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LICENSING THE PRESS: THE CAREER OF G. R. WECKHERLIN DURING THE PERSONAL RULE OF CHARLES I*

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ABSTRACT. *The commitment of Charles I's government to press censorship and the rigour with which that censorship was enforced is the subject of the present essay. In 1627 Georg Rudolph Weckherlin, the Latin secretary to the privy council, became political licenser for the press. Over the next fourteen years he granted eighty-two licences and probably was responsible for many more. Drawing on his two office diaries, his personal correspondence, and the books and pamphlets to which he gave his imprimatur, this essay attempts a small portrait of a 'royal censor' in 1630s London. Although he occasionally allowed works implicitly critical of government policy, he appears to have been conscientious in his duties. (At least twice he approached Charles for his opinion about a licence.) Weckherlin's eventual loss of his licensing job to secretary of state Sir Francis Windebank's staff signalled the crown's interest in an even closer watch on printing and publishing. The evidence of Weckherlin's career suggests that in the decade before the Long Parliament Charles increasingly sought to curtail the power of the press.*

I

Late in the summer of 1627 Viscount Conway was feeling testy. As secretary of state under Charles I, he ought not to have had to concern himself with public opinion or with the printers and publishers who pandered to it. Books and pamphlets having to do with state policy ordinarily came under the purview of the bishop of London, and there was a system in place for licensing such materials. Newsbooks, called 'corantos', were already checked for false reports and slander. However, the summer of 1627 was no ordinary time. England was at war with France, and cheap corantos, readily available in the bookstalls around St Paul's Cathedral, reported weekly on the fighting.[1] More than this, they implicitly questioned the way the king and privy council were running the war. Busy as he was amid all the details of supplying an amphibious invasion, Conway turned his attention to what was being written – and read – at home. In a letter to the master and wardens of the Stationers' Company, the secretary

* I owe thanks to the English Speaking Union of Kentucky, the Graduate School of the University of Kentucky, and the Huntingdon Library for generous financial assistance.

[1] P. Blayney, *The bookshops in Paul's Cross churchyard* (London, 1990), pp. 5, 10, 11, 76–7; F. S. Siebert, *Freedom of the press in England, 1476–1776* (Urbana, 1952), pp. 148–56; F. Dahl, *A bibliography of English corantos and periodical newsbooks, 1620–1642* (London, 1952), pp. 18–25; and A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, eds., *A short title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English books printed abroad, 1475–1640*, 2nd edn, revised by W. A. Jackson et al. (3 vols., London, 1976–91), II, pp. 178–85 (hereafter *STC*).

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complained that some of the company's members had published corantos containing 'manie things … that are false and oftentimes scandalous to the proceedings of his Maiestie and his Allyes'. Accordingly, the company would in future 'give order that nothing of that kind should bee printed without the view and … approbation of my servaunt Weckherlin'.[2] With this warrant from the secretary, Georg Rudolph Weckherlin took over as political licenser for the press, a post he would hold for more than a decade.

Weckherlin, a native German and well-known poet, is one of the few Caroline bureaucrats about whom we have much information. His papers survive in the Trumbull collection at the British Library, and, used in conjunction with the books that he licensed, they make possible a comparatively detailed study of government control of the press. Although the Stationers' Registers list only 82 works as licensed 'under his hand', he undoubtedly examined more than 200 corantos in addition. The diary Weckherlin kept in the 1630s gives no hint of the licences he denied; however, a memorandum drawn up in 1632 dramatically reveals that he exercised this power with Charles's knowledge and approval.[3]

This evidence from Weckherlin bears directly on recent debates over the nature of censorship in early Stuart England. The traditional view, advanced by S. R. Gardiner and T. B. Macaulay in the nineteenth century, asserted that Charles became increasingly intolerant after dissolving the parliament of 1628–9. Anyone who published opinions contrary to royal policy could expect the full rigour of the court of Star Chamber.[4] Literary scholars and historians have largely accepted this view. Yet while acknowledging the fierce punishments from above, they have begun to pay attention to voices that somehow succeeded in questioning royal policy. Richard Cust and Thomas Cogswell, for example, find that, although the crown tried to control the spread of information, in fact everyone from peers of the realm down to day-labourers

[2] British Library (BL), Trumbull Manuscripts (MSS), Miscellaneous Correspondence (Misc. Corr.), vol. XVIII, fo. 82. See L. K. Born, *British manuscripts project: a checklist of microfilms* (Washington, 1955), pp. 48–9.

[3] W. W. Greg, *Licensers for the press, &c. to 1640* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 94–5. Weckherlin licensed eighty-two works between 19 June 1627 and 23 July 1641: see E. Arber, ed., *A transcript of the registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554–1640* (4 vols., London, 1875–7), IV, pp. 182–418; and G. E. B. Eyre, C. R. Rivington, and H. R. Plomer, eds., *A transcript of the registers of the worshipful Company of Stationers, from 1640–1708* (3 vols., London, 1913–14), I, pp. 1–29. Weckherlin probably also licensed more than 200 corantos published 1627–41: see Dahl, *Bibliography*, pp. 152–222; Diary of Georg Rudolph Weckherlin, 1633–42, BL, Trumbull MSS, Misc. Corr., LXI, unfoliated (hereafter Weckherlin diary); and Weckherlin memorandum, 8 February 1632, BL, Trumbull MSS, Misc. Corr., XLII, fo. 35. S. A. Baron, 'The privy council and the press in early Stuart England' (paper presented at the annual meeting of the North American Conference on British Studies, Washington, DC, Oct. 1995), pp. 9–11, argues that Weckherlin saw and licensed only the corantos listed and under his name in the Stationers' Register. This seems unlikely to me, but it must be admitted that there is no direct evidence proving Weckherlin's oversight of the scores of corantos printed 1627–32. I am obliged to Dr Baron for allowing me to see this paper.

[4] T. B. Macaulay, *The history of England from the accession of James II* (5 vols., New York, 1849–63), I, pp. 80–3; and S. R. Gardiner, *A history of England from the accession of James I to the outbreak of the Civil War, 1603–1642* (10 vols., London, 1905), VII, pp. 79, 130, 332–3; VIII, 228–31.

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had a voracious appetite for news. The crown also had difficulty controlling the public stage. Martin Butler contends that plays were more or less subject to censorship depending on their venue. Dramas performed at court 'were limited in the material they could use [and] the diversity of opinion they could express'; on the other hand, those performed at outdoor and private theatres gave royal censors much more difficulty. For literary works, Annabel Patterson accepts that stringent regulations were in place; in fact, authors had an implicit bargain with the state that allowed them to express oblique and metaphorical criticism.[5] All of these scholars take censorship as a given. However, except for obligatory nods to Henry Herbert, master of the revels, none of them pays attention to the censors themselves.

Recently, some historians have taken a fresh look at government repression. They find little evidence to support the traditional picture and argue trenchantly for a more balanced view of Charles's regime. Kevin Sharpe, for example, writes: 'Government censorship, however, not least because there were no adequate institutions or mechanisms through which to exercise it, was largely ineffective even when attempted and the evidence suggests it was attempted only in extreme cases.'[6] Echoing these sentiments, John Morrill argues that 'the state was not efficient enough [or] worried enough' to seek out unlicensed items. Sheila Lambert, meanwhile, contends that what looks like censorship was often simply an attempt to regulate the Stationers' Company and monopolize the printing trade. These scholars' rejection of state censorship and of 'the old myth of the struggle for the freedom of the press' represents a major challenge to Gardiner's view.[7] In this new picture England looks very like the haven described by Clarendon: English people in the 1630s had few complaints and the English king listened equably on the rare occasions when criticisms were voiced.[8] If Sharpe, Morrill, and Lambert are right that Charles's regime was tolerant, benignly ineffective, and more concerned with regulating trade than suppressing dissent, then a civil war originating in

[5] M. Butler, *Theatre and crisis, 1632–1642* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 4, 6, 234, 286; A. Patterson, *Censorship and interpretation* (Madison, 1984), pp. 7, 11, 17; T. Cogswell, 'The politics of propaganda: Charles I and the people in the 1620s', *Journal of British Studies*, 29 (1990), pp. 189–90, 213–14; and R. Cust, 'News and politics in early-seventeenth-century England', *Past & Present*, 112 (1986), pp. 66, 88, 89–90. See also C. Hill, 'The pre-revolutionary decades' and 'Censorship and English literature', both in *The collected essays of Christopher Hill* (3 vols., Amherst, 1985–6), I, pp. 3–71.

[6] K. Sharpe, 'A commonwealth of meanings: languages, analogues, ideas and politics', in his *Politics and ideas in early Stuart England* (London, 1989), p. 9.

[7] S. Lambert, 'The printers and the government, 1604–1637', in R. Myers and M. Harris, eds., *Aspects of printing from 1600* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 1–2, 16–17; idem, 'Richard Montagu, Arminianism and censorship', *Past & Present*, 124 (1989), p. 68; J. Morrill, 'Christopher Hill's revolution', in his *The nature of the English revolution* (London, 1993), pp. 280–1; and K. Sharpe, *The personal rule of Charles I* (New Haven, 1992), pp. 644–730. See also B. Worden, 'Literature and political censorship in early modern England', in A. C. Duke and C. A. Tamse, eds., *Too mighty to be free* (Zutphen, 1988), pp. 45–62; and M. Bland, '"Invisible dangers": censorship and the subversion of authority in early modern England', *Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America*, 90 (1996), pp. 151–93.

[8] E. Hyde, earl of Clarendon, *The history of the rebellion and civil wars in England*, ed. W. D. Macray (6 vols., Oxford, 1888), I, pp. 83–4, 94–6.

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seething grievance and long-term conflict appears nonsensical. If they are wrong – and this essay argues that they *are* wrong – if it can be shown that the government worked to silence public discussion of religion at home and war abroad, then historians must reconsider whether or not the cataclysm of the 1640s had its origins deep in the preceding decades.

I

Weckherlin's background made his position at the court of Charles I unusual. Born in 1584, he had been raised a Lutheran in the city of Stuttgart, where his father was a court official to the duke of Württemberg. After studying law at the university of Tübingen, Weckherlin followed his father into government service and got a post under the diplomat Benjamin von Bouwinghausen-Walmerode. He also began to write poems and masques for the ducal court at Stuttgart. Because of his gift for languages, he made several trips abroad in Bouwinghausen's service and one of these probably turned into an extended visit to England. There he met his future wife Elizabeth Raworth of Dover. In 1616 they married, but the couple did not come to England to stay until some time in the early 1620s. He was an expatriate for the rest of his life.[9]

Why exactly Weckherlin left the court at Stuttgart for London is not known. In 1616 he dedicated a book to James I's daughter, Elizabeth, whose marriage to Prince Frederick V of the Pfalz had given her considerable influence both in Germany and England.[10] Elizabeth probably helped him to his place as Latin secretary to the English privy council; he was holding this position, though without formal appointment, by April 1624. His decision to move his young family (by 1620 he had two children) may also have been precipitated by the Thirty Years War. Although this bloodiest war of religion did not devastate his home until the 1630s, Weckherlin must have watched the victories of Catholic imperial troops at White Mountain, Höchst, and Wimpfen with disquiet. Certainly in later years he seems to have regarded himself as a refugee and dispossessed.[11]

By the early 1630s, he had achieved a position of responsibility that he was to keep even after the king's departure from London and the outbreak of civil war. Since 1624 he had been employed as Latin secretary to the privy council

[9] L. Stephen and S. Lee, eds., *The dictionary of national biography* (22 vols., London, 1959), xx, pp. 1039–40 (hereafter *DNB*); G. E. Aylmer, *The king's servants* (New York, 1961), p. 146; L. W. Forster, *Georg Rudolph Weckherlin: zur kenntnis seines lebens in England* (Basle, 1944); idem, 'Two drafts by Weckherlin of a masque for the queen of England', *German Life and Letters*, new ser., 18 (1965), p. 258; J. A. Vann, *The making of a state: Württemberg, 1593–1793* (Ithaca, 1984), pp. 72, 79, 82; M. and H. Garland, *The Oxford companion to German literature* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1986), pp. 960–1; and G. R. Weckherlin, *Gedichte*, ed. H. Fischer (3 vols., Tübingen, 1894–1907).

[10] G. R. Weckherlin, *Triumphall shews set forth lately at Stutgart*, in L. Krapf and C. Wagenknecht, eds., *Stuttgarter hoffeste* (Tübingen, 1979), p. 6.

[11] *DNB*, xx, p. 1039; D. Hirst, *Authority and conflict* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 115; C. V. Wedgwood, *The Thirty Years War* (London, 1938), pp. 51–2; Aylmer, *King's servants*, p. 133; G. Parker, *The Thirty Years' War* (revised edn, London, 1987), pp. 61–2, 65, 165; Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC), *Report on the manuscripts of the earl of Denbigh* (London, 1911), p. 47.

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which meant that foreign letters in Latin had to go through his office. His position as German interpreter ensured for him a similar monopoly over correspondence to and from the embattled states of the empire. After Conway's promotion to lord president of the council, Weckherlin served as principal clerk to a series of secretaries of state: Viscount Dorchester, Sir John Coke, Sir Henry Vane, the elder, and Sir Edward Nicholas. Such offices, particularly during the tenure of Sir John Coke, gave him a great deal of latitude in day-to-day administration.[12] As we shall see, this latitude extended to the licensing of books. Having sided with parliament after the break with the king, he continued as Latin secretary and served as 'secretary for foreign affairs' to the Committee of Both Kingdoms, a post he eventually surrendered to John Milton.[13] Under the commonwealth Weckherlin was extremely busy, busier than he had been under Charles, and, soon after the death of his wife in 1645, age and weariness led him into retirement. Only Milton's blindness in the early 1650s brought him briefly back into government service. This return cannot have lasted long, for he died in February 1653.[14]

Clarendon's later remark that Weckherlin was an 'inconsiderable' man only demonstrates that political consequence is a relative matter.[15] He was always a talented, painstaking government official, and though he played little role on the national stage, his favour as licenser was crucial to authors and publishers. Weckherlin was a man worth cultivating. His in-laws, the Raworths, acknowledged his role as patriarch of the clan and regularly sought his assistance. His friend Sir Thomas Roe, an influential diplomat during the 1620s, though admittedly out of favour for most of the 1630s, kept up a steady correspondence with him and visited his house when in England. Viscount Conway, his former superior, sent him gifts, and Conway's son solicited his correspondence before going into Ireland. Sir William Boswell and other English agents abroad had frequent professional dealings with him; but they also sought his opinions and good offices as one close to the king. The elector palatine, Charles Lewis, sent him gifts and seems to have kept tabs on his relatives in Germany.[16] He was clearly esteemed by all of these men and he wrote letters of news to most of them.

[12] F. M. G. Evans, *The principal secretary of state* (Manchester, 1923), pp. 96, 162; Aylmer, *King's servants*, pp. 110, 133; and Weckherlin diary, 26 Oct. 1636.

[13] Aylmer, *King's servants*, pp. 363–4; *Calendar of state papers domestic series of the reign of Charles I, 1625–1649* (London, 1858–97), 1629–31, pp. 514, 557, and 1639–40, p. 434 (hereafter *CSPD*); BL Trumbull MSS, Weckherlin papers, unbound ser., additional MSS, LX, office diary of G. R. Weckherlin, 22 Dec. 1643, fo. 1v (hereafter Weckherlin office diary); and Weckherlin to Elizabeth Trumbull, 2 Dec. 1641, no. 57, Library of Congress, marquesses of Downshire Library, Trumbull MSS, Weckherlin papers, letters, 1613–61, microfilm D185, Camb 216 (hereafter Weckherlin letters). See Born, *British manuscripts projects*, pp. 48–9.

[14] Weckherlin letters, Weckherlin to Elizabeth Trumbull, nos. 83 and 85, 26 Nov. 1644 and 12 Feb. 1645; idem to his wife Elizabeth, nos. 92–3, 1–2 July 1645; and *DNB*, xx, p. 1039. His wife Elizabeth Raworth Weckherlin died 25 July 1645.

[15] Weckherlin office diary, 8 Mar. 1644, 5–12 July 1644, fos. 4r, 6r; and Evans, *Principal secretary*, pp. 109–10, 173. Clarendon's remark is from Evans, *Principal secretary*, p. 173.

[16] L. W. Forster, 'Sources for G. R. Weckherlin's life in England: the correspondence', *Modern Language Review*, 41 (1946), pp. 187–8; *CSPD*, 1629–31, p. 327; Weckherlin letters, Weckherlin to

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Although he spread news to his friends and patrons liberally, Weckherlin appears to have been tight-lipped about expressing his own attitude towards politics and religion. According to Caroline Hibbard, his views 'were staunchly Protestant and anti-Habsburg', and as such conflicted with the dominant attitude at court, which inclined towards Spain, Arminianism, and neutrality in the German wars.[17] Yet he probably did not make his views plain to those he worked with. His opinions – very likely anti-Catholic, pro-German, and hostile to Spain – were not advertised with calls for a more aggressive foreign policy.[18] Most of the time in his diaries and letters, his views slipped out by-the-by. He rarely enlarged on the perfidy of papists or the malignancy of Spain. This may be because he assumed his correspondents shared his views. It may also mean that he was a naturally cautious man who gauged the political climate and, wanting to keep his job, opted to wait for a weather change.

Kevin Sharpe has recently suggested in a broader context that the reason we find little documented conflict during the personal rule is because there is not much to find; politics certainly did not polarize between 'court' and 'country'.[19] According to this reading, Weckherlin's opinions must have been lightly held: the reason he did not often mention his position on Spain and the Catholics is because he did not feel they posed a threat. He would have accepted that, if he differed with his sovereign, their differences would concern details, not fundamental principle. Sharpe's suggestion does not apply very well to Weckherlin, whose political ideas were long-standing. Even before the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, he had called for German freedom and unity. A German knight, he argued, should

> bee willing and ready to persecute till death all contentious and seditious men. And ... no respect of religion may withhold any honest man, and much lesse a knight from such an intent: But the love, hee beareth to his countrie, and to the Germane freedome, shall subdue all other considerations.[20]

This passage from a pageant written in 1616 should probably be read against the context of the Protestant Union and the increasing fears that internal conflict might lead to a general war. 'Seditious men' may have meant no more than Catholics – the allegorical scenes Weckherlin described taking place before an exclusively Protestant audience – but his central point that confessional rivalries threatened the peace and freedom of all Germany is clear. Furthermore, he feared foreign intervention. The presence of a Spanish army athwart the Rhine after the second Cleves-Jülich crisis in 1614 must have seemed a ominous threat to 'Germane freedome'. Much later he was to write that 'without the Spanish meanes, we should never have lost all our meanes (I

Elizabeth and William Trumbull, no. 109, 2 Dec. 1645; and Weckherlin diary, 24 Oct. 1636, 2 Jan. 1637, 18 Oct. 1637, 12 Apr. 1638, 13 Jan. 1639.

[17] C. Hibbard, *Charles I and the popish plot* (Chapel Hill, 1983), p. 33; L. J. Reeve, *Charles I and the road to personal rule* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 1; and Sharpe, *Charles I*, p. 156.

[18] But see P. Vincent, *The lamentations of Germany* (1638) (STC 24761), discussed below.

[19] Sharpe, *Charles I*, p. 684.

[20] Weckherlin, *Triumphall shews*, p. 102.

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speake now as a German, that also hath lost there his patrimony) in Germanie'. Weckherlin blamed Spain for the escalation of the Thirty Years War.[21]

These views were not forgotten. In the late 1630s, as he prepared his latest book of verses for the press, he wrote to a friend in Amsterdam 'asking his advise about verses against the papists'. Later still, after civil war came, he bitterly recorded his realization 'that his Majesty had long since (before any troubles in these kingdomes) given Commission to the Irish papists, to subdue and extirpate the English Protestants in Ireland'.[22] Weckherlin's anti-Catholic convictions were certainly conventional but his concern with the Irish rebellion should not be seen in isolation. To an immigrant, the revolt in Ireland, egged on by the king, made the continuing German wars both more relevant and more sinister. There is no evidence that he suspected a popish conspiracy before John Pym made the idea plausible in 1640. Nevertheless, his dislike of the Spanish faction and his feelings of bitterness over the abandonment of the German Protestants 'polarized' his opinions long before the outbreak of the Scottish and Irish wars.

More difficult is to determine Weckherlin's exact religious orientation. Gerald Aylmer insists on his 'ardent' Lutheranism, explaining that when he swore loyalty to King Charles in 1631 in order to become German interpreter, he took a special oath and did not have to swear on the King James Bible. Still, he attended a regular English church and seems to have conformed to its order of service.[23] He reports in his diary having received the communion four times in three years. This is not a significant sample, but except for Christmas 1636, all communions were received at the beginning of the month, which suggests that he took the sacrament regularly.[24] Weckherlin's godly leanings might be deduced from how frequently he noted Sundays in his diary. They were almost always marked, other days less so. Still this is a crude indicator, as a glance at the diary of Samuel Pepys a generation later will show. Pepys frequently noted 'Lords days' and he was hardly a puritan. On the other hand, Weckherlin did not insist on keeping the sabbath holy: his diary often shows him working straight through the week. On at least one occasion, he records his family as having attended a masque on Sunday.[25] His religious sympathies lay with the reformed churches across the Channel, and he saw no conflict with the church of England.

One may wonder if King Charles knew of, or cared about, these attitudes of his Latin secretary. Charles and Weckherlin were without doubt well acquainted. The king displayed enough interest in his children that Weckherlin

[21] Parker, *Thirty Years' War*, pp. 12, 36; and HMC *Denbigh*, p. 47.

[22] Weckherlin diary, 10 Aug. 1638; Weckherlin office diary, 22 Dec. 1643; and G. R. Weckherlin, *Gaistliche und weltliche gedichte* (Amsterdam, 1641).

[23] Aylmer, *King's servants*, p. 146; S. A. Baron, '"The board did think fit and order:" the structure and function of the privy council of Charles I, *c.* 1625–41, with special reference to the personal rule' (Ph.D. diss., Chicago, 1995), p. 224; and Weckherlin diary, 5 Nov. 1637.

[24] Weckherlin diary, 25 Dec. 1636, 7 Apr. 1637, 5 Nov. 1637, 3–4 Nov. 1638.

[25] Weckherlin diary, 30 Oct. 1636, 13 Nov. 1636, 22 Jan. 1637, and 7 Jan. 1638. He marked Sundays with a dotted circle, the sun's astrological symbol.

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felt comfortable informing him of his daughter Elizabeth's progress in music. Ralph Weckherlin, his son, came to Charles's notice and eventually was given a place in the prince of Wales' household. Henrietta Maria too took an interest in Weckherlin. She may have liked speaking French with him and no doubt she knew of his having written a masque for her, though it was never performed.[26] Weckherlin was several times called into the most private royal apartments for important business or simply to write something 'fair'. He recorded, for example, arriving early one morning 'whilst his Majesty was putting on his clothes'. On another occasion he reported that the king 'caused me to come through [the queen's] Bed Chamber into the Withdrawing Roome'. That he mentioned his route to the queen's drawing room perhaps implied that this was not a regular mode of entry. Still, in an age when access to the royal person conferred not only status but a great deal of power, Weckherlin's daily encounters with his sovereigns perhaps explain why prominent men sought his correspondence.[27]

Given the evident trust he reposed in him, how much did Charles care about Weckherlin's political leanings? The evidence is sparse, but Weckherlin did record one intriguing incident in the summer of 1637. Less than three weeks after the sentence of ear-cropping had been carried out on the notorious 'seditious libellers' Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne, Charles teased his secretary for having written a safe conduct for William Lithgow, a Scotsman who had been mutilated in a quarrel years before:

> Item [wrote Weckherlin in his diary] having ... written a safe conduct ... I went to his Majesty who signing the same in the gallery did laugh at me for writing one for Lightgoe (a man that lost his eares) and I excused myself upon mylord Sterlings commandment and the letter his secretary had written to me (as the truth was) about it etc. Whereat his Majesty was very merry.[28]

Other than his evident failure to join Charles in the merriment, it is difficult to interpret this report. The king may have been tweaking Weckherlin because he suspected his sympathy for the three pilloried authors. Or he may have assumed that they were in substantial agreement about the trial and punishments, and the joke was their realization that Weckherlin had written a safe conduct for one who looked like a convicted libeller. A third possibility is that Charles was enjoying the discomfiture of a servant who did not know how to take the jest: the fun was in watching him squirm with excuses. Lastly, Weckherlin may simply have misunderstood Charles. Although the German

[26] Weckherlin letters, Weckherlin to Elizabeth Trumbull, no. 13, 10 Mar. 1632, idem to Elizabeth and William Trumbull, no. 60, 30 Dec. 1641; Weckherlin diary, 20–2 Oct. 1637; C. Carlton, *Charles I: the personal monarch* (London, 1983), pp. 130–1; Forster, 'Two drafts', p. 259; and D. Norbrook, 'The reformation of the masque', in D. Lindley, ed., *The court masque* (Manchester, 1984), pp. 103–4.

[27] Weckherlin diary, 2 Jan. 1637, 7 Apr. 1638; D. Starkey, 'Introduction: court history in perspective', and K. Sharpe, 'The image of virtue: the court and household of Charles I, 1625–1642', both in D. Starkey, ed., *The English court: from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London, 1987), pp. 9, 13, 244–7.

[28] Weckherlin diary, 24 July 1637; and for Lithgow see *DNB*, XI, pp. 1238–40.

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was capable of high spirits, his diaries and letters reveal little sense of humour. He may have interpreted a general laugh about the fate of Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne, and their possible wish to leave England, as a jest at his expense.

If Charles was teasing his servant, and if he understood that they did not share similar values, this certainly did not mean he had lost complete faith in him. Although Weckherlin was ousted as political licenser in 1638, Charles made sure that he retained his other positions when Sir Henry Vane succeeded Coke in 1640. Such magnanimity may have signified that the king continued to view his court as a forum for all points of view. If he thought so, he was dangerously deluded. Many of the king's officers felt excluded from his inner counsels, and certainly Weckherlin had never felt free to vent his real opinions. After Vane's dismissal in November 1641, and believing that his own was soon to follow, Weckherlin wrote: 'I hope [my employment] will now henceforth bee with more honor and farre more libertie, then formerly, so that I may (perhaps) have lesse profit, but I am sure I shall also have lesse subjection and slavery.'[29] These remarks, which occurred in a letter in his daughter, do not specify the nature of the 'slavery'. The implication, however, is that though he felt himself well paid, he also regarded his office as a burden and himself as little more than a lackey. His superiors valued neither his abilities nor his judgement. Bitterly quoting a German proverb, he resolved no more to 'care for who cares not for you'.[30] Though Weckherlin was not dismissed the service, his low opinion of Charles's government was now irrevocably fixed.

II

In the 1620s and 1630s the system of controlling published material depended to a large degree on self-regulation. The major weight of enforcement, of finding and destroying illegal presses, of reporting seditious literature, and of detecting under-the-table sales, fell on the stationers themselves. The company was a comparatively small one, making it possible for every free member to know, and keep an eye on, every other. Sheila Lambert has argued that much of the regulation imposed on the printing trade during this period was sought primarily by the company itself. Thus the investigations of the mid-1630s, which led to the Star Chamber decree of 1637 and which look like government attempts to control the press, reflected instead the guild's attempts to limit piracy and foreign competition. Without endorsing Lambert's conclusion, we can still accept the premise that the Stationers' Company was the powerful body on which any government efforts at control would have to rely.[31]

[29] D. L. Smith, 'The fourth earl of Dorset and the personal rule of Charles I', *Journal of British Studies*, 30 (1991), p. 287; Weckherlin diary, 3 Feb. 1640; Weckherlin letters, Weckherlin to Elizabeth Trumbull, no. 57, 2 Dec. 1641; and Sharpe, 'Image of virtue', pp. 253–4. For Charles's sense of humour, see Sharpe, *Charles I*, pp. 191–2.

[30] Weckherlin letters, Weckherlin to Elizabeth Trumbull, no. 57, 2 Dec. 1641.

[31] C. Blagden, *The Stationers' Company: a history, 1403–1959* (London, 1960), pp. 21, 43; Lambert, 'Printers and the government', pp. 2–3, 5, 9; Siebert, *Freedom of the press*, pp. 66–74, 82, 134; Bland, 'Invisible dangers', pp. 168–9, 175; Arber, *Transcript*, IV, pp. 528–36; and J. Raymond, ed.,

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Anything published needed two signatures in order to obtain a licence. Both a warden of the company and a licenser had to subscribe their names before a work could legally see print. A certain amount of specialization among licensers had become common by the 1620s. Nevertheless, much of what was published went first to the bishop of London and his chaplains because, customarily, the church controlled scandalous writing and speech. For the government in the late 1620s, the thorny issue was what to do about secular material, particularly news. Clergymen had little knowledge of the issues newsbooks – or 'corantos' – discussed, while government officials, who sometimes vetted works about politics or current events, often were overwhelmed with business. Nor did stationers always seek licences from approved men. Almost anyone with a claim to expertise, or the slightest connection to court or holy orders, could set himself up as a licenser. Authors sometimes licensed their own work. Moreover, as W. W. Greg points out, there was no settled idea of the purpose for which a licence should be obtained. Stationers sometimes gathered signatures more because they wished to spread the blame, should the publication somehow offend, than because they recognized a licence as a permission slip from the government.[32]

Weckherlin's career as licenser should be set against the broad climate of secret printing and prosecution that characterized the first fifteen years of the Caroline regine. Charles's government was not of course the first to attempt to control the press and punish offenders. In 1621, Thomas Archer 'was laid by the heels' for publishing a coranto without licence, and the next year the bookseller Nathaniel Butter spent more than a month in prison for the same offence. As his son was later to do, James issued proclamations against unlawful printing and the 'great liberty of discourse concerning matters of State'.[33] Charles's reign was different in the fierce punishments meted out to gentlemen and clergymen, who did not expect to stand in the pillory or have their ears cropped. The famous cases of Alexander Leighton, William Prynne, Henry Burton, and John Bastwick were unprecedented in the previous reign. The Scotsman Leighton, having published a virulent attack on episcopacy, was tried and sentenced to two visits to the pillory, whipping, mutilation of his ears

Making the news: an anthology of the newsbooks of revolutionary England, 1641–1660 (Moreton-in-Marsh, 1993), p. 5.

[32] Siebert, *Freedom of the press*, pp. 143–4; Worden, 'Literature and political censorship', p. 49; W. W. Greg, *Some aspects and problems of London publishing* (Oxford, 1956), pp. 12, 108; idem, *Licensers*, pp. 1–3, 106–9; Lambert, 'Printers and the government', pp. 11–13; idem, 'Richard Montagu', pp. 66–7; Bland, 'Invisible dangers', pp. 153, 174; and J. K. Moore, *Primary materials relating to copy and print in English books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 35–43.

[33] BL, Harleian MSS, 389/122; Siebert, *Freedom of the press*, pp. 150–1; W. W. Greg, *A companion to Arber* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 209–11; James I, 'A proclamation against excesse of lavish and licentious speech of matters of state', 21 July 1621, in J. F. Larkin and P. Hughes, eds., *Stuart royal proclamations* (2 vols., Oxford, 1973 and 1983), I, pp. 519–21; and Charles I, 'The king's declaration prefixed to the articles of religion', Nov. 1628, in S. R. Gardiner, ed., *Constitutional documents of the puritan revolution, 1625–1660* (3rd edn, Oxford, 1906), pp. 75–6.

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and nose, branding, and life imprisonment. Burton, a clergyman, Bastwick, a physician, and Prynne, a barrister, had begun writing about the parlous state of the church in the 1620s. At last, in 1636–7, they published works which denounced the government of bishops within the church. These denunciations were so obnoxious that Attorney General William Noy brought charges against the authors in Star Chamber. Like Leighton, the three received life sentences and suffered at the pillory.[34]

These are the 'well-known special cases', which according to Sheila Lambert ought not to be interpreted as 'a crushing weight of bureaucratic censorship intended to stifle all discussion'.[35] There are, besides these cases, indications that the government wanted stricter controls on what English citizens could read. Works printed abroad seemed to reach England regularly, and this was a constant sore subject. Thus, 'scismaticall and hereticall' books such as *The spy*, which was printed in Amsterdam and which attacked Arminianism as a Spanish conspiracy, circulated widely. It was no coincidence that the four gentlemen sent to the pillory by Star Chamber had all published some of their work secretly and without licence. Other instances illustrate the government's interest in suppressing clandestine publication. In 1629 and again the following year stationers were haled before the High Commission for having published unlawful and unlicensed pamphlets. Prynne and Burton had written two of these pamphlets, but a third author was the moderate bishop Joseph Hall, whose little book *The reconciler*, published by Butter, sought to soften the stridency of his theological opponents.[36]

By 1630 the stationers were beginning to learn that the crown meant business. Four publishers were accused of sending an unlicensed book called *Christs confession and complaint* to their chapmen in the country. The book in question, which had been written under the pseudonym 'J. P.' and secretly published abroad, convicted 'Jewes of Obstinacie, Romish Catholickes of Conspiracie, Seducers of Sedition, [and] Arminians of Apostacie'. All four publishers told the same story: that they did not know where the book had come from, that they had paid no one for it, and that they had surrendered their remaining copies as soon as they had become aware of the contents.[37] The High Commission brought charges even though the men had reported their

[34] Gardiner, *History of England*, VIII, pp. 225–9; Siebert, *Freedom of the press*, p. 122; *DNB*, XI, pp. 880–1; and Sharpe, *Charles I*, pp. 330, 392, 758–65. The offending works were: A. Leighton, *An appeal to the parliament* (Amsterdam?, 1628) (*STC* 15429); H. Burton, *For God and the king* (Amsterdam?, 1636) (*STC* 4141); J. Bastwick, *The letany* (1637) (*STC* 1572); and W. Prynne, *Newes from Ipswich* (Edinburgh?, 1636?) (*STC* 20469).

[35] Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', p. 68.

[36] Weckherlin diary, 12 Jan. 1638, 25 Jan. 1639; J. Russell, *The spy* (Amsterdam?, 1628) (*STC* 20577); Sharpe, *Charles I*, p. 295; Greg, *Companion*, pp. 243–50; H. Burton, *Babel no Bethel* (1629) (*STC* 4136); W. Prynne, *The church of Englands old antithesis* (1630) (*STC* 20458); J. Hall, *The reconciler* (1629) (*STC* 12709); and A. Milton, *Catholic and reformed* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 142–5. See also, *Tom Tell Troath* (Amsterdam?, 1630?) (*STC* 23868); A. Ar., *The practice of princes* (Amsterdam, 1630) (*STC* 722); and J. Clare, *The converted Jew* (Douay?, 1630) (*STC* 5351).

[37] Greg, *Companion*, pp. 253–7; and J. P., *Christs confession and complaint* (1629), title page (*STC* 19069).

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unlicensed stock in the first place. Ballad publishers too came under the scrutiny of the High Commission. In 1632, Henry Gosson was 'complayned against by articles for prentinge of a ballet ... wherin al the histories of the bible were scurrilously abused'. The court was annoyed, noting that 'there was a parish clarke chosen to view all the ballets before they were printed, but he refuseth to doe it'.[38] Gosson was sent to Bridewell prison.

Like ballads, corantos were cheap, short, and plentiful. Before Weckherlin took over the licensing in the summer of 1627, it was not clear who was responsible for them. George Cottington, cousin to Sir Francis, had licensed corantos in the early 1620s, but for various reasons his supervision of these materials had lapsed in the summer of 1624.[39] After that the government had neglected but not completely abandoned its interest in the imprimatur. Dr Thomas Worrall, a chaplain to George Montaigne, bishop of London, set his hand to over 200 works between 1623 and 1628. A later report, however, described him as a 'Scholar good enough, but a free fellow-like man, and of no very tender Conscience'. He was apparently prone to license any book that came his way.[40] Secretary Conway in his letter of 5 September 1627 made clear that the crown's disapproval of foreign news had existed well before Weckherlin's appointment: 'I have formerly signified unto you [he wrote members of the Stationers' Company] his Majesties dislike of the libertie taken in printing of weekeley Courantoes and Pamphletts of newes without anie rule or warrant.' Although previous letters by Conway to this effect have not come to light, evidence from the stationers' court book proves that at least one of them had arrived. On 26 March 1627, the clerk of the stationers' court had written, 'a letter from Mr. Secretary Conway Concerning newes ... was ... reade in the presence of Mr Butter and most of the printers in London'. The master and wardens of the company evidently took the letter as a warning and singled out Nathaniel Butter because he was one of the chief publishers of English corantos. Apparently he did not heed the warning, for in August the privy council sent Butter to prison, and in September the newswriter John Pory predicted corantos would begin to be scarce.[41]

By the time Weckherlin took up his new duties in September 1627, an English fleet under the duke of Buckingham had been attempting to relieve the Huguenot colony at La Rochelle for some weeks. News of the battles for St Martins and the Ile de Ré was filtering back to England, and it was Weckherlin's job to make sure that reports celebrated English arms. He had in

[38] S. R. Gardiner, ed., *Reports of cases in the courts of Star Chamber and High Commission* (Camden Society, new ser., 39 (1886), p. 314; and T. Watt, *Cheap print and popular piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 43–4, 74, 291.

[39] Siebert, *Freedom of the press*, p. 153; Greg, *Licensers*, pp. 25–6, 94–5; Baron, 'Privy council and the press', pp. 3–4; and M. J. Havran, *Caroline courtier: the life of Lord Cottington* (London, 1973), pp. 67–82, 126.

[40] A. Marvell, *The rehearsal transpros'd*, ed. D. I. B. Smith (Oxford, 1971), p. 129.

[41] BL, Trumbull MSS, Misc. Corr., XVIII, fo. 82; W. A. Jackson, ed., *Records of the court of the Stationers' Company, 1602 to 1640* (London, 1957), p. 193; J. R. Dasent, ed., *Acts of the privy council, 1627* (London, 1890), p. 470; Greg, *Companion*, p. 248; and Public Record Office, State Papers, 16/142/22 (hereafter PRO, SP).

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fact already begun work before Conway's letter to the company was written, and may have been responsible for Butter's imprisonment in the Gatehouse on 2 August 1627.[42] The punishment seems to have been brief but effective. Starting on 7 August, Butter and his partner Nicholas Bourne began to churn out each week 'currants' and 'avisoes' with the imprimatur of Weckherlin.[43] By late October twelve such pamphlets had appeared under the new licenser's hand, and every one had dealt with the duke of Buckingham's amphibious campaign against the French.[44] The newsbooks lauded the English forces and defended the wisdom and bravery of Buckingham. They continually promised the imminent fall of the French fort at St Martins 'upon the first arrivall of the next supplies from England'. Louis XIII's forces within the fort were themselves 'much distressed for want of necessary accommodations'. Yet week after week the fort did not fall. When the campaign season was over, Buckingham's achievements were slight. Forced to withdraw from the contested Ile de Ré, the duke returned to something less than a hero's welcome. Weckherlin had faithfully overseen Butter and Bourne's news blitz; but even with the best intentions, early journalists could not explain away failure. After the Ré fiasco, Charles and his counsellors came to see news, no matter how closely it was supervised, as a dispensable commodity.[45]

The next several years appear to have been quiet ones for the licenser. The Stationers' Register for 1628 lists only three works approved by Weckherlin. He must have seen more than this, for Folke Dahl's bibliography lists forty-one corantos published in the eighteen months after March 1628. Still, this figure represents a dramatic fall from previous years. Apparently news of Catholic victories on the continent did not sell. None the less, there were recriminations to be exchanged, and one such was the duke of Rohan's *Declaration*. This book implored English help for the distressed Huguenots of La Rochelle and blamed the English for the slowness of their response. Given the crown's general sensitivity to diplomatic discussions carried on in print, one is hard pressed to explain why Weckherlin allowed its publication. Perhaps his superiors saw the book as a way to whip up popular support for a new expedition.[46] In any event, domestic events such as the passage of the Petition of Right and Buckingham's

[42] C. Russell, *Parliaments and English politics, 1621–1629* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 329–30; Arber, *Transcript*, IV, pp. 182–5; and Jackson, *Records*, p. 193.

[43] H. R. Plomer, *A dictionary of the booksellers and printers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641 to 1667* (London, 1907), pp. 29, 40–1; and L. Rostenberg, 'The debut of English journalism: Nathaniel Butter and Nicholas Bourne, first "masters of the staple"', in her *Literary, political, scientific and legal publishing, printing and bookselling in England, 1551–1700* (2 vols., New York, 1965), I, pp. 86, 94–5.

[44] Arber, *Transcript*, IV, pp. 182–8; and *STC*, II, p. 182. Weckherlin must have licensed more corantos than were listed in the Stationers' Register: see Dahl, *Bibliography*, pp. 152, 162, 166, 187, 221, which counts 192 corantos between Feb. 1627 and Oct. 1632; but see Baron, 'Privy council and the press', pp. 9–11, for a contrary view.

[45] *A true and exact relation of the most remarkable passages* (1627), p. 12 (*STC* 20779.5); *A continued journal September 18* (1627), pp. 2–3, 5 (*STC* 24743); and Cogswell, 'Politics of propaganda', pp. 202–10.

[46] Dahl, *Bibliography*, pp. 162–5; Henri, duc de Rohan, *A declaration of the duke of Rohan* (1628), pp. 6–7, C1v–C2r (*STC* 21252); and Cogswell, 'Politics of propaganda', p. 207.

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assassination overwhelmed other considerations, making 1628 a light year for foreign news.

It was peculiar, then, that the 'check that hath been given the printers' soon needed reinforcement.[47] Conway had received promotion to lord president of the council, and Dudley Carleton, Viscount Dorchester followed him as secretary of state. In February 1629 Dorchester decided to repeat his predecessor's warning. He wrote in a friendlier vein than Conway had done and offered to let bygones by bygones: 'What therein hetherto is past [with regard to previous warnings] I will here not call in question'. Nevertheless, his message to the Stationers' Company was the same. The king's

> expresse will and pleasure is that hereafter none doe presume to print or publish any matters of newes relations histories or other things in prose or in verse that have reference to matters and affaires of State without the view, approbation and license of my secretaries Weckherlin, who is to acquainte me of such things as he shall finde cause.

Dorchester closed with a promise 'always to doe you pleasure', and made no mention of the punishments his predecessor had threatened.[48] We do not know what provoked this new warning. Charles had already issued a declaration, prefixed to a new printing of the Thirty-Nine Articles, that prohibited anyone from preaching or printing 'to draw the Article aside any way ... [or] put his own sense or comment to be the meaning of the Article'. He had also ordered the suppression of Richard Montague's incendiary *Appello Caesarem*. With the 1628 parliament deep in debate over tonnage, poundage, and religious reform, it possibly occurred to Dorchester that a reminder was in order. By linking news relations with 'histories or other things in prose or in verse', Dorchester informed the stationers that he was aware of other genres besides the coranto which dealt with affairs of state. Works of history, biography, travel, even epic poetry, occasionally strayed into forbidden territory and presumed to comment on the *arcana imperii*. These too would need licensing.[49]

No explosion of printed news followed the sudden dissolution of parliament in March 1629, though, from the flurry of proclamations and declarations that did ensue, the regime clearly expected criticism.[50] For Weckherlin the job of licenser was turning out not to be onerous. From 1629 to the middle of 1631 he looked at twelve books and about forty corantos, a total which barely eclipsed the number he had licensed in his first year on the job. For whatever reason, corantos were on the decline. Probably Weckherlin himself had little to do with

[47] BL, Harleian MSS, 390/263.

[48] Aylmer, *King's servants*, pp. 88–9, 110; and BL, Trumbull MSS, Misc. Corr., XVIII, fo. 104.

[49] L. S. Popofsky, 'The crisis over tonnage and poundage in parliament in 1629', *Past & Present* 126 (1990), pp. 44–75; T. Cogswell, 'The suppression of the correntoes in 1632' (unpublished paper, 1991), pp. 3–4; Reeve, *Charles I*, p. 63; Gardiner, *Constitutional documents*, p. 76; R. Montagu, *Appello caesarem* (1625) (*STC* 18030); and Larkin and Hughes, *Stuart royal proclamations*, II, pp. 218–20.

[50] Clarendon, *History*, I, pp. 83–4; Sharpe, *Charles I*, pp. 56–8; R. Cust, 'Charles I and a draft declaration for the 1628 parliament', *Historical Research*, 63 (1990), p. 151; and A. B. Thompson, '"This obdurate land:" the press and debate in Caroline England, 1629–1632' (M.A. thesis, Kentucky, 1992), pp. 11–13, 25–31.

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this decline, since after May 1631 Butter and his partner Nicholas Bourne began again to publish corantos in large numbers. A more likely explanation for the decline was simply that the market had dried up. In July 1630 Butter and Bourne complained that 'we have lost by our publication, both our labour and a great deale of money this tenne moneths, ... it being most mens desire to heare of action'. With the ending of England's wars with France and Spain and Habsburg victories in Germany there was little enough action to report – at least action favourable to Protestants.[51]

Intriguingly, Butter and Bourne published with permission *Three several treatises*, a translation out of Dutch which argued against making a truce with Spain. Written by the directors of the Dutch West India Company, it urged the economic, religious, and political benefits that the United Provinces would reap if the war continued. All three treatises might apply to England, for England too was at war with Spain. The first, 'Considerations and reasons why a truce ought not to bee contracted', preached the utility of warfare against Spanish shipping. This was a strategy that some in the House of Commons had favoured for years, and it was a significant slip of the translator's pen when he wrote: 'every one that looks with an indifferent eye, may perceive that this our East [*sic*] India Companie hath afforded the King of Spaine an irreparable opposition and damage, and is like to make this breach greater, if her proceedings be but continued, and seasonably seconded'.[52] The East India Company was of course an English concern; the substitution of 'East India' for 'West India' indicated that English readers could not but see the parallels between the two companies and the countries which they represented. England should be as wary as the Netherlands of making peace with Spain.

The third treatise too must have spoken to English readers, for the lords of the Dutch estates general were told not to forget 'that the Articles of the forebearance, which they contracted with the King of Great Britaine ... doe comprehend the Palatinate', and no truce could be honourable without the territory's return to the prince elector. Such language could only prick the English conscience since Charles was doing little to aid his exiled brother-in-law. By February 1630 England's conflict with Spain existed in name only and negotiations had been proceeding for months. A work pushing for the war's renewal, even if from the perspective of the United Provinces, ought to have excited official displeasure. Why Weckherlin permitted it is a mystery unless he insisted that its lessons applied only to Holland. It is nevertheless hard to imagine Charles tolerating public discussion of the topic, 'whether it be safe to make peace with Spaine'.[53]

Three years later the government rebuked the stationers a third time. Now the tone was not friendly, and the rebuke came not from a secretary of state but

[51] Arber, *Transcript*, IV, pp. 210–58; Dahl, *Bibliography*, pp. 162–72; Sharpe, *Charles I*, pp. 65–8; *The continuation of the most remarkable occurences* (1630), p. 14 (*STC* 18507.205); *The articles of peace betwixt Great Brittaine and France* (1629) (*STC* 9250); and *Articles of peace concluded in a treaty at Madrit* (1630) (*STC* 9251). The peace of Susa was signed 14 Apr. 1629, the treaty of Madrid, 5 Nov. 1630.

[52] *Three severall treatises* (1630), pp. 6–7 (*STC* 24258).

[53] Ibid., pp. 25, 27; Sharpe, *Charles I*, pp. 66–8; and Arber, *Transcript*, IV, p. 229.

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from the king himself. Charles wrote with the asperity of one used to obedience on the first command.

We perceave well [he wrote] by the promiscuous publishing which is dayly practised, of divers pamphlets of that nature unfitt for popular view and discourse, that ... the former boldnesse and disorder hath ben continewed in printing bookes without distinction to the scandall of gouvernment and disadvantage of our service.

Charles went on to mention Weckherlin twice as the proper authority for licensing, promised to 'take a strict accompt' of individuals who transgressed, and added ecclesiastical works to the proscribed list.[54] This last is important – clearly Charles felt beleaguered on the subject of religion as well as of news. His insistence that matters of state were 'unfitt' for popular discussion and that they led to 'disadvantage' to his government contrasted sharply with his earlier willingness, in the mid-1620s, to use popular opinion for his own ends. Whether Charles's experiences with parliaments embittered him or whether he naturally possessed an autocratic temperament, by the early 1630s he had begun to initiate policies which did not accommodate public expressions of opinion.[55]

A week after Charles's announcement, Weckherlin came to him with two manuscripts seeking licence. His memorandum is worth quoting in full:

Sir Robert Filmer brought me a Discours to bee licenced for printing, written of Governement and in praise of Royaltie and the supreme authority thereof &c. I most humbly crave your Majesty's wise Censure, whether such a subject at this time is fitter to bee made publick or kept in ? Nota – Non licet.

As Plutarch did compare some Grecians and Romans, The like comparison written of Henry the 4th (her Majesty's late royal father) and this king of Sweden, is desired to bee licenced, And (in my poore judgement) as yet not found fitt, unlesse your Majesty bee pleased to command it etc. Nota – Nondum licet.[56]

Besides demonstrating an early date for Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, this remarkable document shows that Charles did take a personal interest in the books that his subjects could read. It shows that authors sometimes came to Weckherlin and by-passed the stationer, perhaps hoping that a direct approach to the Latin secretary would enhance their chances of receiving the licence. But most remarkably, the memorandum gives us a glimpse of the easy intercourse between secretary and sovereign. Weckherlin did not actually pass the manuscripts along to Charles for review; he summarized them in a sentence or two. In Filmer's case he had no decided opinion and relied entirely on Charles's 'wise censure'. With regard to the other manuscript he ventured to suggest that a comparison between Gustavus Adolphus and Henry IV of France was not 'fitt'. He probably knew that Charles had mixed feelings about the Swedish king, whose fame in early 1632 was at its height. As for Henry, a Protestant who committed apostasy in order to reach the throne probably was not the model king Charles would want to hold up to his people. King and licenser obviously

[54] BL, Trumbull MSS, Misc. Corr., XIX, fo. 16.

[55] T. Cogswell, *The blessed revolution* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 285, 299; idem, 'Politics of propaganda', p. 212; and Cust, 'Charles I and a draft declaration', pp. 143–4.

[56] Weckherlin memo, 8 Feb. 1632, BL, Trumbull MSS., Misc. Corr., XLII, fo. 35.

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had a good understanding of each other, and that neither manuscript received permission should not surprise us. Charles construed 'matter of state' very broadly and was serious in his belief that almost any discussion of politics or international news led to 'scandall of gouvernment and disadvantage of our service'.[57]

Charles's unwillingness to see Filmer in print and his stern tone with the stationers resulted in large part from his inability to control news pamphlets. Outside of corantos, Weckherlin had licensed only three works in 1631. But after Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden began to win victories and capture towns in the spring of 1631, demand for news took off. Weckherlin had to inspect twenty-five coranto issues in the second half of 1631. Their popularity no doubt derived from the appearance of a Protestant champion who might at last restore the princess Elizabeth and her exiled husband to their thrones. It was irritating, meanwhile, to Charles that the vulgar could read about his sister and brother-in-law and their dependence on a foreign prince. The real gall to the king, however, must have been the implication in these works that the English government was not doing enough to aid their cause. Corantos were coming out at an alarming pace, and Charles's emphasis on Weckherlin in his letter to the stationers implies that some may have been by-passing the licenser.[58] Since Charles's warning had produced little effect, on 17 October 1632 the privy council ordered weekly newsbooks to cease publication. They did not reappear for more than six years.[59]

In October 1637 Weckherlin's diary reports another instance of Charles's direct involvement in a licence. An application by John Dunton to publish his naval dispatch, *A true journall of the Sally fleet*, sent Weckherlin straight to the king. Dunton, master of his majesty's ship the *Leopard*, tells of an English raid on a stronghold of the Barbary pirates, and Weckherlin was nervous enough about it to ask Charles himself for licence to publish. Permission was granted and, some days later, Weckherlin brought Dunton to Whitehall to present the king with the finished work. The imprimatur page is unusual in mentioning not only the licenser, but the monarch's warrant: 'Hampton Court, the 20. of October. 1637. This Journall and Mappe may be printed. Ex mandato S^{ae}. R^{ae}. Ma^{tis}. R. Weeherlin'. Dunton's *True journall* had implications both for domestic and foreign policy. At a time when the ship money tax was the talk of London, a naval action against pirates was news. Weckherlin well understood his sovereign's sensitivity to any such discussion carried on in print.[60]

[57] R. Filmer, *Patriarcha and other writings*, ed. J. P. Sommerville (Cambridge, 1991), pp. viii, xxxii–xxxiv; Reeve, *Charles I*, pp. 278–9; Carlton, *Charles I: the personal monarch*, p. 174; and BL, Trumbull MSS., Misc. Corr., XIX, fo. 16.

[58] Arber, *Transcript*, IV, pp. 258–67; Dahl, *Bibliography*, p. 166; BL, Trumbull MSS., Misc. Corr., XIX, fo. 16; and Baron, 'Privy council and the press', pp. 9–11.

[59] PRO, SP, 16/224/33; Dahl, *Bibliography*, p. 221; and Greg, *Companion*, pp. 61–2, 66, 77, 79, 209–11, 243, 253–6, 273–4, 292. Weekly news reappeared in December 1638.

[60] Weckherlin diary, 20–5 Oct. 1637; and J. Dunton, *A true journall of the Sally fleet* (1637), sig. D4r (STC 7357).

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Other than corantos, the genres that Weckherlin most commonly encountered as licenser were serial histories, travel and emigration literature, and translations of foreign political and religious commentary. For example, Nicholas Bourne published in 1629 a little translation called *The confession of faith* by the patriarch of Constantinople. The work was in English and Latin and ought to have been a curiosity for those interested in eastern theology. In fact, Cyril Loukaris, the patriarch, turned out to have written a creed steeped in Calvinism. 'We believe', he wrote, 'that … God hath predestinated his Elect unto glorie before the beginning of the World, without any respect unto their workes.' Loukaris went on to claim that believers were justified by faith alone and that there were in fact only two sacraments, baptism and the eucharist.[61] Such statements confirmed to godly Protestants in England that the Eastern Orthodox church shared their most cherished beliefs. On this view, popery seemed an isolated innovation, with doctrines drawn from the word of prelates and priests rather than from scripture. Weckherlin also allowed a work by Paolo Sarpi originally published in Italian and called *A discourse upon the reasons of the resolution taken in the Valteline*. The book was an anti-Spanish diatribe in the form of an appeal to Philip III of Spain. It asked him to disregard the advice of those of his ministers who advocated the reduction of the states of Italy. It also contained a long translator's introduction, dedicated to the House of Commons, which argued that only war with Spain would ensure England's safety. In justification of his work, the translator appealed to parliament men:

> But seeing your owne wisdome did first foresee the necessity of a warre with Spaine, and your owne zeale to the honour of your King, did counsell to undertake it, I thought such forraine Meditations as these – might also animate and nourish in you a spirit, and generous Resolution, vigorously to maintaine it … You know, Monies are the sinews of warre.

Sarpi's book appeared in the summer of 1628 just as the parliament that had passed the Petition of Right was prorogued. Drawing on the national hatred of Spain, it was evidently translated in order to encourage further parliamentary supply for England's wars. Parliament's sudden prorogation, however, left the work without an audience.[62]

Descriptions of voyages and distant lands excited considerable interest during the personal rule. Works as various as a clergyman's letter from Aleppo to a ship's log of an expedition to the Arctic received licences for publication. Accounts of English plantations in the New World were even more popular, and Weckherlin licensed five during his tenure.[63] These generally described the

[61] C. Loukaris, *The confession of faith* (1629), pp. 2, 5 (*STC* 16854).

[62] P. Sarpi, *A discourse upon the reasons of the resolution taken in the Valteline* (1628), pp. 28, 94, 96 (*STC* 21757a); and Russell, *Parliaments and English politics*, pp. 377, 387–8. Some foreign works were licensed but never published in England: A. d'Ossat, *Lettres de l'illustrissime et révérardissime cardinal d'Ossat*, 'dernière édition' (Paris, 1627); L. Melzo, *Regole militari* (Anversa, 1611); G. Basta, *Il governo della cavalleria leggiera* (Venice, 1612); and Arber, *Transcript*, IV, pp. 267, 301.

[63] C. Robson, *Newes from Aleppo* (1628) (*STC* 21130); T. James, *The strange and dangerous voyage*, ed. W. Watts? (1633) (*STC* 14444); *A letter from the Burmudoes* (1630) (not in *STC*); *A publication of Guianas plantation* (1632) (*STC* 12456); T. Morton, *New English Canaan* (Amsterdam, 1637) (*STC*

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area under colonization, assessed the capacity of the land to support settlers, discussed the attitude of the natives, and justified both the settlers' right to remove themselves from England and to take Indian land. *A publication of Guianas plantation*, for example, covered nearly all these themes right on its title page: the subtitle promised that the book would show 'the lawfullnesse of plantations in forraine countries; hope of the natives conversion; nature of the River ... with the provisions for mans sustenance, and commodities therein growing for the trade of merchandise and manner of the adventure'. Another work, Philip Vincent's *A true relation of the late batell fought in New England*, treated the founding of the colony as the legitimate enterprise of 'merchant venturers', who learned from the examples of other American colonies to 'advance the weale publique all they could, and so the private is taken care for'. This public spiritedness was the secret of their success. Both pamphlets were sympathetic to the religious motive for the colonists' emigration, arguing that the propagation of godly religion, not separatism, was their reason for leaving. In contrast, Thomas Morton's *New English Canaan*, also licensed by Weckherlin, attacked the Plymouth settlers as separatists and hypocrites. A dedicatory poem in the front matter aptly expressed one of the book's central themes: the separatists of New England knew 'Nothing but opposition, gainst the right, / Of sacred Majestie men, full of spight, / Goodnes abuseing, turning vertue out / Of Dores, to whipping stocking and full bent.' Morton seemed to have first-hand knowledge of New Plymouth's intolerance and resented more the ostracism of good Protestants practised there than any divergence of doctrine from the national church. The book was printed in Amsterdam and may have represented strife within the separated churches in Holland. On the other hand, Morton dedicated this work to the privy council of England, thus currying favour with authorities at home. Morton's view was, nevertheless, the exception. Most such emigration literature, like Vincent's *True relation* and *Guianas plantation*, put the New World in a positive light.[64]

The largest category of publications with which Weckherlin had to deal after the suppression of corantos was the serial history. It is unclear why the privy council did not extend the ban on corantos to include these chapbooks since they covered essentially the same material, though published at longer intervals. One explanation may be cost. Paper was expensive and these histories were much longer than the corantos had been. Because they were expensive, circulation for serials such as *The Swedish intelligencer* must have been significantly less than that for an average coranto. None the less, the serials were popular: Weckherlin licensed fifteen of them between January 1632 and

18202); W. Wood, *New Englands prospect* (1634) (*STC* 25957); and P. Vincent, *A true relation of the late battell* (1637) (*STC* 24758).

[64] *Guianas plantation*, t.p. and pp. 1–2; Vincent, *A true relation*, pp. 18–19, 22; and Morton, *New English Canaan*, sig. A4v. See also C. Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and troubled Englishmen* (New York, 1968), pp. 430–52; D. Cressy, *Coming over: migration and communication between England and New England* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 74–106; and Thompson, 'Obdurate land', pp. 33–50.

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October 1637. When stationers Nathaniel Butter and Nicholas Bourne inaugurated the genre in 1632, even before the ban on corantos had gone into effect, they probably did so because they suspected that the government would eventually prohibit weekly news. In the very first number of *The Swedish intelligencer* they appealed to their readers not to despise news from corantos because it was 'very true and very punctuall'. This first issue set the tone for what would follow. The serials would consist of eighty to one hundred pages and would treat the recent history of the German states in the driest possible fashion, relating battles and movements of armies with a detectable bias in favour of Gustavus Adolphus and the Protestant interest, but never mentioning England.[65]

An exception to this general rule was the anonymous *A short survey or history of the kingdome of Sweden*, published by Michael Sparke. Not a serial at all, this work was a wide-ranging historical treatment of Sweden's economic, military, and political rise to power. Only the last few pages discussed the Thirty Years War, but earlier in the book the author felt free to discuss how Sweden could finance such a large invasion of Germany. The answer was obvious: Sweden had a system like England's, and Gustavus filled his coffers from royal mines, customs duties, and voluntary contributions 'answerable to our subsidies and fifteenes in this kingdome'. The implication was that England too might free 'distressed Princes and people from the tyranny of the Austrian house', if the king would but call parliament. Most histories of Sweden and Germany, however, did not venture on to ground like this. After the death of Gustavus, serials rarely commented on politics beyond on one occasion celebrating the happiness of Englishmen, who 'under a blessed King, enjoy the blessed fruits of peace'. Such a comment might have meant that the crown's foreign policy ought to be isolationist and pacific. It might have been a sigh of relief that God had not sent pestilence and the sword across the Channel to punish sin. It most certainly was a bow to Charles from whom these blessed fruits dropped. Butter and Bourne, the publishers, were trying to demonstrate their good faith in hopes the privy council would lift its ban.[66]

If the Latin secretary felt relief at the drop in his workload after corantos disappeared and Butter and Bourne's serial histories proved innocuous, he soon had to worry about a kinsman. One of the most curious situations in his career as a licenser involved Robert Raworth, his brother-in-law. Raworth had been a freeman of the Stationers' Company since 1606 and had for a short time owned his own printing press. This press was seized after he pirated Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. For the next two and a half decades he worked off and on in various print shops. In 1621 he was again involved in a piracy scheme: George Wood, the owner of the press, went to prison as a result, but

[65] T. Watt, *Cheap print*, p. 1; Arber, *Transcript*, IV, pp. 268–396; W. Watts, *The Swedish intelligencer* (1632), sig.)(4r [*sic*] (*STC* 23521); and Dahl, *Bibliography*, p. 221.

[66] *A short survey or history of the kingdome of Sweden* (1632), pp. 52–5 (*STC* 23518); N. C., *The German history continued* (1635), part 3, p. 1 (*STC* 23525.8); and Siebert, *Freedom of the press*, pp. 157–9. See also N. C., *Num. 2. The continuation of the actions* (1637) (*STC* 4293.2); idem, *Diatelesma nu. 3* (1637) (*STC* 4293.4); and idem, *Diatelesma the second part* (1638) (*STC* 4293.6).

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Raworth, as an employee, got off with a reprimand. Somehow in 1633 he obtained the capital to set up another printing press. Unfortunately for him, the Stationers' Company was just then flexing its regulatory muscles, and an entry in the court book of the company for 19 January 1635 reported the dismantling of Raworth's new press as being 'contrary to order'. The entry went on to report that Weckherlin had intervened and persuaded the court of assistants to grant Raworth a reprieve. He would get back his 'barr and spindle', upon condition that 'if within six Monthes next, he shall not gett himselfe Lawfully a Master Printer according as in his peticion is by him desired That then he will quietly desist and putt himselfe downe'. Raworth acknowledged the arrangement as a 'great favour done unto him', though whether he meant by this to thank the stationers or Weckherlin is unstated.[67]

Raworth did not fulfil the terms of his agreement. He could not persuade William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, or John Lambe, dean of the court of arches, in whose hands the appointment lay, of his fitness to become one of the select master printers of the guild. Accordingly, in October 1635, the wardens of the company again visited his shop and confiscated his equipment.[68] A few months later, perhaps again at the request of Weckherlin, the court of High Commission over-ruled the stationers and restored Raworth's spindle and barr to him. He continued to run his press through 1636 at which point he turned over the business to his son. He must have known that Lambe was implacably opposed to his ever becoming a master, and it did not help matters that he had been implicated as an accessory in the publications of Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne. The final 'Decree of Star Chamber Concerning Printing' of July 1637 limited the number of master printers to twenty. Robert Raworth stepped aside so that John Raworth, his son, could 'come in in stead of his father'. Even with the help of Weckherlin, Raworth's bid to become a master printer failed. Although Lambe had called him 'an arrant knave', Weckherlin eventually employed him to handle 'my rent and affaires'.[69]

Given this close relationship between the brothers-in-law, it is worth asking whether Weckherlin used his position as official censor to let Raworth publish works that might otherwise have been proscribed. Raworth printed only about twenty books during his four years of active work in the trade, but he covered a wide variety of genres – from reprints of older titles to plays, travel pieces, and reports of foreign news.[70] He did not always trouble himself over a licence, which is surprising given his family connection. Weckherlin appears to have been patient, for he did put his signature to two works printed by Raworth, and both contained foreign news. One was never translated and published. The

[67] *STC*, III, p. 142; Arber, *Transcript*, III, pp. 701, 703–4; Jackson, *Records*, pp. 264, 375–7; Lambert, 'Printers and the government', pp. 8–11; and Plomer, *Dictionary of the booksellers*, p. 152.

[68] Jackson, *Records*, p. 272.

[69] Ibid.; *CSPD*, 1635–6, p. 468; Lambert, 'Printers and the government', pp. 9–10; Greg, *Companion*, p. 338; Arber, *Transcript*, IV, p. 528; and Weckherlin diary, 13 Jan. 1637.

[70] For example, C. Barri [i.e. Borri], *Cochin-China*, trans. R. Ashley (1633) (*STC* 1504); W. Burton, *The rowsing of the sluggard* (1634) (*STC* 4177); N. Breton, *A mad world my masters* (1635) (*STC* 3668); and T. Heywood, *A challenge for beautie* (1636) (*STC* 13311).

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other, called *Arrest of the court of parliament*, Raworth printed for Butter and Bourne in 1634.[71] This little pamphlet was a translation from French which reported in fat paragraphs and repetitive legal language how various French nobles had conspired in a rape and then failed to appear in court to answer the charges. It also recounted the upset caused by the marriage of Louis XIII's brother to Princess Marguerite of Lorraine. On the surface, the pamphlet looked like mere foreign court gossip. A marriage, however, was always a political act. That of Gaston of Orléans to Marguerite of Lorraine embarrassed the French king because it cemented the friendship of Gaston, a constant thorn in his side, to Charles IV of Lorraine, another irritant. Technically the work violated Charles's prohibition against publishing news. Since books and pamphlets treating affairs in Germany, Sweden, and Turkey occasionally still hit the bookstalls, Weckherlin let it go.[72]

Weckherlin recorded little in his diary about his licensing duties, reporting only one instance in which a licence he had granted was called into question. Indeed Coke appears in the diary as a licenser as often as does his clerk.[73] The *Arrest of the court of parliament* came out in September 1634. In January 1638 a Mr Fortescue, who served as resident agent for the duchy of Lorraine, complained to the king about the publication of the *Arrest*. As a result, Raworth, Butter, and Bourne went to jail, though the offence had taken place more than three years before. The men appealed to Weckherlin, who in turn took the matter, interestingly, not to his superior, Sir John Coke, but to the junior secretary of state, Sir Francis Windebank, with whom his relations were usually formal and strained. This approach to Windebank is interesting because it suggests that the duty of press censorship was beginning to pass from the older, Protestant-oriented Coke to a younger man whose sympathies lay with Catholic Spain. Weckherlin admitted having signed the licence. Windebank answered that the king had commanded that the stationers should be punished; however, he promised to do what he could to calm the king's wrath. Eventually Fortescue entered a complaint against Weckherlin himself, which the king passed along to Coke for action. This move was tantamount to shelving it since Coke was unlikely to discipline his most trusted lieutenant. Indeed, Weckherlin's diary records little that might suggest he was in disgrace; he continued at court as always, writing letters and proclamations, observing the king at tennis, and consulting with Inigo Jones 'about the building of my new houses'. After 8 February 1638, he did not mention Fortescue's complaint again. Nor can Raworth have been long under arrest, for the next month the two brothers-in-law were together at St James Palace on business.[74]

[71] Arber, *Transcript*, IV, p. 301; Cardinal D'Ossatt, *Letters concerning negotiacions of estate*, trans. E. Grimeston (1633?) (not in *STC*); but see d'Ossat, *Lettres*, cited above, n. 62; and *Arrest of the court of parliament* (1634) (*STC* 19203.3).

[72] *Arrest*, pp. 4–5; Parker, *Thirty Years' War*, pp. 145–6, 315, 321; Weckherlin diary, 26 Jan. 1638; and E. Grimeston, *The general history of the serrail* (1633) (*STC* 1593).

[73] Weckherlin diary, 25–6 Mar. 1637, 3 Dec. 1637, 12 Jan. 1638.

[74] HMC *Denbigh*, p. 66; Weckherlin diary, 18, 20, and 26 Jan., 8, 15, and 25 Feb., and 31 Mar. 1638; and *CSPD*, 1637–8, pp. 117, 223–4.

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The *Arrest of the court of parliament* was the sort of text that the king disliked. It was hardly seditious, but it embarrassed a brother prince and jeopardized relations between states, whether or not they happened to be particularly friendly at the moment. Windebank may have hoped that Weckherlin's inconvenient connection to Raworth would disgrace the licenser and discredit his superior, Coke. By 1638 Windebank had engrossed much of the business of the secretariat and was conducting, with Charles's approval, foreign negotiations behind Coke's back.[75] One could see the affair as little more than factional rivalry, but that the rivalry between the two secretaries should show itself in a complaint over a failure of censorship is significant.

Weckherlin kept his job as political licenser only for another six months after this incident. By the end of 1638 corantos were again legal, but now Windebank and his clerk Robert Read had taken over the duty of licensing them. Their administration was quite different from Weckherlin's. In a coranto published in early January 1641, Nathaniel Butter described his working relationship with the regime: 'Courteous Reader: wee had thought to have given over printing our Forraigne avisoes, for that the Licenser (out of partiall affection) would not oftentimes let passe apparent truth, and in other things (oftentimes) so crosse and alter which made us almost weary of Printing.'[76] Windebank and Read seem to have intervened much more actively in the publication of news than had Weckherlin. They absolutely disallowed large chunks of the news, though it was 'apparent truth', and they expurgated what remained. For a publisher accustomed to working on a deadline, this procedure must have been most annoying. Still, one cannot read Butter's notice to the reader without feeling that he is capitalizing on Windebank's sudden flight to the continent, which had taken place the previous month. Butter had had his troubles under Weckherlin, but obviously he preferred the system run by the Latin secretary to the one he had been experiencing for the past two years. Indeed, with the departure of Windebank and Read, Weckherlin resumed his former duties. Throughout the early months of 1641 Weckherlin was again monitoring corantos and histories, and only the collapse of the courts of High Commission and Star Chamber finally brought his licensing to an end.[77]

One of the last books Weckherlin licensed before he was superseded by Windebank and Read painted a blistering portrait of how the Thirty Years War had ravaged the German states. *The lamentations of Germany* published letters from various German Protestant divines to their countrymen in exile, and the principal author, Philip Vincent, contributed a long essay on 'the

[75] Evans, *Principal secretary*, pp. 93–6; M. B. Young, *Servility and service: the life and work of Sir John Coke* (Woodbridge, 1986), pp. 216–18, 230–2, 252–5; and Sharpe, *Charles I*, p. 155.

[76] *The continuation of the forraine occurrents* (1641), title page verso (*STC* 18507.343); Dahl, *Bibliography*, pp. 250–1; and C. Nelson and M. Seccombe, eds., *British newspapers and periodicals, 1641–1700* (New York, 1987), no. 64.348.

[77] Eyre and Rivington, *Transcript of the registers*, I, pp. 1–29, and Dahl, *Bibliography*, pp. 250–60, record the sixteen works Weckherlin licensed in 1641. These were almost all corantos. For licensing and publication in the early 1640s, see M. J. Mendle, 'De facto freedom, de facto authority: press and parliament, 1640–43', *Historical Journal*, 38 (1995), pp. 307–32.

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miserable estate of Germany'. He warned that what had happened there could happen in England: 'There be many instructions which we may learne from the lecture of their calamities. No privileges can finally secure a sinfull people ... The seedes of all their evills are sowne in our fields.' Therefore, the people of England must look to their own sinfulness. Vincent was not very specific about the nature of this sinfulness and, besides charity to the miserable Germans, he prescribed no cures. He repeatedly referred to the peace enjoyed by England, but unlike other authors he made no mention of Charles. Rather, he left the impression that God was mercifully waiting to see if England would turn from sin. His chapter titles reflected the bulk of the book: 'Of bloodshed and killing', 'Of burning and destroying', and 'Of tortures and torments'. A series of prints showing violence and famine accompanied the text. One print depicted a woman in torn clothing with the word 'Germany' written across the hem of her skirt. In the background a battle was raging, and the caption read: 'Have pittey upon me, have pittey upon me, o yee my frends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me.'[78]

This work was especially designed, it seems, to provoke public sympathy. Certainly some of the prints showed starvation and famine so severe that money and supplies must have been wanted. In the context of the long debate over whether England should stand neutral or lend a military hand to the Protestant states of Germany, the clear sequel to 'have pittey ... o yee my friends' was *send help*. Such a message would have additional force in the eyes of many because help for Protestant Germany meant restoring the king's sister, the popular Elizabeth of Bohemia, to her rightful place as dowager princess of the Pfalz.[79] An argument for intervention in favour of Elizabeth and her sons accords well with what we know about Weckherlin's views. That he let the booklet pass into print is not surprising in one sense; he must have realized, however, that *The lamentations of Germany* possessed a much more sensational aspect than did, for example, the *Arrest*. No evidence of the work's reception exists: in neither his extant letters nor his diary does he mention the book. Yet within a few weeks of giving permission for its publication he lost his job as political licenser.

III

The evidence of the 1630s is incontrovertible: the king wanted a stricter control on the press and he got it. In the 1620s the crown had tried to influence and use the public press with varying success, but starting about 1627 it moved in an increasingly restrictive direction. The principal secretary of state appointed one of his clerks as political licenser and directed the Stationers' Company to publish nothing to do with government policy without his prior approval. On the face of it, this directive broke no new ground. The government had always

[78] Vincent, *Lamentations*, sigs. A3v, A4r, A7r, and pp. 8, 26, 33, 60; and Parker; *Thirty Years' War*, plates 23a, b and c.

[79] Vincent, *Lamentations*, sig. A6r; and M. Butler, 'Entertaining the palatine prince: plays on foreign affairs, 1635–37', *English Literary Renaissance*, 13 (1983), pp. 319–21.

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controlled seditious speech and writings which incited the people to rebellion and disorder. Gradually it became clear, however, that the king meant to restrain not only corantos that strayed into domestic policy or highly sensitive foreign negotiations, but all news.

Printers and publishers seem at first not to have understood. Even after 1632, with the complete prohibition of corantos and gazettes, stationers such as Nathaniel Butter and Nicholas Bourne were confused. The state would not allow them to bring out weekly reports of the news, even when that news dealt only with Germany and Sweden, yet they could continue to publish serial histories of these countries. They petitioned to get the order of suppression changed and rather pitifully urged their readers of *The Swedish intelligencer* not to despise corantos, for one could not understand the wars in Germany without them. Their petitions went unanswered and their arguments unheard. Only in the late 1630s, when the crown had its hands full in Scotland and perhaps hoped to distract public opinion, did corantos get a new lease on life.[80]

Historians have commonly distinguished censorship as a policy from its enforcement. Kevin Sharpe and John Morrill, for example, concede the crown's interest in controlling the press, but argue that the organs of enforcement were inefficient. But to question whether Laud's chaplains could identify the authors of seditious words or whether the Stationers' Company could find and dismantle secret presses is not the same as to ask whether government efforts, however sporadic and inefficient, had a chilling effect. The machinery might well have creaked and groaned, but printers and authors could still have felt intimidated by its operation. In this regard, Christopher Hill's list of books and tracts written in the 1620s or 1630s but not published until the 1640s is suggestive. Given the argument that the government inefficiently administered censorship, it is surprising that no one has examined the role of the 'royal censors'.[81]

Georg Rudolph Weckherlin functioned as principal political licenser for much of the personal rule. Since he rarely mentioned his duties, we do not know how he felt about them. We do know that Charles trusted him with the job for more than a decade and reappointed him in 1641 when he needed to replace Windebank. The one instance (recorded by Weckherlin himself) in which someone lodged a complaint against him led to no disciplinary action. More importantly, there is dramatic evidence in his papers of his having turned back the work of authors. At the king's command, he denied licences to Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* and to an anonymous work which compared Gustavus Adolphus to Henry IV of France. Tantalizing glimpses of Weckherlin at work

[80] Rostenberg, 'Debut of English journalism', I, pp. 86–7; Watts, *Swedish intelligencer*, sig.)(4r [*sic*]; and Dahl, *Bibliography*, p. 223.

[81] Lambert, 'Richard Montagu', pp. 62–3; Sharpe, *Charles I*, pp. 645–54; idem, 'Commonwealth of meanings', p. 9; idem, *Criticism and compliment* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 36–7; Hill, 'Censorship and English literature', pp. 33, 41–3; Morrill, 'Christopher Hill's revolution', p. 280; and Bland, 'Invisible dangers', pp. 174, 179–80. See also D. F. McKenzie, 'The London book-trade in 1644', in J. Horden, ed., *Bibliographia: lectures, 1975–88* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 144–51, for a wide-ranging discussion of censorship before and after the licensing controls came down.

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reveal a man who licensed some works of news that he thought harmless, and who used patronage to help a very rambunctious relative. He also allowed the publication of works such as *The lamentations of Germany* and *Three several treatises*, both implicitly critical of English foreign policy. Nathaniel Butter possibly spent time in prison as a result of Weckherlin's activities, yet Butter felt free to come to him years later to beg his intercession over a punishment. The evidence is mixed: though overworked he performed conscientiously, giving his superiors no cause for complaint. At the same time he used his position sometimes to aid people and policies of which he approved.

Kevin Sharpe, Sheila Lambert, and John Morrill are of course correct that no Orwellian-style censorship apparatus existed during the personal rule. But their assertions that the government was chiefly concerned with regulating the printing trade or that it censored only in extreme cases leave much out of the account. Charles changed the rules of censorship in the late 1620s and Weckherlin's appointment and charge illustrated this. That he did not harry publishers with the zeal that Windebank and his clerk brought to the job is evidence only that he perhaps did not hold the ideal political views for his post. It is not evidence that censorship existed only to persecute radicals and separatists. On at least two occasions Weckherlin felt nervous enough about submitted manuscripts that he consulted the king. We possess direct evidence that Charles himself took offence at, and censored, works that came to his notice. The struggle for freedom of the press is an unhelpful and whiggish way of interpreting what was going on in the decade before the civil war, but scholars should not therefore conclude that Charles's reign during the 1630s exuded consensus and harmony. More and more after 1627 Charles tried to curtail the power of the press.

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