Benjamin Dennis at Stratford; and John Jones at Pinner's Hall near Liverpool Street. The

¹⁴ Murdina MacDonald was the first to note that some of the regulators (four, by her count) had been Baptist ministers, but the findings of her Oxford D.Phil. thesis of 1982, 'London Calvinistic Baptists 1689–1727: Tensions within a Dissenting Community under Toleration', 15–17, were overlooked in the subsequent literature. Gary De Krey, following an account in the Entering Book of Roger Morrice, identified one of the regulators as a Baptist minister but misidentified another regulator, described only by Morrice as 'Mr. Roberts,' as William rather than Edward Roberts. See Gary S. De Krey, 'Reformation and 'Arbitrary Government': London Dissenters and James II's Polity of Toleration, 1687–1688,' in McElligott (ed.), Fear, Exclusion and Revolution, 25–6. John Miller correctly identified the regulators Nehemiah Cox and William Collins as Baptists but misidentified the Baptist William Kiffin as a regulator, citing the same erroneous passage in Morrice. See Miller, Cities Divided, 229; The Entering Book of Roger Morrice, ed. Mark Goldie, John Spurr, Tim Harris, Stephen Taylor, Mark Knights and Jason McElligott, 7 vols. (Woodbridge, 2007–9), iv, 226, 230.

¹⁵ The eight London pastors are described below. The ninth pastor, Elias Bowyer, led a congregation at Rempstone, a few miles south of Nottingham. On Bowyer, see Stuart Brian Jennings, "'The Gathering of the Elect': The Development, Nature and Social-economic Structures of Protestant Religious Dissent in Seventeenth Century Nottinghamshire' (Nottingham Trent Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1999), 192–3; G. Lyon Turner, Original Records of Early Nonconformity Under Persecution and Indulgence, 3 vols. (London, 1911–14), ii, 724, 769; W. H. Stevenson et al. (eds.), Records of the Borough of Nottingham, 9 vols. (London, 1882–1956), v, 345. The tenth regulator, Edward Roberts, was most likely a member of the Petty France church headed by Nehemiah Cox and William Collins. On Roberts, see Guildhall Library, MS 20228/1B (Acts of the Petty France Meeting, 1675–1727), pp. 11, 24; 'Dangerous Persons Come Lately out of Ireland, 1660,' Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society, iii (1912–13), 254; Charles Deering, Nottinghamia Vetus et Nova (Nottingham, 1751), 257–8, 261; Nottinghamshire Archives, CA 4754, Edward Roberts to Charles Harvey, c. Sept. 1688; J. R. Chanter and Thomas Wainwright, Reprint of the Barnstaple Records, 2 vols. (Barnstaple, 1900), i, 76–7; Joseph MacCormick (ed.), State-papers and Letters. Addressed to William Carstares (Edinburgh, 1774), 149; Memoirs of Thomas, Earl of Ailesbury, ed. W. E. Buckley, 2 vols. (Westminster, 1890), i, 175. Another regulator, James Clarke, may have been the General Baptist of that name from Buckinghamshire; if so, eleven of the regulators were Baptist. On Clarke, see Minutes of the General Assembly of the General Baptist Churches in England, ed. W. T. Whitley, 2 vols. (London, 1909–10), i, 45, 57, 61. The twelfth regulator was the Congregationalist Nathaniel Wade of Bristol. On Wade, see The Records of a Church of Christ in Bristol, ed. Roger Hayden (Bristol, 1974), 307. I have been unable to trace the thirteenth regulator, Richard Andrewes. For lists of names of the regulators, see George Duckett, Penal Laws and Test Act: Questions Touching their Repeal Propounded in 1687–8 by James II, 2 vols. (London, 1882–3), i, 222; Badminton House Muniments Room, FmE2/4/25, letter to Mr Burgis of Malmesbury, c. Jan. 1688.

size of their congregations gives some indication of their influence. Plant spoke to two thousand hearers at the Barbican, representing the largest and wealthiest Baptist congregation in London, while Cox and Collins preached to well over five hundred at Petty France, the unofficial head church of the Particular Baptists. Richard Adams gathered a congregation of at least three hundred and James Jones, at least two hundred.¹⁶ In addition to being Baptist preachers, many of them were artisans and small tradesmen in London. The group included a cabinet-maker, a milliner, a shoemaker, a tobacconist, a theologian, a doctor and a tailor.¹⁷ There is no extant evidence to suggest that any of the

¹⁶ For attendance figures, see Folger Shakespeare Library, Newdigate newsletters, L.c.1782, 8 March 1687; W. T. Whitley, The Baptists of London, 1612–1928 (London, 1928), 112; James M. Renihan, ‘The Practical Ecclesiology of the English Particular Baptists, 1675–1705’ (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School Ph.D. thesis, 1997), 62–3; National Archives, Public Record Office, London (hereafter PRO), SP29/419, no. 55, analyzed in W. T. Whitley, ‘London Churches in 1682,’ Baptist Quarterly, i (1922–3), 82–7. All figures except those for Plant are from 1682, at a time when attendance was depressed due to religious persecution. Of the nine ministers, Cox, Collins, Dennis and James Jones were Particular Baptists, Marnier and Bowyer were General Baptists, John Jones was a seventh-day Baptist, Thomas Plant steered clear of an affiliation with either the Particulars or the Generals, and Richard Adams was a Calvinist in his personal beliefs but ministered at a General Baptist Church. On the history of the Particular Baptists and their division from the General Baptists, see Stephen Wright, The Early English Baptists, 1603–1649 (Woodbridge, 2006), 5–12, 75, 114, 138–142; B. R. White, The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century, 2nd edn (Didcot, 1996), 9.

¹⁷ Dennis was a tobacconist, Roberts was a shoemaker, James Jones was a tailor who kept a coffee-house, and Plant had been a milliner. Adams had once been a beneficed clergyman in Leicestershire, Cox was a medical doctor with a degree from Leiden, and Collins had studied theology in France and Italy and trained as a physician. John Jones (no relation to James) was a cabinet-maker and had been a trooper in Cromwell’s own regiment of the New Model Army and a captain in Monmouth’s army in 1685 before being pardoned by James II. On Dennis, see Whitley, Baptists of London, 115; Calendar of State Papers Domestic (hereafter CSPD), James II, 1685, 241. On James Jones, see Whitley, Baptists of London, 105; CSPD, Charles II, 1682, 79; CSPD, Charles II, 1683 Jan.–June, 185–6; ‘James Jones, Particular Baptist in Southwark, 1672–1683,’ Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society, iii (1912–13), 191; ‘Charles-Marie de Veil,’ Baptist Quarterly, v (1930–1), 181; ‘James Jones’s Coffee-House,’ Baptist Quarterly, vi (1932–3), 324–6. On Plant, see Donald Maclean and N. G. Brett-James, ‘London in 1689–90 by the Rev. R. Kirk,’ Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, n.s., vii (1933–37), 147–8. On John Jones, see Peter Earle, Monmouth’s Rebels: The Road to Sedgemoor, 1685 (London, 1977), 127; Bryan W. Ball, The Seventh-day Men: Sabbatarianism and Sabbatarianism in England and Wales, 1600–1800 (Oxford, 1994), 107–8, 111–2, 120; Public Occurrences, no. 10 (24 Apr. 1688), no. 16 (5 June 1688), no. 32 (25 Sept. 1688); CSPD, James II, 1686–7, 158; PRO, PRO30/53/8/64, letter to Lord Herbert of Cherbury, 16 June 1688. On Adams, see A. G. Matthews, Calamy Revised (Oxford, 1934), 1–2; A. Cohen, ‘Adams, Richard (fl. 1650–d. 1716),’ in Richard L. Greaves and Robert Zaller (eds.), Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century, 3 vols. (Brighton, 1982–4), i, 1–2; ‘Seeking a Change,’ Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society, ii (1910–11), 161–2; Whitley, Baptists of London, 103, 106. On Cox, see R. W. Innes Smith, English-Speaking Students of Medicine at the University of Leyden (Edinburgh, 1932), 55; William Munk, The Roll of the Royal College of Physicians of London, 2nd edn, 3

regulators had prior experience in the practice of electoral management. With the exception of Nathaniel Wade and John Jones, who both joined Monmouth's rebellion, few had anything other than casual involvement in whig politics before 1687.¹⁸

The king funded handsomely the activities of the regulators.¹⁹ But this pecuniary reward was unlikely to have been enough to attract them to the repeal cause, since by their activities they risked exposing their reputations to public censure. As nonconformist ministers dependent on the free-will offerings of their congregants, their reputations underpinned their long-term livelihoods. It seems more likely that they, having experienced religious persecution themselves or having seen its effects on their congregations, wished to see the king prevail in his campaign for liberty of conscience. As two of them wrote in the spring of 1688:

since his Gracious Majesty, by the goodness of God, hath published His Royal Declaration, for Liberty of Conscience . . . We confess we most willingly fall in with his Majesty's gracious Designs, and shall, to our utmost, endeavour to carry them on . . . and pray he may live to see the Top-stone of this glorious Fabrick of Liberty of Conscience laid.

vols. (London, 1878), i, 475–6; CSPD, James II, 1686–7, 335; Massachusetts Historical Society, Ms. N-522, diary of Increase Mather (transcript), fos. 23–6; Harry Care's Last Will and Testament (n.p., 1688, Wing C526), 2. On Collins, see John Piggott, Eleven Sermons Preach'd upon Special Occasions (London, 1714), 279, 281; Renihan, 'English Particular Baptists,' 42–50. On Marner, see Whitley, Baptists of London, 110; Adam Taylor, The History of the English General Baptists, 2 vols. (London, 1818), i, 265, 335; Nottinghamshire Archives, CA 4753, George Langford to William Marner, 27 Aug. 1688.

¹⁸ On Wade and Jones, see W. MacDonald Wigfield, The Monmouth Rebellion: A Social History (Totowa, N.J., 1980), 26–7, 36, 122–3, 149–71; Richard L. Greaves, Secrets of the Kingdom: British Radicals from the Popish Plot to the Revolution of 1688–1689 (Stanford, 1992), 286–7.

¹⁹ Each regulator received £10 to purchase a horse and £1 per diem for travel expenses. Collectively they received upwards of £1,000 to buy pro-repeal pamphlets for distribution throughout the countryside. These funds appear to have been used for their intended purpose; in the month of May 1688 alone, one hundred thousand such pamphlets were distributed. See Nottingham University Library (hereafter NUL), Portland MSS, PwA 2160, James Rivers to [Hans Willem Bentinck], 4 Apr. 1688; NUL, Portland MSS, PwA 2162/1, same to same, 23 May 1688; Moneys Received and Paid for Secret Services of Charles II and James II, ed. John Yonge Akerman (London, 1851), 196–7, 205.

The ‘Top-stone’ they hoped to see laid was the ‘Perfection by Law’ of the king’s declaration in a pro-repeal parliament. A royal proclamation might prove temporary, but a parliamentary act of toleration would outlast the king’s own life and thereby ‘for ever deliver this Nation from the Convulsions and Evils it has labour’d under in former Years’.²⁰ The ideological aims of the regulators suggest that they should be described not as bureaucrats, but rather as repealers. They sought to channel the energies of a popular movement by convincing the participants in that movement to take on positions of influence in the parliamentary corporations.²¹

The brief of the regulators was to make contact with nonconformists in the localities, to gather names of men to be removed from councils and those to be appointed in their stead, and to send those names to Robert Brent, the Catholic head of the board of regulators.²² Either Brent himself or another go-between, Henry Trinder, would forward the names to a subcommittee of the privy council headed by the earl of Sunderland, lord president of the council, which met regularly in the earl’s Whitehall office.²³ That committee would then draft orders of privy council removing men from the corporations, while Sunderland’s secretaries would draft orders under the sign manual recommending their replacements. The idea of hiring Baptists as regulators may have come from Brent,

²⁰ Thomas Plant and Benjamin Dennis, The Mischief of Persecution Exemplified (London, 1688, Wing P2377A), 45–6, dated 7 May 1688 on the title page.

²¹ This use of a popular movement in an attempt to control the urban corporations is reminiscent of Charles II’s use of the tory party to control those same corporations, though for very different purposes; on which, see Halliday, Dismembering the Body Politic, 189–236.

²² Duckett, Penal Laws, i, 195–8; Bodleian Library, Rawlinson A139b, fo. 105r–105v; Memorandums for those that Go into the Country to Dispose the Corporations to a Good Election (n.p., [1688], Wing M1680), 2, 4.

²³ On Trinder, see Anchitell Grey, Debates of the House of Commons, from the Year 1667 to the Year 1694, 10 vols. (London, 1763), ix, 340; Entring Book of Roger Morrice, iv, 226–7; CSPD, James II, 1687–9, 275. On the privy council subcommittee, see PRO, PC2/72; Journals of the House of Lords, xiv, 388; Narcissus Luttrell, A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1857), i, 420–1; NUL, Portland MSS, PwA 2146, James Rivers to [Hans Willem Bentinck], 21 Feb. 1688.

given that he had prior connections with Baptists in his role as supervisor of the patents dispensing nonconformists from penalties assessed under the penal laws.²⁴ The Baptist ministers agreed to serve on the board of regulators even though they knew they would be working under the immediate supervision of a Catholic. This provided a practical demonstration of James II's project to unite both ends of the religious continuum in a tolerationist alliance.

The regulators described themselves, in a letter to one corporation, as men who had the 'honour of Inspecting under the Lords Commissioners appointed p[er] his Majestie the Regulacon now on foote, of severall Corporacons'.²⁵ As their powers of 'Inspecting' were entirely unofficial, they had no authority to compel town councillors to meet with them or to follow their instructions. The regulators could not order; they could only advise. But their influence was decisive because the privy council generally rubber-stamped their recommendations.²⁶ Their inspections were often greeted with hostility in the localities, for their actions threatened local rights and prerogatives. In some quarters they were called 'The Booted Apostles', a name previously applied to the French dragoons who had terrorized the Huguenots into abjuring Protestantism.²⁷ But they did

²⁴ These patents were a temporary expedient that had been rendered superfluous when James proclaimed his Declaration for Liberty of Conscience in April 1687. For Brent's role in issuing them, see Joseph Ivimey, A History of the English Baptists, 4 vols. (London, 1811–30), i, 464; Entring Book of Roger Morrice, iii, 194, 325, 344; CSPD, James II, 1686–7, 66, 71–2, 268, 323, 358, 388; BL, Add. MS 41813, fo. 171, Bevil Skelton to earl of Middleton, 29 June/9 July 1686. On Brent's background and influence, see HMC, Ormonde, n.s., v, 32; Calendar of Treasury Books, 1676–1679, 910; S. C. Ratcliff, H. C. Johnson and N. J. Williams (eds.), Warwick County Records, 8 vols. (Warwick, 1935–64), vol. viii, pp. xxviii–xxix; Duckett, Penal Laws, i, 240; Entring Book of Roger Morrice, iii, 377; The Pension Book of Gray's Inn, ed. Reginald J. Fletcher, 2 vols. (London, 1901–10), ii, 92; BL, Add. MS 75366, Robert Brent to Lord Melfort, 17 Nov. 1688.

²⁵ Badminton House Muniments Room, FmE2/4/25, letter to Mr Burgis of Malmesbury, c. Jan. 1688. This letter was signed by Roberts, Marner, Bowyer, Cox, Plant, Collins, Dennis and James Jones.

²⁶ Journals of the House of Lords, xiv, 388; Entring Book of Roger Morrice, iv, 226–7, 230–1.

²⁷ T. P., Multum in Parvo (London, 1688, Wing P115), title page; George Withers, The Grateful Acknowledgment of a Late Trimming Regulator (London, 1688, Wing W3161), 3–4; The London

find willing allies nevertheless in certain places and regions. One such place was the West Country cloth center of Exeter.

In late 1687, James ordered the removal of twenty-eight officers of the Exeter city council, including the mayor. As their replacements he recommended at least seventeen men, including nine dissenters, seven of whom can be identified as Presbyterians.

Among these Presbyterians were several leaders of the city's cloth industry, including three men who between them had exported 79,067 pounds of serge in 1676. Over the next few months three more Presbyterians were added to the council, including Thomas Crispin, a prominent manufacturer who served as master of the company of weavers, fullers and shearmen in 1687–8.²⁸ These leading clothiers had been hemmed in by the penal laws for a generation. Now they had their revenge.

With the keys of the city in their hands, the new council set about to avenge publicly and ostentatiously their years of exclusion from government. They unwound swiftly the previous council's patronage appointments. The master of the Exeter Grammar School, an Anglican vicar, was dismissed and replaced with a nonconformist minister. Other dismissals included the master of the public workhouse, the holder of the Bodley lectureship, the porters of the East and West Gates, the city's attorney at law, and

Mercury, no. 4 (22–24 Dec. 1688); on the French dragoons as 'booted apostles', see [James Welwood], An Answer to the Late King James's Declaration (London, 1689, Wing W1298), 28; The Twelfth and Last Collection of Papers (London, 1689, Wing T3392), p. ii; Pierre Bayle, A Philosophical Commentary on These Words of the Gospel, 2 vols. (London, 1708; orig. French ed. 1686), ii, 381.

²⁸ PRO, PC 2/72, fos. 58, 68; CSPD, James II, 1687–9, 160; Richard Izacke, Remarkable Antiquities of the City of Exeter (London, 1723), 183–4; Devon Record Office (hereafter Devon RO), ECA/B1/13 (Act Book of the Exeter Chamber, 1684–1730), pp. 77, 79–80, 84; Allan Brockett, Nonconformity in Exeter, 1650–1875 (Manchester, 1962), 40–1, 44, 50, 57, 71–2; W. B. Stephens, Seventeenth-Century Exeter (Exeter, 1958), 179; Peter William Jackson, 'Nonconformists and Society in Devon, 1660–1689' (Univ. of Exeter Ph.D. thesis, 1986), 321–2. On Crispin, see also Joyce Youings, Tuckers Hall Exeter: The History of a Provincial City Company through Five Centuries (Exeter, 1968), 124–5, 138, 231, plate 9; Beatrix F. Cresswell, A Short History of the Worshipful Company of Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen of the City and County of Exeter (Exeter, 1930), 89–90.

the five London lawyers appointed as the city's counselors. One of their new counselors was to be none other than Robert Brent, the Catholic head of the board of regulators. The corporation was to pay him an annual salary of three pounds, six shillings and eight pence. In addition, the corporation voted to 'gratify' him with an unspecified amount for his 'great paynes taken in an[d] <about> the affairs of this City'. They also voted to compensate their new mayor, the dyer Thomas Jefford, for the 'large expences journeys & paynes' he had undertaken to obtain the regulation that had brought them to power.²⁹

The council's political agenda was outlined in an address that they sent to the king. They praised the king's policies and asserted that his declaration for liberty of conscience had been a primary cause of the recent boom in the cloth trade. They pledged their support for his campaign to secure a parliament that would bring about a lasting liberty of conscience. Meanwhile, the Presbyterians of Exeter, in an indication of their pleasure with the direction of royal policy, had named their newly-opened meeting house 'James' Meeting'.³⁰

Thomas Jefford delivered the council's address to the king with his own hands and returned to London later in the spring to meet him a second time. During these meetings, the mayor discussed the upcoming parliamentary elections, assuring the king that the electoral interest of the dissenters in Exeter was stronger than the interest of the town's Anglicans.³¹ At the second audience the king, delighted with what he had heard,

²⁹ Cornwall Record Office, Carlyon of Tregehan MSS, DD.CN. no. 3480, James Salter to Charles Trewbody, 30 July 1688; Devon RO, ECA/B1/13 (Act Book of the Exeter Chamber, 1684–1730), pp. 77–9, 86. Although Thomas Jefford was probably not himself a Presbyterian, he was said to have attended nonconformist services in 1688 with some of the aldermen: see Entring Book of Roger Morrice, iv, 218; CSPD, James II, 1687–9, 305.

³⁰ London Gazette, no. 2315 (23–26 Jan. 1688); Brockett, Nonconformity in Exeter, 54.

³¹ BL, Add. MS 41805, fo. 118, earl of Bath to earl of Middleton, 5 Nov. 1688. In strictly numerical terms, the Anglicans were in fact the stronger group. The population of Exeter in the later years of the

knighted Jefford. The newly knighted mayor also met with Robert Brent, bearing gifts from the Exeter council: fifty guineas for Brent himself and ten for his secretary.³² Back in Exeter, the councillors worked to sew up the results of the imminent parliamentary election. In the whole of the year 1687, only three men had been added to the freedom in Exeter, obtaining with it the parliamentary franchise. But in 1688 more began to be added, starting with the son of the Presbyterian councillor John Pym. Eight were added in February, March, April and May. In August, as news of a new parliament began to spread, the additions to the freeman's roll gathered pace. No less than 169 new freemen were shuttled onto the rolls on the twenty-seventh of that month. Another forty-nine were added on the third of September.³³ The council had refashioned the electorate in a little over a week.

Despite the successful regulation of Exeter and similar outcomes in several dozen other cities and towns, it is far from clear whether James could have secured a repealer parliament in 1688. There were over two hundred parliamentary boroughs in England, but only twenty-eight sent repealer addresses as Exeter did. It is possible that some other councils favored repeal but decided nonetheless against sending a formal address to the king. This was the route taken by Bury St Edmunds, which decided to send a more

seventeenth century has been variously estimated at between 13,000 and 17,700, of which some 3,000 were said in 1715 to have been dissenters, including 2,250 Presbyterians. See W. G. Hoskins, 'The Population of Exeter,' Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries, xviii (1938–9), 246–7; Ransom Pickard, The Population and Epidemics of Exeter in Pre-Census Times (Exeter, 1947), 18; Brockett, Nonconformity in Exeter, 71–2.

³² London Gazette, no. 2360 (28 June–2 July 1688); Devon RO, ECA/B1/13 (Act Book of the Exeter Chamber, 1684–1730), pp. 79–80.

³³ Margery M. Rowe and Andrew M. Jackson (eds.), Exeter Freemen, 1266–1967 (Exeter, 1973), pp. xxvii, 177–180. The 226 freemen added from February to September 1688 represent just over forty percent of the total number of freemen added during the entire decade of the 1680s.

informal letter on the grounds that a formal address would be more expensive.³⁴ Other boroughs were taken over by the king's allies as late as September 1688 and did not have time to send a pro-repeal address before the elections were called off. Hull was one such borough.³⁵ For these reasons, the number of repealer councils was almost certainly larger than the number of repealer addresses from councils. But several other councils are known to have voted against sending an address, even after the king had restructured their membership.³⁶ It is evident that a substantial number of the regulated boroughs did not become repealer boroughs.

A considerable number of English parliamentary boroughs, moreover, were never reformed at all. James lacked the power to regulate all boroughs in the realm. A royal power to remove civic officials had been inserted into the new borough charters passed in the early to mid-1680s during the so-called 'tory reaction', but not all boroughs had been rechartered during this period. The king held full power to regulate only 113 of the 205 English parliamentary boroughs, and he exercised his powers in only 107 councils.³⁷ At the time, this was the most extensive effort at electoral management ever undertaken by

³⁴ Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds, E2/41/5, fos. 37r–37v, Lord Dover to John Stafford, 22 March 1688, fo. 48, letter of Lord Dover, 26 June 1688; Pat E. Murrell, 'Bury St. Edmunds and the Campaign to Pack Parliament, 1687–8,' Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, liv (1981), 191–7.

³⁵ M. J. Short, 'The Corporation of Hull and the Government of James II, 1687–8,' Historical Research, lxxi (1998), 186–90.

³⁶ Bristol, Newcastle upon Tyne, Leicester and Chichester voted against sending an address. See Bristol Record Office, Common Council Proceedings Book of Bristol, 1687–1702, fos. 10–11; W.H.D. Longstaffe (ed.), Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes, Late Merchant and Sometime Alderman of Newcastle upon Tyne (Surtees Soc., I, 1867), 176n; Huntington Library, Hastings manuscripts, HA 1703, Joseph Craddock to the earl of Huntingdon, 28 May 1688; Leicestershire Record Office, BR11/18/36 (Leicester Hall Papers, 1685–1690), no. 89; West Sussex Record Office, C/1 (Minute Book of the Common Council of Chichester, 1685–1737), MF 1145, p. 33.

³⁷ The figure of 107 includes 94 councils regulated by order of privy council and 12 which received new charters from November 1687 to September 1688; 23 of the councils were both regulated and rechartered. The tally also includes London, which was regulated by royal commission. For the corporations regulated by privy council order, see the privy council register for 1687–8 (PRO, PC 2/72). For a list of the corporations rechartered, see Halliday, Dismembering the Body Politic, 351–2. Non-parliamentary corporations have been excluded from these tallies.

the English state.³⁸ But it was not a complete reshaping of the electorate. The regulated boroughs had the right to elect only 212 members, or about 41% of the total membership of the House of Commons, with the remaining members elected by the unregulated boroughs, the Welsh boroughs, the counties and the universities.³⁹

The royal campaign seems unlikely to have been enough to guarantee electoral success. Against the powers of the king and the efforts of the repealers must be weighed the widespread unpopularity of repeal among Anglicans, who made up a majority of the electorate.⁴⁰ But to focus exclusively on the potential composition of a parliament that never met would be to miss the wider significance of the repealer movement. The repealers were amassing power, and they could use that power to achieve some of their ends without ever stepping foot in the House of Commons. By taking over a significant number of councils, they flexed their muscles. Their early successes encouraged King James to press for a repealer parliament, even at the cost of diminishing his own popularity. Many Anglicans were determined to stop the repealers from succeeding and so offered strategic concessions designed to siphon off nonconformist support from the repeal campaign. These strategic concessions eventually bore fruit in the Toleration Act. A few Anglicans, meanwhile, looked to William of Orange for aid against the repealers. The letter of seven notables to William in June 1688, known as the letter of the ‘Immortal Seven’, cited the possibility of ‘a packed parliament’ in urging him to invade before the

³⁸ John Carswell, *The Descent on England* (London, 1969), 113–4; Jones, *Revolution of 1688*, 129.

³⁹ Although two Welsh boroughs, Neath and Carmarthen, were partially regulated, the regulating campaign in Wales was largely ineffectual.

⁴⁰ Historians have differed on this matter. J. R. Jones argued that the king might have succeeded in ‘packing’ the parliament had William not intervened. His argument was countered by Paul Halliday. See Jones, *Revolution of 1688*, 128–75; Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, 239, 249, 260–1. On this point, see also Speck, *Reluctant Revolutionaries*, 131–5.

elections were held.⁴¹ The repealers, with their dramatic entry onto the public stage, caused other actors to change their positions. They provoked a popular counter-movement that sought to marginalize and defeat them. This was the beginning of the forgetting of the repealers.

II

The repealer movement was inconvenient for anyone who opposed James II's tolerationist campaign. Some Anglicans were utterly antagonistic to any form of religious nonconformity, while others were willing to support some degree of toleration for Protestant nonconformists, so long as the Catholics were not granted freedom to proselytize or to serve in public office. Both sets of Anglicans were likely to oppose repeal, the former because it enfranchised both nonconformists and Catholics, and the latter because it enfranchised Catholics. The opponents of repeal were generally unwilling to take the pro-repeal movement on its own terms, for to do so would be to accept its authority to speak for a segment of the population. Instead, they chose to deploy ad hominem attacks to undermine the legitimacy of the movement. Its leaders were depicted as outside agitators and Jesuits from St. Omer stirring up disaffection. Its followers were denigrated as mercenary men taking bribes from the king with one hand and signing addresses written by Catholics with the other.

The opponents of repeal hit below the belt. This tactic is evident in their critiques of the addresses of thanks sent to the king after he issued his Declaration for Liberty of Conscience in April 1687. Soon after the first addresses were published in the London

⁴¹ John Dalrymple, Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland, 2nd edn, 2 vols. (London, 1771–3), vol. ii, pt. i, p. 230.

Gazette, opponents of repeal spread rumours that the king had paid £8000 to various nonconformists in exchange for their signatures. John Tillotson, the dean of Canterbury and future archbishop, was said to have started the rumours and to have alleged that £2000 of the total sum had been given to Henry Hurst and the London Presbyterians as payback for their address. The allegations made their way through the coffeehouses. Both men and women participated in the whisper campaign, with Roger Morrice hearing the rumours from a widow named Clarkson and passing them along himself. Henry Hurst, who ‘followed the Lye from place to place’, was understandably upset, blaming the dean of Canterbury for ‘this great Slander’ on his name.⁴²

The marquess of Halifax, a moderate Anglican who had moved into opposition early in the king’s reign, advanced a similar line of attack in his widely-read Letter to a Dissenter. He warned his readers that the court was employing men who in the past may have ‘sprinkled Money amongst the Dissenting Ministers’ and who now had been given ‘the same Authority’ to practice ‘the same Methods, and Disburse, where they cannot otherwise perswade’. Some nonconformist ministers, he alleged, had fallen into ‘Temptations of this kinde’ by accepting bribes and were now obliged to echo the court’s arguments. They preached sermons of ‘Anger and Vengeance against the Church of England’ because they were worried that ‘their Wages’ from the court ‘would be retrenched’ if they moderated their tone. Moreover, threats had been issued against those dissenters who were reluctant to sign pro-Catholic addresses ghostwritten by ‘Priests’ acting as ‘Secretaries to the Protestant Religion’. True sincerity, however, could not be

⁴² Entring Book of Roger Morrice, iv, 70.

coerced: ‘No man was ever Thankful because he was bid to be so’.⁴³ Halifax’s pamphlet sought to delegitimize the repealer movement. The addresses that were its most visible sign were, from this perspective, the work of only a few collaborators and some Catholics. If any people at all had signed them, they were temporizers, mercenaries or criminals; that is, they were unfit for political participation.

In the face of this delegitimizing of the repealer addresses, Henry Care sought to relegitimize them. He laid out a challenge for the opponents of repeal, offering a reward of fifty pounds to anyone who could prove that the earliest addressers had copied their texts from a draft that had been given them. He was confident that his reward would not be claimed because the first addressers, meaning the London Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists, had been so ‘scrupulous’ as to not ‘impart their Intentions to any but those of their own Communion’. He indignantly rebutted Halifax’s ‘false’ and ‘scandalous’ insinuations that some men had ‘sprinkled Money among the Dissenting Ministers’. He offered the same reward of fifty pounds to anyone who could demonstrate that any money was ‘Given, Promised, or Propounded to any of the Persons that did first Address’.⁴⁴

Despite Care’s protests, the mudslinging continued. In addition to being slighted as mercenaries and ‘tools’ of the king, the repealers were depicted as Catholics in disguise. William Penn and Henry Care were both accused of being Jesuits, the latter’s newspaper being described rudely as a ‘jesuites Pisse pot thrown by Henry Care in the

⁴³ Halifax, Letter to a Dissenter, 3; on the popular demand for copies of this pamphlet, see Mark N. Brown (ed.), The Works of George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1989), i, 81–2.

⁴⁴ [Henry Care], Animadversions on a Late Paper Entitled, A Letter to a Dissenter (London, 1687, Wing C505), 21, 24–5. See also A Letter to a Friend, in Answer to a Letter to a Dissenter (London, 1687, Wing L1646), 2.

church of England men's faces'.⁴⁵ Robert Barclay, the Scottish Quaker theologian who joined the repeal campaign, and John Scanfield, an itinerant Quaker organizer for the campaign, were also accused of being Jesuits. Stephen Lobb, the Congregationalist repealer, was falsely described as having converted to Catholicism.⁴⁶ Similar aspersions were cast on the newly installed Protestant councillors of Exeter, who were caricatured by their fellow citizens as 'popish rogues' or 'a Hodge-podge' of councillors cooked up by the pope for the satisfaction of Satan's appetite.⁴⁷ The alliance of nonconformists with a Catholic king reactivated old fears of 'popery in masquerade', with Jesuits said to be disguising themselves as dissenters to advance the Catholic cause.⁴⁸

In this new telling of an old story, the 'sectaries' had joined the Jesuits in a conspiracy to recatholicize England. The Catholics could not take over the country by themselves, as the second Test Act barred them from entering parliament. Hence they needed a 'treacherous' faction of the Protestants to gain election to the upcoming session and then unlock the gates of parliament from within by repealing the Test Acts. Once

⁴⁵ [William Popple], A Letter to Mr. Penn, with his Answer ([London], 1688, Wing P2964), 2; BL, Add. MS 34727, fo. 157, letter to William Penn, n.d.; American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, William Penn papers, 974.8 P365, vol. i, p. 120; marginal notation in Bodleian Library, Nichols newspapers, Publick Occurrences, no. 12 (8 May 1688). For the king's supporters as 'Mercenary Sycophants' and Catholics in disguise, see [Robert Ferguson], Representation of the Threatning Dangers, Impending over Protestants (n.p., [1687], Wing F756A), 4–5, 14–15, 49. For the repealers as 'tools', see Entring Book of Roger Morrice, iii, 234, iv, 245.

⁴⁶ John E. Pomfret, 'Robert Barclay and James II: Barclay's "Vindication," 1689,' Bulletin of Friends Historical Association, xlii (1953), 35–9; William F. Miller, 'Gleanings from the Records of the Yearly Meeting of Aberdeen, 1672 to 1786,' Journal of the Friends' Historical Society, viii (1911), 62–4; Thomas Story, A Journal of the Life of Thomas Story (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1747), 6; Diary of Thomas Bellingham, ed. Anthony Hewitson (Preston, 1908), 16; 'The Defection of John Scanfield,' Journal of the Friends' Historical Society, v (1908), 178–85; Publick Occurrences, no. 21 (10 July 1688).

⁴⁷ Jonathan Barry, 'Exeter in 1688: The Trial of the Seven Bishops,' in Todd Gray (ed.), Devon Documents (Tiverton, 1996), 8, 10; Cambridge University Library, Sel.3.235, no. 102, 'A New Ballad.'

⁴⁸ On 'popery in masquerade,' see Stephen A. Kent, 'The "Papist" Charges Against the Interregnum Quakers,' Journal of Religious History, xii (1982–3), 180–8; Harris, London Crowds, 119, 139–141, 144; Alexandra Walsham, Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500–1700 (Manchester, 2006), 204–6.

Catholics were permitted to take seats in the two Houses, James would dissolve parliament and call another set of elections, using force and fraud to ensure that a Catholic majority was returned to the Commons while also creating enough Catholic peers to fill the Lords. A parliament so composed would vote to overturn the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity and return England to Rome.⁴⁹

The repealers countered this conspiracy theory by mounting a critique of anti-popery itself. William Penn argued that anti-popery was unreasonable because the Catholics were too few in number, at less than one percent of the English population, to accomplish the designs being imputed to them.⁵⁰ This claim, however, simply sidestepped the argument of the opponents of repeal, which was that the number of Catholics was larger than it seemed because so many of them were masquerading as nonconformists. Henry Care hit back more directly at the motives of those who were spreading anti-popish stories, arguing that Anglican ‘persecutors’ were spreading the rumours in order to maintain the upper hand over nonconformists. If the repeal cause failed, Anglicans would return to persecuting nonconformists and would reassert their valuable monopoly over public offices. Their ‘Apprehension of Popery’ was not genuine

⁴⁹ Story, Journal, 3; A Letter to a Dissenter from his Friend at The Hague (The Hague, 1688, L1633), 4; Some Queries Concerning Liberty of Conscience (n.p., [1688], Wing S4559), 3–4; Halifax, Letter to a Dissenter, 6; NUL, PwA 2148, James Rivers to [Hans Willem Bentinck], 27 Feb. 1688; Warwickshire County Record Office, CR2017/C7/17, letter to [Everhard Dijkveld], 1687; BL, Add. MS 71446, fo. 44v; PRO, PRO 31/3/168, fo. 49v, Barrillon to Louis XIV, 7/17 March 1687; Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS D850, fo. 61v, notes of Denis Granville.

⁵⁰ [William Penn], Good Advice to the Church of England (London, 1687, Wing P1296), 49; for similar arguments, see also BL, Add. MS 72866, William Petty papers, fos. 19v, 35v; [Henry Care], Animadversions on a Late Paper, 15; [John Northleigh], Parliamentum Pacificum (London, 1688, Wing N1302), 29; [John Northleigh], Dr. Burnett’s Reflections (London, 1688, Wing N1298), 16. On the modest size of the Catholic population in this period, see John Miller, Popery and Politics in England, 1660–1688 (Cambridge, 1973), 9–12.

but was, instead, a pretense to ‘serve the Ends designed’, the maintenance of Anglican power over nonconformists.⁵¹

Many Anglicans interpreted these critiques of anti-popery as yet another sign that a popish onslaught was imminent. Since Penn and Care were widely believed to be Jesuits in disguise, their arguments could not be credited. One author described Penn’s critique of anti-popery as ‘Sophistry’ and accused him of arguing on behalf of popery as part of a secret deal struck when Charles II gave him the proprietorship of Pennsylvania.⁵² Denying the existence of a Catholic plot was exactly the sort of thing that Catholics in disguise would do.

The repealers faced a difficult challenge: how to deal with an opposition so wedded to a conspiratorial narrative that any attempt to counter the narrative was taken as further evidence of a conspiracy. Rather than abandon their agenda, they resolved to carry on, hoping that the scare stories would be disproved by subsequent events. Anti-popish fears would be assuaged, repealers believed, when a complete liberty of conscience was instituted and every Christian denomination was treated alike. As one author wrote, striking a theme that would recur in modern history, ‘We have now nothing to Fear, but the Dismal Effects of Popular Fears.’⁵³ But the repealer utopia never arrived; William of Orange and a Dutch fleet did.

⁵¹ Publick Occurrences, no. 15 (29 May 1688); see also Publick Occurrences, no. 8 (10 Apr. 1688), no. 17 (12 June 1688), no. 19 (26 June 1688), no. 23 (24 July 1688); [Henry Care], Animadversions on a Late Paper, 6–7; Two Plain Words to the Clergy (London, 1688, Wing T3527), 9–10; [Stephen Lobb], A Second Letter to a Dissenter (London, 1687, Wing L2729A), 10.

⁵² A Letter Containing Some Reflections, (n.p., [1688], Wing L1357A), 4, 1–2.

⁵³ T. D., Fears and Jealousies Ceas’d (n.p., [1688], Wing D1884), 8; see also [Elkanah Settle?], An Expedient for Peace (London, 1688, Wing E3872aA), 33; [Henry Care], The Legality of the Court held by His Majesties Ecclesiastical Commissioners, Defended (London, 1688, Wing C527), 38; [Henry Care], Animadversions on a Late Paper, 17, 40; PRO, PRO 31/3/168, fo. 50, Barrillon to Louis XIV, 7/17 March 1687.

III

As James's government collapsed in the autumn of 1688, so too did the hopes of repealers. Most of the participants in the repeal campaign withdrew from any association with it after William's takeover of the government. Some dissenters issued public statements disavowing any connection to the campaign. In this they were aided and abetted by the new government itself. William came to woo the nonconformists, not to accuse them. His propagandists aimed to suppress the memory of the repealer movement, not to recover it. Meanwhile, some of the people who previously had dismissed the movement now had an incentive to highlight it in order to smear their political opponents with the taint of having collaborated with Catholics.

Soon after William landed, some repealers began to backtrack. John Baker, a nonconformist in Hull who had presented a repealer address to James, promptly signed a letter praising William for his invasion.⁵⁴ He was not alone in his timely tergiversation. If nonconformists wished to gain religious toleration, they needed to pay court to the ruling power. Before he landed in England, William had promised ease for tender consciences, and he secured his promise by pressing parliament to pass an Act of Toleration in May 1689.⁵⁵ This act fell short of the repealer ideal, but it went further than it could have, offering toleration, not just to the moderate nonconformists who had often

⁵⁴ Hull City Archives, Abraham De la Pryme MSS, DMX/132, p. 175; Byrnmor Jones Library, Hull University, DDHO/13/2b, James Bradshaw et al. to Sir John Hotham, 15 Dec. 1688; Short, 'Corporation of Hull,' 189.

⁵⁵ The Declaration of His Highnes[s] William Henry, by the Grace of God Prince of Orange (The Hague, 1688, Wing W2328), 4; G. V. Bennett, 'King William III and the Episcopate,' in G. V. Bennett and J. D. Walsh (eds.), Essays in Modern English Church History (New York, 1966), 112–3, 115–6; Jonathan I. Israel, 'William III and Toleration,' in Grell, Israel and Tyacke (eds.), From Persecution to Toleration, 151–5.

stayed neutral or opposed the repeal campaign, but also to the radical nonconformists who had frequently joined it.

The Act of Toleration underpinned an enduring alliance between William's largely Anglican government and the main Protestant nonconformist groups. The Act suspended, though it did not repeal, the penal laws, and it contained specific provisions to accommodate the scruples of Quakers and Baptists who were opposed to oath-taking and infant baptism. The Act did not permit nonconformists to take public offices or to graduate from the universities, but in incorporating the more radical nonconformist groups it was more expansive than might have been expected. After a half-century of conflict, with first the nonconformists in power under Cromwell and then the cavaliers in control under Charles II, each side hitting the other when it had the chance, a new alliance was struck in which the winners in 1689 offered an olive branch to the losers. The English political process shifted into a new phase, as the winner-take-all form of politics of the English Reformation and Civil War gave way to an incorporative form of politics that eventually expanded in the nineteenth century to encompass other marginalized groups, including Catholics and Jews. The alliance of 1689 was ratified in the subsequent historiography, as whig historians chose to overlook the extent to which nonconformists had supported James's toleration campaign.

The incorporative settlement of 1689 did not stem primarily from any growing tolerance among members of the Church of England in the later seventeenth century; it came about because England's geopolitical situation necessitated it. The key transitions were more political than intellectual. The Anglicans had been sharply divided on the question of toleration for nearly a generation. When political parties formed in the late

1670s and early 1680s, they organized in part around the question of toleration, with whigs generally in favour of some degree of toleration and tories largely opposed. A measure of toleration had nearly been enacted in 1681 at the close of the whig-dominated second exclusion parliament, but the opponents of toleration decisively regained the initiative after the dissolution of the Oxford parliament and launched a barrage of persecution during the so-called ‘tory reaction’ of 1681–5.⁵⁶ After this instructive experience with a tory relapse into persecution, many nonconformists demonstrated their willingness to break with Protestant unity by forging a tolerationist coalition with James II and the Catholics. This decisive move brought even the most intransigent tories to the bargaining table. At the height of the repeal campaign, in the spring of 1688, the archbishop of Canterbury signaled his willingness to demonstrate ‘due tenderness’ for dissenters in the next parliament.⁵⁷ In the post-revolutionary crisis, with James rallying troops in France and Ireland, the archbishop’s promise could not easily be shrugged off; this was especially the case because James was known to be readying his own competing Act of Toleration for passage through the Irish Parliament in Dublin. As the whig Sir Henry Capel said in the House of Commons in May 1689 in reference to the nonconformists, ‘I would not give them occasion to throw themselves out of the Protestant interest.’⁵⁸

⁵⁶ H. Horwitz, ‘Protestant Reconciliation in the Exclusion Crisis,’ *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xv (1964), 209–14; Grant Tapsell, *The Personal Rule of Charles II, 1681–85* (Woodbridge, 2007), 64–91. On the lack of any broad shift towards greater tolerance in this period, see Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, 8–10, 39–49, 300; Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007), 5–6, 353–7.

⁵⁷ *A Collection of Papers Relating to the Present Juncture of Affairs* ([London], 1688, Wing C5169A), 1; see also Thomas, ‘Seven Bishops,’ 62–4; George Every, *The High Church Party, 1688–1718* (London, 1956), 20–25.

⁵⁸ Grey, *Debates*, ix, 261; James II, *By the King, A Proclamation* (Dublin, 1689, Wing J269), 2; *Entring Book of Roger Morrice*, v, 117; HMC, *Ormonde*, n.s., viii, 391–2. For contemporary concern about a

This was not how the story was told at the time. It suited all sides to present the Toleration Act as a generous gift to loyal nonconformists, rather than a strategic concession to potentially disloyal nonconformists. Tories in parliament were able to save face by conceding some ground without having to admit they were doing so under duress. The nonconformists were able to present themselves as loyal to the new monarchs without having to admit that they had offered any aid to the former monarch's schemes. The Williamite whigs were able to buttress the new regime by claiming that all true Protestant subjects had rallied together against popery in the previous reign. This claim was popularized by William's propagandist, Gilbert Burnet, who denied that the English nonconformists had supported James II's policies.⁵⁹

Most of the nonconformists eagerly grasped the lifeline thrown to them by King William and Gilbert Burnet. They were as willing to forget the past as William was to forgive them for it. The Baptists were particularly exposed, given the highly visible assistance many of their leaders had offered to James.⁶⁰ The Particular Baptists issued a public statement after the revolution conceding that 'some few persons' of their denomination had 'used their Endeavours for the taking off the Penal Laws and Tests; and were employed by the late King James to go into divers Counties, and to several Corporations'. But these men, they claimed, had acted independently and had 'met with little or no Encouragement by any of our Members'. This evasive statement, printed

potential alliance between the Quakers and the exiled King James, see BL, Add. MS 70014, fo. 219, [Robert Harley] to Sir Edward Harley, 19 Apr. 1689.

⁵⁹ [Gilbert Burnet], An Apology for the Church of England (n.p., [1688], Wing B5762), 2, 6; Gilbert Burnet, A Sermon Preached in the Chappel of St. James's (London, 1689, Wing B5881), 13, 27–8; Tony Claydon, William III and the Godly Revolution (Cambridge, 1996), 161–2; see also A Memorial of God's Last Twenty Nine Years Wonders in England (London, 1689, Wing M1691), 112, 126; [Daniel Defoe], The Advantages of the Present Settlement (London, 1689, Wing A601), 6–8; [Edmund Bohun], The History of the Desertion (London, 1689, Wing B3456), 2, 134.

⁶⁰ See notes 15 and 17 above.

under the defensive title Innocency Vindicated, did not give the names of any of the regulators and did not specify what was meant by the ‘little or no Encouragement’ given them by other Baptists.⁶¹ Was it none or was it a little more than none? The Baptists were not about to say.

Baptist chroniclers airbrushed out this embarrassing phase of their denomination’s history, acknowledging only the most minimal and innocuous contacts between the Baptists and King James II. William Kiffin, a Particular Baptist preacher, contended in his memoirs that he had accepted James’s invitation to become an alderman of London only under duress and with great reluctance. He dismissed those who had joined in the repeal campaign as ‘several Dissenters—but indeed they were but few, and for the generality, of the meaner sort’.⁶² He circumspectly avoided mentioning that his own co-pastor at the Devonshire Square church, Richard Adams, had been a regulator.⁶³ Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historians, following Kiffin, chose to remember him as the representative Baptist who resisted James II’s enticements, while Adams and the other Baptist regulators fell into relative obscurity. None of them received extended biographical treatment, apart from a funeral eulogy for William Collins that neglected to mention he had been a regulator.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Innocency Vindicated; Or, Reproach Wip’d Off (London, 1689, Wing I197), 1–2; also printed in A Narrative of the Proceedings of the General Assembly (London, 1689, Wing N216), 26–7.

⁶² Remarkable Passages in the Life of William Kiffin, ed. William Orme (London, 1823), 84–8; on Kiffin as an alderman, see NUL, Portland MSS, PwV 61/23, J. Povey to Sir Robert Southwell, 13 Aug. 1687.

⁶³ Adams became Kiffin’s co-pastor in 1690 and remained so until the latter’s death in 1701: see Whitley, Baptists of London, 106; Guildhall Library, MS 20228:1A, Memoranda of the Acts of Devonshire Square Baptist Church, 1664–1702, entry for Oct. 1690.

⁶⁴ On Kiffin, see John Duncombe, Letters, by Several Eminent Persons Deceased, 2nd edn, 3 vols. (London, 1773), vol. ii, appendix, pp. lxii–lxiv; Walter Wilson, The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses, in London, 4 vols. (London, 1808–14), i, 426–8; Joseph Ivimey, The Life of Mr. William Kiffin (London, 1833), 85–91, 107–9; Macaulay, History of England, ii, 878–82. On Collins, see John Piggott, Eleven Sermons Preach’d upon Special Occasions (London, 1714), 279–84. The

The most famous Baptist of all, John Bunyan, had been approached by one of the local agents of the regulators in 1688. The author of Pilgrim's Progress, whose statue still stands in the town of Bedford where his mixed assembly of Baptists and Congregationalists once met, had given his opinion in favour of repeal, according to the agent sent to speak with him. Several years later, Bunyan's posthumous biographer retouched this episode, claiming that the Baptist author had been too circumspect to offer any support to the king's schemes. This attempt at clearing Bunyan's name is unconvincing, given the contemporary testimony of the repealer agent.⁶⁵ Seven members of Bunyan's congregation, moreover, had been appointed and served as councillors of Bedford as a result of the king's regulation of the town in 1688. The newly regulated council, on a unanimous vote, had sent an address to the king thanking him for his Declaration for Liberty of Conscience and promising to work for the election of pro-repeal Members of Parliament.⁶⁶ There were repealers in Bunyan's congregation, and it seems likely that he himself was one of them.

Like the Baptists, the Quakers found ways to whitewash their past loyalties. A number of them had taken up public office during James's reign, including at least six who had accepted civic offices as part of the king's regulation of the English towns and several who had served as aldermen in the Irish corporations of Dublin, Cork, Cashell

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography has a substantial entry on Kiffin but no entries for any of the Baptist regulators.

⁶⁵ Compare Duckett, Penal Laws, ii, 59, with 'The Continuation of Mr. Bunyan's Life,' appended to John Bunyan, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, 7th edn (London, 1692, Wing B5527), 161–3.

⁶⁶ Richard L. Greaves, Glimpses of Glory: John Bunyan and English Dissent (Stanford, 2002), 569–72; Michael Mullett, John Bunyan in Context (Keele, 1996), 112–4; Bedfordshire Record Office, Bor.B/B2/2 (Bedford Corporation Minute Book, 1664–1688), pp. 288, 292–6; London Gazette, no. 2351 (28–31 May 1688).

and Limerick.⁶⁷ These incidents were edited out of Quaker histories, a redaction seen in the successive editions of Willem Sewel's influential history of Quakerism. When the Dutchman published his work in Amsterdam, he noted candidly that a Quaker had served as an alderman of Dublin in the time of James II. But, when the English translation of Sewel's history was prepared under the supervision of the Quaker Meeting for Sufferings in London, this passage was excised from the text.⁶⁸

Critics of the Quakers were not, however, about to forgive and forget. These gadflies, including the eponymous Francis Bugg, goaded the Quakers with tales of their past indiscretions. Bugg reprinted the addresses of thanks sent by the Society of Friends to James during his reign, noting piquantly that they had once promised to pray for King James but now claimed to have a conscientious objection against praying for King William. Another accuser, George Keith, reminded Quakers that they had participated in James's campaign to regulate the county magistracies.⁶⁹ Stung by these accusations, the Quakers continued to distance themselves from the exiled James, with some even suggesting that William Penn, who remained closely associated in the public mind with the Jacobite cause, should be forbidden from preaching in their meetings. They sent an

⁶⁷ Library of the Society of Friends in London, A.R. Barclay MSS, no. 103, William Edmundson to George Fox, 12 Nov. 1687; Library of the Society of Friends in Dublin, Sharp MS, S6, fo. 30, George Fox to William Edmundson, 28 Nov. 1687; Richard L. Greaves, Dublin's Merchant-Quaker: Anthony Sharp and the Community of Friends, 1643–1707 (Stanford, 1998), 53–60; Sowerby, 'James II's Revolution,' 121–4.

⁶⁸ Compare Willem Sewel, Histori van de Opkomste, Aanwas, en Voortgang der Christenen, Bekend by den Naam van Quakers (Amsterdam, 1717), 659, with William Sewel, The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress of the Christian People called Quakers (London, 1722), 610. On the objections raised by English Quakers to passages in Sewel's Dutch text, see William I. Hull, Willem Sewel of Amsterdam, 1653–1720: The First Quaker Historian of Quakerism (Philadelphia, 1934), 178–81.

⁶⁹ [Francis Bugg], A Letter to the Quakers (London, 1690, Wing B5374aA), 2; Francis Bugg, The Pilgrim's Progress, from Quakerism to Christianity (London, 1698, Wing B5382), 85–7; George Keith, An Account of the Quakers Politicks (London, 1700, Wing K137), 39; on these authors, see Richard Clark, "'The Gangreen of Quakerism': An Anti-Quaker Anglican Offensive in England after the Glorious Revolution," Journal of Religious History, xi (1980–1), 408–10, 412–3.

address to King William in 1696 pledging their loyalty, and the English Parliament in turn passed an act allowing them to make affirmations in lieu of an oath, since they had a conscientious objection to oath-taking.⁷⁰

Keith and Bugg received little support for their anti-Quaker campaigns from William's government. William and his allies were willing to overlook any indiscretions in the past, so long as the Quakers, Baptists and other nonconformists remained loyal in the present. A parliamentary inquiry into the regulation of the boroughs went nowhere, as the king resisted investigations into past malfeasance and whigs and tories squabbled over which party had done more to disgrace itself over the previous decade. None of the repealers was brought to trial, and most were covered by William and Mary's Act of Grace in 1690.⁷¹

Some Englishmen had more particular motives for participating in the cover-up of the repealer movement. One clergyman from Hull claimed that the repealer address sent to James from his town had been falsified and fraudulent, written by a nonconformist who 'had the Impudence . . . to Counterfeit & affix the hands of a great many of the Inhabitants of this town thereto'.⁷² This clergyman sought to protect the reputation of Hull's citizens by disavowing the address that had been presented in their name. Other Englishmen had their own reputations to protect. Thomas Story, who had been an

⁷⁰ Bugg, *Pilgrim's Progress*, 90–1; Henry J. Cadbury, 'Gossip in Yorkshire about William Penn,' *Bulletin of Friends' Historical Association*, xxiii (1934), 95–6; Mary K. Geiter, 'Affirmation, Assassination, and Association: The Quakers, Parliament and the Court in 1696,' *Parliamentary History*, xvi (1997), 286–8.

⁷¹ *Journals of the House of Commons*, x, 41, 341–2; *Journals of the House of Lords*, xiv, 377, 388, 394; Roger North, *The Lives of the Right Hon. Francis North, Baron Guilford; The Hon. Sir Dudley North; and the Hon. and Rev. Dr. John North*, ed. Augustus Jessopp, 3 vols. (London, 1890), ii, 224; David Ogg, *England in the Reigns of James II and William III* (Oxford, 1955), 239–41; *The Statutes of the Realm* (11 vols., London, 1810–28), vi, 174–9.

⁷² Hull City Archives, Abraham De la Pryme MSS, DMX/132, p. 175; the nonconformist in question was John Baker, mentioned above (see n. 54).

Anglican at the time of the revolution though he later became a Quaker, wrote an account of events in Carlisle at the time when repealers took over the city council. As he described it, ‘there was a loose and treacherous sort among the Protestants, who approached daily nearer and nearer towards the Papists, and fell in, generally, with all their Measures; which grieved the steady Part, and justly heightened their dreadful Apprehensions’. In this passage from his memoirs, Story aligned himself with the ‘steady’ Protestants against the repealers. But he had been more involved with the ‘loose and treacherous sort’ than he later cared to admit. The manuscript records of Carlisle reveal that he had joined the council as a capital burgess soon after the assembly had fallen into repealer hands.⁷³ In Story’s memoirs, this incriminating detail was conveniently omitted.

IV

After the revolution, the memory of the repealer movement was kept alive in the most unlikely of places: the tory party. Many tories felt that the Act of Toleration had gone too far and that the nonconformists, especially the more radical ‘sectarian’ Baptists and Quakers, had not merited this indulgence. They were indignant that the nonconformists were being flattered and favoured, and they complained loudly that these supposedly ‘loyal’ nonconformists had dallied with James II.⁷⁴ This punitive mood

⁷³ Story, *Journal*, 3; Cumbria Record Office (Carlisle), Ca/2/13, Assembly rough orders, fo. 61, minute of 25 Aug. 1688, fo. 62, minute of 4 May 1688.

⁷⁴ Henry Sacheverell, *The Political Union* (Oxford, 1702), 51–3; Jonathan Trelawny, ‘Charge [to the clergy of the diocese of Winchester in 1708],’ in *Sermon by the Rt. Rev. Sir Jonathan Trelawny, Bishop of Winchester* (London, 1876), 53–4; [Charles Hornby], *A Second Part of the Caveat against the Whigs* (London, 1712), 40, 43–4; [George Hickes], *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. John Kettlewell* (London, 1718), 141, 144, 147–53, 175; Thomas Salmon, *Modern History*, 31 vols. (London, 1724–38), xxiii, 302–3, 324, 434–5.

found expression in the furore surrounding Henry Sacheverell's trial and resulted in largely tory parliaments targeting dissenters with the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts in the closing years of Anne's reign. In 1715, tory mobs meted out further punishment by ransacking thirty dissenting meeting houses across the west midlands and the north of England.⁷⁵ Over the course of the eighteenth century, however, even tory high-flyers came to accept the toleration of long-established nonconformist groups. Their animus shifted to the more novel bugbears of freethinkers, Socinians and eventually republicans. As the earlier resentments died out, tory historiography ceased to harp on the theme of the disloyalty of the Quakers and Baptists, with David Hume soft-peddalling it in his History of Great Britain.⁷⁶

Meanwhile, in the whig histories of Abel Boyer, Gilbert Burnet and Paul de Rapin de Thoyras, the Revolution of 1688–9 became the foundation myth of a new Protestant nation. The theme of 'popery in masquerade' receded as the Baptists and Quakers came to be accepted as good Protestants. The new incorporative alliance of dissent and the Church of England was extended to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and to

⁷⁵ Geoffrey Holmes, 'The Sacheverell Riots: The Crowd and the Church in Early Eighteenth-Century London,' Past and Present, no. 72 (Aug. 1976), 64–6; Geoffrey Holmes, The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell (London, 1973), 161–74, 234–5; J. H. Y. Briggs, 'The Burning of the Meeting House, July 1715: Dissent and Faction in Late Stuart Newcastle,' North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies, xiv (1974), 69–76; Nicholas Rogers, 'Riot and Popular Jacobitism in Early Hanoverian England,' in Eveline Cruickshanks (ed.), Ideology and Conspiracy: Aspects of Jacobitism, 1689–1759 (Edinburgh, 1982), 76–8; Paul Kléber Monod, Jacobitism and the English People, 1688–1788 (Cambridge, 1989), 173–4, 182–94; John Stevenson, Popular Disturbances in England, 1700–1870 (London, 1979), 20–2, 58–9; Journals of the House of Commons, xviii, 227; Jan Maria Albers, 'Seeds of Contention: Society, Politics and the Church of England in Lancashire, 1689–1790,' (Yale Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1988), 405–13.

⁷⁶ Israel, 'William III and Toleration,' 161–2; Stephen Taylor, 'Plus ça Change...? New Perspectives on the Revolution of 1688,' Historical Journal, xxxvii (1994), 465; J. C. D. Clark, English Society, 1660–1832, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2000), 256, 273–4; Pasi Ihalainen, Protestant Nations Redefined: Changing Perceptions of National Identity in the Rhetoric of the English, Dutch and Swedish Public Churches, 1685–1772 (Leiden, 2005), 501–3; David Hume, The History of Great Britain, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1754–7), ii, 402–3, 406.

nonconformists in the American colonies.⁷⁷ A particular version of the past was developed to legitimate this incorporative alliance and the eighteenth-century whig ascendancy that rose from it. In the ideologically charged post-revolutionary climate, the impulse to persecute could not be laid to rest without rewriting history to bring nonconformists fully onto the ‘good’ or ‘Protestant’ side. The ‘Glorious’ Revolution was thus depicted as largely consensual, with Anglicans and dissenters coming together to repel popery and arbitrary government, while only a few corrupt men and crypto-Catholics were said to have offered any countenance to the king’s schemes.⁷⁸

There was no room in this narrative for a popular movement in favour of James II’s religious policies. Nonconformist historians across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries insistently denied that there had been any substantial support among dissenters for James’s policies, with whig historians eagerly seconding them.⁷⁹ Henry Hallam wrote that the nonconformists were ‘too much of Englishmen and protestants’ to fall in league with James. Thomas Babington Macaulay insisted it was the Catholic courtiers, rather than the dissenters, who had proved to be ‘generally destitute of all English feeling’,

⁷⁷ Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837 (New Haven, 1992), 53–4; Tony Claydon and Ian McBride, ‘The Trials of the Chosen Peoples: Recent Interpretations of Protestantism and National Identity in Britain and Ireland,’ in Tony Claydon and Ian McBride (eds.), Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650–c.1850 (Cambridge, 1998), 26–9; Owen Stanwood, ‘The Protestant Moment: Antipopery, the Revolution of 1688–1689, and the Making of an Anglo-American Empire,’ Journal of British Studies, xlvii (2007), 481–91, 505–8.

⁷⁸ Abel Boyer, The History of King William the Third, 3 vols. (London, 1702–3), 92–4, 114, 124–5, 165; Gilbert Burnet, Bishop Burnet’s History of His Own Time, 2 vols. (London, 1724–34), i, 701–3, 714–15, 718; Paul de Rapin de Thoyras, The History of England, 15 vols. (Dublin, 1726–32), xv, 84–5, 140–1; John Oldmixon, The History of England during the Reigns of the Royal House of Stuart (London, 1730), 721, 723.

⁷⁹ Edmund Calamy, An Abridgment of Mr Baxter’s History (London, 1702), 615–16, 623–4, 627; Edmund Calamy, Memoirs of the Life of the Late Revd. Mr. John Howe (London, 1724), 131–8; James Peirce, A Vindication of the Dissenters, 2nd edn (London, 1718), 264–71; Daniel Neal, The History of the Puritans, 4 vols. (London, 1732–38), iv, 548–51, 568–77, 591–3; Walter Wilson, The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses, in London, 4 vols. (London, 1808–14), i, 426–8, iii, 441–2; Adam Taylor, The History of the English General Baptists, 2 vols. (London, 1818), i, 304–5.

many of them choosing to be ‘traitors’ by accepting payments from abroad and assisting James II’s projects. The nonconformists, by contrast, chose to cast in ‘their lot with the great body of their countrymen’, with only William Penn and a few others going over to the papist side.⁸⁰

The whig consensus on this question was largely reinforced rather than undermined by the rise of professional historiography in the twentieth century, though interpretations of the revolution came to be phrased in less overtly judgmental terms. James’s supporters were no longer derided as ‘mercenaries’ or ‘traitors’; instead they were described, following a seminal article in 1960 by J. R. Jones, as ‘collaborators’. The term appeared to be neutral enough for modern historians to adopt it as a descriptive label, and many did so, analyzing first James II’s ‘whig collaborators’ and then his ‘tory collaborators’.⁸¹

Despite the shift in nomenclature, the underlying explanatory framework endured. Historians continued to discuss James II’s supporters as atomized individuals responding to incentives from the king. Historians of the ‘whig collaborators’ followed the marquess of Halifax’s lead by emphasizing the avarice of these men and the inducements used by the king to promote their compliance. Halifax, writing in 1687, had pointed to the king’s

⁸⁰ Henry Hallam, The Constitutional History of England, 2 vols. (London, 1827), ii, 420; Macaulay, History of England, ii, 980–2, see also ii, 871–4, 944–6.

⁸¹ For ‘whig collaborators’, see Jones, ‘James II’s Whig Collaborators,’ 68–71; Jones, Revolution of 1688, 41; David H. Hosford, Nottingham, Nobles, and the North: Aspects of the Revolution of 1688 (Hamden, 1976), 76, 143; Lois G. Schworer, The Declaration of Rights, 1689 (Baltimore, 1981), 41; Speck, Reluctant Revolutionaries, 66, 169, 175, 184; Robert Beddard, ‘The Unexpected Whig Revolution of 1688,’ in Robert Beddard (ed.), The Revolutions of 1688 (Oxford, 1991), 20; Tim Harris, Politics Under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society, 1660–1715 (London, 1993), 126, 214. For ‘tory collaborators’, see Henning (ed.), House of Commons, i, 613; Mark Goldie, ‘The Political Thought of the Anglican Revolution,’ in Beddard (ed.), Revolutions of 1688, 136; Mark Goldie, ‘John Locke, Jonas Proast and Religious Toleration 1688–1692,’ in John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor (eds.), The Church of England c.1689–c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism (Cambridge, 1993), 149, 153; Andrew Barclay, ‘James II’s ‘Catholic’ Court,’ 1650–1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era, viii (2003), 168.

canny use of royal pardons to strong-arm nonconformists into joining his campaign, and modern historians also cited these pardons as evidence that nonconformists were being drawn away from their true principles towards a temporizing compliance with the king. Other whigs and nonconformists, historians noted, benefited financially from the king's inducements, either by being forgiven the payment of a fine or by assuming a lucrative position in the government. Most whigs and nonconformists were said to have resisted such blandishments, leaving the few who succumbed open to criticism for their lack of scruples. The contempt was spread particularly thick by J. R. Western, who characterized the king's whig supporters as 'venal turncoats' who abandoned their principles for money. J. P. Kenyon, with a lighter touch, wrote that 'none of them [were] knights in shining armour'. John Miller dismissed them as a 'small and motley collection of opportunists, extremists, and men over whom he [the king] had a hold'. Douglas Lacey summed up this school of thought by devoting a chapter of his work on nonconformist politics to 'The Impact of Enticement', the seducer in chief being King James II.⁸²

The focus on incentives was in keeping with the post-war emphasis on rational choice theory common in the social sciences. Each individual tolerationist was deemed to be responding to a certain set of incentives from the king; the cultural links between one tolerationist and another were rarely examined. The very nomenclature of 'collaboration' meant that the ideological affiliations between one collaborator and another were unlikely to be explored, since collaborators do not necessarily possess a

⁸² Halifax, Letter to a Dissenter, 3; J. R. Western, Monarchy and Revolution: The English State in the 1680s (London, 1972), 223; Kenyon, Sunderland, 188; Miller, Cities Divided, 230; Lacey, Dissent, 175–208; for other statements in this vein, see Macaulay, History of England, ii, 872, 883; Turner, James II, 330; Jones, 'James II's Whig Collaborators,' 66–8, 70; Thomas, 'Seven Bishops,' 57–8; Jones, Convergent Forces, 65.

shared ideology. The pro-repeal cause could continue to be depicted as unpopular, since only individuals and not entire groups or denominations were deemed to have affiliated themselves with it. This interpretation of James II's toleration campaign relied on a reductive model of patron-client relations, where anyone who received money or favours from a higher authority was considered to be devoid of any authentic ideological commitments to the cause he or she was espousing.⁸³ Thus the repealers were seen to be doing the king's bidding rather than following their own inclinations, and they were described as part of a top-down exercise in absolutism rather than a bottom-up exercise in popular politics.

The assiduous research techniques of professional historians did mean that the fairly large number of 'collaborators' had to be acknowledged. This trend reached its apogee with that exercise in prosopography par excellence, the History of Parliament, which identified dozens of 'whig collaborators' during James II's reign.⁸⁴ This avalanche of identifications created an opening for Mark Goldie to ask, in an important set of articles, whether the men so identified deserved to be described as a small group of 'collaborators' since there were so many of them. As an alternative, he suggested that they be described as 'James II's whigs'.⁸⁵ W. A. Speck, echoing Goldie, noted that the

⁸³ This argument, which was deployed against the repealers in their own time, was dismissed by the repealer journalist Henry Care as 'that stale Witticism, That H[enry] C[are] Writes for Bread'. See Publick Occurrences, no. 18 (19 June 1688); Jones, Revolution of 1688, 144.

⁸⁴ Henning (ed.), House of Commons, i, 558, 585, 612–3, 616, 619, 633, 670, 676, 704, 709; ii, 3, 120, 165–6, 194, 207–8, 247, 263–4, 286, 291–2, 303, 338, 384, 387, 401, 422, 440, 450, 464, 503, 524, 526, 537, 551–2, 577, 582, 612, 616, 655, 674, 697, 712, 718, 731, 738; iii, 1, 4, 88, 193, 374, 439, 464, 490, 513, 555, 620, 622, 637, 639, 706, 748, 751, 754, 768, 775, 789, 792.

⁸⁵ Mark Goldie, 'John Locke's Circle and James II,' Historical Journal, xxxv (1992), 559; Mark Goldie, 'James II and the Dissenters' Revenge: the Commission of Enquiry of 1688,' Historical Research, lxvi (1993), 54–5; see also Eveline Cruickshanks' anticipation of Goldie's skepticism in her 'Religion and Royal Succession: The Rage of Party,' in Clyde Jones (ed.), Britain in the First Age of Party, 1680–1750 (London, 1987), 23.

term ‘collaborator’ is pejorative in that it has ‘echoes of Europe under the Nazi occupation’.⁸⁶ But Goldie’s proposed alternative has not caught on; instead, the term ‘whig collaborator’ has continued to be employed, though more hesitantly: it is now generally placed within quotation marks, whereas before it was baldly stated without any qualification.⁸⁷ This can hardly be deemed a suitable compromise. If ‘collaborator’, with its echoes of Vichy France, is a pejorative term, then placing it within quotation marks does not make it substantially less so.

The whig interpretation of James II’s reign has remained influential, even in works that have claimed to be moving away from it. Steve Pincus broke the mold of historiography by choosing to analyze James II’s supporters as a group, rather than as individuals responding to selective incentives from the king. Their common goal, in his view, was the establishment of an absolutist, ‘Gallican’ state in England along the lines of Louis XIV’s monarchy in France. Although they had common impulses and were not motivated purely by money, their ideology was not, in Pincus’s view, tolerationist. Pincus argued that the king had very little support among the Protestant nonconformists, who remained too attached to their English liberties to join the king’s ‘Gallican’

⁸⁶ W. A. Speck, ‘1688: A Political Revolution,’ in David Parker (ed.), Revolutions and the Revolutionary Tradition in the West, 1560–1991 (London, 2000), 61.

⁸⁷ See, for instance, Perry Gauci, Politics and Society in Great Yarmouth, 1660–1722 (Oxford, 1996), p. 167, n. 44; Halliday, Dismembering the Body Politic, 245; Paul Kléber Monod, The Murder of Mr. Grebell: Madness and Civility in an English Town (New Haven, 2003), 127. The most recent volumes in the History of Parliament series employ the term ‘whig collaborator’ frequently, sometimes with quotation marks and other times without. See Eveline Cruickshanks, Stuart Handley and D. W. Hayton, The House of Commons, 1690–1715, 5 vols. (London, 2002), ii, 465; iii, 171, 700, 755, 1008; iv, 22, 431, 590; v, 532, 628, 717, 731, 956, 961.

campaign.⁸⁸ In downplaying the links between James and the nonconformists, Pincus's work was more an extension of the earlier historiography than a refutation of it.

V

Impermanence is a defining trait of movements. The repealer movement was far from unusual among popular movements in lasting only eighteen months. Nor was it unusual in failing to achieve all of its ends. Movements that last longer than a couple of years frequently do so by transforming into what sociologists call 'social movement organizations', with formalized membership, leadership and dues-paying, instead of spontaneous activity without fixed membership or leadership.⁸⁹ Popular movements can thus be overlooked by historians, who tend to work with the records preserved by bureaucracies. In some cases, such movements attract attention by deploying physical force. Violent movements are likely to be well recorded since the state apparatus is liable to take notice of them, prosecute them, and throw up a ream of judicial records for historians to investigate. The repealers, however, did not deploy violent measures and did not develop into a longer-lived, more bureaucratic organization. There is no library that holds the records of the repealers because the repealers were not the sort of group to keep records.

Processes of marginalization are never entirely absent from any society, but, in the case of the repealers, these processes had an especially powerful effect, in part

⁸⁸ Pincus, 1688, 131–6, 199–209. To support his case, Pincus cited uncritically the whitewashed evidence from after the Revolution, including the evasive Particular Baptist apology of 1689 and the deceptively selective memoirs of Thomas Story; see Pincus, 1688, 204. For evidence that these documents should not be taken at face value, see section III above.

⁸⁹ Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani, Social Movements: An Introduction (Oxford, 1999), 16–19; Mayer N. Zald and Roberta Ash, 'Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay and Change,' Social Forces, xlv (1966), 327–8, 333–4.

because of the nature of early modern politics and in part because of the strategic choices made by the repealers themselves. Majority groups in early modern European societies were frequently inattentive to the concerns of minority groups and unwilling to acknowledge the legitimacy of minority movements. The repealers, moreover, did not name themselves, a lapse that placed their future reputation in jeopardy.

This is not just a story about history being written by the winners. After all, James II was also a loser in 1688, but he has received extensive historiographical attention, some of it sympathetic.⁹⁰ This is a story, instead, about the deliberate marginalization of a movement, both in its own time and by later generations. That marginalization was embedded in the sources in ways that insulated it from later critique. Historians entering the archives found that many or even most of the contemporary sources appeared to indicate that the Protestant nonconformists had been hostile to James II's toleration campaign. The reason for this preponderance of evidence was that the primary sources had themselves been winnowed by contemporaries to tell one version of the story, whether the culling was done by authors such as Thomas Story who omitted incriminating details from their memoirs, or editors such as the London Quakers who bowdlerized Willem Sewel's history of Quakerism. To counteract this winnowing, historians must attend carefully to the processes by which historical evidence is formed, altered and eventually deposited in archives and libraries.

The winnowing of the sources helped to support a particular interpretation of the Revolution of 1688-9, one in which all Protestants had rallied together to defend the nation against a Catholic threat. The existence of the repealer movement suggests an

⁹⁰ For sympathetic treatments, see Hilaire Belloc, James the Second (London, 1928); Maurice Ashley, James II (London, 1977); Eveline Cruickshanks, The Glorious Revolution (Basingstoke, 2000).

alternative interpretation of the events of 1688-9. The revolution, from this perspective, should not be viewed as a contest between an enlightened populace and an unenlightened monarch; rather, it represented the victory of one version of Enlightenment over another. On the one hand were those thinkers who, with John Locke, believed that toleration could only safely be provided to those who would not pledge allegiance to any foreign power or prince, thereby effectively excluding most Catholics.⁹¹ On the other were thinkers such as William Penn and Henry Care who explicitly opposed anti-popery and who thought that toleration could safely be provided to both Protestants and Catholics. One set of thinkers refused to permit Catholics to participate in government, while the other embraced the idea of a new ‘Magna Carta for liberty of conscience’ under which all Christian groups would be granted access to public office. Only the first group of thinkers has been written into the mainstream of the Enlightenment, while the repealer pamphlets have not usually been treated as Enlightenment texts. But the repealers’ emphasis on a new social contract that would embrace all Christian denominations commands attention, especially as it shows that the Lockean Enlightenment was in some ways the more moderate and less radical of the two alternatives. Jonathan Israel has recently presented Baruch Spinoza as a radical Enlightenment figure, as opposed to the more moderate Enlightenment of Locke, and the repealers can likewise be presented as

⁹¹ On Locke’s stance towards Catholics, see especially Richard Ashcraft, Revolutionary Politics and Locke’s Two Treatises of Government (Princeton, 1986), 502-4; Jonathan I. Israel, ‘Spinoza, Locke and the Enlightenment Battle for Toleration,’ in Ole Peter Grell and Roy Porter (eds.), Toleration in Enlightenment Europe (Cambridge, 2000), 103-4; Jeremy Waldron, God, Locke, and Equality: Christian Foundations of John Locke’s Political Thought (Cambridge, 2002), 218-23; John Marshall, John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture (Cambridge, 2006), 37-41, 686-94.

radical compared to the Lockean vision.⁹² To present the Glorious Revolution in this way is to take much of the sense of triumph out of the narrative, which suggests why the story was not told in this manner by nation-building historians of the eighteenth to twentieth centuries.

This revised interpretation of the revolution in turn suggests a more complete explanation for the origins of modern constitutionalism. Constitutionalism is often said to have originated in the struggles of nations to limit their rulers; thus popular sovereignty is placed at the center of these accounts, and the Revolution of 1688–9, among others, is seen as a moment when the will of the people triumphed over an oppressive regime. An account of the repealer movement highlights a different strand in the origins of modern constitutionalism, one in which minorities organized themselves to repel the overbearing demands of majorities. The settlement of 1689 was as much about limiting the oppressive power of the English majority as it was about limiting the oppressive power of the English monarch. The Protestant nonconformists, including the Baptists and Quakers, had some success in carving out a space for freedom for themselves in 1689, even if the Catholics and Socinians were left out of it. The toleration of Protestant nonconformists remained unpopular with large segments of the English population well into the eighteenth century; yet the nonconformist minority had succeeded in circumscribing the capacity of their enemies to act against them.

If the events of 1688-9 were indeed ‘Glorious’, it was because leading Anglicans did not use the revolution to exact vengeance on the nonconformists. Instead, by mutual agreement, the past was reimagined. King James was presented as an unscrupulous,

⁹² Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (Oxford, 2001), 265–70; Jonathan Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670–1752* (Oxford, 2006), 135–63.

scheming despot in league with France, while his nonconformist allies were reconceived as a handful of self-seeking turncoats. The nonconformists were invited into the eighteenth-century whig state, provided they were willing to forswear any links to the Jacobite cause. This they proved more than willing to do. The new alliance of nonconformists and Anglicans had global implications, helping to knit together the eighteenth-century British Empire, with Congregationalists in Massachusetts, Baptists in Rhode Island and Quakers in Pennsylvania treated as genuine patriots. This new Protestant alliance was founded on a lapse of memory. The history of the repealers suggests that, at least in a pre-modern context, reconciliation could best be achieved through forgetting rather than through remembering.

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